South Africa has given birth to a democracy and thereby to majority rule. But who is the majority? Which interests is the government to represent? What do people actually expect and want from democracy? It is easy to assume that if a majority of people supports a political party, the party programme is supported by a majority of the people. But does this assumption hold true?

Workers and the labour movement have been a important driving force behind the democratisation in South Africa. Many expect workers to be the backbone of the new fanged multiracial democracy. This book looks at some of the factors that shape working class consciousness and democratic culture in South Africa. The focus is on how South Africans view their own living and working conditions, the role of the unions and politics, democracy and the future. The answers are based upon a recent survey of interviews with about 1000 workers in and around Johannesburg.

Liv Tørres has lived and worked in South Africa for several years. She is particularly concerned with the political role and future challenges of the trade union movement.

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The Common Security forum embraces scholars and decision-makers from Europe, Africa, Asia, North and Latin America who are devoted to exploring and promoting approaches to security that go beyond traditional military concerns.
Liv Tørres

South African Workers Speak

Common Security Forum Studies
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PREFACE

John Gomomo
President
Congress of South African Trade Unions

Through COSATU, workers have made an enormous contribution to achieving democracy in South Africa. In the ten years of our existence, we have built not only one of the largest trade union movements internationally, but one based on a thorough practice of democracy and workers control on the ground. It is primarily through this commitment of workers and their militancy that COSATU has won considerable victories in extending workers rights, improving the working and living conditions of its members, and has secured the political advances for the broader working class as a whole.

Now, we face a whole range of new challenges. The legacy of apartheid still survives in our companies, in the huge wage gap between workers and bosses, in the obstacles to organising farm-workers and domestic workers, in the conglomerates and monopolies which control the economy, in the lack of infrastructure and services for the poor, in the low level of skill and training of black workers. Restructuring our economy is vitally necessary to address these questions, yet it also raises additional challenges to workers and the unions to struggle on matters which have long been «managerial prerogatives» - to improve the quality and performance of companies and industries and raise the level of employment dramatically.

These are not easy tasks. Unions in the developed industrialised countries are still grappling with such issues. We have to address these issues while we are still recovering from the loss of so many of our experienced leadership to government, the civil service and national institutions. While the democratically elected government give workers a powerful ally, it is the unity and organisation of workers and the strategic provided by the union leadership, which will finally determine what gains we make for workers and the entire working class during this phase.

The independence of the union movement in meeting these challenges must be underpinned by strategies which improve workers control and organisation at the shop-floor, and processes which enrich the strategic directions taken.

In this context, research focusing on the conditions and expectations of workers will play a valuable role in assisting unions in formulating strategies. Research will not replace the hard organisational work needed on the ground. When done well, it can play an important supplementary role. It is important to hear workers speak for themselves, and to bring the vast wealth of international experience into focus so we can avoid mistakes that have been made elsewhere.
On this basis, this book makes an important contribution to the debates and thinking of unionists in South Africa. Unionists who are busy fighting in the trenches sometimes miss points which can be more easily seen by those writing from a more objective perspective. This book raises information and issues which we have to consider carefully. It is also important for government representatives and employers to come to terms with issues being addressed by workers. We are satisfied that this book will also assist all those concerned with economic and labour questions to develop a better approach to the issues facing us all.

Johannesburg, March 1995
Although the new government of South Africa has inherited a sad legacy of inequality, it holds one great advantage over its predecessor. It has the strength of legitimacy, of representing the majority of the people. The voice of the majority, however difficult it may be to interpret, can never be a matter of indifference to the government. *South African Workers Speak*, authored by FAFO researcher Liv Tørrøs, gives a candid rendition of the voice, or rather the chorus of voices, that needs to be heard as political reforms are formulated and carried into the real world.

The report can be seen as a natural complement to Liv Tørrøs' previous work for FAFO in South Africa. Her studies of South African labour and trade union issues began well before the achievement of democratisation through universal suffrage. *South African Workers Speak* addresses the future. It explores current attitudes to the future with regard to work and participation in political and organisational life. The report is published under the auspices of the Common Security Forum, of which FAFO is a founding institution, together with the Centre for History and Economics, King's College, Cambridge, and Harvard University Center for Population and Development Studies. Looking beyond traditional military concerns, the CSF sets out to examine the security implications of growing economic, social and environmental interdependence. The forum is inspired by the work of the Palme commission, which coined the term *common security*.

As the late Norwegian Foreign Minister and CSF sponsor Johan Jørgen Holst often remarked, it is regrettable that many academics refrain from addressing important, contentious public issues out of fear of being swallowed up by, or identified with, the world of politics. Hence, valuable insights never enter the mainstream of political discourse. Academic opportunities are also lost. Reserve may cause research to become less relevant and meaningful than it easily could be. The Common Security Forum has been established for the very purpose of constructing channels between practical politics and academia. Discussions have been conducted, or are under way, in several geographic areas. The CSF partners seek to promote studies that can fertilise policy dialogues, and would certainly like to do more to disseminate the results of these reflections. It is in this spirit that *South African Workers Speak*...
"Speak" is published, as the first report in FAFO’s new series Common security forum studies.

A lively debate has begun on how to sustain the momentum of reform in South Africa. The Common Security Forum has felt prompted to organise a special South Africa Programme, to be managed by the Centre for History and Economics, Cambridge, and FAFO. By discussing the nature of political participation in South Africa today and the galvanising impact of the trade union movement, the present report can help to pinpoint the issues that need to be dealt with in further research.

We hope this report can shed light on the broader theme of how South African democracy can be fortified. Already an unsettling picture is emerging. Even though democracy is generally accepted, important social forces are failing to provide democratic institutions with the support they need to thrive. If tangible economic and social progress does not materialise, the present modicum of stability may be destroyed, placing democracy itself in grave danger. The ensuing turmoil would probably affect other countries as well. South Africa may in fact hold the key to the advancement of democracy in the entire region.

"South African Workers Speak" has been made possible thanks to The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, which provides generous support for the Common Security Forum.

Oslo, March 1995
When I first came to South Africa in 1987, it was with a strong belief in democracy and worker participation. Apartheid left me in a state of shock, and the achievements of the trade union movement in a state of hope. This book focuses on the role of labour in uprooting apartheid and contributing to a stable democracy. The report provides information on the working conditions and political expectations of workers in Gauteng townships.

Research is supposed to be «neutral» and balanced, but it seldom is. This work is partisan, but I hope balanced. However, I find no need to hide my sympathy and respect for the South African labour movement and its role in the struggle for liberation and democracy.

Readers looking for long and advanced theoretical discussions should not turn to this book. My main objective is to present information which may be of interest and value in order for decision-makers to identify interests, cleavages and on that basis agendas for the future South Africa.

Researchers often share one disadvantage: the difficulty in expressing ourselves in a straightforward, understandable way. I have tried, to the best of my abilities, to write this book in an accessible way. On the other hand, it is difficult to present statistics accruing from surveys without mathematical numbers and «Greek» letters. For those interested in such information, I have kept this to a minimum and put it in footnotes. Let me add that this report is first and foremost aimed at South African readers, so foreigners may in some cases lack detailed background information. Some such information is provided in an appendix.

Lots of people deserve gratitude from my side. Solidarity may be rare in research, both in terms of its aims and driving force and in the way it is carried out. But it is not rare amongst my colleagues and friends at FAFO. Siri Gloppen, Jens Grøgaard, Jon Hippe, Kristine Nergaard, Arne Pape, Jon Pedersen, Arild Steen and Steinar Tamsfoss deserve to be thanked specifically. Jon S. Lahlum did a great job with the editing and lay-out for this publication. Furthermore, FAFO itself deserves thanks for believing in the project and thereby investing time and resources in it.

The Research Council of Norway (NFR) is funding my project, which finally turn out as a PhD. NFR also funded this survey together with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). I would like to thank Kaare Sandegren, Nina Mjøberg and Arne Grønningsæter at LO in particular for their support and enthusiasm for the South African-Norwegian connection.

Social Surveys in Johannesburg helped with the sampling and the interviewing. My thanks go to fieldworkers and coordinators Disa Tshabadira and Jabu Hlatshwayo as well as Philippa Russman and Bev Russel.
Professor William M. Lafferty and Professor Øyvind Østerud are my PhD supervisors; they deserve the warmest appreciation for their support despite their own heavy workloads. Bill's belief in worker participation and democratic debate served as the mobilizing event that sparked off this project many years back.

The Common Security Forum has made the publication of this report possible. Jan Dietz and Ivar Lødemel introduced me to the Common Security Forum network, and I am grateful for their support. Others have also helped. I would like to thank James Cornford in particular for valuable comments to the last parts of the book.

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Finally, this work would never have started, even less proceeded, without the assistance from some key individuals: Sanna Naidoo, who summed up the whole book in the illustrations on the cover and title page. Owen Crankshaw, Sakhela Buhlungu, Fiona Dove and Eddie Webster, who gave me comments on the questionnaire, and Roland Hunter who commented on my sampling. Dan who came to my rescue every time my computer, data or quantitative instincts disappeared or got stolen. My daughter Hannah Tembeka, who says: «it is unfair that only white people should decide». And last, but not least, all my love to Jayendra for pushing, motivating and supporting me when I was about to give it all up for the benefit of nappies and breastfeeding!

Now let the workers speak:

«I say to the party that wins, not to practice racism.»

«I just wish that the world will change to a new South Africa.»

«The only thing we don't know is what will happen after the elections»

Johannesburg, March 1995

Liv Tørres
CHAPTER 1

POLITICS AND WORK

The stability of the newborn democracy in South Africa depends upon economic growth, redistribution of resources, people's support and belief in the new system and the role of organised interests in civil society. The success of economic and political restructuring is on the other hand closely related to the characteristics of the labour market and industrial relations.

The future of democracy depends upon whether the economy can create and sustain prosperity, development and distribution. Labour markets determine the distribution of wages and benefits amongst people. Labour markets and industrial relations are also critical in determining what sort of economic change will accompany the political development, and thereby the extent to which the new democracy can gain widespread support and legitimacy. The future of democracy depends upon whether the society can manage to create, enforce and carry forward a democratic consciousness and political competence amongst its people. Almost half the political electorate in South Africa today is in formal employment. Workers have been at the forefront of the political struggle and are thus an important constituency for the new government. Progressive unions played an important role in the process towards democracy by mobilising workers for political action while simultaneously improving their wages and living conditions. The future of democracy depends upon the degree to which labour market institutions and the labour movement manage to create and enforce legitimacy for the democratic institutions, to moderate economic expectations and to build a cooperative rather than a confrontational approach towards the new government.

The aim of this report is twofold. We want to map various dimensions of work and industrial relations as perceived by the workers themselves. Furthermore, we want to analyse workers' expectations and priorities concerning work as well as politics. Labour markets in the past enforced segregation of work and distribution of resources according to skin colour. What are the wages, benefits and working conditions of workers today? How do workers perceive their jobs and which expectations and priorities do they have regarding their employers and unions?

Many expect workers to be the backbone of left-wing, socialist values and an active citizenship. Others claim workers will develop intolerance and authoritarian values. Or that workers in the future will mainly concentrate upon improving their own individual interests rather than engaging in collective struggles now that the political vote has been won. Democracy creates new rights and opportunities, but it also carries with it new interests, dilemmas and identities. While the struggle against apartheid contained a fight for the vote, for democracy and for political equality, we have few indications as to the political activity, expectations and
priorities of workers within regular politics. The labour movement portrays itself as a main driving force for reconstruction and development also in the future. But the role and strategies of labour will depend first and foremost upon the interests and priorities of the workers they represent. Too little is known about conditions, interests and priorities of the workers of South Africa.

Politicians, unionists, business leaders and academics often argue what they perceive to be the needs and interests of people. In this study, we asked workers themselves about their living conditions, about conditions at work and their political priorities. This book sums up their answers by presenting the results of a survey of interviews amongst a representative sample of about 1000 workers in Gauteng, the earlier Pretoria – Witswatersrand – Vaal\(^1\) (PWV) area outside Johannesburg, the industrial and economic heartland of South Africa.

THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF WORK AND LABOUR MARKETS

The time has now come in South Africa to start a process which makes democracy so broadly and profoundly legitimate that it is highly unlikely to break down. The government has been appealing to the people for patience and joint efforts in the restructuring and transformation. Assuring formal rights is not sufficient to establish a real democracy with widespread participation and popular influence. And establishing a formal democratic system and popular involvement is not sufficient to consolidate a legitimate and stable democracy in a longterm perspective. Many challenges confront the government in building the new democratic order. While options may seem unlimited, the actionradius is restricted by factors such as the need for foreign capital, political conflicts and compromises in the transitional period, etc. Experiences from similar processes elsewhere indicate some of the important factors needed to stabilize and consolidate the fledgling democracy in South Africa.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economic growth has been pinpointed as essential to promote and stabilize democratic change. Economic development, measured in increased income per capita, industrialisation, urbanisation and general modernisation will, it is argued, bring about a general transformation of society through greater literacy and a generally higher educational level among the masses. Increased literacy, and thereby increased exposure to media and to political issues and debates will in turn promote openness and a deeper insight into politics amongst people, so the argument goes.

Economic growth is also expected to have other positive effects (Hadenius 1992). Through industrialisation and increased prosperity, formerly oppressed groups will gain better access to political resources. Previously excluded groups can,

\(^1\) The name was changed in early 1995 to Gauteng, which indicates "a place of gold" in Sotho.
through increased competence and organisation, acquire reinforced political resources and thereby promote democratic stability. Furthermore, the migration and urbanisation that follow from industrialisation and economic development, will enable people to break free of their earlier closed and traditional environments and thereby crosscut and overlap earlier cleavages of social, regional, ethnic or religious nature. Finally, as a result of economic progress, it will also be easier to satisfy different groups' demands on the public sector. More equitable income distribution will be facilitated. High economic growth and higher income per capita has on this basis been found to correlate with democratic change and stability.

**Distribution of Resources**

The assumption that economic growth in itself will ultimately benefit everyone has, on the other hand, been shown not to be the case. Furthermore, economic restructuring in order to achieve growth may trigger uncertainty, pressures and tensions around distributional questions. Growth, and its importance for political stability, must thereby be seen in relation to the distribution of resources. It is not necessarily the level of economic growth or wealth which produces political disorder, but the way it is distributed.

Democracy is of little value to people who have no roof over their heads or no food on their table. In other words, it is the content and delivery of democracy that determines its value to people, and the extent to which they become committed to its goals and have respect for its procedures. Access to social and economic resources decides death or survival. Social and economic resources influence the quality of life and future opportunities, shaping people's needs, interests and priorities. At the same time, resources like education, income, employment, health and welfare will often affect the degree to which people actually take possession of formal political rights and transform them into political influence. Poverty or wealth is thereby also a question of political resources and the degree to which people participate in organisational life and politics. Our political perceptions and expectations are formed on the basis of "who we are" and "where we come from": family, kinship, income and wealth, as well as religion, race and gender.

This situation can give rise to potential cleavages in society. When resources are concentrated in the hands of the few, political conflicts may easily follow. The more such factors, like the distribution of social and economic resources overlap, the higher is the potential for conflicts. The chances for a stable democracy are enhanced to the extent that groups and individuals have many crosscutting politically relevant interests and belongings.

Many see democracy as the instrument for people to achieve access to social and economic resources. To others, however, democracy is dependent upon a fair distribution of such socio-economic resources to nurture political stability and legitimacy. Formal democracy does not ensure social justice and economic redistribution. At the same time, these factors may be necessary conditions to assure a real
democracy and thereby the sustainability of the formal democracy in a long-term perspective. Highly uneven distribution of resources may create or enforce ideological cleavages and thereby affect political stability and democratic consolidation. Social policy is thereby both a means to profound social reform and an instrument to reduce conflicts and prevent social tension and unrest.

Equalisation and redistribution of resources through public means has often been seen as an aim in itself by uprooting poverty and thereby ensuring for people their social citizenship. Western welfare states have developed along these lines, extending individual rights to include not only political, but also social and economic rights. Redistribution of resources is also a means to empower more people to take real part in political decision-making and organisational life, and thereby contributes to the process of democratisation.

**POLITICAL TRUST AND LEGITIMACY**

It is an unsatisfied mind rather than the actual supply, or distribution, of resources which produce revolutions or political opposition.  

Studies of new-born democracies in for example Latin America have noted the lack of legitimacy for political institutions together with the lack of strong, efficient and at the same time representative state structures. Likewise, studies of new-born democracies in Eastern Europe point to the lack of trust in political institutions and organisations. Furthermore, studies of several African countries have stressed the increasing gap between state bureaucracies and the people. Without popular trust in and support for the content, decisions and institutions of democracy, regimes become vulnerable to collapse in periods of economic and social distress (Lipset 1981). Democratic tolerance and political competence are essential components of a stable, legitimate democracy.

When new democracies confront problems in delivering goods and services, legitimacy for the institutions and for the process of decision-making becomes even more critical. The unique nature of the welfare states of Northern Europe rests for example, on the consensus and legitimacy of their institutions and compromises. Interest groups that lose in the first round, know they may win in the next. Interest groups that know they are in minority in the first round, know that they may be in majority in the next. People operate with a longterm perspective on social change. In newly established democracies, legitimacy for political decisions is critical — but even more legitimacy for the institutions and respect for the principle of majority decisions.

Several studies have indicated the need for a common political culture to develop, to enable the consolidation of democracy and the nation-building process in order to create political stability. Political culture is the aggregate expression of people's priorities, tolerance and values concerning national integration and the

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2 See Davies (1971).
legitimacy of a political system. Coordination of cultural standards and development of national solidarity, as opposed to subnational allegiances, form an important part of any nation-building process. Included in a common political culture is a sense of democratic consciousness or citizenship. Respect for opposite views and for the play and procedures of democratic politics is an important part of this. In Lipset's (1963:1) words:

“... without consensus – a political system allowing the peaceful “play” of power, the adherence by the “outs” to the decisions made by the “ins”, and the recognition by the “ins” of the rights of the “outs” – there can be no democracy.”

BUILDING NEW INSTITUTIONS

The need to build new institutions, of both a political and administrative nature, for democratic systems to consolidate and stabilize has been emphasised in certain countries. Representative structures have to be built in order to give access to different constituencies and interest groups. If conflicts inherent in nation-building are to be managed effectively, opposing camps will have to compromise and institutions must be built up to bridge cleavages.

Legitimacy and popular control in democracies relate not only to the input of the political system, but also to the output, i.e. the executive arm and central bureaucracies of politics. Strong, independent bureaucracies tend to lead to a distorted distribution of power between the state and the bureaucracies on the one hand and the people on the other. In order to contribute to legitimacy for political decisions and their implementation, broad representation by and consultation with interest groups in civil society has to be promoted.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The need to build or reinforce a strong civil society in order to promote successful processes of democratic consolidation has been underlined with the recent political upheavals in Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America. Civil society has an important role to play in processes of democratic consolidation (Diamond 1994). The first democratic function of civil society, and organised interests in civil society in particular, is to monitor, control and restrain the exercise of state power. Civil society is a vital instrument for containing the power of democratic governments, checking their potential abuses and violations of the law, and subjecting them to public scrutiny.

Theoretical work and experiences from similar processes throughout the world confirm the need for popular political mobilisation for a nation-building process to secure a stable democracy and political system. People must be integrated into the politics of new institutions and decision-making processes instead of being pushed into protest politics or into apathetic and alienating conditions that may
more easily make them prey to mobilisation by anti-democratic forces. Participation by organisations in civil society is important for the stability of democracy, but so is the integration of the individual citizens.

Furthermore, a rich organisational life supplements the role of political parties by stimulating political debates and participation. Involving people in the decision-making process is one way of making them more committed to the goals and ideals of democracy. Widespread participation in legitimate channels and decision-making prevents people from feeling alienated from democracy and from becoming easy targets for undemocratic forces. Civil society also serves democracy by creating channels for articulation, aggregation and representation of interests. A final important function of civil society is to create broader knowledge and consensus around structural political and economic reforms.

**South Africa: From Apartheid to Democracy**

South Africa is confronting major economic challenges posed by the need for a fundamental restructuring of the whole economy. There are huge demands for redistribution; but at the same time there is a lack of economic growth, and an unprecedented fiscal deficit, domestic fixed investments are in decline, and the capacity of the economy to create or maintain employment has been deteriorating for years.

Apartheid linked political, economic and social rights to race and area of permanent residence, rather than to citizenship. Although apartheid laws have now been formally lifted, the cumulative weight of apartheid still marks every aspect of society. Enormous differences in real distribution of socio-economic resources remain. Access to resources like education, infrastructure, health- and social services vary according to residential areas, which again to a large extent overlap with race and population groups. The government’s *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (RDP) promises millions of jobs, houses, electrified houses, water and schools in the years to come. There are, however, several factors that limit the ability of the new government to deliver: lack of economic growth, lack of precise information or agreement on what is happening in the economy, the fact that large parts of expenditure is already tied to programme items and the existing civil service, political controversies over the issues involved and finally enormous cross-pressures from groups representing different interests and constituencies.

New institutions have to be built. South Africa in 1987 had 11 presidents or prime ministers, 14 ministers of finance, 11 ministers of the interior and 18 ministers of health, all with their own administrations. Political suspicions and cleavages between political parties and interest groups tend in themselves to result in an array of institutions and bureaucratic structures. Old structures will have to be broken down and new efficient and representative structures built up to enable efficient rendering of services. Apartheid institutions, a potentially conservative civil service and “homeland” bureaucracies will have to be transformed into an egalitarian
efficient state bureaucracy which can still allow for regional variations, due to the federal system, in providing services and goods to the people.

As if these challenges were not enough, a national identity and a common political culture and democratic tolerance has to be assured in the process. Whites, blacks, “coloureds” and Asians are slowly integrating, but the legacy of apartheid remains. The extremely uneven distribution of resources may easily contribute to racial tensions and intolerance. Lack of contact and communication across race and ethnic groups has led to a shortage of mutual confidence and trust. Continual political suppression and restrictions have led to differences in organisational experience, knowledge, participation and democratic learning. Political discrimination by the apartheid regime and clear preferences and benefits for certain parties are likely to have contributed to political tensions and intolerance. The 1990s have witnessed high and increasing violence with frictions based on political conflicts, ethnic and regional differences, social hierarchies and fight for access to scarce resources.

Gauteng: The Land of Gold

Gauteng, centring around Johannesburg, is by far the largest of South Africa’s metropolitan areas, with a population estimated at about 9 million people. The region constitutes one out of nine regions in the new South Africa. This area has always been the industrial heart of South Africa with gold and mining as the main income sources. Since Gauteng contributes an impressive 40% to South Africa’s GNP, its share of economic activity far outsteps its share of the population.

Township history was formerly almost identical with working class history (Bozzioli 1979). The creation of black townships after mining had become dominant in the area, was aimed at consolidating in daily life what segregation at work achieved by separating economic interests. Newly proletarianized workers moved to un-segregated areas wherever possible, while the state continuously devised legal mechanisms and force to counteract this. The state’s struggle for a pure white city gave rise to a continuous establishment of new townships and forced removals. It is the ghetto character that gave the cultural characteristics of the township. What people had in common was racial characteristics that made it illegal for them to own property, make demands upon the government or to try and influence the circumstances that ruled their lives. In that sense they were not governed, but administered (Bozzioli 1979). There was a complete absence of answerability of the administrating body to those it administered.

Urban squatting has been part of the Gauteng landscape since the early years of industrialisation. However, it was not until the 1940s, with massive industrialisation and urbanisation, that informal squatter settlements emerged on a significant scale and the major squatter-based social movement made their appearance (Sapire 1990). The squatter settlements emerged with their own political culture, many elements of which still exist – like the social regulatory functions of squatter
committees, the importance of the imagery and vision of the independent African churches, the adaption of features of traditional chieftainship, populist politics, the personalized nature of leadership and the politics of the crowd (Sapire 1990). Although the essence of squatter struggle was usually centred around the fight for scarce resources, it also took the form of political or even ethnic struggle. As ex-squatters settled down in formally regulated areas and proper houses, militancy decreased. The 1980s and 1990s, however, witnessed a rapid growth of informal settlements, first with the number of backyard shacks within the formally regulated townships growing during the 1970s and 80s, and than in the 1990s with the growing number of squatter camps or informal areas.

CHALLENGES OF A NEW DEMOCRACY

Socio-economic conditions are better in Gauteng than in many other parts of the country: personal income is higher, the region is better equipped with infrastructure, etc. Still, unemployment and poverty are high and rising, while production output is decreasing, especially in the manufacturing and mining sectors. Furthermore, there is almost no formal economic activity in the townships, which are the areas where most people live.

There has been a steady deterioration, to the point of near collapse, of the black authorities in the townships, and therefore of the system of local government as a whole. Local elections were institutionalised in the early 1980s to give blacks a say in decisions that affected their lives. However, this move was aimed more at cooperation of blacks and at reducing the opposition against apartheid than at real decision-making. These local elections were generally boycotted. Voter turn-out was as low as 5% in some cases. (Many 1991). In fact, almost none of the workers in our sample had participated in meetings of local government or in elections of local government. Years of illegitimate and often inefficient or corrupt local governments, with the following rent- and service charge boycotts as well as violence, made urban management face collapse in several areas. This again results in the disruption of social services and contributes to the general crime levels.

Gauteng, and especially the East Rand, has been the one area beside Natal to be hardest hit by violence. Violence is connected both to the struggle for access to scarce resources, to political conflicts between the ANC and Inkatha and not the least to provocations and manipulations by white right-wingers and security forces in the days of apartheid.3 Violence must be seen against the background of large urban immigration and extreme poverty. Following the violent conflicts around hostels in the area, attempts were made to upgrade hostels and make them into family accommodation. However, not much success was made during 1994 in addressing the specific problems of the about 300,000 hostel dwellers in Gauteng. The regional and local peace structures that followed the signing of the National Peace Accord in 1991

3 The Goldstone Commission has on several occasions reported on the connection between violence in black townships and the security forces.
had some effect in establishing committees to bring the conflicting parties together, thereby curbing the violence between hostel dwellers and residents, and between various political factions in the Gauteng. All the same, violence and a generally high level of criminal activity continue to prevail in Gauteng. Some 50% of blacks and 28% of whites in Gauteng say that members of their most disliked party should not be allowed to live in their neighborhood, and 20% of blacks admitted they had been under pressure to vote for a party they did not support.4

1994 saw the inauguration of a new representative provincial government. Local elections are scheduled for late 1995. However, a new administration has to be built both at regional and at local level, one which can reflect more accurately the population of Gauteng.

The problems confronting the new Gauteng reflect those of the nation-building process at large: economic decline, extremely skewed redistribution of resources and political instability and intolerance. However, while formal institutional channels for conflict-solving have been lacking in Gauteng until 1994, there has been a simultaneously rich civil society. Much due to early urbanisation and industrialisation, civic and residence committees, unions and youth organisations developed as part and parcel of the struggle against apartheid. An extensive mobilisation of civil society was a crucial source of power for democratic change. The RDP points out the vital need for the participation of a vibrant civil society in the South African transition process ahead. Gauteng is one of the strongholds of the trade union movement, and COSATU in particular.

THE LABOUR MARKET: POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR THIS REPORT

Labour markets are areas for production, for distribution of resources, wages and welfare benefits and for the formation of interests and attitudes. Industrial relations and institutions developed in the labour market thereby play a crucial role in determining the direction of economic and political reforms.

MAPPING LABOUR MARKET CHARACTERISTICS

The need for economic growth points up the necessity of increased efficiency in production and thereby the need for a closer look at the characteristics of the labour market. The need to build a democratic culture and legitimacy for new democratic institutions reveals the necessity of increased adaptation of people's interests and priorities and thereby a need to look more closely at the realities of work. The lessons of work are for millions of South Africans carried directly over to the non-occupational realms of life.

