

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

# South African Social Theory: Steve Biko

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the  
degree of Master of Sociology  
Faculty of Humanities  
University of Cape Town  
March 2015

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## COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.



*Signed*

Signature.....

Date.....

# Abstract

The complexity and dynamism of society provides the sociologist with interesting challenges. The methods and instruments we use to study and understand society have to evolve with the same dynamism.

This minor dissertation investigates sociological theory in South Africa. The primary aim of this dissertation is to determine if one can produce or derive sociological theory from the work of black South Africans, specifically Steve Biko. To this end one has to disseminate the idea of sociological theory and consider how it is constructed. It is also important to highlight the contextual and progressive nature of theory. To illustrate this, I briefly outline the development of sociology as an academic discipline. In addition I consider the implications of macro and micro theory, paying particular attention to Marxism and Weberianism. This is exemplary in terms of showing the contextual relevance and the progressive thinking which inform social theory.

It is widely acknowledged that Comte, Marx, Durkheim and Weber were the founding fathers of sociology. I consider the contributions of Ntsikana, Tiyo Soga, Anton Lembede, Pixley Seme and finally Steve Biko as a means of demonstrating the potential local intellectual to inform a new social theory

The nature of this research dictated the use of a qualitative research design. The review of literature and biographical accounts were used to construct the lineage of South African intellectuals. The key intellectual considered in this paper is Steve Biko. The source of the data was his salient work: "I Write What I Like". Thematic analysis was used to analyse the relevant texts, mainly the Miles Huberman approach. This allowed me to identify the key analytical constructs of Steve Biko's work. These analytical constructs would be the foundation of a possible sociological theory.

The comparative critical analysis shows that one can derive a structuralist sociological theory from Steve Biko's writings. His reflection on the influence of social institutions, political structures and economic relations are central to the construction of racialised identities in the South African context. Most importantly, however, his work provides an exceptional framework through which one can analyse the dialogic relationship between the oppressed and oppressors.

## **Acknowledgements**

This Masters\_degree has been a very interesting challenge for me. As one would find with any meaningful journey, one's company often determines one's experience of it. Thus I find it imperative to acknowledge the individuals and institutions that have been part of this scholarly journey.

First and foremost I have to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Xolela Mangcu. Our many discussions concerning the prominent sociological theorists, the nature of South African politics and various newsmakers, have always been profound and informative. It is these discussions which inspired various aspects of this dissertation. His support in his capacity as my supervisor has been extremely invaluable. Regardless of his busy schedule and various commitments, he has always found the time to guide me in my research and my writing.

I would also like to acknowledge the other members of the Sociology Department. In particular I want to thank Professor D. Lincoln and Professor D, Cooper for the continued support and availability in terms of discussing some aspects of theory and their general openness to helping students. In addition it is also important to thank and acknowledge Mrs Ramela Bagha and Mrs Tarayan Stoffels. They have made it an absolute pleasure to be part of the Sociology Department. Their friendliness and support has always been steadfast and welcome. I wish to thank Ms Lyndsey Petro for assisting me with the editing of this dissertation.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my fellow MA students and good friends, Hangala Siachiwena and Sarah Badat, as well as my brother, Brandon Esterhuizen. Their assistance, support and general presence in my life have contributed immensely to this dissertation. From conversations, arguments and admonishments, they have ensured that I remained disciplined and inspired in terms of working on my dissertation. This has also provided me with the chance to talk through aspects of this dissertation, where I needed to develop concepts or my thinking about particular concepts.

Finally I wish to thank the University of Cape Town and everyone involved in the Sociology Department. You have afforded me the opportunity and resources to educate and develop myself in many ways. Thank you to everyone who has supported me throughout the tenure of this project. Your goodwill will always be appreciated.

## **Abbreviations**

National Union of South African Students: NUSAS

South African Students Organisation : SASO

Black Consciousness : BC

Black Consciousness Movement : BCM

African National Congress : ANC

Pan African Congress : PAC

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# Chapter One

## Research Question and Research Design

This chapter discusses the research questions were designed and what types of research this project reflects. Additionally, it also discusses the research methodology employed: the biographical/historical method of collecting data strongly rooted in the analysis of relevant literature. The researcher used the Miles Huberman (1994) approach to analyse Biko's salient work *I write what like* (1978). All these elements of this research project are discussed in great detail below.

### Research problem/ Research Questions

The overarching research question which steers this thesis is: Can a sociological theory be derived or produced from the work of black South African intellectuals? The question in that particular format is quite broad. Therefore the key points and ideas have been outlined, which will be inspected in terms of formulating possible answers.

1. How did native black South African intellectuals understand South African society?
2. Can a form of social theory be developed from their intellectual work?
3. What are the key social constructs they identify in their 'theories'?
4. Can a form of social theory be produced or derived from Steve Biko's work?
5. How would this theory be different from traditional sociological theories? For example, Liberal and Marxist theories focussed on relations to the means of production (the economy) and Weberian social theory focuses on institutions. What would the focus of these theories be?
6. How would these theories contribute to a sociological analysis of South Africa (or society)?

The South African intellectuals selected for this purpose are Ntsikana, Tiyo Soga, Pixley Seme, Anton Lembede and, most importantly, Steve Biko. This selection of intellectuals has been critically evaluated, based on the chronology of ideas and traditions between these figures. It is evident that their work and contributions became more nuanced and rigorously developed as one moved from one figure to the next. The main intellectual figure looked at in terms of developing answers to the research questions is Steve Biko. The reasons for this

selection will be discussed in more detail in the Chapter Four, titled *South African Intellectual History*.

### **Research Design/Type**

This research project will be a combination of exploratory, historical, meta-analytic and conceptual research.

Firstly, it is exploratory in that the main question is concerned with what and how South African intellectuals wrote about South African society. It becomes evident that all of these theorists were strongly concerned with the process of racial social identity formation. Another key concern inherent in their work was the impact of racial prejudice in South Africa. Secondly, this inherently is a historical question, as it is concerned with what led to Biko thinking and theorising in the manner he did. This raises further questions and discussions about the context which produced his thoughts and insights. To an extent, this research poses meta-analytic questions as it will take one into the debate concerning the importance of racial identity formation primarily in the South African apartheid context. One of the central themes will be the development of African intellectual thought as it surfaced during colonisation. This strongly arose from the context of survival in a changing social and political environment. This also prevailed with regard to the migration of groups in Africa; therefore it might be necessary to investigate the social impact of the interaction of various cultures. This will be discussed this in more detail in Chapter Four, *South African Intellectual History*.

Finally this research is highly conceptual in nature, as it is orientated towards developing social theory focussed on the making of racial identities. One will also find that in the absence of racial prejudice, Steve Biko's intellectual work is more strongly concerned with the relationship between oppressors and the oppressed in society. This would require that these constructs be derived from Biko's writings as a means of developing cogent social theory. This would also require that the meaning and purpose of social theory particularly in the sociological context of South Africa be interrogated

One of the primary aims is to show that the writings of African intellectuals can be systematised to produce African-centred social theory, especially on notions of racial identity. The concept of racial identity dominated the political context from which their

intellectual writings emerged, and therefore the construct of racial identity will be important to consider. In the least the wish is to extract sociological constructs from Biko's work as a means of showing that the construction of social theory will be possible.

## **Methodology**

The aim is to study how humans, more specifically social theorists, have used their understanding of society to produce social theories. This entails studying and understanding the intellectual work they have produced, not only as a means of refining the researcher's thoughts, but also, a means of producing a systematised social theory derived from the work of South African intellectuals. Therefore qualitative methods are the best means of conducting this study.

A qualitative approach makes it possible to understand the context from which these ideas emerge. Under the qualitative framework it is important to develop sound descriptions of the work these theorists have produced and to show an understanding of these theories as they were relevant to and derived for and from particular contexts (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:271) This study will be highly inductive. It would be somewhat problematic on the part of any researcher to hypothesise about African intellectualism with the intent of producing African social theory, without having delved into the work of African intellectuals. The key constructs and elements of their work, particularly in the writings of Biko, will emerge in the process of working through it. Undoubtedly hypotheses and plausible generalisations would emerge from their writings.

## **Data Collection**

The primary source of data was Steve Biko's popular book, *I write what I like*. The first edition was put together by Father Aelred Stubbs and Hugh Lewin in 1978. This book is a collection of papers Biko had written and produced for seminars and meetings. In addition it is a collection of the columns he wrote as 'Frank Talk', entitled *I write what I like* which was published in the South Africa Students Organisation (SASO) newsletter. Given the political context which inspired Biko's thought and intellectual work, this book was fertile ground in terms of insights and theories he held about South African society at the time. The motivation for choosing Biko as a prospective source of African social theory will be addressed in the

chapter on African intellectual thought. The manner in which the data is analysed will be discussed in the Analysis section of this chapter.

### **Analytical Tools**

Thematic Analysis was used to analyse particular writings by Steve Biko. The thematic method used rested on the approach developed by Miles and Huberman. Their approach ‘is directed at identifying “lawful and stable relationships among social phenomena based on regularities and sequences inherent in the phenomena” (Punch, 2005:197)’. This analytical approach is divided into three components: data reduction, data display and finally, drawing and verifying conclusions (Punch, 2005:197; Fielding and Lee, 1998:40).

Analysis will begin with data reduction, which occurs throughout the analysis of the relevant texts (Punch, 2005:198; Fielding and Lee, 1998:41). In the first stage of the data analysis, the data was edited, segmented and summarised (Punch, 2005:198; Fielding and Lee, 1998:41). This process started with a close reading of ‘*I write what I like*’. This gave a good idea of the nature of the raw data and helped to identify the sections of data which would be relevant to the analysis. On the second reading, the researcher systematically extracted sections of the data from the text and documented them separately. This left a number of short documents which contained the relevant sections of writing. The next stage in this process of data reduction consisted of coding the data and also memo-in key thoughts and information. This facilitated the discovery and development of themes, clusters and patterns which was evident in the data (Punch, 2005:198).

However, the coding framework was developed with reference to pre-existing social theories. Engagement with pre-existing sociological theory was necessary in terms of identifying the relevant social structures and institutions which can be used to structure the coding framework.

The coding process started with the identification of first level codes. The purpose of these first level codes was to be descriptive. Therefore these codes should describe the segments under the relevant code (Punch, 2005:200; Fielding and Lee, 1998:41-2). The primary codes developed are: Overall Social Structure/Social groups/Culture /Religion/Politics/Economy. This allowed segmenting data into these broad codes. As one will see, some of these codes are branch codes, branching from the overall structure of South African society. By dividing

these texts into the above components, it was possible to analyse the impact and relevance of those components in isolation. This facilitated a more detailed analysis of these components. An example of the usefulness of this approach would be the consideration of social groups focussing on race. It made it possible to investigate the functionality of race and race consciousness at the individual level as well as the broader social level. Therefore these first level codes allowed the researcher to identify, simplify and refine more interpretive codes, or what one might call ‘advanced codes’ (Punch, 2005:200).

The purpose of these advanced codes was to structure the data conceptually (Fielding and Lee, 1998:42). This was analytically instrumental as it allowed one to investigate the emerging themes/constructs in greater depth without being distracted by the bulk of the data. Therefore it was possible to analyse and display the data in more meaningful units. The advanced codes were developed by considering literature on social theory and racial identity formation. The coding schedule will be discussed in greater detail in the analysis chapter.

### **Coding Framework**

It would have been problematic to approach the text blindly without having any means to direct the required reading and analysis.

After a review of the traditional theories used in sociology as well as the works of South African intellectuals the researcher was able to derive a coding framework which structured the analysis.

Social stratification was always identified and emphasised in social theories. Therefore it was necessary to identify the relevant social classes/groups and then identify the social structures which underpin these divisions. These concepts are subdivided and systemised in the coding framework as follows:

- Cross-section of Society → Social groups : Black South Africans

White South Africans

- Culture
- Religion

- Politics : Colonial Administration → Division of Black Communities
- Economy : Land Ownership  
Black Money → White Enterprise  
Unskilled Black Workers → White Capital Owner

### **Theoretical Justifications**

*“Our culture must be defined in concrete terms. We must relate the past to the present and demonstrate the historical evolution of modern Africa.” Steve Biko (1978:76)*

The concept of social theory has always been a fascinating one. In a nutshell, social theory is a systematic body of generalisations used to explain social phenomena or to analyse society. Theories are developed in a myriad of ways. Scientifically; the manner in which one develops theory is often influenced by the epistemological paradigm to which one is inclined. If one is partial to crude empiricism, one would suppose that knowledge is born through the experience of reality. As such, knowledge of scientific phenomena can only be created through unbiased, repeated observations of those phenomena (Doyal and Harris, 1986:1-2; Williams and May, 1996:15-6). This view was opposed by constructivists who acknowledged that human consciousness is the distinguishing factor of the social world. Succinctly, according to constructivists, one could postulate that social knowledge is context-specific and thus cannot accurately be accounted for without considering the interpretive or hermeneutic element of human behaviour (Williams and May, 1986:60; Sayer, 2000:11; Carter and New, 2004:8).

Thus we see how the very nature of knowledge has been contested. It is important to note that the various ideas which underpin these paradigms reflect the different ways people make sense of the social world. These philosophies have consequently been instrumental with regard to the production of sociological theories. These theories have been used to analyse and explain various aspects of the social world. This minor dissertation briefly attempts to disseminate and critically analyse the key points of some of the theories which have been academically influential in the discipline of sociology. The purpose of this overview is to determine what these sociological theories explain and also to evaluate their relevance and applicability to South African society. This, however, serves a crucial function and informs the overall purpose of this dissertation. The purpose of this dissertation is to determine

whether or not one can produce or derive sociological theory from the work of South African intellectuals.

It is important to outline or to show the prevalence of the systematic, chronological development of intellectual practices, ideas and contributions in South African society. In addition it is important to compare them to South African thinkers. As such it is important to consider particular figures and their unique contributions to South African society. It is also important at every point, to stop and to evaluate their particular contributions as a means of determining whether or not their intellectual work can be constructed into useful and meaningful social theories. These factors will be elaborated on in the relevant sections. The key intellectual figure to be considered in this thesis is Steve Biko. He was the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement. He was primarily concerned with the plight of black South Africans. This concern informed many themes in his writing, such as identity, leadership, social formations and others. Many of these themes carry immense sociological value. Thus his understanding of the various factors which structured 'Apartheid South Africa' may still hold some insight into post-apartheid South Africa.

Why would it be important to derive social theory from the work of South African intellectuals? Have we not been equipped with the necessary theoretical tools and theories by our European/Western predecessors and counterparts? The very idea of social theory, specifically the purpose of theory and thought processes which underpin the theory, will be briefly discussed.

In this section some of the more conceptual aspects of this thesis are discussed. It is important to disseminate the idea of social/sociological theory. Sociological theory is important because it is instrumentally useful in terms of helping one understand the problems in the world around us. The phenomena which drive researchers and intellectuals to the production of theory is not solely the endeavour of sociologists (or any social scientist for that matter), it is also the concern of all people with regard to understanding their everyday experiences and the choices they face on a daily basis (Craib, 1992:3). Therefore theory is useful, if we can learn from it' and we can only learn from it only if we can use it (Craib, 1992:5)'. Therefore theory derived from Steve Biko's work will not only be instructionally useful, but would also serve as an historical compass. It could provide one with a lens through which to study the complexity of racial prejudice and racial stratification in society. It will also become evident

that one would be able to apply this theory in the absence of explicit racial divisions. This is possible if one considers the power and psychological relationships between oppressors and oppressed people. Generally, these aspects of how useful this theory can be are discussed in greater detail in the final chapter.

Theoretical thinking is premised on trying to explain why/how something has happened or is the way it is. General ideas are structured through the application of rules of logic, ideas which compose a theory or conjecture should follow from each other without internal contradictions. The purpose of social theory is primarily to explain and facilitate enhanced understanding of experience, based on other experiences and general ideas of the world. The job of the theorist is to be more systematic about their experience of the world and more particularly how they structure ideas (Craib, 1992:6-8). Thus it is important to consider what and how these systematically generalised ideas of society explain the social realities in South Africa. Hence a theory produced from the work of a South African theorist would be instrumentally and discursively useful. In the least it would provide an alternative explanation for stratification in South African society. Many of the elements within these various sociological theories would be very similar. For instance, if one considers the influence of economic relationships in society. These theorists would, however, approach these relationships differently given their own ideological inclinations.

Another point to consider is that traditional or classical sociological theories do not explicitly focus on racial identity formation. This is often implicated or secondary to the importance of class. Therefore these theories might be somewhat lacking when applied to a context in which race had a functional purpose in society. Therefore, it is vitally important to consider the intellectual work of people who have been located in the context they wish to theorise about. This is largely due to their sensitivity to the most important social constructs which structure their particular society.

In the following chapter the historical development of sociology as an academic discipline is briefly outlined. The researcher discusses how the social sciences generally emerged from the enlightenment period and how various work of theorists formed the foundation of sociology. This discussion is underpinned by references to prominent sociology theorists, Comte, Marx and Weber. The chapter concludes by discussing how their theories have been used instrumentally in South Africa.

## Chapter Two

### An Overview of Sociology: Literature Review

#### Historical Legacy

The aim of this dissertation is to determine if one can derive or produce social theory based on the work of South African intellectuals, particularly. But before doing that one should discuss what constitutes social theory and what its limitations are in the context of South Africa. In this regard it is important and useful to consider the most popular traditional or classical theories of sociology. This section will briefly discuss the European roots of sociology, after which the influential contributions of Karl Marx and Max Weber are discussed. This chapter is concluded by looking at a brief history of sociology in South Africa.

The intellectual lineage of sociology (sociological theory) can be traced to the Enlightenment Period (18<sup>th</sup> Century) in Europe. This context birthed the foundational notions of the natural and social sciences (Drysdale and Hoeker-Drysdale, 2011: 29; Macionis and Plumer, 2012 15-17). One of the questions which drove this intellectual movement was: “What is knowledge?” This led to profound theoretical work, particularly interrogating the manner in which knowledge is produced. Another central theme linked to this pursuit was the idea of “What is permissible knowledge?” The intention was to systematise the ways in which we produce knowledge and conceptualise ideas. Fundamentally this movement was concerned with producing “scientific knowledge”. Thus, many theorists started developing unique ways of studying society, as well as defining key aspects of society

This period saw an array of social theorists pioneering theories and methodologies as means of propagating understandings of society. Central to the above-mentioned intellectual projects was the objective of subjecting human societies, institutions and practices to systematic empirical observation, devoid of theological or metaphysical methods of explanation. These philosophers of the Enlightenment period all held the common view that the growth of knowledge and understanding of human society and social processes should promote the progress of society, intrinsically improving human life. This paved the way for the establishment of the social sciences as distinguishable disciplines with distinct frames of analysis and methods of inquiry. Shortly after this period, inspired by the work of Condorcet,

Henri de Saint Simon and Auguste Comte developed ideas for a new science of humanity, a discipline that would be called Sociology (Drysdale and Hoeker-Drysdale, 2011:30; Macionis and Plummer, 2012:16-7). The objective of this discipline was to draw together rational and empirical methods as a means of studying structure and the social dynamics of society. In line with the ambitions of the early social philosophers the purpose of this new science was to contribute to the evolution of human society. Further theoretical development of the social sciences was driven by John Stuart Mill (1843). His book, *A system of Logic*, proposed and outlined methodological ideas for the social sciences. This development of sociology increasingly moved to the United States. This geographical shift of the development of the sociological canon produced more notable theories and theorists. Some of the popular names include C Wright-Mills, Spencer, Mead, Bauman (1987) as well as the contributions of the Chicago School.

