

THE POLITICS OF EXCLUSION: A CASE STUDY OF THE FACTRETON AREA.

SHAUN PATRICK FIELD

University of Cape Town

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### Abstract

This study explores and documents the experiences of coloured workers in the Factretou area. Coloured workers in Factretou have a tendency to be unresponsive to political issues and political organisation. This unresponsiveness to politics is due to coloured workers tendency to perceive, and deal with, political and non-political realities as separate and unconnected. Coloured worker's social consciousness has been shaped by a particular set of historical and current factors. These factors are collectively termed, "The Politics of Exclusion". The apartheid state has politically, culturally, economically and psychologically excluded coloured workers from having access to the resources and status of the white population. The apartheid state has also separated coloured workers from the African majority. Coloured workers have responded to their oppression and exclusion by using non-political means to sustain community life. These have included particular kinship networks, high church attendance amongst women, excessive alcohol consumption amongst men, and a range of other cultural forms. Coloured workers' day-to-day struggle for economic survival has also tended to reinforce their unresponsiveness to politics. Coloured workers' lack of a clear political identity together with a prevalence of individualism and exclusive forms of behaviour has resulted in coloured workers distancing themselves from political organisation and action. These issues and arguments were developed through the use of extensive interviews with coloured workers and political activists. Furthermore, my year long residence within the Kensington/Factretou area was a vital method and experience which shaped this study.

### List of Acronyms

AAC	All Africa Convention
ACTWUSA	Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union
APD	African Peoples Organisation
ANC	African National Congress
AZAPO	Azanian Peoples Organisation
AZASO	Azanian Students Organisation
CAD	Department of Coloured Affairs
CAHAC	Cape Housing Action Committee
CAL	Cape Action League
CAYCO	Cape Youth Congress
CCC	Cape Town City Council
CLPP	Coloured Labour Preference Policy
COD	Congress of Democrats
COSATU	Congress Of South African Trade Unions
COSAW	Congress of South African Writers
CPNU	Coloured Peoples National Union
CPRC or CRC	Coloured Persons Representative Council
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
FAWU	Food and Allied Workers Union
FCCA	Federation of Cape Civics
FCWU	Food and Canning Workers Union
GAWU	Garment Allied Workers Union
KFRTA	Kensington/Factretton Residents and Tenants Association
LP	Labour Party
MAPP	Musical Action for Peoples Power
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
NP	National Party
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa
SAAWU	South African Allied Workers Union
SACTWU	South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union
SAP	South African Party
SHAWCO	Student Health and Welfare Organisation
SACPO	South African Coloured Peoples Organisation
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
UDF	United Democratic Front

The Politics of Exclusion: A Case Study of the Factreton Area.

Chapter 1. Introduction.

This study will explore and document the experiences of coloured workers in Factreton, a working class suburb of Cape Town.<sup>1</sup> The study will focus on coloured workers' experience of the relationship between day-to-day 'non-political' aspects of their lives and of politics.<sup>2</sup> It will argue that coloured workers in Factreton have a tendency to perceive and deal with political and 'non-political' day-to-day experiences as separate entities. The separation in coloured workers' consciousness poses a contradiction that does not correspond with the existence of two different but connected spheres of social reality. It is precisely this contradiction that forms the area that this study will attempt to unravel and examine.

A contradiction frequently exists between worker experience of political reality and their awareness of the relationship between

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'coloured' has pejorative connotations for many people within and outside the coloured population. The term is also commonly used by many people as a descriptive category that refers to people legally designated 'coloured' within the South African context. While this study rejects the legislative definition of 'coloured people' the term 'coloured' or 'coloured people/workers' will be used in a descriptive sense with no pejorative intentions. There is, of course, a complex debate about the historical roots and validity of the term 'coloured'; it is, however not my intention to enter into this debate. See, R. Van der Ross: Myths and Attitudes (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1979). The issue of coloured identity will be discussed later, insofar as it has a bearing on the development of political consciousness amongst coloured workers.

The name Factreton is derived from the words Factory Town. The area was originally zoned for industrial purposes. It was only in 1944 that the Cape Town City Council decided to construct a housing scheme in the area.

<sup>2</sup> This study attempts to illustrate the reality of working class life as it was encountered, or described by the participants of that reality. Hence, there are some quotes from interviewees that discriminate in terms of either racial, gender or class divisions. I distance myself from these attitudes. The same position applies to secondary and archival sources.

politics and daily 'non-political' experience in the workplace and in the community.<sup>3</sup> Coloured workers tend not to develop a consciousness of the relationship, although they all experience it in different ways. It will be argued that the contradictory tendency for coloured workers to perceive and deal with political and general social realities as unconnected spheres is rooted in a complex set of historical and daily factors. This set of factors will be broadly described as the "politics of exclusion".

Coloured workers in Facticeon are oppressed and exploited. Furthermore, coloured workers in Facticeon, historically and on a daily basis, respond to and deal with, their experiences of oppression and exploitation. With the above as its starting point, this study will explore the various ways that coloured workers respond to and deal with these experiences.

The common assumption that coloured workers tend to respond to their experiences of oppression and exploitation in non-political or apolitical ways will be explored. Whisson argues that in the coloured community 'The politically apathetic probably form a far smaller group than is apparent from the outside as many people have

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 3 The following phrases need to be defined at the outset: 'political reality', 'the political' or 'politics'. These terms, unless otherwise stated, will refer to the particular terrain in society which consists of power relations within the state and civil society. Power relations are a particular feature of all social relations of society. The term 'political consciousness' refers to an awareness of both the explicitly political institutions in society and of the 'power relations' that permeate all facets of life. These general power relations, which do not have an explicitly political character, are often termed relations of domination and subordination. The obvious example is the relationship between the boss and worker on the shopfloor. Aspects of managerial control and class domination may be expressed through this relationship. The worker will feel the brunt thereof but not necessarily understand the class dominant aspects of the relationship or how it relates to broader political relationships.

diverted their political energies into less dangerous channels until opportunity comes to display interest again' (Whisson, 197\_: 6). The tendency for many coloured workers to divert political frustrations into other channels seems to exclude political ways of dealing with their experience of oppression and exploitation; an assertion supported by the research findings of this study.

Low levels of coloured worker participation have become a common feature of stayaways in the Western Cape (Joffe, 1986: 1). This recurring feature does not demonstrate, as it is often assumed, political apathy on the part of coloured workers. While stayaways are an explicitly political activity, this does not mean that we can simply deduce levels of political consciousness from these trends. The small number of coloured workers that participate in stayaways does, nevertheless, indicate that a large number of coloured workers are unresponsive to such political activities.

### 1.1 Central Questions and Arguments.

The central questions that this study therefore poses are: Why do coloured workers tend to respond to oppressive and exploitative experiences through non-political avenues and in an apolitical manner? Hence, why do coloured workers tend to be unresponsive to political organisation and mobilisation?

Examining coloured workers experiences as a starting point, this study will argue the following: a set of historical and current factors have shaped and diverted coloured workers responses away from political forms of expression and organisation. This set of factors will be broadly termed the "politics of exclusion". The politics of exclusion is, primarily the product of the historical

process of political, cultural, ideological, economic and psychological exclusion of the coloured working class by the apartheid state and its allies.<sup>4</sup> However, coloured workers have tended to respond to the practices of the apartheid state, in an exclusive manner.

The ruling bloc has historically excluded the coloured working class from having access to: voting in white elections; universal participation in political decision-making and constitutional developments; white residential areas; white social, sport and cultural avenues; upward movement in the job market; and, finally a racially defined, physical and psychological exclusion from the status and privileges of the white population in South Africa. These practices and factors have had particular effects on the consciousness of coloured workers.

While coloured workers have developed a number of ways of responding to these factors, they also have had to devise ways of dealing with the daily reality of oppression and exploitation, in the workplace and in the community. Coloured workers have tended to use several non-political avenues to channel and divert their frustrations. These include particular kinship relationships, religious participation, alcohol consumption and cultural avenues. It will be argued that these tendencies have reinforced a consciousness and

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<sup>4</sup> The term 'apartheid state' refers to the ruling National Party, central government, civil service, police, army and other parastatals. The term 'allies' of the apartheid state refers to the changing and shifting group of interest groups and institutions that support or actively engage in some form of alliance with the state. The actual participants and nature of these alliances will, of course, change as the conditions of struggle within the political economy of South Africa change. This complex set of shifting alliances within and around the apartheid state will be termed the 'ruling bloc'.

culture of exclusion amongst coloured workers. Several other factors have reinforced this exclusion including the conservative nature of most of the trade unions to which coloured workers of the Western Cape have belonged; the dominance of middle class elements in 'coloured politics' and the dominance of a racist ideological discourse. Furthermore, the predominantly 'Africanised' nature of mass democratic politics and organisation has also, in effect, contributed to this exclusion from politics.<sup>5</sup>

The historical development of the politics of exclusion has created a separation within the consciousness of coloured workers.<sup>6</sup> This separation is between coloured workers consciousness of their day-to-day life experiences, on the one hand, and their understanding of 'politics', on the other hand. Bluntly put, the research findings indicate that coloured workers generally perceive 'politics' to be separate from their day-to-day life experiences. Their bread and butter problems are not perceived by them to be political, nor do they explore political ways of resolving such problems. There seems to be a strong tendency within the coloured working class for workers to define themselves as being outside and separate from the various terrains of political power and struggles, both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary.

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<sup>5</sup> The Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) is broadly seen as COSATU, UDF and other anti-apartheid extra-parliamentary political groups within the Congress tradition. This point is not intended as a slight on the MDM. The historical roots of the MDM are nevertheless predominantly within African communities, hence the particular orientation. As will be seen in later sections many coloured workers, perceive this Africanised orientation of the MDM as being distant from their experiences, and thus reinforcing their exclusion from politics.

<sup>6</sup> The term 'separation' is used in a descriptive sense. In this study it will be used to describe a split in consciousness, or a missing link, or links, within the consciousness of people.

This separation has had a direct bearing on the formation of social and personal identities within the coloured community. Social identity has tended to be protective and 'eiesoortig' in orientation.<sup>7</sup> The forms of 'coloured identity' that have been state-imposed have been accepted by some sections of the coloured population for the purposes of material gain. For many coloured people, however, the rejection of the state's ideological definition of what 'coloured' is has resulted in a painful process of redefining one's own culture and identity. This process of identification has necessarily been in terms of coloured people's own experience as opposed to simply living up to ideological expectations of what the apartheid state or others think coloured people are. It will be argued that the identification process is integral to breaking down the consciousness and culture of exclusion, and thus to the development of an integrated political consciousness and popular culture in coloured communities.

These issues and arguments are a product of a long process of consultation, discussions, interviews and a year-long residence in the Kensington/Factreton area.<sup>8</sup> The period of residence as a participant observer entailed my involvement as political activist in the activities and campaigns of the Kensington/Factreton Residents and Tenants Association (KFRTA). As a participant observer, I was able to combine two roles, that are generally kept separate - political activist and academic researcher. The

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7 'Eiesoortig' is a common Afrikaans expression for individuals or groups that stick to themselves, and to people of the same type. The colloquial Afrikaans expression that is often used as a crude justification for apartheid draws, on this: 'Soort soek soort' (Literal translation: 'Type seeks type').

8 The choice of Factreton was arrived at through a process of elimination and selection. The reasons for choosing the Factreton community are discussed in the research methodology (Appendix 1).

combination of academic and political experience proved to be vital, as my role as participant observer developed within the context of an oppressed community. My observations and reflections are consequently not the product of a passive approach but have been produced by active political involvement in community organisation. This political activity together with numerous discussions and social interactions with coloured workers and political activists, provided important avenues for the research process to develop.<sup>9</sup>

Popular perceptions of coloured workers tend to include the following labels: 'passive', 'conservative' or 'apathetic'. These observations can be contrasted to a general perception that the African working class are more militant and politicized. This study argues that the popular assumption that coloured workers are 'apathetic' is a misleading characterization of coloured workers consciousness. While specific individuals and groups within Factreton might display apathetic attitudes, these tend to be isolated cases and do not constitute a general trend within the Factreton community. It was evident from my own experience as participant observer in the Factreton community that residents tended to be unresponsive to politics and not 'apathetic'. The object of this study is thus to focus on the actual roots of coloured workers' tendency to be unresponsive to political issues and organisation.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The use of participant observation and other related research methods are discussed in Appendix 1.

<sup>10</sup> The term 'apathy' is pejorative and difficult to define. The dictionary definition states 'insensibility to suffering, passionless existence, indolence of mind'. The term 'apathetic' is defined as follows: 'insensible to emotion, indifferent' (The Concise Oxford dictionary, 1964). The term 'indifference' is defined as 'absence of interest, or attention, neutrality, unimportance'. To apply the term apathy in a blanket fashion to coloured workers or even sections of coloured workers would be a gross distortion of

An assumption sometimes made by political activists and academics is that inadequate or conservative worker organisation has caused this so-called coloured worker apathy.<sup>11</sup> This explanation argues that the unresponsiveness of coloured workers to politics is a result of the conservative policy and practices of TUCSA (Trade Union Council of South Africa). The history of TUCSA and its affiliates clearly shows that their policy and practices did have a negative bearing on coloured workers' consciousness. The above argument pinpoints an important factor that has had a bearing on coloured workers' consciousness but it has been over used as many other factors have been ignored: low wage rates, unemployment, influence of charismatic churches, forced removals, alcohol consumption patterns, to name but a few. While the influence of TUCSA organisation and traditions might be related to explaining specific instances of political unresponsiveness, it does not suffice as a general explanation for coloured workers' behaviour and consciousness.

Why do many coloured workers not join unions or community organisations? Why are coloured workers often reluctant to engage in political action? The answers to such questions, it will be argued, are located within the process of the historical formation of a coloured working class with a specific culture, politics and consciousness. The breadth of this topic has forced a narrowing of focus to a specific community and to a handful of long standing residents.

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 reality. Discussion on the issue of political apathy will focus on a lack of interest in 'political' issues, or an apparent political neutrality. The term 'unresponsive' does not have pejorative connotations and furthermore allows for a process of human decision making.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, M. Nichol: A History of Garment and Tailoring Workers in Cape Town, 1900 - 1939 (Phd thesis: UCT, 1984).

Why study coloured workers when the African working class constitute the bulk of the broader working masses and is undeniably the leading force for fundamental political change in South Africa? There is a tendency for many writers and some political activists to see the South African working class as mainly African, but this conception is inadequate in the Western Cape regional context where the coloured working class constitutes the majority of working class people.<sup>12</sup> This study explicitly breaks from this tendency and aims at exploring an under-researched area. Simons, expressed this need as follows:

The non-revolutionary politics of the oldest working class in South Africa - coloured urban and rural worker - remains unexplored, and necessitating further research for our greater understanding of coloured politics and the complexities of the Western Cape political culture (Weekly Mail, 22/1/1988).

Coloured workers have been stereotyped and categorised in many ways by academics, activists and authors. A considerable number of studies have been written on the coloured people, particularly by liberal historians (Lewis, 1987; Van Der Ross, 1986). Yet seldom have coloured workers specifically been focused upon as a social force distinct from the broad phrase 'the coloured people'. The actions, experiences and history of coloured workers cannot be subsumed under such broad categories as 'the people' or 'the masses'. Furthermore, broad pejorative labels applied by the right

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12 The 1985 census gives the following figures for economically and non-economically active Africans and coloureds in the Cape Peninsula. (01 statistical region) Africans: 254 249, Coloureds: 838 746. (Central Statistical Services: 1985) These figures are open to dispute, some sources estimate Cape Town's population to be far larger than is reflected in the 1985 census (Cape Times 21/4/1988).

and left of the political spectrum are also not acceptable: 'deviant', 'degenerative', 'passive' or 'apathetic'.<sup>13</sup>

## 1.2 Identity: Defining the Problem.

The central issue of racial identity is unavoidable when exploring this topic. In particular the inter-relationships between the nature of coloured identity and political consciousness immediately lead to important questions: Does the controversy over 'coloured identity' have a bearing on the responsiveness that coloured workers display towards political organisation and mobilisation? How do coloured workers feel about their individual experiences as coloured persons in an apartheid system and how do they individually and collectively 'handle' these experiences? <sup>14</sup>

Coloured people have been defined as 'coloured' by the Population Registration Act No.30 of 1950 and their communities as coloured areas by the Group Areas Act of the same year. The state, in effect, has defined such coloured areas as being working class areas through the standards of housing, streets, lighting and social services provided.<sup>15</sup> The Population Registration and Group Areas

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<sup>13</sup> The terms 'passive' and 'apathetic' are commonly used by many political activists within and outside the coloured communities. Various authors have also used these terms to describe sections of the coloured population (see Whisson, 197\_). The right wing terms, 'deviant' and 'degenerative' are more difficult to reference because of their overtly racist slant. Western (1981) makes reference to similar racial stereotypes used by white South Africans to typify coloured people.

<sup>14</sup> The complex relationship between human experience and political consciousness will be explored in Chapter 5. The term to 'handle experience' is used by E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays (Merlin: London, 1978). I intend using it in a similar manner to refer to the manner and methods used by people to deal, or cope, with life experiences.

Acts and the actions of the apartheid state create a distorted picture of what coloured identity is, however it is incorrect to define any people as the product of state action and ideology. The basic question being posed is: who defines who and what people are? That the state and its allies politically and ideologically have attempted to define 'coloured people' in a particular way is not disputed; what is at issue is the question of the impact of the denial or neglect of people's own attempts to establish an identity for themselves as individuals, a group, a community, or as a class.<sup>16</sup> The coloured people, and in particular coloured workers, have historically endured the external imposition of an enforced identity, in terms of state ideology and strategy. The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group stated the following:

...being coloured within the framework of the South African pattern of groups is essentially an ascriptive characteristic, that is to say the characteristics which determine the nature of coloured identity and distinguish it from other groups are mainly ascribed to the coloured group by other groups. Being coloured is therefore not essentially the result of a process of positive self-identification. It is not the expression of a common feeling of being different. It is the result of the reactions of other groups. For these reasons the coloured population group as a whole does not display the typical characteristics found in a coherent 'nation' or 'ethnic group' in its pattern of behaviour (1976: 463).

The Theron Commission attributes coloured identity to pressures and forces exerted by other groups. These other groups, in its view are whites and Africans. Consequently the Theron Commission, in bold and crude terms, denied that coloured people have any role in the process of their definition of themselves and of their identity.

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<sup>15</sup> The Group Areas Act and other legislation are simply used for the purposes of illustration. These issues will be dealt with in more detail later.

<sup>16</sup> See for example the work of E.P. Thompson: The Making of the English Working Class (Pelican Books: Harmondsworth, 1963).

Taken to its logical conclusion the Commission argues that coloured people have been 'made' and defined by a ruling white minority. In short, oppressed people are not credited with playing any active role in the building and shaping of their communities, their 'people' and ultimately their own lives.

This directly raises the issue of the apartheid state historically excluding the coloured working class from the sphere of parliamentary politics, yet crudely manipulating the processes of cultural and racial identification to meet its own racist political objectives. The process of identification, in practice, is not simply the product of external imposition, nor is it just a reaction to these forces. The impact of these forces cannot be ignored and does have a bearing on the processes of identity formation. The state does have the power to define people in general legislative and ideological terms. It is at this legislative and bureaucratic level that the state has the power to exclude and manipulate black population groups.<sup>17</sup>

These actions of the apartheid state generally contradict the actual experiences and practice of ordinary working people. Spatial identification, for example, is an important part of the formation of social identities within those communities classified coloured. Western makes the point that 'Place of origin has become an essential element of self definition for coloured people' (1981: 149). The state practice of social engineering and forced removals of people has destroyed entire communities and symbols. The most notable example is District Six. This destruction of communities has

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<sup>17</sup> Lewis (1987) deals with the historical developments around the inclusion and exclusion of middle class coloured people from the common voters' roll.

direct bearing on the so-called 'identity crisis' experienced in coloured communities. The forced removal and exclusion of coloured people from white areas in Cape Town has caused severe damage to the network of community relationships that bind the coloured community together.<sup>18</sup> The dispersion of coloured families across the Cape Flats into state-defined and constructed residential areas is a perpetual source of anger and pain which has hindered the formation of a positive sense of identity.

It is unfortunate that several authors have ignored, or downplayed, the efforts of people legally classified as belonging to the 'coloured population' in developing their own personal and group identity.<sup>19</sup> This problem of how identity is shaped is simply dealt with in the work of Lewis:

The solution to this dilemma, I suggest, is to accept that coloured identity is a white-imposed categorisation. But it is one that for a variety of reasons came to be adopted by sections of those people so described. More specifically, an emerging coloured elite gradually began, by the early 1900's, to use their imposed coloured identity to mobilise others so described, so as to advance their interest as a group (1986: 4).

Thus Lewis accepts that coloured identity is a 'white - imposed categorisation'. He also details how the emerging coloured 'petty-bourgeoisie' manipulated and used this categorisation to mobilise support for its political agenda.<sup>20</sup> Lewis's significant

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18 See for example, J. Western: 'The Geography of Urban Social Control: Group Areas and the 1976 and 1980 Civil Unrest in Cape Town'. In: Living Under Apartheid, D. Smith (ed), (George Allen and Unwin: London, 1982).

19 This review of the literature concentrates on the most recent works of Goldin and Lewis. Note also the work of R. van der Ross, The Rise and Decline of Apartheid: A Study of Political Movements among the Coloured People of South Africa, 1880-1985 (Tafelberg: Cape Town, 1986).

and detailed account of coloured political history is accompanied by an unsatisfactory analysis of coloured identity. The way in which identity is forged, imposed and resisted is no neutral matter that can rest on legislative terminology.

Coloured identity for Lewis is ultimately shaped by a tug-of-war struggle between the white ruling classes and the coloured petty-bourgeoisie. Both of these class forces have historically attempted to shape and define coloured identity to serve their own political interests. The historical accuracy of this is not being disputed. What is being challenged is the neglect of the experiences, struggles and efforts of ordinary coloured workers. Coloured working class experience and history are simply subsumed into the history of middle-class coloured politics. It also follows that the process of self-identification, on both an individual and general level, are ignored by Lewis. A more recent work by Goldin follows in a similar vein:

Coloured identity reflected in part the determination of the skilled stratum of coloureds to defend their position vis-a-vis the African population and to assert their claim for preferential treatment. From the beginning the commitment to a coloured identity was at best ambiguous. The continued existence of an intermediate group, it was recognised, depended on the success of policies which sought to promote the interests of coloured people relative to Africans whilst at the same time preventing the assimilation of white people (1987: 27).

Goldin pays greater attention to the struggles of coloured workers but these are dealt with only in relation to the Coloured Labour Preference Policy (CLPP). The formation of coloured identity is again treated as a reaction to the development of state policy. In Lewis's case, such a position may be explained by his

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20 The term 'petty-bourgeoisie' refers to small traders, teachers, professionals and skilled craftspeople.

broad focus, Goldin however directly focuses on coloured identity and the 'making of race'. He states that

Our aim, however, has not been to explore the 'lower levels' of coloured identity which relate to often inarticulate and hidden expressions of identity. Rather, we focus on the political mobilisation of Coloured identity: the articulation and representation of coloured identity in organisations and institutions. Of course a full understanding of coloured identity would require a larger study which, in addition...would focus on religion, culture, language and other complex psychological manifestations of identity (1987: xv).

Goldin uses the state and organisational developments on that level as his point of departure in exploring identity. As a result he ignores the daily struggles of working class people, as well as the human process of self-identification. The causes or explanations for how and why coloured identity came to be what it is cannot be understood or addressed at the level of state legislation and action alone. The question of coloured identity has to be addressed at the level of the historical and daily experiences of individual coloured workers and their relationships to groups to which they belong.

### 1.3 Aims and Objectives.

The starting point of this study thus commences from the experience of coloured workers. It is from this experiential and individual level that people's culture, consciousness and politics can best be explored. It is from this point of departure that the 'view from below' can be illustrated and developed. Bozzoli argues that

The consciousness and culture of ordinary people are formed in their day-to-day experiences of life in a very small segment of society. The starting point of 'history from below' must be, thus, that same small segment of society in which experiences are forged (1983: 35).

This study will deal with the question of racial identity by initially exploring the life histories of six ordinary coloured workers. These six workers have all been residents of Factreton for at least 20 years. Factreton is designated a coloured area under the Group Areas Act, and the residents are predominantly working class. A community history of Factreton, drawn from archival and secondary sources, will be sketched and linked with interviewees' quotations from the six life histories. Interview material from local political activists will also be interwoven with quotes from coloured workers. The combination of archival and secondary sources, with life history and other interview material will provide the empirical basis for this study. Finally, as stated previously, my experience as participant observer has been an important tool in the exploration of identity and consciousness of coloured workers in Factreton. Through this process of intermeshing various sources and methods an analysis of identity and social consciousness will be developed, insofar as these relate to the central issue of coloured workers' unresponsiveness to politics.

Chapter 2 of the thesis provides the regional context for the specific focus on the historical and daily experiences of coloured workers in Factreton. Brief overviews are provided of coloured political history, the Western Cape political economy and Western Cape politics.

Chapter 3 places considerable emphasis on setting out the history and profile of the Kensington/Factreton area. The origins of the area as a squatter settlement are traced through the 1920s to 1950s period. By the early 1960s the area was established as an urban community within the Cape Town municipality. A contemporary profile

of the area that focuses on services available, number of schools, population features and several other aspects is also included.

Chapter 4 explores the individual experiences of six coloured workers through the extensive use of life history interviews. Workers' perceptions of their family circumstances, church, domestic work and workplace experiences will be detailed. Central themes in this chapter include: the key role the mother plays as the matrifocal head of many coloured working class households; the influence of religious beliefs and participation in church activities as an avenue for channeling frustrations, and the high levels of alcohol consumption combined with a fatalistic attitude prevalent amongst certain sections of the coloured community.

Chapter 5 explores the central questions and arguments posed. The politics of exclusion and its product, the particular separation within coloured workers' consciousness, will be elaborated and analysed. Questions about coloured identity and its relationship to social consciousness will also be discussed.

Chapter 6 explores the re-emergence of Congress politics and how this occurred in Facticeon. The KFRTA, generally known as 'the civic', is discussed as the most prominent organisation of working class residents in the area. Questions about the organisation and mobilisation of coloured workers are examined. Links are drawn between the politics of exclusion and how it, as a social process, has shaped organisational developments in the area.

The conclusion of this study is that coloured workers' experience of political and social exclusion has created a separation within

coloured workers' consciousness of day-to-day 'non-political' issues and their consciousness of politics. Coloured workers tend not to develop an awareness of the relationship between political and non-political aspects of social reality. A central factor that reinforces this separation is the all consuming nature of the struggle to establish a personal and political identity which is based on real life experiences and not on the ideological expectations of the state's legislative and political definition of what coloured people are. The particular effects of this exclusion and separation has been feelings of powerlessness, alienation and inferiority. These feelings have been reinforced through the white population's negative stereotyping of coloured workers. A social and political identity of exclusion and separateness from politics and the ruling white political sphere was thus created. Coloured workers have therefore tended to be unresponsive to political issues and organisation and as a result divert their political frustrations into non-political avenues. This exclusive nature of coloured workers' consciousness has been reinforced by a lack of a tradition of political involvement, charismatic churches, conservative trade unions, disruption of community networks through forced removals, high levels of alcohol consumption, a perpetual struggle for economic survival and a fear of state repression. Coloured workers' unresponsiveness to politics is thus a product of this diverse set of historical and daily factors that have created and reinforced their exclusion from politics.

## Chapter 2. Contextualisation.

### 2.1 Introduction.

This chapter sets out the historical background and regional context of the study. The study of worker consciousness within a specific community has to be situated within a broader context of events, developments and structures. Sub-sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 illustrate a background of coloured political history, Western Cape political economy and contemporary community and trade union organisation in the region. These sections highlight important historical, structural and organisational features.

### 2.2 Coloured Political History: A Brief Overview.

This section will briefly deal with historical attempts at organising and mobilising coloured people. The most significant political organisations to have emerged in the pre-1970 period will be discussed. The period 1880s to the 1940s are dominated by the activities of the African Peoples Organisation (APO). The 1940s to 1960s were dominated by more radical coloured organisations, such as Coloured People's Congress (CPC) and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM).

The two major traditions that permeate the history of coloured politics are: the conservative tradition of 'compromise' or 'working within the system' as manifested, for example, by the APO. The other more recent tradition which has characterised the latter period is one of 'boycott' or overt resistance to the system as exemplified by the Unity Movement. Both traditions represent different political responses to the racially exclusive practices of the apartheid state. The conservative APO tradition tried to make use of the limited space afforded for upper middle class coloured

persons to participate in constitutional politics. Whereas the NEUM tradition called for an outright boycott of this process of exclusion and selective inclusion by the state.

The first notable organisation to emerge amongst the coloured population was the APO, which was founded in 1902 in Cape Town. There were other minor organisational formations such as the Afrikaner League (coloured) that emerged amongst coloured diamond diggers, but few of these lasted for any length of time (Lewis, 1987: 11). Political organisation amongst coloured people only began to emerge in the post-1880 period. Lewis provides the following explanation for this,

...why coloured political organisations only began to emerge in the Cape after the 1880's was the restrictive political and socio-economic environment of the colony, first under the Dutch, and from 1806 under British rule. But an equally important factor was the heterogeneous nature of those people loosely described as coloureds, which meant that they lacked any strong unifying sense of coloured identity (1987: 8).

The position of coloured people in relation to the African population at this time was important insofar as distinctions between the two groups were as yet not clearly defined. The fact that some coloured people did have the vote and that there were skilled coloured workers meant that coloureds were in a relatively stronger position. It was only in 1904 that coloured people were for the first time legally designated as a separate people from the African people. The 1904 Cape population census clearly defined three race groups in the colony; White, Bantu and Coloured. The coloured people were defined as 'all intermediate shades between the first two' (Goldin, 1987b: 158). The initial formation of coloured identity was thus a largely defensive reaction on one level, but

was also related to divide and rule strategies of the local state.

Goldin summarises these developments as follows:

Coloured identity, in the form which exists today was forged in the white-heat of the years surrounding the South African War. In that period the artisan and petty-bourgeoisie class of non-European people found in the ethnic identification of their position in isolation from the rest of the non-European people a protection against their further disenfranchisement and impoverishment. Of course, the mobilisation of this identity was premised on the pre-existence of symbolic and material points of identification. These included elements of the Malay Cape Afrikaner traditions combined with petty-bourgeois and artisan identifications. An 'imagined community', to use Benedict Anderson's suggestive phrase, was established as a unique outcome of a peculiar historic configuration of circumstances (1987b: 163).

The formation of the APO in 1902 was the first explicit attempt to organise coloured people on a national scale. The aims of the organisation were firstly to, 'promote unity between the coloured races'; secondly, to 'obtain better and higher education for our children'; thirdly, to 'defend the coloured people's social, political and civil rights'; fourthly, to get all the men who could vote onto the voters roll, and finally to strive for the 'general advancement of the coloured people in South Africa' (Lewis, 1987: 20).

The strategies outlined to reach these objectives were, mobilising support for white parliamentary candidates who supported their interests and the upliftment of coloured people to a 'civilised' status (Lewis, 1987: 20). The people that the APO appealed to were a mixture of small shopkeepers, tradesmen, teachers and range of petty-bourgeois individuals (Lewis, 1987: 73). The APO never managed to extend its base beyond middle-class layers because of its largely elitist programmes. Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, the APO's well-known president for much of the organisation's existence,

continually stressed the following points in his talks; 'respectability', 'submission to all constitutional requirements' and for members to show by their conduct that they were the 'equals, physically, morally and intellectually, of whites'. Furthermore, in a patronising manner, he reminded APO members that, as the 'intelligent section of the coloured people', it was their duty to uplift other coloured persons whether 'common farm labourer' or the 'worst hooligan of the city slums' and make them 'become as self respecting and respectable citizens as we think we are' (Lewis, 1987: 165).

It is little wonder, therefore, that coloured workers were never drawn to the APO in large numbers. The APO remained throughout its existence a largely elitist organisation that attempted to improve the position of the coloured population through petitions, delegations and mass meetings. It formed no revolutionary force as its focus was limited to pressuring white political parties and the white state into giving concessions. The APO, through hinging its destiny onto the South African Party and attempts to be elected to the City Council (Dr. Abdurahman was elected on several occasions), was inevitably doomed to the vicissitudes of reformist white politics. The liberal paternalism of the South African Party ultimately had more negative effects than positive ones for the APO. The Wilcocks Commission of 1938 made several serious points regarding the APO's policies. Perhaps most depressing for the APO, which was by then on the decline, was the following,

..the failure of moderate political organisations, especially the APO, to halt, let alone reverse the general decline of the coloureds' opportunities for advancement...in their concern for work within the system to achieve urgently needed social welfare reforms. The white liberals strengthened the tendency of the authorities to treat coloureds as a cohesive, separate

group, apart from the whites and Africans. In the long run the legacy of the involvement of white liberal organisations in coloured politics was to bolster, not undermine, the government's segregatory treatment of coloureds (Lewis, 1987: 151).

The above quote (Lewis, 1987), although somewhat contradictory, makes the critical point that the APO by hinging its hopes on liberal institutions like the South African Party, gave greater purpose to the state's segregatory and racially exclusive policies. The death of Abdurahman in 1940 was the beginning of the end for the APO. With the benefit of historical hindsight, it would be easy to criticise Abdurahman's politics and strategies. But his leadership and dynamic qualities were an undeniably influential force in coloured politics. The APO gradually disintegrated in the decade after his death.

The increasing awareness of the futility of the APO style and strategies amongst the younger generation of coloured intellectuals was associated with the emergence of more radical coloured organisations. The APO's inability to extend its base beyond the small petty-bourgeois layer of coloured people together with its failure to meet basic organisational objectives within the confines of 'reformist' politics ultimately led to the organisation's demise.

Although the APO failed to reach the coloured working class in any substantial way, organisations like the Industrial Commercial Union (ICU) and the African National Congress (ANC) did manage to organise coloured workers to unite with African workers during the 1920s. The ICU organised primarily on the docks, while the ANC made inroads in the Worcester area (Lewis, 1987: 180).

During the latter days of the APO's existence, several groups of young radicals met in various discussion groups and clubs. This radical coloured intelligentsia were unhappy with the policies and strategies of the APO. By the mid-1930s two main radical groups had emerged with one group being led by Cissie Gool (Abdurahman's youngest daughter), and the other led by Dr G. Gool, (Cissie Gool's brother-in-law). The Cissie Gool faction had strong links with the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and several of its adherents were, in fact, formally members of the Party. This faction was eventually to become the core which formed the Coloured People's Congress in the 1950s. The other somewhat 'purist' faction was strongly influenced by Trotskyist ideology and later became the leading force in the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) (Lewis, 1987: 181).

The Trotskyist faction tried to push their policy of non-collaboration within the All Africa Convention (AAC) gatherings with little success. The Cissie Gool faction, in contrast, advocated working class unity between blacks and whites with the use of 'direct action' in the form of boycotts, strikes and mass protests (Lewis, 1987: 221). This was in line with CPSA strategy at the time. Tensions between both groupings continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s. When the state set up a 'special' department to deal with coloured issues, a major campaign was launched. The Anti-CAD (Coloured Affairs Department) campaign temporarily led to co-operation between the two factions. Individuals who worked, or sympathised, with the CAD were labelled as 'quislings' by the Anti-CAD organisations. The Coloured People's National Union (CPNU)

advocated working within the CAD. The following passage drawn from a 1944 CPNU pamphlet clearly reflects their racist position.

...it is necessary that the welfare of the Coloured man should be placed foremost, here in the Cape at least, which is the natural home of the Cape Coloured people. We have just reason to feel alarmed at the tremendous influx of Natives seeking employment, into the Cape area. Our chief objection is against the reserve Native, who is a fortuitous visitor, and whose presence here is causing a great deal of hardship amongst Coloured men and their families...We'd be very puny and backboneless men indeed if we allowed the Native to come into our very midst and oust us from our jobs, drive us from our homes, and threaten us in the streets where we have lived all our lives. The statements made above can be substantiated by facts which the Anti-CADs wish to ignore. For instance, places like Windermere, Matroosfontein, Retreat, Athlone, Wetton and Philippi, which are all practically peri-urban areas, have become over-run with Natives from the reserves.

(CPNU pamphlet, 1944: Moltano Papers, 28/5/1944)

The rest of this pamphlet continues in similar vein, castigating the Anti-CAD organisations for selling out the coloured people to the marauding 'Natives'. The CPNU further asserted that 'You inhabitants of Kensington, Windermere, Matroosfontein, Retreat, Athlone and Lansdowne will be fools indeed if you allow your areas to become Native-infested locations' (Moltano Papers, 28/5/1944). The CPNU pamphlet concluded with the demand that coloured people support it because the CAD 'has the ear of the government, and by so doing you will assist in achieving something worthwhile for Coloured people...' (Moltano Papers, 28/5/1944).

The CPNU established some support through filling the space left by the APO (CPNU claimed a membership of 48 000 during the late 1940s) and through active campaigning for United Party candidates during elections. Their racist stance towards Africans and conciliatory posturing towards the white community ultimately did not survive the harsh entrenchment of apartheid by the Nationalist Party. Following

its death in the early 1960s some members of the CPNU were amongst those who participated in the widely rejected Coloured Persons Representative Council (CPRC) (Lewis, 1987: 245-250).

At the Unity Conference of 1943, NEUM was officially launched. The launch was mainly attended by Anti-CAD organisations. Significantly the ANC did not send delegates (Lewis, 1987: 231). The famous Ten-Point Programme was adopted, surprisingly free of socialist rhetoric. The Programme placed an emphasis on the necessity for the struggle to pass through a national-democratic phase which was supported by the Trotskyist supporters, Dr Gool and Ben Kies. The notoriety of the Programme was created by its application and connection to the non-collaboration policy. Lewis comments that

The problem with the programme was that, in its dealings with other black organisations, the NEUM refused to support any action which had as its goal the attainment of anything less than the full ten demands, or which confined itself to any one section of the black people - Indian, Coloured or African. This inflexibility cost the NEUM dear in years to come (1987: 222).

Although participating in the initial AAC discussions, the main thrust of NEUM clearly favoured the Dr Gool faction in style and policies. The 'Doctors Pact' of 1947 was attacked by NEUM as 'bogus unity without a principled basis of action' (Lewis, 1987: 269). Unity talks between the ANC and NEUM collapsed in 1948. Perhaps the most significant split resulted over the state's bill to institute a separate voters roll for coloured people in 1951. The Franchise Action Council (FRAC) was launched by Cissie Gool, Johnny Gomas and other key CPSA leaders. FRAC was attacked by NEUM because it did not adhere to the Ten-Point Programme's principles.

FRAC campaigned against the bill and increasingly became involved in ANC campaigns such as the Defiance Campaign of 1952. In Cape Town, volunteers joined the Defiance Campaign at meetings in several suburbs; large numbers in particular came from Windermere (Karon, 1983: 41). With the end of the Defiance Campaign, FRAC dissolved to form the nucleus of a new national coloured organisation: the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) (Lewis, 1987: 269). Although NEUM claimed to represent black unity across racial divisions, in reality they were representative of a particular section of the coloured petty-bourgeoisie who were predominantly teachers. Although SACPO was also predominantly middle-class in orientation, it did nevertheless draw on working class support through its alliances with South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) affiliates and mass campaign strategies. The split between SACPO and NEUM was ultimately because of deep ideological and strategic differences.

During the 1950s NEUM became increasingly sidelined as the Congress Alliance gained momentum. The Congress Alliance consisted of the ANC, SACPO, SACTU, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the Congress of Democrats (COD). SACPO later became known as the Coloured People's Congress (CPC). The growth of SACPO and particularly SACTU affiliates in the Western Cape was partly due to mass support from the coloured population. The Textile Workers Industrial Union (TWIU) and the Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU) established their power bases amongst the mass of coloured textile and food workers in the Western Cape. These two trade unions were also major affiliates of SACTU. In the face of Congress organisation and mass mobilisation, the NEUM slipped into political obscurity.

SACPO, in contrast, managed to organise or participate in several mass campaigns and, for example, organised bus boycotts in 1954 to oppose bus segregation in Cape Town (Lewis, 1987: 271). SACPO also involved itself in several Congress campaigns and stay-at-homes. A Cape Times report of 9/4/1958 quoted SACPO leadership as follows

SACPO has made a wonderful start. Its general line has the support of the people. The task is now to get down to the job of organisation. SACPO branches must be set up in every area.....Above all SACPO must enlist the support of the coloured working class and organised trade union movement. The coloured workers have a fighting tradition which must be mobilised in the liberation struggle. Only if SACPO leadership and policies reflect its working class support will the organisation be able to forge ahead (Karon, 1983: 127).

The CPC (SACPO changed its name in 1959) ultimately collapsed in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre, the banning of the ANC and mass detentions which followed. The CPC's last activities involved the organisation of a stayaway in May 1961 as part of the ANC-directed campaign to protest against the state's declaration of the South African Republic. A Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU) organiser argued,

In particular, coloured workers in the Western Cape showed that they were no longer prepared to put up with injustices and insults which they are forced to suffer as third grade citizens. Large numbers of them stayed at home and made it one of the most important demonstrations in the history of the coloured people (Karon, 1983: 146).

Karon's work clearly shows that SACPO was able to mobilise mass support around particular issues amongst the coloured population. However, the following remarks by Reggie September, a leading member of SACPO, should be noted, '...it would be idle folly for us to boast of having a mass organisation among the coloured community.

While the roots of the ANC are deep among the Africans, ours have yet to develop in our community' (Karon, 1983: 165).

The period 1962 to 1976 was characterised by little extra-parliamentary political activity within the coloured community. The Labour Party and other liberal or conservative groupings were, of course, still operating in this period; however their activities are outside the scope of this brief overview. Contemporary coloured politics will be dealt with in sub-section 2.4. The liberal\conservative tradition had its roots in sections of the APO. This tradition today manifests itself in the Labour Party and other political parties working within the Tri-Cameral Parliament. The radical tradition of the CPC and ANC partially shaped the formation of the UDF. NEUM, on the other hand, split in several directions. The New Unity Movement and the Cape Action League of today represent the NEUM legacy.

Coloured political history, as has been shown, was characterised by considerable tensions and divisions. The question of coloured identity underpinned most of these divisions. The split between SACPO and NEUM was partially linked to a fundamentally different understanding of race. For NEUM the issue was 'non-European unity' or, in the words of a more contemporary slogan, 'the unity of the oppressed', regardless of racial divisions. Whereas SACPO identified the legally defined coloured constituency as an area to organise in. SACPO's strategy was in line with the Congress position of organising separately within particular racial constituencies (Goldin, 1987: 41). SACPO, in alliance with Congress organisations, attempted to break down racial divisions through engaging in joint mass protests and boycotts. NEUM's non-

collaboration policy invariably resulted in lengthy intellectual debates and political inactivity. Goldin makes the following significant point which the Congress Alliance effectively used to mobilise and organise mass campaigns, NEUM failed to grasp this issue which resulted in a loss of support amongst the coloured population.

The significance of racial identities lay in their ability to help rally individuals around a common cause. However, the extent to which Coloured identity was able to bind Coloureds can never be determined a priori for the identity of each person, each group, was a product of a different set of historical circumstances. Racial identities are the unresolved outcome of a conflict which is constantly being shaped (Goldin, 1987: 235).

### 2.3 Western Cape Political Economy: A Sketch.

This section will provide a brief sketch of the current political economy of the Western Cape. Three areas will be detailed in this sketch: population features, industrial features and community\suburban features. Metropolitan Cape Town constitutes planning region 39 or statistical regions 01 and 02. These consist of the following magisterial districts; (01) Cape Town, Simonstown, Wynberg, Goodwood and Bellville; (02) Kuilsriver, Strand, Somerset West, Stellenbosch, Paarl and Wellington.

The Wilcocks Commission of 1938 identified three class layers within the coloured population. These were

Firstly, the lumpenproletariat, the 'skollies' and undesirables who fitted white stereotypes about the 'Capey'; secondly, the semi-skilled and un-skilled rural and urban workers; and thirdly, the small Coloured elite, 'relatively well-to-do and educated Coloured people, including some 2 400 teachers, the independent workmen and skilled tradesmen' and a handful of coloured professionals (Lewis, 1987: 164).

The major force shaping class formation was the rural to urban migration of coloured workers in the post-war period. The coloured population, over the period 1946 to 1970, increased by approximately 450%, whilst the African population increased by 250% and the white population by 160% over this period (Goldin, 1987: 45). This massive increase in the numbers of coloured workers moving into the Cape Town area was primarily motivated by the need to find jobs in the expanding manufacturing and service sectors in the Cape Peninsula. Table 1.1 clearly shows the rapid increase of coloured people in the Peninsula since 1921.

TABLE 1.1: Population Statistics for the Cape Peninsula: 1921-1980.

RACE	1921	1936	1946	1951	1960	1970	1980
White	126 791	183 046	235 498	266 815	305 155	381 775	482 240
Coloured	112 415	169 392	138 423	297 067	417 881	606 075	775 600
Asian	2 579	3 856	7 018	8 343	8 975	11 086	17 420
African	10 629	16 450	42 580	59 937	75 200	108 827	183 360
TOTAL	252 414	362 744	423 519	632 062	807 211	1 107 763	1 458 620

(Source: Goldin, 1984: 40)

The growth of the coloured working class has been shaped by several factors. The key factors are: the rural to urban migration and the use of the CLPP by the state and capital. While it increased the availability of jobs for coloured workers the CLPP, did not enhance their economic position as such. The wage differential between coloured and African workers meant that, 'unskilled coloured workers, who may have been able to compete with Africans under different circumstances, are unable to do so under the present system of ultra-exploitation of Africans' (Goldin, 1987: 45). The protection afforded by the CLPP for unskilled coloured workers was undercut by the massive inflow of unskilled African workers, who

were prepared to work for lower wages. It is doubtful that this situation has improved since the abolition of the CLPP in 1983.

The gender division of labour as regards job allocation resulted in coloured women workers being drawn into clothing, textiles, food and retail occupations in the post-war period (James, 1984: 9). Many coloured women were also drawn into domestic work. Coloured men in contrast were drawn into construction, printing and a wide range of other unskilled and semi-skilled occupations. There has traditionally been a number of coloured men employed as skilled craftspeople in the following positions: cabinet makers, pattern makers, carpenters, builders, tailors, electricians and mechanics. Unable to move upwards within the job hierarchy of the private sector and unable to take up managerial positions within the white managerial layers of business, male coloured workers became concentrated in these skilled positions.