Labour markets involve the sale of labour in exchange for wages and benefits and hence have two elements: the production sphere, i.e. the actual work process, and

the distributional sphere; i.e. the economic rewards that accrue from employment. Work is the main source of income and status in society. Disputes over settlements of income and pay are one of the main conflicts in modern industrial societies. The level and hierarchy of wages and benefits generally vary with skills, education and experience. The wage gap between highest and lowest paid workers, however, varies more between nations and reflects culture, public policies, union priorities, etc. The South African employers' wage-policy also reflects discriminatory practices on the basis of gender and not least race. Here, however, we should note that remuneration is not only pay. Working time and paid leave, occupational benefits, training programmes and career possibilities are additional elements in wage packages and function as part of the personnel policies and productivity strategies of the employers.

Technology, new markets, production scales, etc. are important instruments in processes of economic restructuring. But although they are often overlooked, the working conditions of the workforce are another important factor in processes of productivity increases. Workers, the "human capital", are one of a company's most important resources. A well-educated workforce for example, is said to be a comparative advantage of several newly emerging economic tigers as well as of well-established industrial societies like Germany.

But jobs differ in the degree to which they offer opportunities for using and developing workers' skills, knowledge and abilities. They also vary in the degree of autonomy that workers have in deciding about work schedules, methods and the pace of their work. At the same time, types of production, organisation of work and position in the workplace influence job satisfaction and may thereby affect productivity as well as political learning and social and political conflicts. Organisation of work is seen as an important factor causing diverse political values and attitudes amongst workers. The critical factors are the degree to which workers enjoy freedom in planning and organising their tasks and time schedules, their freedom of movement in the company and responsibility, as well as the degree to which they are consulted on how to carry out and organise the work.

Management styles and degree of worker participation and influence in decision-making at work are also generally assumed to influence the motivation of workers and their mobilisation for increased activity, both at work and outside work. Political democracy requires politically competent and participating people. However, many workers spend their working hours in settings which more easily promote political alienation than political participation. Management policies and the extent to which workers have a say in workplace matters differ both between and within countries. The various constituencies in the labour market have different, although not necessarily conflicting, goals and rationality in their preference for types of workplace participation (Poole 1986). Employers' goals of profitability, productivity and increased efficiency are often associated with a preference for

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shopfloor participatory programmes, profit sharing and consultative practices. Unions on the other hand, usually favour workgroups and -councils when the aim is improved wages and conditions of work. Or they prefer self-management or programmes of workplace democracy when aiming at a radical transformation of work. The final choice of workplace reforms will be influenced by political and economic conditions, but decided on the basis of the relative power of workers and unions vis-a-vis employers.

The characteristics of labour markets and industrial relations, i.e. the relationship between workers and employers, are decisive for national economic performance. For example, the skills and education of the workforce are an important factor in the implementation of production systems. Management styles and remuneration packages are likewise important in determine motivation and productivity amongst workers. Industrial relations will influence workers' loyalties and motivation for work, and shape workers' status and position in society. While industrial relations and the regulation of conflicting interests differ from one country to another, both employers and unions seek to structure employment relations and their institutions so as to serve the interests of their own constituencies. Employers aim first and foremost at economic profitability, workers first and foremost at decent wages and working conditions. How conflicts are dealt with is determined by the actual labour market characteristics, working conditions and industrial relations.

Labour market characteristics and industrial relations are closely connected to types of production and production systems. Standardized large-scale mass production is perceived as closely linked to bureaucratic systems of personnel administration, hierarchical systems of managerial control and detailed supervisory systems of work organisation. By contrast, small-scale production units, increased use of technology and the growth of the service sector have on the other hand been linked with more flexibility and less bureaucracy, control and supervision in the practices of employers. While large-scale manufacturing is seen as compatible with a formalised system of collective bargaining, the latter types of economic activity have opened up for more decentralised bargaining between unions and employers. Various types of labour markets offer different conditions for economic and political restructuring because they promote different conditions for industrial relations and union activities.

Large-scale manufacturing and hierarchical management structures have generally been perceived as the dominant basis for industrial relations in South Africa. Labour markets and occupational structures have long been segregated along racial lines. Any given occupation represents a package of interlocked job conditions. We lack, however, an updated representative picture of the labour market of the new democratic South Africa. It is the priorities, skills and knowledge of workers that will enable the building of services, welfare and production. Therefore, in this report it has been our aim to map the labour markets and working conditions as the workers experience them.
Worker consciousness and working-class politics

People shape their interests and priorities on the basis of work and the pay and satisfaction accruing from it. Conditions of work show a remarkable parallel with people's personalities, what parents value for their children, people's organisational activities and political attitudes and expectations. Attitudes and the activities of workers will help shape South Africa's economy, but also its political landscape in the future.

After liberation, the first elections will usually be more about the past than about the future. The ANC based their election campaign on the RDP. We might easily conclude that if the majority of people support a political party, then the party programme will be supported by the same majority. However, majorities shift. People's priorities are contradictory and change from one issue to another. Furthermore, people often vote for a party without knowing its programme.

Almost half the political electorate in today's South Africa is in formal employment. Political priorities and voting behaviour have in many countries been found to relate to people's religious, ethnic, social and economic background, their income and status as well organisational affiliation.

Standards of living are not only shaped at home or through mechanisms in the family or public policies. In modern industrial economies, prestige, power, privileges and social division are formed mostly through employment and work. A class is seen as a group that derives its privileges, or poverty, from its role in the production process. On this basis, a class is characterized by common interests and common cultural features. Occupation becomes crucial in determining class position. Occupation, and hence working conditions and income, determines interests, the groups with whom the individual identifies, political priorities and party alignment.

On this basis, class and class voting can explain much of the political development in European countries throughout this century. In practice, the class system has become far more complicated during the past ten to twenty years. As living standards improve, workers have become increasingly de-radicalized. Changes in the labour market, with less use of mass production and a simultaneous growth in the use of technology and capital-intensive production, contribute to explaining the decline of class voting amongst "traditional" workers. A growing service sector, especially in public or state hands, has been found to become the basis of increased class behaviour and voting amongst highly educated employees. Against this background, new concepts like the service class or the public sector class have been developed to explain the political behaviour of employees in the public or "non-profit" sector.

Wages, working conditions and industrial relations closely to how much class consciousness there is in a society and to who has it. Class consciousness implies the identification of oneself as part of a group, seeing this collectivity as being in opposition to other groups; it includes the willingness to act to change these circumstances (Mann 1973). Class consciousness is the basis for values, norms and practices that presumably will crosscut other cleavages and have the potential of building
a national identity and unity by dampening identification with local groups or other sub-categories. Class consciousness usually becomes most evident on issues such as support for redistribution, the role of the state in the economy, opposition to employers, economic democracy, affirmative actions, etc.

Dimensions of work, like time-pressure, closeness of supervision, etc. is seen as influencing political values. Work-organisations characterized by democratic decision-making structures can indirectly promote a democratic process in society at large by influencing the values of their members and their pattern of political activities in a more democratic direction. Worker consciousness may thereby be presumed to relate also to the degree of democratic tolerance, respect for majority decisions and institutions as well as to the tolerance for other groups and minority rights.

An investigation of the balance between individual interests and collective approaches and solidarity as well as between working class consciousness and loyalty to other groups becomes crucial in the democratisation process. Workers in South Africa have been mobilized for collective action through the workplace, through unions and through the urban industrial township culture. Their expectations and priorities become crucial to the new democracy, simply because theirs is its best-organized and most active constituency. The stability of South African democracy now depends upon the ability of individuals and organisations to direct and control collective action. Labour relations and the characteristics and conditions of the workforce thereby form the basis for national restructuring. The interests and priorities of the workers form the basis for social cleavages, union strategies and for national reconciliation. Our aim in this report is therefore to analyse the political expectations, attitudes and behaviour of the workers of South Africa.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

The consolidation of democracy in South Africa depends upon organisations in civil society and the role they play towards the new state. It depends upon the extent to which organisations can to create, enforce and carry forward a democratic consciousness and political competence amongst their members. It depends upon the degree to which organisations can create and enforce legitimacy for the democratic institutions, can moderate economic expectations and can build a cooperative rather than a confrontational approach towards the new government.

The government’s White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (Sept. 1994) underlines the national consensus on the need for reconstruction and development. Economic growth, redistribution of resources, addressing poverty amongst the poor and mobilising civil society are set out as goals in an integrated RDP programme. However, there is less consensus as to how – i.e. the content, strategies and implementation of the RDP.

Often it is not necessarily the absence of economic growth or wealth which produces political disorder, but the efforts to achieve it (Huntington 1968). The process
of economic and social reconstruction may trigger off instability and finally the breakdown of new democracies. Conflicts are often aggravated under economic growth because demands for change may lead to greater uncertainty, intensified fights for access to resources and thereby threaten group interests and identities.

The new government will be subject to extreme cross-pressures from different interest groups: local and regional governments will want to build low-cost housing and electrification schemes; consumer interests and civics worry about the prices of public goods and services; employers, investors and financial institutions want to increase productivity and economic growth and decrease the size of the public sector; labour wants labour standards and living wages. Certain priorities will be have to be made, certain groups and interests be given priority. But which groups and interests? Workers or consumers? Employed or unemployed? Business or labour? And at what levels and through what mechanisms? State or market? Public or private? Tri-partism, or unilateral decision-making by the state?

Interests and groups with strong organisations and ample resources will clearly have a better chance in the fight for scarce resources and allocation of goods than badly organised interests. Organisational strength in this respect will have a different basis and require different resources from that which built the collective strength of unions in the apartheid era. The political influence of unions will be determined by their ability to produce and deliver good arguments, their ability to influence the general public and media to their favour and their ability to sanction decisions. Their power base lies in the internal strategic and organisational resources of the unions and concern leadership capacity as well as the loyalty and support of members.

Norway's Stein Rokkan (1987) once said about Scandinavian political systems that "votes count, but resources decide". Here he had more the institutional than the individual resources in mind. Organisational membership and participation in civil society can compensate for lack of individual resources and create channels for political participation and influence. Organisational membership creates alternative channels for political influence and representation of interests for the citizens. Furthermore, a rich organisational life supplements the role of political parties in stimulating political participation and thereby developing the political competence, knowledge and skills of democratic citizens. On that basis, a rich civil society can also contribute to balancing interests and reaching compromises in societies riven by cleavages and conflicts in processes of restructuring.

The role and importance of unions is clear. How they will fill this role is more uncertain. Unions in processes of transition are themselves challenged by conflicts and dilemmas between the responsibility towards national stability and the interests of their own members. In what respects and areas are unions to protect only their own members and act as private, as opposed to public, interest organisations? And in what respects and areas are unions to frame and pursue their own interests as opposed and in contradiction to other interest groups?

Some call attention to the fact that in their internal organisation and operation unions more closely resemble one-party states than democratic organisations. Can
unions work as agents for democracy in society at large? Others stress the weaknesses of trade unions on the eve of independence in many African countries. However, O'Donnell and others (1986) accredit unions as learning areas for individual political ideas with a radical potential. The new or revived identities and capacities of collective actions by the working class are, in their opinion, the greatest challenge to authoritarian rule. But what identities and which political ideas form the content of these new identities? There are at least three different groups of answers.

**Instrumentalists** argue that unions do not affect workers' attitudes to politics; or to the moderate degree they do, union learning will create or enforce workers support for a (regulated/moderated) free market and for unions as independent of politics. They argue that workers join unions for economic reasons and their attitudes towards their unions are instrumental. They recognize the need for unions to engage in political activities in a limited short-term period, in defence of long-term economic interests.

**Radicals** on the left will argue the revolutionary potential of unions through working-class mobilisation and collective conscientisation of class interests. In their opinion, support for and identification with collective class interests will increase as workers become exposed to the practices of unionism.

According to **participatory democrats**, participation in decisions in working life and unions will teach the individual worker the values and instruments of democracy. Union engagement will teach workers how decisions are made, how to influence them and through democratic conflict-solving teach workers the value of political participation, the collective interests of the community and democratic tolerance.

South African studies have shown the importance of political learning in the union movement. Activity at the shop-floor and grass-root level increased with the democratisation of the labour movement in the 1980s. Workers brought the increased confidence gained in the unions into the larger community. As they gained increased control of their lives at work, they wanted decision-making powers also after working hours. They organised street- and area committees in their local communities, reflecting the democratic structures of their unions. In Friedman's (1987) words:

"labour unions can work as laboratories for democracy."

Understanding of, as well as expectations to unions and union activities vary, but even more the identities, goals, priorities and strategies of labour itself. Over time, and across as well as within countries, unions hold their members to different incentives, rights and duties (Hyman 1994). The union movement in South Africa has, besides the Church, been the major interest group in civil society. It has played a dual role as a political opposition to the apartheid regime and as a force for the improvement of workers' standards of living in their struggle against employers.

In the future, union strategies, policies and power will depend upon the interests and priorities of their members. This is why we in this report want to analyse
workers priorities and expectations towards their organisations. Unions represent interests, but they also shape interests and priorities. The experiences and organisational learning of workers will vary according to the goals, norms and decision-making structures of the union they belong to. We therefore want to analyse the extent to which union members differ from unorganised workers in their expectations to work, employers and politics. For unions to succeed in their strategies and play a constructive role in building stability for the new democracy, there must be some internal balance between the interests of workers and the strategies of the organisations. On this basis, we will take a closer look at some potential consequences of the workers’ priorities and expectations for the future of unionism in South Africa.

WE ASKED THE WORKERS, BUT WHY, HOW AND WHO?

South Africa's new government has put economic growth, redistribution and institution-building on the agenda. We have seen workers in marches and stay-aways in the struggle for higher wages and democratic rights. But we do not know enough about why, with what aims and priorities they mobilize. Old apartheid machinery is now being dismantled and new institutions built up in order to carry the reconstruction and development forward. Yet, not enough is known about people’s living conditions and priorities to establish institutions that can carry their interests forward. The economy is in crisis with enormous unemployment and low economic growth. Yet, we do not know enough about labour markets and people’s working conditions and thereby about the essential factors underlying economic planning, reconstruction, institution-building and nation-building in a broad perspective.

Information about working conditions and industrial relations helps economic planning and reconstruction as well as political priorities concerning labour law, health and welfare. Information about wage formation as well as the distribution of wages and occupational benefits, helps in shaping political strategies concerning redistribution in society. Information about workers’ skills and education helps company restructuring and lays the basis for bargaining and agreements in Industrial Councils. Information about the individual’s interests and priorities helps the formulation of union strategies and policies. Information about workers helps to create institutions, rules and procedures for resource allocation and conflict-solving in order to establish predictability and stability in the labour market. Mapping working conditions and analysing workers’ priorities and expectations are essential instruments for identifying problems, for making priorities and for evaluating progress and policy effects.

Available information about the living standards, working conditions, interests and priorities of workers is scattered, cross-cutting, contradictory or non-existent.

6 Politically motivated strike which often includes not only workers, but also students etc.
We have little information about the political priorities of workers from different sectors, positions and hierarchies. We know little about the expectations of black workers and even less about the white workers.

This book seeks to fill some of the knowledge gap. Our survey is one of the first attempts to map working conditions and trace the political priorities of workers in a new South Africa. The workers interviewed were selected on the basis of a carefully drawn random sample in all five geographical sub-regions of Gauteng and in both formal and informal townships. One hour long face-to-face interviews were conducted with approx. 1000 workers – 861 African and 141 white workers. Even though this sample is small compared to the millions of people living in Gauteng, it is representative of workers in the formal workforce, so the analysis should reflect the priorities and attitudes of the Gauteng working class as a whole.7

People’s sense of empowerment, degree of knowledge and political attitudes are connected with insecurities (Heiberg 1993). Frequently, people cannot or do not want to reveal their views in this respect. The political climate in South Africa, with its history of state restrictions, political intolerance and violence, should not be underestimated. Furthermore, people are contradictory. They may express attitudes which do not correspond to their actual behaviour or do not form a coherent whole. Moreover, peoples attitudes and priorities are changeable. Political attitudes will depend upon critical issues in the public debate, the party in power, leadership figures, etc. It is especially difficult to measure and interpret attitudes in societies undergoing political change, violence and social disruption. On the other hand, the number of people who refused to be interviewed was low as was the number of those refusing to answer specific questions on political priorities.

Surveys are in general the best method of assessing living and working conditions and political priorities as people themselves perceive them. We should, however, bear in mind that this survey and its results must be taken as a snapshot of South African realities at a very specific point in time. The interviews were conducted in March to May 1994 when the degree of political mobilisation and the feeling of freedom and optimism for the future must be expected to be higher than usual. Initially we had planned to interview hostel dwellers specifically in order to better grasp the political interests and tensions in the area. However, it proved impossible to get access to do interviews in the hostels in the pre-elections period while Inkatha was still boycotting the elections. Hostel-dwellers are therefore not represented in the survey and Inkatha supporters thus slightly underrepresented.

It should be underlined that we have concentrated upon the living conditions, interests and priorities of workers in the formal workforce, i.e. those within regulated working conditions. In a country with close to 50% unemployment, with a huge informal sector and with little or no social security system, work is in itself a luxury which may shape interests and priorities in a specific direction. We chose to give priority to an in-depth study of the formal workforce in order to be able to assess the role of the unions.

7 See appendix III for a more detailed description of the sampling, interviews and analysis.
This book is based upon interviews with both black and white workers. However, due to the small number of white workers included and the sampling procedure used in this case, we will draw primarily upon the results from the interviews with the black workers, using the interviews with white workers for contrast and comparison. “Coloureds” and Indians were classified as separate groups according to the apartheid Population Registration Act and thereby designated to specific living areas. These groups are often portrayed as “intermediate” groups in terms of allocation of resources and interests. However, they were not selected in the sampling for the interviews and are therefore not covered by the analysis in this book.

**Design of the Book**

Workers themselves came up with several comments on the issues raised during the interviews. Some of these comments are found in text boxes throughout the book. Comments are not edited or changed in any way, but reflect the content and way the workers expressed themselves. They are added to give workers a voice and exemplify issues and feelings. The analysis in the report is however, based upon the results from the survey data.

We first trace the socio-economic conditions of the workers in the next chapter. The social and economic background of parents determine their aspirations for their children and the possibilities they have of implementing them. Family background, religious affiliation, friends, neighbourhood and not the least race in South Africa affect choice of occupation, work and mobility. Background and education influence the position of workers and their pay.

Economic restructuring depends upon conditions in the workplace as well as their attitudes. With this point of departure, we asked workers about their conditions of work, wages and benefits, as well as their approach to work and employers and whether they feel satisfied with their work or alienated. (See chapter 3.)

Union strategies and priorities depend upon the priorities of their members and the internal decision-making structures of the labour movement. Unions must balance on a tight line between efficient centralisation of union structures on the one hand and strong democratic shop-floor control on the other hand; between national responsibility and accountability to own members, and between workers interests as producers and their interests as consumers of goods and services. In the early post-war period in Europe, workers, as well as their unions were committed to policies of national restructuring which required some self-restraint on the part of labour. In chapter 4 we take a closer look at the workers’ approach to and satisfaction with their unions. To what extent do workers support union participation in the institutions of national negotiations? To what extent do unions, and union leaders, find legitimacy amongst workers? Why do workers join unions? Where do they think union priorities should lie in the future?
In chapter 5 we look at the political expectations of the workers. What sort of democracy do workers want? What do they expect from democracy – redistribution, affirmative action and solidarity or freedom, equal opportunities and fair competition? Why some workers take a collective approach to politics and others a more individualistic self-interested approach is not determined by biological or psychological inheritance. Our skin colour, gender and social background may be inherited, but not the way we interpret them. Political and democratic consciousness is shaped at home, at work and in organisational life. Sitas (1992:3) argues that one of labour's most far-reaching achievements was the creation of a new democratic culture in South Africa and within that a new surplus consciousness. Do union members really carry more democratic values? Are the unions nurturing a revolutionary socialist working class, a democratically tolerant and politically competent working class or a reformist liberal working class?

The two final chapters of the book will sum up the previous chapters and discuss the role of individual interests and resources for the reconstruction process as well as for the role of unions in the consolidation of democracy. Chapter 6 looks at how these interests take shape in respect to dimensions of economic reconstruction, institution-building, democratic culture and civil society. On this basis, we discuss some of the key challenges confronting public policy at large. In chapter 7 we turn to some specific dilemmas and challenges facing the unions in South Africa.
CHAPTER 2
WHO IS THE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKER

How much do we really known about the South African worker? We know that there are huge differences between white and black workers. We know the black worker is poor and oppressed by apartheid into specific job categories and underpaid hierarchies. We know that:

"Hayi bo - people are suffering. People live in poverty. People are quarreling. People are fighting."

Some 18 million people are said to live below the poverty line (RRS 1993/94). Many people are completely destitute and face life-threatening malnutrition. The child mortality rate in South Africa is double that to be expected of a country with its income level (UNICEF – Sunday Times 3 October 1993). These things we know. But we do not know how poor or how alienated the workers are. We don’t know in detail how big the differences are between semi-skilled and unskilled workers, between blue-collar and white-collar workers, between black and white workers. Who, then, is our South African worker?

The aim of this chapter is to present a profile of the Gauteng worker on the basis of existing statistics and results from our survey. We concentrate first on the demographic profile of the black worker, before moving on to compare this with the background and socio-economic resources of the white workers.

Our opportunities in life are decided largely by where we come from. It has become common to distinguish between on the one hand factors like race, gender, age, home area and social background which are given by birth, and on the other hand social indicators like education, income and occupation which we obtain in the course of life. They all influence political expectations and activity, but we do not know how or how much. The primary factors are supposed to be inherited and politically neutral, but tend to generate political cleavages because they are often reinforced by social and economic characteristics. The first set of factors are those over which we have no control, while over the second set of social indicators we have some, albeit limited, control ourselves. Public policies aimed at redistribution of resources will require different means according to whether inequalities involve opportunities (factors given by birth) or achievements or needs (social indicators obtained through life). Let us start with the factors over which we have no control, the disadvantages or advantages given by birth.

1 "Hayi bo": be aware. (T. Machili in Shopsteward, Vol. 3.1 1994.)

2 An estimated 2.3 million suffer from malnutrition (RDP report to the United Nations Social Development Summit, Copenhagen, March 1995).
DISADVANTAGES OR ADVANTAGES BY BIRTH

In South Africa, “how far you get” has to a large degree been decided by skin colour, or rather race classification. Still, the South African worker is clearly not “only” black or white, but also has a mixture of different religious, cultural and economic characteristics.

We know that the workforce in Gauteng in some respects is different from that in other parts of the country. Although the relative importance of mining and manufacturing in Gauteng is steadily losing ground to services and administration, 37% of the formal labour force is still employed by such large-scale industries (Mabin and Hunter 1993). Furthermore, personal disposable income is higher in Gauteng than elsewhere in the country, and the racial disparity in income appears less extreme. That does not imply however, that there is no racial or social disparity or no poverty in the area. The majority of the blue-collar workers are African, whereas whites, constitute the bulk of white-collar workers, artisans, supervisors, managers, professionals etc.

The working population covered by our survey comprises all five sub-regions in Gauteng. Approximately 28% of the workers live in townships in central Johannesburg, 25% in the East Rand, 18% in the Vaal, 13% in the West Rand and the remaining 16% live in the Pretoria subregion.

Living area indicates access to health, welfare and infrastructure, but is also an indicator of political learning. The socio-economics of the area, its population density, the specific political culture and the political party and organisations dominating in an area will have an influence upon the individuals’ perceptions and strategies.

Apartheid segregation into separate residential areas is associated with huge differences in services, infrastructure and general local government expenditure between localities. White local authorities deliver high quality services to people already enjoying high incomes and living standards. Black local authorities, on the other hand, deliver low quality services, if any at all, to people badly hit by unemployment, poverty and misery. Mapping black and white residential areas in Gauteng therefore also indicates the racial discrimination in the distribution of access to housing, quality of services, education, health and social services.

There are three main reasons for the skewed patterns in distribution of resources between black and white areas (Mabin and Hunter 1993). One reason is that jurisdiction over already established commercial and industrial areas, and their rates, taxes and service charges, was allocated to white authorities only. The income level for white areas was therefore substantial. In contrast, black authorities had to rely upon service charges paid by residents rather than enterprises. Secondly, the state subsidies meant to supplement the low incomes in black areas were far from sufficient. Third, the lack of legitimacy of the black authorities, together with the lack of delivery of services, prompted a series of rent boycotts across Gauteng.

The most typical form of informal settlements in Gauteng is the backyard shack, garages or outbuildings either on the land of registered tenants (backyards) or as free-standing settlements within the formal townships or their buffer zones. The
remaining informal dwellings are to be found in free-standing settlements or in small shack clusters outside the proclaimed black townships. We refer here to informal areas as both free-standing settlements within and outside the formally proclaimed and regulated townships. The majority of African workers (65%) live in formally regulated townships, whereas a minority of workers (35%) live in informal areas dominated by shacks.3

The house separates public domain from private domestic life and is in most countries an indicator of social resources and status. One out of four (24%) of our workers lives in a standard square township house, while a few more (34%) have been able to upgrade or renovate their houses by adding extra rooms or facilities. One out of three (34%) workers however, lives in a shack made out of cardboard, aluminum plates or left-over materials from building sites, garbage waste areas, etc. These are “houses” in which one can easily freeze to death during winter or boil over during hot summers.

As to age a substantial proportion of the population of Gauteng is under 35: This applies to 68% of the African population 58% of the whites, 74% of the “coloureds” and 69% of the Asians 69% (CSS 1991). In fact, more than half the African population is under the age of 21. The age spread of the population is more even in Gauteng than in other areas because the fertility rate amongst Africans is lower and immigrants tend to leave children and older relatives behind in the areas of origin. Figure 2.1 shows that among those blacks who are in employment about half are under the age of 35.

The industrial characteristics of Gauteng are reflected in the gender structure, which reflects a shows preponderance of men over women. The 1991 census found a ratio of 111.9 men to 100 women. The participation of women in the formal economy has steadily increased. About 39% of women participate in the formal economy (RRS 1993/94).4 Although representing an increasing proportion of the total workforce, women are underrepresented in specific sectors like mining and manufacturing and in higher occupation groups. Women constitute for example only 13% of those in managerial positions (RRS 1992/93 and 93/94).

The dominance of specific language groups in various areas reflects the traditional spread of the various African groups in different geographical areas, but not the least the apartheid policies of designing and enforcing residential patterns, – “homelands” and “group areas” – according to population groups and thereby ethnic belonging-

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3 Other estimates may suggest that there is an underrepresentation of the informally housed population in our sample caused by the use of the 1991 census for the population figures as basis for sampling. The census underestimated the informally housed population which by others is broadly estimated at approx. 50% of the population. However, there was and is no other existing data source than the census.

4 This may indicate an overrepresentation of women workers in the sample compared to data from the 1991 census showing that women constitute approx. 39 per cent of the total workforce. However, there are huge uncertainties connected to the official statistics. Furthermore, the number of women in the workforce has increased since 1991. The average annual increase of women in the formal economy is estimated at 4.1% compared with 1.6% for men.
ness. Whereas Zulu and Xhosa are the main African language groups in South Africa, Gauteng is dominated by Sotho, Zulu or Tswana speaking workers who come from nearby areas or old "homelands" like Bophutatswana. Gauteng however, reflects a relatively stable migration or living pattern. Only one out of three (30%) of our sample has lived in their neighborhood for less than 3 years. 26% have grown up in their neighborhood, i.e. they have lived in the area for 21 years or more. An overwhelming majority of 79% of the workers have hence grown up in Transvaal, and a big majority of 67% grew up in a formal township. The Urban Foundation reports (1991) likewise that urban origins outweigh rural in Gauteng and that half the informal housing occupants were born there, with another 22% coming from other metropolitan or urban areas.

The 1950s and 60s saw a massive influx to the urban centres as the state lost control of the implementation of the influx regulations parallel to the industrialisation process. Today there is still a steady stream of migration to Gauteng, and initial estimates indicate a rapid growth in informal settlements especially. A relatively large proportion of the immigrants will stay in hostels, and will not easily be absorbed by the formal economic sector.