### **The Founding Fathers**

The origins of sociology are strongly linked to the academic and intellectual work of the social theorists of the Enlightenment. One of the more notable theorists of this period, and also popularly considered the father of sociology is Auguste Comte. During the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Comte constructed conjectures of human thought and society (Graaff, 2001:16; Macionis and Plumer, 2012:16). He theorised that human society was undergoing a gradual evolution through three distinguishable phases. These phases outlined the nature of human thought over this period. These three phases linearly put are ‘theological thinking’, ‘metaphysical thinking’ and ‘positivistic thinking’. Theological thinking entailed the manner in which society operated contingent on the beliefs of individuals. This form of thinking refers to how individual and group thought/behaviour was based on the beliefs and influence of supernatural beings and spirits (Graaff, 2001:16, Giddens, 1978). Over time this way of thinking was rejected and somewhat replaced by metaphysical thinking, which attempted to explain human behaviour and thought in terms of the essence of the phenomena in question. This form of thinking was orientated toward the inner nature of human beings. These forms of thinking subsequently were replaced by scientific thinking. This was the dominant intellectual project of the Enlightenment period. This was construed as the most advanced form of thinking (Graaff, 2001:16; Giddens, 1978). Positivistic thinking shunned all references to the supernatural or ‘essence of things’. This form of thinking was based on factual observations and scientifically rigorous experimentation. This brought about polemic

debates about the nature of sociological thought. Simply put, whether or not social subjects can be studied in the same manner as natural phenomena. The problem with Comte's purely positivist view/method of studying and understanding society was that it did not account for the meanings embedded in individual/group interaction. There are many things that one cannot understand about society purely through empirical observation. This positivistic approach however was instrumental in terms of developing a science of society.

### **Durkheim and Comte on Social Change**

Comte postulated that human society can be studied empirically, in the same manner in which one would study the natural sciences. He suggested that one could use scientific methods to determine principles of order which govern society (Campbell, 1981:140; Hughes et al., 2003:148). The discovery of these principles, accordingly, should facilitate social change and progress, with the betterment of mankind at heart. This thinking underpinned Comte's law of three stages. Thus Comte believed that in the scientific age, particularly, where all social and economic activity is under scientific scrutiny and subjected to scientific authority, mankind would be at its summit.

Durkheim, whilst rejecting Comte's Law of Human Progress, agreed that social problems can be addressed and understood through the application of scientific methods (Campbell, 1981:142). He believed that social sciences can be utilised to re-establish social order following the radically changed society in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. These changes were a direct consequence of the effects of industrialisation. Industrialisation, as noted by many theorists, had increasingly eroded values of community in capitalistic societies. Thus Durkheim wanted to show that a new social consensus can restore values of community, without sacrificing the freedoms and benefits individuals received following the demise of feudalism.

Durkheim distinguished between social statistics and social dynamics (Campbell, 1982:142). Social statistics are indicators of social order and social dynamics are the processes which describe social change (Campbell, 1981:142; Strasser, 1977). Through empirically observing social change and social dynamics one can uncover laws of social evolution.

Durkheim viewed society as a moral order, which regulated individual behaviour through imposed systems of values and rules. This is typified by obligations which govern the social behaviour of individuals. For instance an individual is born into a society, their behaviour is regulated and facilitated by language, laws and customs which they individual did not create themselves. These, essentially, are examples of social statistics. Durkheim envisioned the social scientists task as one of charting patterns of behaviour as well as departures from normative behaviour and the modes through

which normative behaviours are re-established. The observation of continually repeating patterns of behaviour are to be captured as laws of society.

Durkheim's conceptions of social statistics and social dynamics was consolidated by his postulation of emergence. For Durkheim 'emergence' is when social phenomena interact and birth new phenomena which differ from its constituent phenomena (Hughes et al., 2003:158). Durkheim contended that social life is the product of individual human life as it arises from the processes through which individual consciousness is developed through association with society (Hughes et al, 2003:158). The dynamic of social change is generated through increased population density and population growth (Strasser, 1977). The increased frequency of human interaction, brings about population growth, which has led to increased urbanisation. Thus, as society became larger, it became more complex. This complexity led to the need for improved transportation and communication, which in turn change the nature of social relationships (Strasser, 1977:36-37). The dynamics of social change are explained in great detail in Durkheim's first major book, *The Division of Labour in Society* (1983).

Subsequently, more prominent theories of the sociological canon are discussed. However, it is important to note that these approaches developed with greater emphasis on historical analysis as the basis for understanding human behaviour and social action. The two dominant theories considered here are Marxism and Weberian theory. These theories are considered because they are popular forms of macro and micro theory respectively.

### **Marx and Weber**

The foundation of Marx's theory of stratification was his materialist approach to history. Marx and Engels postulated that society can best be understood through investigating the material reality of individuals or social groups (Scott, 1996:48-49; Wright, 2005: 1). This materialist perspective (partially based on Hegelianism) led Marx and Engels to an explication of how society was structurally organised through the historical relationship between the individual and society (Scott, 1996:49; Wright, 2005:2-3, Graaff, 2001:31). Accordingly Marx thought that if one is able to understand the production processes which structure society, one could understand society (Graaff, 2001:31). According to Marx, individuals are socially organised into classes. This class formation is produced through the economic relations which exist in society.

*Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other. Bourgeoisie and Proletariat* (Marx and Engels, 1848:80).

Marx suggested that society is divided into two distinguishable parts: the base and the superstructure (Graaff, 2001:32). The base is the production system of society. This also encapsulates the division of society into these two distinct classes. The superstructure refers to all remaining cultural, political and ideological aspects of society. The prevailing economic relations in society are also the root cause of class struggles in society. Marx developed his idea by considering the transition from a medieval estate, society to a modern class society (Scott, 1996:53; Wright, 2005:6). Medieval estates had clear legal identities and discernible boundaries. Marx theorised that the boundaries which define class relations were becoming more fluid and were dominantly being determined by money, property and labour. According to Marx, cultural, legal and political identities were not directly related to class relations. He thought that the class situation is determined externally/separately from the explicit laws which govern society. Marx theorised that society is defined by the presence of a ruling class (Scott, 1996:57). The ruling class shaped the structural development of society, by dominating subordinate classes as well as emerging classes. Production in society is regulated by the relation of these two classes (Graaff, 2001:31). The only tangible means of social transformation is dependent on revolutionary action by the oppressed classes: they have to overthrow the ruling class (Scott, 1996:57).

Marx's dissemination of the development and social consequences of capitalism became integral to understanding capitalist societies. It also showed the remarkable impact social structure and history has on the lives of individuals. His analysis of class inspired and informed the work of many social scientists. One such scientist was Max Weber. In the next section Max Weber's contribution to sociology is briefly discussed.

One of Weber's most notable contribution to sociology is *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904). In this seminal text he analyses how changes in religion and the economies have remarkably changed society. He believed that society was progressively moving toward rational thought. He showed this by analysing the growth of bureaucratic administrations. In addition to the growth of bureaucratic organisations he was also fascinated by the growing disenchantment in the world. That is to say, that society was increasingly becoming more secular. He, however, contended that the growth of bureaucracies was starting to build an 'iron cage' around individuals' lives: strongly

regulating and structuring the lives of individuals (Webster, Buhlungu and Bezuidenhout, 2001:30).

A key distinction between Marx and Weber was their respective interpretations of capitalism. Marx, failed to fully explain how ideology is produced, through class position and class interest. Marx was quite deterministic in this regard, class position equated ideology. As such, one of the shortcomings with Marxism, was that it did not account for the mechanisms through which ideology is produced. For Marx, these values (ideologies) primarily served a function to the system. Therefore, implicitly he did not specify the psychological functions these values and ideologies have for individuals (Birnbaum, 1953:132; Giddens 1970; Burris, 1987:67).

From Weber's analysis however, it is clear, that political values and other values in society are artificially distinguishable. This distinction in their interpretation of the rise of Capitalism can be understood to be a product of the methods they used to analyse Society. Marx failed to explore how the material factors he found significant in Europe, may have other effects than what he conceived them to have, if they were to arise in another social context (Birnbaum, 1953; Giddens, 1970; Burris, 1987:67-9). Weber used the historical method and studied a number of large civilizations, which had developed relatively separately from each other such as Europe, China and India. This allowed him to trace the economic developments in each of these societies. And thus by holding the material conditions which are similar to Western Capitalism, he could focus on religious ideology to see if there are independent effects (Birnbaum, 1953:135). There is consensus between these theorists, however, that a key cultural feature of the development of capitalism was the emphasis on rationality. Marx however postulated that rationality was a consequence of capitalism, as opposed to Weber who argued otherwise.

The comparative method Weber had used, allowed him to interpret the material and ideological factors associated with capitalism among Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist segments of European society. Weber postulated that the organisation of formally free labour was increasingly becoming more rational, methodical and disciplined. This however was only permissible in so far as the labour relations system permitted it to be. Weber however looked for an answer which transcend the material argument. He set out to show that the changing nature of society had ideological and psychological dynamics to it. According to Weber, men by nature are naturally inclined to live for their subsistence, and to only work as much as they have to maintain that (Weber, 1930: 24). Thus whenever modern capitalism had attempted to increase the productivity of human labour it has always encountered resistance. However, the rational and methodical organisation of human labour was a growing characteristic of that time. He suggested that capitalism should be understood, in terms of the modern spirit which wishes to profit rationally, systematically and maximally

Weber showed that religious ideas impact the economic development of societies. By considering the impact of religious thinking, Weber traced out the differences between medieval Catholicism and Calvinism. He argued that Catholicism impeded the rationality of those individuals (Weber, 1930). This was due to the manner in which it provided its followers an escape mechanism through which they could assuage their guilt, in the form of confessionals and the sacramental power that the priest had. Thus he suggested that Catholics lived moral lives, determined by their day to day actions. Their actions were “judged” on that basis and not judged on their whole lives (Birnbaum, 1953:137). Calvin proposed a radically different interpretation of Christianity. He proposed that individuals that individuals were saved or condemned by will. This view inspired fear and anxiety among Christians. Thus Christians were judged by the work they did in the world. Accordingly, Weber saw that that

the values of Calvinism promoted the development of Capitalist activity. It inspired an ideology which sets Puritans on their entrepreneurial and industrial paths.

According to Weber, power in society is distinguishable according to three concepts: class, status groups, and parties. These concepts/categories are interconnected and functionally stratify society (Parkin, 1982:90; Weber, 1994:113-6). According to Weberian theory, class can be understood in terms of the individual's relationship to property. The owners of property or those who regulate property rights hold the dominant position in society. Those who do not own property and are subjected to the regulation of property are subordinate to and subjugated by the class of property owners. Weber, however, did not strongly believe in the determinism as provided by one's class position (Parkin, 1982:92-3; Seekings, 2009:867). That is, Weber acknowledged that social mobility is possible between classes. It is possible for an individual from a lower economic class to move to a higher class.

In addition to the individual's class position, Weber felt that there was another aspect to society which had a greater impact on social stratification than the individual's relationship to property. Weber postulated that stratification in society is largely the product of what he termed 'status groups'. Status groups were defined as 'moral communities', which when acting collectively, were able to mobilise for struggles in society as it pertained to economic or political power in society. His argument that status groups were the basis of stratification of society was derived from his analysis of the caste system which prevailed in India. Historically the attributions of race to social groups in society have appeared to be similar to the caste formation found in Indian society (Parkin, 1982:96; Gunnar, 1944:668-670). As Warner put it, "Caste accordingly is identified as social status group where marriage between groups is not permitted, and individuals cannot move between these caste groups" (Warner, 1936:234; Gunnar, 1944:667).

Weber's theorisation of caste proved to be instrumental in terms of analysing how race had become operational in society. This was shown in Warner's (1936) explication of the social organisation of the Deep South in America, where race appeared to be functionally similar to the caste system. This is just one of many examples of the reach of Weber's intellectual work and how his social theories have been instrumental with regard to understanding society.

Thus, we see how sociology has developed as a social science. The European Enlightenment strongly changed the manner in which intellectuals produce and consider knowledge in society. This inspired many individuals to systematically analyse and explain the social realities of individuals and society. It is evident that many of these theories are privy to epistemological and ontological positions. These theories have, however, been remarkably useful in terms of providing understandings of society. It is, however, important to contextualise the relevance and application of these sociological theories to each society. In the next section of this chapter the development and applications of sociology in South Africa is discussed.

### **Brief History of Sociology in South Africa**

Sociology in South Africa has always been strongly linked with the political climate of the nation. This should not be surprising if one considers the forms of knowledge social research has produced. This link between politics and sociology in South Africa became apparent during the 80s when sociologists actively began engaging with social movements as a means of facilitating the struggle against apartheid. This was a refreshing and necessary step given sociology's prior association with apartheid's social engineering (Webster, 1997:279). This relation arose through Hendrik Verwoerd, who had developed his ideas of ethnic separation during the 30s while being a professor teaching Sociology at one of South Africa's leading academic institutions, Stellenbosch University.

From this context a new breed of sociologists emerged. Their intellectual thought strongly resonated with New Left thinking in Europe. They were strongly attracted to Neo-Marxist thinking. Neo-Marxist thinking appeared to be instrumentally useful in terms of showing how

the production structure in society (particularly related to labour relations) was conducive to apartheid. These Marxist critiques of the state of South African society were complemented by the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement in the early 70s (Webster, 1997:280). The Association for Sociologists was formed in 1970 as an alternative to the all-white professional association of SASOV. This to a large degree breathed new life into sociology with regard to the creative output of the discipline. This was reflected in the main themes of sociological writings produced by ASSA during the 80s. This change in the political approach to sociological writing was prevalent with regard to labour studies, health, population studies, education, popular culture as well as race, class and gender. Research groups also started to look more closely at the processes of militarisation, political violence and conflict. This birthed the field of peace studies in the second half of the 80s in response to growing political polarisation during the politically tense years of 1984-1990. This also facilitated the participation of young idealistic intellectuals in the transformation of the discourse of development in South Africa. The democratisation of South Africa changed the context of sociology in South Africa.

Marxist, Weberian, Bourdeurian and Parsonian theories, to name a few, have been instrumentally useful in terms of analysing South African society.

Marxism has always had a strong political and theoretical impact in South African sociology and politics.

In discussions of black South African intellectual heritage and contributions, most theorists and writers have focussed on the intellectual activities of black South African politicians. The intellectual contributions of black academics are often publicly overlooked (Gumede, 2010:1). Bernard Magubane can be considered to be one of these overlooked figures. He was particularly prominent during the 1970s-1990s. Magubane's intellectual work surfaced during a harrowing time in South African history. It was a time of political turmoil, and South African intellectuals and politicians were progressively being forced into exile (Masilela, 2009:3). His first piece, *Crisis in African Sociology*, was published in a Kenyan cultural and literary review. Magubane's central work is the *Political Economy of Race and Class*, published in 1979. *The ties that bind Afro-Americans and Africa*, his PhD thesis, was published in 1987(Gumede, 2010:2).

Magubane, similarly to his peers, had to break the shackles of Bantu Education to fulfil his academic ambitions and achievements. Magubane's intellectual work is characterised by a clear theme, in which one can identify clear feeling of anger and frustration. He was angered by the fact that black people were 'objects' of study for white academics. He challenged many white intellectuals for becoming 'gate-keepers' of the social sciences and bureaucratic favouritism toward those academics whose intellectual work perpetuated the status quo. Thus black South African intellectuals were purposefully marginalised in the academic world. Magubane was highly critical of the exclusion of black intellectuals (such as Fanon, Rodney) from the anthologies of anthropology and sociology. Similarly to most black intellectuals, Magubane felt that white liberal academics had disregarded the impact of colonialism and apartheid on black South Africans. He postulated that it is imperative for black and white South African academics to interrogate the notions of persistent poverty in (South) Africa—and importantly, to devise ways and concepts which can free (South) Africans of this burden.

Magubane pioneered the inclusion of Frantz Fanon's intellectual work into understandings of South African politics (Masilela, n.d.: 3). He was deeply fascinated by urban spaces and how exploitative social relations of capitalist production are reproduced in these spaces. One of his most notable books is *Race and the construction of the dispensable other* (Magubane, 2007). There are many parallels with this book and *I write what I like*. He critically examines how, historically, Africans have been exploited by European colonists. He discusses how the economic reality of many Africans is rooted in racism. He argued that wealth in Western nations (France, Britain and America) is the product of forced slave labour. He approached this argument from a Marxist perspective, emphasising the relationship between labour, power and production.

The contradictory dynamics of the urban labour market allowed Crankshaw (2007) to show how the purpose of apartheid was increasingly being undermined (Webster, 1997:281). Racial inequalities were deepening due to low wages and rising unemployment among Africans. Africans were, however, becoming more occupationally mobile; this mobility translated into higher wages for particular groups of Africans. This prompted Crankshaw to suggest that inequality in South Africa will increasingly be rooted in class relations rather than in race relations. The class differences were beginning to manifest in the form of black

middle-class South Africans moving to white suburbs and large squatter camps beginning to grow at the edges of cities.

Weber's theorisation of status groups proved useful in terms of understanding the relationship between race and property in South Africa. This is shown by Kuper's (1949) explication on this matter. Kuper (1949:149-50) postulated that South African society was progressively mobilising in racial groups as a means of protesting the prevailing power distribution in Society. This racial separation was perpetuated when the separation between black and white South Africans was legally enforced. The privileges of white South Africans (at the time) were legislatively protected (Kuper, 1949:150-1). An example of this was how intermarriage between racial groups was forbidden, by means of the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (Kuper, 1949:147). Therefore race in South African society was starting to resemble caste formations in terms of determining interaction between individuals and the opportunities available to individuals of respective racial groups.

“Kuper (1949) contends that South Africa is a capitalist society, through which inequalities are produced through relations to property and not merely a consequence of race” (Seekings, 2009:870-2). South African society is characterised by tension between the proletariat and capitalists. The economic relationship between South Africans could also be apportioned to the prevailing legislative acts imposed by Europeans during colonisation. The prevailing customary tenure system was disregarded by the colonists, and land was liberally taken by force. Consequently black South Africans were proletarianised: they were systematically forced to sell their labour power to white property owners (Kuper, 1949:151-2). Thus Kuper (1949) showed how race as well as relations to property produced the system of stratification in South Africa. His treatment of race as caste proved instrumentally useful in terms of promoting understanding of racially divided societies.

Another sociologist whose work was influential in South Africa was Talcott Parsons. Groenewald (2013), in his obituary of Dian Joubert, elaborates on the usage of Parsonian theory in South Africa. Dian Joubert was an iconic sociology lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch in the early 1960s. His academic output was immensely influenced by Parsons (Groenewald, 2013:92). He is renowned for two books, *The Value Concept in Sociological Theory*, and the other co-authored with S. P Cilliers, *Sociology: a Systematic Introduction*. These books became central to the Sociology curriculum for close to a decade at the Afrikaans- medium University of Stellenbosch. Parsonian theory has a strong emphasis on

cultural values, a concept which always underpinned Joubert's work. Parsons' theory was a popular functionalist theory concerned with how individuals exchange meanings and information. Central to this theory was the organisation of society and social actions. Accordingly society operates as system akin to a living organism. This system has four main imperatives. The first was to adapt to social conditions and the environment. The second was the pursuit and realisation of goals. The third was the integration of various sub-systems into the broader system unit. The fourth imperative was the sustenance of social patterns and the resolution of conflicts (Graaff, 2001:43). Joubert's academic interpretation of Parsons was instrumental in terms of subverting the hegemonic discourse underpinning apartheid (Groenewald, 2013:93)

Another theorist who has been used to develop understandings of certain aspects of South African society is Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu identifies class stratification through considering the ownership and display of cultural capital and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1979:404; Lamont and Lareau, 1988:153-4). Bourdieu's theory is predicated on the concept of taste, which he defines as the: "propensity and capacity to appropriate...a unitary set of distinctive preferences" (Bourdieu, 1979:409). Therefore, if one could analyse the consumption patterns of (groups of) individuals, one could discern a great amount in relation to their perceived or existing class position. One of the most crucial concepts of Bourdieu's theory is that of habitus, this being the systematic way in which ideologies and behaviours are structurally produced and maintained in society (Lamont and Lareau, 1988:1581-161; Waquant, 2006:7-11).