The historical process of 'making' the coloured working class, although concentrated in the post-war period, has its historical roots in earlier historical transformations. The coloured working class is, in fact, the oldest working class in South Africa with its historical origins in the transition from slavery to farm labour and ultimately proletarianisation (Van Der Ross, 1986). A thorough discussion of this transition is beyond the scope of this study.

### 2.3.1 Population Features.

The first and perhaps the most striking feature of the Western Cape region is the difference in the size of the coloured population in relation to the rest of the country. The table below shows this difference in size:

TABLE 1.2: S.A. Population Statistics by Racial Classification.

RACE	PENINSULA (01)		SOUTH AFRICA	
	1980	PERCENTAGE	1980	PERCENTAGE
Africans	183 360	12,6 %	20 886 270	72,4 %
Asians	17 420	1,2 %	821 320	2,8 %
Coloureds	775 600	53,2 %	2 612 780	9,1 %
Whites	482 240	33,1 %	4 528 100	15,7 %

(The Peninsula as a percentage of S.A.; 5,06 %) (Source: October and Young: Carnegie Paper no. 303, UCT, 1984)

As noted above, more than half of all coloured people in the country live in the Peninsula, whereas they only constitute 9% of the total population in South Africa. Furthermore the low percentage of Africans in the Cape, in contrast to the other major centres, is notable. The actual number of Africans within the Western Cape region is however far higher at present through the massive influx of migrants and the eventual collapse of the influx control system. Goldin links and explains the above features clearly: He argues that through the CLPP and the influx control system the state hoped to simultaneously, 'enforce apartheid through the denial of African residence and employment rights in the Western Cape, and incorporate coloureds by giving them labour preference. The fortunes of coloureds were thus inversely related to the predicament of Africans' (1987a: 87). However this is only a partial explanation. Table 1.3 is a recent breakdown of the population in the Cape Town City Council area by employment status and population classification.

TABLE 1.3: Employment Status by Racial Classification in the Cape Town City Council Area.

RACE	SEX	Economically Active		Not Economically Active		TOTAL	
		SUM	%	SUM	%	SUM	%
White	Male	142545	61.32	116734	37.63	259279	47.78
	Female	89929	38.68	193497	62.37	283426	52.22
Col.+ Asian	Male	264025	57.27	262240	41.87	526265	48.40
	Female	197007	42.73	364038	58.13	561045	51.60
Black	Male	84768	64.17	66790	44.70	151558	53.84
	Female	47324	35.83	82624	55.30	129948	46.16
RACE White	Total	232474		310231		542705	
Col.+ Asian	Total	461032		626278		1087310	
Black	Total	132092		149414		281506	
TOTAL		825598		1085923		1911521	

(Source: Cape Town City Council Planner's Report: 1987)

### 2.3.2 Industrial Features.

The Western Cape region is characterised by a high number of small factories and workplaces. The size and the dispersed nature of industry has serious implications for trade union organisation. For example, small factories with small workforces mean greater organisational resources are required to organise workers, in contrast to regions where larger workforces are concentrated in a specific area. The major industrial employers in the area are clothing, textiles, food and the retail sector. Table 1.4 gives breakdowns for six major industrial divisions.

TABLE 1.4: Employment Statistics for the Cape Town City Council Area: 1987.

SECTOR	POPULATION GROUP							
	White		Col.\Asian		Black			
	sum	%	sum	%	sum	%	sum	%
Agri.	4886	2.1	26872	5.83	7295	5.52	39053	4.73
Mining	1042	0.45	1159	0.25	590	0.45	2791	0.34
Manuf.	36494	15.7	138803	30.11	17747	13.44	193044	23.38
Utilt.	3161	1.36	3699	0.80	482	0.36	7342	0.89
Const.	10117	4.35	41016	8.9	21104	15.98	72237	8.75
Trans.	23508	10.11	20220	4.39	4905	3.71	48633	5.89
Finan.	35848	15.42	13195	2.86	2225	1.68	51268	6.21
Commc.	36171	15.56	63224	13.71	15879	12.02	115274	13.96
Servs.	72990	31.40	98822	21.43	34921	26.44	206733	25.04
Unspec.	8257	3.55	54022	11.72	26944	20.40	89223	10.81
TOTAL	232474	100.00	461032	100.00	132092	100.00	825598	100.00

(Source: Cape Town City Council Planner's Report: 1987)

Notable features of the Table 1.4 are the very small number of workers employed in the agriculture sector and the high number employed in the service sector. In fact, the service sector exceeds the number employed in the manufacturing sector. The service sector is notoriously difficult to organise in contrast to the traditional industrial employers in the manufacturing sector. The only other sector that employs a substantial number of coloured workers is the commercial sector which also covers retail outlets. This is also a sector which is characterised by dispersed workplaces with small numbers of workers.

### 2.3.3 Community/Suburban Features.

The Western Cape community formation has in the post-1948 period been radically altered by the social engineering of the apartheid

regime. The occurrence of forced removals in this period had a powerful impact on the social structure of communities and, most of all, on the lives of many people. While the issue of forced removals has been hotly contested in the contemporary period because of the publicity generated around Crossroads and Lawaaikamp, many people have forgotten the legacy of forced removals of coloured communities in the 1948 to the mid-1970s period.

During the 1950s and 1960s whole communities and pockets of coloured people who lived in Cape Town itself (in District Six, Woodstock, Salt River, Mowbray, Observatory, Rosebank, Rondebosch, Newlands and Claremont) were forced to move from their homes under the provisions of the Group Areas Act. With the exception of Salt River and part of Woodstock the remaining areas are today all classified as 'white' by the Group Areas Act. The destruction of District Six has, relative to the other suburbs, captured the most attention as the destruction of a particular symbol and lifestyle common to Cape Town in the pre-apartheid period. People who were removed from areas declared for white inhabitants were placed in 'new' artificial communities on the Cape Flats, such as Bonteheuwel and Heideveld. The bulk of coloured communities are, from a historical perspective quite young, most having been created in this post-1948 period. Notable exceptions are Bokmakerrie and Factreton. The majority of the areas declared coloured are working class suburbs with chronic problems ranging from overcrowding because of the housing crisis to poor services and a lack of facilities. Table 1.5 gives a general socio-economic picture of a selected number of communities.

Table 1.5: Socio-economic Status for Selected Communities of the Cape Peninsula.

Suburb	Race	Composite Index: Socio-economic Status
Clifton	W	15.34
Factreton	C	50.94
Kensington	C	34.01
Maitland	W	28.45
Sea Point	W	7.73
Bridgetown	C	50.72
Hanover Park	C	50.37
Heideveld	C	41.24
Lavender Hill	C	61.13
Meadowridge	W	0.71
Rylands	I	14.81
Guguletu	A	46.90
Langa	A	44.67
Nyanga	A	43.47
Bonteheuwel	C	53.34
Kalksteenfontein	C	63.34

(Source: Unpublished printout by courtesy of Technical Management Services, C.C.C., data was drawn from 1980 census)

(The racial abbreviations refer to the classification of each suburb: W-white, C-coloured, I-Indian, A-African)

The composite index is statistically calculated from data on levels of income, housing, rents and rates. The highest scoring suburbs are the most poor. The validity of this index can be debated but it nevertheless provides an overall picture of socio-economic inequality in Cape Town's suburbs.

The most striking feature of Table 1.5 is the correlation between the level of socio-economic status and the racial classification of the area. Of some note for this study is that Factreton is clearly

one of the poorest suburbs in Cape Town; the poorest are Kalksteentfontein and Lavender Hill. The major African townships do not score as high, yet figures for KTC and Crossroads are not included. However, Watson argues that 40% of coloured households and 60% of African households in the Western Cape are currently living beneath the Household Effective Level (HEL). Watson also argues that in 1983 the total housing shortage for all areas in the Western Cape was 162 000 units. These communities currently need 26 000 - 41 000 units to be built per year. Approximately 12 000 units are being built per year.<sup>1</sup>

#### **2.4 Western Cape Politics: Community and Trade Union Organisation.**

Political organisation in the Western Cape region has historically been characterised by divisions and tensions. Parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics have several tendencies, parties and factions. Within the sphere of parliamentary politics there has been the predominant tradition of liberalism represented, for example, by the United Party and the Progressive Federal Party.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand there has been Afrikaner nationalist ideology represented by the National Party and the Conservative Party. The influence of liberal paternalism and 'verligte' Cape Nationalists on coloured politics has largely been negative, promising so much to the coloured population, yet never fulfilling these promises.

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<sup>1</sup> V. Watson, presentation to Centre for Extra-Mural Studies seminar on local government (UCT, 19/9/1988).

<sup>2</sup> The liberal tradition in white parliamentary politics has often displayed a paternalistic attitude towards oppressed peoples. Contemporary liberals are not necessarily paternalistic. The point, however, is that one of the major features of South African liberalism has been its paternalistic attitude and treatment of black political groupings. This has a negative bearing on coloured politics. Paternalistic practices of the Cape liberal establishment over a number of years have most likely reinforced the politics of exclusion.

In practice, the coloured population has been excluded from the processes of decision making. In giving evidence to the Theron Commission in 1976, the South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) stated the following,

One factor in social living which must be considered is man's feeling of being a part of the society in which he lives. He must feel that he participates in and is responsible for at least some of his society's patterns. The Coloured person has no sense of participation or responsibility because all the vital decisions made which affect his life and person are made by groups which reject him as a member and which have not allowed him to participate in the decision, and often have not even consulted him (Molteno Papers: SAIRR document, 1976).

The Labour Party has played a dominant role in the now defunct Coloured Persons Representative Council (CPC) and in the Tri-Cameral Parliament since 1984. In reference to the CPC and the management committees, the SAIRR makes the following points. These points can also be extended to the Tricameral Parliament.

These bodies are in no position to affect the vital decisions referred to above, (for example, Group Areas Act, Population Registration Act - SF) and are only in a position to carry out and administer a fait accompli decided by a different group from which Coloured people have been totally excluded. It is therefore difficult and even unreasonable to expect Coloured persons to react responsibly within the society in which they live or to expect them to participate in its organisation... Drastic amendments to the Population Registration Act will have to be made to avoid the feeling of exclusion and rejection prevalent among Coloured people (Molteno papers: SAIRR document, 1976).

This feeling and consciousness of exclusion is, in part, a historical manifestation of the apartheid regime's actions and legacy on the coloured community. This has had a direct bearing on the historical development of coloured politics. The most significant developments in coloured politics have been in the extra-parliamentary sphere. There are currently three major tendencies

within the extra-parliamentary political sphere: black consciousness, Unity Movement and the Congress Movement.

The re-emergence of the Congress tradition as the largest and strongest of the extra-parliamentary groupings is of particular importance for this study because major political groupings in the Kensington\Factreton area are a part of this tradition. The largest trade union federation in South Africa, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) will also be examined. The Congress tradition is dominant within COSATU but, at the same time, other political tendencies do have a presence in the federation.

The United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched in August 1983 in Cape Town. Its inception was the product of several developments that occurred before 1980. The 1976 upsurge of resistance had considerable impact after the fairly quiet political years that preceded it. The resistance in Soweto spread to the townships of Cape Town, and notable conflicts occurred in Athlone, Bonteheuwel and Langa. As is well-known, 1976 was largely influenced by the predominant black consciousness (BC) ideology of the period.

Most BC organisations such as the Black People's Convention (BPC), were smashed by state repression in 1977 and 1978. In the wake of this repression groups of young activists began to emerge. Subsequently, the youth of 1976 and later of 1980 broke with the BC position and began to organise in their communities. An example of this ideological break was manifested in the break-away of the Azanian Students Organisation (AZASO), which was the student wing of the Azanians People's Organisation (AZAPO), the dominant BC organisation in the late 1970's. AZASO broke with black

consciousness in 1982 and aligned itself with the Congress movement by adopting the Freedom Charter.

Through the development of embryonic youth and civic organisations a Congress position began to coalesce as a coherent political force. Drawing on the Congress tradition of the 1950s these activists rekindled Congress songs, slogans and symbols. It was the reassertion of the Freedom Charter as a guiding document in particular that saw a distinct 'Charterist' or Congress position re-emerge as a coherent and organised political movement within the country.

Local political activists built student structures in the schools, youth organisations and civics in the community. The first major co-ordinated organisation of these various groupings in the different communities of the Cape Flats occurred in April 1980 with the launch of the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC). CAHAC resolved to develop the 'non-racial democratic movement' based on the principles of the Freedom Charter (Goldin, 1987a: 214). CAHAC is an umbrella body for the civics in coloured areas of Cape Town. CAHAC organises grassroots campaigns based on door-to-door visits and street meetings around a variety of issues ranging from rents to rates, street lighting and evictions. These campaigns sometimes culminate in mass action in the community's (Goldin, 1987a: 214). For example, residents in different areas organised rent marches on their local housing offices.

The late 1970s also saw the re-emergence of organisations affiliated to NEUM. The Federation of Cape Civic Associations (FCCA), a NEUM affiliate, had made some progress before the birth

of CAHAC. During the period 1981-1983, however CAHAC surpassed FCCA in organisation and mobilisation (Goldin, 1987a: 215).

Just prior to the launch of the UDF (in August 1983) the Cape Youth Congress (CAYCO) was launched. CAYCO drew together over 30 youth branches from different communities to organise around several issues facing the youth, for example, youth culture, employment and education. CAYCO together with CAHAC and the student organisation, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), formed the core of the Western Cape UDF at the launch in 1983. While the idea of a broad front of anti-apartheid organisations was initially mooted by Dr Alan Boesak, the actual formation was in reality the product of considerable organisation and mobilisation in the years preceding the actual launch. The growth, successes and attacks on the UDF since then are well-known. They include three states' of emergency, mass detentions of UDF leadership and activists, vigilante attacks and a complex tightening web of repressive legislation.

The formation of the COSATU in November 1985 saw the unification of two broad political traditions: Congress unions on the one hand and a group of largely 'economistic' unions (Carrim, 1986: 6). In alliance with the latter grouping were Western Cape unions aligned to the Unity Movement tradition such as the Cape Town Municipal Workers Association (CTMWA). The Congress grouping at the time included the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) and the Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU). 'Economistic' trade unions in the Western Cape were the National Union of Automobile Workers (NAAWU) and the South African Chemical Workers Industrial Union (SACWIU).

Many of these trade union formations have changed as unions have merged in order to put into practice COSATU's principle of 'One Union, One Industry'. Since the federation's formation, ideological battles are either fought out within unions or between unions in COSATU. COSATU's basic principles provide a basis for unity for trade unions within the federation. These principles are: one union, one industry; worker control; non-racialism; representation on the basis of paid-up membership and co-operation on a national level (Carrim, 1986: 8). These principles distinguish COSATU from other union federations that exist in the region; for example, the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU).

The Garment and Allied Workers Union (GAWU), a former TUCSA affiliate, merged with the Almagamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWUSA) in October 1989 to form the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU).<sup>3</sup> With a national membership of 178 000 members, SACTWU has become COSATU's third largest affiliate.<sup>4</sup> Over 60 000 of SACTWU's members are in the Western Cape. The clothing and textile industry is the major manufacturing industry of the region and employs primarily coloured women workers.<sup>5</sup> The experience of workers at the workplace and as members of a trade union is an important part of the whole working class experience. The trade union experience of coloured workers

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3 GAWU experienced several major changes prior to the merger with ACTWUSA. The former conservative officialdom, which was dominated by the Petersen family and sympathetic officials, have largely been replaced by progressive unionists drawn from Charterist ranks. There is a long road ahead in terms of transforming the old bureaucratic structures into a dynamic, democratic and shopfloor based trade union.

4 See South African Labour Bulletin 14 (4): 6, 1989.

5 See South African Labour Bulletin 13 (6): 121, 1988.

however has historically been one of disappointment. The unfulfilled promises, undemocratic practices, fraternization with management and so forth, of these conservative trade unions have made many coloured workers suspicious of trade unionism.<sup>6</sup>

The relationship between unions and community organisations remains a perplexing and complex issue. Before and after the launch of the UDF, debates around class alliances raged, resulting in a deepening of the split between Congress and economistic unions.<sup>7</sup> In the community the split between Unity Movement and Congress Movement organisations also deepened with the formation of the UDF. On a practical level of day-to-day strategy and tactics this split translated as follows: UDF political strategy was based on notions of broad-based multi-class alliances across racial boundaries. The Unity Movement on the other hand held onto 'pure' notions of black working class struggle independent of class alliances with other classes or racial groups. The popular appeal of alliance politics around popular slogans and issues meant that the Congress Movement has had far greater success in its mobilisation and organisation. This was particularly demonstrated during the 1984-1986 period when the UDF held a series of mass rallies which far surpassed Unity Movement's and Cape Action League's (CAL) isolated attempts at mass mobilisation.

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<sup>6</sup> See South African Labour Bulletin 10 (2): 60, 1984 for an interview with Virginia Engels of the then National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW). One of my trade union interviewees also confirmed these attitudes amongst coloured workers that have experienced TUCSA style trade unionism.

<sup>7</sup> See South African Labour Bulletin 9 (7), 1983 for a collection of articles debating the questions of alliances and of union affiliation to the UDF.

The relationship between COSATU and UDF has consistently improved since the launch of COSATU. The adoption of the Freedom Charter by COSATU at its Second National Congress in 1987 was a victory for Congress forces in COSATU. Although the adoption of the Freedom Charter by both organisations has strengthened the links between them, repression has hampered attempts at concretely consolidating this relationship. Discussions between UDF and COSATU on the building of a 'United Front' were well advanced when the effective banning of the UDF stalled the unifying process.<sup>8</sup>

The repressive period of 1987-1989, with mass detentions, declarations of states of emergency, the Labour Relations Amendment Act of 1988 and restrictions and bannings on activists and organisations placed the mass democratic movement on the defensive. With little legal space in which to manoeuvre, community and political organisations developed clandestine ways of operating. This repressive period of political struggle continued until the recent (August 1989) Defiance Campaign of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and government policy changes initiated by FW De Klerk. Chapter 6 deals with specific organisational developments in Factreton during the period 1980-1988.

## 2.5 Conclusion.

This section has provided a historical and structural background for the exploration of coloured workers' consciousness and politics as well as a brief overview of historical and political trends. Coloured political history has been characterised by various splits and tensions. The two major traditions that emerged in the 1940s

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<sup>8</sup> See New Era 3 (2), 1988 for discussion articles on the United Front question.

and still exist today have been a conservative tradition of working within the apartheid system and a more radical tradition of boycott and rejection of the apartheid system. This split is rooted in a fundamentally different response to the racially exclusive practises of the apartheid state. The conservative tradition has effectively accepted selective inclusion into a white dominated political system for the purposes of material and political gain. The radical tradition has sought through mass struggles and boycotts to reinforce the illegitimacy of the apartheid system and those that work with it.

The radical tradition of boycott politics has, however, been split into two political movements, the Congress and Unity movements. The Congress Movement was and remains by far the largest and most influential movement in terms of its mass-based character and political power. The re-emergence of the Congress Movement, under the banner of the UDF, has resulted in a significant growth of the Congress tradition in the coloured communities. The extent to which this growth has been rooted amongst coloured workers is difficult to gauge without adequate sources.

Chapter 3. The Making of a Community: The History and Profile of the Kensington/Factreton area.

**3.1 Introduction.**

Chapter 3 will focus on the Kensington/ Factreton area specifically. This chapter provides a local context consisting of a historical and contemporary profile of the community. The historical roots of the old Windermere will be traced from the 1920s through to the formative period of the 1950s. This period was characterised by forced removals of African workers, so-called 'slum clearance' and the beginning of 'urban development projects'. These events had a decisive impact on the shape and nature of the community.

**3.2 The Historical Formation of the Kensington/Factreton Area.**

The Kensington/Factreton area has a history that stretches from its early origins as one of Cape Town's first shanty squatter areas known as Windermere, to the current urban community. It is important to note that the history of Kensington and Factreton are inextricably linked and therefore both are presented in this study. However, the major focus of the study is on Factreton a predominantly working class suburb, whereas Kensington is largely lower middle class.

This sub-section consists of the following two parts; a) Pre-1943: The origins of a 'shantytown'. b) 1943-1960: 'Re-development' and mass removals. Before dealing with these aspects, the term 'community' needs to be clarified. The term in part refers to a specific spatial location which people regard as their 'stomping ground'. Yet and more critically, it refers to the

acknowledgment by the people in that area that there is some responsibility for one another.

Another dimension that needs to be considered is that of 'time'. A community is ultimately a set of social relations that develops over time within a specific spatial location. The simultaneous development of a community consciousness amongst residents engaged within those social relations is crucial to the shaping of a community's character and structure.

### 3.2.1 Pre-1943: The Origins of a 'Shantytown'.<sup>1</sup>

The area which is today known as Kensington/Factreton was, prior to 1943, formally known as Kensington Estate Reserve. However, it was commonly known as Windermere at this time. Windermere lay outside the northern boundary of the Cape Town municipality (Swart, 1983: 1; See map in Appendix 4), located between Maitland and the Wingfield aerodrome. The area's position in relation to other areas that eventually became Cape Town's industrial heartland, was an important reason for squatters settling there. For example, easy access to the industrial areas of Ndabeni and Epping and the close proximity to central Cape Town were particularly important reasons for workers moving to Windermere (Swart, 1983: 1).

The bulk of these early squatters had moved from rural areas searching for employment in Cape Town. Their choice of this

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<sup>1</sup> This section is primarily drawn from secondary sources. The periodisation used is based on the 1943 incorporation of the area into the Cape Town municipality and the development of the area into an urban community, circa 1960. This periodisation follows the central source for this section. See Swart's Honours Dissertation 'Windermere: From Peri-urban Area to Suburb, 1920s to 1950s (UCT, 1983).

specific location, just outside the City Council boundary, was partially due to evading municipal taxation and building regulations and lower rent (Swart, 1983: 3). There was also a stream of squatters from the city itself for, as Swart explains,

Earning inadequate wages, many people could not even afford to live in the overcrowded slum dwellings of the city and its suburbs... They therefore went to live in peri-urban areas like Windermere where the cost of shelter was much lower. Although most paid rent for their sites/shacks and some purchased their plots, the cost was still low enough to offset the increased transport costs incurred. Squatting was therefore a strategy for coping with inadequate wages (Swart, 1983: 6).

The original squatters were mainly coloured; however, Africans were resident by 1928. Mr V (a janitor) interviewed for this study moved into the area in 1925 when he was ten years old. He remembers the area as predominately populated by coloured workers during the 1920s but that Africans began entering the area in the late-1920s and early-1930s. He explains how many of the houses were built with branches and cattle dung:

Die vier kante word gebou met pale dan word daar takke en so, en so op gesit, dan word hy geplaster met clay en mis. Dan word hy geplaster, jou muur, so word daai muur geplaster met die hand, so word hy glad gemaak met die hand dan is hy so glad soos daai muur. Dan word hy gewhitewash met clay of rooi clay. Dan smeer jy mis vloer. Toe het ons lekker gelewe. Maar nou is dit als lektriek, nou is dit geld.

He fondly remembers a colourful atmosphere in the area and spoke of the vibrant 'Native bazaars' where a thriving trade was done:

Hier by die Dertien en Twaalf avenue daai area was hulle plek gewies. Soos die barber, hare skeer, anderkant verkoop die man vleis, anderkant speel die manne weer musiek anderkant maak hulle weer vetkoek, en dan verkoop hulle die bier, anderkant verkoop hulle weer wyn, elke ding, geld baie geld gewies, vollop gewies.

Mr V's memories of the old Windermere are generally romantic, but nevertheless provide a useful picture of the period. Surprisingly enough, for contemporary Capetonians who know the Kensington, Factreton and Maitland area as arid and very flat, the old Windermere was characterised by bushes, 'vlei's' and hills. Mr V speaks of 'sandheuwels' and a 'bult' that was located on the Ysterplaat side, where 'Graafs bos' was.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to note the observations of the 'civic' in that period: 'The Kensington Estate Reserve Ratepayers Association discussed complaints received about "drunken natives" who frequented shebeens in the area between Maitland road and 11th Avenue' (Swart, 1983: 10).

The rapid increase of the size of Windermere's population in this period resulted in a series of social problems. There are unfortunately no official statistics for this period. In 1944 the Cape Town City Council gave the total population figure at 14 197, unofficial estimates set figures at around 30 000 (Swart, 1983: 101).<sup>3</sup> A Cape Times report noted that the area '...lacked even the common necessities of life, such as water, sanitation and had no roads whatsoever, simply heavy, loose sand tracks' (Swart, 1983: 21). Although under Divisional Council jurisdiction at this time, the situation gradually worsened resulting in complex wrangles between the Ratepayers Association, the Divisional Council and the

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<sup>2</sup> 'Graafs bos' refers to Sir De Villiers Graaf, whose estate stretched from his mansion on the bottom of Tygerberg Hill and all the way down to Milnerton beach during this period. Large sections of this estate were covered by bush, which consisted primarily of Port Jackson trees, hence the name 'Graafs' or 'Graafse bos'.

<sup>3</sup> This figure was drawn from a table supplied by the Cape City Council: Annual Report of the Medical Officer, 1944-1954.

Cape Town City Council (CCC). Neither of the Councils wished to take responsibility for the area, consequently exacerbating the conditions in the area.

It was only after the situation had reached a point where the whole area was a slum and public pressure was mounting that the CCC eventually capitulated (Swart, 1983: 23). The area officially became part of the CCC municipality on 1 May 1943 in terms of Proclamation No 39 of 1943 (Da Costa, 1983: 77). The area to this day remains under the jurisdiction of the CCC. Donald Molteno, a Representative of Native Affairs in Parliament, visited the area in late 1943 and stated the following,

Windermere: The conditions in this area are too notorious to require stressing...., I have visited this area and the conditions of overcrowding and filth exceed anything I have seen even in the worst country locations. The appalling rack renting prevalent here is described in the Cauldwell report. 1 pound to 1.50 pound per month appears to be the standard charge for a filthy, bare and ill ventilated room, water and removals having to be paid for separately. I have no doubt that at least an aggravating factor in the state of Windermere has been the promulgation 105 of 1939. Africans who were debarred from entering the municipal area sought refuge there pending the obtaining of employment in Cape Town. The council's decision to include the area in the city's boundaries came only recently (Molteno Papers: Memorandum for presentation to Cape Flats Committee of Enquiry, 1943).

### 3.2.2 1943 - 1960: 'Redevelopment' and Mass Removals.

Within the context of dire poverty and a thriving cultural milieu, a number of important events occurred in this period. This was a transitional period of radical changes in the orientation and structure of Windermere. The CCC on the one hand tried to eradicate this 'slum' and on the other hand attempted to institute 'redevelopment' housing schemes. Another more vicious side was the mass removal of Africans.

The housing conditions faced by residents were bad. A survey conducted in one-half of Windermere documented several of these features (Table 1.6).

Table 1.6: Housing Survey of Windermere: 1943.

ASPECT	NO. OF HOUSES	% OF HOUSES
Houses without kitchens	709	47.8
Houses not built of masonry	910	61.4
Insanitary houses	975	65.8
Houses infected with bugs	675	45.5
Houses infected with rats	776	52.3
Houses without fireplace for cooking	736	49.6
Houses without a sink	1408	95.0
Houses without a bath	1429	96.4

(Source: Da Costa, 1983: Windermere Housing Survey, 1943)

Of the houses in the survey 58% of coloured dwellings and 76% of African dwellings were found to be structurally unsound. The houses were described as 'hovels, shacks, or pondoks' (Swart, 1983: 77). Overcrowding was a particular problem, with 40% of the dwellings having more than two persons per room (Swart, 1983: 30). Very few houses had electricity and the area was not connected to a sewerage system (Da Costa, 1984: 94). The occurrence of disease was thus extremely high: tuberculosis (TB), for example, accounted for

55% to 75% of all infectious diseases in Windermere in contrast to Cape Town's 'Non-European' average of 47% to 56% (Swart, 1983: 32).

People in the area were employed in the industrial centres such as Epping, or as domestic servants in the neighbouring white areas of Maitland and Goodwood. Many people were involved in the informal sector such as shebeens and bazaars. A 'shebeen queen' named Langrok came to Cape Town to make a living. She was once a devout Christian person but ended up running an infamous Windermere shebeen, 'Langrok se smokkelhuis' (Swart, 1983: 41). A number of people were 'scavengers' while others made various articles and wares (Swart, 1983: 42). The consumption of alcohol was apparently very high. The Friends of Windermere Association, a local welfare organisation, reported during April 1945 that

...as on Thursday the 26th, 33 doz bottles of wine were destroyed and quantities of brandy and beer confiscated in Windermere alone...it would be no extravagant guess to say two thousand bottles of wine (not counting beer and brandy), is brought in to the Windermere area daily. The only way to stop this is to prohibit the sale of bottles of liquor to coloured men, outside of those in possession of permits to buy bottled liquor. I feel sure the decent coloured people would go all out to assist in this matter as it will kill the Shebeen owner, and assist in doing away with the skolly element (Molteno papers: Office of the Friends of Windermere Association, 1945).

Prior to 1952 only primary schools existed in the area, with most only operating up to Standard 4. These schools were generally provided by the local churches, the Moravian school, the African Missionary Episcopal (AME) school (Swart, 1983: 44). Other social activities were gambling and brothels for which Windermere was famous. Horseraces occurred on Sunday mornings on Acre Road where, when stakes were high, Windermere horses were supplemented with 'classy' imported breeds (Swart, 1983: 49). A vibrant music scene

prevailed with ballroom and marabi dancers. Dollar Brand was apparently a product of this cultural milieu (Swart, 1983: 49). Within this poverty-stricken area a range of people and cultures mixed: Jews, Malays, Coloureds and Africans. While this created a cosmopolitan aura, it also exacerbated some divisions and tensions within the community (Swart, 1983: 50). However, this era was not to last as the election of the National Party in 1948 and its ensuing practices were to destroy it completely.

Even before the Nationalist takeover attempts were made by the City Council to remove Africans from the area so as to return the area to the status of 'coloured area'. Africans were to be rehoused in Langa and housing schemes were erected for coloured people (Swart, 1983: 54). The Council never really succeeded in actually solving the enormous squatter problem. Several raids occurred and people were removed under the pretext of slum clearance. This happened before the central government took action (Da Costa, 1984: 97). In 1953 the state outlined its plan to place Africans in Langa. While initially opposed by the CCC, this plan was ultimately accepted by them in 1955. This scheme was condemned by the African National Congress as a deliberate strategy aimed at forestalling the growth of the urban African proletariat (Swart, 1983: 64). The Congress newspaper, the New Age reported that,

In the biggest police raid yet carried out in the Peninsula, close on 500 police in 100 cars swooped down on Windermere at 5 a.m. one morning last week...The main purpose of the raid, according to police chiefs, was to round up 'single' Africans living in Windermere and force them to take up residence in Langa. Altogether, 1 390 such notices were issued to African men. They were given three days to report at Langa where new 'bachelor quarters' are ready for occupation (Thornton papers: New Age 1/12/1955).

SHAWCO's (Student Health and Welfare Centre Organisation) Annual Report of 1957, described the removal of Africans from the area as '...There was consequently considerable unrest in the area and numerous inhabitants came to SHAWCO to seek aid and advice' (SHAWCO, 1957). What the nature or extent of this unrest was, is not given. The SHAWCO report merely states that the removals did cause unrest. By 1958 between 10 000 and 12 000 African 'bachelors' were removed to Langa (Swart, 1983: 68). Ironically, notwithstanding SHAWCO's commentary, there was very little resistance in the community to these activities of the state. Several factors could explain this: while Africans were being forcibly removed, coloured residents held to Council promises of being rehoused. The CCC's policy was that of providing houses for people whose homes had been demolished. Also welfare organisations like SHAWCO and the Cape Flats Distress Association (CAFDA) tended to play a pacifying role in the community (Swart, 1983: 52). SHAWCO began its Windermere clinic in the AME church during the winter of 1943 (SHAWCO, 1968). Its main clinic and headquarters are still stationed in the Kensington area to this day. In the following passage, Mr S (a security guard) describes the impact and some of the problems caused by the removals of African squatters from Windermere.

Dit het 'n groot impact gehad oor die swartes, selfs 'n sekere deelte van die kleurlinge. Dit het ook baie kleurling vroue van hulle manne af geneem, want baie van hulle het swart mans gehad. Met die implementering van hierdie Groep Area, toe kan hulle nie saam met die mans nie. Toe moes hulle agter bly met kinders, en dit is waarom jy sal vind in die area, nog steeds dat kinders is gebaster, kinders is gemeng, want die vader was weggeneem, omdat hy swart is. Dit was meeste onder die bruin vroue, wat die lyding moes deurgaans het, die Groep Areas Act, en vir baie van die kleurlinge was dit 'n blydskap, dat die swartes verwyder word. Want hulle het gevoel dat dit is onveilig tussen die mense, jy weet, mense is soos dit ver dag nog. As een van ons mense as hulle 'n swart man sien dan raak hulle bang. Hulle bevrees en so aan jy weet, en ek sal maar se dit is verdeling verhoudings wat hulle gehad het. Baie van die mense jy weet, en dit is dinge wat

ek geondervind het en ek het dit gesien dit is so. Er, maar soos die tyd nou is, beseft daardie mense ook dat dit was verkeerd, en dit was van die onkundigheid van politiek, onkundigheid van die Christendom. Mense wat vir hulle self noem as Christin; maar as jy jou noem 'n Christin dan het jy nie 'n concept van ras nie.

In 1948 Mr. Bunney, of the CCC, proposed to redevelop the area into a 'model coloured village' which would include sub-economic, and economic letting and homeownership housing schemes. A section of the Windermere area was also proposed to be demarcated as an industrial zone (Swart, 1983: 74). As people were removed from the area the CCC acquired land under the Slum Act of 1934 for the purposes of redevelopment. By 1961, 40% of the area was taken over by the CCC (Da Costa, 1984: 98).

The section originally zoned for industrial purposes was re-zoned for sub-economic housing for previous residents of Windermere. This particular section is today known as Factreton. The entire Windermere area was officially proclaimed a 'coloured area' in 1958 (Da Costa, 1984: 98). The Council announced in 1959 that all coloured people living in slum conditions in Windermere were to be placed in Factreton Estate (Da Costa, 1984: 98). The years 1960 and 1961 were, however, characterised by national protests and stay-at-home actions. SHAWCO reports that

...all thoughts of an early beginning to the teaching year were dashed by the National Emergency...the population of Windermere was naturally in a state of considerable perturbation...The worst aftermath of the emergency manifested itself in the attendance register. Pupil attendance were uniformly low throughout the year, and the poor start was never really wiped out (SHAWCO annual report of 1960).

The national stay-at-home in May 1961 resulted in the following commentary from SHAWCO staff in Windermere, 'For a few tense days at

the Centre it seemed as though anything could happen. As it happened nothing did, but who was to know?' (SHAWCO, 1961).

Redevelopment continued throughout the 1960s as more houses and facilities were built. Kensington and Factreton were nevertheless established as urban communities circa 1960 (Swart, 1983: 81).

SHAWCO made the following comments:

Overcrowding and bad housing in Windermere presented another of the social worker's mammoth problems. The City Council continued with its major programme of slum clearance which included the extension of the Factreton Housing Estate and the gradual demolition of unfit shanties and pondoks. The demand for Council houses however still seemed to exceed supply, ... (SHAWCO annual report for 1961).

### 3.3 A Contemporary Profile of the Kensington/Factreton Area.

In his study of Cape Town Western wrote of the Windermere area '...I can offer no explanation why the model and the reality should be so discordant, or why the area should remain a coloured area' (Western, 1981: 118). Western is in part referring to the relative isolation of Windermere from other coloured areas on the Cape Flats. The area to this day remains a so-called coloured area. Before sketching the current community profile, certain developments in the post-1960 period need to be set out.

In 1963 the Cape Provincial Administration published regulations for the creation of management committees (Da Costa, 1984: 100). These committees would have the power to inspect public facilities, report on functions and work of council employees, gather information in relation to repealing, amending or enforcing regulations and to make recommendations in connection with revenue and the funding of the area (Da Costa, 1984: 101). There was very

little support for these committees in the communities, as they were simply advisory bodies that were under the control of the CCC.<sup>4</sup>

In 1964 the Kensington-Windermere Ratepayers Association called a meeting in the area to explain the new advisory bodies. 'Only thirty-five people attended the meeting and even they rejected the idea of a management committee for the area' (Da Costa, 1984: 103). After poor responses from the area, the Administrator simply announced the names of the Kensington Management Committee (Da Costa, 1984: 104). The election polls for the 1970 and 1980 period are of some note:

YEAR	NO. OF REGISTERED VOTERS	% POLL IN ELECTION
1972	2 328	18.9
1977	3 336	30.9
1978	3 460	14.7 (By-election)
1979	4 650	19.5
1987	-	17.8 (By-election)
1988	-	30.1

(Source: Da Costa, 1983: Voters roll branch, CCC) (The last two percentages were provided by the assistant-electoral officer, Voters' Roll Branch, CCC).

The population for the area in 1970 was 33 977 and by 1978 it was 36 271 (Da Costa, 1984: 105). The area has been known for relatively 'high' polls in contrast to other coloured areas.

It is interesting to note that during the late 1960s and early 1970s a National Party provincial councillor campaigned for the

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<sup>4</sup> These management committees were essentially created by the central state and not supported by the CCC. The CCC has jurisdiction over these committees although in practise they are generally administered by Labour Party officials.

rezoning of the area for 'low income whites at a cheap rent'. He further stated that, 'the existence of the brown island in a white area was undesirable and would create future problems' (Da Costa, 1984: 105/6). A local resident viewed the area as being, 'n bruin hamburger tussen twee stukke wit brood.'<sup>5</sup>

### 3.3.1 Population Features.

According to the 1985 census, the total population for the area was: Kensington 12 283 and Factreton 11 679 with 98.8% of Factreton and 97% of Kensington residents being classified as coloured. The sex breakdown for coloured residents of Factreton is 46.78% male and 52.08% female. In Kensington 46.19% are male and 50.88 % females. The remaining 1.14% in Factreton and 2.93% in Kensington are residents who are classified white, Asian or African. The bulk of the population is within the age grouping 5-34 where 60.07% of residents in Factreton and 57.53% of the residents in Kensington are in this bracket.

### 3.3.2 Housing.

The following sections will concentrate on Factreton only. There are four types of houses in Factreton: 1) Single unattached houses that are generally privately owned. 2) Attached or semi-detached houses. These are part of the Council's housing scheme. 3) Shanties that are frequently built in backyards out of corrugated iron and sacking. These are known as 'afdakkies' by the residents. 4) Finally, there are a few blocks of flats. Factreton has a total of 1 883 houses of which 1 541 are part of Council schemes. The other 342 are privately owned (Town Planning students, 1985: 11/12).

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<sup>5</sup> This phrase was repeated to me by several residents. The 'twee stukke wit brood' are represented by Goodwood, to the North East of the area, and Maitland to the South East.

There are two kinds of CCC houses in Factreton, economic and sub-economic. The economic dwellings have either one, two or three bedrooms. These houses all have a kitchen, a living room and a bathroom (with an inside toilet). The sub-economic houses are either 'dual or single occupancy dwellings' (sic). These houses have two bedrooms, a living room and kitchen. The toilet is in the backyard and in many cases these houses either do not have a bath or have to share this facility with at least one other family.<sup>6</sup>

The CCC since 1984 has been selling off its houses to residents and simultaneously encouraging private ownership (Town Planning students, 1985: 12). This action has caused considerable controversy and division within the community and will be elaborated upon in Chapter 6. The most dense parts of the area have 100-200 persons per hectare and some have as high as 200-300 persons per hectare (Da Costa, 1984: 114).

The Factreton housing scheme has a density of 100-200 persons per hectare. In comparison, the adjacent white areas of Pinelands and Maitland have densities of 0-40 persons per ha and Goodwood has a density of 0-99 (Da Costa, 1984: 114). Overcrowding is thus a real problem and Factreton currently faces a housing crisis.

The chairperson of the CCC's Housing Committee recently stated that in the municipality there were 'About 45 000 families on the Council's waiting list, yet all the remaining undeveloped land in the municipality - mainly in Mitchells Plain and Steenberg - could

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<sup>6</sup> This data was supplied by the Factreton Housing Office, 25/8/1988.

accommodate a maximum of only about 12 000 housing units' (Cape Times 5/2/1988). Figures released by the CCC indicate that the number of houses being built are decreasing: 1985 - 1 800, 1986 - 2 846 and 1987 - 1 551 (Cape Times 5/2/1988).

### 3.3.3 Employment.

The ratios for economically active or economically non-active people in the area are as follows: Factreton, active - 44.5% and non-active - 55.5%; Kensington, active - 45.84% and non-active 54.16%. The largest employment grouping in Factreton are production or unskilled workers, who constitute 44.64% of the economically active residents in the suburb. In marked contrast, this group in Kensington constitutes 28.72% of the economically active population. This contrast relates directly to the class differentiation between the two areas. The other major occupational category in both areas is clerical workers who in Factreton constitute 15.64% of the economically active and in Kensington 27.44%.

Of economically active residents in Factreton, 18% are either clothing or textile workers. The average monthly income for residents in 1980 was: Factreton - R195.80 (men) and R128.76 (women); Kensington - R304.72 (men) and R157.75 (women). These figures can be compared to the regional average income for coloured people: R229.87 per month for men and R130.78 per month for women (Da Costa, 1984: 136).

### 3.3.4 Education.

All schools in the area are under the control of the Department of Coloured Affairs (CAD) and any child that is not coloured may only

attend these schools by special permission. There are 11 primary schools and three high schools in the area (Da Costa, 1984: 136).

The following percentage of residents have less than Std. 7: Factreton - 78.11 % and Kensington - 59.11%. The following have a matric or higher: Factreton - 4.55% and Kensington - 13.08%. These education levels indicate that most working class employed youth are destined for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs.

### 3.3.5 Services.

Recreational facilities in Factreton include four sportfields (excluding schools) of which three are equipped with playgrounds. There are four public netball courts and two tennis courts. There is also one public swimming pool. In most cases the recreational facilities are old and in bad condition (Town Planning students, 1985: 18/19).

Commercial facilities are generally more adequate with several shops and retail outlets. With a population total of: Factreton - 11679 and Kensington - 12283 (1985 census), among the facilities available are: 11 butcheries, 68 general dealers, 36 cafes and 4 bakeries. There is only one bottlestore. This is because of the numerous shebeens in the area, especially in Factreton. Public transport is quite accessible with bus and train services available (Town Planning students, 1985: 20/21).

There are 17 churches in the whole area, with a fairly large Moslem community. Major churches in the area are the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, Anglican Church, Roman Catholic Church, AME, Methodist Church and the New and Old Apostolic churches. The major

welfare organisation in the area is the Students Health and Welfare Organisation (SHAWCO). The CCC also provides three community health care centres. There are two community centres and a library in the area.

### 3.3.6 Political Institutions.

The local governing body is, of course, the CCC with its direct representatives in the community being the housing and management committees. These committees are dominated by Labour Party supporters. In opposition to the ~~Labour Party~~ there is the Kensington/Factreton Ratepayers and Tenants Association (KFRTA). KFRTA is affiliated to CAHAC, which is in turn affiliated to the UDF. There is also the local youth branch, which is affiliated to CAYCO. The local youth congress as an affiliate of CAYCO is still effectively restricted.

### 3.4 Conclusion.

The Kensington/Factreton area has unique characteristics. Firstly, it is relatively isolated from the Cape Flats network of coloured communities; secondly, it is an historically older community than most other coloured communities; thirdly, it was not created as a direct product of the Group Areas Act as was the case with most other Cape Flats communities, although it has suffered under the Group Areas Act; fourthly, it has a relatively more settled and conservative character than most other contemporary coloured communities in the Cape Peninsula.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This characterisation is based on commentary from several political activists from within and outside the Kensington/Factreton area. My own movements within Cape Flats communities confirm these observations.

It is against this historical background that a study of contemporary political consciousness and organisation of Factreton now takes place.

#### Chapter 4. Religion, Culture and the Family: Coloured Workers Speak About Their Experiences.

##### 4.1 Introduction.

This chapter will illustrate what workers have to say about their 'day-to-day' experiences. This theme shifts the focus from detailing the historical and structural context of the Factreton community to the documenting and analysing of worker experience. The experiences of workers at home, church and in the wider community occur within an elaborate social and cultural network of relationships. In this chapter workers talk about themselves, their community, their families, their churches, their jobs and ultimately about their lives as workers. The 'voices' of workers talking about their life experiences will illustrate an 'experiential mosaic' of working class life.<sup>1</sup>

The struggle to define a personal and social identity, reflecting a strong self-confidence and a positive self-image, is a painful process within a social context and system which militates against this. The apartheid system has historically attempted to define 'the culture' and 'identity' of coloured people in racist terms as inferior 'non-whites' who share similar Western cultural forms with white South Africans but who are systematically excluded from being given the 'superior' political status of whites. At the same time the coloured population is also legislatively restricted from social inclusion and full interaction with the African majority. The

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase 'experiential mosaic' refers to the variety of different human experiences within a particular area or confine. For example, to the outsider, community life might appear to be a mishmash of unconnected activities and experiences, yet the complex set of relations within which experiences are undergone and felt has particular patterns and sequences. It is precisely these patterns of different experiences that constitute the 'experiential mosaic'.

struggle of coloured people to establish a positive identity and culture thus contradicts the dominant racial and cultural stereotypes. Coloured workers in particular struggle to establish a sense of meaning and identity within a context of class exploitation and alienation. Western, for example, details a range of racial and cultural stereotypes commonly used by the white population to describe people classified coloured (1981: 15). He argues that the process of taking this cultural and ideological struggle onto a broader collective level conflicts directly with the apartheid state's practice of political and cultural exclusion. This chapter will illustrate some of the effects and experiences of these contradictions.