Social and economic background has enormous impact upon a person’s course of life, in terms of resources inherited, and in terms of influenced expectations,

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**Figure 2.1 Demographic profile of the Gauteng black worker. Percentage (n = 861)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. Sotho or Pedi</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sotho</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tswana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other African languages</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 or less</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td></td>
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<td>46-50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>61 or more</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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34
attitudes and activities. In our sample, the majority of the fathers belong(ed) to the lowest and worst paid parts of the labour force: 6% of the workers' fathers unemployed, 7% farmworkers, 20% unskilled workers and 27 semi-skilled workers. A relatively large proportion of the workers (12%) do not seem to have known their fathers well, or at least not their fathers' occupation. Most of the workers' mothers were either housewives (42%) or domestic workers (23%).

ACQUIRED ADVANTAGES OR DISADVANTAGES

In addition to being born with some advantages or disadvantages in terms of future opportunities, we acquire others or reinforce these during the road of childhood, school and adulthood.

Society has placed various responsibilities on the educational system. In most countries, schools are supposed to teach academic knowledge, but also to nurture democratic values, knowledge, creativity and independence. Many people suggest that the higher the educational level of a nation's population, the more likely is the existence and endurance of democracy. Education is, however, first and foremost a determinant of income, wealth and social status for the individual. It is thereby also a stepping stone for social mobility and success. The equality of access to education thus also becomes a determinant of social welfare and redistribution of resources.

According to apartheid ideology, blacks had to fill subordinate positions in society and had therefore no need for sophisticated learning. Bantu education created and enforced differences between blacks, whites, “coloureds” and Indians and thereby the segregation of population groups. As noted more than 60% of the population in South Africa is under the age of 35 and of young blacks in this age-group approx. 60% are said to be functionally illiterate. The quality of education, lack of school books and other facilities as well as the shortage of both adequately qualified teachers and a stimulating learning environment at home, are all factors that lead to high failure rates among black youth. The government spent approx. 5 times more on white than on black pupils in 1990. The difference used to be higher, but is now decreasing. Furthermore, continuous school boycotts over the years under the banner of “liberty before education”, caused by the bad quality of schools, the Bantu education system and political reasons, also pushed thousands of black children out of the schools. The Bantu education introduced by the National Party government effectively created a population with serious educational disadvantages and a dire shortage of skilled manpower. Somewhat under half of Gauteng workers (40%) have high-school standard 6, 7 or 8 as their highest educational qualification. An additional third of the total number of workers has achieved post-high-school education. Almost one third of the workers have on the other hand only standard 5 or less, i.e. primary school, of which half the workers (15% of the to-
tal) are functionally illiterate with only standard 3 or less as their highest educational qualification. Figure 2.2 shows the education and income profile of the black workers.

Distribution of wealth is a major source of interest-conflicts in complex societies. There is a relation between low per capita wealth and the precipitation of sufficient discontent to provide the social basis for political mobilisation. This does not mean that poverty in itself is the main cause of radicalism. Poverty is a relative concept and must be related to people's expectations and degree of discontent. Social position is always relative and people's perceptions of their own situation is experienced in terms of being better or worse off than others. Therefore, it is not only such socio-economic factors by themselves, but also the distribution of wealth, income, etc. which is an important indicator of discontent and degree of support for a political system.

9 million people live without access to any income (RRS 1993/94). The minimum subsistence level is calculated at about R300 per person per month and the household subsistence level at approx. R1000 per month. The household subsistence levels for a lower-income family (of 6 people) in Pretoria and the Vaal triangle in 1993 was about R870 per month and in Johannesburg about R930 per month.5

Figure 2.2 Education and income profile of the black worker. Percentage. (n= 861)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>No formal education</th>
<th>Sub A - Standard</th>
<th>Standard 4 - 5</th>
<th>Standard 6 - 7</th>
<th>Standard 8 - 9</th>
<th>Technicon or Matric</th>
<th>Technicon 3 or Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly income</td>
<td>Less than R800</td>
<td>R801 - 1200</td>
<td>R1201 - 1600</td>
<td>R1601 - 600</td>
<td>More than R2001</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5 The household subsistence level for a lower-middle income family is calculated to be higher.
According to census information from 1991, 21% of the total population and 32% of the African population in the central Wits live below the minimum living level of R1000 per month. Survey information from *Social Surveys* indicate that Africans in Gauteng manage to break even with R800 a month with an average household of 5-6 people, but with negative effects upon nutrition levels, quality of life, etc. The “deep poverty” is concentrated in the free-standing squatter settlements rather than in backyard shacks and outbuildings (Sapire and Schlemmer 1990). Income levels in formal areas are higher, in fact double those in informal areas or squatter areas (Sapire and Schlemmer 1990). Our data confirm differences in income levels between shack dwellers in informal areas and people living in formal townships, but not to the extent shown in other data which include unemployed and informally employed. Workers living in shacks in the informal areas earn a net average of R880 per month, whereas people living in formal areas in standard township houses, houses, even outbuildings earn more than the average of R1100 net a month.

Income data reveal that the median income received by African households in the main metropolitan areas of Gauteng is around 20% of that received by white households (Hall et al 1993). Of our sample of African workers 38% earn less than R800 a month, i.e. net take-home pay after all deductions and before overtime. The *average net income* for our formal workers, however, is approx. R1100 per month.

On their gross income, they have first paid an average of R600 in taxes, as well as medical aid, pension fund, etc. In addition to their own income, most households have additional incomes from marital partners, pensions and others. Household net income averages R1545 per month.

Income correlates clearly with gender, sector of employment, occupation, education and unionisation. Figure 2.3 shows the main determinants of income differences among black workers.

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6 Poverty varies between the Gauteng sub-regions. The 1991 census estimates that 42% of the households in West Rand, 31% of Johannesburg households, approx. 36% of those in the East Rand and in Pretoria and as much as 50% in the Vaal live with incomes below the minimum level.

7 The state and employers deduct for medical aid schemes, taxes etc. from the gross income. The tax burden (slightly progressive) on a gross income of between R5000 and R10000 a year will be an average of R386 or about 5% (Salary Survey 1994, Business Times, 18.09.94). Married women have had to pay substantially higher tax rates than men. The tax system is, however, equalised from 1995.

8 The Employment Research Unit estimates average gross income per month in the formal sector to be R958 in 1992. AWARD has looked at wage agreements in the third quarter of 1993 and first quarter of 1994 and estimates that the average gross weekly wage for labourers is R229 (LRS 1994).

9 Incomes below R50000 per year have been deducted directly by the employer without documentation. For women specifically, the employers’ calculation of the tax basis for this *Sita Tax* has been found to be wrong and the state thereby agreed in 1993 to refund money to those concerned.

10 The Employment Research Unit (1992) estimates gross household income at R1436 per month.

11 A regression analysis including race, gender, size of the company where they are employed, sector, occupation, age and education will altogether explain 51% of the variation in income in the sample. All these factors have significant effects upon wages. Race has the strongest net effect. Education, occupation and gender follow (in that order).
The highest income differences amongst workers are, not surprisingly, based on education, occupation and gender (in that order). Occupation and education are, however, strongly interlinked factors when it comes to influencing income: the higher the education, the higher the occupation and the higher the pay-out in Rands. Policy measures for affirmative action and redistribution aimed at addressing the skewed distribution of resources between whites and blacks need to take into account the determinants of blacks' poverty. Education has the strongest impact upon wage differentials. Those with no formal education have an average monthly wage of about 850 Rands whereas workers with degrees or technikon diplomas more than double their incomes, with an average wage of about 1900 Rands a month. Skills for production or degrees in education, health and services are good investments.

Furthermore, women earn less than men. They are generally employed in lower-paid occupations and sectors and have less education than men. gender-related

**Figure 2.3 Income determinants for black workers. Average (to closest R50) monthly net income according to gender, education and occupation (n 861)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Unskilled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White-collar clerical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled/artisans/technicians</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-professional/professional</td>
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0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500
income discrepancies come not only through from differences in choice and degree of education and occupation. Women also seem to get less pay than men for equal jobs.\(^\text{12}\)

There are also relatively big income differences between organised and unorganised workers. Whereas black organised workers have an average monthly pay of about R1290, unorganised workers are paid approx. R970 on average per month. We will return to this later.

Income and expenditure are of course related. The money we earn determines how much we can spend, the quality of goods we buy and the proportion we spend upon schooling, food, clothes, savings and others. Low income groups spend a greater proportion of their budgets upon necessities such as food, clothing, personal care and household operations. The Employment Research Unit (ERU 1992) found that black households devoted approx. 29% of monthly expenditure to food, 11% to transport and about 15% to clothing. Households living only on the Minimum Living Level devoted as much as 56% of their budget to food, 17% to clothing, 7% on fuel and light, 6% on transport and as little as 5% on housing (Hall et al. 1993).

African households devote around 10% of their budgets to support for relatives and other dependents (ERU 1992). In fact, a large proportion of workers surveyed (73%) have five people to support on their income. Most of our workers are married or have a partner (64%) and have on average three children. In addition they often contribute to supporting parents or other relatives.

The workers rent (41%) or have bought (40%) their own dwellings. The approximate rent for a house in Soweto is around R50,- per month. However, there have been substantial rent boycotts in both Soweto and other townships in recent years, so amount payable is not necessarily amount paid. Almost half (46%) of renters in informal dwellings paid nothing for their structure in 1988 whereas 37% had paid more than R26 a month (Sapire 1990, Sapire and Schlemmer 1990). The infrastructure and facilities in informal areas are extremely low. Informal dwellers most often share an external water source and external toilets. About 4 people on average occupy each informal dwelling or shack.

The educational and skills profile of the formal resident is higher than the profile of shack dwellers. Half of the informal dwellers have less than standard 5 in schooling and only R 411 in average household income per month (Sapire and Schlemmer 1990). For the most part however, although they differ in terms of income, education and skills, informal and formal households are similar in many socio-economic characteristics. Contrary to common expectations, there are no big differences in unemployment figures, formal employment patterns, age distribution and household structures between shack dwellers and formal residents (Urban Foundation 1991).

\(^{12}\) Men and women work more or less the same hours. Women have an average working week of 43 hours, while men work on average 45 hours a week.
RELIGION AND CULTURE

Religion is assumed to be a major source of stability and democracy. Religion, particularly in the form of sects, can serve as a functional alternative to political extremism. However, although there are clear indications of a relationship between religion and people's political affiliations, the direction and strength of this relation is far from clear. And religion is an even less predictable factor when it comes to effect upon political values in South Africa than elsewhere. With the Dutch Reformed Church being highly supportive of the apartheid system and ideology in South Africa, we might expect its supporters to be less democratically tolerant than the more open oppositional integrated Anglo-Saxon churches. However, the Dutch Reformed Church used to be segregated according to race, and the “coloured” and African churches of the Dutch Reformed Church developed a firm oppositional character to apartheid. Furthermore, the strong African independent churches have to a large extent been based upon so-called “freedom theology” and hence focused on empowerment and popular participation.

The majority of workers do not belong to a sports club, cultural organisation, social club or a women's group. They do, however, participate regularly in church meetings and ceremonies. 66% say they are members of a church. Most workers in Gauteng are Christians. Workers surveyed are either Methodists (13%), Anglicans (9%), Catholics (13%), Reformed Churches (6%), lutheran (6%), or they belong to the Evangelical (6%) or Apostolic churches (15%) or to one of the African independent churches (18%).13 11% of the workers are not religious at all. More women than men take an active part in religious life. Older people attend church services more frequently than younger people. Finally, lower education and income groups attend religious services most often.

People also participate regularly in stokvels. Sixty four% of our workers say they participate, are members of or hold office in stokvels or burial societies. "Stokvel" is used broadly to refer to numerous categories of co-ops or savings clubs operating in different ways and with different aims and functions. About a third of the existing stokvels are burial societies, especially focusing on financial assistance in connection with the high costs of funerals for family members of the stokvel participants (Lukhele 1990). Others aim at savings, function as banks lending out money, or aim at financial benefits for targeted groups like children, old aged, taxi drivers, or others. The average monthly amount contributed by members is R39 in burial societies and R106 in other types of stokvels (Lukhele 1990).

13 Additional small groups are Presbyterians and Seventh Day Adventists.
CLASS AND COLOUR

In conclusion, then, this is the background of the black worker: He or she is 38 years old on average, has passed standard 5 or 6 in a school marked by Bantu education and poor quality of resources. He or she earns approx. 1100 Rand per month, has three children, but altogether five or more people to support. He or she rents or owns a dwelling, is a methodist, catholic, or belongs to the Apostolic church or to one of the African independent churches, is a member of a stokvel, but does otherwise not take much part in cultural life, sports or social clubs.

The white workers on the other hand, come from a regulated industrial area on the East Rand called Germiston. Our white workers are very slightly younger than the black workers. Whereas the average age of blacks is 38, the average age of the white workers is 35 years old. They all live in proper houses or in flats in an area which for years was designated as a white area according to the Group Areas Act. They are relatively well educated and well paid. A large majority of the white workers have passed standard 9 or have a technicon education or more. South Africa has one of the world’s highest income inequalities. The white worker receives an average wage of R 2700 per month. He or she rents rather than owns a house. White workers in fact rent more often than black workers, and as will be seen later in this book, more often receive free or subsidized houses from their employers. Furthermore, whereas black workers support 5 other people on their income, white workers have often only 2 other people to support in addition to themselves. He or she is primarily Afrikaans speaking, has an urban background from Transvaal, belongs to the Reformed Churches, lives in a house, is married and has between 2 and 3 children while the financial burden is shared with the partner. More white than black workers are married and fewer are widowed. Their net monthly household income is R 3900, almost three times as high as the average income of the black household. Most of the white workers had a working class background, with half of their fathers being unskilled or skilled workers and most of the workers’ mothers being housewives.

Although literacy and education levels as well as income are higher in Gauteng than in any other region of South Africa, we find as in South Africa overall a racial division. Whilst more than one third of all the black workers earn less than R800 a month, two thirds of the white workers earn R2000 or more per month. Poverty is not confined to any racial one racial group, but it seems that poverty amongst whites is confined to people outside the formal workforce. Access to resources is in fact, not surprisingly, determined first and foremost by race. The income difference between white and black workers is significantly higher than either the income differences between various education groups, occupation groups or between men and women. Education and occupation significantly explain income differences between black workers, whereas hardly for white workers. Part of the reason for this is that it is hard to find low education and occupation groups amongst whites. On the other hand, gender has a far stronger effect amongst white workers than amongst
blacks. Income differences are more pronounced between white men and women, than between black men and women, even within the same education and occupation groups. Whether the workers are organised or not has more effect for income amongst black, than amongst white workers. The black progressive or democratic unions have, in other words, been more successful in pushing for wage increases than the traditionally white unions.

Do we know the workers better now? Yes we do, but only to the extent we believe their residential, family and economic background is sufficient to assess their living conditions, interests, politics and priorities. Knowledge about living conditions in this narrow sense may help us assess the “where and who” of workers, but not the “why, how and because”. To that we now turn: the working conditions of workers, their lives in the unions and their politics.
People's wealth, welfare and degree of satisfaction with their own life and status is often determined at the workplace. The purpose of this chapter is to explore working conditions and labour markets in Gauteng.

Cheap labour was traditionally portrayed by many employers in South Africa as the road to competitiveness. Education, training and empowerment of workers, on the other hand, were largely overlooked. Without underrating either the importance of education and training or the extreme shortage of skills, empowerment does not depend on solely formal qualifications. Empowerment is also achieved through the organisation of work, through the relationships between workers and management and to the extent that workers feel that they have control over their own work situation and pride in the job they do. Working conditions and the organisation of work are therefore crucial in strategies to build a more efficient production.

Protection of workers rights is increasingly becoming enshrined in legislation and in the interim constitution, through agreements in the Industrial Councils covering the manufacturing sector as well as in bilateral agreements between unions and employers. No longer are wages and the right to strike the only issues to be fought for by the unions. No longer do employers fiercely resist recognition of trade unions. Unions are arguing the need for social clauses in trade agreements and the challenge of growth with equity, but they also underline the need for economic restructuring and economic growth. Employers argue the interests of capital and the need for increased efficiency in production, but they also underline the need for worker training and empowerment as well as improved communication between business and workers. In short, the political changes in South Africa are increasingly reflected in changes in industrial relations and in new strategies by both labour and employers in terms of economic policy, labour relations and work.

THE SEGREGATED LABOUR MARKETS

The efforts of workers form the basis for wealth and growth of any nation. But who does what, and under which conditions? Due to different types of products and therefore different relationships to markets, suppliers and consumers, the various sectors of economic activity will usually have different forms of employment patterns, remuneration, organisation of work and different types of managerial control. Because of different wages and working conditions in different parts of the economy, together with the tendency of workers to identify with the overall norms and clients of the company, diverse priorities, interests and cleavages emerge between
workers in different sectors of the economy. On that basis, the type of production is often found to have an impact upon attitudes both to work and to life outside work.

We may differentiate between three different work-related political cleavages. Two are "horizontal" and refer to the functional specialisation of various types of economic activities. According to such lines of thought, workers will differ on values and priorities according to whether they work in the profit (private) or non-profit (public) sector and whether they work in for example manufacturing or with administrative tasks. A third "vertical" dimension is the occupational position of workers, which may crystallize conflicting interests and priorities. Let us first have a look at the workforce along these three dimensions which may generate diverse interests and priorities, due to diverse wage and organisational practices.

The large majority of our respondents work for the private sector. Only one of four is employed by the public sector, i.e. by the state, regional administration or municipality. However, we must distinguish between the broader public sector and public services in order to understand the nature of labour relations, wages as well as the scope and nature of employment practices in state and regional employment. Most of our public sector workers are employed in health and education, i.e. about 40%. The civil service occupies close to 20% of the public sector workers.

The essential difference between private and public sector employment lies in the nature of the state or "the public" as an employer; the state being a non-profit organisation, representing the community and thereby paid by taxes. Bargaining in labour relations thereby becomes bi-partite rather than tri-partite, and the pricing of wages, etc. a political act rather than following the market. Industrial relations are far better in the public than in the private sector in most countries in the Western world. In South Africa, however, the nature of the public as an employer, enforced by the history of apartheid, has caused industrial relations practices to lag behind that of private sector.

The public sector is currently subject to considerable dynamism, change and uncertainty. There will be a major reorganisation of public sector personnel. About 1.5 million people are currently employed as public servants. In parts of the public sector, large cut-backs of personnel are as such a desirable objective. In other areas, like health and welfare, the implementation of the RDP will require an expansion of personnel. And 11,000 vacancies were advertised in 1994 as part of an affirmative action programme to make the public sector more representative of the people. But money to finance the RDP will simultaneously have to be taken from amongst other sources, cuts and restructuring of public sector and civil service expenditure. Powerful institutions like the World Bank and the IMF have expressed concerns about public deficit and state expenditure. And the government expresses concerns about wage demands from workers, since about 40% of state expenditure is already needed to cover public sector wages. Black workers in the public sector were granted trade union and worker rights relatively late and many public sector workers are not yet covered by the provisions of the Labour Relations Act.
applicable to other workers. These last factors are important in explaining the recent upsurge in industrial actions among public sector workers.

Employment sector has considerable implications for wages, organisation of work and thereby for work satisfaction and motivation. We can distinguish between "law and order" tasks (police and armed forces); reproductive tasks (health and education); administrative tasks and finance; services and commercial tasks; manufacturing tasks and mining; and finally technical tasks connected to infrastructure etc. These sectors carry out different tasks, with different types of products, consumers and markets. To a certain extent, we will find hierarchical, detailed government and supervision in all these sectors. We will also find that there is usually quite some distance between the planning and conception of work on the one hand and the execution of tasks on the other hand. In the latter, however, some sectors have more freedom than others. Teachers, administrators or those working in finance or services will usually have more freedom in how to carry out the specified tasks and aims than workers in manufacturing or technical tasks, who will be governed by routines, detailed specifications and more strict supervision.

There has been a tendency in manufacturing to distinguish between large-scale assembly-line industries with piece-work production and hierarchical regulated control on the one hand, and more flexible production processes with alternating tasks, broader responsibilities and "human management" on the other hand. However, many companies are now experimenting with some sort of human management and flexible production systems. New technology and new goods aimed at a more affluent individualist consumer societies have given rise to more automated or process production, with different conditions of work from both a physical and a social point of view. Within these types of production, the division between manual and non-manual grades and workers and staff is breaking down. Most of the white workers are employed in mining. Figure 3.1 shows in which sectors the black workers in our sample are employed.

A large proportion of workers are employed in manufacturing and mining. Health, education, civil service, police and armed forces together constitute the core of the public sector workforce. General services, made up largely by commercial and catering, employ close to 15% of the workers, and health and education a bit more.

Most black workers say that they work for small and medium-sized companies (with less than 100 employees), whereas whites state they work for bigger companies. There may be a tendency however, for blacks to quote the people working in their particular plant, whereas whites for several reasons have more detailed knowledge of their company as a whole and will therefore quote the size of the company at large, not only their own plant. This does not, however, prevent many white workers from wondering when asked about the size of their company, if they are to count the blacks as well.

Workers in the formal workforce can be split according to four occupational categories: unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled or artisan, and finally white-collar, semi-professional or professional workers. Unskilled and semi-skilled workers are generally
presumed to lack control and autonomy in their work. Their tasks are often repetitive, short-cycled, and simple, involving minimal decision-making. The pace is usually dictated by the assembly line or close supervision from above. The more skilled workers are responsible for tooling, machine setting, maintenance work, quality inspection etc. or generally tasks which require a certain amount of autonomy and control over the job. Skilled workers and even more so the professional groups have yet more freedom and control. They also have formal qualifications and certificates which increase their mobility in the labour market.

The racial division of the South African labour market is not surprising considering the history of apartheid, and its legal mechanisms for job segregation and job preferences. A cautious estimate would indicate for example that a minimum of one million, or about 13%, of African workers fall into the category of unskilled labourer whereas only a minor group of less than 1% of whites, or about 7000 people have unskilled occupations.\(^1\) Likewise, the great majority of artisans are whites; close to 70% in 1989 (Holdt 1993).

Two out of three of our black workers are unskilled or semi-skilled workers. White workers, in contrast, to a larger extent occupy the upper status and income

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\(^1\)These data are included for the sake of racial comparisons of the labour market. They are based on the 1991 census after adjustments for undercounting (Valodia 1993). However, the census does not cover the old “homeland” areas. Furthermore, note that unskilled workers in this respect are employed in production-related occupations. Unskilled workers in the farming sector, domestic and other services, mining, etc. are excluded.
groups, as artisans, technicians, supervisors, semi-professionals, professionals or white-collar workers. Figure 3.2 gives a profile of the occupational background of the workers in our survey.²

The labour markets are even further segmented as a result of apartheid and its creation of more than 11 labour administrations and many variations of labour law in the country. Different labour laws were established for the various traditional “homelands” and the rest of South Africa, for different occupation groups and for private and public sector employees. The result is that whereas bargaining and worker rights for blacks generally have been recognised in the private sector in South Africa since 1979, such rights are more limited amongst public employees and in some of the old “homeland areas”.

Gender segregation across racial divisions segments the labour markets even further. The gender gap is clearly visible in the occupational profile. A large proportion of women are unskilled workers: 35% of the women as against 16% of men fall into this lowest educational as well as lowest paid category. Men, and especially black men, are mainly semi-skilled or skilled workers. On the other hand, women comprise a relatively large proportion of white-collar workers and professionals, like nurses and teachers. In other words, women take care of reproductive tasks, whereas men take care of production.

Figure 3.2 Occupational profile of the workers. Percentages of black and white workers in each occupation. (n 861 and 141)

²The white workers in our occupational profile are too few in number for us to generalise concerning the population of white unskilled workers at large. They have however, been included for the sake of illustration.
PAY AND BENEFITS

Employers often argue that low wages, or wages that increase more slowly than increases in productivity, are necessary to support growth. In reality, the competitive advantages of nations have often been based upon human resources, high wages and good working conditions (Porter 1990). In 1991, COSATU demanded R1200 per month as the minimum living wage. Few workers have, however, reached this level. The average net income for black workers is as earlier mentioned approx. R1100.

Wages increased by an average of about 10% in 1993, just around the rate of the inflation. Wages are, as already noted, racially based, but also depend upon gender, sector of employment, education and occupation group. Whereas a large proportion of women work in services, health and education, more men work in mining, manufacturing, construction, etc. The lowest paid sectors are services in the private sector which include the commercial and catering businesses. The construction sector is also poorly paid. In the civil service, on the other hand, as well as in health and education, black workers are paid slightly above the average of R1100. These workers are primarily employed in the public sector. Relatively high wages for blacks in the public sector is surprising, but must be explained by their comparatively high educational and occupational background, as teachers, nurses, etc. Manufacturing workers in our survey are paid slightly less than average, and mine workers more.

Most workers say that good pay is the most important factor in a job. Black workers rate good pay as far more important than job security, good work mates, work satisfaction or responsibility. And far more black workers than whites say that good pay is the most important factor in a job. Not surprisingly, pay is perceived as most important amongst those who are poorly paid. Good
pay is perceived as the most important work factor amongst workers in services, commercial, wholesale and manufacturing. And good pay is seen as more important among unskilled and semi-skilled workers than among skilled and white-collar workers. 40% of the white workers say that good pay is the most important factor in a job and 33% say job security. But although the majority of white workers are most concerned with wages and job security, they are still more oriented towards the job content than black workers. 25% of white workers quote work satisfaction and 14% say health and safety are the most important work factors. Figure 3.3 gives a more detailed picture of worker preferences in the labour market.

Most workers generally feel that the physical strain in a job is of minor importance. When asked what they think is the least important in a job, around 10% say that responsibility is the least important, and equivalent numbers state training and development, fair supervision or work satisfaction. The picture that emerges is not surprising. Work satisfaction, empowerment and development are in one sense “luxuries” to be struggled for and achieved after the basic necessities like wages are acquired.

A closer look at the data reveals that the workers who quote work satisfaction, responsibility, training and development or fair supervision as the most important factors in a job have a higher average net income than the workers who say that good pay and light work is the most important.

Figure 3.3 What is most important in a job? Percentages of black and white workers stating that each of the mentioned factors are important. (n 861 and 141)
Black workers who perceive training and development to be most important in a job are those workers who are highest paid, with an average net monthly income of R1600. The workers who perceive full time work, health and safety, light work and good pay as the most important factors in a job are on the other hand the lowest paid workers, with R1 000 net or less a month. These worst paid workers want what they do not have a secure job paid at, or above, the minimum living level. Workers who have already achieved this, are more likely to prefer training and development or even work satisfaction.

Figure 3.4 shows the extent to which workers feel that they have specific job requirements fulfilled. Most of the black workers (about 70%) state that their need for good pay is not fulfilled in their job today. A large majority of whites (close to 70%) feel in comparison that their jobs fulfil the needs for good pay.

Those workers most likely to say that their jobs fulfil the requirements of good pay are, not surprisingly, the workers who are best paid themselves. There is also a far higher average income amongst those workers who say that work satisfaction is achieved in their jobs.

Whites, highly educated workers in the highest occupation groups, are most satisfied with their wages. Amongst black workers, those working in services and commercial, construction, wholesale and manufacturing as well as the public sector

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**Figure 3.4 Fulfilled job requirements? Percentages of black and white workers who say that various job requirements are fulfilled. (n 861 and 141)**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Black workers</th>
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<td>Health and safety</td>
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<td>Fair supervision</td>
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workers in civil service and health and education are least happy with their wages. Less than a third of these workers are satisfied with their wages.

When the average inflation rate is higher than wage increases, workers may earn a total wage increase in Rands which is eaten up by relatively higher prices on the products they have to buy. That is why we talk about net wage increases and why we can say that several groups of South African workers over the past few years have “lost” wages more than they have increased or earned higher wages.

What, then, are the chances of finding other means to meet for higher prices, income losses or just simply to support a large family? The bad economic situation has affected demands for overtime. Black workers in Gauteng work on average 44 hours a week, in fact less than the ordinary working week of 46 hours. This is explained by the number of casual, “part time” workers amongst the respondents. White workers work slightly more.