Bourdieu's theory on the cultural capital, and habitus in particular, has conceptually informed a number of studies in South Africa. Many of these studies have used the theory to analyse youth culture and the determinants of educational outcomes in South Africa. One of these studies was conducted by Nkuna (2006), on urban youth culture in Rosebank, Johannesburg. Another study in which the impact of cultural capital, economic capital and habitus is evaluated is one conducted by De Lannoy (2007). In this study she critically considers educational determinants and educational outcomes by analytically considering the narratives of young adults in Cape Town.

Thus we see how these European theories of social stratification have been useful in terms of understanding (South)African society. This, in part, may be due to elements of European culture which have been transposed onto Africans through the process of colonisation. It

might be permissible to say that there are authentic aspects of African society which these theories fail to explain. Therefore, it is important to consider the work of African intellectuals. The contributions of African intellectuals are discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter Three

### South African Intellectual History

The chapter on the intellectual heritage of Western sociology discussed/charted the roots of sociology. The aim thereof was to trace the ideological, philosophical and methodological development of the discipline. In that chapter, we saw how many sociologists and social scientists used the intellectual products of their predecessors to develop social theories or to inform their own study of society. As such, it is important to use the same approach to the South African context. If one wishes to study and systematise the work of Steve Biko, with the aim of either developing social theory or merely to see how he studied and interpreted society, one has to inspect the roots of (South) African intellectual thinking and knowledge production. Obviously, like any country or context South Africa has produced a vast number of intellectual figures, many of whom have been overlooked by sociologists

In this chapter the researcher attempts to trace the ideological development of African intellectuals. The individuals important to this discussion, in chronological order, are Ntsikana, Tiyo Soga, Pixley Seme and Anton Lembede, before finally arriving at Biko. These intellectuals have been selected firstly based on the changing context from which they emerged, namely black people's response to colonialism and apartheid. The second and most important criterion is their impact on South African society. The progressive nature of their work in relation to their context, with reference to the past with the view of changing the present to produce a better future is remarkably interesting.

Next follows a brief exposition on the selected theorists, briefly considering their backgrounds and more importantly, their intellectual work.

#### **Ntsikana (1780-1821)**

Ntsikana could be considered to be one of the earliest and most prominent intellectuals of South Africa. Ntsikana was the first Xhosa speaker to convert to Christianity. He was a descendant of the royal Cirha Clan. The year 1800 was a significant one for Ntsikana, because it was during this period when he had to start making sense of a rapidly changing South Africa. Ntsikana was circumcised (as dictated by Xhosa custom) and also introduced to Christianity (Booi, 2008:7).

It was very difficult for Ntsikana to reconcile his Christian beliefs and Xhosa beliefs and practices (Booi, 2008:11). Subsequently, Ntsikana eventually managed to reconcile these different belief systems. This allowed Ntsikana better to communicate Christianity to the African community (Odendaal, 2012:10). His reinterpretation of Christianity facilitated the establishment of numerous congregations all over the Eastern Cape. A central part of this reinterpretation was the composition of hymns. Ntsikana is highly regarded for his musical compositions and ecclesial practices. He composed several hymns which captured the cultural experiences of Africans (Booi, 2005:13; Odendaal, 2012:11). It is suggested that the lyrical nature of these hymns appealed to African society. His intellect was highly regarded; this drew the attention of King Ngquika, who approached him to serve as a royal advisor.

If one considers the role of the intellectual, then it is easy to consider Ntsikana to be one of the first South African intellectual figures. Ndletyana(2008:1) defines the intellectual "... an individual who by virtue of their position in society and intellectual training, is preoccupied with abstract ideas, not only for self-gratification, but also to fulfil a public role. Intellectuals explain new experiences and ideas in the most accessible and understandable ways to the rest of society" (Ndletyana, 2008:1). The South African ideological landscape was subjected to profound change with the advent of colonists and missionaries. Individuals were confronted with a new system of governance and administration, in which Christianity was an integral belief system. Ntsikana was confronted with the challenge of reconciling his Christian beliefs with his cultural and traditional beliefs. This was a source of immense psychological tension to Ntsikana. The composition of hymns, and more significantly his reinterpretation of Christianity, to an extent fulfilled the public role of being an intellectual. He would not have been the only South African to be confronted by this tension of reconciling their belief systems and the belief system 'offered' by missionaries. Therefore his reinterpretations of Christianity and his hymns provided other future African intellectuals a framework through which they could reconcile these notions. This is evidenced by the number of congregations which arose through his ecclesial world views and practices. Therefore one could consider this new framework to be his most significant and relevant contribution to South African intellectual history. Ntsikana's work made Christianity more accessible to Xhosa-speaking individuals in the Eastern Cape during the early phases of colonial life. This would, however, be the foundation for generations of black South African intellectuals.

Many of these individuals were formally educated through missionary schools. One of the prominent figures who rose through this system was Tiyo Soga. Soga was one of Ntsikana's

first students. He was a highly influential figure of his time. Therefore it is important to consider Soga's contribution to the intellectual history of South Africa. It is also important to acknowledge that Soga has been described as a the father of Black Consciousness preceding Biko by two hundred years (Williams, 1978)

### **Tiyo Soga (1829-1871)**

Tiyo Soga was the first black South African to receive formal education outside of Africa. He was born in 1829, close to the Eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, into a large polygamous family (Ndletyana, 2008:17). His father was a man of great stature, mostly due to his being an Advisor to the king Ngqika. Tiyo was born in an extremely turbulent time which coincided with people being driven off their ancestral land as well as the growing missionary project. His parents were among the first recruits of the first ever South African missionary, Ntsikana (Ndletyana, 2008:18).

One of the founders of Lovedale College, Reverend Chalmers, was very influential in Soga's life. Rev. Chalmers noticed that Soga was a bright and determined student. This prompted Chalmers to have Soga admitted to Lovedale Seminary in 1844. Growing tension between Africans and the missionaries forced Chalmers and the other Presbyterian missionaries to flee to Scotland. Tiyo Soga accompanied them as it was feared that his community might ostracise him (Ndletyana, 2008:17; Odendaal, 2012:24). He eventually returned as an ordained Presbyterian minister, which gave him high social status.

Soga returned to the Cape Colony in January of 1849. During this time he started his own missionary work and later he became the schoolmaster at Uniondale in Keiskamma Hoek (Ndletyana, 2008:20; Odendaal, 2012:25). Soga's awareness of racial prejudice was central to his own intellectual processes and productions. Initially he was quite cautious, but growing colonial aggression forced him to take a firm public stance on this matter. Tiyo Soga was absorbed by the philosophical approach of missionaries with regard to their interaction with natives. Soga questioned their paternalistic, 'all-knowing' approach. He suggested that it would be better for missionaries to work from the vantage point of the 'natives'.

From 1860 onward, Soga set out to translate English literature into Xhosa. Many of these articles had appeared in missionary journals. His efforts led to the growth of readership among Xhosa speakers. In addition to his translation of English literary works, he was also renowned for his journalism. Similar to Ntsikana, he also composed hymns. Soga could be

considered to be the originator of ‘black consciousness’ (Ndletyana, 2008:28). Soga was highly concerned with the manner in which the image of black society was being constructed and reproduced by the colonial administration. This, in addition to the value he placed on the accurate preservation of South African history, inspired him to capture this history himself.

He interviewed elders, inquiring about history, cultural stories and the genealogy of chiefs (Ndletyana, 2008:28; Bickford-Smith, 2011:28). These interviews were captured in the articles he wrote and subsequently published. It was with Soga that one really starts to notice the challenge intellectual figures were experiencing throughout Africa. As Mkandawire (2005:6) argues, many of Africa’s prominent intellectuals/political actors have attempted to develop an ideology and identity “that would give the project of modernisation and the African soul” (Mkandawire, 6:2005). Tiyo Soga truly abhorred the dehumanisation of Africans and the devaluation of African culture. The essential purpose of his intellectual practices was the preservation of African culture as well as challenging the emerging power relations being produced by the colonial administrations. The value he placed on African heritage and the capacities of African individuals is a sentiment which was carried through many generations. These ideals are, in a sense, the foundation of Africanism and Black Consciousness. As we will see in the latter parts of this chapter, Tiyo Soga, in many ways, became the archetypal model of South African intellectuals: extensively, formally educated, strong Christian beliefs and many of them were esteemed members of their respective society.

Other archetypal figures in the development of African thought were Pixely Seme and Anton Lembede.

### **Seme (1881-1951) and Lembede (1914-1947)**

Pixley Seme was the founder of the African National Congress. Born on 1 October 1881, he came from a highly influential family in Inanda. His parents had settled in Inanda prior to his birth and they were responsible for the building of a church and school, called Inanda Seminary (Na, 2012:1-2). Like Soga, Seme also distinguished himself as a bright student characterised by determination. Seme studied and graduated from the Mount Hermon School for boys in Massachusetts (Na, 2012:3; Wright, 1999:1). Subsequently he enrolled at Columbia University in New York. He also studied at Oxford University, where he eventually obtained a law degree. Seme had a strong commitment to Africanism. He believed it to be imperative to unify all African people in one nation. His vision for Africa was a unity

which transcended ethnicity and tribal communities. Seme would return to South Africa in 1911. He established his legal practice in Johannesburg shortly after his return. It is through his legal practice that he came in contact with and inspired Anton Lembede.

Lembede's contribution to African intellectual thought was the development of Africanism. Anton Lembede came to prominence shortly after 1943, when he slowly but surely entered the political arena of pre-apartheid South Africa. Lembede was in many regards a striking representative of a small, but growing African elite. He was well educated, having obtained a Bachelors of Arts degree through correspondence from the University of South Africa. Whilst working as a teacher in Natal and the Orange Free State, he continued his studies privately and eventually obtained another Bachelor's degree and his LL.B. degree (Gerhart, 1979:53). Lembede's relationship with Pixley Seme would prove to be very significant. Seme was a highly esteemed figure within the African middle class (Gerhart, 1979:45). In many ways he embodied what it meant to be a successful black South African. This, in addition to his stature within and outside the social and political sphere of South Africa, would be highly influential with regard to Lembede's development of Africanism.

The tentacles of the colonial project were deepening their grasp on the South African population. The native population during the period of 1900 to the early 1940s (and beyond) were facing increasing constraints in terms of educational and occupational opportunities. Many of the figures within the African elite were initially educated by missionaries, which also facilitated their access to higher education. Therefore many of them, through their relations with the missionaries, turned out to become well educated and well established professionally. Even though they were aware of the insurmountable impact of racial prejudice, some of the earlier figures of these elite believed there were opportunities available to capable and ambitious individuals to enter this growing elite (Gerhart, 1979:46). Thus, they believed that there were some material options present to Africans to earn power and privilege in South Africa, their own lives and livelihoods being a testament of this.

The context from which Lembede emerged is different from that of Soga and Seme. The social and political world in 1943 was much harsher. Lembede's generation were more exposed and affected by the ideologies and practices of Afrikaner Nationalists. As Gerhart (1979:47) put it, Afrikaner Nationalists "appeared to be ruthless in their path to political dominance". As Lembede's political involvement grew, he became a part of a notable group of young men. Many of them were seriously questioning the political stance of their elders

and predecessors. It became their imperative to develop a new analysis of the political situation in Africa. Lembede was a very charismatic individual as well as one of the most revolutionary thinkers within his circle of peers, which included other notable names like Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu. His talent and stature among his peers would eventually be credited with his election as the first president of the ANC Youth League (Gerhardt, 1979:51)

With the input of Mda and Jordan Ngubane, Lembede sought to develop a new philosophy (Gerhart, 1979:54). This philosophy was well developed by April 1944, associated with the launch of the ANC Youth League, and immensely influenced the thinking of then members of the ANCYL. In the next section the key underpinnings of African Nationalism are outlined briefly.

### **The philosophy of African Nationalism**

A central theme within the colonial project was the dehumanisation of Africans; this was achieved by devaluing their histories and capacities (Mkandawire, 2005:5). Along with many others, Lembede acknowledged that the African population was starting to show psychological handicaps. Therefore the only effective remedy for this condition had to be an ideology around which the African leadership corps could mobilise their people. According to Lembede, Africans had become a broken nation, devoid of a true sense of identity. The only reasonable solution to this problem was African freedom. Therefore the purpose of Africanism was to heal the psychology of African people. The key component of this philosophy was a “new and aggressively positive self-image compounded of pride in the past, confident expectations of the future and emotional, burning love for African’s God-given blackness” (Gerhardt, 1979:59).

A central part of this philosophy entailed that the ultimate destiny of the African nations and people was to become united as one nation. He presumed that this view should extend beyond the borders of South Africa, thus all Africans, regardless of the cultural and tribal systems should unite as one nation, united by the blackness of their skin. These notions, however, were not warmly received by everyone, especially some of his compatriots. Many of them could not intellectually grasp his perspectives. This was largely due to the political and ideological impracticalities at the time. Some of the groups in South Africa, such as the Zulu and Basotho peoples, were at odds. This, in addition to the cultural, ideological, traditional conflicts between some other groups, made it difficult for many to perceive what a

united South Africa might look like, let alone Africa. This was also perpetuated by Lembede's own uncertainty and inconsistency about how his ideas would ultimately manifest.

Lembede's interpretation of Africanism was different from that of Seme. It was also much more radical. Even though Seme was a proponent of Africanism, he still believed that black people could integrate themselves in Western institutions and organisations. Lembede, however, was much more antagonistic toward Western institutions. He believed that they should be abolished completely. This difference was further fuelled by his reluctance to enforce the liberal integrationist values of his predecessors. Lembede proposed a more militant interpretation of African Nationalism (Na, 2006:56). This entailed mass protests and boycotts. The key aim of Lembede's programme was the mass mobilisation of native South Africans as a means to challenge and overthrow the discriminatory system. These actions were to be more blatant. This is somewhat different to Seme's interpretation and administration of African nationalism. Like his peers and predecessors, Seme believed that native South Africans could systematically challenge the system from within through political participation or by legal means.

This exemplifies the growing context defined by political and social tension in South Africa. Pixley Seme and Anton Lembede sought to challenge the system politically. A central part of this challenge was the mobilisation of black South Africans, who at the time appeared to be divided along ethnic and cultural lines. These divisions were further exacerbated through a history of conflicts between these groups. Therefore, the ideology of Africanism would have been a powerful tool through which black South Africans could have been mobilised and united. The possible success of this ideology was impeded by the unclear implications it would have for South Africans politically and also, what it might hold for the rest of Africa.

Steve Biko, along with his political peers, understood the various challenges South Africans had faced historically and also at the time. The divisive impact of cultural or ethnic affiliations was still evident, but partially complicated by the growth of Christianity in South African society. This was further complicated by the growing integration into the economic system. Steve Biko strongly believed in the power of ideology in society. Influenced by Africanism, he set out and developed Black Consciousness as an ideological system.

Next follows a succinct discussion of Steve Biko's political influence and some of the factors which influenced his thinking and political activity

## **Political influence of Steve Biko (1946-1977)**

Steve Biko is greatly considered as one of the prominent intellectuals born in Africa. His thoughts and political participation were central to the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in South Africa. Biko and counterparts from his generation took up the task of organising the black community after the banning of the African National Congress and the Pan-African Congress (Woods, 1979). However, like their predecessors, they became politically active at a time when South Africans of colour were experiencing increasing levels of oppression and exploitation. This, in association with the perceived 'failures' of their intellectual and political predecessors, drove them toward the development of an ideology around which they could organise their political movements and activities.

Lembede had died and Robert Sobukwe had become the leader of the Africanists who had broken from the ANC to form the PAC. Sobukwe had been released from Robben Island roughly at the time that Biko and his fellow university students formed the BCM. This movement was a break-away movement as well as a political alternative to the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). This movement appeared to be a multi-racial party, but was predominantly white in terms of the students who occupied positions of power. This bred the notion that black students could and would not be adequately represented by this movement, so Biko and his fellows broke away to form the blacks-only movement known as the South African Students Organisation (SASO).

### **Influence/Emergence of Black Consciousness**

The emergence of black consciousness went beyond the banning of the PAC and the ANC in the 1960s. It was about more than filling the vacuum left by the banning of these organisations (Buthelezi, 1991:112; Moodley, 1991:143-44). At the heart of this ideological project and political movement lay the intention to unify all oppressed groups (Coloureds, blacks and Indians) within South Africa. Thus Black Consciousness was an ideology of liberation which was 'far-reaching' in practice (Buthelezi, 1991:123). Black Consciousness can be linked to a number of ideological and political developments in the world.

The Black Consciousness movement in South Africa was growing quite steadily by the 1960s. It is at this time when the American Civil Rights movement was also gaining strong momentum (Snail, 2007: 60). By this time however, unlike their South African counterparts, African Americans already had the legal system on their side. Their struggle was, however, one which sought equitable claim to all constitutional rights in America. Black consciousness was an ideology of liberation which sought to

empower and unite all minority/oppressed groups. It became part of the global discourse against racism and the exploitation of politically marginalised people. Thus it was part of a far-reaching ideology, which sought to conscientise minority groups about the reality of their social lives in addition to empowering them ideologically

Previously (and probably to this day) many political and intellectual movements drew distinctions between Africans, Coloureds and Indians (Mangcu; 2013). Biko, however, had a broader definition of black which included Coloureds and Indians. He believed that blackness was not so much about skin colour, but rather about self-identification (Mangcu, 2013; Woods, 1979). Thus this inclusive definition of blackness, which was a core policy of the BCM, bred a sense of unity and solidarity among Africans, Coloureds and Indians. Many intellectuals viewed the struggle in economic terms, whereas Biko integrated and added the element of cultural empowerment to his theory. In addition to economic empowerment, Biko supposed that cultural empowerment is central to the political emancipation of black South Africans.

Biko harrowingly met his end in September 1977. He was cruelly murdered by the apartheid police. This was after he was arrested while making his way from a failed meeting with the Unity Movement and BC activists in Cape Town. Biko transcended the role of being purely a political activist. His intellectual work spawned and sparked an alternative consciousness for many individuals participating in the struggle. He grappled with many sociological issues in terms of developing his understanding of how the world worked at his time and sought to communicate this to others as a means of producing social change. Therefore his writings should be considered to be fertile ground from which ideas could be derived and developed.

In this chapter the researcher briefly discussed some of the more notable intellectuals from South Africa. They are distinguished by the relevance and originality of their intellectual work. Ntsikana is popularly considered to be the first black South African Intellectual. This is based on his reinterpretation of Christianity, in ideological and material terms. He made Christianity more accessible to black South Africans and captured their experiences through hymns. He was succeeded by Tiyo Soga, the first South African to receive formal tertiary education from an international institution. He inspired legions of black South Africans, many moulded into his image. Pixley Seme and Anton Lemebede's key contribution was the development of Africanism, an ideology which sought to restore African pride and challenge the oppressive political conditions. Many of these theories and experiences inspired Biko and

his development of Black Consciousness. Therefore this is useful in terms of tracing the movement and development of ideas through generations of intellectuals.