This chapter will develop and argue the following key assertions: Firstly, the nature of kinship relations within the coloured working class household has developed a particular form and content. The outstanding feature of these kinship relations is the matrifocal role of the maternal head of the household. It will be argued that in response to the particular experiences of oppression that the coloured household has had to endure, the maternal head (in most cases the mother) plays a dominant role by being responsible for virtually all domestic and moral responsibilities within the household. This dominant role consists primarily of 'organisational' and 'supervisory' tasks within the household. At the same time, matrifocal dominance is characterised by a lack of power and control. Maternal dominance in the household is ultimately expected, insofar as it does not undermine the power and control of the paternal head of the family (in most cases the father). Boonzaaier and Ramphele argue that

Patriarchy, or male dominance, is not a single entity which varies only in degree. It takes on different forms in different contexts, and it is only by looking at similarities and differences that one can begin to analyse the highly variable range of factors that impinges upon the process of male dominance (1988: 155).

Matrifocal type relationships do not undermine patriarchal power relationships as such, but are rather a specific kinship response to oppression and exclusion. The 'home' in a sense has become an emotional refuge for the male coloured worker where, in general, he does not want to be burdened by domestic responsibilities. However, women who face a matrifocal role within the household, in effect experience 'double exclusion'. They face social and political exclusion from 'politics' in the public sphere because they are coloured workers and because they are women 'trapped' within a particular matrifocal role in the household.

Gender relations within the household have a direct bearing on the formation of political consciousness and organisation within the coloured community. It is generally women who are concerned with the need to resolve basic bread and butter problems that the household faces. As the matrifocal head of the household it is generally women who are concerned with rents, electricity, water, food costs and so forth and not the husband. These bread and butter issues are also the issues that civic organisations are concerned with. The majority of residents that come to civic meetings are consequently women. Ironically these women approach the civic for assistance with their bread and butter problems, and normally are not concerned about political issues as such. In cases where these women are keen to become more involved in the political aspects of civic organisation they are severely constrained by what one activist termed 'the husband factor'.

The husband's preoccupation with issues in the 'public sphere' and the deferring of the 'private sphere' to the mother is directly rooted in what many writers have described as the public/private dichotomy (Zaretsky, 1976). This split between the private and the public has several implications for this study. In part, matrifocal relationships are shaped around this split, and at the same time this split is also reinforced by the racially exclusive apartheid state. For both male and female breadwinner doing wage labour on the shopfloor, (in the white dominated public sphere), means facing the brunt of racial oppression as 'coloured' workers within a system which defines the individual as 'coloured' and therefore as a relative outcast. The maternal head of the household carries an extra burden as moral authority of the family. The working class 'mother' becomes a protective symbol for good moral values, in the face of an oppressive onslaught from the apartheid system (Ridd, 1981: 202). On her shoulders also rests the enormous responsibility of virtually all domestic tasks of the working class household, both practical and emotional. The combination of above factors takes up most of her time and energy. Does this leave time for social or political activities? This study will argue that it seldom does.

As regards alcohol consumption and church attendance, it will be argued that there is a tendency for women to become more involved in church activities whereas the male worker will more likely be drawn into excessive alcohol consumption within the community network of shebeens. While it is difficult, within the ambit of this study, to establish direct links between the development of political consciousness and that of church attendance, there are some discernable indicators. Charismatic or evangelical churches with

their predominantly apolitical and individualistic theology do appear to reinforce low levels of political consciousness. However, during the past few years this has been countered by the increasing politicization of many of the large liturgical churches, in particular the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Anglican Church.

While alcohol consumption patterns within a specific community are difficult to detail, local residents claim that the shebeens in Factreton do a considerable trade throughout the year. Many of Factreton's 'pleins' (a circle of about 12 houses) will have between 2 to 3 shebeens each. Political activists do not bother doing community work during weekends as a large number of the residents (activists claim) are drinking excessively. An attitude which is linked to the question of alcohol consumption is that of fatalism. Fatalistic attitudes, many residents and activists claim, are particularly prevalent in the most destitute sections of Factreton. Activists argue that in these sections where unemployment and poverty is at its worse, people adopt defeatist and fatalistic attitudes to life. In short, people become totally preoccupied with survival and simply do not care about politics.

It is against this backdrop that the culture of exclusion, and its effects, will be explored. While this study does not have a specific focus on cultural issues, it is possible to illustrate general cultural aspects that by implication overlap with the study of political consciousness and identity. It will be argued that general cultural forms within Factreton have taken on a culturally exclusive character. This is reflected in 'eiesoortig', individualistic and protective forms of cultural behaviour. This

cultural exclusion, it will be argued, has reinforced the existing political and social exclusion of the coloured working class from the mainstream of politics. While cultural forms such as music, drama and sport have been vibrant avenues for self-expression within the coloured community, they have seldom been used to create a cultural identity which challenges the racist stereotypes perpetuated by the apartheid system. Over the past few years, however, the organisations aligned to the Mass Democratic Movement have begun to explore the use of cultural forms to challenge the various manifestations of apartheid oppression. For example, Musical Action for Peoples Power (MAPP) and the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW).

#### 4.1.1 Access and Field Research Methods.

This chapter will draw extensively from six life histories conducted with coloured workers and nine interviews with community activists. The six predominant voices in this chapter are of a food worker, a clothing worker, a trench digger, a security guard, a domestic worker and a janitor.<sup>2</sup> Their ages range from 38 to 81 years old. Three of them are members of the Old Apostolic church, two are Moslems and another is Anglican. These workers are family members, mothers, fathers - they are not famous and are not highly educated. 'Voices' such as their's are often lost, forgotten, or ignored by grand historical and sociological perspectives.

The following criteria were used in the process of choosing the six life history interviewees. The interviewees had to be: firstly, coloured workers who had been resident in Facticeon for at least 20

<sup>2</sup> Several quotes will appear in this chapter. The bulk are drawn from the six life history interviews. There are also quotes drawn from informal discussions and comments made by workers in meetings.

years; secondly, they had to be older than 35 years; thirdly, three men and three women were chosen. The emphasis in this process was on finding older residents who were well established within the Factreton community. Other factors considered were occupation and specific geographical location within Factreton. A spread of interviewees from the upper, middle and lower sections of Factreton were chosen.<sup>3</sup>

The interviews with workers (and with activists) were conducted during my period of residence in the Factreton/Kensington community. My access to the community was established as a result of consultations with individual political activists. After initial consultation was completed, my research was explained at an area committee meeting of political activists where research access was mandated, and assistance promised. I lived in Kensington from January 1988 to November 1988. I lived with two different families, the first for 7 months and the second for 3 months. These families were not involved in political organisations. Although much of my working days were spent at UCT, my week nights were generally spent attending various community meetings. These included a weekly advice office meeting, area committee meetings, civic general meetings, civic workshops and a variety of other community meetings were attended. Social interactions included continual house visits to the homes of activists and workers in the area, parties and other social occasions.

My key worker informant, Mr S (a security guard) played a particularly important role in introducing me to various residents in Factreton. Mr S regularly does 'huisbesoek' on weekends, during

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<sup>3</sup> These sections are indicated on a map in Appendix 4.

which he combines both his civic and church duties. I went with him on several occasions and was able to speak to, listen to and interview workers in their homes in a relatively relaxed way. I was introduced as a university student, who was living in the area, and who was writing a history about the area. My appearance as a white male student was sceptically viewed by some residents, yet the fact that I was resident in the area generally impressed people, thereby quickly establishing credibility for myself. Being introduced by Mr S also enhanced my acceptance and credibility in the eyes of workers and residents.

#### 4.1.2 Oral History and Life Stories.

The value of the oral history method has long been a controversial issue for debate.<sup>4</sup> This section will highlight some of the strengths and weaknesses of the method. One of the obvious advantages of the oral history method for South African researchers is that it creatively enables one to explore the deep class, racial and gender divisions that exist in apartheid society. Oral history provides the opportunity to capture the voices, experiences, actions and ideas of the 'silent' majority of oppressed people in our country.<sup>5</sup> Without going into the complexities of oral history

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4 Among the better articles and books that contribute to this debate are: J. Vansina, Oral Tradition as History (J. Currey: London, 1985); A. Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', History Workshop paper no. 12, Autumn 1981. There are several articles in the International Journal of Oral History, History Workshop and the Oral History Journal contain frequent discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of oral history.

5 For local examples of oral history works see for example, I. Obery (ed), Vukani Makhosikazi, South African Women speak (CIIR; London, 1985). H. Perold (ed) Working Women, A Portrait of South Africa's Black Women Workers (Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 1985).

techniques, Fishers' points about the life history method are pertinent to this study:

The special utility of life history data comes from four characteristics: 1) the data are concrete and (therefore) closer to raw social data; 2) there is a wealth of detailed information, allowing analysis of idiosyncratic life events; 3) the data are 'processual', in that narratives can trace connections between life events; and 4) the understandings and interpretations of the actors can be included as part of the analysis (1983: 31).

Other advantages that this method has for community researchers in South Africa is that strategies for organisational or development work within the oppressed communities have to be started from and premised on the daily experiences of community members. Not only does the oral history method allow the researcher and/or activist to collect experiential data from community members, it also provides the potential for community involvement in the process of research.<sup>6</sup> It furthermore has the potential for enhancing the understanding of researchers, activists, social workers, developmentalists and community workers to the needs, wants, problems and everyday nuances of community life. Using the oral history method, in combination with other research methods, can place the above groups in a better position to structure and organise and give direction to their work in a manner which is more closely in tune with the specific dynamics of each community.<sup>7</sup> As Keaton notes:

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 6 Community Education Resources (CER) group at UCT has done important exploratory work in this area. See, unpublished paper by CER Masters Research Group, 'Conceptualising progressive academic research', (UCT, 1987).

7 The use of the survey method in conjunction with community workshops by the Manenberg Research Group is an exciting exploration in the use of collective research methods to enhance community development projects. Although not strictly speaking using the life history method, the group has used a variety of methods, informal discussions with community people, workshops and questionnaire surveys. Through this creative use of interviewing and interaction

Through personal life histories, it is possible to grasp the manifold variations in social experience and to perceive social contradictions. It enables the researcher to comprehend wider social and economic phenomena through the general patterns that emerge,... (1987: 3).

The life history method, however, does pose some problems. The obvious weaknesses of life history methods are the considerable resources and time that are consumed in the research process, the relatively small number of interviews that can be conducted and the limited ability to generalise results. However Keaton (1987) highlights the possibility of the oral historian illustrating and exploring various nuances of patterns and social contradictions, as expressed through the experiences of a small number of individuals. Yet this poses another problem. 'These interviews are fragments, as an individual life is a fragment and as an individual caught for a moment presents a fragment of a fragment.'<sup>8</sup> Such 'fragments' of human experience, while often rich with raw data, pose complex problems for interpretation and presentation.

Oral sources are a narrative source of information. Albeit fragmentary, this narrative is an important part of the process of allowing the 'silent' many to be heard within an academic context. It also creates an avenue for the so-called 'private stories' of those workers to be heard and to be made public. The narrative that emerges through the interview illustrates processes or events we know of, but is also able to introduce new ideas and meaning towards a better understanding of these events and processes. While oral

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with community people, the involvement of community members has expanded. See, Weekly Mail 7/7/1989.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by S. Gordon, A Talent For Tomorrow, (Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 1985) pg xi. The quote is from J. McCrindle and S. Rowbotham (eds), Dutiful Daughters (Pelican Books, 1979).

history is weak on providing statistical data, (hence other forms of research are often necessary compliments), it is a powerful technique to use in exploring meaning and subjective understanding of events (Portelli, 1981: 99). Furthermore, narrative can obviously enrich and guide the theoretical endeavours of conceptualisation, abstraction and analysis. This however, '... can be assessed not only from what people say explicitly about their thoughts and feelings, but also from how they talk about events' (Fischer, 1983: 37).

My discussions with various residents and activists allowed for a gradual broadening of my own understanding of individual, group and community dynamics. The intermeshing of participant observation, informal discussions, attendance at meetings, interviews with workers and activists all contributed to my own ability to interpret and analyse material for this study.<sup>9</sup> Five of the activists interviewed were either born in the area or have lived there for most of their lives. Their assistance and commentary were important as a means to locating my observations and discussions with worker residents within a broader community context. This partially offset the other common problem of the life history method: the representativeness of a small number of interviewees. Furthermore, the combination of participant observation and life history methods allowed for a considerable diminishment of the distance between myself and the interviewees.

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the methodological issues involved in this research design see Appendix 1.

While this research is not strictly speaking a presentation of the 'view from below', the interactive process of life history and participant observation has created a 'view' of Facticeon that encompasses many voices and ideas. My perspective on the entire process is powerfully influenced by a year's residence in the community. My first-hand experience of the activities and experiences of coloured workers does place me in a different position than the conventional 'outside' researcher.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.2 Brief biographies of six Facticeon residents.

The purpose of the following brief biographies is to provide a sketch of six individual workers interviewed. When various quotes are later drawn from their life histories, they should be seen against the wider history of the six individuals interviewed in depth.

##### 4.2.1 A food worker: Mrs J.

Mrs J was born in 1932 in the original Windermere and grew up in the area and lived there for most of her life. She started work at the age of ten as a domestic worker and was medically boarded in 1976, after working in an Irvin and Johnson fish factory for 25 years. She is diabetic and often goes to hospital for treatment. She has in the past, and still does, live off welfare payments and financial assistance from other members of the family. Mrs J lives in Facticeon in a two bedroom sub-economic house which has two adults (two sons) and three children in one bedroom and two adults (Mrs J

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<sup>10</sup> Over the past few years there has been considerable debate about the politics of democratising the research process, particularly in regard to academic researchers based at universities doing community research (for example, see H. Wolpe, 'The liberation struggle and research' in ROAPE 32, 1985).

and her son's wife) and four children in the other. There is an 'afdakkie' in her backyard (an extension built with corrugated plates and wood with a family of four living in it). The house is partially painted, and there is no garden. Broken cars stand in the front and on the side of the house. The very small lounge (in which the interview was conducted) was crammed with a dining room table, hi-fi, television and an assortment of ornaments. Mrs J is about five foot six, with a large body and bandaged legs. She looks older than her age, with her grey hair tied back and wears an untidy pinafore.

Mrs J has had two miscarriages and eight children (six sons and two daughters) during the period 1950 - 1962. She is a devout Christian and belongs to the Old Apostolic Church and has never been involved in either formal politics or any organisational activities of a political nature.

#### 4.2.2 A trench digger: Mr D.

Mr. D is the oldest of all individuals interviewed. He was born in 1907, moved into Factreton in 1944 and has been on pension since 1976. He cannot read or write and worked as a trench digger for the Roads and Drainage Department of the City Council for 40 years. While dates and figures tend to allude him, he nevertheless has an astonishingly clear mind and recollection of past experiences. He is retired and lives with his wife Rosie who is 80. They have had ten children. He is a member of the Anglican Church. Mr D is approximately six foot tall, and walks around Factreton at a gentle pace, with walking stick in hand. He lives off pension payments from the Cape Town City Council and has not had any other form of employment since retirement.

#### 4.2.3 A domestic worker: Mrs L.

Mrs L is a small woman with hunched shoulders and long grey hair tied beneath a doek. She is a 76-year old member of the Moslem faith who stopped doing paid domestic work only two years ago.<sup>11</sup> She has been a domestic worker for her entire working life, starting at age 13. She lives in a small yet well kept house with a neat front garden. Mrs L is characteristically filled with emotion, and she is a passionate story teller, especially about the 'old days'.

Her earliest memories are of growing up in Chiappini Street in Bo-Kaap. She speaks vividly about the Spanish flu epidemic that hit the Cape in 1918.<sup>12</sup> She was 6 years old at the time. She moved into Factreton in 1968.

#### 4.2.4 A janitor: Mr V.

Mr V is 76 years old and is still doing a full day's work every working day of the week. He left school after Standard 1 and can barely read or write. He worked for the City Council from 1932 - 1974. During this period he worked for the Parks and Forest Department as a gardener, and as a 'lynman' for the Electricity department.<sup>13</sup> Since 1974 he has worked as a janitor at a primary

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<sup>11</sup> The phrase 'slams' or 'slamse' is short for Islam and refers to people of the Moslem faith. Middle class Moslems generally do not like to refer to themselves as 'slamse'. However, commonly used in Factreton by non-Moslem people when describing Moslems.

<sup>12</sup> The Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 was brought to the Cape by returning soldiers from Europe. According to official estimates there were more than 6 000 deaths that year. Popular estimates were between 7 000 - 14 000. The bulk of the deaths were amongst Cape Town's black and coloured population. See H. Phillips: 'The impact of the Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918 on Cape Town'. In: The 10th conference of the S.A. Historical Society, Part I (UCT: 1985).

school in the area. He moved from Caledon in 1925, and "trekked" with his parents to Windermere. He has been a resident of the area ever since. His appearance and manner reveal a strong rural orientation. He speaks Afrikaans with the appropriate 'brei'. He is also a deacon in the local Old Apostolic Church and is currently supervising the construction of a new church hall.

#### 4.2.5 A clothing worker: Mrs I.

Mrs I is 38 years old and has been living in Factreton since 1962. She is the youngest worker that I conducted a life history with. She lives with her husband, her brother and sister, plus her stepmother and four children in a three bedroomed house. She was born in the City centre and at the age of 12 her parents moved to Factreton. Her mother, father and sister worked in clothing factories. She was forced to leave school at the age of 15 because of the family's 'financial problems'. She was also forced to marry at 25 when she became pregnant. She has four children, three boys and a girl. She belongs to the Moslem faith.

#### 4.2.6 A security guard: Mr S.

Mr S is 63 years of age and has been a resident of the Kensington/Factreton area since 1937. In contrast to the previous residents interviewed, he is active in organisations and is currently a member of the Kensington/Factreton civic organisation. He has four boys and three girls from his first marriage, and another two boys and two girls from a second marriage. He lives with his wife and the four children in a caravan, parked in the

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13 A 'lynman' does several dangerous tasks that usually include the installation and repair of either underground or high overhead power lines.

backyard of a friend's house. Mr S is a devout Christian and is actively involved in the affairs of the Old Apostolic Church.

Of all the workers interviewed I spent the most time with Mr S. His interest and assistance with my research proved invaluable. He is employed at a refrigeration firm as a security guard and is a member of the National Union of Metal workers of South Africa (NUMSA). Born in Upington in 1925 he grew up with his grandfather, who was a 'skaapboer'. Mr S was six when his grandfather died, and was then sent to live with relatives in Windermere.

#### 4.3 Kinship and working class parents.

The complex set of kinship relations that intertwine across the Cape Flats into the various rural districts around the Cape, constitute the fundamental fabric of coloured community life. For workers in Factreton the process of proletarianisation has usually meant the movement of families from rural areas to the Cape Peninsula in pursuit of jobs and a better standard of living. Mr V (a janitor) moved with his parents, who were 'saaiboere' in Caledon, and Mr S (a security guard) came from Upington after growing up with his grandfather, who was 'n skaapboer'. Mr V explains their reasons for moving in the following passage,

Deur die geld behandelings. Daai tyd het hulle maar min geld gekry op die plaas en deur die plaaswerk het hy geskywe. Altyd lat hy kan verbieter doen, hy het gese voor hy die dag die aarde verlaat hy da'em in 'n verbietering is lat os oek almal 'n verbietering kan wies, daarom het hy hier geskywe Kaap toe. 14

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14 All the interviews with workers were conducted in Afrikaans as this is their first language. Quotations in the text will be presented in the original vernacular. Since this thesis is intended for a South African audience, it was felt that Afrikaans should be intelligible to most people. Also the considerable richness of the material is lost in translation. A translation of the Afrikaans quotes is nevertheless provided in Appendix 3. Several Afrikaans

For others, their roots lie within the traditions of the Old Cape. Mrs L (a domestic workers) and Mr D (a trench digger), whose roots stretch back into the nineteenth century Cape Town, moved from the City centre, (Bo Kaap and Salt River respectively), in search of better homes during the growth of the Cape Flats network of communities.

The significant aspect about the Factreton residents interviewed is that none of them moved to Factreton because of forced removals instituted by the state. The historical formation of Factreton, although affected by the forced removals of Africans in the late 1950s, was not a direct product of forced removals and the apartheid regime's social engineering. The late 1950s and early 1960s were marked by the forced removal of African residents from Windermere. The bulk of these African residents were relocated in Langa. Windermere's coloured squatter residents escaped the brunt of these forced removals by being housed close by in the new housing estate of Factreton. These events can be contrasted to the thousands of coloured families who were moved from District Six, Mowbray, Harfield Village and other areas, to artificially created communities on the Cape Flats. The significance of this is that kinship relations in Factreton have suffered less disruption than in other coloured communities in the Western Cape. Some locals even attribute Factreton's more settled and conservative character to these factors.

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words require grammatical punctuation that does not exist within the confines of an American computer programme, hence words like 'se' requiring a 'kappie' on the 'e', and words like, 'reen' requiring a 'deelteken' on the second 'e' regrettably are ground into cultural submission because of inadequate American computer programming.

While Factreton is one of the poorest suburbs on the Cape Flats, several features make it more appealing to live in for many people (Da Costa, 1983: 65). Several residents and political activists claim that there has been a decline in gang warfare in the past decade. While geographically isolated from the broader Cape Flats network, it is more conveniently placed in relation to the City Centre and many of the industrial centres, for example Paarden Island, Epping and Factreton's industrial area.

It is against this backdrop that the kinship relations of Factreton must be approached. Perhaps the most striking feature of kinship relations within the families interviewed was the overcrowded nature of the household. This was generally because of the expanding nature of extended families. Sons, daughters and their wives/husbands with their children, grandparents, aunts and uncles would often stay under the same roof. The most obvious reason for this situation, and the reason repeatedly given, was that they either could not find another place to live in, or could not afford it. In other cases, for example, Mrs J and Mrs I, there were 'afdakkies' in their backyards where additional family members or friends would live. In the homes of the interviewees, which were either two or three bedroomed houses, occupancy would vary from five to twelve individuals. In many cases the husband and wife would have to share their room with two to three children.

A part of the extended family network are 'die voorkinders'. The term literally refers to pre-marital children. A local priest explained this as usually happening when young women became pregnant and their lovers either refused to take responsibility for

their offspring or simply absconded to another community. In two of the interviewees' homes there were 'voorkinders'. Perhaps most interesting was that this was not seen as something to be ashamed of but an accepted, although not liked, part of many persons' lives. According to the priest and local activists, the occurrence of 'voorkinders' is widespread in Factreton. Whisson confirms this trend in his study on Oceanview, 'The long tradition of the 'voorkind' is apparent from the genealogies collected where, even among the oldest living generation, it is not uncommon to find the oldest child retaining his mother's maiden name' (1976: 261).

The particular formation of the Factreton working class family is distinctively different to the traditional structure of the nuclear family which is dominated by a male figure or patriarch with submissive wife and children. The overcrowded nature of the household, with extended family and friends, has meant that the family does not function as a rigid nuclear structure.

The overriding feature of Factreton families interviewed and spoken to was that they were 'dominated', in a particular sense, by women. Many informants referred to their communities as being 'matriarchal'. This is however incorrect. Matriarchy refers to an entrenched position of dominance and power within the kinship network. What exists in many coloured working class communities is not matriarchy but a form of matrifocal relations (Whisson, 1976; Ridd, 1981). Matrifocal type relationships within the family refer to the dominance of women without the actual power to exert full control over the household. Furthermore, the dominant presence of the matrifocal figure is directly linked to the continued power and control of the male head of the household. The dominance of the

matrifocal figure is allowed by the male head insofar as it removes the burden of domestic responsibilities from his shoulders, but does not undermine his authority and power in the household. Matrifocal relations thus do not exclude the subordination of the wife to the husband's power. Matrifocal type relationships, according to a range of people spoken to, are very common within Cape Flats coloured communities.<sup>15</sup> Mr V (a janitor) describes his wife's role as follows,

Nie my vrou, sy het haar salaris (his paycheck - SF) gekry, ek gee haar salaris, en die council trek my salaris af vir die huis vir die rent. Sy het al die inkopies gedoen elke ding ingekoop, dan betaal sy ek betaal nie, ek gee, sy moet betaal, sy is die baas van die huis. Sy maak al die besluite oor geld in die huis. Als, al die besluite en alles. Ja as iets nou gekoop word besluit sy nou, en vra sy nou vir my nou wat ek dink om daai ding te koop. Wel as sy sien 'n way uit dan het sy nou 'n way right koop sy dit. As ons nie kan nie, dan bly ons sonder dit tot dat ons nou kan afford om dit koop.

This passage is typical of comments from all interviewees. The general pattern of matrifocal relations entails the wife taking the central role as co-ordinator of house duties, nurturing of children, financial administration and transactions. In effect, the wife dominates the household in a supervisory sense and when important decisions are taken she approaches the husband for advice. The husband literally defers the practical running of the household to the wife. As a relatively distant figure in the household, he offers advice and at times helps resolve conflicts between the wife and children and the extended family. He still maintains effective control through two key mechanisms. Firstly, he is generally the

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<sup>15</sup> See , R.Ridd's work on families in the Woodstock/District Six and Walmer Estate area: 'Where Women Must Dominate: Response to Oppression in a South African Urban Community'. In: S, Ardener (ed), 'Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Map' (Croom Helm: London, 1981).

major breadwinner, even if the wife has paid employment. Secondly, his physical power as male head means he still has the final say, through physical and sexual means. For obvious reasons the second factor is extremely difficult to explore. Concerning financial controls, Mrs J (a food worker) made the following illuminating comments:

Al die werke het ek in die huis uit betaal. En ek het self kos gekoop, klere gekoop. Ja, want 'n man mag nie geld in sy sak dra nie. Dan moet hy nog ander mense onder hou ook. Nie net vir daai nie, (alcohol - SF) maar kyk 'n mans mens wat nou geld hou in sy sak hy moet nog ander vrouens ook onder hou, want moet mos nou vir hulle koop.

In a similar vein Mrs L (a domestic worker) explains her role,

Als het ek self gemaak (decisions - SF). Ek het hulle grootgemaak. Hulle was maar klein, wat hulle pa geoorlede is, wat hy't mos met 'n kwaal van die army gekom. Die baby seun wat hier bly, hy was nou 'n jaar en vier maande gewees, en ek was maar altyd man en vrou wat gat werk, die rent inbring.

Thus, in a sense, the husband through fulfilling the traditional man's economic role of bringing home a paycheck at the end of the week/month, becomes a means of controlling the behaviour of the wife. Both Mrs L and Mrs J, after their husband's death, took over the role of breadwinner and household head in all respects. The wife of Mr D (a trench digger) is a year younger than he is but at eighty still does the bulk of the household tasks. The domestic role of younger wives in the household has nevertheless increased. Mr D explains how and why he gives all his money to his wife.

Als. Ek h't nie 'n ha'penny of 'n sikspens van my geld gevat nie. Ek kan dit nie doen nie. Ek moet na die vrou toe gaan eers. Wanner sy vir my iets wil gee, dan kan sy gee, maar as sy nie wil gee nie, dan gat ek ook nie moeite maak om vir haar te vra nie. Wan' as ek gat moeite maak om'e te vra, dan gat die kinders honger ly. Of wan' ek die helfte vir haar gee en die helfte vir my, die kinders en sy gat honger ly. Even waar't ek een aand werk en ek pay daai nag se geld, moenie glo ek sal 'n sikspens daarvan vat nie. Ons was nie so groot gemaak nie moet na die vrou gaan.

In the above passage Mr D reveals a strong sense of tradition, as this was how he was taught to behave. Upsetting this traditional way of doing things potentially undermines the material well being of the whole family, 'sy en die kinders sal honger ly'. All the money must go to the mother, she becomes the house accountant, administrator and purchaser of all household requirements.

The mother, usually is not only seen as the maternal head of the family but also the moral authority. It is she that does most of the disciplining, teaching and nurturing of the children. The moral importance of the mother is frequently brought to the fore during inter-male fights. Common swear words during these conflicts are, 'Jou ma se moer' ('moer' is basic Afrikaans for the womb or uterus of an animal) are graphic ways of attacking male honour by undermining the sexual and moral credibility of your mother. Ridd explains,

The greatest offence one man can give another is to swear by his mother, to insult or even mildly criticize her...It implied the very essence of a man's being, his identity as well as his honour rested in his mother from whose womb he entered the world...Relegation of a man's mother to a state of nature has deep significance implying that he is less than human... (1981a: 118).

The importance of motherhood as a symbol of moral authority, respectability and dignity are elements of coloured workers' construction of a positive personal and social identity.<sup>16</sup> The cultural and moral importance of the working class mother in Factreton is clearly rooted in the dominant and central role she plays within the household. Ridd explains the matrifocal relations of the coloured household as follows

..women exert authority through their household organisation. They are the chief decision makers, they generally control the household income and they bring up the children with very little help from their husbands. Their respectability among other women, depends on their ability to keep their homes spotlessly clean and on providing food for the family (1981a: 117).

In the following passage Mrs J (a food worker) describes her experience of these issues

So het die lewe aan gegaan. Maar my eie werk het ek self gedoen, kos het ek self gekoek saans. In my huiswerk het ek self, want soggens as ek uit stap moet die plek skoon wies. Saans as ek in trap dan moet dit ook skoon wies, moet skoon bly. Ek mien 'n mens is arm maar jy moet skoon wies. So het ek maar my kinders ook geleer. Vandag doen hulle die selfde.

In the above passage Mrs J illustrates her own matrifocal role in the household. Furthermore, she repeatedly emphasises the importance of cleanliness and the concomitant respectability. No matter how poverty stricken she may be, the importance of

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16 A link can be drawn between working class motherhood and the largest trade union in the Western Cape, SACTWU has a membership of over 60 000, most of whom are coloured women. A key trade union official remarked in an interview that, 'GAWU (the union's name before the merger - SF) is more than just a trade union, it is a working class mother'. SACTWU in a particular sense has become a symbol of coloured working class motherhood within coloured communities.

maintaining both her own dignity and that of her family is fundamental. She further adds the point (illustrating the importance of matrifocal relations in coloured working class life) that she teaches her children to behave in a similar fashion thus preserving the dignity of the household. The coloured working class mother is expected to play the key role of passing on the essential elements of the family's traditions and values, thereby ensuring that matrifocal relations are reproduced in the next generation. Mr S (a security guard) explained to me how he taught his sons to do carpentry and other manual tasks. When asked what his daughters are taught he replied:

Die meisies is maar meeste geleer deur die vrou, soos naaldwerk en daardie soort van ding, dit kan hulle maar self sien. Maar ek wil ook sien dat dit gedoen word en dit moet reg gedoen word. En wil ook sien dat die meisiekind, as sy in die huis is, dat die tafel nie vuil wees is nie. Of die kombuis skoon gemaak nie, sy moet leer om dit skoon te hou en op alle mate meer op 'n hygienic stelsel te wees. Dat sy kan leer wat is skoonheid, want die skoonheid is die netheid van die lewe, soos as mense kom dan moet hulle kan sien jou plek is presies.

The above passage illustrates the gender division of labour within the home. The mother is responsible for teaching the daughters their tasks, thereby helping to reproduce matrifocal relationships. In the next passage Ridd offers her explanation for the formation of matrifocal relations.

It may be contended that men feel the discrimination against them as 'coloured' more directly because their frame of reference is more specifically in the public sector controlled by whites. In consequence, the 'coloured' home has been elevated as a place of refuge and women thrust into the vital endeavour of preserving the dignity of the family against the humiliation of apartheid. The exclusion of the 'coloured' man from the white man's social and geographical space has produced a situation where, for the 'coloured', home is paramount as the physical space controlled by women (1981b: 190).

The central premise of Ridd's argument rests on the assertion that matrifocal relations have emerged as a particular response to the pressures of oppression within the apartheid system. However, it is important to note that the nature of the traditional public/private dichotomy emerged before the onset of capitalist social relations and was further entrenched by the capitalist mode of production (Zarestky, 1976; Hartmann, 1981). Through this historical process, the home as the 'private' sphere was split off from the rest of so-called 'public' society. Personal and emotional conflicts are dealt with in 'private' and that private domain not surprisingly becomes the emotional 'refuge' for the male worker.

The social exclusion of the coloured worker from the dominant white social order, with its access routes to privilege and prestige, is a key factor in shaping the nature of kinship relations. This social exclusion and the systematic brutality of being defined 'inferior' within apartheid society has pressurised and moulded the coloured working class household into an essential site for protection and restoration of moral and emotional strength. Kinship relations have historically played this type of role yet, under exploitative and oppressive conditions, this protective function becomes increasingly accentuated.

The coloured mother in this context, whether she only does housework or does wage labour as well, is of particular importance to the process of building civic organisations. The working class mother, as matrifocal head of the household, is generally responsible for dealing with rents, electricity, water, food costs and other bread and butter problems. These issues are also the primary concern of

the local civic organisation. For example, in Factreton as in other coloured working class areas, it is primarily women that come to civic meetings. Responses to civic campaigns will usually come from women. However, because women are constrained by their domestic responsibilities and their obligations to the husband, they have little time or opportunity to become involved in organisational work. Activists cited numerous examples of women that were keen to become more involved in the civic but could not because their husbands would not allow this.

The role of the father/husband within the matrifocal type relationship of the household, while less visible than the maternal head's role, is nevertheless still powerful. The matrifocal relation is premised and structured around notions of male dominance and authority. As one male interviewee put it, 'my vrou is my besit'. Similar, although less explicit patriarchal sentiments were offered by other male informants. The central feature of matrifocal relations is that the wife does not have real power to do as she pleases, her dominance and responsibilities are either delegated or expected of her by the male head who does not want to be burdened by household affairs. Her relative control and dominance lacks tangible power to explore her own interests. Her own interests are defined for her by the rigours of motherhood and the moral and practical tasks that flow from her position as matrifocal head of the household.

The most tragic interview I conducted was with Mrs I (a clothing worker), who was both battered and abused by her husband. Like the other mothers referred to in this study, she plays a similar

matrifocal role of doing all the major tasks in the household and has a full-time job at a clothing factory.

Ek is nie skaam te se nie, daar is niks tussen ons nie, ons lewe nou net vir onse kinders, whatever die case is wat hy nou doen. Ons is nou net bymekaar vir die kinders se sake, daai's al. Maar verder is daar niks tussen ons, soos 'n man en 'n vrou moet wees. Want om te het 'n man, in die aand as jy uit die werk kom is jou man daar, daare'm 'n bietjie praat of so, niks soos daai nie.

For several years her husband has had an affair with a woman and they have two children. At the time of the interview he was still continuing this affair, and helps support her and the two children. As Mrs I explains, in the above passage, it is only their children that hold the family together. In a rather tense moment during the interview she revealed that her husband had repeatedly hit her.

Elke mens lewe sy lewe, en elke een dink sy eie way. Maar soos ek voel, ek stel nie belang daarin nie (entertainment outside the home - SF). Want ek vat dit so, hulle sien net hulle pa die oggend en die aand, nou as ek aan hulle moet daai doen, dan ek weet nie hoe gaan hulle teenaan hulle families wees nie. Ek will nie he hulle moet diesel'e dinge doen wat hulle pa doen nie. So ek probeer om meeste van my tyd saam met hulle te spandeer.

I then asked her whether her husband had ever hit her 'O baie keer, maar nie meer nie.' I then enquired how she felt about this:

O baie hartseer. Ek dink, dis daai wat maak, well a'mal die mense is nie dieselfde nie, maar 'n groot verskil tussen 'n man en 'n vrou, as hy sy hand oplik vir jou, my hart was baie seer, want ek het dit nie verwag van hom.

A strong theme that ran throughout the interview with Mrs I was her feeling of being trapped. Although never explicitly verbalised, numerous sentences reflect her desire for freedom. In particular, a freedom from this marriage.

En as jy jonk is en jy het nie kinders, jy't nie 'n man nie, dan maak 'it 'n groot verskil, want dan kan jy nog altyd gaan waar jy wil, jy kan doen wat jy wil. Maar nou although is jou married life nie honderd persent nie, jy moet nog altyd jou man se rules obey.

While Mrs I's case is particularly harsh, it does explicitly reflect the underlying power of patriarchal dominance. She is trapped in a marriage that no longer provides the caring and support necessary for individual growth. She is also trapped by her responsibility for, and commitment to, her children and the rest of her household. Finally, although their marriage is far from 'honderd persent', she still submits to her husband's rules and regulations and the matrifocal role she plays in the family is strictly within the confines of the terms laid down by her husband.

Matrifocal relations are inextricably interwoven and rooted in a formation of kinship relations which have been fundamentally shaped by two factors. Firstly, the nature of the apartheid system and its racially exclusive practices has undermined the identity and dignity of coloured workers. The community, as a source of identification (Western: 1983) and the family home as a 'refuge' for those that work outside in the white dominated public sphere are fundamental elements of coloured working class life. Secondly, the traditional split between the public/private dichotomy has taken on an added importance and significance with the practices of the apartheid state.

It is a situation where women must dominate for the sake of the family and community rather than one of challenge to male authority. It is also a situation where women have been forced to conserve traditional notions of human dignity. The matrifocal household, however, is an ephemeral phenomenon established in response to special conditions, a transitional phase in the struggle against oppression (Ridd, 1981: 202).

Ridd correctly concludes that matrifocal relations are a 'response to special conditions' of oppression, but is incorrect when she demphasizes this situation by asserting that it is merely 'ephemeral'. Coloured women's matrifocal position within the working class household is an entrenched part of the social division of labour. Matrifocal relationships, with their explicit gender bias, places an even greater practical burden on the maternal head of the household. The matrifocal role is not only a response to racial oppression, but is also a response to the effects of class exploitation. Furthermore, matrifocal relations do not redress the unequal power relations within the household, but rather entail a different allocation of domestic tasks and moral responsibilities. The basic fact that the underlying power relations of patriarchy are unchanged means that matrifocal relations, within the coloured working class household, is more than just an 'ephemeral phenomenon'.

#### 4.4 'The bottle and the pulpit'.

Some years ago I asked a trade union organiser what the biggest obstacles to organising coloured workers were. Her reply was 'the bottle and the pulpit'. This section explores some of the reasons for Factreton workers turning to these activities.

The following passage full of cynical humour and tragedy is by a local cultural activist interviewed,

So the masses out there, I keep seeing this picture that way, and very few people see it from the masses point of view as individuals, but what is their gut response to this, what do they basically want? Now if we don't

respond in the way we think they should, like revolutionaries, then we call them lumpen-proletarians, who should be written off because they have become so corrupt by the capitalist system, they're irredeemable. There is something wrong with them because they won't play ball on your terms. So you are going to eliminate them as well because you can't eliminate your original statement. So if you look at these unwilling masses who won't shake their blabby arses, you get angry with them, and you start having long researches into why they aren't doing it. Maybe you can find the answer and help the revolution on. If I was the guy out there and I've got this whole history of being down there, and your whole response has been 'your mother to the Holy Spirit and your father to the alcoholic spirit', and you have got to survive. Now how is political mobilisation, or any other thing going to get you to survive in the social milieu which you operate in? You don't. You see yourself as a helpless victim of fate who has got to survive day-to-day and you start having symbols like: 'Man was born to suffer' and 'I found myself in this place of stones and sadness where dog eats dog and every man has got to survive for himself'.

Embedded in the above comments are serious observations about the behaviour of political activists and researchers, and the extent to which 'fatalism' is part of the coloured working class view of their situation. It is precisely a fatalistic attitude combined with the pursuit to survive within one's given context that has encouraged the lack of interest that most coloured workers display towards politics. From a position of hardship and poverty, 'handling' your situation and day-to-day needs and experiences are the most pressing tasks to be dealt with. The most destitute section of Factreton is commonly known by residents as 'Die Gat' or 'Die Kreefgat'. From my own observations and those of other residents, this is a particularly demoralised layer of the Factreton community. It is particularly in the lower echelons of the coloured working class where religion, and even political activism have little impact on the social consciousness of people. Those features are directly related to fatalistic and demoralised attitudes of workers living in this section of Factreton. A local political activist explained how, during the anti-election campaign, they went from door to door

on three occasions in the 'Gat'. The last occasion was on the night before the election. Most people in the section promised not to vote. The following day many of them voted not because they cared about voting but because (so my informants reported) they were 'bought' by promises of a free loaf of bread from Labour Party canvassers. Various attempts to appeal to this layer of people within the community, be it from the civic, the Labour Party or by particular churches had minimal impact. The key determinant of their actions, under these destitute conditions of life, was that loaf of bread.

It is precisely at this point, when human existence is reduced to a struggle for economic survival, that understanding the responses and actions of human behaviour becomes so difficult to analyse and predict. Thompson makes the following points,

...experience has in the last instance, been generated in material life, has been structured in class ways, and hence 'social being' has determined 'social consciousness'. La structure still dominates experience but from that point her determinant influence is weak. For any living generation, in any 'now', the ways in which they 'handle' experience defies prediction and escapes from any narrow definition and determination (1978: 363).

Two key mechanisms that Factreton workers use to 'handle' their situation and experiences of oppression and exploitation are alcohol consumption and religious activities. As the above interviewee put it, '...mother to the Holy spirit and father to the alcoholic spirit.' A sad, yet quite accurate statement on patterns of behaviour in many working class households. Mrs J (a food worker) illustrates this pattern in terms of her relationship with her deceased husband:

Hy het nou nie deur die week gedrink nie maar naweke dan drink hy. As ek kerk toe stap dan moet ek nog eers 'n half botteljie se geld gee, kom ek uit die kerk dan is hy dronk. Hy het nooit kerk gegaan nie. Ek het hom lelik geskel dan se 'ek wens die karre trap jou vrek, die jonges moet jou stiek'. Maar daai het nooit gebeur nie. So die Here het sy eie tyd met elke ene.

In the following exchange Mr V (the janitor) describes how he used to go out 'drinking' while his wife stayed at home.

SF: Soe jou vrou het nooit uitgegaan nie?

V: Sy was maar net by haar huis van jongs dae af. Haar Pa het nie vir haar laat rond loop nie.

SF: En wat was jou reel?

V: Toe sy hier by my kom, toe se ek, 'As ek uit gaan dan moet jy by die huis bly'. Maar sy skel my, 'Dink eers aan ander mense, wat van die kinders'. Ek was altyd by die parties, sy skel vir my, is arraaait, lekker tyd gehad.

For many coloured workers drinking and gambling are attempts at coping and dealing with their situation. In the following passage an area activist raises several key issues:

I think on the farm it's very different. They have a tot system where from Friday nights through the whole weekend you find workers gesuip. In the urban areas you find gambling, not heavy gambling, going to the tote, that has actually become a feature of coloured life. Saturday afternoon the drinkers go and gamble. I don't think it's that serious, gambling; drinking is. I mean, what else can people do, especially men. Sometimes we can't even go pamphleteering every weekend because of that problem, because people are gesuip.

The same activist made the following interesting link between drinking and the question of feeling superior to Africans.

We are made to feel superior to the African masses. I mean you find a fucking dronklap in the 'gat' who's no better than a dronklap in any African area, but who thinks that he's far superior to any middle class African or any educated African person, because he's coloured, he's a kleurling.

While it is important to avoid any stereotype of coloured workers being 'dronklappe', we nevertheless need to understand why individual coloured workers turn to alcohol as a coping mechanism. On a mundane level drinking for millions of working people worldwide is one of the few forms of relaxation available. Having a few 'drinks' is a common way of relaxing after a long day or week on the job. Yet it is also an undeniable means of escaping from the oppressive reality of working class life.

On a general level, high levels of alcohol consumption are a historical feature of coloured working class life. Scharf estimates that there are at least 3 000 shebeens in the coloured areas of the Cape Peninsula (1983: 80). In the following passage an activist interviewed comments on widespread alcohol consumption

Objectively, the coloured community is a ready market for liquor capital. Without millions of bottles of Virginia, liquor capital would be in dire straits, as SA Breweries would be if there was no African market. There are consumption patterns. The process of distribution of liquor and things like that resulted in the way that it becomes an expression of alienation. Liquor became the crucial means in the vicious circle of the expression of that alienation. So it becomes more than just a consumption pattern. It becomes linked to other forms of activity which sustain the coloured community in many ways, socially, but obviously financially as well. That's where the question of organised gangs emerges, in terms of groups of people who prospered by the proliferation of drugs and shebeens. Gangs become an outlet for further deprivation. It's not a given, as many seem to theorise. What I'm trying to avoid is the sense that the coloured community are innately drunk and apathetic. I'm trying to say that there's a particular conjuncture within which the existing patterns of social experiences and networks become absorbed and the new way in which the forms of oppression and control begin to exist. The question of liquor and drugs become a form of control reproducing itself as an important pillar in the whole coloured community.

There is a proliferation of shebeens in Factreton, with as many as two to three shebeens per 'plein'. Going to the local 'smokkie' (shebeen merchant) was for many residents an accepted part of life. Mrs J (a food worker) was very critical of the shebeens in the area:

Kyk baie kinders ly daaronder en dan is dit huis probleme want die man bring nie genoeg geld nie. Hy gat nou eers na die shebeens toe, naweke is dit maar die selfde wanner hulle drink. Vernaam jou kinders, dan is dit 'n bakleiery en aangaanery. Nou ek dink nie dit moet gebeur nie want as jy nou jou kinders wil ordentlik groot maak dan kan jy nie want die mense wat nou die wyn verkoop en daai hou jou kinders af.

One local resident claimed the police were powerless to stop the activities of the shebeens as they were so deeply rooted in the fabric of the community. This same informant claimed some policemen receive 'payoffs' from major 'smokkies'. A local police sergeant apparently regularly receives a case of beers in return for not harassing these shebeens. Other occasional 'smokkies' would tend to be the ones harassed or arrested by the police.<sup>17</sup>

For future historical research, an exploration of alcohol consumption patterns within coloured working class areas and how this is connected to shifts in political consciousness amongst coloured workers is necessary. Also, the extent to which alcohol distribution has become a control mechanism for liquor capital and capital in general, for the purposes of ensuring a docile and readily available labour force in the Western Cape region, is in need of detailed examination (Scharf: 1983). In an illuminating discussion with a 'gangster' who was a liquor and dagga merchant, Scharf extracted the following pertinent points,

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<sup>17</sup> The source of this information is reliable and close enough to these activities to be considered a responsible informant. It is, needless to say, necessary to keep his identity anonymous.

He was after all part of a distribution chain which facilitated people's individualistic inward escape into an induced selfish consciousness. The emerging civics were intent on achieving exactly the opposite response in outward, organised mass consciousness which challenged the state... His gut feeling was that his regulars were likely to remain more attached to intoxicants than organised ideology; and even if there was a shift, it would be extremely gradual, sufficiently gradual that it would not endanger his livelihood. Yet this did not dispel a feeling of ambivalence about civic organisations at the time (1983: 122).