Most workers get additional benefits from their employers. The extent and coverage of social security systems suffer from several shortcomings in most developing countries, and for that matter in several countries in the industrialised world. In the Nordic countries, Social Democratic governments have gone relatively far in establishing substantial universal public arrangements which make people less dependent upon market mechanisms. Elsewhere, however, it is common that social security systems contain a relatively small state pay-out, while most of the social security benefits are labour-related, with substantial additions from employers. This implies that social security coverage varies greatly between employed and unemployed and between groups of workers employed by various employers, working in different occupations and work categories, or organised by different unions. This means that welfare benefits acquired through work may contribute substantially to the social security and position of the individual. Social responsibility programs are getting increased attention from South African companies — in some cases due to employers’ feelings of social responsibility, in others because fears of compulsory taxation under a new democratic government are replacing the voluntary spending they now control themselves. Figure 3.5 shows us the type and extent of benefits provided.

Social responsibility programmes often amount to a voluntary tax, but also cover benefits like house loans, bursaries for education etc. Although most workers get extra benefits in addition to their wages, the degree, type and contents of such “fringe benefits” vary between blacks and whites. Fewer black than white workers get fringe benefits from their employers. More than 80% of white workers and 60% of blacks get extra benefits like medical scheme, free or cheap meals, etc. However, the difference between blacks and whites is even larger than what is indicated by the number of workers covered. The type and value of benefits differ even more. White

"Employers should provide us with bursaries and not the R50. It is insufficient"

"I would like to have security in a job like medical scheme and be recognized as a person."
workers get free or subsidized houses, black workers get loans for houses. Getting free or heavily subsidized houses seems to apply first and foremost to white workers in the mining sector. Blacks get subsidized education for their children, whites get free or subsidized transport, medical aid, profit bonuses and/or a 13th pay cheque at the end of the year. In other words, whites get benefits which to a larger extent function as a wage increase or “wage top-up”, so wage differentials between blacks and whites are even higher than what first meets the eye.

Unions negotiate for pension and provident funds, medical aid schemes and housing. Organised workers – black and white – are better covered by such arrangements than unorganised workers. Furthermore, we find that skilled and white collar workers are far better covered by benefits at work than unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Less than 40% of workers in services and commercial are covered by pension and provident funds, as against more than 60% of workers in civil service, health and education etc. Medical aid schemes also differ in the extent they cover different occupations and sectors of workers. Whereas less than 30% of unskilled workers are covered by medical aid at work, more than half the skilled and white collar workers are. More than half the workers in the public sector are covered by medical aid, but only one third of workers in the private sector.

Figure 3.5 Additional benefits to workers. Percentages of black and white workers saying they receive various types of benefits (n 861 and 141)
Loyalty to the company and work motivation are influenced, amongst other things, by the time the worker has been employed in the company. In South Africa, however, time in the company does not necessarily indicate career patterns, work satisfaction or loyalty to the employer. It simply says that, if you find a job, you hold on to it. Most of the workers have been with their company for several years: 37% have been in the company for 4 years or less, but the average has been employed with the same company for about 8 years. This is not strange in light of the country where the formal labour market only manages to incorporate one out of ten that comes out of school.

**ORGANISATION OF WORK**

Organisation of work is seen as having a major influence on diverse motivation and attitudes amongst workers. Degree of control over one's own job and decision-making at work are the main factors influencing job satisfaction and alienation at work and thereby loyalty and the motivation to perform. Common "knowledge" says that mass production typically involves people working at fragmented, routinized and repetitive work-tasks under restrictive conditions. Automated or process production, on the other hand, often brings people together in relatively small teams where they can perform a variety of tasks. The latter workers tend to enjoy a greater degree of freedom in planning and organizing their tasks and time schedules. At the same time, they usually have greater freedom of movement in the company, more responsibility and are more often consulted on how to carry out and organize the work in general.

South African managerial strategies usually emphasize hard work discipline, piece-work and specialization. However, management has lately become more concerned with human relations, especially in companies where machinery and capital investments are at stake. There is an increasingly wide-spread use of machinery to replace heavy manual labour and/or artisans. Furthermore, there has been upward occupational mobility of African workers into machine operative jobs (Crankshaw 1993). Management is increasingly turning to affirmative action to redress the disadvantage inflicted by apartheid on black people and on women. The main point here is that the more repetitive the work, lack of autonomy etc., the more alienated the workers are expected to become from work itself, social life and from politics. Workers who, on the other hand, find themselves within flexible, more trusted circumstances at work, where they themselves have more influence over the pace and execution of tasks, will feel more committed to the company, become more productive and active. We need to look at organisation of work against the background of both different profit/non-profit and economic sectors as well as on the basis of occupations. Issues of skills and degree of control in the carrying out of a job are usually closely linked.
Most workers say that they have to cooperate with others to finish their own tasks or jobs. They say that they are able (to a large extent) to decide themselves how fast to work and when to do their various tasks as well as to decide how the job is best done.

Unskilled workers have the least independence here. They have to cooperate with others to finish their jobs, and have less freedom in timing and strategies for own work. Skilled and white collar-workers are also far more often asked for advice by management on how to organise work, than are unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Except for workers in armed forces and civil service, most workers feel that they themselves to a large extent can regulate the time-span and procedures by which to execute their tasks. Public-sector workers on the other hand, clearly feel that they are far more regulated by norms and instructions.

Job autonomy and satisfaction are the mediating factors which make organisation of work, type of production etc. have a strong impact upon political attitudes and activities of workers. Alienation indicates both the extent to which workers are separated from the final product, the total production process, other work-mates or comrades as well as the degree to which they themselves thereby feel that they lack control over their own work situation. Figure 3.6 gives an idea of the degree of autonomy and control the workers find in their work.

Alienation is at its most extreme in the large-scale mass production based on assembly-line principles. Still, industrial jobs differ in the degree to which they offer

![Figure 3.6 Degree of autonomy and control in own work. Percentages of black and white workers responding positively to questions on work autonomy, consultation and whether they have fora for communication at work. (n 861 and 141) ](image)
opportunities for workers to use and develop their skills, knowledge and abilities. Industrial jobs also vary in the degree of autonomy that workers have in deciding about work schedules, methods and pace of work. People working in the finance sector, health and education, civil service and wholesale sector say that they have most autonomy at work and are consulted most often by management concerning the organisation of work.

How can we explain that a relative large proportion of workers actually perceive that they do have autonomy at work? Several studies have argued that black workers in South Africa are stripped of any form of control, both over the ordering of tasks, and over the speed at which they have to be executed. Adler (1993) on the other hand, argues that the grading system in South African industries reflects more the racial divisions of apartheid than real skills and knowledge. One individual South African worker may be responsible for a number of operations which in comparable industries in other countries would be performed by a number of workers. Adler argues that there is substantial informal and plant specific skills are gained through informal learning channels. “Tacit skills” and “multiple or allround skills” must hence be seen against the background of the specific characteristics of South African economic activity, isolated by sanctions, directed towards a white consumer market, producing relatively low outputs, and the differentiation of products and low volumes rather than economy of scale, mass production and competition by cutting prices.6

Autonomy at work should also be studied with some caution. Even if workers feel that they do have autonomy, their perceptions of freedom may be within strict routines for time and quality performance. Their autonomy may hence be interpreted as autonomy in the execution of tasks to meet such requirements. A better indication of workers’ control is the extent to which they are consulted about how to organise work. The higher income and occupation groups clearly have the highest autonomy at work as well as highest control over their own work situation. They are also far more often consulted about how work is organised than the unskilled and semi-skilled workers. When asked whether management or their supervisors ever ask their advice or consult them about how their work is organised, only one out of four workers state that this never happens. The majority of workers say that they do have fora or mechanisms at work where they can voice their opinion about work and their own working conditions. Such channels for communication cover more than half the black workers and almost 70% of white workers. However, the type and form of such communication varies substantially. And the degree of influence attained through such bodies is limited.

Rather than viewing industry as dominated by deskilling and dehumanisation, driven by rapid mechanisation, we should note that jobs obviously require far more thought and control over execution than what we may have expected. Racism, and

6Adler (1993) has studied the automobile industry. However, his arguments are easily applicable also to other parts of the economy.
systems of grading based upon population group categories more than skills and performance, have frozen people in specific job categories, whereas the skills they have and the tasks they actually perform are far broader. Studies of the automobile industry have shown that workers have a wide range of “tacit” skills and “allrounder” status (Adler 1993). With this background, workers feel that they do have autonomy in their work. Work satisfaction, however, is limited. They approach work in an instrumental way, to find means for survival. They want a good decent wage—and this they do not get.

DECISION-MAKING AND CONSULTATION

Economic and industrial democracy is receiving increased attention in South Africa as part of debates around a new appropriate production policy. This increased attention to industrial democracy is also due to high expectations that the political democratisation process must be followed up by increased participation in all spheres of society. Workers throughout South Africa expect political democratisation to be accompanied by a process of economic democratisation and democracy at work. COSATU states that democratisation of workplace decision-making is essential to develop a programme to raise both capital and labour productivity in a way broadly acceptable to all parties (Shilowa 1994).

However, people from different normative and political quarters put different contents into the concept of economic or industrial democracy. Some refer to economic or industrial democracy or worker participation as communication, consultation or simply re-organisation of work. Others underline the decision-making aspect of democracy and thereby define industrial or economic democracy as workers participating and influencing fora where decisions are made.

By democracy, we here mean full participatory rights in decision-making bodies where all participants have equal power to determine the outcome of decisions, whether that body is a parliament, the workplace or an organisation. Economic or industrial democracy thereby implies full participation and influence in bodies dealing with economic and industrial policies. Workplace democracy on the other hand, refers to full participation by workers in decision-making at work.

Recent years have seen economic and political changes reflected in changes in the labour market in South Africa. Some employers are trying out new strategies with “green areas” for social gatherings, exchange of information as well as improved contact with unions and consultation with workers. Employers have often introduced participative processes in response to the productivity crisis and in the hope that this will restrain workers back from taking part in

“On the matter of trusting bosses and leaders, I cannot really trust them because we have been promised a lot of good things and at times we have been deceived in most cases.”
confrontational industrial action. Figure 3.7 gives an idea of the types of fora offered.

Worker participation is still in its infancy in South Africa and most of the schemes introduced have less to do with decision-making and more to do with re-organisation of work and improved communication between management and workers. Workers are increasingly consulted by management on matters such as organisation of work and workers, production lines, work periods, etc., but it is management's prerogative to decide whether to listen to the opinions of the workers. A majority of workers say that they have some sorts of fora or communications channels where their opinions can be heard. Still, more of the white workers have such arrangements than black workers. Furthermore, such arrangements cover more public sector workers than workers in the private sector and more skilled workers than unskilled workers.

These participative schemes are aimed at individual participation, to a large extent to the exclusion of the trade union movement. Liaison committees were introduced in South Africa in the 1970s as an attempt to co-opt black workers and tame the growing militancy amongst workers. Despite long and strong resistance from unions to such management-introduced committees, they still exist. There are indications that the existence of liaison, work or staff committees decreased through the 1980s, but there has been a steady growth in such structures since then. Black workers tend to take advantage of such forms of communication in committees. Most workers participate, often in structures associated with quality control circles, consultation fora etc. Although these schemes are more often than not aimed at maintaining decision-making prerogatives in the hands of management, some

Figure 3.7 Communication at work. Percentages of black and white workers saying they have various fora of communications. (n 861 and 141)
communication is obviously seen as better than none. White workers, on the other hand, are in higher occupational groups; they tend to have more influence through the work they are doing and closer contact with management without formal structures. They participate less in the formal structures of communication than black workers.

THE MICROCOSM OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The workplace has been the microcosm of the broader South African society, marked by racism and apartheid (Crankshaw 1993). Whites dominate the best paid and best protected parts of the labour market, Asians and “coloureds” form intermediate groups, whereas Africans dominate the bulk of the lowest part of the job market. This divided labour market is illustrated by the occupational distribution of various racial groups and thereby income distribution, work tasks and status. There is a primary labour market for white predominantly white collar, professional or artisan workers which offers high wages, good working conditions, stable employment, job security, possibilities for mobility and promotion within the company, and trade union protection. The secondary and third labour markets for “coloured” and Asian workers, by contrast, are marked by lower wages and unstable employment. The fourth labour market for African workers has been marked by the lowest wages and high unpredictability.

However, the labour market is more complex than racial segregation alone would indicate. Neither one nor four labour markets can explain the different practices in wages and benefits, organisation of work or managerial control. The labour market contains several more divisions of skills, occupations, sectors and gender.

Workers' occupational categories differ not only in wages, but also to the extent that they are covered by social benefits at work. Skilled workers and white-collar workers are far more often covered by such benefits than unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Furthermore, public sector workers in civil service, health and education and the armed forces are more often covered by benefits at work. More than 80% of workers in these sectors are covered by benefits, as against less than 60% in sectors like private services and commercial, construction, wholesale trade and manufacturing. There is no longer, if there ever was, one black working class with similar interests. Affirmative action has opened up new divisions in the labour market and deepened the divisions between African workers who have gone into artisan, super-
visory or white-collar jobs and those less-skilled workers with low wages and no security.⁷

Reorganisation of the economy in order to kick off economic growth must take products and markets into account, but also focus on the reorganisation of work itself. The days of reliance upon cheap labour have long passed in the industrialised world, and attention is increasingly turned towards higher productivity. Worker satisfaction is one factor leading to increased efficiency. Here the first step in the right direction seems to be decent wages – which the majority of workers clearly feel that they do not have today. Loyalty to the company is hampered not only by low wages, but also by unfair wages. Equal pay for equal work is essential for greater worker satisfaction and thereby loyalty to the company and increased production.

The route to economic growth presented by the National Economic Forum, and embraced by labour, seeks to combine economic growth, social equity and increased worker participation by lowering unit labour costs (Patel 1994). This is to be achieved through lowering production costs by reorganisation of work, human resource development, etc. Simultaneously, products should be improved by quality production, product innovation, etc. which again requires training and empowerment of the workers. However, workers themselves do not seem to put training, responsibility and empowerment high on their priority lists.

Getting workers themselves to cooperate in the restructuring ahead is crucial in order to achieve economic growth and efficiency in production. One effective way to help the cooperation, input and efficiency of workers is to guarantee proper wages and working conditions. Type of production, organisation of work and decision-making in the workplace are important factors for job satisfaction and thereby for economic efficiency as well as for political and social conflicts. Employers will have to change their attitude to worker rights. The willingness of business to put their weight behind the RDP will be put to the test when it comes to wages and working conditions for their own employees.

The RDP provides for “legislation to facilitate worker participation and decision-making as well as ensuring worker access to company information”. Existing worker participation schemes are, however, aimed more at consultation than at democratisation. Examples are token share-owner schemes and schemes like green areas, quality control circles etc. whose primary aim has often been to break the backbone of worker solidarity and the unions. The extent to which they succeed will, also depend on the strategies and resources of the union movement. But qualitative demands like restructuring of decision-making at work have usually been more difficult to win for union movements than quantitative demands concerning wages.

Worker education, training and empowerment, with a new system of grading and training included, is seen by labour as the key to South Africa’s productive potential. The labour movement, and COSATU unions in particular, are working on plans for new industrial grading and training systems which will indirectly

⁷See Crankshaw (1993) on changes in the labour market.
address the differences in income and working conditions between different groups of workers. Programmes of affirmative action to address the legacy of apartheid, and make all positions and occupations at work more representative of the population at large, make up an important part of such restructuring. Such schemes of “positive discrimination” are not unlike European work practice, where they have generally been implemented to address gender inequalities. In South Africa the aim is to ensure that company employment structures reflect or become broadly representative of the composition of society.

**WORK AND POLITICS**

Marx and Engels’ theory of the evolution of working class consciousness is specifically related to characteristics of the production process and the workers’ relation to the means of production and its surplus value. This has led many to focus on the traditional production process with huge manufacturing plants where workers are engaged in manual and semi-skilled production with an alienated relation to the products. Others focus on working class consciousness on the basis of work organisation or the degree of worker participation in decision-making at work. What then is the relationship between work-related factors and satisfaction on the one hand, and class consciousness and work-related political activities on the other hand?

Those workers who participate most in strikes are, not surprisingly, those who are least satisfied with their own wages and working conditions. Participation in stayaways, political meetings or marches, on the other hand, is not influenced by individual satisfaction with wages or working conditions. Some may expect workers’ political participation to increase as workers become more involved in decision-making at work (Pateman 1970). If we look closer at the schemes of workplace “participation” existing in South Africa, however, we can see that participation in such schemes at work hardly increases political participation. If anything, the converse seems true. People who participate most in Quality Control Circles, Consultation Fora, etc. are the ones who are involved least in political actions, be they strikes, stay-aways, political marches or meetings. In other words, the most politically conscious are hardly active in consultation and communication schemes at work at all.

Work seems to influence political attitudes and working class consciousness only to a limited extent. There are few differences between workers from different economic sectors, with different degrees of autonomy, consultation, work satisfaction and participation in communication and consultation schemes, when it comes to class consciousness, working class identity and opposition to management. One exception concerns the tendency of those who participate in consultation structures, to be less inclined to be in opposition to management. Those who participate most in Quality Control Circles, Consultation Fora etc. tend more often to agree that it is possible to have teamwork with management.
Class theory asserts that people who belong to the same class also tend to have other common characteristics and to behave in certain common ways. Class consciousness implies identifying of oneself as part of a group, seeing this broader collectivity as in opposition to other groups, and having a willingness to act and do something to change the situation (Mann 1973). But the workers in our survey identify themselves first and foremost as "just a person" and less as workers (see Chapter 5). We asked workers several questions to probe their feelings on opposition to management. Figure 3.8 shows the response.8

Even though black workers are more sceptical than white, most workers believe it is possible to have teamwork with management. However, there is a difference between seeing the need to cooperate with management and actually trusting them. While both white and black workers agree to a large extent in the need to make a common effort for the company, they strongly disagree when it comes to trust. Black workers do not trust management. This may indicate that they will give more emphasis to the need to control the conditions for their cooperation and they may more easily be inclined to pull out of cooperative structures. They also believe that it is only if workers stand together that they can protect their own individual interests and living conditions.

Figure 3.8 Opposition to management Percentages of black and white workers (n 861 and 141)

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8The question on teamwork with management was formulated like this: "Some say running companies after the elections is like playing soccer/football where good teamwork (between management and workers) is success and to everyone’s advantage. Others say that teamwork is impossible because employers and workers are really on opposite sides." Who would you agree with most? (Goldthorpe 1968).
Working-class consciousness in the “traditional sense” is more developed among workers in the private sector in typical industrial sectors than among public sector workers and is stronger among unskilled and semi-skilled workers than among the more skilled workforce. Workers in the manufacturing sector tend to identify themselves more often as workers than do public sector workers, who more look upon themselves as “just a person”. Unskilled and semi-skilled workers believe less in teamwork and cooperation with management, and give more support to the idea of workers running the factories than more do skilled workers. White-collar workers express the strongest trust in management. The support for redistribution, in the sense of themselves taking a lower wage increase or paying more in taxes in order to avoid retrenchments of workers in their own company or to the benefit of those less well-off in the community, is stronger amongst skilled than amongst unskilled and semi-skilled workers. This is clearly explained by wage levels. Unskilled or semi-skilled workers are paid less and have less to contribute with.

In recent years the consciousness and confidence among black workers has been much affected by developments outside the workplace. Working-class consciousness is formed in the townships, through education and thereby hierarchy in the workplace. Education and income are the strongest determinants of political attitudes, as we will see later. Furthermore, working-class consciousness is formed in the unions. Those workers who have been active in collective bargaining structures participate more in political activities and have a stronger identity of being workers. With that, it is time to turn our attention towards the unions.

35% of unskilled workers say teamwork with management is impossible whereas only 10% of skilled workers express the same attitude. Almost half the unskilled workers disagree with a statement that workers should not run the factories, whereas only one third of the skilled workers say the same.
Unions are interest organisations, but what interests do they represent? The aim of this chapter is to address why workers organise and what they expect from their unions.

On the international arena, the balance of power between unions and employers has generally swung against labour during the last decade. Membership and militancy have declined and the institutional power of unions carries less political weight. Reasons can be found in changes in the labour markets, increasingly internationalised economies and the introduction of new technology, flexibility policies and various instruments of individualised reward systems. Union decline can also be caused by ineffective unionism or by internal political divisions in the labour movement as well as by government policies that undermine union power. The interests of workers and union members have changed, and so have the nature and essence of trade unionism in the Western world.

By contrast, in several developing countries and countries in the process of democratisation, unions are now gaining increased political power and social force. The political power of unions in mobilising for democracy is reflected in countries such as Brazil, Poland, the Philippines and not least South Africa. Political changes as well as economic recession, inflation and unemployment are factors which turn attention towards the role of labour in national restructuring. The political struggle has in many cases been the driving force behind the unions. What drives their agendas and strategies, once formal democracy is obtained? Which are the priorities of the workers?

Union power has at least three dimensions. First, the ability of unions to achieve their agenda in the face of resistance. Second, winning an institutional or legal framework which increases the likelihood of their success. Third, the capacity to influence attitudes and perceptions - of employers, state and not least their own members so as to create a favourable ideological climate. The most important aspect of power is how unions influence their own members in order to mobilize collective strength. The power of unions towards employers and the state thereby depends upon the degree to which union strategies reflect the interests of their own members.

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1See Hyman 1994.
SOUTH AFRICAN UNIONISM

The total number of organised workers in South Africa has increased from 1 million in 1979 to about 3.3 million workers today. COSATU is clearly the dominating trade union federation. From the time it was formed in 1985, the number of paid-up members of its affiliates has increased from 450,000 to about 1.3 million, and making it the biggest organised group in civil society. The National Congress of Trade Unions (NACTU) has approx. 330,000 paid-up members. The Federation of South African Labour Unions (FEDSAL), formed in the early 1990s on the basis of remnants of TUCSA (Trade Union Council of South Africa), has about 260,000 paid-up members. FEDSAL represents predominantly white-collar workers, and hence white employees. The rest of the organised workers are spread over a large number of smaller independent unions, in the Federation of Independent Trade Unions (FITU), the United Trade Unions of South Africa, or, in the case of large numbers of white workers, belong to relatively small unions affiliated to SACOL (South African Confederation of Labour). Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show the development of membership in registered trade unions from 1979 to 1993 and paid-up union membership by federation in 1993.

About half the workers we surveyed were unionised, with the great majority belonging to COSATU affiliates. Another small group of workers have previously been organised, but left their union either because they changed jobs to companies where the unions have no recognition agreement with the employer, or because the company is too small for union representation. Where they left the union, this was mainly because circumstances forced them to do so, not because of dissatisfaction.

Figure 4.1 Membership of registered trade unions 1979 - 1994

![Figure 4.1 Membership of registered trade unions 1979 - 1994](image)

Source: Department of Manpower 1995
with the union. Whereas a large majority of Gauteng black workers are organised in COSATU, sizeable proportions of white workers belong to small craft or artisans unions affiliated to SACOL.

COSATU and NACTU are mostly organised around sectoral interests generated by the final product more than the craft or work process. The traditional white workers' unions, on the other hand, represent to a larger extent interests generated by the production process, by crafts or professional interests. COSATU and NACTU mainly organise blue-collar, unskilled and semi-skilled manufacturing workers and miners. NACTU's has its strongholds in the chemical, construction, transport and metal sectors and is increasingly gaining ground also among farm workers. COSATU is strongest in the mining, metal and manufacturing sectors, and is increasingly gaining ground within public sector workers.

There is clear duality between the strategies and priorities of black and white workers as well as a duality of the organisational priorities and strategies of their unions. Dualities reflect the political setting and the apartheid protection of white workers by regulations and restrictions placed upon blacks. White workers were given priority and advantages by the apartheid regime, in terms of education and laws on job preferences and segregation restricting the entry of blacks to the labour market. Black workers were thus disadvantaged by legal restrictions, bantu education and direct discrimination in the workplace. Unions or staff associations representing white workers were given special status by the apartheid state and the employers.

"Unions are for kaffirs".

Figure 4.2 Paid-up union membership by federation 1994

![Bar chart showing union membership by federation in 1994](chart.png)

Source: A. Levy and Ass 1995
By contrast, unions representing black workers had no bargaining rights until 1979, and had in some "homelands" still no rights or status by 1994. A racially divided labour market has emerged from the discrimination, which also in the years to come will carry weight in shaping workers' interests and union priorities.

Differences in privileges and positions created different political strategies by the unions through the 1960s and 70s. White workers joined TUCSA, racially exclusive unions and the federation SACOL, whereas black workers joined SACTU, and then after SACTU had to disband, the FOSATU unions and independent unions in large numbers. Both white and black labour unions were highly political, but with different strategies, goals and content. White workers' unions were relatively conservative, seeking to maintain their privileges and working closely with the National Party. Black workers' unions were progressive, seeking to uproot white workers' privileges and working closely with the political parties in underground and exile. Whereas white workers and their unions worked against democracy, democracy was the primary goal for black workers and their unions.

The legacy of racial segregation of the earlier trade unionism continued into the 1980s and 90s. COSATU was formed in the mid 1980s on the basis of combining the early political "congress" unionism of SACTU, the workerism of FOSATU and several independent unions. COSATU soon gave its support to the Freedom Charter and the alliance with the ANC. NACTU was also formed in the 1980s with a strong Black Consciousness and PAC identity. FEDSAL, as a traditional white union federation, is in principle nonracial. But other whites-only unions, like the Mynwerkersunie (the Mine Workers Union) and affiliates of SACOL like Yster en Staal, are still racially exclusive, have been conservative defenders of the old order and have actively worked against the democratic process.

**NEW UNIONISM, NEW AGENDAS**

The trade union movement which developed after bargaining rights for blacks were recognized in 1979 is often characterized as the *new* trade union movement. The new elements were the legally organised *opposition*, and the *non-racist* and *democratic principles*.

The role of civil society and of trade unions, in particular in processes of democratisation, has traditionally been underplayed. Unions influence the form and content of public policy and distribution of resources through their key position in the economy by means of strikes and sanctions. A massive strike wave followed the birth of COSATU and the federation initiated several major strikes and stay-aways during the late 1980s: stay-aways on the 1st of May and on the Soweto day of 16th of June every year as well as mass actions against the white elections, actions for the

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2 SACTU was dismantled in the early 1960s because of political harassment, the banning of the ANC, etc.

3 FOSATU was formed in 1979 with the objective of building an independent, non-racial worker controlled labour movement.

4 In principle however, NACTU remains independent.
release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and against the VAT⁵ and the new amendments to the Labour Relations Act in 1988, just to name a few. A general stay-away with millions of workers on mass actions may cost the employers and the economy more than 200 millions Rands a day. Mass actions were often successful both in terms of support from millions of workers and in terms of the short- or long-term responses to the demands.

Unions also pushed forward political negotiations by means of negotiations in the labour market and the contact achieved here with state and employer representatives. Negotiations in a series of fora, at local, regional and national level, prepared and re-inforced the political talks by generating ideas and strengthening the democratic forces. Negotiations in the labour market helped to create legitimacy among leaders and grassroots structures for the need for political negotiations. Labour’s participation in the National Manpower Commission, and in the National Economic Forum where labour relations and macro-economic policies discussed, was an important contribution to the political talks.

Through these years, the new trade union movement displayed immense organisational and strategic skills. In spite of political restrictions and strong resistance from employers, COSATU unions in particular demonstrated a growing strength, discipline and ability to carry out actions. Two factors are of specific importance in this respect. Firstly, the development of national strategies⁶ is important for building class identity and national solidarity. Secondly, there is the mobilisation and organisation of the shop-floor according to democratic principles.

COSATU developed into a social-political popular trade union federation. Its pledge for working-class interests was defined broadly as the fight against apartheid. The trade union movement worked for political and economic rights by building alliances to community organisations, the church and oppositional groups within South Africa and abroad. The strategy was mass mobilisation and international sanctions. The aim was a multi-racial democracy with strong public intervention, regulation and a planned economy.

RECRUITMENT

Some claim that the union movement is merely an institution for defending its members’ economic interests: through collective bargaining, grievance procedures and a practical monopoly of strikes, unions come to exercise a proprietary interest

⁵The Value Added Tax (VAT) replaced the General Sales Tax (GST) on goods and services from 1991. The conflict between labour and the NP government revolved around the rate of the VAT, whether basics, foods, etc. should be zero-rated and not least whether the government had the right to impose such changes without consulting the unions.