# Chapter Four

## Analysis of Findings

In the previous two chapters two distinct, but related intellectual lineages were outlined. The chapter on the European roots of sociology traced the development of sociology as an academic discipline and how the prominent sociological theories have been applied in South Africa. This served the added purpose of displaying the progressive nature of intellectual work. It was then followed by the chapter which attempted to display the development of black South African intellectual figures in a similar chronological fashion. Functionally the previous chapters served as a broad literature review of social theory and intellectual work. This review was used to develop aspects of the coding framework used to analyse Biko's writings. In this chapter the researcher focuses purely on Steve Biko with reference to critical parts of *I write what I like*.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, the Miles Huberman approach was used to analyse the data. At first the data was reduced by extracting the key ideas from *I write what I like*. These took the forms of quotes and summaries of portions of the text. The data was subsequently coded according to the analytical framework provided in the Methodology section. In this chapter findings are reported. This entails a diagram summarising findings according to the section, followed by a brief exposition in which findings are explained.

The findings are presented according to the following structure:

- Overall structure of South African Society
- Cultural oppression
- Market relations and labour structure
- Politics
- The social groups: Black South Africans/White South Africans

It is important to state that this framework influenced the interpretation of the text.

## Structure of South African Society

Steve Biko's work emerged from a particular context. This context was characterised by particular social structures and institutions. South Africa during Biko's time was strongly characterised by racial divisions, which were legislatively institutionalised, as illustrated in Figure 1.

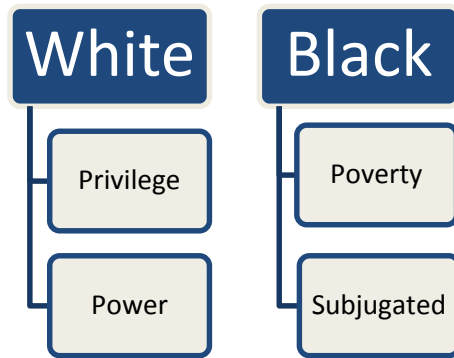


Figure 1. The overall structure of South African society. This graphic shows the explicit division in South African society. It extends to show the economic condition of these two groups and the social relationship between them. The graphic was produced as part of the data display component of the Miles Huberman approach

*“My friendships, my love, my education, my thinking and every other facet of my life have been carved and shaped within the context of separate development.”*(Biko, 1978:29)

*“I have lived all my conscious life in the framework of institutionalised separate development.”*(Biko, 1978:29)

Steve Biko acknowledged the most glaring characteristic of South African society at the time. He stated that South Africa was a divided society. This division is broadly evident in terms of racial lines. South Africa was racially divided into two main groupings, these being European (white) and non-white/'native'. The non-white community was further subdivided into black (African), Coloured and Indian. As exemplified by the quote, each of these distinguishable groups was privy to their own unique development paths that shaped the lives of those individuals belonging to them. These racial differences were institutionalised, and became the explicit foundation of discrimination in South African society.

In the ideal society racial segregation would be unwanted and not evident; this, however, is not the reality of South African society. The social lives of black South Africans are subjected to white authority; this is evident even within black organisations:

*“Very few black organisations were not under white direction. True to their image, the white liberals always knew what was good for the blacks and told them so. The wonder of it all is that black people have believed in them for so long.”* (Biko, 1978:21)

From this quote one can see the rationale given or proposed for white influence in black organisations or even their social lives: white society or political figures, more particularly liberals, feel that they know what is best for the black segment of society. In addition, they feel that they are physically and intellectually capable of directing the lives of black people. According to Biko, white individuals so strongly propagated this view that black people believed it. That is to say, many black people for some time believed that white people truly understood the nature of their lives and what might be best for them, that they relinquished their own power to create and define their own lives and accepted the influence of the white community.

One of the key reasons Biko gives for these prevailing social differences is the systematic development of inferiority/superiority complexes. One of the aspects in which these complexes arise is evident in the nature of the suggested resolution against discrimination and more specifically the groups which suggest these resolutions. White society, from the place of superiority feels enabled to suggest resolutions on the part of black South Africans. Black South Africans, from the position of inferiority, are more receiving of resolutions suggested by white South Africans:

*“People forming the integrated complex have been extracted from various segregated societies with their inbuilt complexes of superiority and inferiority and these continue to manifest themselves even in non racial set-up of the integrated complex. As a result the integration so achieved is a one-way course, with whites doing all the talking and blacks the listening.”*(Biko, 1978:21)

*“Each group must be able to attain its style of existence without encroaching on or being thwarted by another. Out of this mutual respect for each other and complete freedom of self-determination there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the lifestyles of the various groups. This is true integration.”*(Biko, 1978:22)

For Biko, ideal integration will arise from mutual respect between groups in South African society. He suggests that this mutual respect will be the foundation from which groups may be equipped with the social, political and economic power to define themselves and to create their own realities:

*“...no matter what a white man does, the colour of his skin-his passport to privilege-will always put him miles ahead of the black man. Thus in the ultimate analysis no white person can escape part of the oppressor camp”.* (Biko, 1978:24)

Biko reinforces the notion that race is a proxy for privilege in South African society. This is exemplified by the above quote. Inherent in this quote is the idea that power stems from recognition of characteristics associated with the status quo. White people in South African society control political power; this power has given them certain liberties and privileges. Thus, in South African society, the colour of one's skin (or the perception of the colour of one's skin) is a signal of one's social position. This is accompanied by a basket of rights and privileges associated with one's membership to a particular group:

*“I am against the superior-inferior white-black stratification that makes the white a perpetual teacher and the black a perpetual pupil (and a poor one at that). I am against the fact that a settler minority should impose an entire system of values on an indigenous people.”* (Biko, 1978:26)

Biko quite obviously and strongly opposes this manifestation of the superior (white)–inferior (black) stratification in South African society. The aspect of this relationship which really stands out for him is how this superior position of whites produces a student/teacher relationship between white and black South Africans. Another aspect of this relationship, he points out, is the prevailing aspect of exploitation of black people in this system:

*“The fact that apartheid has been tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation and deliberate oppression makes the problem more complex.”*(Biko, 1978:33)

## **Cultural Oppression**

*“Ground for revolution is always fertile in the presence of absolute destitution.”* (Biko, 1978:33)

The imposition of the Christian religion is central to the cultural subjugation of African people. Biko thought that it was incredible that black people had ‘put up’ with being poor and

powerless in South African society. One of the key notions which led them to accept these material conditions of their lives was how they related to God and biblical messages as provided by the clergy who explained the conditions of their lives. Therefore Biko felt these very messages and interpretations had to be redefined and re-interpreted. This is largely due to how influential Christianity had become in South Africa at that time.

*“Obviously the only path open for us now is to redefine the message in the bible and make it relevant to the struggling masses. The bible must not be seen to preach that all authority is divinely instituted. It must rather preach that it is a sin to allow oneself to be oppressed.”* (Biko, 1978:34)

As is evidenced above, he thought that the messages derived from the Bible should be empowering rather than disempowering. He suggests that religion, more specifically Christianity, should help individuals foster a sense of pride as well as the capacity to question authority.

Another aspect of the cultural oppression of black South Africans was the growing impact of Western culture. The prevailing discourse on black culture dictated that native cultures were ‘barbaric’ and ‘savage’. As Biko explains:

*“The history of African Society was reduced to tribal battles and internecine wars. There was no conscious migration by the people from one place of abode to another. No it was always flight from one tyrant who wanted to defeat the tribe not for any other reason, but merely to wipe them out of the face of this earth.”* (Biko, 1978:32)

This interpretation of history led to tensions between generations of Africans. Younger Africans, or those who appropriated Western cultures, often found themselves viewing their own traditional practices from this Western perspective. This led them to give greater credence to Western institutions. Therefore, even though many of them questioned the discriminatory legacy and impact of these institutions, they still participated in them as they found that it might be the only way to improve their material realities at that time.

Cultural oppression can be summed up by the following Biko quote:

*“At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by the blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the*

*oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do that will really scare the powerful masters. Hence thinking along the lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man see himself as a being, entire in himself and not as an extension of a broom or additional leverage to some machine.”*  
 (Biko,1978:74)

One of Biko’s greatest contributions to understanding cultural oppression is the notion of Consciousness. He suggests that the greatest instrument in the hands of oppressive government was the ideological/intellectual/cognitive subordination of native Africans. The native African person has been groomed and moulded to become an instrument of/for the white man. They have become easily controllable, so much so that native Africans believe they are a liability to the white man. They were forced to believe that they are retrograde and an impediment to progress. This Biko believes is the greatest tragedy of the system. The black man has lost his ability to think for himself and therefore he has lost himself and has merely become a tool for the white man to do with as he pleases.

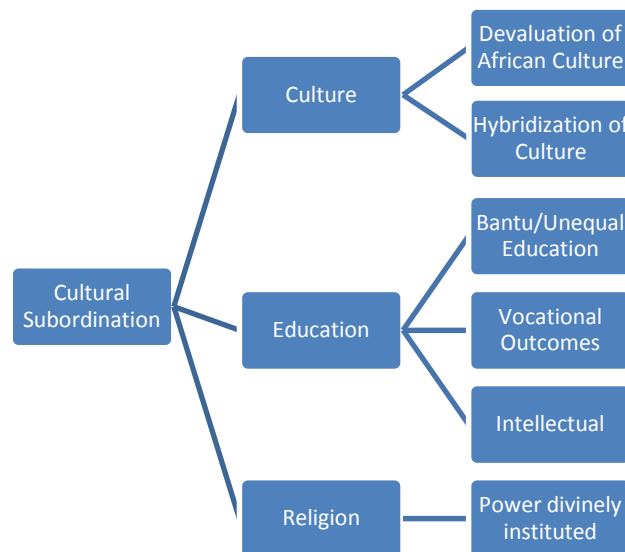


Figure 2: Cultural Subordination: this figure outlines the aspects of the cultural subordination of black South Africans(Produced by the researcher)

### Political Oppression

Apartheid was a political project. One of the main points of interests is how a minority settler community usurped power and how they maintained their power over a native majority once they had taken it. A pivotal aspect of usurping and maintaining power of this native majority was the legislative division of these groups along tribal/cultural lines:

*“The white man’s quest for power has led him to destroy with utter ruthlessness whatever has stood in his way. In an effort to divide the black world in terms of aspirations, the powers that be have evolved a philosophy that stratifies the black world and gives preferential treatment to certain groups. Further, they have built up several tribal cocoons, thereby hoping to increase inter-tribal ill-feeling and to divert the energies of the black people towards false prescribed ‘freedoms’. Moreover it was hoped the black people could be effectively contained in these various cocoons of repression, euphemistically referred to as ‘homelands’.”(Biko, 1978:66-7)*

The outcome of this legislative division of these groups along these cultural lines had a stark impact. As evident in the quote, the outcome of this segregation was tension between these groups. Therefore, as opposed to dealing with the glaring truth, i.e. white domination, groups would rather set out to fight for the interests of their respective groups. This impeded the potential political and social power of native Africans if they were to act as a united front and pursue their interests collectively.

*“Slowly the ground is being swept off from under our feet and soon we as blacks will believe completely that our political rights are in fact in our own areas. Thereafter we shall find that we have no leg to stand on in making demands for any rights in ‘mainland’ White South Africa which incidentally will comprise more than three quarters of the land of our fore-fathers.” (Biko, 1978:40)*

These differences in these communities were exacerbated by the imposition of sterner legislation. This was further enforced through violence and the systematic dehumanisation of native Africans.

*“Then again the progressively sterner legislation that has lately filled the South African statute books has had a great effect in convincing people of the evil inherent in the system of apartheid. No amount of propaganda on Radio Bantu or promises of freedom being granted to some desert homeland will ever convince the blacks that the government means well, so long as they experience manifestations of the lack of respect for the dignity of man and for his property as shown during the mass removals of Africans from urban areas. The unnecessary harassment of Africans by police, both in towns and inside townships, and the ruthless application of that scourge of the people, the pass laws, are constant reminders that the white man is on top and that blacks are only tolerated-with the greatest restraints.” (Biko, 1978:67)*

Biko illustrates that irony of the fundamental promise of many political systems:

*“All opposition parties have to satisfy the basic demands of politics. They want power and at the same time they want to be fair.”* (Biko, 1978)

Many political groups exemplify their endeavours through their manifestos. This would entail promises to groups predicated on some form of association. Therefore, based on one’s political association with particular groups, one would legislatively be entitled to some privileges given that the group has the political power to dispose these privileges. However, many privileges in society can only be disposed at the expense of others, thus it would be impossible for any political group to be fair or equitable in all respects.

*“Rather I am illustrating the fundamental fact that total identification with an oppressed group in a system that forces one group to enjoy privilege and to live on the sweat of another, is impossible.”* (Biko, 1978:71)

*“What I have tried to show is that in South Africa political power has always rested with white society. Not only have whites been guilty of being offensive but, by some skilful manoeuvres, they have managed to control the responses of the blacks to provocation.”*(Biko, 1978:72)

Biko goes on to show that white societies have always had immense political power in South Africa. He reiterates the point that this political power was founded on violence and the ideological subordination of native Africans.

*“National consciousness and its spread in South Africa has to work against a number of factors. First there are the traditional complexes, then the emptiness of the native’s past and lastly the question of black-white dependency. The traditional inferior-superior black white complexes are deliberate creations of the colonialist. Through the work of missionaries and the style of education adopted, the blacks were made to feel that the white man was some kind of god whose word could not be doubted.”* (Biko, 1978:77)

One fundamental topic which Biko explicates is the black-white dependency. This dependency between these groups is a deliberate creation of the colonial government. This is founded on the initial provision of education and religion through the missionary work of early colonists. These colonists created a particular discourse around their institutions. This

discourse devalued African knowledge, traditions and culture. In addition, this discourse apportioned a sense of reverie with regard to Western/European knowledge and traditions particularly in relation to the functional aspect of this knowledge and tradition within their burgeoning administrations. Therefore this slowly led to a relationship of dependency between whites and blacks: blacks needing the provision of Western education, jobs and goods, whites needing cheap black labour as well as growing market in which to sell their goods. These various relations are dealt with in separately in sections of this chapter.

### Market relations

Economic relations also show racialised division in the social structure of South Africa. This is demonstrated in figure3. It displays how the the exploitation of black labour and the economic activity of black people was the cog which drove white privilege

*“It goes without saying that the black people of South Africa, in order to make the necessary strides in the new direction they are thinking of, have to take a long look at how they can use their economic power to their advantage.”(Biko,1978:77)*

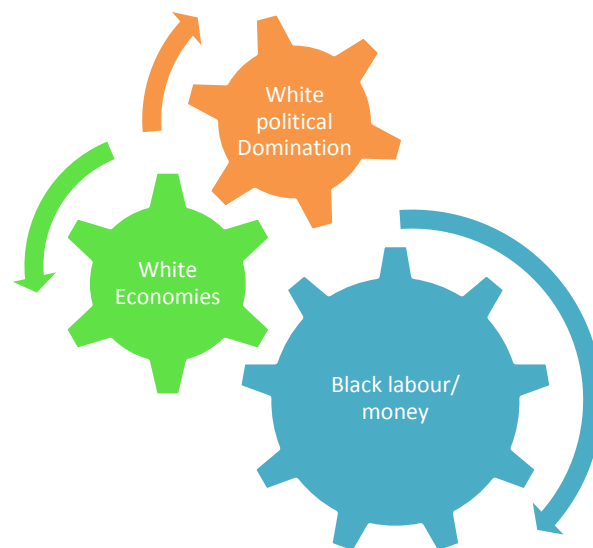


Figure 3.An illustration of how Biko depicted Economic Relationships in South Africa (Graphic produced by researcher)

*“As the situation stands today, money from the black world tends to take a unidirectional flow to the white society. Blacks buy from white supermarkets, white greengrocers, white bottle stores, white chemists, and, to crown it all, those who can,*

*bank at white owned banks...Needless to say, they travel to work in government-owned trains or white-owned buses.”(Biko, 1978:78)*

Biko suggests that black South Africans must seriously re-evaluate where and how they spend their money. He shows how many black South Africans, spend their money on goods and services provided by white people. This reinforces the economic power white South Africans have in society. He suggests it would be better for black people to invest in or use the services and goods of black people. This would strengthen the black community economically; in the least it would help the black community maintain some vestige of economic strength. In addition, if black enterprises grew significantly, one might find that white people become dependent on goods and services provided by black people, rather than merely exploiting black people in the labour market.

The differences between racial groups are also evident in terms of the occupation and ownership of land in South Africa. This is enforced and perpetuated through legislation.

*“Geographically, i.e. in terms of land distribution, Bantustans present a gigantic fraud that can find no moral support from any quarters. We find that 20% of the population are in control of 87% of the land while 80% ‘control’ only 13%.” (Biko, 1978:90)*

*“To make this situation even more ridiculous, not one of the so-called ‘Bantustan nations’ have an intact piece of land. All of them are scattered like little bits of the most unyielding soil. In each area the more productive bits are white controlled islands on which white farms or other types of industry situated.” (Biko, 1978:91)*

Therefore he affirms how the white minority own the majority of land in South Africa. He also shows how the black majority are forced to occupy 13% of land in South Africa. He further states that the pieces of land allocated to blacks are not even agriculturally productive. In addition government owns the minerals under the land they occupy and the rights of natives only extend to six feet under the ground.

*“Economically the blacks have been given a raw deal. Generally speaking the areas where Bantustans are located are the least developed in the country, often very unsuitable either for agricultural work or pastoral work.” (Biko, 1978:91)*

*“Not one of the Bantustans have access to sea (major port) and in all situations mineral rights are strictly reserved for the South African government. In other words*

*Bantustans only have rights extending to 6 feet below surface of the land.”(Biko, 1978:91)*

Therefore we see the actual nature of the land allocated to natives. Black South Africans are not able to use to land for agricultural or any productive purpose due to the inadequate productive potential of the land. This is very problematic as this might have a severe impact in terms of how these individuals might sustain their livelihoods. They cannot produce crops to sell or to sustain themselves. This further exacerbates the economic subordination of black peoples: they have to work to produce and sustain some meaningful form of livelihood.

### **Labour relations/marketplace**

A key aspect of discrimination during apartheid was the structure of the labour market, more particularly, labour relations. Biko felt that many white South Africans at that time wanted to reduce prevailing differences in privileges to the legacy of economic classes. He, however, went on to show that these differences are perpetuated and founded on institutionalised racial discrimination.

*“With this background in mind we are forced, therefore to believe that is the case of haves against have-nots where whites have been deliberately made haves and blacks have not’s. There is for instance no worker in the classical sense among whites in South Africa, for even the most downtrodden white worker still has a lot to lose if the system is changed. He is protected by several laws against competition at work from the majority (54). He has a vote and he uses it to return the Nationalist Government to power because he sees them as the only people who, through job reservation laws, are bent on looking after his interests against competition with the natives.” (Biko, 1978:53)*

Therefore, we see how white labourers were protected by government. This protection was provided through legislation, particularly the job reservation laws. The above quote shows that even white South Africans who are relatively poor in relation to other white people in South Africa still had some material investment in the system. They might have felt that political change would dispel the meagre privileges they had access to at the time. Why would they vote against a government which protects their jobs? Therefore it was in their economic interests to ensure that the Nationalist Government remains in power.

## WHAT ARE THESE DISTINCT GROUPS?

In the above sections the researcher reported on how Biko wrote about South African society. This section summarises how he wrote/defined the distinct groups in South Africa.