Shebeen activities and excessive drinking are frowned upon by the established religious community. The high levels of drinking do seem to be more prevalent amongst men. All three male workers interviewed claimed to have drunk quite heavily during their youth, but they all gave up during middle-age. Mr V explains,

Hy (alcohol - SF) gat my siek maak, naderaan vir my 'n kwaal gie, hy gat my oe effect, hy het my rug geaffect. Soos ek gedrink het is nie 'n way om te drink nie. As jy 'n borrel gekoop het, 'n borrel moet daar'm hou 'n paar dae, 'n borrel hou net vir my 'n paar minute. As hy klaar is gat ek maar weer shebeen toe, gaan haal maar weer. Ja dit het ek gesien en my sak bly stukkend. Ek het nooit geld in my sak gehad nie, daar'm het ek hom neer gesit.

Only one of the women interviewed previously drank alcohol and that was very seldom. The other two female interviewees are Moslem and in terms of their faith are forbidden to drink alcohol. The dominant trend appears to be that women generally stay at home, especially when they start having children. Men, on the other hand, are still free to continuously socialise outside of the home, if they so wish, which they often do 'over a drink'. This pattern was reflected in every interviewee's family.

The old tradition of 'a womens place is at home' seems to hold considerable currency and serves to strengthen matrifocal relations. A woman is expected by her husband, family and community to remain at home and to fulfill her maternal duties. As a result the working class mother generally has a stronger interest in moral and religious affairs. A local activist explains:

I think to the coloured person the church is everything. People have a hell of a lot of respect for the church, especially if you're a priest. It's this big thing, whatever the priest says is true, even if he talks a lot of shit. Especially in poorer areas, amongst old people, they're poor what else do they have but to go to church. Church is everything, they rather become 'bekeerd' than do something else. They can't uplift themselves in any other way, and this is a fact. Women go to church more often than men, because the men probably have a hangover. Women go to church because they have all the problems. They have the kids, they have to ensure that they have money by Friday when their husbands get paid so that they can pay the rental or whatever, those kind of domestic problems. So there's probably unemployment in the house as well, they can't make ends meet, so what else can you do but go to church.

Women's role within matrifocal type relationships entails her being responsible for the moral and religious credibility of the household. This matrifocal position of women clearly links with the patterns of church attendance in the community. The church is in many respects a central institution in the civil society of the coloured community. It is a refuge and a supportative institution and potentially provides meaning for individuals within a desperate situation. The church, however, has the potential to promote individual withdrawal and exclusion. In particular, women's exclusion from the public sphere and entrapment within the household is justified as her moral responsibility. Mrs J (Old Apostolic), and Mrs I (Moslem) respectively provide key insights, into the importance of religious beliefs,

Ek kan nie se ek vrees niks nie want jy moet glo aan die Here dan kan niks in jou pad staan nie. Sien as jy geloof het dan hoef jy nie om te vrees nie. Sien as jy geloof het dan hoef jy nie om te vrees nie, bang te wees nie, nou ek voel so...

Ek glo waarlik dat Chris' en Moslem bid na een Here en die Here gee vir ons 'n uitweg in verskillende maniere, as jy waarlik glo en jou hart daarin sit, en vir die Here vra, die Here gee vir jou uitweg. Want in my getroude lewe het ek baie dinge oorgekom, en ek het die familie eerste gegaan of na die suster en daai suster gaan praat hoe't ek voel, en dan som dae voel jy mismoedig, jy moet met ene praat en na 'n tyd het ek eerste agter gekom, dat 'n mens kan nie met mens praat nie, want mens voel maar net jammer. Maar dan praat hulle weer oor met 'n volgende persoon en daai persoon kom vir jou weer terugvertel, waar jy vertrou in daai persoon geneem het en dan voel jy meer seer. Maar as jy met God praat, dan weet jy 'it bly tussen jou en God en God gee vir jou 'n uitweg op verskillende maniere. Dit vat nou wel miskien somtyds tyd, maar jy kan sien daar is 'n verandering in jou lewe.

In both passages it is strikingly clear how both women find emotional refuge and solace in their religious beliefs. They also use religion as a means to confront and deal with fear in its various manifestations. Furthermore, Mrs I's relationship with God takes the form of the emotional confidant, which also serves as a coping mechanism.

Several interviewees frequently prefaced statements with, 'Met die krag van die Here...' or remarks of a similar kind. During the course of discussions a strong sense emerged of several of the interviewee's growth in confidence. This personal growth has apparently emerged behind a protective religious shield. Whether this sense of protection is a product of imaginary or real religious belief is not the issue. It was clear that some interviewees derived individual strength from their religious beliefs.

While this is important in a day-to-day, 'life must go on' sense, it is difficult to assess what this means in terms of political consciousness. Individual growth through religious belief might lead either to an entrenched apolitical attitude, or give the individual the strength and confidence to challenge the sources of their oppression.<sup>18</sup>

The actual impact of the church and its following in the community varies across various sections of the community. A Facticeon activist explains:

There is a large sector of the working class in our area, where I don't think the church has had much impact. There is a layer who are so demoralised that even the church is not going to really influence how they perceive factors that shape their lives. It's not going to determine how they view certain things. Then you have another layer of people who you could classify upper working class or lower middle class who the church still has an incredible influence over. They are obviously people who haven't been demoralised in terms of their economic position. In the way that they can still have faith in God, their position isn't so bad. There must still be a God somewhere, still living, and they are still able to make ends meet.

The linkage between the various levels of the coloured working class and their respective economic position with their patterns of religious participation and political activity within the community is a crucial issue for this research. However, within the given confines of this study it is not possible to explore these questions

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<sup>18</sup> The Halevy thesis, (closely related to Weber's thesis of a link between Calvinism and the growth of capitalism), asserts that during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Britain, 'the importance of religious ideology in preventing political revolution'. In: M.Hill, A Sociology of Religion (Heinemann: London, 1973: 183), Hill however explains that Halevy's thesis was premised on the view 'that religious ideas may exert an important autonomous influence within the process of social change' (p.183).

in detail. Pargament, for example poses the following important question,

What type of religion held by what type of person faced, with what type of life situation, offers what types of advantages and disadvantages in their efforts to deal with the world? Implicit in this question is the potential value of a variety of religious experiences, rather than one type of experience alone (1986: 70).

Different religious philosophies and experiences could thus have different implications for the development of political consciousness amongst workers. As regards religious participation across denominational boundaries, there are some marked trends. Participation within the evangelical and charismatic churches such as the Apostolic churches, African Mission Episcopal (AME) and the Moravian churches tends to be far higher within coloured working class areas than in middle class areas.<sup>19</sup> In contrast the liturgical churches such as the Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches have stronger roots within the middle class coloured areas. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church also has a large following amongst Afrikaans-speaking coloured workers.

The Anglican and Roman Catholic churches are accorded the highest social status, associated with 'respectable coloured families'....Both Moravian and Dutch Reformed churches were held in low esteem, because they were seen as coloured churches (Ridd, 1981a: 202).

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<sup>19</sup> This commentary is based on observations by local residents. It is difficult to provide statistical evidence of these patterns. 1985 census data does not provide class differentiation in their breakdowns. The following 1985 census data provides membership statistics for the major churches in the coloured community: Dutch Reformed Mission Church: 674 781, Church of the Province: 181 244, Anglican Church: 149 460, Methodist Church: 149 181, United Congregational Church: 185 949, Lutheran Church: 102 293, Catholic Church: 266 150. Of these churches only the United Congregational can be considered evangelical. The other evangelical churches, according to the census, have less than 100 000 coloured members. In: SA Barometer Vol 1 (17), 1987.

Coupled with these factors are the historical roots of the liturgical churches. Liturgical churches have colonial links with the British Empire, and these aspects (several informants claim) are revered status symbols amongst many older generation coloured families. However, Mrs L, a member of the Moslem faith, continually told stories of her husband's service in the British army, which were intertwined with her glorification of the Royal family.

It appears that upper-class Moslems attempt to break from the legally defined racial categories by adopting an Islamic identity. It is particularly middle-class coloured people of the Moslem faith who attempt to use their faith as a new 'non-coloured' identity. In the following passage Ridd draws out some of the distinctions between the Moslem and Christian faiths within the coloured community:

The Muslims do indeed have an advantage over the Christian coloured: their religion provides them with a framework of social values distant from that of the dominant white establishment. It is a system of values which the whites respect but know little about. As a result, Muslim self-respect is based on something that is exclusively their own, and they gain advantage by accentuating those aspects of the Islamic life which they know will contribute to the image they wish to project (1981a: 403/4).

Religious identity is thus a mechanism for many coloured people to resolve the contested nature of their social identity. Muslim identity is particularly 'eiesoortig' in orientation, which relates to Ridd's key point that this is drawn from a faith which is exclusively their own and has no direct links with the dominant white culture and values.

Working class people who are Moslem appear not to be in the position where they can change their identity. The two Moslem women interviewed, Mrs I and Mrs L, are rooted within a working class community and freely referred to themselves as coloured or as 'n bruin persoon'. They also consistently referred to themselves as 'slamse mense'. They attached no pejorative connotations to this term and used it in a descriptive fashion. However, in my discussions with middle-class Moslems and non-Moslems the term was generally used with distinct pejorative intentions.

The increasing middle-class orientation of the Moslem population has also raised the ire of Christian coloured people. 'Die slamse mense hulle is soe suinig' or, as one coloured worker said to me as we drove past a middle-class coloured area, 'Ja en daar woon die ryk Moslems wat ons soe rob by die shop'. The proliferation of corner shops and cafe's within coloured communities are considerable. They are generally owned by Moslems.

Returning to the evangelical churches, it is important to note the explicitly individualistic and messianic message of these churches. The New Apostolic hymn book has on its cover page the classic charismatic quote, 'Make a joyful noise unto the Lord and follow Him and all your problems will be solved'. Salvation for these churches lies in repentance of worldly sins and following the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Bible. Confrontation with the state, or reference to the oppression that people experience, is either avoided or attributed to the sins that people have committed. The apolitical approach of these churches, through the individualisation and avoidance of their congregation's material context, has a direct bearing on the development of political consciousness in the

coloured community.<sup>20</sup> While it is difficult to gauge the precise impact that particular churches have on the development of political consciousness, it is nevertheless possible to argue, bearing in mind the influence of 'the priest' in the coloured community, that churches with an apolitical and individualised theology will have a depoliticizing effect on their members. A lack of political involvement also refers to the socio-economic position of the congregation members and cannot be attributed solely to membership of an evangelical church.

However, many of the ministers of the liturgical churches subscribe to some form of liberation and contextual theology. The Kairos Document, reflecting South African liberation theology asserts,

Christians, if they are not doing so already, must quite simply participate in the struggle for liberation and for a just society. The campaigns of the people, from consumer boycotts to stayaways, need to be supported and encouraged by the church....In other words the present crisis challenges the whole church to move beyond a mere 'ambulance ministry' to a ministry of involvement and participation' (1986: 28).

The involvement of ministers from the liturgical churches in Factreton has generally been supportative towards progressive organisations in the area. The Anglican Church in particular has practically assisted local activists. Confronting the sources of oppression has been a key part of these churches teaching and thus combines effectively with many of the local campaigns. During the September 1988 period, leading up to the Muncipal elections, a protest church service was organised at the Anglican Church. The priest read out the following theological statement.

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<sup>20</sup> See, M. Hill, A Sociology of Religion (Heinemann: London, 1973), p.193.

We worship God and pray together today because we cannot separate our worship from our material life and activities in society. We believe that God has a word in these times of confusion and repression, as we look for leadership and find our leaders imprisoned or under threat of imprisonment. In a time when truth is not to be found in those who presume to rule, we come to the source of truth, justice and love. We express our desire to say yes to God even if that means casting a no vote for the government in power (Extract from a church leaders statement: 1988).

The explicit political message of this statement reflects a clear connection between material context and the experiences of oppression, on the one hand, with a belief in God. Yet this statement goes one step further and strongly suggests what political decision people should take, in terms of the municipal election. Mr S, the only worker interviewee who is politically active is also a devout Christian and is extensively involved in the church. I asked him how he linked his religious beliefs with his political activities. He replied

Vir my is dit saam, ja die uiterlike mens en die innerlike mens se lewensbaan moet gelyk wees. Ek kan nie my baseer net met kerk en die tydelike deel van my lewensbaan gaan agteruit nie, wat help dit? En aan die ander hand help dit ook nie om daardie deel sterk te maak en die innerlike mens is swak nie, want uiteindlik dan verloor jy. So hulle twee moet saamloop, want hulle al twee is saam geïmplementeer, om saam te wees. Dieselfde vryheid en voorregte wat jy wil he in die innerlike mens as geestelike, dieselfde moet jy he in die tydelike deel van die lewe.

The church that Mr S (a security guard) is involved in, the Old Apostolic Church, is quite conservative. The source of Mr S's politicization was through experiences outside of the church and not through the church. As can be seen in the above passage, he now sees religion and politics as different but linked aspects of his life. In the following passage Mr S highlights the recent political changes in some churches:

Is nou dat die predikante, leiers nou eers begin hulle oe opmaak, soos byvoorbeeld vat nou die Archbishop Tutu, jy kan maar se dat hy is nou die sleutel tot die predikante. Want nou kan hulle sien, wat hulle nooit voorheen gesien het nie.

Since 1983, support for Dr Alan Boesak, the moderator of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, has become quite considerable within the coloured community. As one local political activist put it to me, 'The easiest way to pack out a meeting in the area is to tell people that Boesakkie is coming to speak.' The charismatic influence and the work of Dr Boesak have had a considerable impact on the development of a political awareness amongst large sections of the coloured community. While many political activists from several coloured areas with whom I discussed this issue did not always agree with Dr Boesak's political style and message, they all confirmed that he had an enormous popularity amongst members of their communities. The precise extent of this popularity is obviously very difficult to gauge. At the same time, there is a strong impression amongst certain sections of the community that the Dutch Reformed Mission Church is a 'coloured' church (Ridd, 1981a: 209). There are nevertheless moves afoot to amalgamate the coloured and African wings of the Dutch Reformed Church.

While it is difficult to assess precise reasons for individuals turning to alcohol or to the church, there are at least two discernible trends. Firstly, more women than men go to church, and men tend to consume more alcohol than women. This confirms the conventional view that men do most of the drinking and socialising, especially once they are married, while women remain at home to fulfill their matrifocal role.

Secondly, within a context of limited options, ways of 'handling' experiences of hardship are guided and shaped by the existing patterns of responses that have historically developed in the community. It is clear that both religion and alcohol consumption cannot be simply written off as tools or 'opiates' of the ruling class. Rather, they are serious mechanisms that coloured workers turn to as way of coping with the realities of their situation. On the political level, apolitical churches and excessive alcohol consumption pose particular problems for community organisations that are trying to develop collective forms of political consciousness amongst coloured workers.

#### 4.5 From domestic work to wage labour.

A theme throughout this thesis concerns the differences in experience between men and women workers. While the specific focus in this thesis is not on gender issues, the different positions and experiences that male and female workers have are important factors to be considered when exploring the roots of particular forms of social consciousness. The distinctively different positions in which women and men are located within the broader social division of labour has partly been discussed. The split between the 'public' (as a so-called male sphere), and the 'private' or home (as the women's sphere) is significant as a conceptual distinction. When making this distinction it is important not to ignore the reality of the many women who not only fulfil the tasks in the household but also do a full day's work on the shopfloor. Pollert argues that,

Women's social experience cannot be defined solely in terms of the family...The deficiency in analysis can be

traced back to the lack of reference to class discussions about women and the family. Once we include class we include working class experience, and for women this means both the working class family and the lived experience of working class jobs (1981: 3).

The relationship between unpaid, predominantly women's work in the household and paid wage labour in the public sphere needs examination. Unpaid domestic work performed by women is an essential part of the social reproduction of the conditions necessary for the physical reproduction of generations of working class labour (Vogel, 1987: 150). The various aspects of social reproduction of generations of working class labour have been a historical necessity for the growth of capitalist relations of production.

...the family has persisted as the site for the basic reproduction of labour power. It is the institution within which most commodities and services are consumed which provides for the mediation of the wage, and whose material responsibilities and support are reinforced by the state (West, 1979: 175).

While it is important to connect and situate the various aspects of working class life within the growth of racially defined capitalist relations of production, the family and women's oppression should not be seen as simply being functional to capitalist production. That the position of women and their labour at home and on the shopfloor serves particular functions is not being denied. What is being argued is the primary importance of: firstly, the essential social reproductive tasks that women fulfil in the form of unpaid domestic labour and child rearing; secondly, their position within the sexual division of labour, that is, being confined to only 'nimble finger' type jobs; thirdly, in contrast to fellow male workers, women workers deal with different experiences within a racially and gender divided material context; and finally, in terms

of the public/private dichotomy, the 'entrapment' and exclusion of women within the private sphere. In another study in this particular area Hunt argues that,

...in order to understand the position of women in Capitalist society, it is necessary to take the physical separation of the family unit from the social production as its central feature....The underlying integration of the family unit and social production, in the sense that each sphere constitutes the condition of existence of the other. Thus, the contradiction between the apparent separation, but actual integration of the domestic and industrial arena (1980: 2).

The importance and complexity of the relationship between home and the public arena cannot be underestimated. Of importance for this study is the manner in which this public/private split is an important element of the social exclusion of the coloured working class and in particular working class women. On the shopfloor the worker is part of a terrain primarily dominated by white males who have access to the primary sources of power to dominate, control and exclude workers. While men can return to their household and find some degree of refuge and solace, women face the burden of their matrifocal role. Coloured women workers are in this sense doubly excluded from participation in the public sphere. As noted previously, this severely constrains their ability to become involved in organisational work.

The different positions that men and women workers occupy within the social division of labour has a direct bearing on how they perceive and interpret their 'day-to-day' experiences. Porter makes the following points,

...I do not mean it to refer only or even mainly to the material sexual division of labour - who does what - but more to the ideological sexual division of labour; what women and men think, and how they interpret their

experience in relation to the differential nature of that experience. The sexual division of labour becomes a tool that we can use to unlock some of the mediation and contradictions that occur between men's and women's worlds (1983: 7).

Mrs J worked in an Irvin and Johnson fish factory for 25 years; filleting, cleaning and packing fish. The Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) organised in the factory yet seemed of little significance to her. It was for her located in '...wat buite kant is'. She had no big problems with her bosses. Wage labour seemed to be a perpetual necessity, 'Jy het maar net soe voort gegaan met jou werk en gedoen'. After work she went home, and did all the necessary domestic tasks for her family.

The same applies to Mrs I, who works in a clothing factory in Factreton's industrial area. Mrs L on the other hand worked as a domestic worker for every week of the year for six white families in the Green Point/Sea Point area. After a working day of paid domestic work for a white middle-class family, she would return to do unpaid domestic work for her own family. She was employed as a full-time domestic worker from the age of 13 until her retirement two years ago, at the age of 76.

Ja, ek het gewerk ja, maar ek het nooit in 'n factory gewerk nie, in service werk, en my missies, hulle was baie lief vir my. Ek het vir ses miese gewerk, ek't nog nie an'er plek gewerk nie. Goeie mense, ja, hulle was well-af mense, twee miese het da'em vir my erf gegee, twee wat dood is. (Baie geld?, I then asked - SF) Nie baie nie, was R200 wat ek gekry het.

After 60 years service to some of these families, she receives the small sum of R200 per month. For Mrs L, trade unions were simply not an issue. While heavily influenced by the patronising attitude and 'benevolence' of her employers, she appeared to have an

underlying unhappiness about her former employers and avoided my questions about her attitudes to them.<sup>21</sup>

In Mrs I's case her father, mother and sister have worked in clothing factories and she has also been employed at various clothing factories since she was 15 years old (Mrs I is at present 38 years old). In the following passage she describes the various tasks that she has done on the shopfloor:

Ek is op die oomblik 'n maschnis, ek kan op different masjiene werk, so 'is nie moeilik vir my om 'n an'er fabriek te gaan werk nie, because ek kan enige masjien werk, ek kan enige soort werk doen. Plain maschine, overlocker elasticating, flossing maschine, because by Symington was dit nou swimwear, want in die klerefabriek is 'it different soorte klere wat hulle maak. Rokke, broeke, sweaters, nou nie soos by Symington, waar't ons nou bathers en goed gemaak het nie. Hier's it weer rokke en baadjies.

When she began working in 1965 her weekly wages were R13, but have now risen to R108 per week, which she terms 'top wages'. As the factory where Mrs I is currently employed falls under the closed shop agreement, she is automatically a member of SACTWU. These are her impressions of SACTWU and the changes that have taken place within the union,

Wat ek begin werk het, toe was die salaris en die siekpay en a'mal die benefits was baie min, maar daar is 'n baie groot improvement van daai tyd tot nou, in die union, want hulle fight vir ons nou vir meer'er geld, vir baie benefits, vir onse siekpay, want onse siekpay was gevaarlik min. Maar dinge kan nie sommer net gebeur nie, want daar's baie dinge wat hulle ook moet deurgaang met die base voor't hulle ook kan kry wat hulle graag wil he. Soos ons increase wat hulle nou voor gesit het.

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<sup>21</sup> Key sources on domestic labour: J. Cock, Maids and Madams, A Study in the Politics of Exploitation (Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 1980). Also, E. Boddington, 'Domestic Service: Changing Relations of Class Domination, 1841 - 1948' (M.A. thesis: UCT, 1983).

While Mrs I is clearly impressed by the changes within SACTWU and the advances won by the new SACTWU officialdom for rank and file clothing workers, she persists in viewing the union as being separate from the rank and file. In informal discussions with several SACTWU officials, it was repeatedly stressed that one of SACTWU's major objectives is building the union on the shopfloor, combined with rigorous political and union education work. The effects of many years of bureaucratic unionist practices and clothing worker's consciousness of this legacy is gradually being transformed by new officials and emergent worker leaders.

Mrs I was a union shop steward for a brief period. Her reasons for discontinuing this work were

Ek was nie lank gewees nie, want toe wil my man nie gehet ek moet die meetings attend nie en toe gaan ek weg met my seun. Ja, toe agterna het ek nie geworry nie. Ja, ek moet mos nou vergaderings bywoon, maar ek het nie die geleentheid gehad, want toe het ek niemand om agter my kinders te kyk nie.

When I asked whether she was keen to be involved in the union's activities she replied

Ek wou graag communicate met an'er mense, en jy leer baie so en jy ontmoet verskillende mense en jy gaan na baie ander verskillende dinge toe. Jy kan baie dinge leer, jy voel vry om baie dinge te doen, nie vir jouself nie, maar vir an'er mense ook.

The strong sense of entrapment displayed by Mrs I is again reflected in these quotations. She has particular desires for herself and her children, but most of these are being curtailed by several factors: the double burden of wage work and domestic labour; financial problems; the dependency of her children upon her and their welfare

and finally her submissive relationship with her husband.<sup>22</sup> This combination of factors reinforces her exclusion from full participation in the public sphere and ultimately politics. I asked how she felt at the end of the day. She replied

Moeg, moeg. As jy jou die hele week, of elke dag op diesel'e masjien, dan voel jy nie so moeg nie. As wat jy moet gaan van een masjien na 'n an'er masjien, 'specially nou van daai plain masjien na 'n overlocker, 'it maak jou gedaan.

During the final interchange of the interview, I asked Mr I what she would ask for, if any of her wishes could be granted. She replied, '...is net 'n huis vir myself en my kinders. Dit sal my die gelukkigste mens maak in die wereld, ek dink so'. Once the taperecorder was switched off, I asked her whether she had enjoyed the discussion/interview. She replied, 'Ja dis lekker om vry te wees, om oor jouself te praat'.

While Mrs I's entrapment and dependency on the household are powerful female experiences, male worker experiences are far from simply being the reverse. Mr D in the following passage describes some of his experiences as a trench digger.

Dit was waar ons slote maak. Ek kom daar een klong se: 'Mister, kom staan kaalhol vir my hiersa'. Nou kaalhol mean jy moet die grond weg gooi. Ek dink hoe die duiwel praat die man dan nou, staan hiersa kaalhol, (laughs) mean te se ek moet nou my broek uittrek, maar ek was nie spyt nie. Maar toe weer Brooklyn kom, daar is mos gravel. O, toe dink ek, as ek da'em nie, nie die vrou gehet nie, en die kinders gehet nie, dan het ek wragtig die job sommer nou opgegooi. Toe dink ek, net oor die vrou en oor die kinders en die dak. En ek h't gehou, die Here het my gespaar en ek het gewerk. Soggens gat ek hier uit met my bike (bicycle - SF), dan is die wolke duskant duk, wat ek in die Koeberg kom, dan reent 'it. Daar's mos nie skuil plek nie, dan moet ek ry totdat ek by die werk kom. Nou

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<sup>22</sup> See D. Taylor: 'Life Sentence, the Politics of Housework', in New Internationalist, March 1988.

eers 'n bietjie by die vuur gat staan, klere uittrek, nat klere, overall aantrek, koffie maak, en somer stukkie brood ook. Hoekom die pik en die graaf gat nou 'n bietjie swaar wies. Pik en graaf, ja en toe wanne'r ek gepension word, toe kom hulle met die masjienerie, wat die trenche self doen en almal daai.

Mr D's revealing commentary about his responsibility to his family as a motivating factor for not leaving his job are fundamentally important. With no qualifications, ten children and a wife to support, he had little option but to stick it out in an arduous job of 'pik en graaf' everyday. His final commentary about the use of machines after his retirement reflect back on his role as a traditional labourer. Mr D worked with a pick and shovel for over forty years. He is in the traditional sense the last of a generation of working class labourers. The nature of the labour process has changed considerably with the increasing use of machinery, with workers in the contemporary era becoming more and more the 'mere appendages of machines'. Mr D is, therefore, a remarkable reminder of the traditional manual labourer. In the following passage he illustrates other aspects of his job:

'n Wit voorman gehet, ou baas Kloppers, wat hy nou wil 'n stuk werk klaar he, voor die pak (end of the working day - SF). Dan laat hy ag man piek, piek, wat hy kan bou. D kom hier, Myburgh kom hiersa, jy kom hier, jy kom hier, ek wil he julle moet stukke werk. Dan is dit nog Saterdag oggend, dan se hy, die pype wil ek le, voor half-elf moet die pype gele wies. So moet julle gat was en sit in die hok, as enige baas hier kom, ek is baas hier nou. Dan werk ons vir daai man. As ons klaar is, dan se hy, 'dankie my volkie', die ou kerel was altyd lief om te gese het, 'dankie my volkie, op julle kan ek bou ja'.

He and his fellow workers' loyalty to their foreman, combined with the foreman's patronising benevolence towards them, constitute strong bonding elements within a small group of workers. These small groups of manual City Council workers are still commonly known

as 'the gangs'. The Roads and Drainage Department gang of trench diggers continually move around from job to job and the existence of a collective sense of 'die manne' or 'the gang' provides them with a degree of meaning and purpose in a job that is physically and emotionally draining. The overtly male orientation is an overriding feature of this type of work. This is 'man's work', a male domain of hard manual workers. Their loyalty to the patronising white foreman is more than just submissive in orientation (although submissive attitudes are an essential part of this kind of relationship). The relationship and loyalty are also based on and strengthened by respect and thankfulness. These aspects are reflected in the following passage where Mr D explains how the foreman staved off retrenchment for himself and three fellow workers.

Daar was 'n tyd gewies, ek werk elf maande, toe word die Corporation (City Council - SF) se werk ook soe sleg, toe sit die voormanne, toe sit die base net af (Late 1930s, depression period - SF). Daai selfde voorman, oubaas Kloppers, hy se my D, jong die mes is skerp jong, maar ek gaan baklei met die groot base oor julle vier. En dit was net so. Hiersa kom'it, die wat moet nou afgaan, die wat moet nou afgaan, die ou kerel se, Mr Knowles, hierdie vier man is die vier man wat my brood verdien, ek gat nie vir hulle laat loop nie. Mr Knowles wanner hulle loop, dan gat ek ook saam met hulle, Mr Knowles vat weer die list en hy gat kantoor toe. Toe hy kom weer daárvanaan af, toe's ons vier name uitgekrap, ons kan maar werk. So as jy jou bes doen, jou voorman kan jou lewe save, by die werk. Maar waar jy vir hom backanswer gee, onbeskofte tale gee, dan kan die man nie jou lewe save nie.

During Mr D's term of employment for the City Council, the existing municipal workers trade union was widely seen as being a bureaucratic sweetheart union; therefore, he did not take the union seriously. Mr D's view of his employers was, 'Lekker, ...ek kan niks se van die base nie, so wat ek gese het, jy moet jou daaglikse brood verdien, dan kan die base nie fout op jou vind nie...' In part, Mr D's

conservatism and acceptance of the status quo can be explained by his old age, and this most likely influences his present day reflections on past experiences. However, the recurring importance of bread and butter issues played a role in shaping his actions: earning a living, the family, the house and the bills all weighed heavily on him, as he submitted to the authority of the foreman. Within a context of no effective worker organisation that could take up these issues in a progressive way, there are but few options that can be used as a coping mechanism or as a means to 'handling' a harsh reality. Alcohol, sport, entertainment were the more appealing options during Mr D's younger years. As he grew older, however, there was little outside the church to turn to. There was nevertheless the underlying acceptance that he must have a job/income to survive.

Mr V worked for the City Council for 24 years: 20 years for Parks and Gardens and the remainder for the Electricity Department. For the past 12 years he has worked as a janitor. At Parks and Gardens he used to work in the council gardens, a particular incident between Mr V and a foreman reveals how he draws on his previous experience of growing up on the farms.

Die grond, as jy daar geplant, plantjie sit jy nie weer die selfde plantjie op daai stukkie grond nie. Dan aart hy weer bietere op die grond as wat hy geaart het op die ander grond. Kom hy vir my se, (The foreman - SF) 'what the bloody hell, what do you know about the ground you can't see...' Toe se ekke, 'Well look hear don't come and swear to me', toe gat ek daar in die hokkie toe was ek voel op. Toe vat ek die byl toe se ek, 'kap jou met die byl nou, moet nie vir my kom vloek, vroeg hier oggend nie'. Toe gat hy my report by die superintendent. Toe se ek vir die superintendent van die grond. Toe se hy wel dis reg wat jy het, so leer jy jou grond ken, dan wiet jy watter plante kan jy hier plant van jaar en watter plante kan jy daar plant. Goeie Hollander gewies, ken my werk, geken.

In many respects Mr V is very similar to Mr D; for example, in his conservatism and acceptance of the status quo. However once an explicit breach of 'decent' behaviour occurs within that accepted worker/forman relationship then, in Mr V's case this was not tolerated. Particular when this led to a confrontation that contradicted what he had learnt through experience to be correct. The result was an explosion of anger and his ultimate resignation from that job.

Blomme geplant, toe chuck ek die job. Toe gat ek weer, labourer werk doen. Van labourer het ek op gewerk toe gaan ek later linesman toe. Linesman is een wat die leer kyk. Hy moet op die leer staan dan moet hy op klim dan moet hy help in die lyn want hy moet werk daar bo. Die draade is stukkend dan moet jy dit vas maak help draad trek, vas maak krag deur sit, almal die, my job daai. Gevaarlik job, baie gevaarlik gewies. Ek raak oud, baie gevaarlik gewies.

The perpetual necessity to be employed (Mr V is 76 years old and still works full-time) is a recurring theme of working class life. He too supports his wife and other dependants. The necessity to have a continued income sets real limits to potential resistance and confrontation with the bosses. In their older years, both Mr D and Mr V have become conservative and apolitical in their outlook, yet both expressed a real antagonism towards their employers. This antagonism, although at times hidden beneath paternalistic benevolence by their employers and loyalty in return, is nevertheless a reality that has fundamentally shaped their behaviour. Located within a context of no progressive organisational alternatives, the perpetual necessity to make ends meet and to support the family, are the overriding factors that have shaped their behaviour patterns. Antagonism and its various products: anger, bitterness, hurt pride, and resentment need to be

emotionally contained or suppressed by the individual, to avoid losing one's job. These emotions ultimately need to be directed somewhere or resolved somehow. A social worker explained it as follows:

The men come home really fed up from work. Most of them are doing mundane, semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, being ordered around all day, with the 'Ja baas' thing, having to swallow their pride. They come home and they let fly in the one place they can, asserting all the authority they've squashed during the day, really making their power felt. And it's a crazy thing - if they don't do that, their wives drive them to it. I've seen it happen. Perhaps, after a day of battling at home with the kids and the cooking and the washing, they also want a chance to let fly - or they want to see their husbands being self respecting and masterful, instead of downtrodden. So if the guy's quiet and gentle for once, she'll taunt him until he explodes in a fury (Durbach, 1976: 49).

Mr S in contrast to the other interviewees is a trade union member. He currently works as a security guard at a metal factory but has previously done several jobs.

Ek het gewerk by verskillende plekke, maar die eintlikke staanwerk wat ek gehad het was op die spoorweg, op die Table Bay Harbour gewerk, in die dokke. Ek onthou toe ons nog op die stands gebou het vir die royal visit, die tweede Royal visit. Vanaf Table Bay Harbour, ek het 'n tyd gewerk vir Parks en Forests. Toe ek trou, toe werk weer op die spoorweg in Soutrivier. Ek het daar gewerk as 'n timekeeper, goeie tyd daar gewerk. Toe ek die spoorweg los, se maar in 1950, toe ek getrou het, ek het toe getrade in soft goods, tot op 'n tyd wat ek hier gaan werk het by die kamp, Ysterplaat, taamlik lank daar gewerk.

Mr S freely admits to heavy drinking and roaming in his youth. He subsequently changed his lifestyle dramatically and became a devout Apostolic and has for the past three years been chairperson of the local civic. He now actively engages in community and church work every evening and weekend. He consequently does not have time for union activities at work. In the following passage Mr S explains his participation in a two day strike at the factory:

men's conversion to religion generally came later in life. Only two of the workers had any real interest in trade unions: Mrs I (a clothing worker) was so 'entrapped' by various relations and responsibilities that this interest was impossible to pursue. Mr S (a security guard) is supportive but is far too busy with other activities to be involved in union work.

Of the six worker interviewees, only Mr S is an activist as such. However, the workers interviewed are either too old or 'trapped' to be involved in community politics. So much of their working experiences occurred within an organisational vacuum. Antagonisms and hardships that were experienced had to be resolved by other directly available means that would allow people to continue with their jobs and which would provide some degree of meaning in life within a context where material survival was the primary concern, but not the only concern.

The following section turns to the area of culture within the coloured community.

#### 4.6 The Culture of Exclusion.

Throughout this study the centrality of 'human experience' has been stressed. Defining this term is a complex task and is part of a controversial debate (Thompson, 1978; Anderson, 1980). A simple way of defining 'human experience' is to see it as what 'happens' to people. The interaction between people and people, people and things, people and places is perceived felt and internalised by people. This dialogue between the human individual and his/her reality is precisely what experience is. All individuals live and struggle within a specific material and ideological context; their consciousness absorbs and is conditioned by that context. In the following passage Thompson outlines some of the complexities of the term 'human experience'.

Men and women also return as subjects, within this term not as autonomous subjects, 'free individuals', but as persons experiencing their determinate productive situations and relationships, as needs and interests and as antagonisms, and then 'handling' this experience within their consciousness and their culture (two other terms excluded by theoretical practise) in the most complex (yes, relatively autonomous) ways, and then (often but not always through the ensuing structures of class) acting upon their determinate situations in their turn (1978: 356).

The above passage aptly captures the ambiguity of human life, with its determinate and indeterminate elements and forces. Human experience is perhaps the most indeterminate of all social phenomena. Yet just as there is diversity in experience there can be commonality. It is precisely these common experiences that need to be identified and analysed. It is around common experiences that people can unite and coalesce as collective forces to form social, political and cultural groups. This section will explore the specific relationship between experience and culture, within the context of Factreton.

...with 'experience' and 'culture' we are at a junction point of another kind. For people do not only experience their own experience as ideas, within thought and its procedures, or (as some theoretical practitioners suppose) as proletarian instinct, etc. They also experience their own experience as feelings within their culture, as norms, familial and kinship relationships and reciprocities, as values or (through more elaborated forms) within art or religious beliefs. This half of culture (and it's full one half) may be described as affective and moral consciousness (Thompson, 1978: 363).

It is in this sense that this section thus far has been dealing with culture as it is experienced by coloured workers in their kin networks, workplace and religion. These aspects of cultural experience combined with the culture of celebration, music, art and sport constitute the fundamental fabric within which social experiences are felt and understood within the community.

Yet how can the controversial subject of cultural formations within coloured communities be approached? Firstly, it is necessary to accept that in reality there is no single culture as such, but a diversity of cultures within the coloured community. To assert that a single identifiable 'coloured culture' exists at present is a distortion of reality. Cultural experience and practice as currently exists within the coloured community are numerous and diverse. Freedberg argues that the coloured population group,

...in the sense of "a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from its own, (and whose) members... are, or feel themselves, or are thought to be, bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture." This categorisation does not apply to the coloured people. I will demonstrate that they do not display any of these characteristics exclusively, but that they are loosely bound through historical circumstance, rather than common ethnic identity (1987: 8/9). ←

Some of the elements of these cultures are products of a white dominated culture while other elements are drawn from different cultural roots such as Islamic culture. Although often ignored, there are also organically developed cultural elements and forms within the coloured community, such as the musical forms that emanated from the District Six era. This diversity of cultural forms and expression has been created in response to the racially and culturally exclusive practices of the apartheid state and also contributes to the existing divisions and fragmentation within the coloured community. The political, social and cultural exclusion of the coloured population from both the white ruling order and the African masses through apartheid legislation is a central point in this context. Fitzgerald argues that

The fact that the coloured people are culturally white, although excluded from the white social order, means that they are more harmed by social separation from the whites than acculturated Africans and Indians, who are supported by cultures of their own to which they have grafted selected elements of white culture (1980: 82).



While it is problematic to argue that coloured people are simply 'culturally white' and Africans and Indians are more 'acculturated', the central point in the above quote refers to the social exclusion and separation that coloured people have experienced. This social and political exclusion has resulted in the coloured population developing culturally exclusive ways of responding to their oppression and exclusion from access to the social, political and cultural avenues within the ruling white minority.

This cultural exclusion has contributed to individualistic practices amongst coloured workers. As there is division and diversity, there is also commonality within this confusing matrix of experience and

culture. It is through the process of identifying and developing these common cultural experiences that there exists the real potentiality for a common positive identity and culture for the coloured working class.

The following passage is a political activist's response to a question about the prevalence of individualism amongst coloured workers.

It's one of the manifestations of alienation, although I wouldn't see it as a strictly scientific term. I think it's conceptual in so far as it allows us to understand the internalisation of oppression, but I think individualism is a dominant characteristic. It's individualism in so many different ways, you see. If you look at the coloured Moslem community, there's a kind of 'eiesoortigheid'. A kind of ethnic nationalism of the community and they define their group status as separate from the other groups in the coloured community. That expresses itself in a broad kind of individualism: they don't care, there isn't that kind of community thing, you know. Let's talk about neighbours, for example. There isn't that kind of neighbourliness that you find in the African community, even in working class communities.

While this individualism can be seen as an expression of alienation and deprivation, it also can be viewed as a form of self protection in response to particular circumstances that people find themselves in. If social identity is to provide meaning and cohesion within a community context, it has to provide a common identifiable meaning to all members of that cultural formation or community. Furthermore, social identity needs to provide a continuity of meaning and purpose for participants within the community. A lack of these elements or damage to basic cultural networks via forced removals, for example, has resulted in a dispersed individualistic response to the effects of oppression. Several informants in Factreton spoke of the problem of individualism and the difficulty

that this creates for building collective community organisation. This issue will be returned to in Chapter 6.

The diversity of cultural influences within the coloured community is considerable. In terms of the older generation, anything from Boeremusik, Dutch choirs, jazz music and the 'Kaapse Klopse'. Although much maligned by many activists in the community, the 'Klaapse Klopse' tradition is strongly rooted within the coloured working class. Mrs J and Mr V both loved 'boeremusik', while Mrs L used to sing in Moslem choirs in the Bo Kaap. Mrs L speaks about the 'Hollandse Troepe':

Ag musiek, ek het baie gehou van die Hollandse troepe. Nou my seun en sy seuntjie, Farouk was in die Hollandse troepe. Nou ek is die ene wat die koekies bak an a'mal daai, nou dek vir hulle tafel hier. Ek het nou weer vir hom gevra, gaan jy nie die jaar in die troepe. Hy se, 'Ek weet nie Mamma, hulle vra dan nou so baie geld vir die klere'.

For the youth, alert to fashionable trends, the early 1980s saw the reggae music of Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, with its overtly political message, become extremely popular. However, over the past few years the popularity of black American music has increased considerably. Michael Jackson, Tina Turner and Whitney Houston are but a few of the most popular singers. The slick and cool black American petty-bourgeois image has stirred the imagination and aspirations of many Factreton youth. The following points were made by a local political activist,

I think Western culture has obviously had a big impact on the coloureds, precisely because of the absence of a strong culture. That is why certain things can be artificially imposed amongst the coloureds because of that situation. That is why coloureds change according to the fashions, you know in dress, in ways of speaking, in songs and so on. But I think a long with that, they still sing their own songs and it still has an affect on them. If you see the kind of things that do develop in periods of

struggle, you will notice that it takes the tunes from Western culture, but it also takes from the organic Cape tunes of the District Six era.

The point in the above quote, an 'absence of a strong culture', needs clarification. The speaker seems to imply that, there is a lack of an 'own' culture. The obvious danger of stating this is that we may fall into the trap of Nationalist Party type thinking with its rigid group ideology. However, the important point that the above interviewee makes concerns the lack of cultural cohesion, which together with the fragmentation of community networks has created a greater susceptibility within the Factreton community to imported cultural influences. A variety concert organised by the local CAYCO branch was held in the Kensington civic centre. The concert was organised to raise money for striking Spekenham workers. The evening was a popular success with the venue packed to capacity (approximately 1000 people). The performers on stage were primarily drawn from the Kensington/Factreton area. For example, disco dancing by high school students, folk singing, karate performances by the local karate club and gym exercises by the gym club. The major reason for the concert's success was not the 'cause' as such but that most of the performers on stage were from the community itself. The audience was filled with whole families who had come to see their sons, daughters and friends perform. Disco dancing was by far the most popular performance for the audience.

While it is sometimes assumed that coloured people have no culture of their own (Fitzgerald, 1980), it is also incorrect to assert that there is a 'coloured culture' as such. This study argues that the ←  
diversity of cultural forms within the coloured communities are in part inherited from the white, African, Islamic and other cultures.

However, is there a historical continuity within this diverse mixture of cultural forms? And is there an organic cultural element which is specific to the communities classified 'coloured'? These are important questions which need to be dealt with in future studies.

What is the root of the divisions and individualism that exists within the coloured community? One activist, argued the following,

So I don't know if one talks about division. I think it is more to do with competition. It is inter-relationships which create a kind of division because solidarity will be an acknowledgment of your problem. So psychologically there has got to be division in order to survive. The other thing that divides people again is their responses to their situation. You see, the divisions are something that come about on their own because of people's reactions and interactions. They don't create a total condition: they find themselves in it and they merely respond in that way. And so of course the people who control the situation don't want to promote the type of common feel. No ways are these things going to be promoted by the powers that be. That is why you cannot possibly have unity in a situation that is designed to create a permanent 'disunity'.

The practices of the state and the ruling white social order have excluded the coloured population from the political and economic sources of power and helped to maintain division and disunity within the ranks of the oppressed. The specific material context that individuals are located within also pressurises people to respond in individualistic ways to their oppression. As one political activist argued,

I think those cultural forms are a means of community outlet of their experiences, obviously found in any oppressed community. There are always specific and general forms of cultural expression and they take various forms and they express a kind of localised vernacular discourse of that oppressed community. So, in the coloured community the whole spirit and discourse of coloured culture, District Six culture, expressed itself in a musical way. It took a specific form of that cultural experience. Now how does that impact in the community? It's kind of a strange thing because, for the working class it was

definitely a means of self expression. But it's not something which you share easily. It's not something which is defined with other aspects of coloured working class life. It's a kind of alienated form of self expression, as opposed to the African township musical culture. African township culture is more easily communicable. It doesn't operate as a guilt trip or as a kind of extreme form of alienated expression, as the "coons" do.

Three central points are made in the above passage; firstly, that a central element of coloured workers culture is an expression of their experience of alienation and deprivation; secondly, that this experience of alienation is individually internalised, and therefore difficult to communicate to others around them, who might be feeling the same experiences; thirdly, whereas African cultural experience is more easily communicable, cultural experience for the coloured working class is expressed as individualism and 'eiesoortigheid'. The culture of exclusion embraces both individualistic and 'eiesoortigheid' behaviour patterns. The culture of exclusion operates as a way of distancing the individual from others around him or her, particularly people that pose some form of threat to their situation. In this sense the culture of exclusion is a protective posture and a way of dealing with the ongoing experience of exploitation, oppression and alienation.

I mean we're all like that, we don't talk about 'we' as everyone else involved. Just us as coloureds. We think of ourselves only, we think of what is important for us. We have privileges and yet we're oppressed. The boere have been able to co-opt so many of us or if they haven't co-opted us half way, you know our tails are still hanging out and our heads are still in the co-optation. We're in between nothing you know, and we had to defend ourselves all our lives, defend our culture. So we don't know where we are really. We don't know who we are. We do have a culture, although some people might say we don't have a culture, I think it's been so mixed, so embroiled in other things. We're a stepchild, and I think that's why we're such a lot of individualists. Trying to prove ourselves all the time you know, and to most people trying to prove yourself is trying to be more white than black. Trying to have straight hair and that kind of thing, being better is being white.

Again several important points are made, although they do not come across clearly. On the one hand, the partial co-optation and exclusion of other sections of the coloured community has exacerbated divisions. On the other hand, the individual struggle to establish a positive sense of identity translates into individualism. As the above interviewee put it 'we're always trying to prove ourselves'. Freedberg however argues the following,

...it cannot be denied that in some sense the coloured population does display a communal 'ethos', that in fact many of them do see themselves as 'kleurlinge'. It is this unarticulated sense of community which is frequently used by analysts to suggest that there is some basis for differentiating between coloureds, whites and Africans. However, this is a purely latent sense of 'cultural' identity, and does not generally directly affect political action. It is a function of the unique position which coloureds have held in South African society, and is the outcome of an historical process which has led to the increasing separation of the coloured population from the rest of the South African population. This type of identity is not to be confused with 'political' ethnicity, which emerges when a group enters the political arena through the politicization of issues affecting its members' lives (1987: 9/10).