⁶From 33 unions in 1985, a comprehensive amalgamation of unions has taken place to 15 national sectoral unions today. National collective bargaining in central Industrial Councils and the use of instances like the Industrial Court are other elements in COSATU’s increasing emphasis on national strategies.
over labour protest. Unions are service organisations, a means of providing restricted economic benefits. However, a broader perspective sees unions as political organisations that aim to challenge capitalist production and the free market forces. Unions must, in this perspective, by virtue of their very reason for existence, engage in a political struggle, with the central, strategic objective of defeating economic liberalism in the political arena and opening up the possibility of displacing market determinations with political regulation (Higgins 1985). Others maintain that unions attract new members on the basis of their fight against capitalism: it is the ideological and political fight for socialism that sustains and expands the union base. The central point for all these views, however, is that unions represent interests. The success and extent to which the union movement can carry forward the members’ interests vary, as do the methods and strategies the unions choose to implement. However, no union will survive unless it can represent the needs and priorities of its members.

A labour movement does not reproduce itself, but continuously has to be reproduced through organising new workers and retaining old members. So which are the main interests of workers and potential union members? Some will say that it is the fight for “bread and butter” issues that maintain the unions. However, it may sometimes be more rational for workers to protect their individual economic interests from outside the unions, while the unions as collective organisations provide and negotiate their basic needs, especially if unions negotiate all-embracing agreements or push for legal reforms. Many of the industrial councils negotiating wages in South Africa, for example, have been empowered to extend their rulings to non-parties. In many countries, compulsory membership and coercive picket lines are the source of union membership. In South Africa however, compulsory union membership is rare. Both unions and employers have sometimes pushed for compulsory union membership for white workers, but these unions (staff associations) are in reality often seen as the extended arm of management. Although compulsory union membership may be rare, collective pressures to organise can obviously be found in South Africa, as elsewhere.

The extent to which the unions manage to incorporate the interests of their members will determine the recruitment, loyalty and support from their constituency. Unions in many countries are facing problems because new groups and new interests increasingly form part of the labour market and their constituency. Union success will depend upon the extent to which they manage to defend such new and changing interests of their members. Many of the new worker interests and demands go beyond the traditional subject matter of collective bargaining to include issues such as health problems, day care, maternal leave, flexible hours, training etc. Figure 4.3 looks at why workers themselves say they joined the unions.
Black workers join unions to be protected against their bosses. Increased wages or expectations of improved wages is one commonly cited reason for membership in the unions. This is not surprising, considering that organised workers and COSATU members negotiated the most significant wage improvements during the 1980s. In fact, black unions in South Africa made wage gains similar to those of unions in more developed countries. Furthermore, black unions tended to compress wages across skill levels by securing higher minimum wages for unskilled workers. The union wage-effect for black workers in blue collar jobs is highest amongst unskilled workers. Among white workers the union wage-effect has been shown to be significant, but not as strong as among black workers (Moll 1993).

Low-income groups more frequently state that they have joined the unions to improve wages and working conditions than do high income groups. Three out of four low-paid workers say they joined unions to improve their wages and working conditions, whereas only one out of three with incomes between R2400 and R3000 gives this reason for organising. Those workers stating that they joined unions for political reasons, or because of pressure from other workers, in fact have a higher average income than those workers giving other reasons for organising.

Many black workers also joined the unions because they believed this was a way to make a contribution to the liberation struggle. However, political reasons are mentioned by only 15% of the black workers as their reason for organising and women are less driven by political motivation. The lowest-income groups are more motivated by instrumental reasons and aims to improve wages and working conditions. White workers, on the other hand, often joined unions because they believed this was a way to build strong institutions in order to stop the liberation struggle. Or they simply joined unions because it was compulsory: almost 60% of the white workers quote this as their reason for organising.

Figure 4.3 Reasons for organising. Percentages of black organised workers quoting various reasons for organising. (n 429)

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7Data from 1985 (Moll 1993).
8Earning less than R800 per month.
The survival of unions makes it necessary not only to focus upon the interests of members in order to maintain them, but obviously also the preferences and interests of non-union members in order to assess how to recruit them. Figure 4.4 thereby looks at the main stumbling blocks for union recruitment in Gauteng.

The main reason why black workers do not organise is found in resistance and intimidation from employers. Almost half the unorganised workers quote this as their reason for not joining a union. Others say that there are political reasons why they are not in the unions, or that other workers intimidate them from joining. A total of 12% of the workers say that they are happy without unions or that they are informed or uninterested in union matters.

Some major stumbling blocks for unions in organising new members will have to be removed through legal mechanisms and negotiations, in for example, the newly established National Economic Development and Labour Council. Employer intimidation must be confronted by legal steps and provisions concerning worker rights in the Bill of Rights. Clearly, compulsory union membership amongst white workers also serves as a barrier against the principle of freedom of association and the workers' right to choose. The Bill of Rights makes compulsory union membership illegal. Legal steps and negotiations between employers and unions do not, however, solve the problems for the bulk of workers who do not organise simply because they do not know enough but are interested in unions. This is clearly a "greyzone" where unions have a potential for organising without major efforts and where the resources and quality of organisers will determine the result.

COSATU says that it has uncovered widespread dissatisfaction amongst members about the lack of service they are receiving from the unions (Shilowa 1994).

Figure 4.4 Reasons why workers do not organise Percentages of black unorganised workers quoting various reasons for not joining unions (n 389)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changed work</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company too small</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested in unions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from workers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation from employers</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political reasons</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages are calculated on the basis of the total number of black workers who are not organised. White workers are not included, for two reasons. First, the total number of unorganised white workers in our sample is small (53). Second, this figure is reduced even further by a relatively large proportion of them (23%) refusing to answer why they are not organised.
In the new political climate, unions are, and increasingly will be, pressurised to show moderation on wage demands. Employers will tend to push for alternative ways of compensation like profit sharing, fringe benefits etc. where the costs of benefits are linked to company performance. These factors together make services and benefits an extremely important area for union advances. But what sort of services? We asked both organised and unorganised workers what the most important service was that they would like to see the unions provide (except for wages). Figure 4.5 indicates the responses.

*Figure 4.5 Most important service from unions. Percentage. (n 861 and 141)*

They were asked: *Which is the most important service/s you would like to see the unions provide, except for improved wages?* Workers could give more than one answer. Frequencies should thereby be understood as the percentage of workers mentioning the specific service in question.
A large proportion of the workers state that they would like to see the unions provide traditional union services, like job security, or representing workers vis-à-vis management, or stopping intimidation from employers. This is what we term as “traditional shop-floor issues” above. The second type of answers which we have called “communication”, must be seen in relation to the first type of service in the sense that these are factors that can first and foremost be promoted in negotiations and cooperation between by managers and unions. Communications include improved relations between workers and management, improved race relations, as well as the small number of workers stating improved relations amongst workers. The third group of answers, which we refer to as “quality of work”, includes improved working conditions, health and safety as well as training and education. The fourth type of service has simply been named “benefits”. Many of the workers would like to see the unions provide, or rather pressure the companies to provide, specific benefits like housing loans, scholarships, free or cheap transport. In addition comes a smaller group stating that unions should work for socio-political issues, such as creating jobs or providing external community services.9 A relatively small group of workers (3%) says that unions should concentrate upon improving themselves and becoming more effective or they simply state that unions have got nothing to offer or they don’t know what that should be (10%) The last group is first and foremost confined to unorganised workers.

Workers would in general like the unions to work with issues that they will benefit directly from on the shop-floor. Unorganised workers tend to give less priority to improved working conditions and race relations and far less priority to benefits. They have less knowledge or ideas of what unions can offer. White workers stress improved working conditions and health and safety. Whereas for example less than 20% of black workers cite the need for unions to promote better working conditions, 25% of white workers say this is a service they would like the unions to provide. It should also be noted that white workers are far less inclined to say that unions should give priority to fringe benefits and to education and training. This corresponds however, to the tendency of lower income groups to give high priority to promotion of benefits rather than other issues.

A PROFILE OF THE UNIONISED WORKER

So who is the black organised worker? Earlier data reveals, that the degree of unionisation is higher amongst men than amongst women (Pityana and Orkin 1992). However, women are estimated to comprise some 36% of COSATU membership (NALEDI 1994) which corresponds broadly to the proportion of women in the for-

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9We have also included promotion of worker rights in this group of answers because the type of examples they mention (like freedom of association) is best promoted as a socio-political issue.
mal labour market. Our survey in fact also shows that women constitute about 36% of the organised workers. Furthermore, the higher the income group, and the higher the education level obtained, the higher the degree of unionisation. However, there is no difference in income and education level between COSATU members and workers organised in the other unions.

How long a worker has been within the union movement and his or her degree of activity and participation in the union movement will determine the extent and depth of loyalty to union norms. Some will argue that the purpose of power struggles within the union movement or political goals or missions outside the unions are too corrosive of personal relations, and too removed from the deepest, most enduring concerns of the members to be able to sustain mass interest (Lipset 1963).

Others will argue that the longer you spend in an organisation, the more loyal you become to the norms of the organisation and more active in defending these norms. About 40% of the unionised workers in our sample have been in the organisation for four years or less. This may indicate that the turn-over of members is relatively high. Most unions, and in mining and manufacturing in particular, have in fact experienced a loss of membership as a result of retrenchments. There has also been an emergence of new union constituencies in recent years, with growth in public sector unions in particular, i.e. new types of workers joining with new interests and priorities. The average black worker, however, has been a union member for 7 years, whereas whites have been union members for a longer average of 12 years. Furthermore, workers who joined the unions after 1990 may have done so for more instrumental reasons than the workers who joined earlier. Workers who joined unions for political reasons or to promote unity and solidarity amongst workers have in fact on average been union members for longer (10 - 11 years) than those who state that they joined unions for instrumental reasons to increase their wages or because they felt pressurized by other workers (5 - 6 years). The workers who have been the shortest time in the unions are most likely to say they joined in order to get better wages.

Position in the union will also affect loyalty to the organisation and political learning. It has been frequently noted that elected union leaders and trade union officials become set apart from the rank and file in their style of life as well as their perspectives and modes of thought. Such arguments are

"Personal factors such as education, marital status and race did not influence union membership, whereas factors such as industry affiliation, experience tenure, firm size and geographical variables did". (Moll 1993)

"Now people (organisers) come to unions to work. It is not a commitment anymore" (M. Buthelezi in Buhlungu 1994).

10Caused by public sector workers now being covered by legislation which opens up for union rights to bargain, etc.
largely based upon the increased income and social status of union leaders and are thus more applicable to a Western European setting than to South Africa. South African unions, and COSATU in particular, applied strict principles and practices to assure representativity and accountability through the 1970s and 1980s. But as the union movement has matured and grown, its strategies have become more centralised, and the gap between rank-and-file and union leaders has also widened. COSATU and its affiliates today have about 95 national office-holders and 590 regional office-holders and employ more than 1400 people on a full-time basis (NALEDI 1994). While it was common in the union movements' initial stage to find that union leaders drew the same salaries as secretaries, cleaners, etc. within the unions, this has changed dramatically. Although union leaders are currently paid far below market rates in both the public and private sectors, they have enjoyed relative wage gains compared to other groups of union staff. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to argue that union leaders today are less motivated by the political struggle or "a mission", and more motivated by instrumental reasons to perform a job. Differences in priorities and norms between union leaders and rank and file have on the other hand been found also in South Africa (Ginsburg 1993).

There are no reliable data on the total number of shop stewards in the major labour federations. Very few affiliates have such information. However, 16% of the organised workers in our sample now hold or have held the office of shop steward. Further, 7% now hold or have held the position as a shop steward committee office-holder 7% hold or held the office as local or regional office-holder. There is obviously a considerable overlap between these categories. Altogether about 20% of our organised workers hold or have held offices, for an average period of 4 years. There is also a small group of trade union officials (6%) in our sample, -- education officers, administrators, etc.

Union activity is, however, not restricted to a limited few leaders. 22% of organised black workers have participated in union training courses during the last 5 years and 43% have participated in seminars. Furthermore, over half the black workers have participated in elections of shop stewards and most have participated in local union meetings, but less in regional union meetings and congresses. White workers participate far less in union activities than do black workers. 65% of organised white workers have, for example, never taken part in elections of shop stewards, in comparison to 46% of the black workers. 55% of white workers have never taken part in local union meetings, compared to 42% for the black workers in our sample. Women are also generally somewhat more passive union members

"Attending union meetings regularly is a service to a comrade, like a car being sent to the garage to be serviced"

11The formal arrangements and existence of such provisions are also provided for far less in the white unions.
than men. Whereas 46% of men never participated in election of shop stewards, 55% of women were passive. Whereas 42% of men never took part in local union meetings, as against 48% of the women.

**“BACK TO BASICS”**

Unions have been built more or less along the same four dimensions all around the world. First, worker allegiance was developed and the trust of the workforce obtained. Second, a national network was developed linking the unions together as well as connecting them to other organisations. Third, union-presence within the firms and at plant level was established with a regular process of collective bargaining usually as the first priority. Fourth, the tacit or explicit authorisation to establish union organisations outside the plant level was obtained. Included in this was the recognition of the unions’ right to speak for the interests of workers in negotiations with governments and legislatures on questions of social and economic policy. South African unions have been built along all these four dimensions. The last dimension developed in the past four years with the participation of COSATU, NACTU and FEDSAL in the National Economic Forum, National Manpower Commission and several other fora to carry forward workers’ interests into the sphere of politics through institutional channels.

Some will distinguish between a revolutionary union movement and a reformist union movement according to the goals of the unions in relation to the state. Others distinguish between socio-political trade union movements, corporatist union movements and pluralist union movements. To clarify the picture, or to make the confusion complete, we will distinguish between a model of unions as an anti-capitalist opposition aimed at advancing class interests, a second model of unions as a vehicle for social integration representing social interests, and finally a third model of business unionism with priority of collective bargaining and narrow occupational interests. The first model assembles the revolutionary union movement or the socio-political trade union movement aiming at a change of system. The second model operates within a system and resembles a social democratic or reformist union movement. The third and final model of business unionism resembles the pluralist union movement with focus upon the economic interests of the workers.

The important point is that the broader the issues focused on by the union movement, the more likely will union members feel affected by decisions being made within the union and the more inclined they be to participate and try to influence these decisions both within and outside the union. The type of union is, in other words, important not only when it comes to the content of the political learning taking place within it. Type of union in terms of focus, strategies and

12 The argument holds for genuine workers unions, not for state corporatist unions which were built up in some authoritarian countries, or business unions in other cases built by employers.

13 Hyman 1994.
relationship to the state will also mobilize workers to differing degrees because of the numbers and types of issues that affect workers.

The black South African trade union movement can easily be characterized as a socio-political trade union movement or a revolutionary union movement up to the late 1980s. Since then, however, COSATU and its affiliates have developed strong characteristics of a reformist or social union movement with increased responsibility for societal interests and nation-building. The “back to basics” campaign that COSATU has launched takes into account the consequences of a new political setting, increased focus within the union movement upon the gap between leaders and rank and file as well as the consequent need for a strategy to rebuild strong shop-floor activity and greater emphasis on bread-and-butter issues. This implies in one sense a return to campaigns and the “worker control” culture of FOSATU days. In another sense, this new strategy is not a return to anything, but rather an agenda for rebuilding internal organisation within a new political and economic climate, with new leaders and with new dilemmas.

One of these dilemmas concern with the balance between union member interests on the one hand and societal interests on the other. This dilemma involves questions such as the extent to which a privileged (but still poor in absolute terms) group of workers in the formal workforce should show wage moderation and responsibility towards the interests of unemployed and poor people, and society at large. How, and to what extent, should unions act as private interest organisations, concerned with the interests of their own members, as opposed to identifying with broader constituencies? Another important question, thrown up by the same dilemma, concerns the degree of union independence from government within the context of an alliance and with leading union activists taking over parliamentary and government positions. We will return to this and to the question of class consciousness later, but let us just have a brief look at worker expectations in relation to the political role of the unions in the future. We asked the workers whether they agreed or disagreed with the idea that unions should stay independent of political parties.

Figure 4.6 gives an idea of how workers perceive the relation between unions and political parties. Workers are relatively polarised in their answers, with a slightly positive balance of opinions, i.e. the percentage of workers who agree that unions should be independent of political parties almost balances the percentage of workers disagreeing. Half the black workers disagree with the statement that unions should keep independent from political parties. Most workers have made up their minds, but quite a big proportion (about 20%) of the total number of black workers are uncertain or indifferent. Organised workers, however, feel more affected: a larger proportion of the unorganised workers are uncertain or indifferent. White workers are more polarised than blacks, with fewer white than black workers indifferent about the issue of union independence.

White workers' unions, on the other hand resemble, more the typical business unions. Simultaneously, some of the white unions have functioned as typical old-style corporatist unions (as known from other authoritarian systems) in cooperation with the apartheid regime or political parties.
Strong support for union involvement in politics has been found amongst COSATU shop stewards before (Pityana and Orkin 1992). It was found that only one out of five shop stewards think that unions should stay out of politics. Supporting union involvement in politics is obviously different from supporting union alliances with political parties, but the latter gives an additional indication of how workers perceive political strategies as opposed to concentration on shop-floor issues and their understanding of whether political participation and broad alliances are important to the pursuit of workers' interests.

We also asked the workers whether they agree or disagree that unions should concentrate more on bread-and-butter issues and less on politics in the future, whether the tri-partite alliance (between ANC, COSATU and the SACP) should be broken in the future, and whether they believe strikes would be used as readily in the future as in the past. All these questions concern strategies and agendas along the balance line between own member interests and societal interests.

The tri-partite alliance between COSATU, ANC and the South African Communist Party carries long historical weight in South Africa. Whereas some will clearly argue that unions should remain independent of political parties in order to forcefully defend workers' interests through the shop-floor, others will argue that broad mass-based alliances are the route through which workers' interests can be integrated in politics and in the struggle for democratic rights, which in turn will benefit workers on the shop-floor. The old debate within COSATU between workerists and populists to some extent reflects the dilemmas and conflicting points of views concerned with broad alliances and agendas. Furthermore, whereas some will argue that unions should now stay independent of governments in order to serve as

Figure 4.6 Unions should stay independent of political parties. Percentages of black and white workers favouring independence of unions (n 861 and 141)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White workers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Black workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unorganised workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organised workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Percentages

77
“pushers” for social change and not be made responsible for state policies, others argue that cooperation between government and civil society is crucial for reconstruction and development. COSATU hence re-emphasised at its Congress in September 1994, that it is independent within the alliance. Only two affiliates have pushed to break the alliance now after the elections, namely SACTWU and NUM-SA. Figure 4.7 suggests that the majority of the black workers themselves think that the alliance should be maintained.

Altogether 60% of the workers in our sample believe the alliance should be maintained. This is in line with the previous finding that most workers believe that unions should not stay independent of political parties. There is slightly stronger support for the alliance among organised than among unorganised workers. Unorganised workers tend to be more uncertain than organised workers and tend to give slightly stronger support for union independence. However, there are only small differences between unorganised and organised workers, as well as between workers organised in independent unions and in COSATU unions, when it comes to support for the alliance. There seems to be a general perception among all black workers that a close relationship between labour and the majority party in government will benefit all workers. White workers on the other hand, tend to favour independent unions. Figure 4.8 shows how workers perceive the role and priorities of unions in the future.

Black workers generally believe that unions should keep up their political work. One third believe, on the other hand, that unions should concentrate more on bread-and-butter issues. And here there are no differences between unorganised and

Figure 4.7 The future of the tri-partite alliance. Percentages of black workers responding to whether it should be broken after the election (n 861)

Unorganised workers

Organised workers

Black workers

This question was not posed to white workers
organised workers. There are, however, dramatic differences between black and white workers. Almost all the white workers indicate that unions' direct involvement in politics will not serve their interests. They believe a more narrow "economist" approach of unions would be a correct strategy in the future. However, while all white workers believe bread-and-butter issues must be given priority in the future, they obviously believe (as was found earlier) that there are various channels for the unions in their fight for such issues; independently or dependently of political parties.

Organised workers have trust and confidence that the unions can represent their interests in the political sphere and clearly tend to define their own interests broadly to be fought for in the political arena at large. The means and instruments to obtain power in the political arena are, however, based on the ability of unions to mobilize collectively through strikes and stay-aways. That does not necessarily contain actual strikes, or loss of man-days and thereby productivity due to strikes. It is the threat or potential of strikes that makes labour powerful. To what extent do workers now believe that this is as an efficient weapon in the present and future as in the past? Figure 4.9 shows if and how workers perceive the use of strikes in the future.

Most workers believe that it will be more difficult for unions to use strikes and stay-aways as readily and successfully in the future as in the past because of the close relationship between unions and government or because governments will tend to be hostile to such actions. In fact, it is white workers who more often support the view that unions will strike as easily in the future as in the past. Half (51%) the white workers are of this opinion, as against only 37% of the black workers.

Figure 4.8 Unions should concentrate more upon bread and butter issues? (n 861 and 141)

"Unions should concentrate more on bread and butter issues and less on politics in the future"

15The degree of uncertainty is however higher amongst unorganised workers. This makes 54% of organised workers disagreeing with the statement, while "only" 48% of unorganised workers disagree.
There are only small differences between organised and unorganised workers on questions of the unions' relationship to politics, except that organised workers tend to believe more that the close ties between governments and unions will make it increasingly difficult for unions to go on strike.\(^{16}\) In conclusion, therefore, workers support the political involvement of unions, but seem more hesitant about the efficacy of strikes and stay-aways to back up such political power.

Although there is majority support for political involvement and the tri-partite alliance, this should not be exaggerated. Whereas workers and unions in the past have been united by common interests in fighting apartheid, the future may see the dawn of stronger interest conflicts and ideological cleavages within labour. First, a relatively sizeable minority supports the break-up of the tri-partite alliance and independent unions. Second, support for political alliances varies between different unions, sectors and groups of unionists. Workers from the metal, clothing and textile unions are far more critical of the political involvement of unions. Furthermore, leaders are surprisingly less supportive of the tri-partite alliance and the political involvement of the unions than are ordinary members. Leaders tend to say that unions should concentrate more upon bread and butter issues and that it will be more difficult for unions to go on strike in the future because of close ties with government or because governments tend to be hostile to such actions. “Leaders” in this respect include all strata of elected leaders, from shop stewards to national office holders.\(^{17}\) Such a broad categorisation of leaders may hide internal differences.

\(^{16}\) 35% of the organised workers support this view in comparison with 28% of the unorganised workers.

\(^{17}\) It is impossible to split this group up further because we will then end up with too small numbers for analysis.

**Figure 4.9 Use of strikes in the future? Percentage of black workers agreeing with one out of the following statements (n 861)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile government will make it more difficult to strike in the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close relations with government will make it more difficult to strike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unions will strike as easily as in the past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Bar chart showing the percentage of workers agreeing with each statement](chart.png)
within the group and between strata of leaders. Most of the elected leaders in the survey were (or had been) shop stewards, i.e. the stratum of union leadership expected to be most militant. Around half the shop stewards agree in union independence from political parties, and that unions should concentrate more upon bread-and-butter issues in the future. Ordinary members will tend to be far less inclined (about 30%) to support a greater focus on bread-and-butter issues.

With potential internal differences in interests and strategies emerging within the union movement, another dilemma concerns the organisational strategies of the future, and the fine balance between internal democracy on the one hand and the need to create consensus and centralise decision-making in relation to macro-economic negotiations, national collective bargaining, etc. on the other hand. How are unions to reconcile differences in the future?

THE ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES OF UNIONS

The principle of worker control carries more weight in the history of practice of South African unions than in most other unions elsewhere. Many would link the re-emergence of militant trade unions in the 1970s to the radical ferment of left-wing academics and students who advocated a more participatory notion of socialism (Collins 1994). Unions were, in Friedman's (1987) words “laboratories for democracy” in which workers could get empowered to take control of their own lives both at work and in the community at large. The principle of worker control had both a strategic basis and an ideological and political component. The new unions built up strong democratic grassroots structures in order to reduce dependency upon leaders and ensure that they had new people to replace leaders who fell victim to political harassment and restrictions. The emphasis was upon building worker leaders and preventing bureaucracy and domination by strong union officials.

There are, however, clear signals from within the union movement that this internal democracy has been more rhetoric than reality. Leadership and elites have attained far more power in the union movement than is usually recognised. Workers complain that the leadership has left the membership miles behind, that leadership is losing accountability and thereby information and in-put from the ground. The problem therefore seems to be not only one of representativity, but also one of information and contact with workers’ issues. The responses from workers surveyed indicate that many are not confident of the democratic practice in their unions. Although this perception is far more pronounced among white workers, it indicates also a growing alienation and weakness in the new unions.

The majority of organised workers believe that decisions in their union are usually taken by democratic debate, mandates to leaders who in turn are accountable to them, the workers. The trust in democratic decision-making is stronger amongst blacks than amongst white workers. Whereas 8% of black workers state that decisions in their unions are never taken through democratic channels, 18%
of white workers say this is the case and 22% don't know. Further 35% of black workers say that union leaders never take decisions on their own without consulting the workers, whereas 30% of white workers believe this is the case and 19% don't know. In total, 44% of the organised workers feel that decisions in their unions are generally taken by democratic debate and by their giving mandates to leaders who are accountable to them. The lower income groups have stronger trust in democratic decision-making and disagree more often that union leaders take decisions on their own than do higher income groups. When it comes to their own perceived influence on union decisions, the great majority feel that their contribution is important in shaping union decisions. Only 12% of the black workers state that they have no influence whatsoever over union decisions. Whereas 46% of black workers say they have a lot of influence, only 15% of white workers are of the same impression.

The degree to which workers internalise the values of their union depends upon how centralised the organisation is. The more the bureaucratic and hierarchical the union, the less the potential for membership influence over policy and the less they are likely to feel part of the union structures and loyal to its norms. The more democratic the organisation, the more will members be able to take part in decisions that affect them and also hence feel more part of the norms, values and decisions of that organisation. There is increasing awareness within the COSATU unions that bureaucratisation and centralisation have grown. Furthermore, union leaders, administrators and organisers are now increasingly professionals who come to work in the unions to do a job, not necessarily to fulfil a political commitment to the struggle. There are now several places and organisations where people can fulfil a political commitment which are paid better and offer better career possibilities and working conditions.

Union satisfaction is closely linked to how members assess the quality of the union's relationship with its members – like its readiness to listen to member concerns and provide feedback, and members' perceptions of the degree of union leadership influence and effectiveness in dealing with management (Fiorito et al. 1988). There is also evidence that union leaders often overestimate how satisfied members are with union internal affairs, and relations between union and members. Union participation is positively related to perceptions of union performance in bread-and-butter and member-union relations matters. At the same time, it is not enough for unions just to “deliver the goods”. Members who participate most actively in union activities have been found to be more satisfied with their unions (Fiorito et al. 1988). Not only do they feel part of the decisions that are made, they also gain access to information about union matters. The communication and contact between leaders and shop floor is thus important for members' satisfaction with their unions.

Shop stewards are in several respects regarded as “in the middle”; between workers and management in the company, and between members and leaders within the union. Shop stewards constitute the most important link in the internal communication within the unions. In one sense, they are caught between the employer they work for and the members they represent. Their power and position depend
upon continuing support from the members. An overwhelming majority of CO­SATU shop stewards in the earlier mentioned CASE study agree in that shop stewards are bound by workers' mandates (Pityana and Orkin 1992). On the other hand, 80% of them feel that they may be in conflict with their constituents and occasion­ally have to discipline their members.

Two thirds of the black workers in our sample say that their shop stewards frequently report back to them concerning issues discussed within the company and on matters discussed in the union or federation. The higher income groups tend to be less appreciative of the feed back from shop stewards and white workers far less. This communication goes two ways. Most black workers believe they in turn contact their shop stewards often with ideas complaints or suggestions. All in all, more than 70% of the black workers said that they felt their shop stewards represent their interests well, while this was the case for less than half the white workers interviewed.