### **Black South Africans**

At this juncture it is important to consider how, or whom Biko identified as black South Africans.

*“We have in our policy manifesto defined blacks as those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations.”* (Biko,1978:49)

This appears to be quite a broad definition of blackness in South African society. This also elicits some characteristics and requisites of being black in South Africa. According to this definition black individuals, broadly speaking, are all individuals who are being discriminated against in South Africa. He, however, adds further conditions to his definition; these are based on the self identification of the individual. He suggests that the individuals must identify themselves as members of a community united in an effort to eradicate discrimination and oppression as a means of achieving their own aspirations.

*“Being black is not a matter of pigmentation – being black is a reflection of a mental attitude.”* (Biko, 1978:48)

*“Merely describing yourself as black you have started on a road toward emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being.”* (Biko, 1978:48-9)

Therefore, we see that for Biko, the issue of race transcends the colour of one’s skin. For him one’s racial identity is rooted in one’s ‘mental attitude’. He also suggests that identifying one as black should set one on the path of fighting for one’s liberation. He, however, does not dismiss the significance of an individual’s skin colour in relation to the social interpretation of one’s skin colour in South African Society.

*“... fact we [are] all not white does not necessarily mean that we are all black. Non-whites do exist and will continue to exist for quite a long time. If one’s aspiration is*

*whiteness but his pigmentation makes attainment for this impossible, then that person is a non-white. Any man who calls a white man 'Baas', any man who serves in the police force or Security Branch is ipso facto a non-white. Black people –real black people – are those who can manage to hold their heads in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man.”(Biko, 1978:52)*

He further suggests that black South Africans have developed an inferiority complex. This complex is a product of the historical oppression of black people. Therefore black South Africans have to realise their power and potential in society if they wish to work toward a better future. This is quite similar to Lembede and his understanding of the plight of black people. This is the very foundation of black consciousness.

*“As long as blacks are suffering from inferiority complex- a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision-they will be useless as co-architects of a normal society where man is nothing else but man for his own sake. Hence what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that may come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim” (Biko,1978:22).*

*“The real concern of a group is to keep the group going rather than being useful. In this sort of set-up one sees a perfect example of what oppression has done to blacks. They have been made to feel inferior for so long that for them it is comforting to drink tea, wine or beer with whites who seem to treat them as equals. This serves to boost up their own ego to the extent of making them feel slightly superior to those blacks who do not get similar treatment from whites. These are the sort of blacks who are a danger to community.” (Biko, 1978:25)*

Similarly to Tiyo Soga, Biko shows how systematic oppression of blacks has led to certain black people disassociating from black culture. They do not wish to continue with cultures and traditions which reinforce their place of inferiority and subjugation in South African society. Therefore, as a means of developing some sense of superiority they appropriate the mannerisms of white South Africans. Biko feels that these individuals who shun the cultural/racial identities are dangers to their black compatriots. He believes that their adoption of white cultural/traditional practices further devalues and denigrates black culture and traditions.

*“The type of black man we have today has lost his manhood. Reduced to an obliging shell, he looks with awe at the white power structure and accepts what he regards as the `inevitable` position. Deep inside his anger mounts at the accumulating insult, but he vents it in the wrong direction-on his fellow man in the township, on the property of black people.”* (Biko, 1978:30)

Biko suggests that the black community has been robbed of its manhood. Thus it might be evident that he ignores the impact of gender on South African society. We will, however, return to this point in a later chapter. Black individuals have become ‘shells’ of what they used to be. What this means, is that these people can be perceived to be black purely based on their appearance, but they lack the substance and pride of their forefathers. Instead of taking ownership and responsibility for their people and each other, they revere white power and structure. This leads the black man to accept his position of inferiority in South African society as dictated to them by white South Africans. This, however, is not blindly accepted. Black South Africans do experience anger and disgust at the conditions of their lives; these negative emotions, however, arise within black communities. The manner in which this manifests is shown in the following quote:

*“Township life alone makes it a miracle for anyone to live up to adulthood. There we see a situation of absolute want in which black will kill black to be able to survive. This is the basis of the vandalism, murder, rape and plunder that goes on while the real sources of the evil-white society- are sun tanning on exclusive beaches or relaxing in their bourgeois homes.”* (Biko, 1978:82)

This also exemplifies the harrowing differences between black and white South Africans at that time: one group condemned to a life of destitute poverty and crime whilst the other basks in privilege. He also goes on to show how the lives of black people are governed by legislation. He suggests that the purpose of this legislation is to keep the black man in a constant state of fear and suspicion.

*“No average black man can ever at any moment be absolutely sure that he is not breaking a law.”* (Biko, 1978:82)

*“There are so many laws governing the lives and behaviour of black people that sometimes one feels that the police only need to page at random through their statute book to be able to get a law under which to charge a victim.”* (Biko, 1978:83)

## **White South Africans**

Biko does not provide as extensive a definition for whiteness as he does for blackness. However, he does define white people in opposition to black people. For Biko, white people are individuals in society who seek to maintain the existing stratification of power in South African society.

*“While as a matter of principle we would reject separation in a normal society, we have to take cognisance of the fact that ours is far from a normal society. It is difficult not to look at white society as a group of people bent on perpetuating the status quo.”*  
(Biko, 1978:13)

On the other hand, he feels that there are existing differences in the black community, for instance Coloureds and Indians. These differences also extend to the political consciousness of individuals, although,, he suggests, these differences are not as pervasive in the white community. He views them as a homogenous community.

*“The South African white community is a homogenous community. It is a community of people who sit and enjoy a privileged position that they do not deserve, are aware of this, and therefore spend their time trying to justify why they are doing so. Where differences in political opinion exist, they are in the process of trying to justify their position of privilege and their usurpation of power.”* (Biko, 1978:20)

This community is distinguished by the privileges they enjoy in South African society. He feels that they are aware that individually white people have not done anything to deserve the privileges they experience, particularly in South African society. They are fixated on justifying their position in South African society. This extends to contending political opinions which contrast their justifications for their position of privilege in South African society.

*“They claim that they too feel the oppression just as acutely as the blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the black man’s struggle for a place under the sun.”*  
(Biko, 1978:21)

*“Being white, he possesses the natural passport to the exclusive pool of white privileges from which he does not hesitate to extract whatever suits him. Yet, since he identifies with the blacks, he moves around his white circles- white only beaches,*

*restaurants, and cinemas – with a lighter load, feeling like he is not like the rest.”*  
(Biko, 1978:71)

In addition to their political position in power in South African society, whiteness is more closely identified by the colour of their skin. Therefore the whiteness of the skin of an individual is the signal of membership to the group of white people in South African society. This automatically equips the white individual with rights and privileges in South African society. These privileges are undeservedly enjoyed by these white individuals. Biko is highly sceptical of white people who claim they can associate or empathise with the plight of the black man in South Africa.

*“It is not as if whites are allowed to enjoy privilege only when they declare their solidarity with the ruling party. They are born into privilege and are nourished by and nurtured in the system of ruthless exploitation of black energy.”* (Biko, 1978:71)

The above quote further exemplifies the rationale behind white individuals supporting an oppressive government. He also suggests that this privilege transcends the politicisation of race. That is to say those whites to an extent naturally experience privilege through the prevailing capitalist modes of administration.

*“The claim by whites of monopoly on comfort and security has always been so exclusive that blacks see whites as the major obstacle in their progress towards peace, prosperity and a sane society.”* (Biko, 1978:84)

*“One must not underestimate the deeply imbedded fear of the black man so prevalent in white society. Whites only know too well what exactly they have been doing to blacks and logically find reason for the black man to be angry.”* (Biko, 1978:85)

Biko attempts to disseminate the cognitive impact of the relationship between whites and blacks in South Africa. He suggest that the continual oppression of black people in tandem with divergence in the privileges these groups experience is breeding resentment of white people in black communities. It is fuelling increasing anger toward white people in general, rather than anger only toward the political figures that have produced this uneven state. In addition, he also suggests that the oppression of black people is rooted in white fears. He states that white people fear the social, political and economic potential of black people; therefore white people actively try to limit this power through the institutionalisation of racism.



## Chapter Six

### Discussion of Findings

The key South African intellectuals identified in this thesis are Ntsikana, Tiyo Soga, Pixley Seme, Anton Lembede and finally, Steve Biko. They were selected based on the evident progression of the inherent ideology in their intellectual work as well as the unique perspectives and interpretations they provided of South African society during their time. In this section the researcher will consider the first three research questions of the dissertation as outlined in chapter 1 before moving on to a more detailed comparison between Biko, Marx and Weber. This will be followed by considering how Steve Biko's 'theories' can be used analytically.

The first three questions asked which directed the preliminary research were:

- 1) How did black South African intellectuals understand South African society?
- 2) Can a form of social theory be developed from their intellectual work?
- 3) What are the key social constructs they identify in their theories?

As one can see from the questions and also considering the extensive work of all of the previously mentioned figures, it might not be possible to exhaustively answer these questions in one thesis. However, what would be possible is a systematic overview with reference to the research questions.

Many writers have written about intellectuals in different ways. Thus it is important to point out the features of intellectualism which are relevant to this discussion. Sadri (1992) highlights the idea that the role and function of intellectuals are rooted in their devotion to an ideology. Ndletyana (2008:1), with reference to Gramsci's definition of an intellectual, suggests that it is the intellectuals imperative to be a source of knowledge and leadership in society, largely in relation to the conception and expression of ideas. Suttner (2005:117) locates the position of the intellectual more closely within social structure. Also with reference to Gramsci's definition of the intellectual he says that an intellectual is a person who provides a consistent and logical explanation of the social world, from the vantage point of their social position or experience.

The structures or the *nature* of society are maintained through theories and ideologies which ‘[has] established its hegemony over the minds of men, who therefore do not merely bite their own tongues but submit to it’(Gouldner, 1970:5). Gouldner (1970) thus expresses an idea the researcher believes to be commonly held. The hegemonic theory individuals hold in and of society, structures thought and to an extent influences social behaviour. This is so deeply entrenched in society and daily interaction that it is often blindly accepted and construed as the way things are meant to be done. An example of how theory or postulations of social structures, thought and behaviour affect social behaviour would be the manner in which religion affects the lives of people who ascribe to it. Religion provides society with an explanation of how life came to be and the various forces which influences one’s life on a daily basis. More than that, religion provides individuals with a code of conduct: a way to live their lives. Whilst many individuals do not strictly adhere to the tenets of their respective religions, religion remains a remarkable point of reference in terms of structuring thought and patterning behaviour.

Therefore, in order to affect the way in which society operates it is vitally important to inspect the ideologies and theories which influence thought and behaviours. This conception of the impact on theory or generalisations of social life manifests in the work of the South African intellectuals considered here. The central point of their work was to produce an ideology which would restore the dignity and pride of black South Africans. Soga, Seme, Lembede and Biko attributed the social circumstances of black South Africans to the broad acceptance of what white politicians and religious leaders dictated. Soga, on the one hand, challenged racial prejudice through his journalism; however, he did not set out to create a set ideological system which could serve as a point of reference for black South Africans. This is where Seme, Lembede and Biko differ from Soga. They developed African nationalism and Black Consciousness. It is important to state that with the exception of Seme, all of them strongly questioned the structures which, with reference to Gouldner’s quote, questioned the very social structures which have established hegemony over the minds of the individuals of their time. Seme did not question these structures as strongly as the other intellectuals did. He believed that black South Africans could become part of these systems and succeed within them.

Soga, Lembede – and particularly Steve Biko – were strongly concerned with the apparent submission of native South Africans to the colonially established governments. Biko,

Lembede and Soga (much later in his life) questioned the base assumptions which underpinned this apparent submission on the part of native South Africans. However, one must acknowledge that this ‘submission’ does not equate acceptance of oppression or the harrowing conditions of their material realities. One could say that this ‘submission’ is a greater case of reconciliation of their material realities and the various reasons and generalisations of their respective societies which were given to make sense of their lived realities.

If one considers Ntsikana, he had a strong sense of devotion to his culture as well as Christianity. Christianity, however, was not very accessible to Xhosa speakers in the Eastern Cape. This is mostly due to the language through which it was communicated. This was further complicated by the inherent contradictions between Christianity and native cultures. Another point one should consider is that the manner in which Christianity was practised was different to how the Xhosa people practised aspects of their culture. This religion increasingly started to appeal to Xhosa people, which then led to growing tension between people and within individuals themselves. Thus Ntsikana’s reinterpretation of Christianity proved to be quite significant, particularly in how he made it relatable to the everyday experiences of Xhosa people. Therefore in relation to Ndletyana’s developed definition of the intellectual; Ntsikana was considered to be a source of this hybridised knowledge, which became central to his assuming the role of a religious and educational leader. Therefore we now have some idea of how Ntsikana made sense of his social reality. One would not say that a form of social theory could be derived from his work. One could probably develop a discussion on the impact of hegemonic belief systems on native cultures. In addition, there is no clear analytical construct evident in Ntsikana’s work. If one were to consider a social construct, a probable answer would be quite similar to a discussion on the social impact of a hegemonic belief system, or rather, the structural impact of Christianity on native South African communities.

One other key difference between Ntsikana and the other figures is that there were fewer formal institutions during his time. The other figures had access to formal education. This is exemplified by their attendance at colleges and university. This also facilitated their participation in formal institutions where the very ideas which govern political power and knowledge are disseminated. This also placed them in positions where they could communicate their ideas widely in society. This point can be illustrated if one considers the career of Tiyo Soga. He was able to start a newspaper; in addition he was also able to

participate in political forums. These capacities enabled him to spread and develop his ideas extensively.

Similarly to Ntsikana, Tiyo Soga was also a prominent religious and educational leader in South Africa. His work and stature, however, became more explicitly political as he became more integrated in this changing South African context. Tiyo Soga also had a strong commitment to Christianity, but his strongest ideological commitment was to the valuation and transmission of knowledge in South African society. This is exemplified by his translation of English literature into Xhosa. He also held a strong commitment to a proud image of black South Africans. This was brought on by his awareness of how the colonial administration was culturally dehumanising native South Africans. His role and function as an intellectual is given further credence by his exploits as a journalist and historian. At this point one has to consider Tiyo Soga as a social theorist. To do so one has to ask the following question: Does he provide an explanation of/for society? This appears to be a yes/no answer. Tiyo Soga did not explicitly explain the prevailing social structures and challenges in South African society. In this regard a form of social theory would not be present in his work. However, he was one of the first native South Africans to blatantly/formally acknowledge, disseminate and challenge the harrowing impact of racial prejudice in South African society.

*“But if you wish to gain credit yourselves— if you do not wish to feel the taunt of men, which you may sometimes be made to feel – take your place in the world as coloured, not as white men, as kafirs, not as Englishmen.”* (Soga, 1870)

In addition as evidenced by the above quotation, Tiyo Soga was one of the earliest South African intellectuals to grapple with the notion of hybridised racial/cultural identity in South Africa. He also proposed an understanding of black South Africans which was meant to restore the pride of this racial group. Thus his emphasis on the definition and understanding of race in South Africa was integral to the political understanding and expression of blackness. This also underpinned the ideological foundations of Africanism and BC. Therefore, from a socially scientific perspective, one could derive a possible theory or discussion on racial identity in South Africa. This would then also become a unique social/analytical construct in his writing. This by extension, as used by Kuper (1949) and Crankshaw (2007), can be used to accentuate a class/social analysis of South African society. Thus, the consideration of racial identity particularly with reference to the impact of racial prejudice would be a social construct one could derive from Tiyo Soga’s work.

Pixley Seme and Anton Lembede are highly regarded for the development of Africanism. This to a large degree was inspired by Tiyo Soga's assertion that black South Africans should be proud of themselves and their heritage. Both of these individuals had a strong commitment to their own interpretations of Africanism. Lembede's interpretation and expression of Africanism was much more radical than Seme's, though the purpose of their development of these ideologies was the same. Seme and many of his peers acknowledged the disastrous impact colonialism had on the psychology of native South Africans. It increasingly became evident that lives, behaviours and attitudes of native South Africans were starting to correspond to the image being constructed by the colonists and colonial administration. Therefore they sought to produce an ideology through which they could restore the dignity and pride of native South Africans. The overarching purpose of this philosophy was to restore native political power.

Once again we are tasked with the identification of a form of social theory, in addition to identifying the possible social constructs. Evidently, a clear social theory is not explicitly evident in the work of Seme and Lembede. They do provide explanations for why native South Africans are appearing to be disenfranchised with the system and why they appear to be materially and psychologically destitute., but this does not contain generalisations based on observations, which one could construct as theory. Their work is orientated toward the development and transmission of a political ideology, the purpose of which is to usurp political power in South African society. Like Soga, the key social or analytical construct in their intellectual work was racial identity. However, if one considers how they write about racial identity one could probably argue that the key social construct of their writing is racialised national identity.

In the following section the researcher returns to the primary focus of this thesis, considering the research questions in relation to the analysis of Steve Biko's writings and delving into how he wrote about society, with the aim of seeing whether his work might constitute a form of social theory. The purpose of this is to look at the social/analytical constructs he identified. This will be discussed with reference to Marxism and Weberianism, as a means of determining how it could be used analytically.

### **Structure of Theory**

Theory is a systematically organised body of knowledge. Therefore it is important to discuss the necessary structures of intentionally formulated theories.

Intentionally formulated social theories often ascribe to two key elements (Gouldner, 1970:29). The first of these elements are clearly stated assumptions, which are referred to as “postulations” (Gouldner, 1970:29). The second components of intentionally formulated social theories are background assumptions; these being expostulated assumptions (Gouldner, 1970:29). These are differentiated on the basis of how explicitly they are stated. Postulated assumptions are often the focal point of a theory; the background assumptions however are embedded or encapsulated in the postulated assumption. Essentially, the background assumptions are the fibres from which the postulation materialises. To a large extent, these background assumptions define a theory and the background assumptions often determine to which extent a theory resonates with its audience (Gouldner, 1970:29).

The reception of a theory is premised on the formal logic of the theory and the evidence which supports it (Gouldner, 1970:30). Background assumptions are often the cornerstone of any theory; they are often “beliefs about the world which are so general, in principle, they may be applied to any subject matter, without restriction” (Gouldner, 1970:30). They are thought of as world hypotheses, primitive presuppositions of the world “and everything in it, they serve to provide the most general of orientations which enable unfamiliar experiences to be made meaningful.

In brief, to understand a theory or discipline, we must grapple with the domain/background assumptions which influences and are captured by their intellectual work.

Background assumptions provide the inherited intellectual capacity with which a theorist is endowed long before he becomes a theorist (Gouldner, 1970:34). This was the overarching purpose of Steve Biko’s writings. He strongly questioned the domain assumptions which underpinned the political, social, cultural and economic oppression of certain social groups in South Africa. All these European theories attempted to account for a ‘one size fits all’ account of society: class divisions rooted in the capitalistic nature of modern society. An anthology of what dictates power and privilege in society, largely defined by economic relations and relations to property, comprises the voices of African intellectuals in so far as their contribution to social theory is not as prominent as the voices of the sociological canon, namely Marx, Weber, Durkheim and more recently Bourdieu.