While this 'latent sense of cultural identity' does not 'directly affect political action', it is necessary to consider the potential development of an active cultural identity, and its potential links to the development of political consciousness amongst coloured workers. How can this latent sense of cultural identity be developed into a unifying force for those people designated 'coloured'? The central issue is not 'colouredness' in the primordial sense in which this term has been used by the apartheid state, but the necessity to develop a cultural and political identity that is rooted in the issues and experiences of those communities designated coloured and that will serve to unify people. A key question to pose is: How, within those communities classified coloured, can a positive and progressive popular culture

be created that transcends racial stereotypes and unites people across cultural and social divisions? A Factreton activist argued the following:

The issues that they all have in common haven't been issues that we've been able to tackle in our organisations. That's why it's so important that we start identifying those issues in our organisations. What are the issues that can actually bring communities together. I think that's why we changed our policy on how we organise in the civic. It wasn't fostering, it wasn't enhancing that development of an organised community where people would relate to each other as a community with common problems and common experiences. And common responses can be worked out to those problems. When I was talking about culture I was talking about a culture that unites people, their own culture and forms of expression.

The process of identifying those common experiences and common problems of coloured workers is a starting point for community activists and researchers. In part this process has already begun, not just by setting up specific cultural organisations, but by exploring these issues within local civic organisations. Furthermore, the process of working out common and united responses to those identifiable common problems and experiences is the crux of the matter. Herein lies the road ahead in terms of breaking down the various cultural divisions, and ultimately the culture of exclusion. Finally, within this process of exploration and resolution lie the threads of a popular culture which is communicable and unified in nature.

This process is already underway in various organisations. A good example is SACTWU.

Like if you look at the songs which were developed in the three week Rex strike (Rex Trueform - SF) and after that, now continuously throughout a large section of the coloured working class. Like say the old songs 'Sak en Pak' and so

on which emerged in District Six, 'ons gat sak en pak Elsie's toe', (Elsie's River - SF). Now they would identify with GAWU, COSATU and they would put in those names you see 'sak en pak gaan ons GAWU toe'. They would sing the tunes of those songs and they would put in words against their boss, for higher wages, and those kind of things. They would also take Western songs and do exactly the same with that, put in their own words and develop their own songs in that way. And also the question of church hymns and so on has the same effect. Say, for instance, if they don't know the songs, they sing hymns, during periods of struggle. If they don't know freedom songs, they sing hymns to express their moods.

The above quote from a trade unionist draws out how garment workers through their experience of strike action drew on their own traditions and experiences to formulate cultural forms of protest. Songs, plays, poems and so on are all ways of drawing on the traditions that coloured workers have. Needless to say there are also borrowed elements from other cultures. This is often an important, albeit contradictory, part of developing a popular culture that has organic roots within the coloured working class. The above example illustrates the beginnings of the creation of a popular culture for coloured workers. This example illustrates how coloured workers collectively initiated creative forms of cultural expression to effectively challenge and resist a particular form of oppression. Other sites of struggle will also need to develop ways of drawing on common historical and daily experiences, if a united popular culture is to be created. It is ultimately through this creative process of resistance and growth that the various manifestations of the culture of exclusion can be broken down.

#### 4.7 Conclusion.

This chapter has dealt with a range of worker experiences within the Factreton community. Firstly, a set of powerful experiences have been detailed that have bearing on the development of political consciousness. These are: matrifocal relations and male power in the household; excessive alcohol consumption by many male coloured workers; a predominance of women turning to religion for solutions; a split between work experiences in the home and experiences at the workplace; and, finally, the culture of exclusion and its manifestations, such as individualism and 'eiesoortigheid'.

Secondly, through this exploration the constraints and limitations placed on individuals, in terms of material factors, domestic responsibilities, antagonisms at work and the pressure of living up to traditions, has clearly shown how the possibilities for personal choice are drastically reduced. In short, workers often act on the basis of material necessity or on the basis of what is expected of them. Seldom, as was seen in the case of Mrs I, are workers allowed to attain what they want or desire out of life. The differences between what is expected and/or necessary and what is wanted by individuals and people is an area of human behaviour that needs to be explored. This area has a direct bearing on the development of the political consciousness of people. If the individual worker feels 'trapped' in his or her situation, be it via domestic, work, or religious responsibilities or by expectations of how, and what an

individual must do, their potential for developing a wider political awareness is constrained.

If the material conditions under which individual workers and their families live are so destitute and poverty stricken then the potential for fatalism and defeatist attitudes to set in are increased. An element of hope and meaning, be it through work, religion, the family or culture must be achieved if individuals are to develop as emotional beings within an oppressive context. If defeatist and fatalistic attitudes set in then it is likely that the realm of formal political activity will have virtually no meaning to persons, except as spectators of events that appear out of their control.

Political organisations are exploring ways of giving meaning and hope to workers that are stifled and curtailed by their oppressive circumstances. Workers need to see some purpose in breaking away from and challenging the oppressive relationships that they are part of. The following chapter shifts the focus from the documentation of worker experience within particular oppressive relationships, and provides an analysis of coloured workers' consciousness of politics.

## Chapter 5. Learning from Experience: The Politics of Exclusion.

### 5.1 Introduction.

The culture and consciousness of coloured workers has from the outset of this study been described as being exclusivist in content and form. On a national level, there has been the historical development of the apartheid state and legislation, with its racially exclusive practices towards the coloured working class and people. On a general social and cultural level, there has been the exclusion of coloured people from the dominant white social and cultural arena. On a local and spatial level, there has been the physical removal of coloured people from white residential areas. The focus of this chapter is on coloured workers' experience of the politics of exclusion and the implications it has had for the formation of political consciousness among coloured workers.

The central argument of this study asserts that a variety of individual and social means and mechanisms have been used by coloured workers in dealing with the effects and experiences of exclusion. This study argues that it is incorrect to characterise coloured workers' political attitudes as apathetic. There are of course individuals and perhaps even groups of coloured workers that may be described as being predominantly apathetic in their behaviour. Bluntly put, this study argues that the general characterisation 'apathetic' is wrong. Many coloured workers perceive politics to be separate from their lives and their daily community and work experiences. Generally, most coloured workers do not perceive their problems to be political and seldom explore political ways of resolving their problems. Coloured workers have hence tended to be unresponsive toward political issues and

organisation.<sup>1</sup> Coloured workers consequently have tended to use non-political avenues to channel the effects of their oppression and exploitation.

On the one hand, the apartheid state and dominant ideological institutions have excluded the coloured people through political means. On the other hand, coloured workers, in response to the effects of state actions and their particular experiences of oppression, have defined themselves as being outside the various terrains of politics. Facing the brunt and effect of the apartheid state's practice and ideology, and simultaneously having to respond to the demands of their economic situation has shaped coloured workers' consciousness in a distinctive manner. In short, bread and butter issues have become the dominant issues that preoccupy their time and energy. The pressures and demands of 'making ends meet' have sucked coloured workers into a struggle for economic survival that has reinforced the gap between their 'social' consciousness of living and working conditions and their consciousness of politics.

This study will argue that the effects of their experience of oppression and exploitation has meant that coloured workers have internalised a high degree of alienation, deprivation and fear. Social experience, however, does not occur outside of ideology but within a particular ideological discourse.<sup>2</sup> The prevailing dominant

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to maintain a clear distinction between unresponsive and apathetic attitudes. On the level of common assumption the term apathetic has distinct pejorative connotations, whereas unresponsive does not. The essential differences between these terms relate to the issues of choice and state of mind. The term apathetic virtually denies that the person so described is making a choice at all. It also implies that the person simply does not care about politics. The term unresponsive, on the other hand, implies that the person has made a decision to not respond. It also does not attribute negative aspects to the person's attitude or state of mind.

ideological discourse of the apartheid society is a fundamental part of the context within which experience is felt and interpreted. The ways in which coloured workers have interpreted these experiences and feelings have been manipulated by the various ideological institutions in our society such as the state, schools, mass media, and churches. Responses to experiences of oppression and exclusion have generally been individualised and de-politicised. This has in part contributed to the lack of community consciousness and cohesion amongst coloured workers. An activist argued the following points about the coloured community:

Even in the height of 1985, during a parent-teachers meeting, they wouldn't once mention the politics of the class boycotts of 1985. But the parents were coming there because their kids were involved in the boycotts. Their kids were involved in having to make decisions about going on class boycotts or not. The parents are discussing it at the supper table, working class or middle class parents. It's amazing the contradiction. They would talk about it in the taxis, they would talk about it in trains, but its not defined as politics. Politics is defined as something separate. Getting involved in politics is defined as something separate from the organisations which they would normally be part of.

Coloured workers' responses to politics are thus fundamentally shaped by their experience of oppression, and, in particular, their experience of exclusion. Coloured workers' experience of oppression and hardship, and their use of non-political avenues to

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2 The term 'discourse' can be defined as follows; the '...most general sense as any regulated system of statements'. J.Hendriques et al: Changing the Subject, (Metheun: London, 1984: 115). In this study the term ideological discourse will refer to the dominant discourse defined and perpetuated by the major institutions of ideological inculcation. The state, churches, schools and mass media which are controlled by the apartheid regime or allies of the apartheid system spread and define a particular discourse. This ideological discourse attempts to shape and manipulate subordinate groups' understanding and interpretation of their own experiences. In this sense ideological discourse becomes a means to gearing oppressed people's actions towards non-political avenues or towards a politics that emphasises the legitimacy and necessity for political actions within legislative confines.

direct the effects of this oppression, suggests that there is a latent or potential political consciousness prevalent amongst many coloured workers.<sup>3</sup>

A good example of this has been the recent developments within the recently launched South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU). The Cape Town based former clothing workers union the Garment and Allied Workers Union (GAWU), which merged into the above union, was for many years dormant and apparently devoid of worker militancy. A number of clothing worker strikes have occurred in Cape Town during the past two years. While most have been around wage issues, there was also a significant stayaway in protest against the Labour Relations Amendment Act of 1988. Stayaway action against state legislation is an explicitly political act and cannot be categorised as simply economic. Former GAWU officials claim that during this stayaway, several clothing factories that had not seen worker militancy for over 50 years had supported the stayaway call. While the issue of a latent political consciousness is difficult to show in reality, the above example does make a compelling case for this position.

#### 5.1.1 Background.

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3 The term 'latent' political consciousness refers to the undeveloped potential for the emergence and growth of political consciousness. It is important however to avoid placing this notion within a true consciousness/false consciousness dichotomy. This study will at a later stage argue against this type of formulation. The term 'latent' thus refers to the potential for the development of political awareness and is not intended to suggest that coloured workers 'should' necessarily be politically conscious. The latter point would fall into a false consciousness/true consciousness dichotomy which asserts that because workers are oppressed and exploited they 'should' necessarily be politically aware, and if they are not, then they are accused of having a false consciousness.

Within the context of national political struggles in South Africa there are two major protagonists, around which a range of political interests have coalesced. On the one hand, the National Party and its allies wield considerable coercive power through direct access to political power, economic and political resources and the security forces. On the other hand, the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) provides leadership for the bulk of the oppressed population, particularly amongst the African majority.<sup>4</sup> The largest social force within the MDM is the African working class. The upsurge of mass resistance in the period 1984-1986 was largely as a result of the militant actions of African workers in the communities and on the shopfloor. The most widespread and intense mass struggles occurred in the Vaal Triangle and in the Eastern Cape. There were, however, waves of resistance in such Western Cape coloured communities as Athlone, Bonteheuwel and Mitchells Plain. This resistance was largely amongst the more militant coloured youth and students. While large sections of the youth are from working class communities, there has been a low level of involvement among older sections of the coloured working class.

A UDF publication made the following points about the Western Cape region: 'Material conditions in the Western Cape, however are so different that there is no certainty that they will follow national political trends at any particular point in time' and '...the

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<sup>4</sup> There has been considerable debate over the past year about the precise state of the balance of political forces. Some argue for example, M. Swilling: A talk given to a Five Freedoms Workshop in Cape Town, 1988) that the current situation is a 'stalemate' while others argue that there is a 'unstable equilibrium'. (See G. Berger, Work in Progress 56/57: 25) While this might sound purely semantic in nature, it does have particular implications for the analysis of social forces.

rhythm of the struggle in the Western Cape remains largely autonomous from the rest of the country'. To support these points regional stayaway figures for 1988 are cited. Where other regions have averages ranging over the 80 percent level, the Western Cape's '...average support by coloured workers in the region was less than 15 percent, but the average by African workers in the region was about 51 percent' (Phambili, 1988: 33-35). The other exception is the Natal region. This is largely due to the powerful influence of Inkatha, especially in the rural areas.<sup>6</sup>

It is against this backdrop that the study of the political consciousness of the coloured workers must be seen. As argued at the outset, the question of the development of political consciousness of coloured workers has not been dealt with adequately by various writers. Whisson for example argues:

While the apolitical form a part of the community, many more of the Coloured community have developed an attitude of 'negative non-cooperation'. Opposition to the government and to the collaborators rarely takes the form of political action, nor is it necessarily verbalised. It may take the form of escapism of an 'anti-social' (using the White concept of anti-social behaviour) kind - excessive consumption of liquor, or use of dagga (1968: 8-9).

Whisson's work reflects the common assumption that there are low levels of political consciousness within the coloured community, but his attempts at characterisation do not help explain the issue of low levels of political consciousness amongst coloured workers. Stone, in his study of identity amongst coloured workers, argues that

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<sup>6</sup> As regards Inkatha's waning influence on workers see, South African Labour Bulletin Vol 13 (6), 1988: 55.

A profound sense of helplessness is engendered by experience of the repeated ravages of physical discomfort, disreputability, and of exploitation by other poor and better-off people alike. Fields of possible activism are restricted to relatively desocialised modes of interaction within the confines of the impoverished community - violence and sexuality. These become simple means of warding off the threat of a total loss of identity (Stone, 1972: 32).

While some of Stone's commentary is disputable, he highlights two important points: Firstly, that there is a 'problem' with the development of political consciousness amongst coloured workers, and, secondly, that coloured workers tend to divert their frustrations into non-political avenues. His assertion that these avenues tend to be 'violence and sexuality' is questionable.

My own fieldwork within the Factreton community indicated the existence of low levels of political consciousness amongst coloured workers in this area. As should be evident from this study's central arguments, the characterisation 'apathetic' was rejected. In fact, it was observed during fieldwork that the only cases where 'apathy' was in some degree prevalent was in the section residents call 'Die Gat'. While it is difficult to assess how widespread 'apathy' is in this section, from my own observations, and the those of experienced activists, it did seem that there was apathetic behaviour. However, even if this entire section of Factreton was labelled 'apathetic', then they would still constitute a minority (approximately one third) of the whole community.

A key question that guides this study is 'why are coloured workers not as politically conscious and militant as African workers?' While African and coloured workers have different historical experiences, there is a tendency to assume that because all workers

in South Africa are oppressed and exploited they should necessarily act according to their interests as oppressed and exploited people. A senior activist in the Cape Flats area during an interview with me made the following point about the differences between working in coloured and African areas:

One will have to employ different organisational styles, because in the coloured areas, activists tend to do things as people do things in the African areas. Because of this mistake we have many times fucked up situations in coloured townships. Once you come to terms with the conservatism in the coloured areas it will be so much easier to organise, but you constantly organise in terms of a 'perceived militancy' that you want to create.

The theory, strategies and practice of the MDM have generally been geared to organising the African majority, and particularly African workers. While this general emphasis is understandable, the particular problem faced in the Western Cape is the necessity to develop political and development strategies that are specifically geared to organising in the coloured areas. It is clear that strategies that are used in the African areas cannot be copied in the coloured areas. The coloured areas can also not be organised on the basis of a 'perceived' or 'desired' militancy. Rather the organisation and mobilisation of coloured workers and residents must commence from the daily experience and consciousness of coloured people. This requires a clear understanding of not only the historical and daily experiences of the coloured working class but also of the diverse and numerous cultures and identities that make up their lives.

The social consciousness of any group of people is always a diffuse mixture of political and non-political elements. The coloured working class is no exception. Coloured workers have undergone a diffuse mixture of political, cultural, economic and social

experiences. This study argues that their specific experiences of exclusion has shaped the development of their social consciousness in a particular direction and manner. Coloured workers' experience of exclusion has created a separation between their consciousness of general social experiences and their consciousness of politics. Coloured workers' lack of political organisational experience has also contributed to their unresponsiveness to political issues. Coloured workers do, however, have an ongoing 'political' experience through their experience of apartheid oppression.

While there are a range of factors that shape and create the forms of social consciousness prevalent amongst all people, coloured workers being no exception, there is a necessity to identify and analyse the key factors that shape social consciousness. The object of this study is thus, not to detail all the factors that shape coloured workers consciousness, but to rather identify and analyse the central factors that will lead to a valid explanation of coloured workers' unresponsiveness to political issues and organisation.

## **5.2 Politics and Bread/Butter issues.**

There is no simple relationship between economic deprivation and political action. Zeitlin argues that deprivation explains little or nothing, for it is the structure of social relationships in which a person is implicated that will shape how he or she perceives their deprivations and their objective impact on him or her (1970: 10). Economic deprivation and its by-product, bread and butter issues, may fertilize the ground for political action but does not necessarily generate political action or consciousness.

For the large majority of the residents of Factreton the immediate problems they face are not seen as being connected to wider political forces, which has deprived them of democratic rights and compelled them to live their lives as members of a 'racially' ← defined population group. Civic activists in Factreton confirmed my observations of that community: problems connected to economic deprivation are not explained by the individuals experiencing them by reference to wider political concerns, nor do their problems propel the individuals concerned into political activity. This is seen particularly in the work of KFRTA. Residents of Factreton will come to the civic with their problems, virtually all of these problems fall within the 'bread and butter' range: evictions, rent, electricity payments, housing problems. While most residents in Factreton know that those working in the civic are politically active in the MDM, the civic is generally not seen as a political institution, and the problems that workers bring to it are also not seen as being political.

Coloured workers might blame 'the bosses' or 'the council' for their problems, but their problems (for them) remain apolitical and ultimately individual problems. There is, for instance, a common awareness that evictions are a very serious issue affecting many people in the area, and that eviction could happen to any resident at any time. Yet the problem remains 'my problem, and I must sort it out'.

How best to deal with day-to-day bread and butter needs and problems for the bulk of coloured workers is individualised and depoliticized. No explicit link is made between their problems and the political sphere, nor to the political nature of their

oppression. Even when the link is perhaps hinted at and, for example, 'the boere' are blamed, there is a sense that they still think that the issue cannot be resolved politically. This relates directly to the feeling of powerlessness and subordination. Stone argues:

All citizens categorised as 'Coloured' have to cope with various forms of domination by those who categorise themselves 'White'. This manifested most starkly in the presence of sheer physical force before which coloureds are powerless. Such force is irresistible and inescapable, and the only adaption which can be made is intrapsychic, i.e. by some degree of introversion or aggressive resistance to it. Individuals differ in degree of directness of expressed aggression towards whites, but virtually none appear to escape a sense of stigma... (1972: 30).

While Factreton residents may call upon the civic or the church to help deal with a problem, in the end, the tendency is for the problem to be individualised and as one worker expressed it 'jy het jou eie bed gemaak, dan moet jy maar daarop le'. It is precisely this individualistic response and in some extreme cases defeatist behaviour that relates to coloured workers' lack of a collective political consciousness. This form of individualism and defeatism contradicts community organisations' attempts at building collective political organisation.

In every interview conducted, with trade unionists and community activists, respondents continually stressed that coloured workers are far more responsive to bread and butter or economic issues. Although workers interviewed at times downplayed their economic insecurities, or these were obscured by their domestic concerns, bread and butter issues nevertheless touched at the heart of their daily existence. It is also interesting to note that in some of the interviews I conducted with older workers, their relative economic

stability and security, or protection by the extended family network, meant that bread and butter issues did not appear to be as critical for them as was the case with younger workers. This might partially explain why older coloured workers are often reluctant to become involved in politics. In the following quotation an activist reflects on workers' responsiveness to bread and butter issues.

There's no doubt in the working class communities. It's always the economic crisis, I mean, issues on houses and wages, it's the first thing that the coloured community would be reacting to. I'm not talking about how they would translate it into action, divisions, challenge, protest, but definitely it's the economic issues. Because in the working class communities there's been an organic economic crisis of survival and that in itself has become internalised and multiplied. Levels of unemployed are not only higher but have become permanent, a permanent appendage of the coloured community. Now we're plunging back into economic crisis in the second half of 1988, so the interesting factor is that people have come to terms with the fact that they've got more dependents, and that the community has changed. Therefore the way they see those issues has been informed by an internal crisis, of internalisation of deprivation, and that is manifested in the revival of gangs and in the revival of township squalor and more deprivation in coloured township life like in the Northern Suburbs, Bellville, Hanover Park. And it is very much like it was in the early 70's, when there was a massive economic crisis in South Africa and in the coloured working class.

Another activist stated

The issues of housing and work related issues are always there. Even during a period of heavy repression our civic was still able to function because people still respond to those kind of issues, housing and evictions and so on. Those are issues we still have to organise around, they are still burning issues, the kind of issues that people respond to most effectively.

I spent every Monday night during my period of residence (10 months) in the area at the civic's advice office. The advice office is run by civic activists. Local residents bring a variety of problems to

this advice office. These problems range from inability to pay debts, hire purchase problems, legal issues and, the most severe of all eviction cases (see Appendix 4 for documents on eviction cases). Eviction cases are usually taken to another forum where the merits of the case are assessed. If there is a remote chance of success, the civic will take up the case with the Housing committee of the Cape Town City Council. There are frequent cases where residents are unable to meet various expenses resulting in the repossession of their goods or their eviction from their home. A frequent cause for evictions is that residents are caught being shebeen merchants or "smokkie".<sup>7</sup> However, many residents turn to these illegal activities in order to increase their household income.

For many households the collective income of the extended family and not simply the single breadwinner is what keeps the home afloat. In many cases I encountered the household income was supplemented with welfare payments, pensions and Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) payments. The use of the 'informal sector', be it selling alcohol, being a dagga merchant, selling or using goods stolen from the workplace are other ways used by some residents to supplement household income.<sup>8</sup>

The question of hire purchase agreements has been a major problem in the working class areas. Certain shop owners, particularly

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<sup>7</sup> The term 'smokkie' refers to the shebeen merchant who participates in the illegal sale of alcohol. A particular shebeen I went to on a few occasions was commonly known as 'Auntie May's'. Auntie May's home and business is in fact a quite respectable family house.

<sup>8</sup> The term the 'merchant' or 'dealer' commonly refers to individuals who deal in dagga and mandrax. These activities however seem to be less frequent than shebeening. A degree of respectability can be maintained while being a smokkie but dealing in drugs invokes considerable disapproval by large sections of the community.

furniture shops, are notorious for exploiting the lack of basic legal knowledge that many residents display. This situation is also exacerbated by poor budgeting by many residents. Within the Kensington/Factreton area itself the widespread phenomenon of buying 'on tick', or 'on the book' at local cafes, was another variant of this problem. In addition, many hawkers extend credit at high interest rates and use various means to procure the payment.

I was told a few cases where old age pensioners, who could not meet these payments, would be 'assisted' by youngsters employed by the hawkers to collect welfare or pension payments. Since the pensioners often cannot read or write, these youngsters would 'sign' on their behalf and then take their entire monthly income to meet the account at the hawker, leaving the pensioner with no income for the month.<sup>9</sup>

Hire purchase and other forms of credit purchases, as one informant put it, are 'the strangler of the coloured community'. This problem and other problems around wages, water, electricity, rents and housing all fall under the broad category of bread and butter issues. These issues are central to the subsistence and economic livelihood of residents and form a fundamental part of their experience of social and economic deprivation.

How then can the 'problem' of establishing a conscious link between workers' acute awareness of bread and butter issues and their

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<sup>9</sup> The civic is virtually powerless to do anything about this. Were the civic to launch a campaign against these hawkers, the people who will suffer are not the hawkers but the buyers, through credit refusals. This in turn would undermine the civic's support and credibility, as 'buying on the book' is a way of life in coloured areas.

consciousness of politics be dealt with? The following interchange occurred in an interview with a civic activist.

SF: How do you establish the link between bread and butter issues and politics?

A: By ultimately explaining to people who is responsible for whatever, for instance the 'afdakkies' issue. Ons will regte huise kry, proper housing for everyone in fact is one of the CAHAC demands. We want housing for everyone. When we analyse the situation we come back to: why are we in the position we are in? But we are also concerned with working with the immediate issue, although sometimes people can't see what the link is. We are fighting for their rights here and now.

SF: But why that space between what we are dealing with on a daily basis, bread and butter issues, and politics as something out there?

A: For working class people it's the conditions they live under, which makes them block things out. I think sometimes unconsciously they dismiss that: 'Well that's the government out there, en hulle is verantwoordelik' but 'nou, ek nodig kos nou, ek bekeur geld nou vir my rent nou, my kinders het nie kleure nie nou'. While sometimes they see the link they also sometimes unconsciously just block that out. The conditions they live under - that is the reality.

Issues raised in this interchange are the immediacy of bread and butter issues in both physical and temporal senses. As already stated the link is seldom made, yet when the link is made it is not seen as being immediately important since the daily struggle to achieve a basic standard of living has a far greater priority. Mrs I (the clothing worker) states the following:

Hoeveel geleentheid kry hulle nie, die wit kinders, wat die bruin kinders nie kry nie. And ek mean ons wil nie he dieselfde nie, maar gee vir onse kinders die geleentheid wat ons toekom. Kyk vernaam in die clothing factories, kyk hoeveel wat onse top wages daai tyd. Wel die geld was min, maar was meer value in die geld, maar verdag is dit baie min value. Soos die goud en goede gaan op en af, daar is niks value in geld verdag nie.

Mrs I seems to be suggesting that there is a link between her low wages and the declining value of her money and the question of

educational rights for her children. However, within her 'trapped' position in the household there is little possibility that Mrs I's ideas and desires will be adequately developed. Her lack of a political consciousness, wherein links between economic and political issues could be drawn and understood, is clearly evident.

Over and above, the pressures of making ends meet and constraining social relations, there is also the issue of workers' fear of the apartheid state. An activist makes the point, '...it's because of the fear the state's instilled in our people. Even if they feel differently people are scared to actually speak..' Another activist posed this problem as follows, 'People are shit scared of the boere. People aren't prepared to get involved because of the boere'. Mr S (the security guard) had the following to say:

Die ondervinding van my in hierdie gemeenskap in, daar waar't ek kom praat, mense het 'n samewerking, maar die groot vrees is die polisie en die weermag. Wat gaan word, hulle wil nie tronk toe gaan nie, so dit is 'n groot stryd.

Psychologically, there are ways of responding to the daily battle for material survival. Commonly known as defence mechanisms the mind attempts to find creative ways of protecting the individual from bad experiences or real or imagined threats. Denial, is one particular form of defense.<sup>10</sup> Denial of the link between the political and the bread and butter issues faced by workers is but one way workers handle the threat or fears created by the state as an coercive power.

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 10 The Dictionary of Psychology defines the term denial as follows, 'A defense mechanism that simply disavows or denies thoughts, feelings, wishes or needs that cause anxiety. The term is used purely for unconscious operations that function to 'deny' that which cannot be dealt with consciously. See Anna Freud's classic text, The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence (Hogarth Press: London, 1948).

Furthermore the importance of 'now' as a determinant should not be ignored. The struggle to meet these daily needs must be resolved now. These needs and the obstacles to meeting these needs cannot be postponed until tomorrow but must be met as soon as possible. A political activist made the following point,

Will you be interested in a overtly political issue when you don't have bread in your house. It's more that kind of thing, their day-to-day needs, their personal frustrations. They work long hours, now you come talk about politics to them.

This preoccupation with subsistence issues might seem parochial to an outsider, yet when this struggle to survive becomes the overwhelming aspect of a worker's life then 'blocking out' politics becomes an understandable response. Subsistence in a particular sense is not only a bread and butter issue but includes basic personal goals of respectability, security, stability, self-dignity and the capacity to engage in personal relationships that will allow individuals to grow as emotional beings. Establishing some degree of financial and personal security for oneself and for one's family, are overriding factors that dominate coloured workers social consciousness.

### 5.3 Ideology and the Internalisation of Oppression.

The impact of dominant ideology, as defined and shaped by the state, mass media, churches and education has far-reaching consequences for the development of political consciousness in coloured communities.<sup>11</sup> This raises the issue of popular ideologies which

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<sup>11</sup> I do not intend dealing with complex debates around the definition of ideology. The working definition of ideology to be

emerge as counter to dominant ideologies with coercive and oppressive political goals. The struggle for ideological hegemony over the oppressed communities has historically been a key feature of mass struggles. Ideology is not simply an outside imposition on the experience of people, Leonard argues that people experience within various forms of ideology (1984).

People are conditioned and socialised from birth by a range of institutions that perpetuate the dominant ideological discourse. Schools, family, media and the church all play vital roles in reproducing the required forms of consciousness amongst subordinate groups in society. Daily experience does not occur outside of these processes. This is one of the central contradictions that needs to be analysed: the concrete experiences of coloured workers and their interpretation of these experiences. Also important to analyse is how the dominant ideological forces attempt to shape, condition and determine how people think, feel and act towards their own experiences.

The impact or nature of ideology cannot be posed within a true/false dichotomy. Characterising coloured workers' social consciousness as being a 'false consciousness' distorts their experience of reality in a particularly negative manner. Mclellan argues that Marx never used the expression 'false consciousness' and that it was in fact Engels who coined the term (1986: 18). Mclellan also argues that 'Marx's point is often that ideology is not a question of logical or empirical falsity, but of the superficial or misleading

used is: ideology is a set of ideas and beliefs that have a concrete grounding within the social relations of human reality. This set of ideas is not necessarily coercive in nature, but may be manipulated to achieve an active and willing consent from groups in society. Ideology can therefore also be organically produced by subordinate groups through the development of their own internal discourse.

way in which truth is asserted' (1986: 18). In a similar vein, Jagger argues that '...a successful ideology is a seductive blend of truth and misinterpretation that distorts and obscures the facts without denying them completely' (1983: 256).

Central questions that need to be posed are: How has the experience of dominant ideology been internalised by coloured workers? How has dominant ideological discourse shaped or contributed to the creation of a separation within the coloured workers's consciousness?, To what extent have popular ideologies emerged amongst coloured workers?

As regards the first question above, a central issue that concerns this research is the question of the inferiority/superiority complex. A political activist argued the following,

I think we must steer away from getting people to see themselves as coloured. I think the apartheid state has done its dirty work indoctrinating people. Making people feel because they're coloured they are inferior. It's been years and it's going to take people a long time to get rid of the brunt of apartheid. That's why I say we should work towards where people see themselves as being people. Unconsciously coloured people project themselves as what they have been told what they are by the state. I don't think its a conscious acceptance, it happens I think because of our gutter education, because of a whole lot of factors. People also don't have much education and it's unconsciously, drummed into those people.

The subordination of coloured people, through the continual reinforcement of negative and inferior images and stereotypes about themselves, is one of the primary effects of dominant ideology in South Africa. Although the apartheid state and the various ideological institutions perpetuate this, there is also the role played by 'whites' as the dominant group. Western outlines eight key aspects of the stereotypical 'white' view of coloured people: 1)

possession/ paternalism - 'onse bruin mense'; 2) bastardy; 3) drunkenness; 4) musical; 5) hopelessness or powerlessness; 6) childlike qualities - ignorant, irresponsible, vulnerable; 7) crime and violence; 8) sexual promiscuity (1983: 15).

Peter Leonard outlines various psychological mechanisms used to produce the individual subject. One of these mechanisms is what he terms the 'internalisation of the ideologically constructed self'. This he defines as,

The individual's conception of self reflects the meanings and definitions common to the most significant others with whom interaction takes place, for example family members, co-workers other political activists. Through these symbolic interactions based primarily on language, ideologies, dominant or subordinate, interpellate or speak to the individual from his or her birth in the form of expectations concerning how to behave, think feel and what objectives to pursue. These ideological definitions and expectations become part of the individual's world view, so as to reproduce a gendered class subject who is required to submit to the social order and prepare for labour within it (1984: 115).

Leonard distinguishes the above process from the process of identification which he defines '...a significant mechanism of socialisation and reproduction of social roles whereby the individual 'sees', herself/himself in another person'(1984: 115/6). This process helps bonding between parents and children, establishing relations between groups and friends, and provides a personal sense of meaning and security for themselves and their community.

The processes of internalisation and identification are clearly linked and interwoven. Both processes are in part attempts by the individual to establish a coherent meaning of himself/herself.12

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It is through these mechanisms that people psychologically deal with their daily experiences of oppression and exploitation. This assertion supports a previous point made by an interviewee: that there is an 'unconscious acceptance' by coloured workers of these inferior images about themselves. It is clear that many coloured workers do internalise these ideologically constructed images of coloured people. Just how widespread this is, is impossible to judge within the ambit of this study. My experiences in the Kensington/Factreton area certainly suggest that this inculcation of negative stereotypes is quite widespread. Discussions with area activists confirm that many residents, particularly those in a more destitute economic position, internalise these negative stereotypes. The work of Stone is also notable in this respect (1972).

Just what kind of beliefs and ideas does this dominant ideological discourse aim to inculcate amongst subordinate classes and groups in our society? Leonard outlines some of the key elements of this dominant ideology. Firstly, '...an idea that existing class, gender and ethnic relations are "natural"....'. Secondly, that these relationships are '...right, just and desirable...'. Thirdly, '(they are)...the only possible ones' (1984: 134-135). In part, this means creating an acceptance and consent amongst the broadest layer of people within the subordinate classes. In short, the creation and maintenance of ruling class hegemony over oppressed classes.

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12 The Dictionary of Psychology defines these terms as follows: 'Identification is a mental operation whereby one attributes to oneself either consciously or unconsciously, the characteristics of another person or group'. Identity 'is the study of personality, a person's essential, continuous self, the internal subjective concept of oneself as an individual.' Internalisation is 'the acceptance or adaption of beliefs, values, attitudes, practises, standards, etc as one's own.' The distinction between these terms lies in identification being an identification of oneself with someone or something else, whereas internalisation is the process whereby an idea, action or relation is incorporated or transposed by the person into their character.

This entails an acceptance of the prevailing status quo as legitimate and as only changeable through reformist means within the legislated procedures provided. For coloured people this has meant working within the Tricameral Parliament. However, in this process underlying contradictions are obscured. Larraine argues that 'Ideology is not simply a cognitive error...the specificity of the ideological error is the fact that it conceals contradictions' (1979: 173).

Of the six coloured workers I interviewed only one voted in tricameral elections. The same individual, Mr D (the trench digger) thought Mr PW Botha was doing a good job. At the same time, he also thought the civic in the area was doing a good job. In the following passage Mr D explains his view of political changes in South Africa.

Botha het self die werk gedoen. By my was mense te hastig, die man kan nie als in een slag reg maak nie. Baie het hy weggemaak, maar nog nie heeltemaal nie, maar hy werk nog altyd hard. Ons het gebly in die Soutrivier, lanks wit mense, en ons en die wit mense se boys, en die groot mense was goeie vrinne, nooit sov'l uitgeval gehet nie. Maar toe wat daai an'er Prime Minister inkom, wat sy naam, ou Verwoerd inkom, toe maak hy mos die apartheid. Die bruin mense het al'right in die Bloemhof flats in die Kaap gebly, toe moet die bruin mense uit. Die hele Woodstock was meestal bruin mense en wit mense, en toe sny die wit mense af van die bruin mense af.

When asked about the practical benefits he felt the PW Botha era had brought for him, he replied:

Die ou mense, mooi agter die ou mense gekyk. Hy kan nie sommer vir a'mal met een slag dieselfde gegee het wat die wit mense gekry het nie, maar hy't elke jaar die bruin mense se geld hoer gemaak. Ek sien self wat hy nou nog altyd doen. Hy werk so, wat die bruin mense gat kry wat die wit mense kry.

However, all interviewees voiced unhappiness with various aspects of apartheid, especially the Group Areas Act. Yet only Mr. S (the security guard) saw political ways of tackling these political issues. The rest of the interviewees saw political resolution as being impossible against a force that is strong and potentially violent.

For all interviewees the prevailing gender relations were accepted as natural and correct. Amongst the older interviewees there was a strong tendency to accept most aspects of social relations as being unchangable, yet what changes there have been are considered improvements. As a few activists remarked to me: the old people compare what is happening at present with their experience of the past, and for these people the present (having a house, garden, basic necessities, a job or a pension) seems much better than the past. The cruder side of apartheid is also changing and the breaking down of petty apartheid, the abolition of the Immorality Act, the Mixed Marriages Act are seen as signs that things are improving. In addition there are changes in personal behaviour towards them. For example, as one person remarked to me, 'In the old days the boere used to call me Hotnot, now they call me Meneer'.

But there is a strong feeling that such changes are small and make little difference where it counts at home, in the community and in the workplace. Amongst many coloured workers I spoke to there was a sense of 'powerlessness' because 'no matter what you do things remain the same.' This attitude in part entrenches a social and political conservatism. It is an attitude of 'things aren't so bad. If we fight for more maybe we'll be risking the little we have.'

In part this implies a defence of what people have achieved, yet also a fear of confronting the state and its coercive power.

For some coloured workers like Mrs L (a domestic worker), who has experienced this 'swaarkry' and all the difficulties of making ends meet, resistance for her is still wrong no matter how difficult the circumstances. When asked why this is so, she replied 'ons moet die gowerment aanvaar.' When I asked how she felt about white people she replied:

Ek voel baie lekker, is deur die wit mense wat ons lewe verdag. Ek bid al aande, ek vra dat die Here moet hulle gesondhied gee en hulle lank lewe gee en hulle moet gelukkig wees, want die Here het gemaak daai, mense moet bymekaar kom om vir ons daai penny te gee vir 'n stukkie brood.

Yet her feelings about apartheid were described as follows,

Nee ek voel nie lekker oor apartheid nie maar wat kan ek doen, ons moet maar tevrede wees, want as hulle nou apartheid maak, dan moet hulle maar maak. As hulle nou voel, die Here is tevrede met hulle, met hulle apartheid.

In both passages, Mrs L's acceptance of the status quo and the state are explicit, yet her antagonism and dislike for apartheid are tempered by a religious morality. In effect she seems to be saying 'if its God's will, then so be it'. Mr V (a janitor), had a slightly different view,

Ons het maar al die jare soos slawe mense gelewe, ons het maar al die jare swaar gelewe. Nou ja is baie mense in die politiek, hulle is slim, geleerde mense hulle sien mos daai's verkeerd gewies, daai's reg, begin die mense nou praat daarvan, ek sal maar aangaan met die graf en die pik.

For Mr V there is some hope of changing things, but 'that's the business of educated people', while he continues with 'graf en pik.' In his mind things are changeable, but he sees no role for himself in creating this change. In his view, finding political resolutions is the responsibility of the clever and the educated. In comparison, Mrs J (a food worker) retreats into her family and her religion in an attempt to find peace and to maintain things as they are.

Ding is die huis gesin is meer waarde vol vir jou as enige iets anderste. Nou die blyste is ek, as ek by my kinders, almal kan saam wies. En laat os 'n goeie familie wies, moet nie hierna toe trek en die ander een soentoe nie. Die Here gee vir my die krag lat ek nog hier by hulle is. Die wat nog nie apartheid gewies het nie, toe het die mense lekker gelewe met mekaar. Toe apartheid nou weer uit is, toe was't oek orraait gewies. Nou waarvoor moet hulle baklei, wittes, bruines en swartes, wil hulle nou weer almal, los die ding net soe't is, dan sal't 'n baie blye tyd wies vir elkeen op sy plek bly.

#### 5.4 Community and Identity.

The term community is defined as being located in a spatial terrain which people regard as their 'stomping ground' or as social and cultural networks where people feel protected, cared for and share some degree of common purpose and meaning. In order to establish a community there has to be set of common experiences that the participants can identify with. The diversity of identities and cultures in the coloured areas has not allowed for a common united experience around which a community can be 'naturally' shaped. The initial historical forces that have shaped most coloured communities has been coercion and racially discriminatory legislation such as the Group Areas Act. As one activist put it,

You must remember the coloured community is an artificially created community. I mean they would never throw themselves together if there was a choice, unlike say, Xhosa-speaking people, Zulu-speaking people, you know, where there is a brotherhood, ethnic brotherhood, a clan-system, common history and so on. Take the coloured people, I mean, they are all shapes and sizes, belong to about every religious group, speak English and Afrikaans; have different accents; belong to different classes. It is interesting, bladdy interesting, but nowhere can you find a sort of common purpose, unless you align yourself.

The coloured areas are ultimately a complex set of communities clustered around particular cultural, religious, political and social points of interest. These cultural networks provide a degree of protection and direction in the lives of the participants. An activist provides the following contextual response to these issues.

I think we must start looking at traditions. I think it's a standard starting point, to talk about the traditions of the coloured community and the separation of their experience of economic life from their experience of political life. They have never defined political life in any sense of the term. We obviously can't be too historicist, we must understand these issues concretely, the phases of how the coloured community evolved. But, again, there has been dislocation as a network of families. These relationships have been unable to consolidate themselves in the way many of the other African communities have been able to. The coloured community was profoundly dislocated with the removals of District Six and the rural area removals since the 1950s, and what we tend to forget is that it's been a gradual process that has dislocated the political consciousness of people. So in terms of their history and traditions, that's why the coloured community doesn't have any immediate feel for political participation nor an immediate political responsiveness to issues.

The separation within coloured workers' consciousness is clearly referred to in the above passage. The additional point, regarding the lack of political definition, relates both to the question of exclusion and political identity. On the level of general social relations that constitute the networks of community life there is a real fragmentation and lack of group cohesion. Their general

experiences within the community context are defined through cultural or religious avenues yet seldom through political avenues. The coloured community lacks a clear political definition of themselves. The groups and institutions of coloured civil society are explicitly defined by people as being non-political. The same activist argues that,

No doubt the levels of deprivation that the coloured working class experiences becomes internalised, and their responses to this alienation is in a sense, is in the form of a whole range of alternative kind institutions and networks. These are defined almost as anti-political, outside the sphere of civil society, the gangs and religion. I'm talking about revivalist religions. These are no doubt in the normal sense, civil society type organisations, a network of burial societies, of clubs and of localised churches which have always defined their terrain as outside the political. Now that's a very important source of where the consciousness of unresponsiveness forms you see. It's not just a question of so-called apathy. The coloured community's civil institutions define themselves as outside of the political sphere.

Participation in the sports clubs, burial societies, churches, social clubs and gangs is highly competitive and intense. These institutions have become particular non-political avenues within which people direct their political frustrations, but in the process people define themselves as being 'aligned' or a 'part of' a specific identifiable cultural group. For coloured working class youth it tends to be youth gangs, church youth groups or a sports team. For older coloured workers it is evangelical churches, dance clubs, 'Coon' carnival and choirs. Coloured workers perceive these institutions of civil society to be outside the state sphere and outside the terrain of politics.<sup>13</sup>

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 13 The term 'civil society' was originally formulated by Gramsci. Simon argues that the Gramscian definition is, 'Civil society is the sphere where capitalists, workers and others engage in political and ideological struggles and where political parties, trade unions, religious bodies and a great variety of organisations come into

Going beyond the level of institutions there is, on a grassroots level, a lack of community spirit.

Let's talk about neighbours, for example. There isn't that kind of neighbourliness that you find in the African community, even in working class communities. Someone was telling me that in a house meeting the other night in Kewtown, people wanted to come together in one flat to discuss things. In general, there's a willingness to do that; to be very responsive to the call of the civic. But in the meeting the one person doesn't like this one because this one did that, this one hung his or her washing on the line and this was my part of the washing line. That kind of individualism almost caused the meeting to collapse.

In the case of the older workers I interviewed, there was a real fear of the dangers that lurked outside the garden gate such as gangs/criminal elements. Whether this threat actually exists or not, people do not feel safe so they retreat into the safety of their homes at night. All interviewees had one or two friends in the street, or 'plein' but friends were usually limited. The only exception was Mr S (a security guard) who, because of his hectic political and church activities, had an extensive network of friends in the Factreton community.

For some of those interviewed it appeared that they were beginning to develop a more positive impression of the Factreton area as it has become quieter and more settled over the past years. I asked Mrs J whether she had seen anything happen in Factreton during the 1980 school boycotts:

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existence... Thus it is in civil society that the struggle for hegemony takes place... since civil society includes all organisations and institutions outside of the state, it includes the family. In: R. Simon, Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction (Lawrence and Wishart: London, 1982: 69).

Nee, is stil, die plek was baie stil gewies en is nou nog stil. Daar was nie riots en daai nie, daai kan ek nie se nie. Is nie nog daai probleme, wat buste word aan die brand gesteeke of daai nie, is baie stil hierso.

Whether this trend towards stability in this area will produce a greater community spirit remains to be seen. In many cases the explosion of resistance and repression has served as a catalyst to politicizing the community. The harsh reality of police brutality on your door step, for example in the Belgravia Road district of Athlone, has involved many older, normally apolitical, residents. In many instances, however, the separation is still not broken down, even when mass resistance is happening in one's own community. As the opening quote of this section stated, 'Politics is defined as something separate, getting involved is defined as something separate from the organisations which they would normally be part of.'

The majority of coloured workers have effectively defined themselves as outside the sphere of politics. The sphere of popular politics in the community has a complex bearing on shopfloor struggles yet for coloured workers this is simply not conceptualised as being political. This relationship nevertheless concretely exists, but takes on a different form in the community. The following story was related by a union and community activist,

A factory in the union, which has been one of the strongest factories up to now, was organised for two years. Two key individuals who come from working class backgrounds were responsible for organising that factory. They are both guys who have a reasonable level of education, and they are both drivers at the factory, where they all basically fought the bosses. Now they were close as individuals and that closeness was part of the dynamic of why the union became strong there, because they were always at the helm of building it. Because the nature of the workers is in itself a microcosm of the community. The union in this factory is now, completely split into two

camps, each camp supporting one of these individual workers. The split between these guys is completely petty and individualistic, but it has become the split of the factory. But the thing is, the deep-seated inability of the factors within the coloured community. The inability to rebuild a community ethic after so many years of relocation and the internalised oppression, which means that the same contradictions emerge. In my example, there is no group of coloured community elders that a union can have recourse to, to sort these guys out, which is what you have in the African community. There's no recourse to a set of time-honoured principles of honesty or reasonableness in terms of their consciousness.