IN CONCLUSION

We have found a picture of South African unions, and COSATU unions in particular, which confirms the idea of a political and internally democratic trade union movement. Workers have firm confidence in the democratic structures and practices of the unions, and believe in their political power. Still, for workers the priorities are clearly on the shop floor. They give priority to wages and benefits, whereas working conditions, education and training are seen as of less importance. By contrast, the reconstruction agenda of many unions is now turning increased attention towards such “quality demands” in order to strengthen productivity and avoid retrenchments and dismissals. COSATU aims to represent the poor and dispossessed. However, COSATU workers are still a privileged minority in relative terms. In the future, strategies for centralised collective bargaining will have to take local interests and economic out-put into consideration.

Union power relies on a collective willingness to act and to use strikes as a collective voice. However, power is issue-specific varying according to issues and the ability of the parties to mobilise material, organisational and ideological resources. Workers seem generally sceptical about the effective and successful use of strikes in the future. The collective willingness to act depends, however, upon specific issues, let us now turn to how workers approach various political issues critical for the future of both democracy and for union strategies in the future.
A tornado has blown over South Africa. Yet, tornados strike very unevenly, leaving some areas untouched while turning others completely upside down. Much still has to be achieved for formal democracy to stabilise and become a real democracy with equitable distribution of social, economic and political resources. The RDP points out the need for broad involvement of civil society in the transition process. But active involvement by the people presupposes political competence and motivation. Reconstruction itself presupposes trust and legitimacy for democratic institutions and decisions, as well as a fair amount of patience on the part of the people. In practice, the government may have to strike a fine balance between broad political involvement of civil society and efficient governing, and also between the interests and opposition of strong pressure groups and the need for compromise.

This chapter focuses on political attitudes and priorities among workers. What do they expect and want from democracy? To what extent do they feel they can influence the course of political events? What sort of democracy is their goal: a participatory democracy with high popular involvement, or a representative democracy with respect for majority decisions and for governing bodies?

**Political Competence or Alienation**

According to R. Dahl, if democracy is to work, it requires a certain level of political competence on the part of its citizens:

"In newly democratic or democratized countries, where people are just beginning to learn the arts of self-government, the question of citizen competence possesses an obvious urgency." (1992:45)

What standards must citizens meet for them to be considered competent? It seems reasonable to expect people to be aware of what they want their government to achieve and be predisposed to act in ways aimed at bringing this about.\(^1\) The modern politically competent citizen is thereby expected to be concerned about public affairs and political life, well informed and involved in discussions and activities to influence governmental decisions in order to foster the general welfare of the community as well as protect their own interests. This may seem to be a lot to ask for in newly established democracies.

\(^1\) I have borrowed heavily from Dahl (1992) in this section on political competence.
People will participate in politics according to whether, and how, they see their own living conditions affected by political decisions. The mobilisation for political activity depends upon political knowledge and interest, as well as confidence in one's own capacity to change circumstances through political action.

Political competence refers to specific political knowledge, interest and confidence in one's own capacity to influence politics. Political alienation on the other hand, implies a perception of being, without control, which in turn indicates that a person does not have the opportunity to act in ways that can serve to further his or her political interests. Feelings of not being informed about what is going on, being unable to follow political events or unable to influence political decisions—all these indicate political alienation.

Pityana and Orkin (1992) reported that more than half of the COSATU shop stewards they surveyed thought politics was too complicated for workers to understand. Shop stewards obviously believe less in the abilities of workers than workers themselves do; moreover political consciousness and knowledge have probably also increased as the transition process moved towards elections. Today's South African black worker is not politically alienated or powerless. Figure 5.1 reveals a picture of a highly competent citizen on political matters. He or she is collectively oriented, feels affected by political decisions and believes that he or she has the knowledge, competence and resources to influence the course of political events. A large majority of workers consider themselves well informed and feel that political decisions are often made that affect their lives. However, they have less confidence in their own abilities to influence politics. There are more workers who feel that they are well informed or affected by politics than there are workers who feel that they influence politics, or are capable of doing so, through their own actions. The feeling of being affected and informed about politics functions as a stepping stone towards participation and confidence in own abilities to influence politics. Those workers who are most confident of their own political influence also consider themselves well informed about politics.

People's ability and capacity to advance their own interests will determine the quality of the democratic system. The politically competent citizen does not necessarily participate actively in politics. Most citizens in fact make use of only a small proportion of their potential political resources. However, their competence lies in the fact that they are able to mobilise for political action on specific issues. It is important to note in this respect that only 20% of black workers do perceive their own participation to have no effect on politics and their own living conditions. 37% of white workers believe in comparison that they are unable to influence politics, and 16% do not know.²

Less than half the workers believe that it is only people in high positions who can influence the course of political events. The fact that close to half the workers say that they themselves can influence politics must be noted as quite amazing, against the backdrop of apartheid and decades of exclusion from formal politics. However, as will be seen later, this confidence reflects the experiences of resistance politics more than participation in formal political channels.

²In addition to the about 25% of workers who say they are capable of influencing own living conditions through political actions, another 50% say they are able to a limited extent to change own living conditions through political activity.
Several institutions were of critical importance to the political transition process: the National Manpower Commission and the National Economic Forum discussed and made decisions concerning industrial relations, labour market issues and macro-economic policy which eventually affect the working conditions of millions of workers. The Transitional Executive Council (TEC) governed the transition process up to the elections in April 1994, and the National Peace Secretariat (NPS) established structures and mechanisms for conflict-solving to curb the violence. However, with the exception of the TEC and the NPS, the majority of workers have no knowledge of these institutions. Most workers are unaware of the responsibilities and work of the Manpower Commission and the National Economic Forum.

So how do people learn or develop a civic competence or participative culture? Political involvement or apathy will never be evenly spread in a population, but will depend upon people's political resources. Political resources are factors which promote interest in, knowledge about and confidence in politics and thereby enhance participation and influence. Political resources must be seen against the background of socio-economic resources. If political alienation and poverty overlap with a scarcity of resources in other areas, strong social tensions easily develop. Certain patterns should be mentioned in particular concerning the workers' sense of political competence and power.

Figure 5.1 Political alienation or power amongst black workers. Percentages (n 861)

They were asked whether they: (1) Feel well informed about the political negotiations. (2) Follow political news on radio, tv or in newspapers every day. (3) Feel that their lives and living conditions are changed because of decisions made by the state or the region. (4) Think politics is too complicated to follow. (5) Think that people like them (and not only people in high positions) can influence the course of events. (6) Think that their political actions and their own involvement has an effect on their living conditions.

The NMC and the NEF have from February 1995 been replaced by the National Economic, Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC).
White workers feel more politically powerless than black workers. Whereas about 70% of black workers feel well informed about politics, 60% of white workers feel well informed. Whereas 65% of black workers say they follow the news every day, about 50% of whites follow the news. Whites have far less knowledge of institutions such as the TEC and the NPS than the black workers. Finally, whereas only 20% of black workers believe they are unable to influence their own living conditions through political action, 37% of white workers say their own political activity will have no effect and an additional 16% say they don’t know.

Figure 5.2 reveals three resource factors for political competence and participation amongst black workers: gender, income and union affiliation. Men generally feel less politically alienated than women. They feel better informed and more capable of changing their own circumstances through political action. Furthermore, more organised workers feel directly affected by political decisions, follow political news and

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**Figure 5.2 Political affectedness, interest and confidence by gender income and union membership. Percentages (n=861)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel informed about politics</th>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Man</th>
<th>Unorganised</th>
<th>Organised</th>
<th>Low income</th>
<th>High income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel affected by politics</th>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Man</th>
<th>Unorganised</th>
<th>Organised</th>
<th>Low income</th>
<th>High income</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I can influence my own living conditions through political action</th>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Man</th>
<th>Unorganised</th>
<th>Organised</th>
<th>Low income</th>
<th>High income</th>
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Those who feel they have *some* but limited influence over their own living conditions through political action are here grouped together with those workers who, without reservations, say that they have political influence.
feel well informed as well as more politically competent than unorganised workers. Higher income brackets feel more politically confident than the lowest income brackets. Whereas we would expect both education and skills to have a strong effect on political competence, these influences are relatively weak. On the other hand these factors are correlated with wages.

**Political Participation and Citizenship**

Political participation is certainly the key concept of a democratic system. No country in the world can show that all its citizens actually take part in elections or express their political priorities and beliefs in other ways. Degree of political involvement varies with the extent of political apathy and alienation. Some argue that a high degree of political activity is not necessarily an indicator of a successful democracy, nor of a desirable basis for a system of governance. The widely accepted theory of democracy is in fact one in which the concept of participation has only a minimal role (Pateman 1970). Several writers pinpoint the dangers involved in wide popular participation which may lead to political instability. Others maintain that participation is desirable and that low levels of citizen participation is an indicator of low legitimacy for the system and may involve the danger of people expressing their political frustrations through other more disruptive channels. A high participation level is important for people to protect their own interests and ensure a good government, while also increasing the feeling among citizens that they belong to the community. Figure 5.3 suggests a picture of a highly active black political citizen emerging out of years of resistance politics.

All in all, South African workers are politically active. They believe participation is important to protect their own interests, but, even more important, the interests of the community. More than two thirds of the workers say that it is important to participate in politics to improve their own or their family’s living conditions, or even more important in order to improve the quality of life in the community. Far more white than black workers say that it is important to take part in politics to protect their own population group.

4 If we add the workers who also say that they to *some, but limited, extent* are able to influence own living conditions through political actions, we find a stronger difference occur between unorganised workers (47%) and organised (51%).

5 We have in figure 5.2 compared the lowest income group, i.e. those earning less than R800 a month with the highest income group, i.e. those earning more than R1600.

6 See Pateman (1970) for discussions of the content and importance of political participation.

7 68% of white workers as compared to 58% of the black workers.
It is probably accurate to assume that workers are more politically active than other groups, like unemployed, people in the rural areas, etc. However, that does not mean that all workers participate in all types of political activities. Their political activities, as they themselves perceive it, have not changed much in the period of political top-level negotiations after 1990 to what it was before 1990 in the period of resistance and state oppression. There is a slight upswing in activity when it comes to strikes and stay-aways, but a decrease in activities when it comes to political marches and meetings.8

The type of political activity that people engage in is, however, clearly important for political stability. Types of South African political activities are usually divided by skin colour due to apartheid, continuous political restrictions and states of emergencies. Whereas whites, coloureds and Asians had access to and took part in Parliamentary elections,9 political participation by Africans mainly took the form of stay-aways, boycotts and strikes aimed to promote the downfall of the apartheid regime. Whereas writing articles to newspapers may be an expression of whites’ political criticism, stay-aways and boycotts have definitely been an important part of blacks’ political resistance.

In 1993, 3.6 million man days were lost in strikes in South Africa (Levy 1994), a 14% decrease from the previous year. Wage conflicts are increasingly dominant as

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*Separate questions were posed as to their political participation before and after 1990.

*Coloureds and Asians had the right to vote for separate chambers in Parliament from 1985. Most did however, boycott the elections.
strike triggers, as opposed to earlier years when political campaigns explained a lot of the man days lost in strikes. The state sector now accounts for the highest number of man days lost, and there is a marked increase in strikes involving more than 1000 workers.

More than half of our black workers have participated in strikes, political marches or in political meetings in the last four-year period. Furthermore, the majority of workers say they have participated in rent boycotts as part of the frequent township protests against illegitimate local governments and disproportionate high rents. In certain areas, rent for formal houses for blacks was set at a higher rate than comparable houses in white areas. Blacks however, were forced to dwell in areas allocated to them by the Group Areas Act. Most of the workers have also taken part in consumer boycotts called by political organisations or unions.

More than 80% of those surveyed say that they have participated in stay-aways. The stay-away emerged as a specific tactic of black resistance to apartheid already in 1949 when the ANC adopted a Programme of Action aimed at non-collaboration, a non-violent disobedience campaign and a general withdrawal of labour. Despite a drop in the percentage of workers observing the stay-aways on the second or third days of an action, about 70% of manufacturing workers have likewise been estimated as taking part in both the 1988 and the 1991 stay-away in Gauteng (Adler et al. 1992).

There has been a steady deterioration, to the point of collapse, of black township administrative authorities, and thereby of the entire system of local government. Local decision-making aimed more at co-option of blacks and at reducing the struggle against apartheid than at real decision-making. Almost all our workers -more than 90% - say they had never attended meetings of local government, and approx. 80% say they had never taken part in local elections. Urban management collapsed in several areas after several years of illegitimate and often inefficient or even corrupt local governments, with ensuing rent- and service charge boycotts as well as violence.

A new wave of black opposition to apartheid rolled through the 1970s with a general growth of the organised black civil society. Students inspired by black consciousness revolted in the mid 1970s, the youth movements grew increasingly stronger, and firm alliances emerged between student organisations and black trade unions. Strong residents' associations or "civics" began to form in the townships in opposition to the official community councils with yet new alliances between these, unions and student organisations. Political changes during the last few years, and specifically the growing community violence in Gauteng, have given rise to speculations as to a potentially decreasing legitimacy and collapse of civics and residence committees in the black townships. However, our survey contradicts such a trend. More than two thirds of our workers have still attended, sometimes or often, meetings of civics, squatter or residence committees during the last four years period. In fact, the participation and legitimacy of civics seem to have increased. Whereas one third say they never participated in civics or residence committee meetings before 1990, only about a fourth say they have not participated in the most recent four-year period. Civics

*The state sector accounted for 68% of mandays lost in strikes in 1993 compared with 13% in 1992 (Levy 1994).
seem, however, to be a forum for male politics more than women's issues, and for organised workers more than the unorganised.

Compared to black workers, white workers are far less active in political life (figure 5.4). More than 90% of the white workers have never participated in strikes, stayaways or political marches or consumer boycotts. A small minority (17%) had attended political meetings, and the majority had taken part in local and provincial elections, whereas 84% had voted in the white Parliamentary elections. Unionised white workers have a higher degree of involvement in electoral politics than unorganised workers.

A large majority of about 90% of our workers were involved in the first democratic April elections. African workers said they would vote, and white workers said that they had participated. Of the few that said they would not (or did not) participate, the motive for not voting was that they did not support or belong to a political party, had no interest in politics or had religious reasons for not voting. Black workers also mentioned fear of violence and intimidation as reasons for not voting.

The ANC won a decisive victory of the elections, although falling short of a two thirds majority. The ANC also won the Gauteng provincial elections. Here the vote was overwhelmingly drawn from the African population. Few "coloureds", and almost

Figure 5.4 Comparison of white and black workers' political activities Percentages. (n 861 0g 141)

\[\text{\%}
\]

\begin{itemize}
  \item Black workers
  \item White workers
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Strikes
  \item Stayaways
  \item Political marches
  \item Political meetings
  \item Elections: local government
  \item Elections: provincial government
  \item Elections: parliament
\end{itemize}

11 We did not ask the white workers about participation in rent boycotts or school boycotts, as these are typical expressions of black workers' politics.

12 The interviews with the white workers took place after the elections.
no Indians and whites supported the ANC. Our survey reflected this trend, with a big majority of around 80% of the black workers stating they would vote for the ANC, whereas close to 60% of the white workers said they supported the National Party and a relatively smaller number supported the Volksfront, Vryheidsfront or the Inkatha Freedom Party.

The first democratic elections after liberation will usually be more about history than about future priorities. South Africa is no exception. Amongst the reasons quoted for voting for the ANC was that it had been involved in the freedom struggle, that it is a truly democratic party or that it represents everyone. Less than 38% of the black ANC voters did so because they expected the ANC to improve their living conditions, of which 8% stated that the ANC had promised improvements. Hardly anyone chose their party because they expected it to improve race relations. Furthermore, only an insignificant number of black workers said that they chose their party because it represents workers' rights. White workers hardly ever quoted the non-racial character of their party as the main reason for their support. In a sense, white workers are far more instrumental and are look more to the future than black workers when choosing their party: a majority of white workers argue that they have chosen their party in order to stop the ANC from winning a two-thirds majority, to protect white security or in order to achieve a separate white "volkstaat".

People's involvement will also depend upon specific issues and their alternatives, as well as upon how much people feel personally affected by the issues. Political action and activities take many forms. The extent to which people themselves directly have the interest, knowledge and capacity for political participation and influence concerns

Figure 5.5 Worker participation in organisational life Percentages of black workers participating in different organisational activities (n 861)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports club</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Womens group</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civics group</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth group</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural organisation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social club</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stokvel</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
individual political poverty or power. Institutional political poverty or power, on the other hand, concerns people's access to organisations which can efficiently protect their interests vis-a-vis public authorities. Membership in political organisations or in organised sections of civil society can on this basis function as a political resource for many people. Figure 5.5 reveals that black workers' activity in churches, civics and stokvels is especially high in South Africa.

Many voluntary organisations or specific interest groups are highly political in both their norms and strategies. Sections of civil society sought to carry the anti-apartheid struggle forward. The church, and especially those churches affiliated to the South African Council of Churches, started campaigning strongly for sanctions and disinvestment through the 1980s. Civics and residence committees were part and parcel of the struggle against apartheid, through for example consumer- and rent boycotts. And finally, unions and students organisations successfully mobilised for stay-aways and strikes. The United Democratic Front (UDF) was on this basis established in the 1980s as an umbrella organisation for hundreds of anti-apartheid groupings.

Churches, unions, civics and stokvels may function well as areas for political empowerment and thereby reduce individual political poverty. However, while church, union and civics may function also as an organisational back up in order to advance the individual's political influence, the stokvel is less political. The churches, unions and civics are all organised at the national level. And the unions and civics aim directly at political influence. Stokvels, on the other hand, have less of a national institutional apparatus and less political vision and aims.

Stokvels still seem to function as an economic and political resource to the individual. Two thirds of the workers say they participate, are members of or hold office in stokvels. Stokvel is, as earlier mentioned (chapter 2), used broadly to refer to numerous categories of co-ops operating in different ways and with different aims and functions. Mutual financial assistance is the main purpose of the stokvels, but they also have a social function. They are also often administered and controlled jointly. Millions of people are thereby exposed to democratic learning through their stokvels. Members discuss how much money has come in, how it has been spent and how to make the society a general success. Stokvels also seem to function as information networks for consumer affairs. There is a significant tendency for stokvel participants to take active part in consumer boycotts. Although the stokvels' stronghold is at the local level, they have enormous potential for organised political and economic influence. It has been estimated that stokvels generate more than 200 million Rand per month around the country (Lukhele 1990).

There are differences in political activities between women and men, between organised and unorganised workers and between different income groups (figure 5.6). Male organised workers participate more actively in politics than women and unorganised workers. While more black women than men participate in stokvels and the church, the men's domain is in the civics and the unions. Furthermore, black organised workers participate far more often in strikes, stay-aways, political marches and meetings than their unorganised comrades. Among whites, organised workers have

13The civics regrouped into the South African National Civics Organisation after the UDF disbanded.
Figure 5.6 Comparison of the political activities of (black) women and men, different income groups and unorganised and organised workers. Percentages. (n 861)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sometimes or often participated in:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings of civics or residence committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman High income Unorganised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman Low income Unorganised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man High income Organised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man Low income Organised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political marches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman High income Unorganised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman Low income Unorganised</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Man High income Organised</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man Low income Organised</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman High income Unorganised</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woman Low income Unorganised</td>
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<td>Man High income Organised</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Man Low income Organised</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strikes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman High income Unorganised</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Woman Low income Unorganised</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man High income Organised</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Man Low income Organised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay-aways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman High income Unorganised</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Woman Low income Unorganised</td>
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<td>Man High income Organised</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man Low income Organised</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The net monthly income variable was split in four: (1) R800 and below, (2) R801 - 1200, (3) R1201 -1600 and (4) R1600 and above.
participated far more often in apartheid politics than their unorganised colleagues. Unions mobilise in other words both white and black workers for political action, but in different ways. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between unorganised black workers, those organised in non-COSATU unions and COSATU affiliated workers when it comes to participation in strikes, stay-aways, political marches and political meetings. COSATU members are most active. Stokvels also have more unionised than unorganised members: about 70% of organised workers participate in stokvels, as against 60% of the unorganised workers. Stokvels attract most members from the higher income brackets of over R1000. Otherwise, the effect of income deserves specific attention. Figure 5.6 reveals that the workers in the middle income brackets, i.e. between R800 and R1600, are the most politically active. In fact, the top income bracket has a participation pattern more similar to the lowest paid workers, except for higher participation in political meetings. The political activist group may on this basis be assumed to be found more easily amongst male, semi-skilled or skilled workers in the manufacturing, mining, or public sector, rather than amongst professional workers or workers employed by the private service sector.

DEMOCRATIC TOLERANCE, LEGITIMACY AND TRUST.

Political participation and trust in the political system must be seen in relation to each other. A traditional Western approach may argue that the combination of low participation and low trust defines the politically alienated, whereas high trust in the political system and high degree of participation defines citizens as the political elite or as the politically most resourceful. In South Africa, however, we need a different approach. Distrust, as opposed to trust in the apartheid political system, functioned for a long time as a stepping stone for blacks’ political participation and collective power and action. Feelings of mistrust to the politicians and the political system are hence not necessarily an expression of political alienation.

Democratic citizenship is a main factor in a nation-building process, especially in countries which have been riveted by socio-economic, religious and/or racial cleavages and even more if such cleavages are overlapping. Democratic tolerance also becomes increasingly crucial in a context where distrust has been a stepping stone for political mobilisation and resistance. By democratic citizenship, we imply consciousness and tolerance: acceptance of and belief in democratic participation, principles and institutions, degree of public consciousness as well as trust and confidence in other population groups and common problem-solving.

The stability of any democracy depends upon the effectiveness and legitimacy of its political system. Effectiveness, in this context, means actual performance, the degree to which the system satisfies basic needs as seen by the majority population and powerful groups within it. Legitimacy involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society. A political system can be effective without being...
legitimate and it can be legitimate, without being effective. However, for a democracy to remain stable in a long-term perspective, it must be both effective and legitimate (Lipset 1963).

In general, we find a high level of trust and confidence in political parties and leaders amongst black workers (figure 5.7). Two out of three of the black workers agree that political leaders can be trusted. The majority of black workers do not believe that politicians will stop caring about the needs and interests of the people after the elections, or that political parties have lost touch with the people. White workers, on the other hand, feel far less confident about the political parties and politicians.

Support for the principle of equality does not come through in respect for common problem solving and for the democratic principle of majority decisions. Only half the workers believe they should always respect the decisions of the majority in the future, if the majority does not represent their own interests. And only half the workers have trust in other population groups. It should be noted, however, that while there are fairly large discrepancies between black and white workers on political trust and confidence in parties and politicians, their attitudes to other population groups and the principle of majority decision are quite similar.

Democratic commitment is defined as adherence to a composite of three democratic values: non-racialism, non-sexism and fair government. Citizenship is an index reflecting the extent and vigor of people’s involvement in politics. Orkin (1994) did an indepth study of democratic commitment, citizenship and organisational participation in civil society amongst youth in a national all-race sample survey in 1992. He found that democratic commitment interacts with the “mix” of people’s organisational involvement in civil society, their broad party-political orientation and the

Figure 5.7 Democratic citizenship Comparison of black and white workers’ attitudes concerning democratic tolerance and consciousness. Percentage. (n 861 and 141)
degree of people's involvement in politics, i.e. their citizenship. He argues that the more people take part in political life, the higher they score on democratic commitment whatever their civil society involvement. Amongst those who are less politically active, democratic commitment is higher amongst those with high civil society involvement especially in explicitly political organisations. Orkin argues that democratic commitment and citizenship is hardly higher amongst union members than amongst those who belong to no organisation at all. This is confirmed in our data, which show little difference between organised and unorganised workers on democratic attitudes.

We compared the group of highly political workers with the less active to see if we found differences in democratic commitment. The workers who feel most affected by politics, and that they themselves are able to influence their own living conditions through political actions, are also the workers who place most trust in political leaders and parties, while also believing that they themselves will be able to give directions to Parliament. Furthermore, the activist workers - those who participate most often in stay-aways, strikes, political meetings and marches - are also the same workers who have most trust in the new system, most respect for majority decisions, but simultaneously have the highest expectations, are most easily mobilised for actions if the government does not deliver and expect to be able to give directions to Parliament.

INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION.

A major challenge for the new South Africa is to unite groups which for years have been split by apartheid, by uneven distribution of resources, struggles for access to scarce resources and by ideological cleavages. Development of a common political culture and identity is critical in order to create political stability and offer favourable conditions for investments and economic growth. For years, racism formed the constitutional basis of the South African society. During the days of “hard apartheid”, no contact was allowed across race barriers. Blacks and whites were not allowed to have sexual relations or marry, travel on the same buses, stay in the same house or be on the same beach. Thousands of people applied to be reclassified from one race to another every year. Yet, M. N. Treurnicht stated in Parliament in 1967: “Actually we have no race classification in the strict sense of the word. We have population grouping. We in South Africa are not at all obsessed by race.”

But South Africa put racism into the system through population classification and segregation of residential areas, education, health, and thereby income, wealth, etc. according to skin colour. Blacks were defined as belonging to separate nations with identities, loyalties and languages fundamentally different from those of whites. Apartheid is likely to have contributed to racial tensions and intolerance also in the

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14More than 70% of the workers who said they influenced their own lives through political actions, said they expected to be able to give directions to Parliament, as compared to about 50% of workers who feel that their own actions had no effect.

15Quoted in MacLennan, B. 1990: Apartheid. The lighter side.
new South Africa. Dismantling the old apartheid segregation may on the other hand also initially stimulate ethnic conflict in that it deregulates competition between groups. Greater resources for the most disadvantaged racial population may spark off racial confrontation and protests from rivalry groups who feel negatively affected by the competition for markets, customers, and/or jobs.

Political discrimination by the apartheid regime and clear preferences and benefits for certain parties are also likely to have contributed to political tensions and intolerance. Half of the blacks and one third of the whites in Gauteng say for example that members of their most disliked party should not be allowed to live in their neighborhood. One out of five of blacks revealed pressure to vote for a party they did not support (Schlemmer, HSRC 1994). A research report released in early 1993 by Stellenbosch academics stated that intolerance amongst political leaders was also disturbingly high.

The violence that has affected Gauteng since 1990 has predominantly been portrayed by the media as ANC - Inkatha violence, and has often been labelled ethnic, “black on black” or tribal violence. Is there within the social fabric of South Africa the potential for a single nation? History shows us astonishing racial divisions and a population lacking basic agreement as to which symbols, languages, role figures, etc. represent their identity (James 1989). A critical factor in the nation-building process ahead is how people identify with local groups, race or ethnic groups which may pull loyalty away from “the nation” and the state. How do workers look upon themselves? An overwhelming majority of black workers say that they identify themselves as South Africans, as opposed to their own race or ethnic background (figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8 National, racial or ethnic identification: “Do you see yourself mainly as a...?” Percentages. (n 861 and 141)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home language speaking person</th>
<th>Black workers</th>
<th>White workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home language speaking and South African</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly as a South African</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17See footnote 13.
18This is very similar to the trend found by Pityana and Orkin (1992) amongst COSATU shop-stewards.
Only a small minority identify themselves primarily in terms of ethnic or racial membership. Furthermore, they state that no racial or ethnic group should get special treatment in the future. Pityana and Orkin (1992) argue, on the basis of their earlier survey of shop stewards, that those with higher education and higher income, and men in general, are less inclined towards ethnicity or dual identity, as compared to those with lower education, low income and women, respectively. Our survey also shows a significant tendency for higher income brackets to identify themselves as South African as opposed to ethnic identity. Otherwise, there seem to be only minor differences between women and men, organised and unorganised workers, different skills groups, etc.

Blacks identify themselves as South Africans, but do not necessarily think that whites will do so. On the other hand, discrimination, or intolerance towards other groups is a potential, but not necessary consequence of feeling identity to specific population or ethnic groups, gender, religious groups, etc.

One of three (36%) of the black workers in our survey say they will never really trust people of other ethnic or population groups. Years of white suppression under apartheid and an extreme lack of equal contact across racial barriers may mean it can take years before full trust is established between the different population groups. Moreover, we should note that the tendency to identify oneself as South African is far weaker amongst whites. Whites often tend to see themselves as whites or Afrikaans speaking and less often (than blacks) as South African.

FORWARD FOR THE WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE?