A form of social theory is evident in Biko's work. He appears to be fascinated by one key idea throughout his text. He is preoccupied by the idea of how a minority settler community has subordinated a majority native community. More than this, he is preoccupied by the idea of how this majority native community has allowed itself to be politically, socially, culturally and economically subordinated. As discussed in the previous chapter, he argues that it is the consciousness of individuals which underpins the social formation of South Africa at the time. This also underlies his formation of SASO. He finds it highly problematic that individuals and groups do not have the political power to define their own social realities. This leads him to identifying the psycho-social complexes of white South Africans and black South Africans. He defines this prevailing superior-inferior relationship between white and black South Africans as a symbiotic relationship. These polarised psychological dispositions are responsible for the prevalence of social and political inequality in South African society. He does this quite lucidly, firstly considering the political landscape of student politics, then taking a critically considering the distinguishable racial groups in South Africa. Importantly, he formulates a detailed discussion looking at the existing social reality of South Africa, based on his experience as well as studies he conducted. Through this, he attempts to develop an explanation for these circumstances by considering the cultural, economic and political relationships between white and black South Africans. He then proposes a means by which these social challenges can be surpassed, namely, the widespread adoption of Black Consciousness.

If one considers this to be a viable form of social theory, then it may be useful to embark on a critical comparison between Marx, Weber and Biko. This comparison will be made with consideration of the earlier discussion the researcher had based on theory. Thus we will first consider the structure of theory, looking at what it explains and the assumptions which underlie it. This will then be followed by considering what it may offer instrumentally and analytically.

Marxism is based on two broad domain assumptions, the first being Marx's theory of historical materialism. This entails the idea that social change is produced through conflicting elements; in Marx's case this would be a state of conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The second explicit domain assumption of Marxism is that social classes are structured and based on production in society. What are the domain assumptions one could identify in Biko's work? The first would be the idea of consciousness. At first glance, it

would be relatively safe to assume that Biko suggests that social classes are based on racial lines and racial identity in South Africa.

*“They tell us that the situation is a class struggle rather than a racial one. Let them go to Van Tonder in the Free State and tell him this.”* (Biko, 1978:90)

However, he constantly iterates the idea that racial identity is a mind set, rather than an issue of pigmentation. These are exemplified by the superiority complex of white South Africans and the alleged inferiority complex of black South Africans. Therefore class structure– or rather social groups – are structured by their psychological complex. Similarly to Marx and Weber, Biko asserts the instrumental impact of production relations in society. This appears to be a logical assertion, in modern society, formal employment or the ownership of commercial property is the only means through which individuals can sustain a livelihood. This would have a visible impact on the material reality of individuals. However, Marx closely considers the means of production in Europe, and Weber on the means of administration. Marx looks closely at the development of capitalism through European history. In his theory of stratification, when considering social/economic class, Weber considers the growth of capitalism and how the administration of capitalism or the markets in society impact the class structure of European society.

Biko considers how these systems of administration and production have been systematically imposed on South African society. Moreover, he strongly considers the impact this has on the consciousness of black people. The manner in which these systems were imposed resulted in native South Africans mostly becoming wage labourers in this system. He also suggests that black South Africans are actually reinforcing the stronghold white South Africans have on the market. This allows one to consider the differences between domain assumptions which appear to be very similar. These assumptions are similar in terms of the material outcomes which exemplify prevalence of social classes as determined by market relations. The difference would be the causal explanation of how these classes arose or became apparent. As for Biko, the point of departure was the systematic cultural degradation of black people.

An important factor in sociological theory is the relationship between the individual and society. This entails closely considering the impact social structures have on the individual. In addition, it is also important to consider how individuals influence social structures.

Therefore one must consider how the theorists wrote about this relationship between the individual and social structures. Marx and Weber strongly emphasised social structure on individual lives. They also wrote about society with greater reference to an acknowledgment of social structures such as religious systems or market systems. Thus there is a greater consideration of social institutions. The manner in which they relate this to individuals is quite deterministic. This could then be considered to be one of the key domain assumptions of their theories. This is somewhat different from Weber's stance on the relationship between individual and society. Weber's domain assumptions are strongly rooted within his epistemological approach. This requires that one must look at the individual and build conjectures of society through studying the meanings individuals attach to social action. In his theory on stratification he does acknowledge the presence of social classes and broader social structures which shape these classes or give them particular characteristics. However, Biko's emphasis on consciousness leaves more room for human agency.

What would some of the background assumptions be? The assertion of different social groups inherently suggest social groups in society are not homogenous. Social classes are evident based on inequalities between groups, or the presence of distinguishable differences at least.

Biko provides an explanation of a racially divided/structured society. This society is rigidly stratified, with white (European) South Africans who hold political, economic and social power in South Africa. If one reads carefully, Biko is strongly preoccupied with the idea of how a small white settler community managed to subordinate a large native community. By carefully reflecting on the social, political, social and cultural context of colonised South Africa and apartheid South Africa he arrives at a possible conclusion. He suggests that this material and social oppression of black South Africans is a product of the psychological oppression/subordination of black South Africans by white South Africans.

This brings us closer to the how of this theory. Biko identifies three key factors which highlight this divided relationship. He closely looks at the political, cultural and economic relationship between these two groups.

Each of these facets of his analysis had a particular impact on South African society. It is here where Biko treads the line between Micro theory and Macro theory. Similar to Marxism he provides an explanation for the prevailing social hierarchy in society. For Marx, society was defined by conflict between the ruling class and the working class. This conflict arose from

the different positions they occupied within the system of production in society. The ruling class were the owners of the means of production. The only means the working class could develop a livelihood was through selling their labour power. This relationship often made the working class exploitable due to the surplus of labour as well as their dependency on the economic system.

Biko also stresses the impact on capitalist relations in South African society. He acknowledges that South Africa, like many colonised nations, provided the colonists with a surplus of unskilled to semi-skilled labourers. This, in addition to their dependence on the market for consumer goods, made the labour force exploitable. They approach the resolution of this relationship quite differently. Marx suggested that the working class should unite and take hold of the means of production and overthrow the entire system and systematically work towards a socialist society. Biko, on the other hand, suggests that black South Africans, should actually operate outside the system and take control of it there. The purpose of operating outside the system would be to build a strong, independent social group. This would enable oppressed South Africans to negotiate with the politically dominant group in society. The ultimate purpose of this is to take over political control of the entire social system. He encourages black South Africans to pursue a good education and to start their own enterprises. Crucially he encourages black South Africans to support black enterprise economically. This would empower black South Africans economically and therefore they will not be as dependent on white-owned / produced consumer goods or employment opportunities provided by white employers. Simultaneously, continuous reinvestment in black-owned enterprises and business would also weaken or in the least, it would lessen the economic power white South Africans have over black South Africans. Therefore, similarly to Weber he views class position more fluid than Marx did. He acknowledges that there are avenues through which black South Africans could improve their economic class position.

Differently to Marx, Biko did not think that the underlying factor which differentiates social groups is their relationship to the means of production in society. The central point which divided society was the racial, political and cultural psychological complexes of individuals it produced. He states that black South Africans held an inferiority complex, which was juxtaposed by the superiority complex of white South Africans. Therefore this could be partially related to Weber's insistence that one must study the meanings individuals attach to their actions, and from there one could extrapolate this to society as a whole. Biko, however, looks at the prevailing social structures and institutions as the factors which have produced

these individual and group dispositions. This largely is a product of their evaluation of their material realities. These individuals see white South Africans in positions of power and living lives of privilege. Obviously, at the onset of colonisation, the material realities of these groups would have been remarkably different. This, in addition to the systematic degradation of native culture, through the discourse of white missionaries and settlers, it was only a matter of time before native individuals internalise and accept this imposed inferiority. Therefore Biko strongly ascertains that the only reprieve for black South Africans is to challenge this position of material and psychological inferiority. Therefore, for Biko, the most important resolution is through the psychological empowerment of black South Africans. Out of this he developed the idea of black consciousness; many of these tenets are inspired by African nationalism. He, however, strongly locates this within both the individual and the group. Therefore, once again similarly to Weber, he acknowledges the importance of the individual within social action.

The manner in which Biko wrote about religion also differs from how Marx and Weber wrote about it. Weber was strongly concerned about the secularisation of society. He argued that the growing reliance on rational and scientific thought was instrumental to the growth of capitalism and the increasing modernisation of society. Biko's stance on religion, however, more closely relates to Marx's stance on religion. Marx argued that religion legitimised the exploitation of the lower classes. Religion, Christianity more particularly, offered the proletariat the reward of a sparkling and peaceful afterlife for their struggles in present society. In addition, religion romanticised the idea of struggling in the present with this promise of a better life now and damnation for those who are constructed as sinners. Biko believed that religion should be used to enrich the lives of people with a greater focus on their lived, material realities. Throughout the colonial project and apartheid, Christianity was often used a means to legitimise and justify the oppression and exploitation of native South Africans. They were often constructed as a cursed community, who should serve the harbingers of this new religion. This, in part, was also achieved through the systematic demonization of native cultures and traditions. Biko felt that religion had an irrevocable role to play in South Africa. He argued, however, that Christianity should be used to empower and uplift black South Africans rather than merely being used as an instrument of cultural oppression. Therefore, in contrast to Weber, Biko was writing about a modernising context which can be associated with the growth of Christianity, rather than increasing disenchantment with religion.

## **Biko a structural functionalist?**

In order to determine if Biko was a structural functionalist, it would be prudent to compare the salient features of Biko's writings to the key features of structural functionalism. It is apparent that Biko did not make an explicit reference to structural functionalism in his work; the features of functionalism, however, are apparent in his analysis of South African society, but not in his solution to South Africa's social problem.

Structural functionalists propose that society is a system comprising social structures, institutions and social roles. Biko postulated that South African society operated like system in which the social structures (culture, religion), institutions (government) and the social roles of individuals operated as a system. Accordingly, within the paradigms of functionalism, we have to be able to identify what the elements of the system are, and how they relate to other parts of the system (Strasser, 1977:56; Kingsbury and Scanzoni, 1993:195-198). This is clearly evident in Biko's writing. For example, he discusses how the economy is structured to perpetuate the wealth and privilege of white South Africans. Critically this is done to perpetuate the subordination of black South Africans. Merton (1948), postulates that it is important to determine if functions are 'latent' or 'manifest'. Manifest functions are the functions which are intended and recognised by participant/individuals in the system. Biko pointed this out in his discussion of the various laws that were passed by government which restricted the geographic and social movement of individuals in the system. Latent functions are not intended or recognised by individuals in the system

A key notion within functionalism is that there are conditions which define the ends or the objectives of the system (Merton, 1948; Strasser, 1977). Within South African society this was glaringly obvious. The system was constructed, purposively to subordinate and oppress black South Africans as a means to maintain and perpetuate the privilege and wealth of white South Africans. A functionalist would also set out to determine which elements are necessary for society to be in a "certain goal state". Biko proposed that the ideological subordination of black people was necessary for their persistent oppression.

Therefore, by relating Biko's intellectual work to the salient features of structural functionalism, it is permissible to suggest that Biko can be considered to be a structural functionalist. This view nevertheless is contradicted by his advocacy of radical social change.

## **Critique of Biko**

Academically it would be problematic to accept any idea without critical reflection. Thus it is important to evaluate critically Biko's contribution to understandings of South African society. Biko may have been mistaken in his definitions of black and white South Africans.

Biko is famed for his inclusive definition of blackness. He suggests that blackness is not about the pigmentation of one's skin. Being black is more a matter of self-identification of the individual, closely linked to the individual's commitment to the political restoration of equality in South African society. He constructs black individuals who do not actively oppose oppression as being "shells of men". The obvious purpose of the emphasis of political commitment in terms of racial identity was to urge black (black, Coloured, Indian) South Africans to stronger, definitive political action. This could, however, have devalued the racial identities of black individuals who are not actively committed to the political struggle. This could have had the same impact as the racial discourse of the colonial government and subsequently the apartheid government. Thus individuals who felt that they do not match Biko's criteria of blackness could have experienced increasing disenfranchisement with society. His definition proved to be a powerful uniting tool among a divided community. This critique can be extended to his suggestion that the white community of South Africa appears to be homogenous. He was right to an extent in that they inhabited the same habitus in the Bourdieurian sense. He goes on to make distinctions within the white community himself. This was illustrated by his distinction between liberal and conservative white individuals in South Africa.

Another critique of black consciousness is the apparent internal contradiction within the ideology (Sizwe, 1979:121-5). This is evident by the contradiction in its slogan 'One nation' and the two-nation thesis it proposes. The two-nation thesis of the BCM is used to illustrate the racialised reality of South Africa during apartheid. It is instrumental in terms of informing a nation on the true nature of its oppression. It literally calls on black people to wake up to this reality. The slogan of 'One nation' reflects the intended ideal for South Africa: a nation where racial identity is not a determinant of privilege. Inherently BC homogenises black people as much as it proposes heterogeneity through its edict of self-identification. It also does not account for class differences within social groups. Therefore the plight of the poor black man is the same as the plight of the rich black man. This would be one shortcoming of a theory informed by Biko's work. How would it address or inform a society in which power and privilege are co-related with economic class? This may be explained if one removes the notion of racial identity from his theory and then focuses on the relationship between oppressed and oppressors. The problematic aspect of this, however, would be if these explicit class relationships do exist, but the oppression of a lower class is not evident or explicit.

Another plausible critique of Biko is that he reified those very institutions he was critical of. He acknowledges the remarkable power of Christianity among black South Africans. Similarly to Ntsikana and Soga, he states that Christianity should be reinterpreted to reflect the experiences of black South Africans. One could argue that this undermines his views on the cultural subordination of black South Africans. Christianity was central to ‘barbaric’ construction/discourse of native South Africans. It was highly instrumental in terms of devaluing the prevailing belief systems of black Africans. Therefore, if one is to restore the pride and dignity of black South Africans, would it not make sense to restore their pride in their unique traditional belief systems? He does discuss the hybridised traditional, cultural and religious practices of native South Africans. This is a topic touched on by Soga and Ntsikana as well. The idea is that Christianity must be remoulded to be more accessible to native South Africans. This may be a case of growing conversion to Christianity amongst native black South Africans at the time. Thus it would make sense to create a discourse of pride and dignity through the belief systems these individuals ascribe to. It may also be an acknowledgment that the world has changed in irrevocable ways. Thus rather than overthrowing or abolishing systematically enforced social institutions, it might be best to use these institutions to ones advantage.

Another popular critique of Steve Biko and black consciousness is that it does not consider or account for the impact of gender in South African society. As Gqola (2013:13) points out, the seminal text which informs Black Consciousness emerged from a context in which women did not matter. This is reflected in the language which is used to construct the ideology. The consistent emphasis of ‘the black man’ or manhood also has considerable implications on ideas of gender. This implicitly excludes women from this discourse (Pheko, 2013:3). As such, when Biko urges black men to re-examine themselves and their place in the world, it can be suggested that he does not urge women to do the same. Implicitly it sends the message that black women should not examine the prevalence of poverty and oppression in their lives. Feminists’ movements in South Africa have, however, incorporated the tenets of black consciousness into their thinking (Maart, 2013; Pheko 2013). The emphasis on independent thinking and self-examination has been powerfully incorporated into what is referred to as women’s consciousness. This alludes to a shortcoming in Biko’s theory in that it does not explicitly address relations of power with accord to gender. These power relations often occur independently of racial identity. As such, its focus on the oppression of black man is limited as it does not explicitly deal with the oppression of black women.

## **Relevance and Application**

All sociological theories have been questioned, especially where there is a gap between “newly emerging sentiments of younger theorists/practitioners and the older language of/or theories” (Gouldner, 1970:7). This is highly evident with various stances on Marxism in South Africa. Market relations in modern society have increasingly become more complex. There are increasing levels of co-operation between markets and states. Also the concept of class did not apply to fit in the way Marx suggests. Therefore societies in terms of their economic structure are not purely capitalistic. Conflict between classes arguably is not as evident as it used to be during the French or Industrial revolution. Therefore, pure application of Marxist theory in terms of understanding South African society might be somewhat problematic. Consequently this is symptomatic of the diverging gap between pre-existing social theories and ever-changing social contexts. This is largely due to the fact that older or more dominant theories were developed in/from older realities (Gouldner, 1970:8).

Historically, sociology at times looked to the past to find or derive models for the future (Gouldner, 1970:21). Methodologically this appeared to be a feasible manner by which one could develop an understanding of society. As such, it would be reasonable to say that the history provided an already constructed case study through which patterns which define society could be studied. The problematic aspect of this approach, however, is the ever-changing nature of society. This has stark implications for the very patterns which we wish to study and understand. Another point to consider would be the impact of technological change, and how virtual realities relate to social realities of individuals.

Biko wrote about a context where racial prejudice and discrimination were deeply entrenched in South African society. This current social context of South Africa is remarkably different to the one Steve Biko endured. Therefore it might be possible to suggest that his theory might not be relevant in terms of understanding post-apartheid South Africa although there are many similarities between these particular contexts. South Africa is experiencing widening levels of social and economic inequalities. A large number of South African citizens are experiencing abject poverty, stark unemployment and harrowing levels of access to resources. These challenging conditions are exemplified in increasing civil action and protest marches. This is one of the benefits of modern South Africa: citizens have greater freedom to speak out and to challenge the political system and administration in a myriad of

ways. Their social realities, however, still remain unchanged. This is where Biko's social theory of Black Consciousness or even just the idea of consciousness could be instrumentally useful. Essentially this theory dictates that people should be given the power or the space/forums to empower themselves. Psychologically, they should be empowered with the belief that they can define their own social realities according to their own standards. This should be done through the various social structures which inform or dictate ideologies and beliefs. Therefore one of the primary points of departure would be the messages people receive through the religions (if they ascribe to any religion). The function and purpose of religion should be to give people a sense of pride and dignity, with the aim of opening their minds to the (limited) opportunities provided for them. In addition to religion we should also alter the discourse that we use for socially, economic and politically marginalised groups in society. Steve Biko would suggest that no social group or collective should be constructed as being inferior to any other group in society. It is this very psychological disposition of inferiority or superiority which enables one group to subordinate another in society.

The more practical measures he considers are economic relationships in society. Once again, he focuses on oppressed or marginalised individuals in society. He suggests that people within these groups should establish themselves economically. This would be through encouraging enterprises within these groups. Individuals within these groups should also attempt to focus their own economic expenditure within their social groups. This would ensure the circulation of money within these marginalised or oppressed social groups. This can then be used to grow the enterprises or as a means to secure or pursue improved education, but this was also within a broader political struggle.

Another point of recourse he offers is to actively, consistently and purposefully challenge legislation which is functional to the social, economic and political oppression or marginalisation of groups in society. An example he uses for this would be how functional the Natives Land Act of 1913 was in the subordination of black South Africans. The particular feature of this act he considered was the implications it had for people living in Bantustans, where the rights they held over the land extended only to six feet below the surface of the land. A consequence of this was that people who lived in Bantustans had no legal claim to any commercially viable minerals which might be located in their lands. Thus they could not exploit their own property for their own economic benefit. This is just one example of the many implications policy might have on the lived realities of South Africans.

Therefore he encourages people to oppose political practices which impede the opportunities they might have to build and sustain livelihoods.

The above discussion exemplifies the interesting manner in which he writes about the dialogic relationship between the individual in society. He shows the remarkable impact social structures have on the lives of individuals. The particular structures he refers to religious systems (Christianity), politics and the economy. Many of the policies are devised by individuals or collective groups to subtly and stringently produce a certain impact. These are often informed by some commitment to a particular ideology by politicians. As suggested earlier however, the individuals only have the recourse to challenge the system in so far as the system allows. Thus the individuals who constitute the system should be changed or individuals should disregard the system and develop their own structures and systems which would then provide a political alternative to individuals in society.