The destruction of this community ethic and of cohesive relationships has a bearing on the building of union organisation as well. While it is beyond the focus of this community study to do an in-depth analysis of coloured workers on the shopfloor, it is nevertheless important to state the logical conclusion that coloured workers' depoliticized and individualised understanding of their community applies on the shopfloor as well. This, however, is happening within a community context which lacks those particular 'time honoured principles' and traditions which provide people with a sense of historical continuity and meaning. Furthermore there is a lack of a layer of older leaders that can be reference points for passing on the socio-political history of the community. The current older section of the coloured community were described by one informant as a 'defeated generation'.

Individualism has been referred to at various points throughout this study. What precisely are the roots and implications of this individualism amongst coloured workers? The contested nature of 'coloured identity' is closely linked to this. In the following passage, Baumeister outlines the basic functions of identity.

- 1) A clear sense of identity helps one make choices (decisions).
- 2) - Relationships to other persons are

impossible without identity and difficult if one's identity is in transition or poorly defined. 3) A sense of identity furnishes one with a sense of strength and resilience, so that the impact of specific misfortune or setback is diminished and one's life can be orientated towards specific goals that include the fulfillment of certain potentialities.... Functional aspects: 1) The individual's own structure of values and priorities. 2) Interpersonal aspect consisting of one's social roles and personal reputation. 3) Sense of the individual potentiality...consists of having realistic personal goals and sufficient self-esteem to believe one can reach that goal (1986: 19).

There is at present no single coloured identity. By definition coloured identity is a diverse and mixed set of attitudes, perceptions, cultures and understandings of the self.<sup>14</sup> To construct a single notion for coloured identity flies in the face of what exists in reality. The apartheid state's attempts at imposing their definition of 'coloured identity' onto the population they defined as being 'coloured' has been a brutal exercise in ideological and political manipulation. Those conservative elements within the coloured community who have accepted the state's definition of 'coloured identity' have generally done so for their own material gain. The Labour Party is the most notable contemporary example. As one activist expressed it:

Because what the boere or what the authorities have done, is they have taken Africans, Europeans, Asians and Chinese, and they have taken a mix of these and they have given them a name, which is very useful if you have this overview of things. The state, for the purposes of control, has created a single definition for the coloured people. Any penal structure must have terminology. So I

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<sup>14</sup> Baumeister had the following to say about identity: 'The sense of identity, in other words, is not just based on the physical self but depends on meaning. Because meaning occurs only within a contextual network of relationships, it seems safe to conclude that identity is a linguistic construction - unity of meaning...Unity over time (continuity) means that today you are the same person as the person who existed last week. Continuity over time is a main criterion of identity'. See, R. Baumeister, 'Identity, Cultural Change and the Struggle for the Self' (Oxford University Press: New York, 1986: 15).

don't think there is any one definition because of the very diverse nature of this group of people. I don't think there is any one definition that applies to everybody except for registration purposes.

Another activist developed these points further,

In the sense that the coloured person identifies himself as different in relation to others, in that sense there is a group identity. But other aspects of that identity, whether it be cultural forms or beliefs, is not an established one, if one compares it say to Indians, who have far deeper traditional and historical roots. It only exists in so far as people understand themselves to be different to others. People reject apartheid ideas and they reject their colouredness. They never find pride in being coloured, so that is why we do not have to mobilise around a coloured identity or have coloured organisations as such.

Coloured identity as a group identity exists, but it neither has the historical roots, continuity nor group cohesion to firmly root itself within the community. The notion that there is a 'coloured identity' is also objectionable to many coloured people. What this study contends is that, while it is possible to talk of elements of a 'coloured identity' which on a broader level commands a degree of acceptance amongst those people classified 'coloured' on the long-term the need is to move beyond racial identities towards social, cultural and political identities which unite people across racially defined boundaries.

The previous interviewee makes the point that coloured people define themselves by their 'differences', whether the differences are between themselves, or between themselves and Africans or whites. While differentiation is one part of the process of building a positive social identity, there is also a need for a common strand that has a degree of continuity and similar meaning that permeates

the coloured population. I asked the following interviewee what his definition of 'coloured identity' was:

It would be a fascinating study just to look at the total identity and the total attitude and break it up into its component parts and then you will find fascinating strands going in all kinds of directions. It will answer your question in a far more interesting way, I would say. It takes a bit of work that. But the moment one starts looking for that common thing, you deny yourself a reality which is very rich.

The two endeavours are not mutually exclusive. The point made is that just as diversity has created division and problems it has also produced a far greater variety and richer set of cultural expressions. Whether there is a common thread that permeates all these identities and cultures, which is not a reaction to the coercion of the state but something organic and common to the coloured population, remains an unanswered question. The purpose of establishing these common strands of identity, must go beyond the state-defined racial boundaries in South Africa. Post-apartheid struggles will entail the creation of a common South African identity that allows for both a variety of cultural, social and political expressions, and a unifying commonality.

The nature of social identity within those communities classified 'coloured' is continually changing. One activist defined coloured identity as follows,

Firstly, it is a set of historical ethnic factors that have determined and shaped a community; secondly, it is a community whose identity has been shaped and defined by the state, ethnically. This coloured identity has become a process; has become a cultural, political inheritance which reproduces itself ideologically, politically and economically. So coloured identity is not simply a definition, a conceptualisation by the state. It's not simply an internal discourse it is, to say the obvious, a combination of all these things.

The uncertainty and contested nature of coloured identity has a bearing on political consciousness. The negative perceptions that many coloured people, particularly workers, have of the notion of coloured identity is important. For many activists it is a question of,

I don't think that we're working towards a coloured identity at all. I think that what I am trying to do in my organisational work is to make people feel that they're part of the oppressed and I think that is the problem actually. We have too much coloured identity. So what I would strive for is that coloureds don't have a coloured identity, but have an oppressed identity, as oppressed people. To me the coloured identity is, besides the other characteristics of coloureds, about their individualism. I think we like to be seen as something separate to others. In fact people don't see it as an identity you know. It's just an attitude of 'leave us alone' and 'this is happening to you' when it comes to struggle, organising around issues. It's not our problem, it's their problem. That's one of the bad things about apartheid, it has given us this 'separateness'.

The protective element of 'coloured identity' is clearly drawn out in the above quote. Wanting to be separate from others becomes a way of asserting one's individual identity and protecting the self. The desire for separateness is a response to the racially exclusive practices of the apartheid state. It is also a defence and protection by the individual against the brutality of apartheid oppression.

In other studies the pejorative connotations and attitudes towards a notion of coloured identity are emphasised (Lewis, 1987; Goldin, 1987). Coloured cultural identity has a long legacy of historical roots, such as slavery, rural labour, Afrikaner/Dutch culture, Islamic culture and colonial English influences to mention but a few. The diversity of cultures and identities, together with the

impact of forced removals has created conflict, competitiveness and individualism. An aspect of this conflict is noted in the above quote, where the phrase 'Leave us alone' serves to define one's self by asserting the distance and difference between one's self and others. Furthermore, this combination of 'eiesoortigheid' and separateness has led to individuals seeing their problems as their own individual issues to solve. These attitudes are particular manifestations of exclusion. A key dimension of the politics of exclusion is the diffuse cultural responses coloured workers have, together with their exclusivist manner of defining their identity.

Amongst the coloured workers interviewed and spoken to most referred to themselves as 'bruin werkers', yet when probed about their feelings around this issue many avoided the question. One interviewee who did respond to this question said 'Ek's nie proud van myself nie, maar ek lyk om straightforward te wies vir mense 'n ding te se...' A common phrase encountered amongst coloured workers in the community was, 'Meneer wiet mos, ons bruin mense is mos soe.' Mrs J (the food worker) made the following revealing remarks about coloured people:

Ja sien hulle wil vir hulle hou wat hulle nie is nie, want ienige bruinmense as hy 'n posiesie het, dan dink hy, hy is meerde as die ander ene, maar hy wiet nie hy kom uit die selfde toestand uit wat die ander mense in gewies het.

In part her comments describe competitiveness. She also expresses an antagonism toward people who have moved up the economic ladder. Coloured workers who have improved their economic position, according to her, forget their roots and consequently who they are. Mr D. (the trench digger) stated the following about being a 'bruinwerker':

Wel, dis my vel wat dit maak, so ek moet 'n bruinwerker word, wat ek my kan gepaint het wit, dan het ek baie by 'n European plek werk gekry, nou is dit die vel wat dit maak. Wat jy geleerd is, se nou jy's 'n geleerde man, dan kry jy die werk van 'n European deur jou education wat jy gekry het. Maar die werk gat nie na jou toe kom nie, jy moet na die werk toe gat.

For Mr D being a 'bruinwerker' seems to be an accepted part of life. He highlights two key points in this respect: firstly, being a coloured worker reduces your access to certain jobs and secondly, if you have obtained education, this can operate as a mechanism for finding better jobs and overcoming racial boundaries. Mr S (a security guard) describes his feelings about being a coloured worker:

Ek voel dat, as 'n nie blanke, so genoem as 'n nie-blanke, want ek kan myself nie se dat, deur my kleur en as 'n bruin werker, dat ek nie vry is nie. En ek voel dat ons in daardie pad is om te besef wat ek is en wat ek kan doen, dan sal die lewe beter word. As ek praat met mense ook, dan se ek, die peppercorn, (he places his hand on his head - SF) die peppercorn moet ons mooi kyk, moenie die peperkoring kyk, kyk wat binne in die peperkoring is, in an'er woorde, don't judge a book by its cover.

In this passage Mr S explicitly attacks racism and begins to offer a more humane way of seeing coloured workers. As one activist put it,

I think the apartheid system has done its dirty work indoctrinating people, making people feel because they're coloured they are inferior. It has been years and it's going to take people a long time to get rid of the brunt of apartheid.

The internalisation of the ideologically constructed self becomes a central issue when workers accept their state-defined identities. This ultimately results in an uncertainty about who you genuinely are. Connected to this uncertainty are elements of an inferiority complex which are caused by an individual's acceptance of the

dominant ideological definition of 'coloured identity'. Leonard argues that this is a problematic process,

...the habituation of the adult to the ideologically prescribed roles demanded of the social order is never a simple, trouble free matter for capital or the state. Avoidance, resistance and dissent are everywhere to be seen in the lives of individuals (1984: 179).

How then do these aspects affect the development of political consciousness amongst coloured workers? When asked about 'apathy' within the coloured community an activist responded as follows,

Coloured apathy, yes. The very nature and history of the group called coloured is full of contradictions. You have got enough problems just accepting who you are and what you are. The black people in this country have together been bound by oppression and exploitation and conquest so that they have got a history of consciousness. The consciousness of resistance and the history of protest and heroes that their grandfathers can pass on. We haven't got that. When I am talking about we, I must talk again about coloured people. We range from a whole bloody spectrum from those who have got white parents to those who have got black parents, and all the variations one can possibly find. How can one find a commonality in any way? What are we talking about? Who are we talking about? But if one has to accept a given group then one must say 'yes'.

The question of whether it is possible to find a commonality between the various communities, cultures and identities that constitute the coloured population remains unanswered. The point made in the beginning of the above passage articulates a link (or lack of a link) between political consciousness and the contested nature of coloured identity. 'You have got enough problems just accepting who you are and what you are...' It is in this sense that contestation and conflict around social identity can create obstacles to people developing a political consciousness.

The combination of daily pressures and frustrations on the shopfloor, at home and in the community plus the undefined nature of individual identity as a 'bruin werker' undermines responsiveness and preparedness to become involved in politics. Community activists argue that coloured workers not only need to develop a greater positive sense of identity and confidence in themselves as individuals, but also to develop trust and confidence among themselves as workers with real social and political potential. As one activist put it,

I think that has been a hell of a sore point in the coloured community, where people explain their lack of participation, or their apathy, by saying 'We don't actually have a history of feeling confident that people stand together in the coloured areas.'

In addition, the point was made that 'coloured workers don't see themselves as having potential political power'. This point relates directly to the separation in coloured workers consciousness.<sup>15</sup> Coloured workers' personal and group perceptions are separated from what they perceive politics to be. This separation in consciousness splits a sense of personal and group identity as articulated within a 'day-to-day' social consciousness and culture, on the one hand, from a consciousness of politics. Coloured workers, in this sense, lack a clear political identity which can be appealed to in the process of building collective community organisation.

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<sup>15</sup> These points relate directly to the issue of 'bruinwerkers kan nie saamstaan nie' attitude. This issue will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 6.

### 5.5 The Consciousness of Exclusion.

The separation between a consciousness of politics and a consciousness of personal and group identity is directly rooted in the structural formation of broader political alignments within South Africa. The belief that the centre stage of struggle is between a ruling white minority and a dispossessed African majority is endemic in the popular consciousness of South Africans. Where do people situate minority groups, coloureds and Indians in this scheme of things?

In terms of overall policy making and popular consciousness, coloured people constitute a minority group within the South African political economy. How do coloured people see their position within the South African social formation and how do coloured workers see and feel about their position? An activist in the coloured areas made the following points,

There has never been a tradition of participation in the coloured community. I don't mean just politically - there has never been that kind of community involvement. Why has there always been a persistent strand of boycottism in coloured politics and even progressive politics for that matter. It is because the nature of the state and oppressive institutions have always been one of exclusion. It has never been one of inclusion or absorption into itself. So it's not just because there's a tradition of non-collaboration amongst the coloured mass. It's because the nature of the forms of control defined by the state (the relations of power), have always been structured as one of exclusion.

While coloured people have historically been excluded from the apartheid system, the Tricameral Parliament strategy has aimed at co-opting middle-class sections of coloured and Indian groups into the white constitutional framework. There has also been a persistent paternalistic policy and attitude by the white liberal

establishment towards coloured people, particularly in Cape Town. Both these factors have reinforced exclusion, the one coercive in nature, the other patronising.

The other factor that reinforces this exclusion is the different historical and daily experiences that coloured and African people have. The racial divisions that have historically been imposed by the apartheid state are a part of the apartheid state's 'divide and rule' strategy. In the following passage an activist remarks:

Although they (coloured workers) would say certain things in their gut responses you, can see they think that it's a different kettle of fish: 'you're black and you're coloured'. That particular identity completely clouds their perspective and affects their perception of economic brackets. It's not just a question of consciousness but also of one's experience. The coloured working class deals with situations that they find themselves in, where the dominant feature of their lives is: whites are their bosses, blacks are their inferior, and that's it. Through our experiences at varsity, the whole question of superiority and inferiority is broken down. This process also happens in our organisational work where we're all comrades.

Two points are raised above: the difference between activist and non-activist experiences and more importantly the superiority/inferiority complex. The in-between syndrome for many coloured workers of 'whites are superior to us, but we are better off than blacks' has deep psychological roots as well as being a consequence of the effects of apartheid. For coloured workers exclusion is, not only between themselves and the white ruling bloc, but between themselves and African workers as well. This division between African and coloured has a direct bearing on the development of political consciousness of coloured workers. The next passage by an activist develops some of the above points further.

The whole attitude is that the blacks are getting swaar 'ons kry nie soe swaar, soe hulle kry swaar', that's their problem. Politically the responses of the coloured working class has largely been one of 'Who's the majority in this country? It's the blacks. If they take over, what are we going to live under?' That has resulted in the kind of apathy which coloureds have displayed. The unknown of 'who' the blacks are. One can understand the extent to which apartheid creates the situation of the unknown. Their experiences are not one with, that of the black working class. It's amazing when you're talking to people the extent to which coloured people view black people in a racist way is bizarre. It's a hell of an important factor in the coloured working class that they don't see changes made that could really affect them. Coloured workers are asking questions such as: What will happen if the blacks take over? Are we going to be any better off than we are under the white man? That's another factor we are going to have to address in terms of building working class unity. They're not so confident its going to mean improvement in their lives. It's not so much a question that it's their problem. It's a question of actually feeling better off.

This division between African and coloured has been caused by the apartheid regime's actions which have particularly fostered attitudes of mistrust and suspicion. Some coloured workers' perceptions of Africans went as follows;

Well meneer ek het nog nie teekom iets snaaks nie. Wat my pa geleef het was daar native mense wat saam met my pa gewerk het, en hulle sal altyd ingekom het, en hulle was baie vriendelik, maar ons het nooit onse pad gegaan om te communicate saam met hulle nie, so ek kan nie meneer verder antwoord daarop nie.

Maar die native man slat hom hier, en hy vat weer sy vuis en hy slat die native man. En die native man slat hom en hy slat die man op die grond. Toe lag die boys vir die native man. Toe staan die native man op, hy se, I show you something. Daai native man, hulle's mos vuil daai kaffir mense. Daai vuilwerk wat hulle doen, daai vuil goeters wat hulle het, die slange en geraamte bene en almal daai, daarmee werk hulle mos die kaffirs. Sea Point is vol die kaffir mense.

However a mistrust between coloured workers also exists:

En toe elke een wat verbykom vra ek, 'maar nie vir die bruines nie, bruin mense is terrible, hulle verlei jou sommer daar en daar, hier en daar.

For most workers interviewed, racist terminology seemed to be an accepted part of their discourse. This is not to say that there was necessarily a deeper antagonism towards Africans than towards whites. Reflected in the two interviewees' responses is a suspicion and mistrust of Africans. This attitude is directly linked to the lack of contact and stereotypes instilled through the dominant ideology. An often understated point is the fact that for many workers the only direct experience of other race groups occurs at the workplace.

Ek kan nie se nie, want ek wiet nie. Ek wiet nou soe ver ek kan se, wat ek nou onner gewerk het en daai is goeie mense, ek kan nie se die Wit mense is goed of die native mense is goed of die kleurling mense is goed nie. Ek se maar nou net wat ek nou by gewerk het.

The same worker, however, had the following to say about mixed marriages:

Die wat die wit man die bruin vrou het, en die wit vrou die bruin man, dan sien jy nou weer die native man met die wit vrou en soe nie, stick by your colour.

All of the workers interviewed (with the exception of Mr S) did not seem to be interested in political issues. Common responses were, 'ek steur my nie aan daai nie' or simply 'ek wiet nie van daai nie' were common responses to straight-forward questions about how they felt about various aspects of apartheid. In part, this can be attributed to fear but it's also a product of a lack of real political experience. This lack of political or politicising experience is an important aspect of the separation between social consciousness and a consciousness of politics.

Where clearer responses were given to questions about politics, they were often mixed with conservatism, resignation and fear. The first respondent gives his feelings on the institution of petty apartheid divisions, and the second on Group Areas.

Ek het 'n bietjie sleg gevoel, maar wat kan ek gemaak het, ons kan niks daaraan gemaak het, ons moet maar saam kyk. Die moeilikheid is net dit, is nie die bruin mense wat dit maak nie, is ook nie die wit mense wat dit maak nie, is daai government.

Ek kan nie gat se nie, waar ek miskien gat se 'is verkeerd dan is 'it reg, en as 'it nou verkeerd is dan se ek 'it is reg. Ek voel nie lekker daarvoor nie, maar wat kan ons doen. Ons is nie die gowernment nie, as die gowernment, leaders su'ke dinge uitsit dan moet ons net tevrede wees, 'cause ons a'mal val onder een ding, is 'it nie waar nie. Ons a'mal val onder die gowernment, ons kan nie die en daai gat se nie, ons kan nie nasty wees nie.

Another worker interviewed rejected apartheid, but saw 'bruin werkers' to be responsible for it and not the 'wit man'.

Daai is verkeerd, strande en die busse is verkeerd. En is o's self wat dit maak, o's gaan nie om die dag deur te bring nie, o's gat skandaal maak. Jy het ook nie respek ook eers en die nie jy self maak dan se jy is die witman. Is nie die witman wat maak nie, jy gaan strand toe, jy gat daar vir die dag, jou vrind wat saam met jou gat is eintlik skaam vir jou pal se besigheid wat hy aan rig. So 'n mense moet hulle 'n slag skrik maak lat hulle kan sien en hulle kan verander. Die way soos hulle aangaan, gaan hulle soos heidene aan.

In most interviews, without raising the issue myself, the question of violence emerged. When questioned about school boycotts and other forms of resistance, most simply rejected these activities because of what they saw as the inherent violence in such situations. The attitude which prevailed was 'We already have so much violence in the community, why create more by challenging a force that is far greater than you anyway.' With the exception of

Mr S, all interviewees felt that change is not possible through resistance or challenging the powers that be.

The separation between coloured workers' lives and their consciousness of politics is not a tangible thing, but a lack of a political consciousness which is an integrated part of workers' worldview. In the following exchange with Mr D (the trench digger) the 'separation' in consciousness becomes evident:

SF: Wat dink jy van 'apartheid'?

D: Die 'apartheid' kom stadig weer terug, Botha maak nou weer laat dit terugkom.

SF: Wat dink jy van dit?

D: Hy laat dit weer terugkom. Is mooi kyk, die Bloemhof Flats, die bruinmense het daar gebly toe was daar nie 'n lift daar gewies nie. Botha't nou glo 'n lift laat insit vir die witmense.

SF: Dink jy dis reg of verkeerd dat die bruinmense moes skyf van daai Flats?

D: Was verkeerd gewies ho, was verkeerd. Die mense het lekker gebly daar, bruinmense, en daar't niks gehappen daar nie, hoekom hulle was a'mal susters en broers.

SF: Maar jy dink nogtans dat wat Botha nou doen reg is?

D: Ja, Nee ek gat nie se die ou kerel doen iets wat verkeerd is nie, nee die ou kerel werk hard nou.

Mr D's rejection of the implimentation of the Group Areas Act apparently contradicts his support for PW Botha and his policies. Later in the interview I asked Mr D the following general question, 'Wat maak jou bly in die lewe?'

Wat my bly maak in die lewe is my gesondheid, die Krag wat die Here my gee, en my gowernment, hy kyk mooi agter die bruin geslag, agter die bruin kindertjies, agter die gebrekklike kindertjies ook en hy kyk mooi agter die ou mense. Die mense complain, ek ook, my vrou complain oor die pryse was so opgaan, maar ons kan nie an'erste nie, daai man kan nie sy geld vat en a'mal laat kry van daai geld, hy moet die goed tax.

Mr D, on the one hand, feels unhappy about various direct effects of apartheid, Group Areas and rising food prices, for example, but, on the other hand, strongly supports the Nationalist government and its policies. This contradiction between Mr D's consciousness of 'day-to-day' experiences of apartheid oppression and his submission to the perpetrators of that oppression provides a clear illustration of the separation in his social consciousness. However Mrs I (the clothing worker) had something different to say about the Group Areas Act:

Kyk soos eerste, maar nou is dit mos nou gepass dat 'n European an 'n coloured kan trou, eers kan hulle mos nie getrou het nie, maar nou is dit mos gepass. Maar nou hulle kan nie gaan bly waar't hulle wil bly nie, 'it is nog nie reg nie, ek agree nie daarmee nie, because jy moet vry wees. Ons is a'mal mense, maak nie saak onse colour nie.

Workers' consciousness of the mainstream of politics, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, and their consciousness of themselves and their lives is primarily the product of the politics of exclusion. The feeling of political powerlessness and the consequent distancing or lack of participation in political activities is the core of this problem. The politics of exclusion is not simply a coerced imposition by the dominant ruling bloc, but is also an inculcation of powerlessness into workers' consciousness. I asked Mrs J whether she felt the Group Areas Act was right or wrong:

J: Nou ek wiet nie of dit verkeerd is 'n of dit reg is nie, maar soos ek vir Shaun se, ek wiet nie wat gat aan in hierdie land in nie. Ek sit maar by die huis, ek hoor maar baie dinge wat aangaan. Wel ek is jamma en ek voel hartseer oor al die dinge maar wat kan ek doen, ek kan niks doen nie.

SF: Hoe het jy gevoel toe jy gehoor het dat District Six gaan verpletter word?

J: Baie hartseer, baie hartseer want daai is nou die plek wat jy kan gegaan het, jy kan jou inkopies gat doen het, jy kan als gedoen daar, daar was ek baie mal. Kyk hoe lyk die verdag. Hulle kan maar nou net die plekke gerenuw het vir die mense maar nog gebly rit daarso.

SF: Weet jy wat die UDF is?, en wat dink jy van die UDF?

J: Sien daai's wat ek vir Shaun se, ek ken niks van hierdie dinge nie. Ek wiet nie wat gat aan nie. Ek wiet nie wat die UDF beteken nie. Ek verstaan nie hierdie dinge nie. Ek wiet nie of ek outyds is of wat nie, maar ek verstaan glad nie hierdie dinge wat aan gat nie. Ek wiet nie niks die betekenis is in waarvoor rit is en wat gat aan en daai.

SF: En wil jy nie weet nie?

J: Ja, as ek nou vra wat beteken die UDF, dan sal ek wil graag wil hoor wat rit is.

SF: Het jy nooit probeer om uit te vind wat aangaan?

J: Nee, ek loop nie in die ronte nie, ek gat nie by sukke plekke nie ek sit maar net hier by die huis sit ek.

There are two striking aspects in the above exchange: firstly, Mrs J feels bad about the destruction of District Six but is not prepared to or is not in a position to judge whether Group Areas legislation is right or wrong; secondly, her entrapment in the household is combined with a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness. Her double exclusion from politics as a coloured worker and as a woman 'trapped' within the household is evident.

While individual feelings of powerlessness and submission amongst coloured workers are produced by many factors, this feeling is a central product of the consciousness and culture of exclusion. A key aspect of this exclusion is the apartheid state's attempts to undermine the coloured working class as a potential force for political resistance. Through this ideological and political process, the apartheid state has aimed to create a marginalised

group of 'excluded' people who do not pose a threat to its position and power.

A striking feature of the ideological context of marginality is that it provides an illustration of one function of all dominant ideologies - their power to define and characterise a subordinate group of the population from outside in the interests of the dominant group...Dominant ideology acts to perpetuate the position of exploited classes and groups through definitions and meanings which these classes and groups must incorporate into their own thinking and feeling...(Leonard, 1984: 187-188).

In other words, coloured workers have in part been defined, by the state and its allies, as being outside the formal political arena, yet many coloured workers, through the use and development of their own discourse, have also defined themselves as being separate from this arena. Consequently, coloured workers' struggle to establish particular forms of culture and identity, together with their struggle for economic survival, has tended to draw coloured workers away from the political terrain. This withdrawal has entrenched an apolitical understanding of their problems, culture, identity and ultimately their entire situation.

This separation is not a clean break or split. By definition, the term, separation implies inconsistency and discontinuity in mental processes and consciousness and has a material root in the changing conditions of life that working class people face on a daily basis. Furthermore, coloured workers internalise levels of deprivation and alienation at work and in the community. These experiences exacerbate and complicate the struggle to establish a clear sense of culture and identity.

The phrase 'fragmented consciousness' is frequently used amongst activists in the Western Cape and is probably historically one of the oldest expressions used to describe the consciousness of the coloured working class. Paradoxically, there is, no such thing as a clear, uniform or undivided consciousness for any individual or group in society. There is always some degree of distortion, projection, denial and so on, in most people's consciousness. The experience of working class people worldwide is particularly marked by these inconsistencies and gaps in consciousness.

#### 5.6 Conclusion.

What is the significance of the separation between social consciousness and a consciousness of politics? Taking working class experience as one's point of departure, the separation between bread and butter issues and politics has considerable importance. Insofar as bread and butter issues are the basic subsistence issues that continually weigh heavily on the daily consciousness of working class people, these issues are nearly always going to get responses when taken up by community organisations. Yet these issues are not perceived as a collective problem. They have been individualised through the impact of dominant ideology, on the one hand, and entrenched by the excessive individualism perpetuated by the deeper strivings for personal identity and meaning within the coloured community, on the other hand. The question of having food, clothing, shelter and so on are fundamental human needs but equally important is the question of personal and social identity. Well-fed and sufficiently clothed individuals or groups of people, are meaningless and ultimately without purpose if they have no sense of identity. Having an established personal identity is just as much a

'necessity' as having food and clothing. The 'gap in Marxism' as regarding its undeveloped analysis of the individual, needs to be explored from this point (Riegel, 1976; Layder, 1979).<sup>16</sup>

If developments at the level of the state are considered as our point of departure, then the separation between politics and the coercive exclusion of the coloured population from parliamentary politics is of paramount importance. Historically, the apartheid state has played various political games with coloured people, taking them on and off the voters' roll. These developments, for the most part, have affected the coloured middle class primarily and not the working class. The issue that remains is that the coloured working class has been physically excluded from this avenue of power. Furthermore, the divisions and separateness created by apartheid, with its concomitant lack of information, has instilled fear and mistrust between the coloured and African population groups. Thereby reinforcing exclusion and its consequent attitudes.

This division between African and coloured has historically been created and enforced through the pillars of apartheid legislation, in particular, the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act. A good example of how this division was entrenched is shown in the history of old Windermere, (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, progressive organisational initiatives, such as the launch of the UDF, are perceived by many coloured workers as being simply for the Africans and not for coloured people.

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<sup>16</sup> Leonard's book, Personality and Ideology: Towards a Materialist Understanding of the Individual (Macmillan Press: London, 1984) is an attempt to explore this terrain and quotes Jean-Paul Sartre as saying, 'Marxism lacks any hierarchy of mediations which would permit it to grasp the process which produces the person and his product inside class and within a given society at a given historical moment' (p.5).

The 'exclusion' separation is thus, in part, created by apartheid divisions from parliamentary and extra-parliamentary spheres. The parliamentary and legislative exclusion is a more directly coercive measure. The exclusion from extra-parliamentary organisations relates in part to racist divisions created by the state, but also relates to misconceptions and stereotypical ideas that coloured workers have about the nature of progressive organisations.

On the level of community formation there has been the historical development within the different coloured group areas, (particularly around religious, cultural and social points of identification), of 'communities' at a localised level. These specific 'communities' are in themselves no different to any other community where different religious, cultural and social groups normally group and cohere together. What is noticeably different is the lack of broader group and community which leads back to the undefined and contested nature of 'coloured identity'. It is within this context that other focal points, such as the local sports club, choir, church, social clubs and so on, become so much more important to people, in providing protection, stable social networks, a greater sense of common identification and a consequent greater sense of meaning.

In comparison, where the institutions of civil society in the African areas have taken on an increasingly politicised role, the same is not the case in the coloured areas. There are of course notable exceptions, for example the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and cricket clubs.

Ultimately there are various dimensions to the politics of exclusion and the consciousness and attitudes that coloured workers have developed from this exclusion. While several aspects and attitudes flowing from this have been explored in this Chapter, the central feature has been the formation of a separation between coloured workers' social consciousness and their consciousness of politics.

## Chapter 6. Uniting Around Common Experiences: Organising Coloured workers in the Community.

### 6.1 Introduction.

This Chapter explores the very difficult task of developing collective relationships amongst coloured workers within the community. The popular assumption 'bruiwerkers kan nie saamstaan nie' which is repeated by individuals within and outside of the coloured community, will be explored. This Chapter deals with the specific problems encountered in organising and mobilising coloured workers in the Factreton community. What problems have there been in developing collective relationships and forms of action between coloured workers in the community? Through exploring this question, it will be shown how difficult it is to organise and develop a sense of unity amongst coloured working class residents. The final sub-section will nevertheless attempt to demonstrate that 'bruiwerkers Kan saamstaan'.

Sub-section 6.2 provides a historical illustration of the re-emergence of Charterist politics in the Western Cape. Against a historical backdrop of the Fattis and Monis boycott and the '1980 Schools Boycott', a number of organisational networks emerged in many communities in the Western Cape. Sub-sections 6.3 and 6.4 illustrate organisational developments in the Factreton community. The re-emergence of Charterist politics in the Kensington/Factreton area was manifest in the creation of student and youth structures in the area. However, of greater importance for this study was the 'takeover' by Charterist activists of the existing Labour Party controlled civic organisation. The building of a civic organisation by Charterist activists in the Factreton area will be traced from

this point. The subsequent repression of community organisation in the post-1985 period will be dealt with in sub-section 6.4.

This section links key aspects of coloured workers consciousness, to contemporary political and organisational developments in the area. This means drawing out the specific organisational and political implications of the separation in the social consciousness of coloured workers. This also entails examining the implications that the various aspects of coloured worker consciousness (which was explored in Chapters 4 and 5) has have for organisational work in the area.

The perceptions and experiences that are cited in this chapter are primarily those of 9 activists who grew up in various coloured communities. These activists first became politically active during the period 1976-1982. The bulk were politicised during the events of 1979-1980. Many of this generation of political leaders who entered politics during this period are today occupying important leadership positions in MDM affiliated civics, youth structures and trade unions. The two activists from outside the Kensington/Factreton area were both chosen because of their considerable political experience within coloured communities. Of the seven local activists, six of them were chosen because they were the most experienced civic and youth activists in the area. The seventh individual is a cultural activist who is a respected community 'historian' living in Kensington.

The two activists interviewed who are not from the Kensington/Factreton area are both from what has been termed a 1976 generation of political leaders. The one has been active in both

student, youth and civic organisation. The other has been active in student, community and trade union organisations.

The other seven activists interviewed are all resident in Kensington. Five of these individuals were either born, or have lived, in the area for most of their lives. These activists have thus grown up in the community. Many of them live with their families in Kensington. The close relationship between activists and their families is a notable feature. While most of the activists have been schooled in the area, and have been, or still are, at university their political development is nevertheless distinctively community based.

Of the seven area activists five have been active in the civic for periods of 5 - 10 years. The other two local activists are a youth activist and a cultural activist in MAPP. The youth activist has occupied senior leadership positions in CAYCO. Five of these seven activists are in the age group 25 - 35. The other two individuals are older than 35. All of the nine activists interviewed regard themselves as Charterists, or as being aligned to the Congress Movement. Their assistance throughout the research process was invaluable.

The few remarks that worker interviewees had concerning political events were largely based on their distant observations of political events. For the worker interviewees the historical events of popular resistance, 1976, 1980 and 1985 seemed to be largely unconnected to their daily experiences at work and in the community.

The final sub-section will argue against the common assumption that 'bruin werkers kan nie saamstaan nie'. While coloured workers often say this about themselves, and in a sense this phrase has become entrenched in the popular tradition of coloured politics there is a growing awareness amongst many coloured political activists and coloured workers that 'bruin werkers kan saamstaan'.

## 6.2 Pre- 1980: The re-Emergence of Congress Politics.

Charterist, or Congress, politics were largely dormant in most Cape Peninsula communities during the period 1964-1978.<sup>1</sup> Extra-parliamentary political developments during the period 1973-1978 were dominated by the Black Consciousness (BC) and Unity movements. The Unity Movement, in particular, has deep historical roots within the coloured communities of the Cape Peninsula.<sup>2</sup> With the repression of Black Consciousness organisations in 1977, Unity Movement activists rooted in the more affluent coloured schools (such as Livingstone High and Trafalgar High) held considerable sway within coloured community politics. As regards trade union politics, the former SACTU-affiliated Food and Canning Workers Union (FCWU) still existed with a degree of support amongst coloured workers. There was also the embryonic General Workers Advice Bureau which primarily organised African workers.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms 'Congress' and 'Charterist' politics essentially refer to the same thing. The Congress tradition of politics is historically personified by the Congress Movement of the 1950s. Aspects of this history were referred to in Chapter 2. The term 'Charterist' refers to the Freedom Charter which was and still is the guiding document of the Congress Movement. The term has been used more often and more openly during the 1980s, as it reflects a less explicit link with so-called banned organisations. During the past few weeks, however, with the release of several ANC leaders the complete opposite has been the case and the ANC is being more openly referred to.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 2 deals with the historical roots of the Unity Movement.

On Monday, 23 April 1979 five workers were dismissed at Fattis and Monis factory in Bellville-South. No reasons were given by management for the dismissals but all five workers were members of FCWU (Luckhardt and Wall, 1983: 81). Some days later the majority of the staff at Fattis and Monis went on strike in solidarity with the dismissed workers. A significant feature of the strike was the community support generated through a consumer boycott. This also marked the first time since 1962 that trade unions and community organisations had worked together. The boycott continued for seven months. Management eventually acceded to the union's demands.

There were 'teething problems' in the embryonic relationship between trade unions and community organisations. For example, the structure of the relationship between the emergent community organisations and trade unions had at that early stage not been clearly co-ordinated. The consumer boycott against Fattis and Monis was nevertheless an important event preceeding the watershed 'schools boycott of 1980'.<sup>3</sup>

A political activist described some of his experiences during this period.

That was after the BC period. Something like the Fattis and Monis issue just drove home the point that you must link up with the community. During 1980 and in 1976 to a lesser extent, people did go out and form committees in their specific areas and have meetings with their parents. While say during 1978, 1979 activists would have concentrated a lot on theoretical stuff and debates on campus, for long time many of us were completely unaware of the Congress history especially pertaining to questions of mass struggles.

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<sup>3</sup> See, F. Molteno, 'The Schooling of Black South African's and the 1980 Cape Town Students Boycott; A Sociological Interpretation' (M.Soc.Soc: UCT, 1983).

In a similar vein Manuel stated that,

Up until 1979, the attempts that had been made to organise in the communities (coloured communities - SF), were in themselves quite unconnected, and no consideration was given at the time to establishing permanent organisation. In 1979, the Fattis and Monis workers came out on strike and called for a consumer boycott. This underscored the importance of permanent community organisation. The boycott was organised within the community, and was successful even though there were no structures organising in the community. The sum total of that experience pointed to the importance of establishing a permanent organisational form within the community. (1983: 64).

For a generation of school and university students, the 1980 schools and consumer boycotts were to have a decisive impact on their political development and consciousness. Against a backdrop of relative extra-parliamentary political quietness, emerging student activists in the schools and on the campuses, together with embryonic community and trade union organisations, initiated a massive outbreak of schools boycotts which spread across the Cape Peninsula. Without going into the specific details of this historical event, it is important to consider the implications of this year, as it did have an impact on subsequent developments in the coloured communities. Two activists reflect on the significance of 'The 1980 Schools Boycott'.

What 1980 did was to throw up a range of activists who broke out of the ideological stranglehold of the Unity Movement. You must remember the Committee of '81. They brought out a manifesto, which was very radical because they defined issues in class terms; they defined the question of race in a different way not like the Unity Movement who almost denied the existence of ethnic differences. So out of the BC position, developed a new kind of thinking among student activists. In 1981, at the funeral of Hennie Ferris, for the first time publicly a Charterist banner was raised in the Western Cape (since the early 1960s - SF). Ferris was a community leader who was on the Island and when he died people felt he should be remembered for what he stood for. And immediately after that, the anti-Republic festivals and campaigns happened. As a force that's where it started, and it just

encompassed a range of all these 1980 graduates into the fold (the Congress Movement - SF).

It definitely was the emergence of youth structures and civic organisations throughout the Western Cape and nationally. I also think the manifestation of a particular ideological position was realised far more that year in terms of working together. After a fair amount of lull, a real democratic movement was surfacing inside the country. 1980 also in a sense marked a period of a rebirth of the Congress Movement inside the country. I think people were meeting again specifically as Congress activists, people were strategising as Congress activists. So to me that year was hell of a significant. Even in terms how people organised was much more focussed on the question of: 'who is the vanguard, actually? We began to build into our organisational work an emphasis on working class leadership, an emphasis on the development of a conscious working class.

The school boycotts on a general political level were a historical watershed as they broke the relative political dormancy of the period after 1976. On a local and community level, the school boycotts were a catalyst for the mushrooming myriad of student, youth, civic, worker, women's and civic organisations. The school boycotts of 1980 heralded the re-emergence of the Congress tradition of politics that had been virtually dormant in the Western Cape since 1963. It was against this backdrop that organisational developments in the youth, schools and the civic occurred in the Kensington/Factreton area.

### 6.3 1980-1985: Organising in Factreton.

Prior to 1980 the Kensington/Factreton Residents and Tenants Association (KFRTA) was dominated by Labour Party people in the area, who controlled all the executive positions. While a younger generation of activists was emerging in the schools and in the youth organisations, there were several key older activists who had been

working within the Labour Party controlled KFRTA. An activist described how Charterist activists took control of the KFRTA:

Some of us were working on the committee that was set up in the area to co-ordinate the boycott (the 1980 schools boycott - SF). We discussed how we were going to take the boycott up at the school and into the community and make people understand in the community why students were boycotting. It became increasingly clear to people that what we needed was to get into the civic in order to reach as many people as possible. The civic was quite popular and it was able to reach a number of people. To co-ordinate the boycott we eventually decided that we should look seriously at the existing civic instead of forming another structure in the area. It was quite amazing the extent to which we didn't have to work much to establish ourselves, in order to take over. After the first few meetings we were able to pass a vote of no-confidence in a few Labour Party guys, kick them out and assumed leadership positions in the civic. I think it showed the extent to which people had already developed some kind of disillusionment with the Labour Party. We've had control ever since.

In the next passage an older activist explains how he saw the 'takeover' of the civic.

We stood together and we said we don't want them here, we kicked them out completely. When they went into management committees that is the time that we opposed them, not because they were Labour. Labour's constitution, if you can follow it, there's nothing wrong with it, but it's only when they started to participate in the other things that we didn't want them with us. But before that I was with the very same people. They were strong people but when they started going into the management committees, that's the time we said, 'We don't need you.'

Once Charterist activists had taken control of the civic, the initial years of their leadership were characterised by an organisational emphasis on bread and butter issues. Rents, evictions and a variety of basic problems that residents face were (and still are) the primary basis from which the civic draws community support. The major goal, however, was to build mass organisation that was rooted in the community. The obvious starting

point was to take up the issues that directly affected people, particularly the issues that workers were most conscious of. An activist described some of the initial work of the civic in the area by noting that

1981 was significant in the sense that for the first time organisations, or people's organisations became a reality in the Western Cape area. And they were fairly mass-based in the sense that issues were identified that people could relate to. Issues were clearly worked out. The maintenance campaign, the rents campaign, buying of houses: those issues were clearly identified from a survey conducted. Our method of working was a mass approach: door-to-door work, Plein Committees, the whole question of taking up the struggles of people. For example, taking them through a process of struggles, identifying issues, taking issues to the City Council, getting ordinary residents to participate in challenging Council, working out arguments and preparing for meeting the City Council. That was the first time that this approach to progressive community organisation emerged. It had mass support amongst the people.

While the local activists consistently took up these bread and butter issues, they were also continuously looking for ways to take up political issues. A key element of 'taking up' political issues within the community meant exploring ways of establishing the link between bread and butter problems and broader political issues. A local activist explained some of the organisational problems encountered in the early 1980s:

A particular problem was that because there had been such a lull in the overt political issues, it was very difficult for civics to tackle issues in a way that made direct links between the issue we were taking up, whether it was housing, evictions, rent increases or cutting off peoples electricity or whatever. I think it was very difficult, and people felt very frustrated by the inability to make the links between the issues we were taking up and broad political questions and because people's consciousness at that stage was so dulled by all the years of no political activity. It wasn't easy to make those links and discuss overt political issues with people. Although I think the 1980 period made a big difference to that, particularly after 1983 with the Tricameral Parliament elections where we were forced in a sense to make those political links. Although we were able

to organise a hell of lot of people, the extent to which we were able to develop people's political consciousness was severely limited. The other problem with that period was that it was a period of mainly very young people or youth who had emerged and were fired-up politically. Obviously there was a need for all those organisational structures but I don't think that we were able to capture the older people in a way that more senior people would have been able to do. I think that was to some extent a limitation, too because people associated us immediately with what was generally happening in the Western Cape.

During one of the worker interviews Mr V (a janitor) became somewhat irritated when I posed questions about various political events and issues. When asked whether he saw any purpose to schools boycotts he responded:

Daar moet iets wies, maar ek wiet nie wat nie. Die agtergrond daarvan wiet ek nie. So jy kan net praat van wat jy ondervinding van het, maar wat jy nie ondervinding van het nie, dit baat nie jy praat daarvan ok nie. Moet praat van 'n ding wat jy wiet, en ondervinding daarvan het, so lat jy kan more jy weer antwoorde gee daarop. Maar nou gaan dit net praat, en jy wiet nie wat jy praat nie.

Mr V's point clearly illustrates the lack of a tradition of political struggle amongst many coloured workers. He senses that the school boycotts have some purpose and at no point during the interview does he make critical remarks about these events. While he notes that it is difficult to comment on something he knows nothing about or has had any experience of, he nevertheless stresses that if a person does have these experiences then they should be spoken about. In a sense his commentary affirms the existence of the separation between his general social consciousness and his consciousness of politics. This separation is due in part to a lack of experience, particularly political experience. A lack of political experiences is also reflected in Mrs L's (a domestic worker) commentary:

Ek kan nie se nie because ek verstaan niks wat aangaan nie. As die ene se daai, ek kyk net vir hulle aan maar ek praat nie, se ook niks, wat ek dink ek gat miskien iets verkeerd se, dan kom ek in trouble. Ek was nooit in moeilikheid en ek wil nie nou op my ou dae in moeilikheid kom nie.

Mrs L's lack of political experience is interwoven with a fear of getting involved in something that might get her into 'trouble'. Later in the interview, I asked her how she felt about the government:

Wat kan ons doen, ons moet tevrede wees. Ek se weer, ek wil nie in die moeilikheid kom omdat ek het die gese en daai gese het nie. Ons moet maar vat soos ons kry.

Mrs I (who is exactly half of Mrs L's age) replied in a similar vein to the same question:

Wel hulle maak hulle wette, as jy nou tevrede is, of nie tevrede nie, wat kan jy maak. Jy moet obey en klaar, because ons moet hulle obey, because hulle's die government.

The comments of Mrs J (a food worker) were similar:

Nee maar ek kan nie se nie want ek wiet nie hoe gat dit wies nie, sien os moet maar tevrede wees met die wat nou aangaan. Ek kan nou se of it goed of sleg is nie. Kyk die parties en goete ek ken nie, en ek wil my nie inmeng in sulke dinge nie.

While older coloured workers tend to be unresponsive to politics, the emergence of coloured youth as a radical political force was, and still is, an important political factor within the coloured communities. The relationship between radicalism in youth and the conservatism of the older members of the community has a bearing on the relationship between community organisations and community

residents in the broader community. One resident at a house meeting voiced this opinion,

You people are lighties, you got ideas, you guys got ideas. You will dig and dig that's why they (CCC - SF) listen to you. There is still things that they will hide from us. For very educated people (CCC), they're very stupid. They must explain to people in simple Afrikaans and English. They must explain to people on their level.