Class consciousness is the basis for values, norms and practices that may crosscut other cleavages and have the potential of building a national identity and unity. It may serve to dampen identification with local groups or sub-groups, but does not necessarily increase loyalty to the state. Understanding the balance between working-class consciousness and loyalty to other groups with whom the workers identify and between individual interests on the one hand and collective approaches and solidarity on the other hand is therefore crucial in the democratisation process.

Class is usually defined in terms of people's relationship to the product and the production process. Class theory expects people who belong to one and the same class will also share other features and will behave in certain common ways. Class consciousness is often presumed to be the real mobiliser for political action. By class consciousness we imply the identification of oneself as part of a group, seeing this broader collectivity in opposition to other groups and a willingness to act and do something to change the cleavages and conflicts (Mann 1973).

The picture that emerges from figure 5.9 is that workers tend to see themselves mostly as "just a person", rather as workers; furthermore, only a small percentage of workers see themselves in terms of "ethnic working class consciousness", i.e. as black or white workers. The relatively strong tendency of whites to identify themselves as whites or white workers should, however, be noted. Working-class consciousness in the traditional sense is expressed most strongly when it comes to black workers’ dis-
trust of management. This is also where we see the largest difference between black and white workers.

Nationalisation as preferred economic policy and worker control of factories are ideas that received strong support amongst COSATU shop stewards (Pityana and Orkin 1992). Workers we surveyed also give strong support to the idea of workers' control of factories: almost half support the idea that workers should run the factories. All in all, it seems as if workers' class consciousness may more easily be identified in terms of the solutions they perceive than how they see themselves. At the same time, they also believe that the economic system will give everyone a fair chance after the elections. More than 60% of the workers believe that everyone will get a fair chance after the elections.

Figure 5.9 Working-class consciousness. Comparison of black and white workers (n 861 and 141)

67% of shopstewards express support for nationalisation and 75% support the view that workers should run the factories (Pityana and Orkin 1992). It should be noted that shop stewards are generally known to be more radical than rank-and-file members.
Although some may argue that workers join unions as an instrumental step towards own individual economic protection and advancement and thereby develop "instrumental collectivism or class consciousness", it is generally assumed that unions function as a school for class-consciousness and further for socialism. Unions are seen as places where workers internalise values, skills and commitments appropriate to the struggle against capitalism. Lenin, on the other hand, believed that unions could in fact generate only trade-union consciousness (Mann 1973:12). But according to Marx himself, working class consciousness grows dialectically with experience in trade unions, in political parties and in the sphere of production itself (Mann 1973:12). Now, do unions generally work as incubators for the notion of a "class for itself"? Do unions develop values conducive to socialism?

Organised black workers tend to be more class conscious than unorganised workers. They are more inclined to support the idea that workers should run the factories, less inclined to trust management, and are more inclined to agree that it is only through worker solidarity that individual worker interests (and their own) can be improved. However, the effect of trade union membership is not strong. Generally, black workers tend to look at themselves less as workers than as "just persons". They see themselves as in opposition to management, but still believe that teamwork is possible. They are less critical of the economic system and the exploitation of the free market forces than what might have been expected. It seems as if class consciousness is more limited to the factory, and that worker solidarity and unions on this basis is instrumental in solving the working class problems at work, more than in the outside world.

NEW SYSTEM - NEW ISSUES

The focus of political culture and legitimacy is not only upon the political institutions and the in-put to the political system i.e. whether the system is representative. The out-put of the political system - whether the political system delivers and distributes goods and services the way people expect - is also relevant for people's perceptions of the political institutions as being legitimate. Individuals or groups will regard the system as legitimate if its values fit with their own and if they feel that the system in a long-term perspective can deliver and perform. Establishing control over the economy by regulation and targeted interventions, affirmative action and redistribution to address inequality - these are essential components of a nation-building process and of the ANC's RDP. Attitudes to questions such as redistribution and equality thereby become crucial in the transition process ahead.

The picture emerging from figure 5.10 is that a majority of workers expect their living conditions to improve after the elections. However, unorganised workers tend

"As it is, my child was knocked down by a car and died. We are not even helped by the state. We lost our 5 year old girl. The lawyer tried to help, but in vain. We hope things will really change with a new government."
to be more uncertain about this, or they tend to think that their living conditions will remain the same.

On the other hand, up to 40% of the workers actually say that they would be willing to take a lower wage increase in order to avoid retrenchments of workers in their company. Whereas only 36% of black workers, who are first and foremost the best paid workers themselves, support this idea, as many as 64% of white workers would be willing to contribute to avoid unemployment for their colleagues at work. Support for redistribution is, however, not as strong amongst white workers when it comes to increasing the welfare of those less well off in society. To the question of whether they will contribute through lower wages or higher taxes to help these people, only 30% of the white workers agree, as against 44% black workers.

High needs and expectations coupled with economic problems have set the “expectations gap” or the “delivery crisis” high on the political agenda. Legitimacy for government performance may prove to be more important for stability in a newly established democracy than in old democracies, where institutions and compromises have long traditions. At the same time, there is also a general recognition that workers are a relatively privileged minority compared to the huge number of unemployed and the poor in the rural areas. What will workers do if their living conditions do not improve?

“...You know my eye was injured by the police and I have never been compensated. And now that is why I am so bitter about the whole situation. And that is why I want to fight for this land. And my eye was severed for no apparent reason so I also want revenge. I was unfairly dismissed and the union helped”.

Figure 5.10 Expectations to improved living conditions after elections Percentage of the workers black and white workers (n 1002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black workers</th>
<th>White workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get worse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay the same</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get better</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages
Workers say that they will first and foremost vote for another party if their interests are not represented by the new government, whereas the tendency to go to mass actions is relatively weak (see figure 5.11). On the other hand, this must be seen in relation to a general high level of trust in the ability of the democratic government to deliver. Furthermore, a large majority of black workers also expect that they themselves will be able to give directions to Parliament after elections. Less than one fifth say they expect Parliament to take all decisions without further consultations with the people. Trusting the new government, the political parties and the new political leaders makes mass actions a more remote possibility. This is reinforced by the period in which the survey was conducted, characterised by generally high confidence, trust and patience towards democracy.

Whereas a total of 17% of the workers consider the possibility of turning to mass actions, 19% of organised workers as opposed to 16% of unorganised workers consider this possibility. There is a significant tendency on the other hand of the higher income brackets to turn to mass actions.²⁰

A research report released in early 1993 concluded that a considerable majority of opinion leaders favoured a federal system.²¹ However, the total results hide however, rather big differences between leaders from various political parties. Whereas National Party, Democratic Party and Inkatha leaders expressed strong support for a future federal system, ANC and SACP leaders expressed clear preferences for a unitary state model. After the elections there has been far broader support for a federal system also amongst supporters of the tripartite alliance, who now need resources and legal backing to strengthen their power in their provincial governments. Our

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Figure 5.11 “If the future government fails to improve your own individual interests and living conditions, what will you do?” Percentage of black and white workers. (n 1002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Black workers</th>
<th>White workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing I can do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact someone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote for somebody else next elections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁰Higher income brackets refer to the workers earning more than R1200 net a month.
workers on the other hand express strong support for the idea that the state should make the decisions that affect their lives as opposed to regional or local government. Whereas black workers most strongly prefer decisions to be taken by central government, only a minority of whites support this. Half the white workers believe decisions should be taken by local government. Someone will also have to pay for new welfare benefits, social services, health and education. But who? Almost all black workers (82%) believe the state should pay for this through taxes. A far larger proportion of white workers believe that the employers should pay through their profits (20%) or that individuals should pay such benefits themselves through their wages (20%).

Programmes of affirmative actions have received wide spread support amongst political parties and unions alike, and have also to some extent been embraced by employers. The controversy devolves more on the content of such programmes than the need for, and legitimacy of, addressing the discriminatory practices of the past. Employers will tend to embrace systems of affirmative actions where well-educated blacks are recruited into top management positions, whereas unions and the tripartite alliance in general underline the additional need for programmes focused on training, empowerment and advancements of blacks and women from the bottom up. Affirmative action gets most attention when it comes to making companies more representative of population groups. There has in reality been less attention and more controversy about the need for affirmative action programmes for women. The Chemical Workers Industrial Union suggested at the COSATU Congress a system of quotas for women within union structures. This was turned down by the rest of the union delegates who instead focused on the need for training and empowerment of women. Amongst the workers in our survey, programmes for affirmative action get widespread support. Most black workers support affirmative action for both blacks and women. But organised workers tend, surprisingly, to be more hesitant in supporting such programmes. Support also decreases with the income of the respondent, with the highest income groups more negative. Another group who would be particularly negatively affected by such programmes are the white workers: 80% of the white workers do not support affirmative actions for blacks, or for women.

**POLITICAL CLEAVAGES AND CLASS**

Black workers are politically aware and active. While the number of political activists - i.e. those regularly involved in more than two or three types of political activities - in most countries is limited, the trend amongst workers in South Africa is the opposite. Figure 5.12 reveals that only a relatively small number of people (less than 10%) are completely passive. Almost half the black workers take part, sometimes or often, in four or all five of the following activities: strikes, stay-aways, political meetings, political marches and meetings of civics or residence committees. We constructed a similar index of organisational activities, and the same pattern emerges in figure
The percentage of workers participating in more than one activity increases with number of activities: altogether only about 20% of workers are passive or take part only in one organisation. 26% of workers participate (sometimes or often) in the activities of four or more organisations.

There is clearly a connection between interest in politics, feeling of being affected by politics and the extent to which people actually participate in politics to influence its outcomes. Furthermore, the political activists amongst our workers are confident in the political parties and leaders, while simultaneously more readily mobilised if the new system should fail to live up to its expectations. The activists are the aware and competent citizens. But who, then, is this political activist? Race, gender, income and union background are obviously the factors which form the basis for generating different ideas and activities about politics. The “activist” is black, male, has a relatively high income and is more often than not a union member.

White workers are far less active in politics and take part in quite different activities. A culture of resistance politics amongst blacks may be juxtaposed with a culture of formal politics amongst whites, making political awareness and competence higher amongst blacks than amongst whites. White workers feel insecure about the future and tend to see their past, present and future in terms of race, more than politics.

Furthermore, the different roles of women both at home and in the labour market also generate different interests and activities in politics. More women than men take active part in religious life and in the consumer-oriented stockels, but less so than men in civics and residence committees. They have less confidence in their own political power, and are less politically active.

Figure 5.12 Accumulation of political activities amongst black workers (n 861)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of activities

0 1 2 3 4 5

Strikes, stay-aways, meetings of civics or residence committees, political marches and political meetings.

The number of workers participating in four or more organisations is, however, relatively small.
Income also generates diverse political activities and priorities. The highest income groups amongst blacks have most confidence in their own political influence, have higher expectations regarding their own living conditions after the elections and are more inclined to go to mass actions if the government does not deliver.

The effect of unions on working-class consciousness depends upon the norms, strategies and internal procedures of the union movement. It has been claimed that organisational democratic arrangements have the effect of nurturing class consciousness among workers. Operating within an institutional frame-work which is egalitarian, cooperative and democratic will enhance the development of such values in people. Pateman (1970) states that democratically organised work-places will nurture a collectivist approach to community and politics rather than individualistic solutions. What she calls "collective spirit" is an identification with the identity, problems and strategies of the collectivity. If unions are revolutionary, with the declared goals or strategies of overthrowing capitalist production, the individuals will learn class consciousness in a revolutionary sense. If, on the other hand, the union is instrumentally oriented towards wage increases and grievances in the workplace, workers will more probably nurture individualism as opposed to a politically socialist class-consciousness.

Do South African unions serve as schools for democracy, equipping their members with a higher democratic consciousness and thereby society with a more adult, politically educated constituency? South African unions, and COSATU in particular, do have an influence on the political attitudes and activities of their workers. However, unions serve less as schools for revolution than as plain instruments for worker economic interests. The content of union learning is one which works in a democratic empowering direction. COSATU workers express a slightly more democratic approach to politics. They are the most politically active in the formal labour

**Figure 5.13 Accumulation of organisational activities amongst black workers (n 861)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports organisations, women's groups or organisations, civics, youth organisations, church, cultural organisations, social clubs and stokvels.</th>
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Number of activities
force in Gauteng. Organised workers have slightly higher expectations to the future and to their own influence, and participate more in politics in order to make change happen. Workers who participate most in union shop-floor activities like elections of shop stewards and in union and federation congresses also participate most actively in political actions like stay-aways. They also more often believe in resorting to mass actions the new government does not deliver. Unions work as learning areas in mobilising for political action, but less so in changing attitudes to democracy and politics. Aims and interests of union members are instrumental in that they want to improve their own lives and living conditions, but their political consciousness is connected more to the general political struggle than to work or class.
Democratic backsliding can occur in various ways. Revolutions, civil wars or military coups are not the only forms of democratic collapses. Democracies can be drained of their content by an increase in political cynicism and apathy and a decline in effective political participation. Democracies may be reversed by an increase in violence, crime, civil disobedience and anarchy. The struggle in South Africa was not focused on democracy as an end in itself, but as a means to equality, prosperity and a better life. Democracy in itself is unfortunately not sufficient to achieve these goals.

Labour is not alone on the political arena in South Africa, whether as a political player, an interest group or a democratic laboratory. However, economic restructuring, institution-building and civil society all exist in close interplay with characteristics of the labour market on the one hand and democratic consolidation on the other. In this chapter we will discuss these points on the basis of our survey: What are the interests and cleavages in the labour market in relation to economic development, culture and civil society?

**THE SEGREGATED LABOUR MARKETS**

White workers earn more than double the wages of black workers, and are far better covered by additional job-related benefits. The type and value of such benefits differ even more. Whites receive medical aid, housing and bonus schemes which to a large extent function as a wage increase or “top-up”, making the wage gap between blacks and whites even higher than what first meets the eye. Skewed distribution of resources is reinforced by expenditure patterns and black workers supporting more people on their meagre incomes.

The workforce contains further divisions than race. Resources and interests differ among educational, occupational and income groups, among workers in different sectors, and between men and women. Industrial relations and worker rights in the public sector often lag behind the private sector. However, despite large differences between blacks and whites within the public sector, the remuneration received by public employees in the form of wages and benefits is above the average received by wide groups of private sector workers. Public sector workers’ wages partly reflect education and work tasks. Unskilled workers are also usually paid far less than skilled or white collar workers, which is partly attributable to different educational levels and social background. However, even workers with the same qualifications and the same jobs in different sectors and industries may be paid differently. Inequalities reflect company market orientation, profitability, human development policies as well as

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union power. But different pay for men and women, whites and blacks in similar jobs, may also be seen against the background of direct discrimination.

An individual's level of living is defined not only by economic goods, but also by the ability to exercise choices and affect the course of his or her life. Divisions in the labour market are not only expressed in different wage levels, coverage and content of social benefits and working conditions, but also by the different interests and perceptions generated on this basis. Various groups will have differing patterns of political and organisational activities. The most important cleavages are generated on the basis of race, gender and income.

White workers have participated in formal political channels and apartheid politics, whereas black workers have developed a culture of resistance politics through marches, stay-aways, strikes and political meetings. Whereas white workers have taken part in elections, black workers have developed their own democratic structures in and through civics, residence committees, stokvels and unions. White workers today have less confidence and trust in their own ability to influence the course of political events. Their approach to unions is more instrumental: they want them to engage in bread and butter issues, and less in politics. At the same time, they give higher priority to work satisfaction and responsibility, whereas blacks give priority to improved wages.

Gender emerges as yet another important cleavage. Women work in services and with reproductive tasks while men work in production. Black women and men differ in their organisational activities and in their political aspirations and attitudes. Women have less confidence in their own abilities to influence politics, feel less informed and generally participate less in political activities. Their socio-economic background also differs. Not only are men paid more, they also have more social benefits covered through work.

In Western democracies, the more people have in terms of education, income and wealth, the more they usually participate in politics. In South Africa, on the other hand, the highest income and education groups among the whites seem to be more difficult to mobilise for political action. Amongst black workers on the other hand, the highest education and income groups are amongst the most active, with most confidence in their own abilities and resources to influence political change and with the highest expectations for the future. They are also the workers who will be most easily mobilised for mass actions against the government if their living conditions are not improved.

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING?

At the end of the day, a heavy burden is placed on the shoulders of the economy and business to satisfy the expectations of workers. The future of democracy is said to depend upon its economy (Huntington 1994). South Africa's democracy depends upon having an economic growth higher than the growth of the population.2

2 The argument must be somewhat moderated for the highest monthly income bracket above R1600.

Population growth has exceeded economic growth most of the time since 1980. In 1994, they were more or less equal (about 2%).
Economic restructuring towards export-driven manufacturing for niche products as well as a stimulation of the national market for mass consumption are key focus areas for the new government. Will it be able to turn the economic tide towards growth, job creation and increased welfare? Will business manage to take advantage of the new possibilities offered to compete in international markets while remaining major suppliers of the national demand?

The apartheid economy was built on a systematically enforced racial division, at the same time as it was a mixed economy with broad state engagement through regulation and public ownership. Private capital was concentrated in a few hands. Monopolies prevented free competition within both the public and private sphere of the economy. Economic restructuring within the new democracy brings up questions as to state or market, regulation or free market forces and business versus labour interests.

The key issues in debates about economic policy concern the role of the state: degree of regulation, public versus private ownership, privatisation of public corporations and parastatals versus nationalisation. In reality, several factors complicate the possibilities for an efficient restructuring policy from the public sector.\(^4\) The government's deregulation in the area of trade is, however, now coupled with reregulation in the area of worker rights and protection.\(^5\) Two thirds of the black workers in our survey believe everyone will get a fair chance in the economy now after the elections. But although the majority of workers believe that a practice of equal opportunities and non-racism will be implemented, they do not have much confidence that a more redistributive or socialist economy will be realised. Almost half the black workers believe that with the way the economy is organised, a small elite will continue to have all the power while the majority will be exploited.

Restructuring refers to shifts in economic policy, but more often contains the following types of processes: changes in the structure of industries and economic sectors and processes, and organisational or product innovations within the company. Specific labour market characteristics are found to relate positively to economic restructuring (Deutschmann 1987). Workers are generally favourable to restructuring which builds upon skills already inside the labour market. This can involve shifts in the dominant economic activity from one sector to another, but where retrenched workers will more easily find new employment. On the other hand workers may be less supportive of restructuring towards types of capital-intensive production and technology which they are not equipped to handle and where they are therefore in danger of being replaced by more skilled employees. South Africa has a relatively large manufacturing sector. But manufacturing has to develop a greater capacity to produce capital goods, and to compete in exports. Domestic markets have developed primarily to serve the needs of a small income elite. There is a large segment unskilled or semi-skilled blue-collar workers. While economic restructuring towards more capital-intensive and skills-intensive production will threaten the semi-skilled black worker, the potential for developing large mass-production for the home market may on the other

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\(^4\) Mostly because of political controversies inside both the ANC, in the government and amongst key constituencies.

hand secure his interests. The unskilled workers constitute the most vulnerable part of the workforce.⁶

Workers themselves seem by and large to have a positive attitude to restructuring. The large majority believe teamwork with management is possible. But they do have an ambivalent relationship to employers. A large majority say they will never really trust them. In fact, they believe workers themselves should have far more influence in the economic decision-making and strategies in the factories. A large majority believe workers themselves should run the companies.

Economic growth is related to making work itself more productive. High productivity, in terms of number of produced items and value added to products, has been found to result from increased work satisfaction. Training and empowerment are thus important for economic restructuring. Workers themselves are, however, not too interested. In general, work satisfaction is low, although workers with relatively high pay are most satisfied with their working conditions. They more easily perceive training, development and responsibility as important. The worst-paid workers, on the other hand, rather want a secure job paid at or above the minimum living level. While high productivity may be a result of new attitudes towards work, such attitudes do not come for free. Work satisfaction, and interest in empowerment and development follow from improved wages, fulfilled job expectations and influence over work conditions. At best, it takes time to achieve an increase in production and employment in the competing sector. Expansion of plants, development of competence and entry into new markets are long-term processes. In the mean time, one option is to stimulate the national market demand through improved buying power on the basis of decent wages. Increasing the loyalty of workers and making better use of the knowledge of workers related to production through decision-making rights to workers, will benefit the restructuring process.

REDISTRIBUTION OR DISTRIBUTION?

Economic growth also depends upon distribution of resources. Huge discrepancies between rich and poor are found to be less favourable to economic growth than a more equal distribution of resources (Ringen 1987, Castles and Dowrick 1988). Still, resource distribution in South Africa ranks as one of the most unequal in the world. Democracy will not be valued by people unless it can deal effectively with social and economic problems, and not least with social and economic injustice.

For successful reconstruction and redistribution, public policies must both aim at repairing the damages of the past and at preventing new damages in the future. Education, and thereby equal access to education, is a prerequisite for social mobility. It influences people's opportunities in life and their capacity to change their social status. Public policies aimed at improving and equalising the education system for whites, Indians, “coloureds” and blacks can prevent or reduce the possibilities of such group-specific inequalities in the labour market and thereby in social status, income

⁶The extent to which domestic markets are opened for imports of cheaper, more competitive goods, will also determine whether the jobs of the semi-skilled worker are threatened.
and wealth in the future. However, there are already huge group specific inequalities between people who have finished school. Millions of black workers are already lagging far behind.

The suppression and segregation of apartheid can be addressed by means of affirmative action, training, empowerment and new grading systems at work. However, even this will have limited effect in moderating the existing differences in resources between rich and poor. And even if the government should manage to dramatically redistribute the access to work and to such resources as education and health, inequalities in wealth and social status will remain. Promoting equality in opportunities by securing an equal school system, basic health care, protection against discriminatory work practices etc. is not the same as promoting redistribution and equality in resources or results. A heavy emphasis upon equal opportunities, may secure fair competition, but fails to take account of the fact that disadvantages tend to be hereditary; if you are born to poor parents, you tend to end up poor or poorer. Income and wealth differentials have increased within the black population through the 1980s and early 1990s. At the same time, the poorest of the poor have become poorer.

Other types of redistributive measures must be implemented in order to address the wealth gap. Progressive income taxation is one such instrument providing social benefits through political mechanisms instead of through the market is another. But the public sector will continue to be unable to meet the increased demands for education, health and welfare. This has caused the ANC and the government to maintain a system of private welfare for those who can afford it, while concentrating upon meeting basic needs in health, welfare and education amongst the poorest and most vulnerable. Simultaneously, money for the RDP is primarily to be drawn from a reorganisation of public sector spending and savings by making the public sector more efficient. Those who have the money to pay for "extras", such as private education, hospital care, etc. must do so with their own resources. Political regulation of basic needs is developing for targeted groups, while the market is expected to address and satisfy social needs and welfare for the large majority of workers.

It will always be more sensible in a short-term perspective to target scarce resources towards those who need them most (FAFO 1994). There is on that basis no moral justification for developing universal social benefits which benefit everyone. Universal benefits are, however, more easy to administer, they contribute to make the economy more predictable, are cheaper for the national economy because they reduce the needs of the middle class for alternative market related arrangements, and they are subject to democratic debate and decision-making (Goodin 1989, FAFO 1994). National unity will be promoted by people's common interests and investments in the public sector and the delivery of public services (also for the poorest) improved by the nationally united demands for quality.

Enforcing social policy and welfare through the market will have limited or contradictory effects in addressing redistribution, whether within the commodity market or in the labour market. The social responsibility of those few inside the labour market will grow tougher or at the best remain constant in the future. Each black worker already has an average of four to five people to take care of. The reality

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7 Unemployed and people in the rural communities are targeted specifically.
emerging out of current economic problems and political compromises places responsibility and care of the most needy in the political sphere, while achievement in the market and redistribution remain in the private sphere and the family.

**BUILDING LEGITIMACY AND TRUST**

People may grow increasingly impatient in their struggle for a better way of life, if the deliveries of democracy do not meet with their expectations. Does there exist a culture of patience and a legitimacy for redistribution?

In practical life, two contradictions will accrue from what the workers say in the survey. Workers expect increased living standards and welfare from democracy. But they are willing to contribute themselves to the worst-off in society, which in turn may easily contradict increased living standards for themselves. Second, they look primarily to the state for redistributive measures. They believe social benefits and welfare should be paid by the state, and not by people themselves, nor by the community or business. Simultaneously, there is a trend towards developing or enforcing social benefits for workers through the market and negotiations between unions and employers, instead of through political agreements, and regulation.

There are those who say that the expectations gap or delivery gap threatens the fragile stability of the democracy in South Africa. The highest expectations seem, on the other hand, to be amongst those to whom least will be delivered if simple poverty or socio-economic factors are used by the government to settle priorities. The workers with the highest expectations are also the those who are most easily mobilised for political actions and who maintain the most scepticism or uncertainty concerning the leaders and the system. Reactions or "threats" to the stability of the government are most likely to come from the relatively well-organised interests and people with relatively more resources than from the most disadvantaged by apartheid: the unemployed, illiterate and poor majority.

Research from newly democratised countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa shows that the most disturbing distributional questions centre not on the poorest of the poor, but on the low and middle-income workers and employees (Haggard and Kaufmann 1994). While meeting the desperate needs of the destitute should be the priority of governments, blue-collar and middle class groups may be unlikely to continue supporting anti-poverty measures if they themselves have nothing to gain or stand to lose. The downward mobility of individuals within these groups may be a powerful impetus to anti-democratic forces (Haggard and Kaufman 1994). Where and when will the political support to redistribution reach its limit in South Africa?

At point of departure, the new government, enjoys enormous confidence and trust amongst workers and especially black workers. They believe in the credibility and integrity of political parties, their leaders and the system as such. However, urgent steps need to be taken for the government to consolidate that confidence.

The big challenge for the government will be to develop a culture of legitimacy for redistribution. Workers, as surveyed here, are now positive and willing to contribute to redistribution by lower wage increases and tax payments. However, benefits must be seen to be shared and distributed more or less fairly. And benefits and public
policy must be seen to address the poorest of the poor so that they at the end of the day come back to themselves through increased welfare for the community, and own friends and relatives. Furthermore, the burdens of adjustments must be seen to be shared fairly. And finally, when only limited groups have their interests provided for by the state, tax tolerance and support for the public sector becomes more critical. Workers must therefore receive some benefits from the state in order to have more tolerance for their own contribution to redistribution and patience with their political representatives. The question remains as to how long and how far they will support a public sector if it seems to give little in return to themselves, while they have to contribute to redistribution with their own wage moderation and increased social responsibility in the private sphere.

A NEW DEMOCRATIC CULTURE?

A major challenge for the government will be to channel the oppositional political energy of black workers, built on resistance politics through the past decades, into more formalised activities.

"Old" cleavages and conflicts concerning access to resources and maintenance of own identity must be bridged and cross-cut in terms of national consolidation. Both whites and blacks must be integrated in the reconstruction. At the same time, political and economic compromises must not be seen to uphold the privileges of the past. Questions emerge concerning potential cleavages between those who have wealth to buy private services and those who have not, between those who are inside the labour market and those who are outside, and between different groups of workers and employees. The wage gap inside the labour market may to some extent level out in the future, through processes of new grading systems and training, while "hidden" wage differences in the form of fringe benefits may remain or increase. Class differences may easily prove more important in generating cleavages than race. Interests and conflicts will be based less on skin colour than out of possessing wealth or not, possessing a job or not and not the least what sort of job one possesses.

In other newly democratised countries, the chief issue in circumstances of economic and distributional conflicts is becoming one of culture. Fukuyaman (1995) argues that the battles that will determine the fate of democracy will take place in civil society and culture in the future. Does there exist a democratic culture amongst workers which will constitute a foundation for the nation building process?

While Marxists expect working-class consciousness to be socialist, democratic, and in opposition to a market economy, workers' culture has in fact often been shown to be extremist, intolerant or simply liberalist. In Europe the traditional working class is increasingly voting for right wing parties. In several African and East European countries, a minority of workers have served as a conservative barrier against transformation of society as a whole. Lipset (1963) argues that the "lower" classes are much less supportive of democracy than are the middle and upper classes. Groups with low-status occupations and low education and incomes, it is argued to lack democratic tolerance and tend to be more supportive of authoritarian movements and ideals.
In South Africa, on the other hand, the black working class is neither authoritarian, undemocratic nor politically incompetent. Workers have been actively involved in the struggle against apartheid through strikes, stay-aways, political marches and political meetings. They are politically active, relatively politically conscious and feel well-informed about politics and the political negotiations that have taken place. They are collectively oriented, seeking the good of the community at large. A sizable majority feels that it is important to engage in political activities - to protect their own living conditions, but even more important in order to protect the quality of the community.