## **Conclusion**

In this minor dissertation I have attempted to critically evaluate some aspects of social theory, and to show that the construction of social theory based on the work of South African intellectuals is possible. This process required several steps to enable such an evaluation. First it was important to provide an overview of some of the historically dominant sociological theory. This served two distinguishable purposes. The first was to show what these theories explain and to unpack their key assumptions of society. The second purpose was to show the progressive and contextual nature of these theories. Therefore it was important to illustrate how social theory developed from Comte to Marx to Weber as a means of outlining the intellectual heritage and traditions underpinning sociology. This facilitated the movement toward how sociology has developed academically in South Africa. This was done in a similar fashion. It was shown that sociology as an Academic discipline in South Africa was and is highly reliant on Western social theories. This may be truer in an academic sense than a practical sense. Many times these theories inform the analysis and interpretation of research findings rather than determining the research itself. It is in these instances that one would often find the shortcomings of particular theories.

South African society is one historically defined by oppressive and exploitative racial relationships between social groups. This is a legacy still grappled with today. Many

dominant Western social theories would often not account for the impact of racial thought or racial discrimination in society. Stratification in society would often be predicated on relationships with the means of production or power in systems of administration. This is remarkably true in the sense that differences in terms of wealth are often highly evident and influential with regard to social structures and institutions in society. Society is, however, much more complex than the explicit economic relationships between individuals.

The intellectual voices of oppressed people are often suppressed or not well considered. Therefore it is important to produce social theory which is based on the experiences of oppressed people. This serves many purposes. The first would be an acknowledgment of the intellectual capacities and contributions of these individuals. The other more academic purpose would be to produce a theory which explains the context as well as the experiences of individuals more accurately.

In addition, for sociology and social theory to be socially and academically relevant, they have to evolve with the dynamism of their social context. This was exemplified by how sociology evolved in the USA, with reference to Parsons, Mead and the Chicago School who undertook the task of developing their own unique theories. As such it is important for Africa and South Africa to take this intellectual and academic step. This was one of the underlying purposes of this dissertation, to show that South Africa has a unique intellectual heritage – a heritage which can be used to develop sociological theories derived from the work of native South African intellectuals.

We see how intellectual thought developed progressively: from Ntsikana's reinterpretation of Christianity to Soga, the first formally educated South African and his ventures into activism. We also see how Pixley Seme and Anton Lembede developed the ideology of African nationalism as a means of politically empowering native South Africans. This facilitated the progressive movement to the key figure with which this dissertation is concerned, Steve Biko. It is evident that one may derive a structuralist theory from the work of Steve Biko. This evident in the manner in which he discusses the impact of social structures on the lives of individuals.

Steve Biko was fixated with the political liberation of oppressed South Africans. This passion urged him to critically reflect on the social structures and institutions which structure South

African society. This required that he re-examine discourses, racial identities, and cultural, political and economic institutions in our country. The underlying functions of his seminal texts were politically to inspire disenfranchised South Africans. These texts contain very interesting insights as we saw earlier, which significantly enrich our understanding of South African society today. It would be to our own detriment as academics and theorists of society not to use these insights to advance to enrich of our own research and social understanding.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Initial Coding List/Nodes**

##### **Charlton Esterhuizen Analysis Coding List**

###### **Structure/Shape of Society**

Groups of people/collectives: Whites/Blacks/Non-whites

Relations between groups/Stratification: Economic/ Social

**Characteristics of Groups:** Black/white Non white: Ideological/Practical behaviours

**Power in Society : Organisations/Political Voice?**

Appendix 1.B

DATA DISPLAY

White → PRIVILEGED POWER | dependency  
BLACK POOR | subjugated

① Intellectually / Culturally

② Religion

③ Politics

→ colonial administration → division of black communities → divided conquer

④ Economic

① Land ownership

② Black money → white Enterprises

↳ unskilled black workers → white capital owners

↳ dependant on white owned services and infrastructure

↳ which they help to build.

Black people

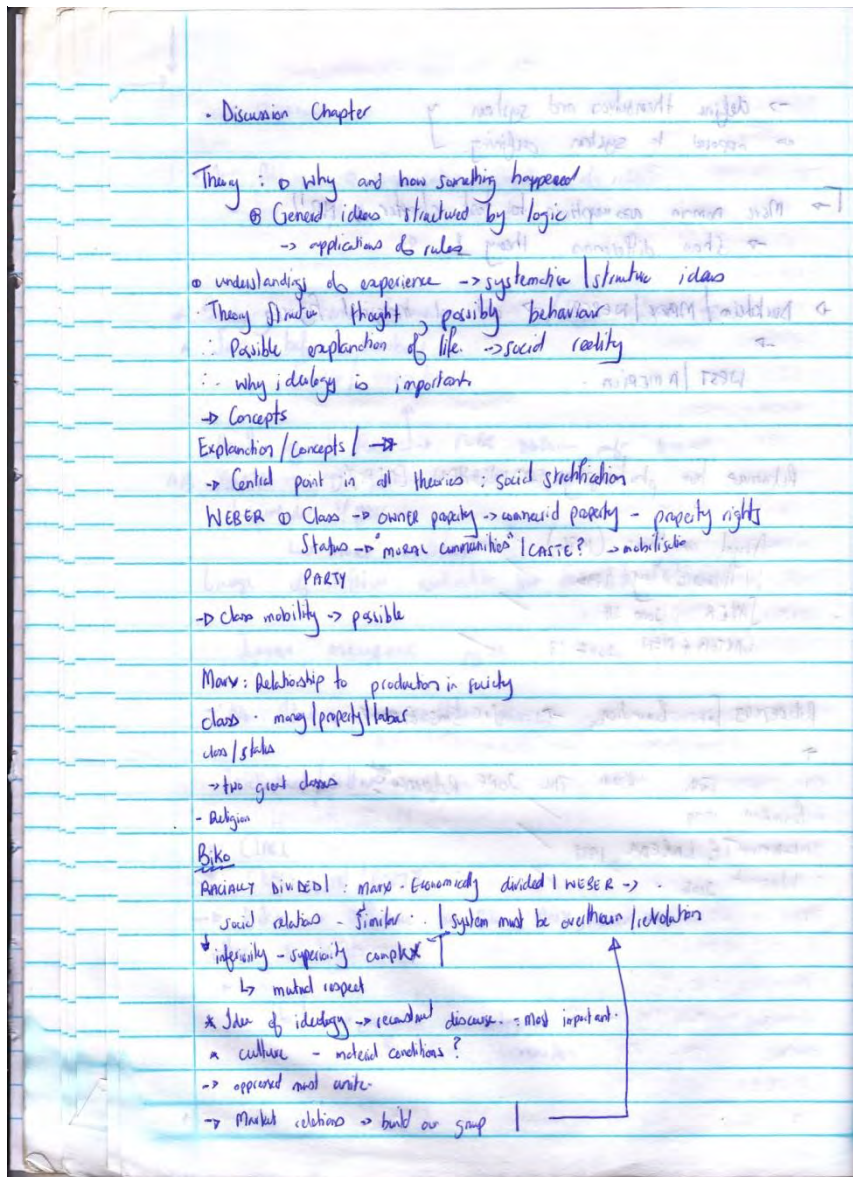


WHITE PEOPLE



→ Section Findings!!

## Appendix 2



## Appendix C

Cross Section of Society / Social Structure FRAMEWORK (13)

Blacks valued in organisations

ideal normal society → no separation

→ SA Society → separated → white society → "group of people & character" who wish to perpetuate this.

① Divided Society → blacks → value → intelligence

→ white + power

② Approaches to "correct this" → white liberals → integration

→ Biko → black consciousness

↳ Reasons → Biko - Racism

↳ white SA → megalomania

→ Key reason → Superiority Inferiority complex

↳ → quotes → privileged positions

idea - true intergroup → groups define themselves

white ↑

black ↓

→ better

## Appendix D

• importance of history.

- deaivity → attitude / action / rather than pigeonhol.
- holders of power and privilege.

Q WHAT ARE THE ASSUMPTIONS? → focus point / postulated

Q → BACKGROUND assumptions / unpostulated. - components ↑

MARX → Production | MATERIALISM

Biko → Consciousness | group who

WEBER → Individual / rather than society → material individuals attach to actions - analysis of individuals

→ social action

HEM

BROUCCOURA n.

→ Divisions → Inequalities → difference. RES.

Bikism → what does it explain

↳ How does it explain it?

• Presence of unequal society → political power and privilege → social difference institutionalized.

→ cultural, political, economic subordination

→ dependence.

→ integration only possible if complexities are removed?

→ individual defts.

→ consciousness - spirit

# Appendix

## Reduced Data

### Characteristics of Groups

#### Blacks

We reject their basis on integration as being based on standards predominantly set by white society. It is more of what the white man expects the black man to do than the other way round. We feel we do not have to prove ourselves to anybody (14).

SASO adopts the principle that blacks should work themselves into a powerful group so as to go forth and stake a rightful claim in open society rather than to exercise that power in some obscure part of the Kalahari(17).

This again is a tragic result of the old approach, where blacks were made to fit into a pattern largely and often wholly determined by white students(19)

There is a growing awareness of the role the black students may called upon to play in the emancipation of their community(19). The students realise that isolation of the black intelligentsia from the rest of the black society is a disadvantage to black people as a whole(19).

It will not sound anachronistic to anybody genuinely interested in real integration to learn blacks are asserting themselves in a society where they are being treated as perpetual under-16s(22).

As long as blacks are suffering from inferiority complex- a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision-they will be useless as co-architects of a normal society where man is nothing else but man for his own sake. Hence what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that may come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim.

The real concern of a group of the group is to keep the group going rather than being useful (25). In this sort of set-up one sees a perfect example of what oppression has done to blacks. They have been made to feel inferior for so long that for them it is comforting to drink tea, wine or beer with whites who seem to treat them as equals. This serves to boost up their own ego to the extent of making them feel slightly superior to those blacks who do not get similar treatment from whites. These are the sort of blacks who are a danger to community

Instead of directing themselves at their black brothers and looking at common problems from a common platform they choose to sing out their lamentations to an apparently sympathetic audience that has become proficient in saying the chorus of shame (25).

What makes the black man fail to tick? Is he convinced of his own accord of his inabilities? Does he lack in his genetic make-up that rare quality that makes man willing to die for the realisation of his aspirations? Or is he simply a defeated person?(30)

The type of black man we have today has lost his manhood. Reduced to an obliging shell, he looks with awe at the white power structure and accepts what he regards as the `inevitable` position. Deep inside his anger mounts at the accumulating insult, but he vents it in the wrong direction-on his fellow man in the township, on the property of black people (30).

No longer does he trust leadership, for the 1963 mass arrests were blameable on bungling by the leadership, nor is there any trust.

In the homebound bus or train he joins the chorus that roundly condemns the white man but is first to praise the government in the presence of the police or his employers. His heart yearns for the comfort of white society and makes him blame himself for not having been 'educated' enough to warrant such luxury. Celebrated achievements by whites in the field of science-which he only understands hazily – serve to make him rather convinced of the futility of resistance and throw away any hopes that change may ever come (31). All in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, and ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity.

Reference...African culture became barbarism, religious customs and practices referred to as superstition. The history of African Society was reduced to tribal battles and internecine wars. There was no conscious migration by the people from one place of abode to another. No it was always flight from one tyrant who wanted to defeat the tribe not for any other reason, but merely to wipe them out of the face of this earth (32).

No wonder the African child learns to hate his heritage in his days at school. So negative is the image presented to him that he tends to find solace only in close identification with the white society (32).

The ones if community for instance is at the heart of our culture. The easiness with which Africans communicate with each other is not forced by authority but is inherent in the make-up of African people (32). Thus, whereas the white family can stay in an area without knowing its neighbours, Africans develop a sense of belonging to the community within a short time of coming together. Many a hospital official has been confounded by the practice of Indians who bring gifts and presents to patients whose names they can hardly recall. Again this is a manifestation of the interrelationship between man and man in the black world as opposed to the highly impersonal world in which whitey lives.

It seems the people involved in imparting Christianity to the black people steadfastly refuse to get rid of the rotten foundation which many of the missionaries created when they came. To this date black people find no message for them in the Bible simply because our ministers are too busy with moral trivialities (33).

Deprived of spiritual content the black people read the bible with a gullibility that is shocking (34)

Black theology seeks to do away with spiritual poverty of the black man.

What in fact is happening is that black world is beginning to be completely fragmented and that people are beginning to talk sectional politics (39).

Moreover any visitor is made to see that these people are fighting for more concessions in their own area (13% of the land). They accept that the rest of South Africa is for whites. Also none of them sees himself as fighting the battle for all black people. Xhosa's want their Transkei, the Zulus their Zululand, etc. Coloured people harbour secret hopes of being classified as 'brown Afrikaners' and therefore meriting admittance into white laager while Indian people might be given a vote to swell the buffer zone between whites and Africans. Of course these promises will never be fulfilled – at least not in a hurry (39).

The Transkei, the CRC, Zululand and all these other Apartheid institutions are modern-type laagers behind which whites in this country are going to hide themselves for a long time(39).

Slowly the ground is being swept off from under our feet and soon we as blacks will believe completely that our political rights are in fact in our own areas (40). Thereafter we shall find that we have no leg to stand on in making demands for any rights in ‘mainland’ white South Africa which incidentally will comprise more than three quarters of the land of our fore-fathers.

One of the most fundamental aspects of our culture is the importance we attach to Man (45). Ours have always been a man-centred society. Westerners have in many occasions been surprised at the capacity we have for talking to each other- not for the sake of arriving at a particular conclusion but merely to enjoy the communication for its own sake. Intimacy is a term not exclusive to particular friends but applying to a whole group of people who find themselves together either through work or residential requirements (46).

In fact in traditional African culture, there is no such thing as two friends. Conversation groups were more or less naturally determined by age and division of labour (46). Thus one would find all boys whose job was to look after cattle periodically meeting at popular spots to engage in conversation about their cattle, girlfriends, parents, heroes ect. No one felt unnecessarily an intruder into someone else’s business (46). The curiosity manifested was welcome (46). No reason was needed as basis for visits. It was all part of our deep concern for each other (46).

These are things never done in Westerner’s culture. A visitor to someone’s house, with the exception of friends, is always met with the question ‘what can I do for you?’. This attitude to see people not as themselves but as agents for some particular function either to ones disadvantage or advantage is foreign to us (46).

Hence in all we do we always place the Man first and hence all our action is usually joint community orientated action rather than individualism which is the hallmark of the capitalist approach (46). We always refrain from using people as stepping stones (46).

Nothing dramatises the eagerness of the African to communicate with each other more than their love for song and rhythm. Music in African Culture features in all emotional states (46). Influence of Music (46-47).

Attitudes of Africans to property again show just how unindividualistic the African is. As everybody here knows, African society had the village community as it’s basis. Africans always believed in having many villages with a controllable number of people in each rather than the reverse. This obviously was a requirement to suit the needs of a community-based and man-centred society. Hence most things were jointly owned by the group, for instance there was no such thing as individual ownership. The land belonged to the people and was merely under the control of the local chief on behalf of the people (47). Communal use of resources.

Poverty was a foreign concept. This could only be really brought about the entire community by an adverse climate during a particular season(48). It was never considered repugnant to ask one’s neighbour for help if one was struggling(48).

Another Important aspect of African culture is our mental attitude to problems presented by life in general....Westerners- problem solving....trenchant analysis... African approach. ...situation-experiencing...he relies on Dr. Kaunda...(48).

We as a community are prepared to accept that nature will have its enigmas which are beyond our powers to solve. Religion page 49.

We have in our policy manifesto defined blacks as those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations. This definition illustrate to us a number of things:

Being black is not a matter of pigmentation – being black is a reflection of a mental attitude.

Merely describing yourself as black you have started on a road toward emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being.

From the above observations therefore, we can see that the term black is not necessarily all inclusive; i.e. The fact we all *not white* does not necessarily mean that we are all *black*. Non-whites do exist and will continue to exist for quite a long time. If ones aspiration is whiteness but his pigmentation makes attainment for this impossible, then that person is a non-white. Any man who calls a white man ‘Baas’, any man who serves in the police force or Security Branch is ipso facto a non white. Black people –real black people – are those who can manage to hold their heads in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man (52).

Briefly defined, therefore, Black Consciousness is in essence the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their operation – the blackness of their skin- and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles which bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the normal which is white (53)

It is the manifestation of a new realisation that by seeking to run away from them and to emulate the white, blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black(53). Further exposition on the meaning of black consciousness.

It will not be long before the blacks relate their poverty to their blackness in concrete terms. Because of the tradition forced onto the country, therefore, that blacks should wish to rid themselves of a system that locks up the wealth of the country in the hands of a few.(68).

These young men were questioning a number of things, among which was the ‘go-slow’ attitude adopted by the leadership, and the ease with which the leadership accepted coalitions with organisations other than those run by blacks. The Peoples Charter adopted in Kliptown in 1955 was evidence of this. In a sense one can say that these were the first real signs that the blacks in South Africa were beginning to realise the need to go it alone and to evolve a philosophy based on, and directed by blacks. In other words, Black Consciousness was slowly manifesting itself (73).

They are beginning to rid their minds of imprisoning notions which are the legacy of the control of their attitude by whites (74).

“...and are now learning that a lot of good can be derived from specific exclusion of whites from black institutions (74).

It goes without saying that the black people of South Africa, in order to make the necessary strides in the new direction they are thinking of, have to take a long look at how they can use their economic power to their advantage (77).

As the situation stands today, money from the black world tends to take a unidirectional flow to the white society. Blacks buy from white supermarkets, white greengrocers, white bottle stores, white chemists, and, to crown it all, those who can, bank at white owned banks (78).

Needless to say, they travel to work in government-owned trains or white-owned buses (78).

Township life alone makes it a miracle for anyone to live up to adulthood. There we see a situation of absolute want in which black will kill black to be able to survive. This is the basis of the vandalism, murder, rape and plunder that goes on while the real sources of the evil-white society – are sun-tanning on exclusive beaches or relaxing in their bourgeois homes (82).

No average black man can ever at any moment absolutely sure that he is not breaking a law (82).

There are so many laws governing the lives and behaviour of black people that sometimes one feels that the police only need to page at random through their statute book to be able to get a law under which to charge a victim (83).

It sometimes looks obvious here that the great plan is to keep the black people thoroughly intimidated and to perpetuate the 'super-race' image of the white man, if not intellectually... (83).

At worst blacks envy white society for the comfort it has usurped and at the centre of this envy is the wish – nay, the secret determination – in the innermost minds of most blacks who think like this, to kick whites off those comfortable garden chairs that one sees as he rides in a bus, out of town, and to claim them for themselves (84)

Any black man who props the system up actively has lost the right to being considered part of the black world: he sold his soul for 30 pieces of silver and finds that he is in fact not acceptable to the white society he sought to join. These are colourless white lackeys who live in a marginal world of unhappiness(86).

### **Whites**

While as a matter of principle we would reject separation in a normal society, we have to take cognisance of the fact that ours is far from a normal society. It is difficult not to look at white society as a group of people bent on perpetuating the status quo(13)

These people realise now that a lot of time and strength is wasted in maintaining artificial and token non-racialism at student level- artificial not in the sense that it is natural to segregate but rather because even those involved in it have certain prejudices that they cannot get rid of and are therefore basically dishonest to themselves, to their black counterparts and to the community of black people who are called upon to have faith in such people(19).