The predominance of younger activists within organisational structures has given greater vigour to organisational work, but it has also created a tension between the residents who are primarily concerned with their daily bread and butter issues, and younger activists who aim to politicise the community through taking up economic issues and linking these to broader political questions.

It's because to them it's not politics. If I go to number 10 Diasplein and I say to the woman 'Look here, look at your high rents, look at the place you're living in; she'll think that's not because of politics or because of apartheid, but because of the Council. The Council's responsible for that, why aren't they doing it. So OK, you organise around that and you go to the Council and you ask for lower rents and you ask for better conditions in the house and 'finish and klaar'. And it's always been like that, apartheid is here, you can't say anything about it. 'Jy gaan opgetel word' is in the back of their heads, and they accept it. It's only now, the new generation who've become far more active. And when they (the older generation - SF) do talk about it, it's like something that's alien to them, although it's not really. I mean, 'Why must 'we' change apartheid you know?' They have a car, God will help soon and so on.

The problem of linking political and economic issues consistently has reoccurred throughout the various campaigns the civic has taken up. In the following passage Mrs L (a domestic worker) illustrated the difficulty that civic activists face in organising around bread and butter issues.

Wel ek voel lekker, daar's niks worries vir my nie, die rent is fixed up. Als is fixed up, my water en lig is

betaal. So't my pa vir my gese, jy kan 'n stukkie harde brood eet en 'n koppie water, maar sorg dat jy die rent betaal. Laas maand het 'n papier gekry my rent is op, daarom toe vra hulle vir my, hoe voel ek nou om extra te betaal. Toe se ek, ek moet dit betaal, ek kan nie gat se ek kan nie betaal nie, want ek het nou nie genoeg om die huis te koop nie. So as die rent opgaan dan moet ek betaal al gat die rent elke maand op dan moet ek betaal so dat ek accommodation kan het, is 'it nie waar nie.

Mrs L is acutely aware of the pressures of paying her bills and making ends meet. Yet her preoccupation with these bread and butter concerns is rooted within a 'Master/Servant-type' consciousness. In Mrs L's case an emphasis on maintaining the little you have, in particular your house, overrides any suggestion of challenging the status quo. Manuel argues that,

Now on the one hand, organisations in fact exist to mobilise people around the causes of poverty; on the other hand, poverty tends to build in a particular kind of disillusionment in the minds of people. there is also the problem of the long waiting lists which tend to give Council an artificial hold over people - people tend not to want to get involved in organisation because of fear of eviction (1983: 66).

Within the context of a severe lack of space and housing there are thousands of residents within Factreton who have been on the CCC's waiting list for several years. I met a number of residents who claim to have been on this waiting list for over 20 years. The threat of eviction is a constant problem which influences the behaviour of most residents.

The 'Sale of Houses Campaign' was a contentious period in the history of Factreton. During 1983 the Cape Town City Council launched this campaign. Over 1 501 Council rented houses in Factreton were to be sold to those tenants who wanted to buy the

houses they occupied.<sup>4</sup> This created considerable tension within the civic and in the Factreton community. The common thread that ran throughout Factreton at this time was the question of Council housing and common problems that people experienced in relation to the Cape Town City Council. The major problem for the civic was that the City Council's campaign had the potential to individualise and fragment the community even further. As one activist put it, 'They want to ensure that everything is according to the individual. They make it difficult for people to stand together around common problems.' A local activist explained the divisive impact this had on the community,

Our position was that houses weren't worth buying even at the low prices they were being sold for. After all people had been paying rent for those houses for so many years. We were trying to make a political issue out of it: we were saying 'You've paid for that house over and over again, you've paid the cost of it.' The materials used for those houses were so poor that you must actually bargain with Council. But the conflict for the community was that this was the only opportunity that they ever had to own a house. How can we tell them not to do that? We live in houses in Kensington; how can we tell them not to buy their houses. The civic association lost quite a bit of footing in some sections of the community. The campaign was so divisive we couldn't come up with any formula that was accepted by all, by the entire Factreton area. The 'Gat' agreed with us because they couldn't afford the houses that were being offered them. What we were saying was in their interests. The centre section to some extent agreed but even some of them could afford and others couldn't. In the Hawe Plein area all the houses have been sold. It was the first chance for them to own a house and they were going to buy that house. Eventually we tried to make a non-issue out of it; we were forced to, to try and neutralise the situation. Our proposal was, those who can afford to buy, should buy. The CCC campaign was hell of a divisive thing you can see the aftermath of that in the area. People are still very reluctant to respond to the civic because they feel judged and feel justified in buying a house and we had no right to tell them not to buy. People have this strong sense that 'When we die our children must have a roof over their heads.'

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<sup>4</sup> This figure was supplied by the Factreton Housing Office: 25/8/1988.

The 'Sale of Houses Campaign' was a difficult and painful period for the civic. Several activists claim that there are sections of the community that are still resentful towards the civic because of its changing stance, and the activist in the above quote implicitly admits that under trying circumstances mistakes were made. The civic's priority at the time was (and still is) to serve the entire community. The 'Sale of Houses Campaign' exposed the underlying tensions and differences in interests that sections of the community had. An added complication during this campaign was the role played by what my informants termed 'workerist' individuals in the civic.<sup>5</sup> These individuals argued that the civic should completely oppose the 'Sale of Houses Campaign'. This, they argued, would increase the impoverishment of residents and hence enhance the potential for revolutionary activity. At the end of the campaign, the "workerists" were ousted from the civic by Charterist activists. The "workerist" element caused considerable damage, insofar as their role reinforced the misconception amongst many residents that the civic was totally opposed to residents buying houses.

In the next passage Mr S (a security guard) comments on the 'Sale of Houses Campaign':

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<sup>5</sup> The phrase 'workerist' is a pejorative label in common usage among political activists. It generally refers to individuals, groups or organisations which have a 'purist' understanding of the role of the working class within a National Democratic struggle. The workerist perspective asserts the independence of the working class at the expense of the formation of working class political alliances with other classes and political groupings. The phrase 'workerist' has become abused and distorted by many political groupings. This should not detract from the fact that there are individuals and groups who can be accurately described as having a workerist political perspective.

Ek het self gegaan na daardie kantoor (housing office - SF) toe se hulle vir my, 'Mr S it's a golden opportunity that people can't let go. Toe lag ek en se, 'a golden nonsense that people must let go'.

One resident had the following to say 'Ek voel magteloos. Die staat maak it, dat ons met mekaar veg, maar daar is min huise en baie van ons.' There are signs that several residents have come to realise that 'homeownership' does not bear the 'fruits' that they assumed it would. During house meetings that I attended, several residents complained about the condition of the houses that they had bought: 'The bricks used are like crispy things'; 'These houses were built for kakkerlakke' (cockroaches) and 'My kitchen window frame is like flour'. As tenants, these residents could demand that the City Council undertake repairs. As so-called 'homeowners', however, these repairs have now become their responsibility. Mrs J had the following to say about her house:

Kyk hoeveel jare bly ons al nie in hierdie huise en die huise is vrot. Daai agter kamer wat os in slaap, daai is nou amper soos 'n yskas. Die mure is water nat, jou goete word mif in die kaste, jou kooigoed bly nat, en nou moet os die plekke nog koop. Daarvoor voel ek 'is nie regverig nie, maar wat kan ons nou doen? As ons 'it nie koop nie of ons wil nie hier in bly nie, waar gat ons bly? Wie gat os plekke gie? Soe ons moet maar tevrede wies.

The launch of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in August 1983 created considerable community interest but this was unevenly spread across the Kensington/Factreton community. According to informants, Kensington tended to be more responsive and interested in the launch of the UDF than Factreton. This, they argued, reflected that the predominantly middle class Kensington residents were more responsive to political issues than the residents in Factreton. One indicator of the support that the launch had was that the civic was able to fill three large buses to take people from Kensington and Factreton

to the launch. For subsequent political gatherings outside of the area they have not been able to fill more than one bus. An activist explains,

It had more impact in Kensington than it had on Factreton, although we spent most of our time in Factreton. The response in Kensington was far more favourable than Factreton. It's part of that whole notion that coloured workers don't stand together and the UDF didn't make an impression on them because it was trying to bring them together.

The civic's attempts during the period 1983-1985 to build organisation through using explicitly political issues and linking this with the growth and building of the UDF was, according to activists and worker interviewees, far better in a lower middle-class area like Kensington. For most campaigns, local activists concentrate their efforts within Factreton yet their most favourable political responses generally come from Kensington residents.

Local activists interviewed and spoken to consistently referred to the question of the 'older orientation' of the Factreton community. Activists drew parallels with younger communities, such as Mitchells Plain, where the average age of householders and tenants is apparently a lot lower.<sup>6</sup> A key remaining factor is coloured workers' perceptions of the UDF and politics as not being not part of their lives. An example of this conservative view of coloured

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<sup>6</sup> Official statistics support this parallel, while simultaneously indicating that the number of older residents in Factreton might not be as great as many residents and activists claim. Drawing from 1980 census data, Patel provides the following figures: Percentage of residents below 35 years of age and those above: Factreton, 76% below and 24% above. Mitchells Plain, 83% below and 17% above. E. Patel: 'Cape Town - A Statistical Summary and Analysis of Socio-economic Trends for Local Areas and the 01 Economic Region, (Part 2), Carnegie Conference Paper No. 302b, (Cape Town, 1984). The outdated nature of this census data and claims by residents that suggest a higher percentage of older people in Factreton provide grounds for disputing the validity of these figures.

workers was the perception communicated to me by one person that the UDF was for 'Die kaffirs'. In the following passage an activist describes a common view amongst the older generation of coloured workers in Factreton:

But I think the conservatism is that we don't have any experience of politics in the coloured community. Also, don't rock the boat, rather disassociate yourself from politics. If you do want to go into politics rather join the Labour Party, because that has some kind of credibility. We also found that out with the anti-election campaign, Labour Party gives you credibility: 'How can we join UDF saam met die kaffirs.' The Labour Party, Parliament, gives you far more status and credibility and that is politics for people.

The underlying relationship between racial classification and the superior or inferior status attached to each group classification is apparent in the above quote. During a house meeting in Factreton, one resident had the following to say about the CCC and Labour Party 'They must know their story, Alan Hendrikse, sit nie hier nie. Mrs -- (CCC housing official - SF) was here in this plain once. She never came again after the old people moered her.' Another resident described the CCC as 'Council is the Baasboy of the Tricameral Parliament.' One resident accused the Labour Party of, 'They sold us out, now Harold Ross (the Labour Party MP for Kensington/Factreton - SF) is driving a BMW and we are walking with broken shoes.'

While many residents and activists dismiss the leadership of the Labour Party for opportunistically using their ascribed status as 'coloured' for their own personal material gain, the same cannot be said of rank and file Factreton residents who vote for these people. Mr D (the trench digger), for example, voted in these elections because he saw potential for change and improvement. Yet, as the

above quote implies, for many, being accepted into the 'Parliament' albeit as 'coloureds' means some kind of status can be acquired. In the following passage Mr D explains why he has voted in all of the recent elections,

Amal ja, daar was mos 'n tyd wat hulle die bruin mense s'n afgevat (the voter roll - SF), toe laat hulle mos nou weer stem vir die bruines, en toe kom hulle (Labour Party officials - SF) hier een oggend. Ja, gaan ook stem. Wel, hulle sal my kom haal, hoekom ek het mos nou ook stemregte. Vir ons en vir onse kinders dan het jy dan ook mos iets van die land, dan kan jy ook mos da'em iets se, jy't ook mos 'n stemreg.

As illustrated previously, for many of the older generation of coloured workers, the state's reforms do have some meaning. The older coloured workers compare these present developments with their experiences of an old style apartheid. Those residents that vote within the tricameral elections do not necessarily vote for political reasons. An activist explains,

Our area is dominated by older people, people with old ideas of other organisations tried, but not really succeeding. Perhaps the first chance of those organisations going into parliament is seen as being a possible chance for change. Maybe for older people it meant possibly some kind of progress: "What do we have to lose? The other thing, people like Harold Ross has a very, very strong footing in sports in the area, particularly in soccer, and soccer is incredibly popular in Kensington and Factreton. I don't think it's the politics of the man as much as the man, in Harold Ross's particular case. The man comes from a family which was one of the first families in Kensington. Everyone in this area know's the Ross's. The historical relationships could be exploited. This is an established area so you're bound to have that kind of history in the area, to have some loyalists. The cronies that he has hang around with him, still selling fish and things in the area.

While it is difficult to develop an analysis of the Labour Party's support in the Kensington/Factreton area, it can be asserted that the Party's material support comes predominantly from a group of

small traders in the area. My informants claim that the Labour Party's voting support tends to come from the soccer fraternity and old age pensioners (like Mr D) in Factreton. During the anti-election campaign, the civic and youth structures actively canvassed the entire area for residents not to vote. The responses in Factreton varied from section to section.

'Die Gat' is our completely demoralised sector, that is lumpen. Their responses are clearly that they couldn't care a shit. You can see they have been so demoralised they really can't see anything good happening out of anything and they are the most unreliable sector in the community. You just don't know when you are on or off with them. Then you have the middle section, the section that generally responds okay. Their economic position is slightly better than the lumpens, but it's still not sufficient where people can even address themselves, they are so bogged down with their problems and they don't actually think they are able to move beyond that position. The particular economic position forces people to occupy themselves with the questions of just being able to live and meet deadlines and so on, they can't think beyond that. It's like a rut people are in. That section opposite where you are, has consistently responded well. One has confidence with the minimum amount of work in that section. People are going to respond where their economic position is slightly better. It is still essentially working class, but they are in a position where they can address questions of their life other than just trying to see to it that they have food on the table, money to send their kids to the school, and so on.

My own observations and experiences confirm the above comments. The informant is drawing an important link between responsiveness to politics and the socio-economic position of particular sections of the Factreton community. The relative degree of economic security and deprivation of the working class household does have an important bearing on the conditioning of the individual responses of workers. Yet workers' reasons for not voting are also often not based on political grounds. As Mrs I (a clothing worker) explained:

Nee, ek stel nie belang in daai nie. Om die waarheid te se meneer, ek het nie die tyd om in sulke vergaderings by te woon nie, want at all times het ek niemand responsible om na my kinders te kyk nie.

Mrs I, burdened by domestic and maternal tasks, simply does not have the time or energy to be 'bothered' with politics. In a similar vein Mrs J (a food worker) explained her reasons for not voting:

Ek kan nie se nie want ek het nooit gegaan nie, en ek bly maar by die huis want ek wiet nie as ek moet gaan stem vir wat moet ek stem of vir wie moet ek stem nie. Hy het (her deceased husband - SF) net maar gat teken hy wiet oek wat hy geteken het nie, kruisie gemaak want hy kan oekie geskrywe het nie.

The UDF Anti-Election Campaign was by far the most intensive and extensive political campaign conducted in the area. In the initial stages of the campaign, civic and youth structures concentrated on educating and conscientising people around the major issues that related to the Tricameral Parliament. Activists went door-to-door, pamphleteering and explaining to residents why they should not vote in the tricameral elections. This period was followed by a period of further door-to-door work and house meetings where structures were set up to coordinate the campaign. A variety of residents from different 'pleins' and sections were represented. They included representatives from various sectors within the community, such as traders and the churches. Although at 14% the eventual poll was relatively high, in contrast to other urban coloured area polls of below 10% (such as Mitchells Plain and Woodstock), this poll was nevertheless in line with previous polls for the area. While the period after the 1984 tricameral elections was characterised by heightened political activity throughout the Western Cape region, this was not the case in the Kensington/Factreton area. With the exception of isolated incidents of stone throwing and City Council

vehicles or tyres being burnt, the area did not experience the same degree of mass militancy that occurred in areas such as Bonteheuwel, Athlone and Mitchells Plain.

#### 6.4 1985-1988: State Repression and Popular Defence.

Political activity of the 1985-1986 period was dominated by the actions of students and youth in particular. A series of mass protests and street battles occurred in Athlone, Bonteheuwel, Mitchells Plain. The state gradually re-established control by initiating repression from its coercive apparatus. This included states of emergency, press restrictions, widespread detentions, murders of activists, restriction orders and a general 'kragdadig' onslaught by police, riot police, security police and the army. While mass struggles were happening in townships on a national scale, there were some townships that were relatively dormant. Factreton was one of these townships. This was a key motivation for choosing to do a study of this particular area.

In the post-1985 period, repression did play a significant role in the decline of organising residents in the area. Examples of state repression included a number of local activists spending periods in detention, and students being charged with so-called public violence. The first year of the state of emergency, with the widespread fear of state action against organisations and the detention of well-known community figures from central UDF leadership position, such as Trevor Manuel, all contributed to the build-up of fear amongst Factreton residents. As one Factreton resident put it 'Ons vrees die gereg kan miskien toe slaan.' Manuel played a central role in the initial 'takeover' of the civic

organisation. His political involvement in the post-1984 period was mainly outside of the area.<sup>7</sup> Detentions of popular figures like Manuel did contribute to the general climate of repression and fear. As one activist put it,

But the repression has also scared off the coloured community in many ways. It is contained, there is a shell around the coloured community and it is much harder to organise people effectively. People withdraw into their shell.

I asked Mrs J what she felt about the resistance that had occurred in many coloured communities:

Ek kan nie se nie, ek sit maar by die huis. Nou baie dae was 'n vrees in my in as ek sukke dinge hoor, is 'n vrees want jy wiet nooit wanner kan jy oek in daai beland nie. Nou waarvoor baklei hulle, waarvoor doen hulle sukke dinge? Los als af, die Here sal self reg maak wat verkeerd is. Jy baklei nou, Shaun is nou 'n witman, ek is 'n bruin vrou, nou baklei ek, waarvoor baklei ek, ek wiet nie waaroor baklei ek nie. Maar revereg moet regveragheid gebeur. Ek mien as ek ken vir Shaun dan vir Shaun gie ek wat Shaun toekom. En Shaun gie my wat my toekom dan sal daar nie moeilikheid wies nie. Maar eerstyd was daar nie sukke dinge gewies nie, hoekom nou.

Over and above the effects of repression, there were other reasons that contributed to the decline of community organisation in Factreton.

The one thing that has been serious is the decline in student organisation. In our area the extent to which students are organised does determine a hell of a lot what happens in the community. The 1985 boycotts in our area were fairly abortive. It was 'malgat' stayways and it wasn't organised in a way that the community could get involved in those kinds of political activities. This I

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<sup>7</sup> In the middle of 1988 during my period of residence in the area, Manuel was released after more than two years in detention. I approached him a few days after his release for an interview. He requested a period to re-adjust to normal life, whereafter he would give the interview. Approximately six weeks later I approached him, and a date a week from then was set for the interview. Two days later Manuel was detained again.

think determined a hell of a lot of what happened in various areas. The area organisation couldn't respond to it, effectively, particularly the youth. We (civic and youth structures - SF) had very little contact with students. The other thing is the whole history of the area, this has been an incredibly difficult area to organise. I think the decline in organisation in our area is similar to other areas. As you said, it's not only linked to the question of repression, but also the ability to actually find ways of organising. We can't call meetings where we invite people in the community. Because of the repression those meetings haven't been able to take place, but we haven't found other ways of reaching people. We haven't been able to sustain the quality of work which we've been doing in the area. We haven't found other ways of sustaining that kind of work.

The radicalism and militancy amongst the younger sections of the community has consistently been a force for mass protest and the politicization of the rest of the community. Why then are Factreton youth and students apparently politically uninvolved? A youth activist explains,

I think, although we're isolated and young people from Factreton would socialise on their own and not really mix with the Flats people, they are the same as any young people in the Western Cape. Absolutely disinterested, very conservative as well, unconcerned. But, and I think this has been a surprise for us, every year one or two have emerged as serious activists, so one can't write off the youth of Factreton. But we've had a problem at the schools. There are SRC's at two schools in the area but as soon as it means coming to meetings, they don't turn up.

The lack of militancy and depth of organisation amongst the youth in Factreton is clearly an important factor that has contributed to the political inactivity in the area. However, the underlying factors that contribute to current developments are rooted in a previous historical phase. In the following passage a leading activist explains certain mistakes that were made in the pre-1985 period.

We had a naive idea that the mass public space that emerged in the post-1981 period would sort of last ad infinitum, and that was the big mistake we made. Not that we did not expect repression, but we always thought repression would be, in a sense, short-term. We never realised that we could go into a period like the 1960s, where there would be a permanent state of emergency. The second thing about the period, we had to understand that we had to work at very different levels in building the MDM. We did not build the underbelly properly, so we got the flabby remains of those organisations in the late 1980s. I'm talking very much in general the only distinctive different element into this whole picture has been the growth of the labour movement, particularly since 1985.

The question of the nature of organisational development from the 1983-1986 period of launching the UDF, anti-election campaigns, mass protests and widespread militancy in the Western Cape townships, to the period of organisational decline, has marked features. Repression had been an important feature contributing to this decline. The 1983-1986 period was marked by predominantly mobilisation-type politics during which activists were continually drawn into regional campaigns, thereby draining organisational resources within their specific community-based organisations. As the above activist notes, 'we failed to build the underbelly properly'. When repression was at its worst, and hundreds of central and local leadership individuals were detained or restricted, these basic weaknesses were exposed. A lack of grassroots organisational development and activist training had been neglected in a period of intense mass mobilisation politics. Those activists who weren't detained or restricted had to take the burden of maintaining organisations under repressive conditions. Several activists remarked on just how 'burnt out', 'uitgeput' or 'drained' individuals were after this period of mobilisation politics. In the following passage a former youth activist, and now trade unionist states,

If you look at youth organisation in Facticeon, if you cover the different social networks, we have at some point in the history of organisation drawn all of Facticeon in. We have touched people, but we've never solved the problem of being able to at the same time bring Kensington and Facticeon into one issue; it's either one or the other, even with the civic. I think one aspect about our area is that in high periods our organisation compares with other areas, and then obviously there is a lull. Being a small area, being a middle-class area (Kensington) has its special problems, but one good thing has been our organisation. There has always been a coherent group of activists involved all the time. Obviously activists change, but there's always been a group which has kept a semblance of organisation and structures. They've kept the shell of the organisation together all the time, the same thing that people are doing in other areas. Keeping shells of the organisation, it's not really mass-based in the present period (1988). I think it's a feature of organisation in the present period, but it's slightly stronger or slightly weaker in different areas.

Organisations in the Kensington/Facticeon area shared similar problems and experiences. At the same time, MDM organisations in most areas, facing similar repressive conditions, went through a phase of defence and consolidation of existing organisational structures.

#### 6.5 'Bruinwerkers Kan Saamstaan'.

This section deals with the problem of coloured workers uniting as a collective force. The common phrase 'bruinwerkers kan nie saamstaan nie' is repeated by individuals within and outside the coloured community. That it is difficult to organise coloured workers into a collective force was repeatedly emphasised by several informants. This Chapter has thus far illustrated some of the problems encountered by political activists in organising coloured workers in Facticeon. Assuming, then, that 'bruin werkers kan nie saamstaan nie' is a 'problem' that needs to be resolved, the following questions can be posed: What factors contribute to an explanation of

the problem, 'bruinwerkers kan nie saamstaan nie'? and, in contrast, Is there evidence to suggest or show that 'bruinwerkers kan saamstaan'?

This study has explored various aspects of coloured workers' lives, including their conditions at home, work and in the community, their experience thereof, and their consciousness and culture. A complex set of factors have been illustrated and analysed in this exploration, some have received more attention than others. Some of these aspects have been: political and cultural exclusion, individualism, alienation, fatalism, fear, conservatism, powerlessness, identity crisis, dislocation of community networks, lack of faith and trust in others. All these factors have a bearing on the questions of 'unity' and 'collectivism' amongst coloured workers. While much of the evidence documented might seem fragmentary, it nevertheless reveals particular patterns of social behaviour that people live within, express and, in a sense, are trapped within.

From many residents that I spoke to (during my period of residence), I attained a strong sense of resentment and antagonism towards the various symbols of oppression, such as 'the bosses' and 'the state', yet very few of these workers were prepared to do anything about these feelings. The following exchange occurred with Mrs I (a clothing worker):

I: Maar meneer weet, ons bruinmense is maar so, hulle staan nie saam met mekaar om iets reg te kry nie. Hoekom het ek by die huis gebly, ek hou nie van violence nie, en ek het dit so gevat, daar's niks violence daai dag nie (June 16 stayaway - SF), ons bly net by die huis, daai's al wat ons doen. So ek sien niks verkeerd daarmee.

SF: En hoekom dink jy staan bruinwerkers nie saam nie?

I: In meeste gevalle meneer, hulle praat nou so, maar as die wit man nou kom, hulle is so bang vir daai wit man, daai's nou hulle Here wat daar kom. Ek glo dis hulle's nie so bang vir die Here so wat hulle bang is vir daai wit man nie. En hy's 'n mens net soos ek is, net soos ek is, is nou net sy kleur wat 'n verskil is, maar daar is niks verskil nie.

Mrs I emphasises the issue of fear and worker's consciousness of white people, also closely linked to the issue of fear. However, some workers I spoke to had a gut reaction and consciousness of the antagonism between themselves, as the oppressed, and the 'state/bosses' as the oppressors. Regardless, they were not prepared to be involved in any form of politics. There is, then, for particular reasons, a lack of an 'active element' or preparedness to be involved in politics or collective work. I asked the following activist to explain this particular phenomenon.

It comes down to this question of standing saam, why is there not unity? Why is there not collectivism? The reason behind this is that people's experience of the institutions of coloured civil society are atomised. These institutions and their members have defined political collectivism as alienated, as alienating, or as outside their sphere. So the institutions that normally bind the community together, those very institutions of civil society, are defined outside of the scope of traditional politics.

After the interviewee completed the above response, I asked him, 'In organisational terms, how do you make the link between bread and butter issues, and strictly political issues, be it in the community or on the shopfloor?'

You can do that by skilful propaganda, you have to say: 'You are taxed through the economic crisis, you are facing the bloodshed.' You have to go through a hierarchy of concepts, political ideas. You go to the Tricameral Parliament system and you say, but look what Hendrikse is getting and you begin to sketch a picture and obviously there's a recognition, a realisation. There's a consciousness-raising of the contradictions, so it's not

difficult to make the links, but there's nothing to sustain the consciousness.

I followed this response by asking 'But what's lacking then, you're implying that something is lacking?'

What's lacking is a set of organisational networks which bind together people's experiences. So what I'm saying is lacking is the historical element of the make-up of the coloured community, which informs all the aspects of its identity. So it's not just a lack of organisational relationships. It's also a lack of consciousness of collectivism, coupled with deep-set alienation. An ability to come out of that, to override that, is deeply hampered, is contained. The level of consciousness is self-contained, it doesn't expand unless you are continually expanding it from your own site of struggle. You must always look at why certain things happen in a certain point of time which defines a pattern of events. We need that space to change that pattern of events consciously.

At another point in the interview, he said,

It's a deep psychological scar, it's like a long fold, which we never quite see the end of, never quite comprehend the complete sense of the pictures and images that it has set in your mind. But you can definitely feel the effects of it through nightmares, it's that kind of thing for the coloured community. You see, I think people don't want to discuss those things, we haven't theorised the perspective in concrete terms, of where the coloured community is at.

The above interchange between myself and the interviewee illustrates, in brief, some of the key aspects of this study. While many workers have developed certain levels of political awareness, this consciousness is not taken onto a level of organisation and action. The issue of activating people's consciousness in such a way that they can 'break out' of being trapped within specific patterns of behaviour is particularly crucial. An aspect of this 'breaking out' of existing patterns of behaviour involves two particular links: firstly, a link between coloured workers'

experience of their socio-economic position, and their experiences of political oppression inflicted by the institutions of power and exclusion. Secondly, a link between their experiences as workers on the shopfloor and their experiences as community residents and family members. It is this second point that requires further attention. Mann argues that,

The ability of any worker to generate a total account of his life situation is reduced by the gap that exists between work and non-work experience. Non-work experience clearly compensates for work alienation, at least to some extent, yet does not remove experience of the latter (1973: 30).

Several interviewees stressed the need for developing a link between the shopfloor and community experiences of coloured workers.

I think it's far easier to raise the question of people's political oppression with them once they have actually had a sense of their economic exploitation as opposed to raising questions of people's economic exploitation with them through political organisation. This has been my experience. It's far easier to talk to people who are in a union (in the community) than to talk to someone that has not been unionised and doesn't make the links. I think it is a difficult question, and is probably the crux of your research, because I don't think we've been able to successfully develop the necessary strategies to successfully handle that particular problem.

Over and above establishing these two links, another step in the process of developing worker consciousness needs to occur. Workers have to believe that the process of political change has benefits for them. Workers have to believe in their own power to change their lives and their situations. Political struggle has to create and project a sense of political as well as human growth and empowerment. Workers need to develop that sense in order to become active participants in the process of struggle. Yet a political

sense and consciousness can only be established by drawing workers into the struggle for political change. An activist argues,

Maybe it's not conservatism, maybe it's a question of fear, people engage in struggle once they have realised their own power. So people understand that things are bad and it's wrong and they're obviously anti-apartheid, in that sense they do have a political consciousness. But whether they see themselves doing something about it, is the next thing. And they don't and they reject talk about it, they reject bringing it in, using symbols and slogans, because they don't see the possibility of participating in change. It is only in particular periods when they do realise their ability to change events. And that is in periods of action, of a strike, of a community struggle, then they realise their ability to change.

Building unity and collectivism amongst coloured workers contradicts many features of coloured worker consciousness that has been illustrated so far. This means breaking out of a pattern of behaviour which has limited coloured workers' social behaviour to exclusive and apolitical activities. As one activist put it 'there isn't a natural tradition of political struggle amongst coloured workers.'

Drawing coloured workers into active participation in political struggles means organising within the organisations and institutions of coloured civil society (such as churches, youth groups and sports clubs) as opposed to political organisations simply appealing to these institutions for support and assistance. In the following passage a community and trade union activist argues the following:

The problem is we are caught in an historical time warp, ultimately, you can't get yourself out of that time warp. We need a strategy, but a strategy mediated and worked out under different conditions of struggle. Namely an advanced form of coloured identity, namely a whole range of things. We need to build solid organisations which incorporates part of civil society, without that we're making a fatal mistake. That doesn't simply mean inviting or liaising or relating to those organisations, which we did before. Because we were using organisations like a

'ball and chain', just drawing them along, as Poulantzas used to say. You need to thoroughly engage yourself in these institutions so that the moral, political and social leadership of the coloured working class becomes real. And that means it's a long, slow process. Concretely speaking, organisations will have to change drastically, the style of activism is going to have to change.

The implications of the above argument takes political activism into the heart of those institutions that have an important bearing on the development of political consciousness. It means political activism needs to develop within the sports clubs, churches, youth groups, music and cultural groups, all those institutions which make up civil society within the coloured community. If the politics of exclusion are to be broken out of, political activism, as a catalyst for political change has to be taken into the heart of the community. Civic organisation in itself is not sufficient to develop a broader political awareness of oppression and exploitation. In the following passage a civic activist explains this problem.

People have this vague notion of community organisation being political, but they don't perceive it in terms of their problems and how that is political. They know that we (activists) are dabbling in politics but when they come to us and discuss their evictions they don't see how those people (political activists) whom they think are involved in politics, are actually involved in politics. How that issue of theirs, the eviction, is political. Their sense of their predicament is not that is to do with certain political contradictions, it's one of 'Ja ons het gesmokkel an okay nou is ons ge-evict.' But it doesn't raise a whole range of questions from their economic position to their housing position, to who decides on housing and all those kinds of questions.

Developing political consciousness amongst workers requires addressing and challenging them within a wide spectrum of organisations and institutions that have a bearing on their day-to-day experiences. Politicization of coloured workers within the

community goes beyond the aspects of civic organisation that this study has focused upon. Activists argue, however, that civic organisations do have a pivotal role to play in co-ordinating and drawing together the various community groups of coloured civil society. In this manner, the potential for creating organisational networks that can bind together people's experiences can be developed. This creates the potential for developing a community cohesion and identity that will unite coloured workers within the community.

#### 6.6 Conclusion.

This Chapter has illustrated a contemporary political history of community organisation within the Factreton area. It outlines some of the problems encountered by activists in building collective relationships amongst coloured workers and residents within Factreton. It also reveals just how difficult it is to create a sense of unity and trust amongst coloured workers. While the problem of 'bruinwerkers kan nie saamstaan nie' is evident, there is also real potential for developing 'bruinwerkers' into a collective mass force.

Four elements to developing political consciousness and action amongst coloured workers were identified. These were: firstly, establishing the link between workers' experience of their socio-economic position and their experiences of political oppression; secondly, establishing the link between workers' experience of the workplace and their experiences in the community and home; thirdly, to create an active element in coloured workers' consciousness by drawing them into active forms of protest and struggle wherein a sense of their own political power can be created; fourthly, this

process of politicization and breaking down the consciousness of exclusion and unresponsiveness, can be extended and deepened on a broader scale. This requires, however, organising within the institutions of coloured civil society, so that these influential institutions can become participants within the process of political struggle. As one leading activist argued: 'Politicization and organisation have to occur within a range of institutions and sites within the coloured community.'

This process of politicization has the potential for creating a social and political identity which goes beyond the designation 'coloured' and develops a common humanity and purpose for those communities classified 'coloured'. This process is fraught with risks. For many coloured workers it means risking the little they have got at present. An activist captures this aspect.

You are talking about the workers now, specifically the coloured labourer class, the people who have got poor education and who have got low paid jobs and who have this whole battle with their self-esteem. Who are trying to be dignified. Their churches help a hell of a lot, in God we trust and in our community we find strength and so on, and that's the important value of the church. They don't want any part of all this ugly politics outside. After a hard day's work, a 46-hour week, travelling in the bus, picking up all kinds of things, the church is solace, your home is a solace, your family life is a solace, you want to preserve what little bit of solace you have got. No ways are you going to rock the boat. Anything to anger the Council or the government or the police, we can't afford that. We can't afford to be activists. But once people discover their power, as I think the black people have already, then there will be change.

Coloured workers are 'trapped' within a consciousness of exclusion and an existing pattern of relationships which affords some degree of meaning and purpose within a general context of oppression and exploitation. A question which encompasses many of the feelings that coloured workers, in particular older generations, have about

political involvement is: Why risk what you have worked so hard for? 'Politics' has to provide coloured workers with a sense of hope about their future and, in particular a growing sense of their own political power through participating in the process of political organisation, struggle and change.

## Section 7. Conclusion.

...it is by means of the sociological imagination that men now hope to grasp what is going on in the world, and to understand what is happening in themselves as minute points of the intersections of biography and history within society (Mills, 1959: 7).

The purpose of this study has been to understand the political consciousness of coloured workers by exploring and analysing the intersections between individual life histories and broader historical/structural developments. These intersections have influenced the development of particular forms of consciousness, culture and politics amongst coloured workers. Chapters 2 and 3 provide a historical and structural context for the study of worker consciousness. Chapter 4 relates the biographies of six coloured worker residents of Factreton. Chapter 5 attempts to develop the basic elements of a social analysis of coloured workers' consciousness and unresponsiveness to political issues and organisation. Chapter 6 sketches a contemporary political history of the Kensington/Factreton area. This chapter focusses on illustrating the links between the nature of coloured workers' consciousness and how this has influenced the development of community organisation in the area.

The central research findings of the study were drawn from the combination of a year-long residence within the Kensington/Factreton area and in-depth interviews with workers and political activist. As participant observer within an oppressed community I was actively involved in the work of the local civic organisation. While living with two different families I had regular interactions with activists, their families and friends. This contact created opportunities to meet and interact with residents in an informal

manner and also allowed me to move freely within the community. While Kensington is a largely lower-middle class area, Factreton is a particularly depressed working class community.

My experience as resident and as political activist in the community was a powerful influence on the development of the ideas and analysis contained in this study. As far as possible, I have attempted to convey the sentiments of workers and activists in their own words. Their words and their experiences constitute the empirical threads with which this study has been woven. My own experience as a white researcher living within an oppressed community was at times frustrating, depressing and isolating. I generally 'stuck out' in most situations within the community. Interactions with activists as opposed to with workers were more relaxed as there was greater commonality in terms of political experiences and university background. Yet, community residents in Kensington who did not know me seemed to think that I was just another 'white boy shacking up with a coloured woman'. At times there was even greater suspicion and fear of me in Factreton: 'Is hy 'n boer (policeman - SF) of nie?' My residence within the Kensington/Factreton area was nevertheless a rewarding experience which stimulated my learning and research in an invaluable manner.

In appearance, Factreton is drab, dreary and at times quite desolate. As one of the oldest Cape Town City Council housing projects, there is a strong sense of old houses and old facilities that are gradually decaying. With a few isolated exceptions, the houses are square shaped and painted grey or brown. While the main roads through Factreton are in good condition, other roads between houses are generally disintegrating into gravel and sand. Open

plots within the 'pleins' are run down and neglected. The most poverty stricken section of Factreton is commonly known as the 'Die Gat'. This section is a particularly depressing example of working class hardship and deprivation.

It is within this desolate environment of community life that coloured workers' social and political consciousness was explored and documented. This study argued that in order to understand the unresponsiveness of coloured workers to political issues and to organisations, broad categorisations that distort or ignore the complex nuances of human experience must be avoided. The terms 'apathetic' or 'passive' were consequently rejected as a means to explain coloured workers' consciousness. Workers' historical and daily experience of this depressing and bleak reality was the point of departure used. Thompson argues that

Experience arises spontaneously within social being, but it does not arise without thought, it arises because men and women are rational, and they think about what is happening to themselves and their world..(therefore)...changes take place within social being, which gives rise to changed experience: And this experience is determining, in the sense that it exerts pressures upon existent social consciousness, proposes new questions, and affords much of the material which the elaborated intellectual exercises are about (1978: 200).

Coloured workers' experience of their community and life situation, and the social consciousness that they have developed to interpret, understand and deal with this situation is the primary empirical area for this study. However, there are no simple explanations for the reality of their lives which is a complex interaction of experiences, relationships, different cultures and consciousness. This study is but one limited attempt to capture and explain a 'piece' of that complex reality.

The following guide questions were posed at the outset: Why do coloured workers tend to respond to oppressive and exploitative experiences through non-political avenues and in an "apolitical" manner? Hence, why do coloured workers tend to be unresponsive to political organisation and mobilisation?

Coloured workers in Factreton usually do not see themselves as being part of white dominated parliamentary politics. These workers also feel excluded from African dominated extra-parliamentary politics. This study has argued that the experience and effects of political and social exclusion has created a separation within coloured workers' consciousness between day-to-day 'non-political' issues and political consciousness. As a result of this separation workers have tended to be unresponsive to political issues, in the community and on the shopfloor. This separation within the consciousness of coloured workers and their consequent unresponsiveness to politics has been reinforced by a range of factors.

Most coloured workers that I encountered during my fieldwork tended to be overwhelmed by the daily battle to 'make ends meet'. This entails a daily preoccupation with bread and butter issues, which hampers the development of political consciousness. The basic struggle for economic survival has a powerful influence on workers' attitudes toward and perceptions of politics and political organisation. As one activist informant put it, 'Why should workers be interested in politics when there is no bread in the house?'

This struggle over bread and butter issues primarily takes place within the household. The coloured working class household in

Factreton have kinship relationships that are characterised by a dominance of matrifocal relations. This generally results in the husband/male head of household deferring all domestic responsibilities to his wife/female partner. All the households in Factreton that I entered during my residence were characterised by this domestic dominance of women. These women are thus responsible for dealing with bread and butter issues, and thus it is women who are most concerned with civic issues. Yet women are also severely burdened by domestic and moral obligations which hamper their ability to participate in organisational and political work. Many female informants displayed a strong sense of entrapment within the domestic situation. The few women that I met who had been able to transcend this situation were divorced from their husbands and also had someone to help with domestic responsibilities, particularly childcare.

Male workers, however, tend to use alcohol as a means to deal with their experiences of oppression. Patterns of alcohol consumption are very difficult to discern within a single community, such as Factreton. Based on comments by worker and activist informants it seems that high levels of alcohol consumption are particularly prevalent amongst men. Excessive alcohol consumption appears to reinforce deprivation and a withdrawal from any form of political activity. However, the issue of alcohol consumption is inextricably interwoven with shebeen networks within the community. Activist informants generally regarded shebeens as a fundamentally apolitical social arena of community life.

As one interviewee put it, 'Mother to the Holy Spirit and Father to the Alcoholic spirit'. A high level of church attendance is prevalent amongst women, although it is difficult to discern a clear connection between political attitudes and church attendance. On an individual level it is clear that many workers use religion as a coping mechanism to deal with the effects of exclusion and oppression. Gender bias in terms of church attendance is connected to the moral obligations that the matrifocal head of the family is expected to fulfil. Most of my male worker informants only became regular church attenders when they were a lot older.

More broadly the growing political role played by many key churches, such as the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and Anglican Church, within the coloured community suggests that churches can be a politicising factor. Charismatic churches with a predominantly apolitical and individualistic theology appears to reinforce an exclusive consciousness. The influence of individual priests is significant in influencing the beliefs of specific congregations.

Outside of the household and the church, there are a variety of cultural forms that have developed as a vibrant but largely apolitical avenue of involvement. Cultural forms such as the 'Coons' have largely reinforced apolitical practices and alienated responses to political oppression. The myriad of cultural activities and sports clubs and societies are important factors in shaping the development of social consciousness in the community. This study did not deal with these issues in any depth. My informants regarded these issues, however, as being historically apolitical influences on the Facticeon community. A notable exception is the local cricket club.

It is within the context of these complex relationships that the unresolved and contested nature of 'coloured identity' was explored. The struggle over a clear sense of one's own personal and cultural identity has undermined the growth of trust and confidence of coloured workers. This lack of a common heritage has resulted in an individualistic pursuit for establishing one's own identity. The basic struggle over bread and butter issues and the experience of forced removals has also reinforced this fragmentation of relationships. Individualism and fragmented relationships has been a major obstacle to building solidarity amongst coloured workers. Workers' negative experiences of conservative trade unions and the failure of organisational initiatives because of individualistic rivalry have reinforced workers' reticence to become involved in community organisation. Fatalistic attitudes were also observed and have a direct bearing on people's willingness to be involved in politics. These attitudes seem to be confined to the most destitute section of the Factreton community, 'Die Gat'.

Specific factors that have reinforced low levels of political consciousness within the Factreton area have been: firstly, the relative isolation of the community from the Cape Flats network of communities; secondly, the specific historical formation of the community, in particular its relatively longer history and the fact that it was not a direct product of the Group Areas Act (as is the case with most other coloured communities); thirdly, the settled nature of the community and its fairly high ratio of older residents; fourthly, the decline of student and youth organisation in the area. It is the decline in student organisation particularly

which is significant, as student militancy has played a key role in politicising other coloured communities.

Bearing in mind the diverse set of factors that have contributed to coloured workers' unresponsiveness to politics, what possibilities or counter-trends exist which can advance political consciousness? In part, the resolution to this problem lies within the need for particular kinds of 'experience'. Experience that can develop coloured workers' consciousness of the underlying connections and contradictory relationships between various aspects of reality. Politicising experiences of police action, state repression, demonstrations and organisational work have the potential to breakdown the exclusive nature of coloured workers' consciousness. It is particularly through the process of political struggle, by challenging the state and local government, that workers within the community can develop and sustain links between various spheres of social reality. For example, consciously sustaining the links between bread and butter issues and politics is vital as is the link between community issues and issues experienced on the shopfloor. An activist informant explains,

What I'm trying to say is that it is the experience of people that is going to enable us to actually make those links (between bread and butter issues and political issues - SF). The very same people who experience the police action on the factory floor are more able to make a link between what is actually happening on the factory floor and what is happening in the community.

However, by not using political means or avenues to direct the emotional consequences of their oppression, such as feelings of exclusion, anger, frustration and bitterness, workers have used other avenues to deal with these experiences. Coloured workers have thus tended to displace their frustrations into various institutions

and mechanisms of civil society, such as the church, family, cultural groups, sport and recreation. While these institutions have sustained the coloured community in their position of political and social exclusion from the white and African communities, they have not unified the coloured community as a political force. This has been largely due to coloured workers' tendency to exclusively define these institutions of civil society as non-political. This also relates to what one informant termed 'coloured workers' lack of a political identity'.

Several activists that were interviewed stressed the importance of organising within these institutions as a direct avenue to developing political consciousness amongst the coloured working class. While trade unions such as SACTWU will play a major role in the transformation of coloured workers' consciousness, this is simply not sufficient. Coloured workers, many activists argue, will be drawn into political struggles by drawing directly on their own historical and daily experiences. Furthermore, for coloured workers to 'break out' of a consciousness of exclusion they need to be actively involved in political struggles outside of the workplace as well. Lenin argues that

The workers' utter lack of political rights, about which we have already spoken, and the absolute impossibility of the workers openly and directly influencing state authority become more clearly and sharply exposed and felt as the working class movement develops. That is why the most urgent demand of the workers, the primary objective of the working class influence on the affairs of state, must be the achievement of political freedom, i.e., the direct participation, guaranteed by law (by a constitution), of all citizens in the government of the state, the guaranteed right of all citizens freely to assemble, discuss their affairs, influence affairs of state through their associations and the press. The achievement of political freedom becomes the 'vital task of the workers' because without it the workers do not and cannot have any influence over affairs of state and thus inevitably remain a rightless, humiliated and inarticulate class (1970: 51).

An important aspect for coloured worker participation in future political struggles and democratic processes entails transcending the effects of apartheid oppression and exclusion. Inclusive organisational channels and processes need to be explored and developed so that coloured workers will play an even greater role in the process of historical transformation that is currently happening in South Africa.

This study has explored a broad and under-researched empirical area. A series of issues and questions have been generated which could not be explored within the scope of this study. Some of the most important issues that need further attention are: firstly, a comprehensive history of the Windermere community needs to be written. Key questions relating to the formation of coloured communities and identity could be unravelled in this process. Secondly, a considerable amount of experiential research of individuals, groups and communities is required if the enormous gap in our understanding of coloured identity, culture and consciousness is to be advanced. In-depth research into culture and identity issues amongst coloured workers have the potential for broadening our understanding of racism and the effects of apartheid oppression. Thirdly, the whole area of worker consciousness needs further research. This has particular relevance for research and development in a post-apartheid South Africa. There are inherent dangers in making an assumption that coloured workers will necessarily vote and give support to a post-apartheid government.

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## Appendix 1. Research Methodology.

This study has used four research methods to collect information: firstly, secondary source material; secondly, archival source material; thirdly, in-depth and oral history interview techniques; fourthly, participant observation.

This study has aimed to illustrate 'pieces' of working class life within a coloured community. A complex reality of houses, workers, families, jobs, recreation, organisations and politics constitute a vast canvass with numerous themes and issues. While the initial motivation was to simply 'allow workers to tell their story', this was gradually developed and structured into a narrower focus. Workers' own words and experiences were nevertheless, as far as possible, given priority when developing the research design. Extensive use of workers' quotes in the vernacular convey a more vivid sense of reality.

The first phase of the research process consisted of secondary reading and a broad range of consultations with academics and activists. My initial intention was to do participant observation of coloured workers on the shopfloor. Several attempts to gain access into a clothing or textile factory, however, failed. Management in most cases were simply not interested in the project. Those firms that were interested in the study were intent on using me as a surreptitious source of information on workers and their trade union activity. I then decided to change my focus to doing a community study.

I established a list of over 100 potential coloured working class areas to be researched. Through initial discussions with informants it was clear that there is no such thing as a 'typical' coloured working class community. Each community had its own particular features, and the notion of a 'typical' community was rejected as being problematic. The major criteria used were: firstly, the community had to be relatively small in terms of population and geographical size. This would reduce the number of practical problems faced. Secondly, older and more stable communities that did not have a history of heightened political activity were given preference in terms of the central questions of the study. Thirdly, the extent of community organisation in the area and whether there were individual contacts that could assist with access into the community. Fourthly, the extent to which there had been previous research done on the particular community chosen. These criteria enabled me to reduce the number of options to a handful of communities. Large communities like Mitchells Plain and militant communities like Bonteheuwel were avoided. Factreton, Bridgetown, Silvertown and sections of Athlone seemed to meet all the above criteria. Factreton was chosen because my contacts there were more extensive and there was more general research done on the area. However, a personal curiosity was ultimately the deciding factor. I spent most of my early childhood living in the white working class suburb of Maitland which borders on Kensington/Factreton. At a quite young age I was curious to know more about the people that lived across the railway line. This aspect of my personal history later became useful in breaking down barriers between myself and workers. The combination of living in the area and having grown up across the 'line' generally impressed people and decreased suspicions of me as participant observer in the community.

After initial discussions with political activists in the Kensington/Factreton area, I attended an area committee meeting where my access into the community and local organisation was mandated. Arrangments were then made to find accommodation in the community. I would have preferred to live in Factreton itself, as the major focus was on this section of the community, however, the extreme lack of rooms within Factreton was a major obstacle. Ultimately both houses that I lived in were centrally situated and were close to the boundary between Kensington and Factreton.

The selection of worker interviewees and the nature of the life history method has been discussed in, Chapter 4. Two experienced activists, not from the Factreton/Kensington area, were interviewed to help develop a broader understanding of the key issues of the study. The seven activists who lived within the Kensington area were chosen because they all had at least five years of political organisational experience. Particular individuals were selected from this small group because they either had or were holding central leadership positions in local community organisations. Five of the local activists were active in the civic (KFRTA). The remaining two activists were involved in the local CAYCO branch and in MAPP, respectively.

In-depth interviews with activists were semi-structured with the duration of the interview varying from one to four hours. The interview schedule was broken down into three sections: (1) the personal and political background of the individual; (2) detailed questions about the key general issues of this study; (3) questions about the political history of the Kensington/Factreton area. In

contrast, the in-depth interviews with worker interviewees took a life history format. In addition to questions about their life history, these interviewees were also asked indirect questions which explored their political opinions.

My position as a university trained white male was a sensitive issue that did affect worker interviewees. In most cases people were clearly relating to me differently than they would to their friends or family. Living in the community, my background, and the manner in which I related to interviewees gradually broke down most suspicions of me and pretentious behaviour worker interviewees might have displayed initially. Many of these informants were also introduced to me by Mr S who was widely respected as a community leader. This also enhanced my credibility in the eyes of my informants. A respectful but relaxed way of relating to people was also important. Showing interest in what people did and their families were ways of learning about community life but also broke down social barriers that might have existed.

All interviews were conducted in the homes of the interviewees, using a taperecorder. Some interviewees were slightly nervous of the taperecorder but this generally did not last for very long. A major problem during interviews with workers were continual interruptions by children, and other family members, neighbours knocking on the door and noisy animals in the backyard. While it was difficult to interview workers in this context, it was the interviewee's home and thus where he/she clearly felt more relaxed.

An aspect of interviewing workers which I had not foreseen was the extent to which many of the interviewees actually began to enjoy

talking about themselves. Once initial obstacles and nervousness had been overcome, several interviewees simply rambled on about various aspects of their lives. Many interviewees seemed surprised that a university trained person should find 'their lives' interesting and worth recording.

A major methodological issue that needed to be confronted was the extent to which I could generalise from a sample of six worker interviewees. Previous studies on the area (Swart, 1983; Da Costa, 1984) were useful for background purposes but did not resolve the problem. The nine activist interviewees partially reduced this problem by providing far more general information about relationships and attitudes within the Kensington/Factreton community.

Participant observation allowed for an involved exploration of research subjects within the 'natural setting' of the community. This in-depth involvement helped develop my general observations and feel of community dynamics. However, the emphasis of the research was not on generalising results but on illustrating particular trends within the Factreton community.

Social occasions such as parties and house visits were vital avenues for exploring community life. Regular attendance at civic meetings, advice office meetings and other political and cultural occasions organised by the civic were used to learn about community life. While I was active socially and politically during my period of residence, I was particularly conscious of playing a low key role in all activities. This was partly expected of me by community activists. However, had I played a high profile role this would

also raise security problems within the context of South Africa's State of Emergency.

As my stay in the community drew to a close, I could begin to sift through the massive pool of empirical information I had collected. Four hundred pages of interview transcripts, lengthy notes taken during and after meetings, and diary observations recorded during my stay, archival and secondary sources, were sorted out and analysed. The analysis of interviewee transcripts entailed identifying themes, coding and marking issues and extracting important quotes. Interpretation of individual worker experiences was a particularly difficult exercise. Similar studies where interpretation of oral data was central were consulted (Gordon, 1985; Vukani Makhosikazi Collective, 1985). My own experiences as participant observer also allowed for greater scope to reflect on and interpret oral data.

Finally, this study has laboured under three specific 'pressures' which have caused particular tensions to permeate through the entire study. Firstly, my own initial intention to allow workers to tell their 'story'. Secondly, thesis requirements and academic expectations by academic peers. Thirdly, political objectives and expectations. A wide range of activists within and outside Kensington/Factreton have either needed or expected particular issues to be dealt with in the study. With some reluctance I was forced to accept that not all 'audiences' could be catered for within this study. While this thesis is therefore intended for an academic audience other 'audiences' and their expectations will have to be catered for in a different format. However, the apparent 'academic necessity' to strip 'academic works' of their political

intent and popular appeal reflects a positivism on their part which remains unacceptable to me.

## Appendix 2. Statistical Outlines.

SUBURB - FACTRETON

YEAR: 1985

POPULATION	Pop. Group	White	%	Coloured	%	Asian	%	Black	%	Total	% of 01 & 02
Unadjusted	Males	36	0.31	5463	46.78	31	0.27	5	0.04	5535	0.71
	Females	38	0.33	6083	52.08	21	0.18	2	0.02	6144	0.79
	Total	74	0.63	11546	98.86	52	0.45	7	0.06	11679	1.50
Adjusted	Males	39	0.33	5556	47.06	33	0.28	6	0.05	5634	0.62
	Females	41	0.35	6107	51.73	22	0.19	2	0.02	6172	0.68
	Total	80	0.68	11663	98.79	55	0.47	8	0.07	11806	1.31

AGE STRUCTURE*		0-4	5-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Total		1330	2369	1263	1538	1846	999	1023	870	541	11679
	%	11.39	20.28	10.81	13.17	15.81	7.70	8.76	7.45	4.63	100.00
Males		685	1165	642	737	847	410	440	401	208	5535
	%	5.87	9.98	5.50	6.31	7.25	3.51	3.77	3.43	1.78	47.39
Females		645	1204	621	801	999	489	583	469	333	6144
	%	5.52	10.31	5.32	6.86	8.55	4.19	4.99	4.02	2.85	52.61

OCCUPATION CATEGORIES*	Male	% of e.a. tot	Female	% of e.a. tot	Total	% of e.a. tot	% of total 01/02 econ. active
Prof/Semi-Prf/Tech	76	1.46	122	2.35	198	3.81	0.02
Manag/Exec/Admin	25	0.48	24	0.46	49	0.94	0.00
Clerical/Sales	359	6.91	454	8.74	813	15.64	0.07
Transprt/Communic. Service	335	6.45	19	0.35	353	6.79	0.03
Farmer/Fishrn/Farelab.	212	4.08	281	5.41	493	9.49	0.05
Tradesman/Apprentice	43	0.83	3	0.06	46	0.89	0.00
Mining/Quarry/Prodctn	253	4.87	29	0.56	282	5.43	0.03
Unskilled	600	11.55	886	17.05	1486	28.59	0.14
Not Classifiable	590	11.35	244	4.70	834	16.05	0.08
	371	7.14	272	5.23	643	12.37	0.06
		% of suburb pop		% of suburb pop			
Total Econ. Active	2864	24.52	2333	19.98	5197	44.50	0.48
Not Econ. Active	2671	22.87	3811	32.63	6482	55.50	0.60
Total	5535	47.39	6144	52.61	11679	100.00	1.08

EDUCATION*	NONE AND ?	STD. 6	STD. 6	STD. 7	STD. 8	STD. 9	STD. 10	DIP. WITH STD. 9 OR LOWER	DIP. WITH STD. 10 OR LOWER	DEGREE	TOTAL
TOTAL	2176	5023	1924	969	759	297	363	90	66	12	11679
%	18.63	43.01	16.47	8.30	6.50	2.54	3.11	0.77	0.57	0.10	100.00

\* Not adjusted for undercount

(SOURCE: TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES, C.C.C.)

SUBURB - KENSINGTON

YEAR: 1985

POPULATION	Pop. Group	White	%	Coloured	%	Asian	%	Black	%	Total	% of 01 & 02
Unadjusted	Males	34	0.28	5673	46.19	145	1.18	0	0.00	5852	0.75
	Females	37	0.30	6250	50.88	135	1.10	9	0.07	6431	0.83
	Total	71	0.58	11923	97.07	280	2.28	9	0.07	12283	1.58
Adjusted	Males	37	0.30	5769	46.43	152	1.22	0	0.00	5958	0.66
	Females	40	0.32	6275	50.51	141	1.13	10	0.08	6466	0.71
	Total	77	0.62	12044	96.94	293	2.36	10	0.08	12424	1.37

AGE STRUCTURE*		0-4	5-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Total		1198	2220	1248	1461	2016	1272	1307	854	707	12283
%		9.75	18.07	10.16	11.89	16.41	10.36	10.64	6.95	5.76	100.00
Males		589	1107	614	743	943	593	609	385	269	5852
%		4.80	9.01	5.00	6.05	7.68	4.83	4.96	3.13	2.19	47.64
Females		609	1113	634	718	1073	679	698	469	438	6431
%		4.96	9.06	5.16	5.85	8.74	5.53	5.68	3.82	3.57	52.36

OCCUPATION CATEGORIES*	Male	% of e.a.tot	Female	% of e.a.tot	Total	% of e.a.tot	% of total econ. active
Prof/Semi-Prf/Tech	293	5.20	296	5.26	589	10.46	0.05
Manag/Exec/Admin	103	1.83	34	0.60	137	2.43	0.01
Clerical/Sales	677	12.02	868	15.42	1545	27.44	0.14
Trnsprt/Communic.	296	5.26	9	0.16	305	5.42	0.03
Service	142	2.52	245	4.35	387	6.87	0.04
Farmer/Fishrn/FarmLab.	18	0.32	0	0.00	18	0.32	0.00
Tradesman/Apprentice	565	10.04	54	0.96	619	10.99	0.06
Mining/Quarry/Prodctn	725	12.88	575	10.21	1300	23.09	0.12
Unskilled	221	3.93	96	1.71	317	5.63	0.03
Not Classifiable	226	4.01	187	3.32	413	7.34	0.04

	% of suburb pop		% of suburb pop			% of suburb pop	
Total Econ. Active	3266	26.59	2364	19.25	5630	45.84	0.52
Not Econ. Active	2586	21.05	4067	33.11	6653	54.16	0.61
Total	5852	47.64	6431	52.36	12283	100.00	1.13

EDUCATION*	NONE AND ?	STD.6	STD.6	STD.7	STD.8	STD.9	STD.10 OR LOWER	DIP. WITH STD.9 OR LOWER	DIP. WITH STD.10 OR LOWER	DEGREE	TOTAL
TOTAL	2011	3205	2045	1355	1559	502	940	270	308	88	12283
%	16.37	26.09	16.65	11.03	12.69	4.09	7.65	2.20	2.51	0.72	100.00

(SOURCE : TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES, C.C.C.)

\* Not adjusted for undercount

Appendix 3. Translations.

No. 1

You build the four sides with poles. Then you take branches and place them here and there. Then you plaster the wall with clay and manure. You plaster the wall by hand, so smooth that it looks just like that wall. Then you white-wash the plastered wall, with clay or red clay. Manure is poured for the floor. Those were happy times, but now everything has changed - everything's electric, everything's money (p.49).

No. 2

Here, near the intersection of Twelfth and Thirteenth Avenues, was the area where those places were. Like the barber, the hairdresser, on the other side a man sold meat, on that side men played music, over there again they made 'vetkoek' and over there they sold beer. On the other side again, wine. Everthing, there was much money, a lot of money (p.49).

No. 3

It had a big impact on the Blacks, even on a portion of the coloureds. It also removed many coloured women from their husbands because they had taken Black husbands. They remained behind with the children and that is why you will still find many illegitimate children, children of mixed racial descent, children removed from their father's because the father was Black, in that area. It was mainly the Black women who experienced suffering - the Group Areas Act. For many of the coloureds it was a joy because the Blacks had disappeared. They felt unsafe among these people, you know, people are still like that nowadays - the sight of a Black man scares our people. They become afraid and I would attribute this fear to the divided relationships that they have had. Many, people, this had been my experience. But as things stand at present, those people realise that this was wrong and that it was political ignorance and ignorance of Christianity. People who call themselves Christians, but if you call yourself a Christian then you can't have a concept of race (p.55/6).

No. 4

For monetary reasons. In those days they received very little money on the farm and because of that he had to move away from farm work. Always to improve himself. He said that before he leaves the earth he wanted to have improved himself and us, and that is why we moved to the Cape (p.80).

No. 5

No, my wife got her salary, I gave her my cheque and the Council deducted from my salary for the rent. She did all the shopping, she bought everything. She paid for it, not me. I give, she must pay. She is the boss of the house. She makes all the decisions concerning money in the house. All the decisions and everything. Yes, if something is bought, she decides then she asks me what I think about buying the article. If she sees her way clear to buy it, she buys it. If we can't, we go without until we can afford to buy it (p.84).

No. 6

I paid for everything to be done in the house, I even bought the food and clothing because a man is not allowed to carry money around in his pocket. He has to support other people, and not only buy alcohol. A man that has money in his pocket must also consider and support other women (p.85).

No. 7

I made all the decisions. I raised them. They were toddlers when their father died from an ailment he got in the army. The baby boy who lives here was a year and four months old and I was mother and father: I went to work and brought in the rent (p.85).

No. 8

Everything, I didn't take a ha'penny or sixpence of my money - I couldn't do it. I first had to go to my wife. Whenever she wants to give me something she can do so, but if she doesn't want to give it to me then I won't go to the trouble of asking for it because if I go to the trouble of asking for it then the children will go hungry. If I give her half and keep half for myself then both she and the children will go hungry. Even if I work overtime and am paid for that night's work, I will not take even a sixpence of that money. We weren't brought up that way. It must all go to the wife (p.86).

No. 9

Life went on. I did my own housework, and cooked the meal at night. I cleaned my house myself because in the morning before I leave the place must be tidy. When I return in the evenings it must also be tidy - it must remain tidy. A person can be poor but clean. This is what I taught my children and today they still do the same (p.87).

No. 10

The girls were mainly taught by my wife - things like sewing and that sort of thing. They should be able to do things for themselves but I would also like to see it done - and done properly. If there is a girl in the house, she should keep the table and the kitchen clean. Everything should be as hygienic as possible. She should learn that cleanliness is an element of a tidy life. If visitors come they should be able to see that your place is ship-shape (p.88).

No. 11

And I am not ashamed to say that there is no longer anything between us. We live together now just for the sake of the children, whatever he does is his own business. We are just together for the sake of the children, but further there is nothing between us, like there should be between a man and woman. There's no-one to talk to when you come home at night after work. Nothing like that (p.91).

No. 12

Everyone lives their own life and everyone thinks their own way but as far as I'm concerned I'm not interested in entertainment outside the home. I reason this way: they don't see their father in the morning or the evening and if I have to do that to them then I don't know how they will feel towards their own families one day. I don't want them to take after their father so I try to spend most of my time with them (p.91).

No. 13

Oh, very heartbroken. That's the difference between a man and a woman, all people are not the same. When he raised his hand to me I was heartbroken because I did not expect it from him (p.91).

No. 14

When you're young, unmarried and don't have any children, it makes a big difference because you can go anywhere you want to go and do what you want to do. But even though your married life is not one hundred percent, you must still obey your husband's rules (p.92).

No. 15

He didn't drink during the week but over the week-end. Before I left for church I had to give him money for a half bottle. When I returned home after church, he was drunk. He never went to church. I reprimanded him sharply and said: 'I hope you get run over by a car or that the delinquents stab you'. But that never happened. God has a pre-ordained plan for each one (p.96).

No. 16

SF: So your wife never went out at all?

V: From an early age she just stayed at home. Her father did not allow her to wander around.

SF: And what was your rule?

V: When she came to live here I told her that when I went out she should stay at home. She admonished me and said: 'Consider other people. What about the children?' I always went to parties and even though she scolded me I had a good time (p.96).

No. 17

Children suffer because of it; it causes problems at home because the husband does not bring home sufficient money. He goes to the shebeens first. The same thing happens over week-ends: there is friction and fighting. I don't think it's right: you try to rear your children decently and you can't because the shebeens are a bad influence (p.98).

No. 18

Alcohol made me ill: it affected my eyes and my back. The way I drank was wrong: if I had a bottle it would not last a few days but would be finished in a few minutes. When that was finished, I would go back to the shebeen and fetch another. I never had any money so I decided to stop (p.99).

No. 19

I cannot say I do not fear anything but you must believe in God and nothing can stand in your way. If you have faith, then you have nothing to fear. If you have faith, then you have nothing to fear or dread, I feel this way ...

I firmly believe that Christians and Moslems pray to the same God and he provides a solution in a variety of ways, if you sincerely believe and put your heart in it, and ask God, he will provide a solution. Many things have happened to me in my married life and I would go and discuss it with my family first or to my sister and tell her how I feel. Sometimes you feel depressed and feel you have to confide in someone but after a while I realised that you cannot talk to people because people don't understand, they can only sympathise. But they in turn discuss it with a third person and that person comes and repeats it to you. You trusted the person you confided in and you feel hurt that your trust has been betrayed. But if you talk to God then it remains between you and God and God provides a suitable solution. It sometimes takes time, but you can see a change in your life (p.101).

No. 20

For me they concur: the outward appearance and the inner man's philosophy of life must agree. I cannot base my life solely on church and the temporal (political) part of my life degenerates. That will be to no avail. On the other hand, it serves no purpose to improve that area and the inner man is weak because in the end you lose anyway. The two must concur because they they were implemented simultaneously, to be together. The same freedom and privileges that you desire in the inner man as spiritual must be present in the temporal (political) part of your life (p.107).

No. 21

The ministers and leaders are now beginning to open their eyes, for example Archbishop Tutu. He is considered to be the key to all the ministers. They can see now in a way that they never saw before (p.108).

No. 22

Yes, I did work but not in a factory. I worked in domestic service and my employer was very fond of me. I worked for six employers and I have never worked anywhere else. Good people, rich people. I inherited from two of my employers who died - not too much, about R200 (p.112).

No. 23

At the moment I am a machinist and I can operate various machines so it's not difficult for me to go and work at another factory because I can operate any machine. Plain stitching, overlocking, elasticating, flossing machine, because at Symington we made swimwear and in the clothing factory they produce various articles of clothing - dresses, pants, sweaters - not like at Symington where we made bathers: here we make dresses and jackets (p. 113).

No. 24

When I started working the salary, sick pay and all the benefits were very low. There has been a great improvement since then through the union. They fight for us for more money, for greater benefits and for increased sick pay because the sick pay was hopelessly inadequate. But those things can't just happen overnight because there are many obstacles to surmount with the bosses before they can get what they want - like the increase they have proposed at the moment (p.113).

No. 25

It wasn't for long because my husband did not want me to attend meetings and then I went away with my son. Afterwards I did not worry about it anymore. Yes, I am supposed to attend the meetings but I did not have the opportunity. I had nobody to look after the children (p.114).

No. 26

I would like to communicate with different people because you learn a lot that way and you meet different people and go to many different places. You can learn a lot and you feel free to do a lot, not for yourself, but for others as well (p.114).

No. 27

Tired, tired. If you work on the same machine every day of the week then you don't feel so tired but if you change from one machine to another, especially from a plain machine to an overlöcker, then you feel exhausted (p.115).

No. 28

We were digging trenches and the one chap came up to me and said: 'Mister, would you come and stand bare bottom?'. 'Bare bottom' means you have to remove the sand. I thought 'What is the man saying! I should take my pants off!' But I was not sorry. When we got to Brooklyn, there you find gravel. I thought: 'If only I didn't have a wife and children, I would throw the towel in. Then I considered my wife, my children and my home. But I stuck it out - God spared me and I worked. In the morning I would set off on my bicycle. The clouds would be heavy over there and when I arrived at Koeberg it would be raining. There would be no shelter on the way and I would have to ride all the way to work. When I arrived there I would go and stand near the fire, take off my wet closes and put on my overall. I would have a cup of coffee and a slice of bread. Digging with a pick and shovel was heavy work. When I went on pension they came along with machines to dig the trenches (p.115/6).

No. 29

I had a white foreman, old Mr Kloppers, who would want a job completed before the end of the working day. He would instruct eight men to pick and tell them where to stand - he wanted us to do piecework. Even on a Saturday morning he would tell us he wanted the pipes laid before half-past-ten. The hole should look like this when you place the cage and if any other boss comes here, tell them you work for that man. When we finished he would say: 'Thank you my

people'. The old man liked to say: 'Thank you my people - I can depend on you'(p.116).

No. 30

There was a time when I had been working for the City Council for eleven months, that their work had decreased considerably. The bosses had to retrench many people. That same old Mr Kloppers said to me: 'D, there are going to be radical cut-backs but I am going to fight with the bosses for the four of you. And he did just that. When it came to our turn he said: 'Mr Knowles, these four men are the four men that earn my living, I cannot allow them to be fired - if they go, I will join them.' Mr Knowles had another look at the list and he went to his office. When he returned our names were removed from the list and we could continue working. If you do your best, your foreman can save your life at work but if you are cheeky or rude, he will do nothing for you (p.117).

No. 31

When you are planting, you don't plant the same thing in the same place every time. It will thrive better in a different place. The foreman would come to me and say: 'What the bloody hell, what do you know about the ground you can't see'. Then I would say: 'Look here, don't come and swear to me' and I would go to the cubicle, feeling very angry. I took the axe and said: 'Cut yourself with the axe but don't come and swear at me so early in the morning'. He reported me to the grounds superintendent. He agreed with me and said that when one gets to know the soil, you become aware of what plants would thrive in different places. He was a good Hollander, but I knew my job (p.118).

No. 32

I was planting flowers when I left the job and became a labourer again. I improved my position and later became a linesman. The linesman's job involves getting on to the ladder and fixing the wires that have come loose. You have to fix the wires, connect them and turn on the current. That was my job and it was very dangerous. I am getting old but it was very dangerous (p.119).

No. 33

I have been employed at various places, but the main one was on the railway, at the Table Bay Harbour, on the docks. I remember building the stands for the second Royal visit. From the Table Bay Harbour I worked for Parks and Forests for a while. When I got married I worked for the railway at Salt River. I was employed as a timekeeper there for a good while. When I left the railway around 1950, I got married and traded in soft goods. After a while I went to work at the camp at Ysterplaat for quite a while (p.120).

No. 34

The men came in but they did no work. The management did not call in the police but they did talk to the men. The men went their own way - stood at their stations but did nothing. Because of the strike on those two days, I think the company realised that they lost a lot. What else could I do? If the men strike, I must strike

as well. I could not accept deliveries and the trucks just stood there: there was nothing I could do about it (p.121).

No. 35

Experience constitutes happenings I have lived through, things that have come to me, events I have taken action on, things that have been an improvement and things that I have seen to be disadvantageous. If you do something you must consider where it will lead to and what will be the end result. You can also go and make the event happen. But, it is written that out of bad comes good so it is very important to first experience the bad so that you can pick out the good and when you have good things you must assist the weaker people to attain greater heights and be a better person. That is why I used the word 'experience' and it is one of my firm goals to bring things to successful completion (p.121).

No. 36

Oh, music I really enjoyed the Dutch choirs. My son and grandson Farouk, were in the Dutch choir. I am the one who bakes all the biscuits and lays the table for them. I just asked him whether he is going to be in the choir this year. He said that he was not sure because the clothes have become so expensive (p.127).

No. 37

How many more opportunities do the white children get that the coloured children do not get. We don't want the same but give our children the opportunities they deserve. Especially in the clothing factories - consider what our top salary was then. It was very little but money had more value then. Today it has very little value. Just as the price of gold and things goes up and down, money has very little value today (p.150).

No. 38

My experience of this community is that when I talk to people they want to co-operate but they are afraid of the police and the army. What will happen to them - they don't want to go to jail, so it is a big problem (p.151).

No. 39

Botha did the work himself. In my opinion people were too hasty - the man cannot correct everything at once. He eradicated a lot of things but not totally, but he is still working hard. We lived in Saltriver, next to white people. The children as well as the adults were always great friends and we never had any friction. But when a new Prime Minister came into office, old Verwoerd, he implemented apartheid. The coloured people were happy in Bloemhof flats in Cape Town, but then they had to leave. The whole of Woodstock consisted of coloured people and white people and then the whites were cut off from the coloureds (p.157).

No. 40

He looked after the old people very well. He could not immediately give them everything that the whites were given, but he increased their money annually. He is still doing this. He operates like

this: the coloureds should receive whatever the whites get (p.157).

No. 41

I feel fine about it - it is because of the white people that we are alive today. I pray every night that God must grant them good health and longevity and happiness because God created them to get together and give us a penny for a piece of bread (p.159).

No. 42

I don't feel very happy about apartheid but there's nothing I can do about it so we must accept it. If they implement apartheid then that is that. If they think God approves of it then so be it (p.159).

No. 43

All our lives we have lived like slaves and experienced great difficulties. Lots of very clever people are in politics and they are aware of what is right and what is wrong. People have started talking about it but I will just continue with the pick and shovel (p.159).

No. 44

Your home and family are more important than anything else. I am the happiest when the children are all together. I want us to be close - not some live here and others living here. God has spared me so that I am still with them. Before the apartheid system people lived together in harmony. When there was no apartheid then things also went well. Why should coloureds, blacks or whites fight? Leave things as they are and everyone will live very happily in his place (p.160).

No. 45

No, it was quiet there and it still is. There was no rioting to speak of - nothing like busses being set alight or anything. It is very quiet here (p.164).

No. 46

They want to be something that they are not. Any coloured person in an elevated position considers himself superior. He does not realise that he comes from the same background as everyone else (p.170).

No. 47

The colour of my skin determined that I should become a worker. If I could paint myself white, I would be employed at a white position, but the colour of my skin determines it. If you are well educated then you get the job of a European because of your education. Jobs don't come looking for you - you have to go out and find them (p.171).

No. 48

I feel that as a so-called Coloured, the colour of my skin is an inhibiting feature. I feel we are approaching the stage of realisation that what you are and what you do are important and this will improve the situation. When I talk to people then I tell them not to be blinded by the peppercorn hair - see beyond the peppercorns. In other words, don't judge a book by its cover (p.171).

No. 49

I have not encountered anything unusual. When my father was alive, he worked with native people and they always came in and they were very friendly but we never went out of our way to communicate with them, so I can't really say much.

The native man hit him and he hit the native man back with his fist. And the native man hit him again and he knocked the native man down. Then the boys laughed at the native man and the native man stood up and said, 'I'll show you something'. Those native people are dirty they do dirty work with snakes and skeletons and all sorts of things. Sea Point is full of kaffirs (p.176).

No. 50

I asked everyone who came past but not the Africans. They are terrible, they mislead you here, there and everywhere (p.176).

No. 51

I can't say because I am not sure but as far as I know, those I have worked under have been good people. I can't say whites are good or natives are good or coloureds are good. I can only vouch for those I have worked with (p.177).

No. 52

Those white men who have coloured wives or the wives who have coloured husbands, or even a native man with a white wife and so on. Stick by your colour (p.177).

No. 53

I felt upset about it but I could do nothing about it, just accept it. The problem is that it's not the fault of either the coloureds or the whites, it's that government.

I can't really say - what I feel is wrong may be right and if I say it's wrong it may be right. I feel unhappy about it but there is nothing we can do about it. We are not the government and if the government, leaders etc., decrees such things, we must accept them. We are all ruled by the government and we can't say this or that - we can't be nasty (p.178).

No. 54

That is wrong - the beaches and the busses - it's wrong. We brought it on ourselves. We don't go there to enjoy the day but to cause disgrace. You have no respect for yourself and then you blame the whites. It is not the whiteman's doing. You go to the beach for

the day and your friend that goes with you is ashamed of what you are doing. People like that should get a big fright to see if they will change. They behave like heathens (p.178).

No. 55

SF: What do you think about apartheid?

D: This apartheid is slowly coming back. Botha is allowing it to come back.

SF: What do you think about it?

D: He is allowing it to come back. Consider the Bloemhof Flats, when the coloured people lived there there was no lift in the block. Botha has installed one for the white people.

SF: Do you think it is right or wrong that the coloured people had to move away from those flats?

D: It was wrong. The coloured people were happy there and nothing untoward happened there because they were all brothers and sisters.

SF: But you still believe that what Botha is doing is right?

D: Yes, I cannot say the old man is doing anything wrong. The old man works hard (p.179).

No. 56

What makes me happy is my good health and the strength that God gives me, and my government that treats the coloured people well. He cares for the coloured children, he cares for the deformed children and also for the old people. People complain and I do too. My wife complains about the escalating prices but that's the way it has to be. That man can't take his money and share it with everybody - he has to impose taxes (p.179).

No. 57

For instance, it is now permitted for a European and coloured to marry. Previously they could not marry but now a law has been passed. But even now, they can't and live where they want to and that is not right. I don't agree with it because people should be free. We are all people, regardless of our colour (p.180).

No. 58

J: I'm not sure whether it is right or wrong but as I've told you, I don't know what is going on in this country. I stay at home and hear about all the things that happen. I feel sorrow and heartache about all these things, but what can I do.

SF: How did you feel when you heard that District Six was going to be demolished?

J: Very sad. Very sad because that was a place you could go to and do your shopping and everything. I went there often. See what it looks like today. They could have renovated the houses and the people could have stayed there.

SF: Do you know what the UDF is and what do you think about it?

J: As I have told you before, Shaun, I know nothing of those things. I don't know what the UDF is. I don't understand these things. I don't know whether I am old-fashioned or not but I do not understand these things that happen, at all. I do not know what it means, or why it is there or what goes on there.

SF: And don't you want to know?

J: Well, if I ask what the UDF means then I would like to hear about it.

SF: Have you never tried to find out what happens there?

J: No, I don't walk round in circles. I don't go to places like that. I just stay here at home (p.180/1).

No. 59

There must be a reason but I don't know what it is. I don't know the background. One can only talk about things you have experienced. It is not use talking about things you have no experience of. Talk about things you know and that you have experienced so that tomorrow you can give the answers again. It is no use talking for the sake of talking (p.196).

No. 60

I cannot say because I understand nothing of what is happening. If someone says something I just look at them but I don't say anything because I might say something wrong and get into trouble. I have never been in trouble and don't want to land in trouble in my old age (p.197).

No. 61

What can we do: we have to be satisfied. I say again, I don't want to get into trouble for saying something or the other. We must accept it as we find it (p.197).

No. 62

They make the laws and whether you are satisfied or not, there is nothing you can do. You have to obey the government and that's that (p.197).

No. 63

I can't say because I don't know what it will be like. We must be satisfied with what is happening. I can say whether I think it is good or bad but the parties and things I know nothing about and I don't want to concern my self with things like that (p.197).

No. 64

I'm satisfied, I have not worries, the rent is fixed up. Everything is fixed up and my water and lights have been paid. My father always told me: even if it means eating a dry cust and a cup of

water, see that the rent gets paid. Last month I got notification that my rent had increased and they asked me how I felt about paying extra rent. I said to them that I have to pay it, I can't say I cannot pay it because I do not have enough money to buy my own house. So if the rent goes up I have to pay it - even if it goes up every month I have to pay it so that I am ensured of accommodation, isn't that so? (p.198/9)

No. 65

I went to the housing office myself and they said to me: 'Mr S it's a golden opportunity that people can't let go. I laughed and said: 'A golden nonsense that people must let go' (p.202).

No. 66

See how many years we have stayed in these houses and the houses are rotten. The back room that we sleep in is like a fridge. The walls are very wet, your clothes become mouldy in the cupboard, your bedding is damp and now we are still expected to buy the place. I feel it's very unfair but what can we do? If we don't want to buy it or don't want to live here, where will we go to? Who will provide accommodation? We have to be satisfied (p.202).

No. 67

All of them, yes. There was a time when the coloured people were removed from the voter roll. Then they allowed us to vote for coloureds again, and then the Labour Party officials came here one morning. I told them I was going to vote and they said they would come and fetch me: I am entitled to vote. We and our children will have something of the land, some say, because you are allowed to vote (p.205)

No. 68

I am not interested in that. To tell you the truth, I don't have the time to attend meetings like that because I never have someone responsible to look after my children (p.207).

No. 69

I can't say because I have never been because I stay at home and I don't know if I do go and vote, who or what I would vote for. My deceased husband also just went and signed without knowing what he was signing. He made a cross because he was illiterate (p.207).

No. 70

I can't say because I just stay at home. Often I would feel afraid when I heard things - an anxiety because you never know when you could be involved. Why do they fight and do things like that? Leave things, the Lord will eradicate the wrongs. Shaun you are a European and I am a coloured woman, if we fought I don't know what we would be fighting about. Righteousness begets righteousness. If I know you I have to give you what is rightfully yours. You in turn would give to me what is rightfully mine and there will be no trouble. In the past these things like that didn't exist, why should it be like that now (p.209).

No. 71

I: Sir, the coloured people are like that, they don't stand together to achieve something. I stayed at home because I abhor violence. I reasoned, there's no violence on June 16, we merely stay at home and I see nothing wrong with that.

SF: Why do you think the coloured workers don't stand together?

I: In most cases, they say something but if the white man comes along they are frightened of him and see him as God. I think they fear the European more than they fear God. Even though he is mortal, just like me: nothing is different except the colour of his skin (p.213/4).

Appendix 4. Documents.KENSINGTON FACTRETON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONCASE: MRS C. HOLLOWAY

The Association notes that:

1. Mrs Cecelia Holloway and her six children (Christopher - 18 years; Charmaine - 16 years; Neil - 14 years; Sharon - 13 years; Shireen - 5 years and Neville - 4 years) have been living in the front garden under canvas of 25 Patrys Plein since the 11th February 1988. Her plight is untenable and unacceptable to her family, her neighbours and the residents Association. (See attached petitions and affidavits).
2. Mrs Holloway had lived with her mother since she was 13 years old. At the time of her mother's death in 1987 the tenancy of 25 Patrys Plein was transferred to her half sister Mrs Aziza Arend. There were twenty people living in this two bedroomed dwelling at the time.
3. Due to her inability to read and write Mrs Holloway was unaware of the fact that she had not been placed on the survey list and she became aware of this for the first time when she received an eviction notice in November 1987. (See Appendix 1).
4. Mrs Holloway was extremely shocked and went to see a certain Mr Schoeman at the Civic Centre who told her to ignore the notice and to bring any such notices to his attention in the future.
5. A tense situation existed between Mrs Holloway and her sister and on the 11/02/88 she summonsed the South African Police to evict Mrs Holloway and her family. (See Appendix 2).
6. Bearing in mind Mr Schoeman's words, Mrs Holloway was reluctant to move her belongings and refused to do so. Lieutenant Kruger threatened to jail her if she didn't comply. Her fear for her safety and that of her children prompted her to move her belongings. It is obvious that this was done under great duress and threats from the South African Police.
7. Since the 11/03/88 the family have been living in the most pathetic and unhygienic conditions imaginable. There are 7 people living under a canvas which is 2 metres in diameter. The cold and damp has affected the health of her two youngest children and proper housing is a prerequisite for their improved health. (See appendix 3). Mrs Holloway has also suffered muscular back problems. It is clear that the approaching winter will only worsen the health of this family.
8. In spite of incredible odds Mrs Holloway has encouraged her children to pursue their education. Christopher (18 years) and Charmaine (16 years) are in Std's 9 and 7 respectively. In areas such as these many children leave school very early as there is often very little incentive for them to further their education. Charmaine and Christopher are due to write the June examinations and because of this disruption in their lives have been unable to study properly for this exam. Charmaine has been extremely traumatised by this experience as she feels extremely embarrassed about living under a canvas and is reluctant to leave to school from there in the mornings. Needless to say this has only compounded the problems Mrs Holloway is experiencing.

9. Mrs Holloway receives a grant which enables her to support the family. Her husband receives a disability grant.
10. Neville Holloway has been on the waiting list since 11/05/83 (Card No. 72530) which makes Mrs Holloway eligible for a Council house.
11. A family in Manenberg was granted a house within three days of being evicted after the community took action.

The Association therefore wishes to motivate that:

1. The Holloway family is the only family on the street in the Kensington/Factretton area. We feel that it is vital that they be housed by the Council immediately.
2. Leaving this family on the street when there are possibilities of housing them is inhuman and criminal as one is condemning them to live an unhygienic and degraded life which could have negative repercussions for the family.
3. We understand the housing crisis but feel that the Holloway family deserves priority attention.
4. Mrs Holloway be made the tenant of the house as she is a responsible and upright human being and is actually taking care of her family.

We know that you will understand this request for assistance and we look forward to the granting of a house to the Holloway family.

By KURT SWART

**RAIN seeping through the canvas roof and flowing in from outside her shack is a constant reminder for a Factretton woman that blood is not always thicker than water.**

A family squabble led to the eviction of Mrs Cecelia Holloway, her husband and six children from her stepsister's house in February this year.

The family has been living on the front lawn of the house ever since in a small canvas shack with corrugated iron walls.

Mrs Holloway is breast-feeding her year-old son Neville, who has developed bronchitis.

Five-year-old Shereen also has bronchitis and Neil, 15, is asthmatic.

With little hope of finding better accommodation the family's future looks bleak as they face the onslaught of another freezing Cape winter.

Mrs Holloway's husband Neville was evicted from the house in November last year after he smashed a window during an argument.

### Suffering

Her stepsister, Mrs Aziza Arend, then insisted Mrs Holloway and her children leave, according to Mrs Holloway.

After three months the police were called in. Threatened with arrest for not leaving the house, the Holloway family moved their belongings into the garden and built their shack.

## Family evicted after squabble

SUNDAY TIMES EXTRA, 5 June 1988

She said her husband was unemployed and they find it difficult to find a house of their own.

"Neville is paralysed in his right hand and it's not easy for him to find work.

"I'm worried about the rain. My children and I are sick. The floor is always wet.

"Exams are coming and my children can't study. The place is too small. I wonder how Aziza can sleep at night knowing how her sister and children are suffering," Mrs Holloway said.

Mrs Arend said she asked the Holloways to move because her house was overcrowded.

"There were more than 20

people in the house."

Mrs Arend said there were violent arguments. She said she was slashed with a knife and claimed Mr Holloway smashed her windows.

"I couldn't take it — they were nasty to my kids. I had to run out of my own house to look for help."

Mrs Arend said she felt sorry for the family but that she could not take them back in.

She said she gave the Holloways milk and sugar when they needed it and the children of the two families played with each other and

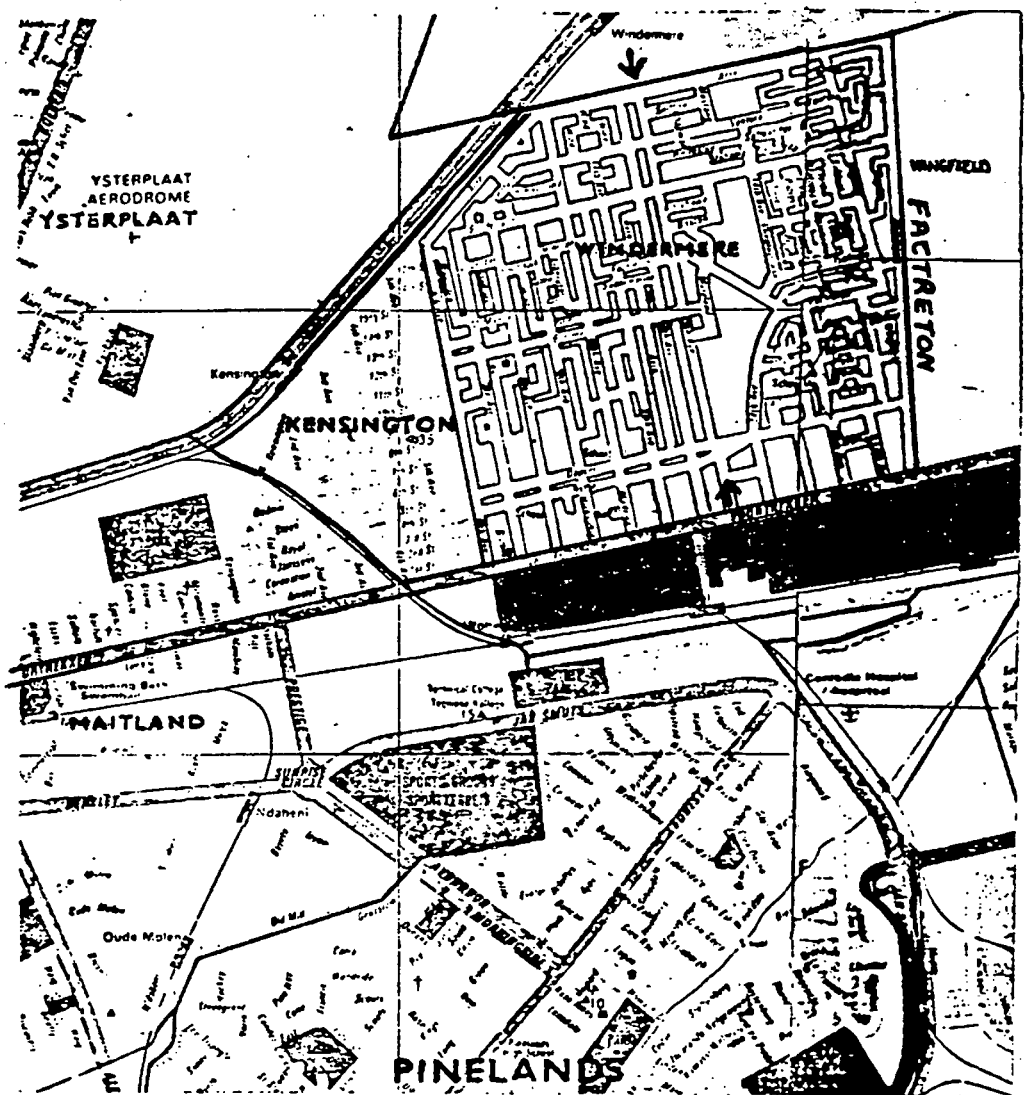
watched TV at her house.

"I'll never chase the children away. I hope they can get a place to stay before it rains heavily — especially for the children's sake."

The Kensington and Factretton Residents Association is trying to help the Holloways and has petitioned the council for a house for the family.

Mrs S Mulder, Director of Housing at the City Council, confirmed the association had made a plea to him.

"The request will be discussed by the Housing Committee at a meeting next week," she said.



(SOURCE: URBAN ROAD ATLAS)

(NOTE: THE BOUNDARY LINE BETWEEN KENSINGTON AND FACTRETON IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS 13TH AVENUE, MARKED WITH ARROWS)

## KENSINGTON / FACTRETON AREA

# HOUSES, SECURITY COMFORT? COME TO A.G.M.

The Kensington Factreton Ratepayers & Tenants Association (KFRTA) has existed since 1979. The KFRTA, known as the "Civic", was formed to fight for a better life for our community. There are many difficulties facing us, like evictions, shortage of houses, poor pavements and high rents and rates.

Since 1979, the Civic has fought hard and has won many victories for the community, like *afdakkies*, electricity, rates and evictions. This was possible because our community was united. We were strong only because residents were **directly** involved in making decisions and electing leaders. The Civic belonged to the people.

In 1985, the Botha government saw that organisations like the Civic were becoming stronger and communities were winning many victories. Botha became scared and declared a State of Emergency. Many leaders were detained and our past secretary, Trevor Manuel, is **still** in detention.

But **have** our problems disappeared? Families are still being evicted, rents and rates increase **all** the time, we **still** have a big housing shortage, unemployment and prices are increasing **daily**. The Civic therefore **continued** the fight for a better life. Throughout 1986 and 1987, the Civic still found ways of assisting 40 evicted families. We even started an Advice Office to help residents.

We have learnt over the years that our lives can only improve if **we**, together fight for our rights. Management Committee, Hendrikse & Ross can only make false promises! We know that we can give our children a better life only if we are **united**. Only we ourselves, can bring about change.

- \* come to the Annual General Meeting and join the fight for houses, security and comfort.
- \* come to the A.G.M. and join the fight for a better life.

**UNITED WE STAND, TOGETHER WE FIGHT,  
DIVIDED WE FALL!!**

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Sunday 17 April 1988 2.30p.m.**

**Shawco Hall, Kensington**