This again is a tragic result of the old approach, where blacks were made to fit into a pattern largely and often wholly determined by white students(19)

The South African white community is a homogenous community. It is a community of people who sit and enjoy a privileged position that they do not deserve, are aware of this, and therefore spend their

time trying to justify why they are doing so. Where differences in political opinion exist, they are in the process of trying to justify their position of privilege and their usurpation of power (20)

They claim that they too feel the oppression just as acutely as the blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the black man's struggle for a place under the sun(21)

The non-racial approach by liberals, claims a monopoly on intelligence and moral judgement and setting the pattern and pace for the realisation of the black mans aspirations.(23) They want to remain in the good books with both the black and white worlds(23).

Their protests are directed at and appeal to white conscience, everything they do is directed at finally convincing the white electorate that the black man is also a man and that at some future date he should be a given a place at the white man's table(23).

While this may be true, it only serves to illustrate the fact that no matter what a white man does, the colour of his skin-his passport to privilege-will always put him miles ahead of the black man. Thus in the ultimate analysis no white person can escape part of the oppressor camp(24).

The liberal must apply himself with absolute dedication to the idea of educating his white brothers that the history of the country may have to be rewritten at some stage and that we may live in a country where colour will not serve to put a man in a box.

Being white, he possesses the natural passport to the exclusive pool of white privileges from which he does not hesitate to extract whatever suits him. Yet, since he identifies with the blacks, he moves around his white circles- white only beaches, restaurants, and cinemas – with a lighter load, feeling like he is not like the rest(71).

Because of their inferiority complex, blacks have tended to listen seriously to what the liberals had to say(71). With their characteristic arrogance of assuming a 'monopoly on intelligence and moral judgement', these self-appointed trustees of black interests have gone on to set the pattern and pace for the realisation of the black man's aspirations(71).

It is not as if whites are allowed to enjoy privilege only when they declare their solidarity with the ruling party. They are born into privilege and are nourished by and nurtured in the system of ruthless exploitation of black energy (71).

Of course it is not surprising to us that whites are not very much aware of these developing forces since such consciousness is essentially an inward looking process(75).

White people working through their vanguard – The South African Police- have come to realise the truth of that golden maxim- if you cannot make a man respect you, then make him fear you(83).

The claim by whites of monopoly on comfort and security has always been so exclusive that blacks see whites as the major obstacle in their progress towards peace, prosperity and a sane society(84).

It may, perhaps, surprise some people that I should talk of whites in a collective sense when in fact it is a particular section i.e. the government – that carries out this unwarranted vendetta against blacks(84).

One must not underestimate the deeply imbedded fear of the black man so prevalent in white society. Whites only know too well what exactly they have been doing to blacks and logically find reason for the black man to be angry(85).

Their state of insecurity however does not outweigh their greed for power and wealth, hence they brace themselves to react against this rage rather than to dispel it with open mindedness(85).

This interaction between fear and reaction then sets on a vicious cycle that multiplies both fear and reaction(85).

### **Cross Section of society**

“...The NUSAS conference of 1967 the blacks were made to stay at a church building...so appalling were the conditions that is showed the blacks just how valued they are in the organisation(page12).

While as a matter of principle we would reject separation in a normal society, we have to take cognisance of the fact that ours is far from a normal society. It is difficult not to look at white society as a group of people bent on perpetuating the status quo (13).

One striking feature is the steep decline in the intensity of the ‘morality’ argument. Some time ago quite a lot of people used to violently oppose to ‘segregation’ even when practiced by blacks against whites (18). Of late people of this persuasion are beginning to see the logic of rejecting the so called bilateral approach. The idea that blacks and whites can participate as equal partners in an open organisation as being questioned even by the most ardent black supporters of non racialism(18).

These people realise now that a lot of time and strength is wasted in maintaining artificial and token non-racialism at student level – artificial not in the sense that it is natural to segregate but rather because even those involved in it have certain prejudices that they cannot get rid of and are therefore basically dishonest to themselves, to their black counterparts and to the community of black people who are called upon to have faith in such people(19).

This again is a tragic result of the old approach, where blacks were made to fit into a pattern largely and often wholly determined by white students(19)

There is a growing awareness of the role the black students may be called upon to play in the emancipation of their community(19). The students realise that isolation of the black intelligentsia from the rest of the black society is a disadvantage to black people as a whole(19).

Nationalist gave white South Africans some moral explanation...the blacks will be free when they are ready to run their own affairs in their own areas(20).

One liberal, leftists...people who argue that they are not responsible for white racism and the country’s inhumanity to the black man(21).

Very few black organisations were not under white direction. True to their image, the white liberals always knew what was good for the blacks and told them so. The wonder of it all is that black people have believed in them for so long.

People forming the integrated complex have been extracted from various segregated societies with their inbuilt complexes of superiority and inferiority and these continue to manifest themselves even in non racial set-up of the integrated complex(21). As a result the integration so achieved is a one-way course, with whites doing all the talking and blacks the listening.

I am not claiming to that segregation is necessarily the natural order ; however, given the facts of the situation where a group experiences privilege at the expense of others, then it becomes obvious that a hastily arranged integration cannot be the solution to the problem. It is rather like expecting the slave

to work together with the slave masters son to remove all the conditions to the formers enslavement.(22)

Once the various groups within a given community have asserted themselves to the point that mutual respect has to be shown then you have the ingredients for a true and meaningful integration. At the heart of true integration is the provision for each man, each group to rise and attain the envisioned self. Each group must be able to attain its style of existence without encroaching on or being thwarted by another. Out of this mutual respect for each other and complete freedom of self-determination there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the life-styles of the various groups. This is true integration(22).

Their protests are directed at and appeal to white conscience, everything they do is directed at finally convincing the white electorate that the black man is also a man and that at some future date he should be a given a place at the white mans table(23).

While this may be true, it only serves to illustrate the fact that no matter what a white man does, the colour of his skin-his passport to privilege-will always put him miles ahead of the black man. Thus in the ultimate analysis no white person can escape part of the oppressor camp(24).

I am against the superior-inferior white-black stratification that makes the white a perpetual teacher and the black a perpetual pupil (and a poor one at that). I am against the intellectual arrogance of white people that makes them believe that white leadership is a *sine quo non* in this country and that whites are the divinely appointed pace-setters in progress. I am against the fact that a settler minority should impose an entire system of values on an indigenous people(26).

One cannot escape the fact that the culture shared by a majority group in any given society must ultimately determine the broad direction taken by the joint culture of that society(26).

I have lived all my conscious life in the framework of institutionalised separate development(29)

My friendships, my love, my education, my thinking and every other facet of my life have been carved and shaped within the context of separate development(29)

The fact that apartheid has been tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation and deliberate oppression makes the problem more complex (30).Material want is bad enough, but coupled with spiritual poverty it kills(30). And this latter effect is probably the one that creates mountains of obstacles in the normal course of the emancipation of black people(30).

The logic behind white domination is to prepare the black man for the subservient role in this country. Not so long ago this used to be freely said in parliament even about the educational system of the black people. It is still even said today, although in a much more sophisticated language. To a large extent the evil-doers have succeeded in producing at the output end of their machine a kind of black man who is man only in form. This extent to which of dehumanisation has advanced (30).

This is the first truth, bitter as it may seem, that we have acknowledged before we can start on any programme designed to change the status quo. It becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realise that the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality. The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward looking process. This is the definition of black consciousness(31).

Ground for revolution is always fertile in the presence of absolute destitution(33-brief exposition on black relationship with God).

The anachronism of a well meaning God who allows people to suffer continually under an obviously immoral system is not lost to young blacks who continue to drop out of church by the hundreds. Too many people are involved in religion for blacks to ignore. Obviously the only path open for us now is to redefine the message in the bible and make it relevant to the struggling masses. The bible must not be seen to preach that all authority is divinely instituted (34). It must rather preach that it is a sin to allow oneself to be oppressed (34).

The Transkei, the CRC, Zululand and all these other Apartheid institutions are modern-type laagers behind which whites in this country are going to hide themselves for a long time(39).

Slowly the ground is being swept off from under our feet and soon we as blacks will believe completely that our political rights are in fact in our own areas(40). Thereafter we shall find that we have no leg to stand on in making demands for any rights in 'mainland' White South Africa which incidentally will comprise more than three quarters of the land of our fore-fathers.

The advent of the Western Culture has changed our outlook almost drastically. No more could we run our own affairs. We were required to fit in as people tolerated with great restraint in western type society. We were tolerated simply because our cheap labour is needed. Hence we are judged in terms of standards we are not responsible for(51). Whenever colonisation sets in with its dominant culture it devours the native culture and leaves behind a bastardised culture that can only thrive at the rate and pace allowed it by the dominant culture. This is what happened to the African Culture. It is called a sub-culture purely because the African people in the urban complexes are mimicking the white rather unashamedly (51).

The inter-relationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipator programme is of paramount importance. Black no longer seek to reform the system because doing so implies acceptance of the major points around which the system revolves(53). Blacks are out to completely transform the system and to make of it what they wish(53).

It is true that the history of weaker nations is shaped by bigger nations, but nowhere in the world today do we see whites exploiting whites on a scale even remotely similar to what is happening in South Africa(53).

With this background in mind we are forced, therefore to believe that is the case of haves against have-nots where whites have been deliberately made haves and blacks have not's. There is for instance no worker in the classical sense among whites in South Africa, for even the most downtrodden white worker still has a lot to lose if the system is changed. He is protected by several laws against competition at work from the majority(54). He has a vote and he uses it to return the Nationalist Government to power because he sees them as the only people who, through job reservation laws, are bent on looking after his interests against competition with the natives(53).

It should therefore be accepted that an analysis of our situation in terms of one's colour at once takes care of the greatest single determinant for political action, i.e. colour, while also validly describing blacks as the only real workers in South Africa. It immediately kills all suggestions that there could ever be effective rapport between the real workers, i.e. blacks, and the privileged white workers since we have shown that the latter are the greatest supporters of the system(54).

The overall analysis therefore, based on Hegelian theory of dialectic materialism, is as follows....if SA is to be a land where black and white live together in harmony without fear of group exploitation, it is only when these two opposites have interplayed and produced a viable synthesis of ideas and a modus Vivendi. We can never wage any struggle without offering a strong counterpoint to white races that permeate our society so effectively(55)....**GROUP DIFFERENCES END OF PAGE.**

Christianity was made the central point of a culture which brought with it new styles of clothing, new customs, new forms of etiquette, new medical approaches and perhaps new armaments. The people among whom Christianity was spread had cast away their indigenous clothing, their customs, their beliefs which were all described as being pagan and barbaric(60).

All too soon the people were divided into two camps – the converted (*amagqobhoka*) and the pagans(*amaqaba*). The difference in clothing between these two groups made what otherwise could have been merely a religious difference actually become at times internecine warfare(60).

### **Religious justifications for apartheid (60-61).**

Stern-faced ministers stand on pulpits every Sunday to heap loads of blame on black people in Townships for their thieving, house-breaking, stabbing, murdering, adultery, etc. No one ever attempts to relate all these vices to poverty, unemployment, over-crowding, lack of schooling and migratory labour(61).

Because the white missionary described black people as thieves, lazy, sex-hungry etc., and because he equated all that was valuable with whiteness, our churches through our ministers see all these vices I have mentioned above not as manifestations of cruelty and injustice which we are subjected to by the white man but inevitable proof that after all the white man was right when he described us as savages(61).

It must also be noted that the Church in South Africa as everywhere else has been spoilt by bureaucracy. No more is it only an expression of the sum total of peoples religious feelings, it has become highly institutionalised not as one unit but as several powerful units, differing perhaps not so much on scriptural interpretation as in institutional aims(61).

The white man's quest for power has led him to destroy with utter ruthlessness whatever has stood in his way. In an effort to divide the black world in terms of aspirations, the powers that be have evolved a philosophy that stratifies the black world and gives preferential treatment to certain groups. Further, they have built up several tribal cocoons, thereby hoping to increase inter-tribal ill-feeling and to divert the energies of the black people towards false prescribed 'freedoms'. Moreover it was hoped the black people could be effectively contained in these various cocoons of repression, euphemistically referred to as 'homelands'(66-67).

At some stage, however, the powers that be had to start defining the sphere of activity of these apartheid institutions.

Then again the progressively sterner legislation that has lately filled the South African statute books has had a great effect in convincing people of the evil inherent in the system of apartheid. No amount of propaganda on Radio Bantu or promises of freedom being granted to some desert homeland will ever convince the blacks that the government means well, so long as they experience manifestations of the lack of respect for the dignity of man and for his property as shown during the mass removals of Africans from urban areas. The unnecessary harassment of Africans by police, both in towns and

inside townships, and the ruthless application of that scourge of the people, the pass laws, are constant reminders that the white man is on top and that blacks are only tolerated-with the greatest restraints(67).

All opposition parties have to satisfy the basic demands of politics. They want power and at the same time they want to be *fair*.

Rather I am illustrating the fundamental fact that total identification with an oppressed group in a system that forces one group to enjoy privilege and to live on the sweat of another, is impossible(71).

White society collectively owes the blacks so huge a debt that no one member should automatically expect to escape from the blanket condemnation that needs must come from the black world(71).

What I have tried to show is that in South Africa political power has always rested with white society. Not only have whites been guilty of being offensive but, by some skilful manoeuvres, they have managed to control the responses of the blacks to provocation (72).

At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by the blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do that will really scare the powerful masters. Hence thinking along the lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man see himself as a being, entire in himself, and not as an extension of a broom or additional leverage to some machine(74).

National consciousness and its spread in South Africa has to work against a number of factors. First there are the traditional complexes, then the emptiness of the native's past and lastly the question of black-white dependency. The traditional inferior-superior black white complexes are deliberate creations of the colonialist. Through the work of missionaries and the style of education adopted, the blacks were made to feel that the white man was some kind of god whose word could not be doubted.

It goes without saying that the black people of South Africa, in order to make the necessary strides in the new direction they are thinking of, have to take a long look at how they can use their economic power to their advantage(77).

As the situation stands today, money from the black world tends to take a unidirectional flow to the white society. Blacks buy from white supermarkets, white greengrocers, white bottle stores, white chemists, and , to crown it all, those who can, bank at white owned banks(78).

Needless to say, they travel to work in government-owned trains or white-owned buses(78).

It is this fear that erodes the soul of black people in South Africa- a fear obviously built up deliberately by the system through a myriad of civil agents, be they post office attendants, police, CID officials, army men in uniform, security police or even the occasional trigger happy white farmer or store owner(83).

Of course the idea of territorial segregation in South Africa is an old one(89).

Geographically ,i.e. in terms of land distribution, Bantustans present a gigantic fraud that can find no moral support from any quarters. We find that 20% of the population are in control of 87% of the land while 80% 'control' only 13%(90)

To make this situation even more ridiculous, not one of the so-called ‘Bantustan nations’ have an intact piece of land. All of them are scattered like little bits of the most unyielding soil. In each area the more productive bits are white controlled islands on which white farms or other types of industry situated(91)

Economically the blacks have been given a raw deal(91). Generally speaking the areas where Bantustans are located are the least developed in the country, often very unsuitable either for agricultural work or pastoral work(91).

Not one of the Bantustans have access to sea(major port) and in all situations mineral rights are strictly reserved for the South African government. In other words, Bantustans only have rights extending to 6 feet below surface of the land(91).

Politically, the Bantustans are the greatest single fraud ever invented by white politicians(with the possible exception of the new United Party federal policy). The same people who are guilty of the subjugation and oppression of the black man means escape from that situation(92).

### **Ambiguous leadership (94)**

These tribal cocoons called ‘homelands’ are nothing but sophisticated concentration camps where black people are allowed to ‘peacefully’. Black people must constantly pressurise the Bantustan leaders to pull out of the political cul-de-sac that has been created for us by the system(95).

The leaders of the white community had to create some kind of barrier between black and whites so that the whites could enjoy privileges at the expense of blacks and still free to give a moral justification for the obvious exploitation that pricked even the hardest of white consciences(97).

However, tradition has it that whenever a group of people has tasted the lovely fruits of wealth, security and prestige it begins to find it more comfortable to believe in the obvious lie and to accept it as normal that it alone is entitled to privilege(97).

The racism we meet does not only exist on an individual basis; it is also institutionalised to make it look like the South African way of life(97).

To make the lie even longer, blacks have to be denied any chance of accidentally proving their equality with white men. For this reason there is job reservation, lack of training in skilled work, and a tight orbit around professional possibilities for blacks(97).

Stupidly enough the system turns back to say that blacks are inferior because they have no economists, no engineers, ect, although it is made impossible for blacks to acquire these skills(97).

The overall success of the white power structure has been in managing to bind whites together in defence of the status quo. By skilfully playing on that imaginary bogey – *swart gevaar* – they have managed to convince even diehard liberals that there is something to fear in the idea of the black man assuming his rightful place at the helm of the South African ship (98).

Hence whites in general reinforce each other even though they allow some moderate disagreements on the details of subjugation schemes(98).

So immersed are they in prejudice that they do not believe that blacks can formulate their thoughts without white guidance and trusteeship(98).

They do so by dragging all sorts of red herrings across our paths. They tell us that the situation is a class struggle rather than a racial one(99).

We must realise that our situation is not a mistake on the part of whites but a deliberate act, and not amount of moral lecturing will persuade the white man to ‘correct ‘ the situation(100).

They see blacks as additional levers to some complicated industrial machines. This is the white man’s integration-an integration based on exploitive values(101).

It is an integration in which the black man will have to prove himself in terms of these values before meriting acceptance and ultimate assimilation, and in which the poor will grow poorer and the rich richer in a country where the poor have always been black(101).

A culture is essentially the society’s composite answer to the varied problems of life. We are experiencing new problems every day and whatever we do adds to the richness of our cultural heritage as long as it has man at its centre. The adoption of black theatre and drama is one such important innovation which we need to encourage and to develop. We know that our love of music and rhythm has relevance even in this day(106).

We are aware that the blacks are still colonised even within the borders of South Africa. Their cheap labour has helped to make South Africa what it is today. Our money from the townships takes a one-way journey to white shops and white banks, and all we do in our lives is pay the white man either in labour or in coin(107).

Capitalistic exploitive tendencies, coupled with overt arrogance of white racism, have conspired against us(107).

They see blacks as additional levers to some complicated industrial machines. This is the white man’s integration-an integration based on exploitive values(101).

### **Power in Society Organisations**

One of the most talked about topics was the position of the black students in ‘open’ organisations like NUSAS and UCM. Concern was expressed that these were white dominated and paid very little attention to problems peculiar to black community. In fact some people began to question the very competence of pluralistic groups to examine without bias problems affecting one group especially if the unaffected group is from the oppressor camp(11)

It was felt that a time had come when blacks had to formulate their own thinking, unpolluted by ideas emanating from a group with lots at stake in the status quo (2).

Some people amongst the black communities felt that the best approach would be a black takeover of the ‘open’ student organisations engineered from within. However, this idea never got any real support since to start with black students at the University Colleges were not even allowed to participate freely in these organisations(12).

“...The NUSAS conference of 1967 the blacks were made to stay at a church building...so appalling were the conditions that is showed the blacks just how valued they are in the organisation) (12).

SASO adopts the principle that blacks should work themselves into a powerful group so as to go forth and stake a rightful claim in open society rather than to exercise that power in some obscure part of the Kalahari(17).

One striking feature is the steep decline in the intensity of the 'morality' argument. Some time ago quite a lot of people used to violently opposed to 'segregation' even when practiced by blacks against whites (18). Of late people of this persuasion are beginning to see the logic of rejecting the so-called bilateral approach. The idea that blacks and whites can participate as equal partners in an open organisation as being questioned even by the most ardent black supporters of non racialism(18).

Hence the multiracial political organisations and parties and the non-racial student organisations, all of which insist on integration not only as an end goal but also as a means.