A generally well organised civil society in itself contributes to a high political awareness and competence amongst all workers. There is a wide spread existence of structures like stokvels with flat decision-making structures and collective problem-solving. In addition come the thousands of civics, youth organisations, church groups, and political organisations which work as agents and schools for democracy.

The political consciousness of black workers reflects collectivism and the struggle, but less so a working-class consciousness in the traditional sense of identifying themselves as workers and demonstrating opposition to the market as governing principle. Black workers say they will never really trust management, but believe simultaneously that team work with management is possible. They generally express an instrumental approach to work and to unions, their first priority being to improve their own living conditions. Democratic citizenship is more clearly expressed in degree of political activity than in specific democratic attitudes and tolerance. Workers support the notion of a “left wing” model of democracy, and quote joint decision-making or equality as the most important part of democracy. The liberal concept of democracy built upon tolerance, protection of the law and freedom gets less support. But on questions concerning respect for majority decisions and Parliament supremacy, they believe they themselves should be able to influence Parliament decisions. The extent to which they will respect the final decisions will depend upon the degree to which these decisions reflect their own interests.

The general political competence and democratic tolerance amongst workers may to some extent be explained by the period in which the survey was conducted and the prevailing sense of liberalisation and freedom. The peaceful process of the election supports that. Furthermore, most workers trust that their living conditions will change for the better. If their expectations are not met, tolerance may wear thinner. Distributional conflicts may aggravate interest cleavages and democratic tolerance. Cleavages seldom die, but they can be moderated and managed so as not to threaten the stability and legitimacy of the new democracy. Organised and institutionalised conflicts tend to be less threatening to democratic stability.

BUILDING NEW INSTITUTIONS

Democracy is about managing conflict on the basis of consensus. The challenge is to build institutions which can administer this balance line and create legitimacy around it.
Policy-making and strategies to address political problems have never been determined purely by calculations on a rational cost-benefit analysis or by the political parties represented in the process and their relative power. It is becoming increasingly clear that institutions themselves and how they are constituted and formed will determine the outcome of decisions. In other words it is necessary to address the levels and mechanisms of decision-making as well as the participants represented in the process in order to be able to understand political decision-making. Questions to be addressed are whether decisions concerning economic policy or social welfare systems shall be developed by political regulatory mechanisms or by negotiations on the market, and whether the implementation of such strategies should be pursued at the central national level or at the regional or local level. And, not least, who should be involved in making these decisions?

In any democracy there will be tensions between consent and conflicts and between representability on one hand and effectiveness and governability on the other. A democracy must be based upon consensus-regulating conflicts. Furthermore, a government must be representative, but also governable and effective in the implementation of policies. Integrating key constituencies in institutions may help relieve both these tensions by ensuring that conflicts and cleavages are resolved inside the system and not challenged from outside.

Structural economic reforms are more sustainable and far-reaching when pursued through a democratic process. Successful reforms require the support of political coalitions, in particular unions which can mobilize support for and neutralize resistance to economic reforms. Tri-partite negotiations have been important in reducing social tensions and easing the pain of economic and social transformation in several countries. Furthermore, democratic stability and legitimacy for institutions tend in themselves to be enhanced if people can have their representatives present in the process of decision-making.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND LABOUR

A larger part of the well paid, male black workers are organised in COSATU unions. Organised labour attracts or nourishes, in other words, the most resourceful part of the workforce: the workers who are most politically conscious, active and critical.

The government needs to incorporate organised civil society in the transition process. Mobilisation of civil society implies involving both individuals and their organisations in various levels of decision-making. If on the other hand, the politically competent, conscious and active citizens feel that they are left out of the process, national consolidation and stability may be harder to achieve. From the government's point of view, therefore, it will be important to include organised interests, unions in particular.

A "pact" between labour, business and the state should not concentrate only on macro economic policy, but also on development on the shop floor. Management must respond to the needs for economic restructuring at the shop floor by including workers and their unions in corporate development efforts.
Worker empowerment is enhanced through industrial democracy and real decision-making concerning the organisation of work. The knowledge of workers in evaluating organisation of work is grossly underestimated. So called “encompassing unions”, representing broad interest groups such as COSATU, are found to be most likely to respond positively and adapt quickly to industrial restructuring (Olson 1971). Such increased co-operation between unions and management is, most favourable when based upon real gains and decision-making for labour and not only more communication and pleasant gatherings for tea.

Workers themselves prefer political decision-making to be made locally and the costs to be carried by the state. They have confidence in democracy, but also believe that they themselves will be able to influence the decisions of Parliament in the future, and are ready to mobilise if politics does not satisfy their expectations. They want their unions to be involved in the political process and carry their interests forward. They believe in a participatory democracy where they are represented both directly and through their unions.

The government has likewise committed itself to maximum transparency and inclusivity in the implementation of the RDP. The RDP aims to be an integrated and sustainable programme driven by the people and recognising the interrelatedness of meeting basic needs, developing human resources, building the economy and democratising the state and society.

The state needs labour. The state needs the unions to create consensus and legitimacy amongst workers for necessary compromises, for reaching consensus on the priorities and mechanisms used to redistribute social benefits and welfare, for cooperation around major economic restructuring, in order to generate more and better information to use in economic decision making and in order to integrate the most active, politically conscious and potentially most critical and “watchful” citizens inside the transformation process. However, the combined and potentially contradictory needs of the state on the one hand and the needs and interests of its members on the other, puts the labour movement itself face to face with major challenges.
CHAPTER 7

NEW NATION, NEW UNIONS

Labour can play a critical role in the time to come through strikes and stay-aways. The threat of industrial action can be used strategically to influence the shaping of new economic policies. But the political power of unions and their interests in a stable democracy also depend, upon willingness to reach compromises. Workers have huge expectations to improved living conditions, and trust and confidence in the abilities of the unions to deliver. Workers are, on the other hand, a relatively privileged group compared to the millions of unemployed, informally employed or to people in the rural areas. Lack of economic growth and the need to redistribute and address poverty amongst rural people and unemployed, increases the pressures from the government upon labour to show restraint. But the “strike-wave” following the elections reduced hopes of labour showing one-sided restraint in the future.

The first dilemma to balance for the union movement is whether they are to act as private interest organisations, concerned exclusively with their own members, or identify with a broader constituency. The second dilemma is how far they should go in framing and pursuing the interests of their members in ways which exclude other constituencies. Their third dilemma concerns how to reconcile internal differences of interests. The role of the unions will also depend upon the degree to which they have loyalty and support amongst their own members. A critical factor for the consolidation of democracy and the strength of labour is thereby the internal consolidation of labour itself. For labour to contribute constructively to democracy, it needs to be democratically organised and institutionalised. The contribution and gains of labour will be determined by its strength and integrity. What are then the new challenges, potential strategies and scenarios of the unions?

NEW REALITIES, NEW CHALLENGES

Unions are facing harsher realities all over the world due to tougher competitive environments, internationalised markets, long-run transformations in economic and employment structures as well as a harsher political climate. South African unions in particular are faced with a radically and rapidly changing industrial, economic and political environment. Whereas there is little doubt that the current government will be more labour-friendly than previous governments, it will also be forced to make decisions that contradict labour interests. The way unions react to new challenges and changes, the decisions they make and the strategies they pursue, will have long-lasting consequences for how industrial relations are formed over the next decades.

1See Hyman 1994 on dilemmas of union movements.
Unions are facing new dilemmas, but with less organisational resources to deal with them. Unions, and COSATU unions in particular, have been suffering an incredible brain drain, as more than 120 experienced union leaders left the organisation through 1994. At the same time, there are enormous organisational challenges already on the agenda with a new public sector union merger, the establishment of a new farm workers union and the transport sector merger.

The COSATU Congress (September 1994) discussed new policies and strategies on labour market policy and organisational and political challenges. But while Congress resolutions indicate future directions, the course of union strategies is more often shaped on the basis of more immediate and ad hoc decisions to concrete issues. Some of the critical issues and dilemmas in response to union policies will be formed in the future are set out below.

**RECRUITING NEW WORKERS OR RETAINING OLD MEMBERS**

One critical issue concerns organising and recruiting new members versus implementing strategies to retain old members. In certain sectors and areas where workers have been excluded from full recognition in labour relations by apartheid politics, union membership will continue to grow without major efforts from organised labour. Here we are thinking first and foremost of workers in the former homelands, and occupational groups such as domestic workers, farm workers and groups of public sector employees. Major mergers might also take place between COSATU, NACTU and FEDSAL unions: or rather, FEDSAL and NACTU unions may leave their federations in order to join COSATU. In a longer time-perspective we may also see mergers between the union federations, as indicated already by labour unity meetings.

Even with “automatic” union membership growth, strategies are needed to balance new and old members and different occupational and interest groups. Most current COSATU members are in mining and manufacturing. However, membership has grown most in the public sector during the last few years, while both the relative and absolute number of manufacturing worker members is declining. The economic recession hit hard at the manufacturing sector with consequent widespread retrenchments. However, in spite of recession also in the mining sector, the NUM has managed to increase its membership.

Unorganised workers cite intimidation from employers as one major reason for not joining a union. Promoting worker rights and giving practical weight to the right to organise are thus important instruments for further union recruitment. Likewise, attacking the major obstacle of compulsory membership in employees’ associations for white workers. Further inroads into the public sector and the service and commercial sector constitute potential growth areas for the unions. Farm workers and domestic workers should be mentioned specifically. Other occupational groups are increasingly targeted as well; first and foremost white-collar workers, skilled and professional workers. COSATU states that their trend as a blue-collar federation cannot be allowed to continue any longer and that the lack of ability to organise all workers, including whites, contributes to a divided working class (Secretariat Report 1994).
In order to build long-term strategies to achieve a growth in membership, the trade union movement must also relate to the fact that the population and the labour force are changing. The balance between gender, between age groups and between diverse educational groups in the population carries important implications for the labour market and for union recruitment strategies. In the course of 20-30 years, the population has nearly doubled. Although the growth curve has flattened out and decreased in recent years, the population is still increasing, which implies that the labour force will on the average become younger. The number of people of working age will continue to grow - as the unemployment well may.

More women in the labour market and a better qualified labour force will change the profile of trade union membership masses, as well as its recruitment basis. Women want maternity leave and day-care facilities for children; youth want further skills and educational improvements; skilled and educated workers want higher wages, responsibility and greater work satisfaction. Targeted strategies to organise white workers, white-collar and skilled employees as well as public and service sector unions will also have serious implications for the future identity and priorities of COSATU. Different constituencies have different interests that the trade union movement will have to confront and represent.

The image of a pluralistic and many-faceted society with greatly differing interests does not imply that COSATU ought to have a separate policy for each sub-group. Rather, the unions will have to redefine their space of action, and that presents an unavoidable dilemma for any organisation of interest groups. Union growth may not be the major problem for COSATU in the short term. Consolidating the growth and building strategies around new interest groups, on the other hand, may prove a bigger challenge. There will be increasing demands from the government upon labour to show restraint and patience in the reconstruction process. Simultaneously, large groups of workers approach work with the sole objective of a living wage, just as they approach their unions with the major objective of achieving better living conditions.

Furthermore, different sectors and occupational groups constitute different wage interests. Government expectations for worker moderation may turn into difficult internal fights for labour. This survey has revealed a picture of black and white workers with different interests. Diverse occupational categories and groups employed in diverse sectors of the economy also differ in wages, interests and degree of work satisfaction. The labour market is divided along lines of colour, skills and occupations. These divisions are reflected in the labour movement. The priorities of the various income and racial groups seem to be very different. Whereas unions representing black workers function as political unions, white workers’ unions function more as business unions. How to combine such various interests can be combined in an efficient union movement which is internally loyal, solidaristic and easy to mobilize across sectoral and wage barriers has been a continuous problem in other countries. How are such internal differences to be reconciled in the future? The more internal interests differ, the harder such fights may become. COSATU states that lack of qualitative service to members has reached critical levels and “while we have organised thousands of new members, thousands seem demoralised and may leave our ranks” (Secretariat Report, COSATU 1994). Two questions emerge here. First, should the labour movement build strategies of membership growth, or concentrate upon con-
solidation of own structures and representation of its own members? Second, which interest groups should form the constituency of COSATU in the future? Should COSATU consolidate its strength in breadth or in depth?

**Remuneration: Money or Benefits?**

Labour must also consider new methods of wage formation in the future - both type and content of demands as well as strategies to achieve them. The first obvious question for labour is whether to continue the fight for a "living wage" or rather concentrate on industrial restructuring and issues such as training and development. The COSATU Campaigns Conference decided in 1993 to work for a national minimum wage pursued through public regulation together with sectoral minimum wages agreed through collective bargaining.

Unions have started to rethink the relationship between training, grading and wages and are advancing programmes to integrate these issues (Patel 1994). In practice, there is often a trade-off of lower wage demands for economic restructuring and/or an end to retrenchments. Quantitative demands on wages are, however, more easily sold to members than complex "qualitative" demands concerning empowerment and restructuring where the immediate benefits are not clear. The latter type of demands are usually developed at head offices rather than on the shop floor. Most workers see training and empowerment as less important than the improved wages they joined the unions for.

The types of issues currently being tabled for negotiations by unions also include job security, housing, education, health and safety and maternity provisions. This also brings up a choice between wages and fringe benefits. Fringe benefits, in the form of medical benefits, legal assistance, etc., make up an increasingly larger share of the compensation workers get in many countries. Occupational welfare or fringe benefits are not only social policy for workers, but also remuneration which affects labour costs and indirectly part of the human relations management of employers. Fringe benefits will more readily be accepted by management because they can be easily be linked to company performance and profit. To some extent, unions are already following a strategy of decentralised market-oriented social security system. There are greater differences between organised and unorganised workers on fringe benefits than on wages.

The debate over benefits also places the question of profit-sharing on the agenda, and questions concerning production, distribution and influence follow (Odnes et al. 1990). The challenge to the trade union movement is to find practical solutions as to how arrangements like profit-sharing and funds should be formed, financed and organised, and how these arrangements can be made part of the negotiation process in a way conducive to a wage policy based on solidarity principles. The strikes in 1994 showed that workers expect to see political democracy accompanied by a transformation of work. To date, the trade unions have only to a small extent succeeded in becoming an active partner in local decision-making systems in the workplaces. The need to close ranks and make an effort for the benefit of the company may potentially give considerable influence to the trade union representatives. Their influence in this case comes not from the "threat" of strikes, but rather from their positions as
spokespersons for the workers. Shop stewards and the unions can to some extent choose whether to create a workforce of the willing, loyal and ready, or of the frustrated, alienated and sluggish (Odnes 1990).

Should wage settlements be negotiated centrally, at union level or at plant level, i.e. through normal "market adaption" procedures between employer and employees? The framework for settlements varies greatly between and within countries. More weight has usually been given to central negotiations, relative to union or local adaption. In South Africa, unions now aim at a strategy of sectorial bargaining rather than collective national bargaining or decentralised company bargaining. Yet, international comparative studies have shown that the intermediate forms, between a centralised system on the one hand, and a decentralised, market-oriented wage formation on the other, often result in a stronger growth in wages than indicated by growth in productivity. Wage growth is higher than productivity growth when settlements are negotiated at the intermediate level, when many organisations are involved, and when negotiations take place both centrally and locally. International comparisons indicate that either a very centralised or a very decentralised settlement process is best suited for economic growth.

In countries without a centralised trade union movement, where wages consequently are settled at union level, sometimes with competing unions, the unions are still capable of influencing wages. But, in contrast to the centralised model, such organisations are not sufficiently large to be able or willing to take responsibility for the effect of excessive wage growth on competitiveness or employment. They may achieve wage increases at the price of high inflation, unstable exchange rates and periods with weak competitiveness and high unemployment.

By contrast a decentralised bargaining strategy gives relatively large powers to employers. In local negotiations, workers have a weak hand, and wage increases are dictated by corporate profitability or the state of the labour market. In centralised collective negotiations, on the other hand, the employees' unions have considerable power to set wages. The primary goal is higher wages. At the same time, the trade union movement is aware that excessive wage growth will lead to loss of competitiveness, and higher inflation. Therefore, there will be strong pressure also from the state to prevent wage growth from exceeding what the economy can sustain. Centralised collective bargaining hence opens up for more political pressure upon the unions to show restraint. On the other hand, the strategy has been implemented in several countries in order to develop a solidaristic wage policy between diverse groups of members and in order to secure other deals on "social wages", like unemployment schemes, social security, pensions or health.

For South Africa's union movement, the important challenge consists in finding solutions which can address three problems simultaneously: How is labour to stimulate the economy, without losing sight of redistribution, while also increasing worker participation in company restructuring? How can unions affect the provision of wages and benefits? Which strategy to choose? Concentrate upon wage demands while welfare is in the hands of politics and the state? Make sure that fringe benefits such as unemployment insurance, medical aid etc. are covered by the state, or pressure the employers to pay?
WELFARE: POLITICS OR MARKETS?

The ability of the unions to balance their responsibility towards the nation with the interests of their own members, will be tested in their policies and strategies on social welfare issues, health and education.

Like everyone else, workers have clear interests in improved education, health and social welfare for the population at large. It will pay them back in the form of improved living conditions for themselves and their dependents and in the overall standards of community life in general. Furthermore, welfare systems are also used to control the labour market; the entry and exit of workers and thereby employment rates. The balance between age and educational groups in the labour force has distinct implications for the labour market. Smaller batches of school leavers is the best remedy against youth unemployment. Broad improvement of education levels is important not only for the quality of skills in the labour market at a later stage, but also for controlling the number of people entering the labour market and hence unemployment levels. Likewise, pension systems, rates and retirement age are methods to control the size and composition of the labour force.

Workers also have specific interests in work-related benefits like health and safety measures at work, severance pay, health insurance, additional sickness benefits, etc. as well as vocational training and gaining further skills. Gradually then qualifications will become outdated, and upgrading of skills may be a necessary long-term investment in job and career climbing. Although the average level of education in society rises by improving primary education for everyone, demands on competence in industry are also increasing. Continuous upgrading and refining of skills must become part of the occupational career.

The question for workers and their unions is whether to choose a strategy of promoting universal benefits, or only group-specific targeted measures and thereby to follow the strategy of political mechanisms of providing social security, or rather go to the market for benefits. It becomes to some extent a choice between supporting legislative political solutions or collective bargaining as preferred strategy.

No union will readily declare itself prepared to show "social responsibility" unless they get social reforms and improved material conditions in return. In several countries wage moderation by labour has been exchanged for pension arrangements, unemployment schemes, job creation or price control. However, it is also true that several labour movements abroad have found large problems in creating or enforcing legitimacy for such a "social wage" amongst own members. "People will rather receive X in cash than a commodity that costs X" (Flanagan 1989 et al, in Hippe 1995), the reason simply being that people would rather choose themselves what to buy for X. Furthermore, the more insecure workers perceive their economic environment, the more they will prefer getting paid today rather than seeing the benefits tomorrow.

Private and public welfare are clearly distinct categories with different effects in terms of economic redistribution and worker solidarity. Unions have often striven for a transfer of welfare benefits to the public sector and consequently removed such

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1 I have borrowed heavily from Hippe (1995) in this section on unions and welfare issues.
topics from settlements in the labour market. Strong unions are often perceived as supporters of state dominance in welfare provisions, while weak unions are forced to engage in market-based welfare. Traditionally, a united and well organised labour force which controls government through a separate labour party will use political mechanisms to satisfy and regulate welfare. Unions may advance workers’ short-term interests by settlements with the state on a “social wage” or universal benefits to the whole population. Universal rights and benefits, in particular through legislation, also reduce the tendency of capital to regard worker rights as a competition factor and concentrate production in “low-pay” areas or plants. In a long-term perspective, however, a strategy of universal rights may undermine the recruitment strategies and strength of organized labour. With universal benefits, all workers may “free-ride” on the deals between labour and the state, without joining unions. Universal rights may also tend to lose their redistributive character and hence undermine a substantial goal of labour. The “free-rider” problem implies on this basis, that organisations will tend to prefer specific job- or union-related benefits and negotiations in the market because they will serve as extra incentives to secure their own membership bases.

National considerations will put pressure on labour to show moderation and rather promote the universal model of social security. While workers obviously support the idea that the state should provide and pay for social security, they simultaneously look to work and unions for such benefits. In a short-term perspective the political choice of the government will be the one of broad enlargement of the number of people being covered by primary school qualifications, basic health care etc. Upgrading skills and qualifications further and build more specialised care and welfare will be for the few who can pay, either through work or otherwise. Occupational or work-related benefits may thus serve to increase differences between those inside the labour market and those outside in the future. Furthermore, different groups of employees may have different perceptions and priorities when it comes to types of benefits and remuneration provided and thereby contribute to internal cleavages in the labour movement.

Politics or Production?

Diamond (1994) argues that civil society must be autonomous from the state to be able to check and balance state power in a transition process. Corporatist style pacts thereby pose a serious threat to democracy in transitional or newly emerging constitutional regimes.

Regulation of the market, redistribution and stimulation of the “demand” as opposed to the “supply” side of the economy have boosted crisis-ridden economies before and created favourable conditions for reconstruction. In South Africa a tripartite forum, the National Economic and Development Council (NEDLAC) has now been launched to take over from the National Manpower Commission and the National Economic Forum. However, with political controversies and insecurities, an increasingly open economy, a relatively fragmented union movement, huge unemployment and low economic growth, there are also reasons to approach corporatism or tri-partism with caution. Furthermore, support from workers for labour participating in national institutions may be limited. Finally, whereas “corporatist” Scan-
Dinavian countries have had relatively strong centralised states with popular legitimacy, a decentralised South African state may confront problems in implementing policy, i.e., "corporative agreements", in a unitary way at the local level.

Institutions may be the crystallisation of specific political forces and power, but once established they take on a life and reality of their own. On that basis, labour must ensure that institutions are transparent, focusing on clearly defined policy questions and with a clear time-frame and terms of reference in order to make it easier to withdraw, ensure independence and to legitimise their actions to own members.

Workers support the political engagement of the unions and their participation in national institutions. They express a general sense of collectivism in their strategic approach to politics as well as in the solutions they perceive. This collectivism is not necessarily a socialist approach, however it comes through in their support for trade unions as collective instruments for empowerment, in their approach to teamwork and management in the companies and in their approach to different population groups and the need for nation-building and reconciliation.

Unions have worked as agents for democracy and democratic values amongst all workers, more than political learning areas only for their own members. Unions have contributed to a sense of grass-root democracy in black society at large through locals, by contributing to building civics organisations and residence committees, student organisations etc. COSATU developed into a social-political popular union federation. The pledge for working-class interests was defined broadly as the fight against apartheid. And the pledge for own members' interests was defined broadly as part and parcel of the interests of the whole working class. The unions' political struggle was thereby perceived as representing not only representing own members, but the black community at large. The historic role of labour and the current external expectations pose a serious challenge also to the internal consolidation of labour in South Africa today.

**INTERNAL CONSOLIDATION OR EXTERNAL POWER?**

Labour will also to some extent have to take the "national interest" into account in a transitional reconstruction period. Political involvement combined with centralised collective bargaining may tend to centralise the decision-making structures also internally within the unions. The dilemma remains, however, that while negotiations at the political national level aim at addressing working conditions on the shop floor, such issues and strategies tend to turn the focus and influence away from the priorities of the ordinary workers.

Internal democracy and the need to uphold vibrant democracy at the shop-floor level for workers to feel that they influence political priorities and labour issues, has become a major challenge for labour. Centralisation and bureaucratisation of the union movement carry the danger of evolving protests and reactions from members on issues, included politics, where unions are seen as unrepresentative. Keeping up activity and support at the shop-floor level may be achieved through strong union support and involvement in worker participation in decision-making bodies at the workplace. And internal campaigns and capacity have to be developed in the unions.
to counterbalance the tendencies towards centralisation of union structures. The need for improved internal strength and communication is increased by the possibility of stronger internal conflicts and cleavages within the union movement in the future.

The degree to which members feel loyalty to and identity with their unions will depend upon the ability of the unions to deliver economic and social goods as well as the overlap, or alternatively gap, between union goals and leadership on the one hand and shop-floor priorities and aspirations on the other. How organised labour will respond to new challenges in balancing the short-term needs of its membership against the long-term needs of national stability and institutional peace is of decisive importance for the nation-building process in South Africa. The workers represented in our survey have high confidence and trust in their unions. The unions function as an institutional and political resource to these workers.

The future may see the dawn of stronger ideological and economic conflicts within labour: between economic sectors, between big and small unions, between public and private sector, between different wealth and income groups of workers. The cleavages between different income groups, gender and sectors which emerge from this survey stand at the starting line. There may be new and harder struggles over union identities in the future. Cleavages may occur between ideological groups formerly united by the struggle against apartheid. New questions as to political affiliation, independence and political involvement may easily revive old discussions and cleavages. The 1980s saw internal disagreements in COSATU between those who argued that unions should concentrate on shop-floor issues and traditional union issues, and those who felt that it was impossible to separate the economic struggle from the broader political struggle. The old fight between "workerists" and "populists", and more recent disagreements concerning political alliances in the union movement, have been balanced and dealt with within the union movement. But labour needs strong internal and organisational resources to balance such conflicts in the future.

The COSATU "back to basics" campaign aims at rebuilding the movement as a mass formation based on worker control, and eradicating the danger of COSATU becoming leadership driven from offices and boardrooms (Secretariat Report, COSATU 1994). Top priority in a reconstruction process must be to ensure the support of rank-and-file workers. Strong labour movements are built on the shop-floor.

**Union scenarios**

Two rather self-evident scenarios have been quoted as the options for labour and for COSATU in particular (NALEDI 1994). One is stagnation and decline in membership; the other is consolidation and further growth. Future challenges seem, however, to be more linked to strategies, power and agendas than to counting workers. Strategies, power and agendas grow out of membership: not in terms of their numbers, but out of the composition of different interests within and between constituencies.

The union movement can no longer sustain its old identity and must redefine its role. But to what? And with what implications? There are several scenarios for labour. Let us label them as industrial, sectoral, political and radical unionism. Here they are...
portrayed as ideal types, although they will in reality blend into each other. Their likelihood is determined by the future strategies of labour, including issues of recruitment, wage formation, welfare and organisational and political strategies. The following is a brief attempt at placing the dilemmas of union development on the agenda.

**INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM**

The first type of unionism is characterised by unions concentrating on bread-and-butter issues on the shop floor while keeping qualitative demands at work and political engagement at arms' length. The goals of such unions are largely economic, in that they want to pursue improvement in wage demands and living standards for their members while they feel less responsibility towards broader national interests. The scenario is recognised by decentralised responsibilities for social security and employment relations. Setting wages and benefits in the market may pull in the direction of such a scenario. Independently of the model selected for wage settlements in the years to come, profit-sharing and funds will undoubtedly be on the agenda. In the private sector, such forms of settlement, at least part of the wages, are expected to become more widespread, being an advantage to employers. Within a decentralised model, these elements are seen as a practical way of adapting wage levels to profitability. Employees in successful companies will attain a higher wage level than workers in unprofitable companies. Local-level bargaining thereby opens up for more inequalities between groups in different sectors and companies.

Increased internationalisation, more flexible specialisation in the labour market and a more consumer-oriented society may reinforce the trends towards such a scenario. Increased flexibility in employment and wage practices may result from new technology and forms of organisation in the occupational sphere, and increased demand for services.

While welfare policies may target the most needy and poor outside the labour market, benefits and social security are already to a large extent linked to company performance and union strength at the local level. Many unions and employers negotiate only minimum wages in centralised bargaining and Industrial Councils (LRS 1994). This implies that employers in many cases continue to control the grading system, unilaterally setting all wages above the minimum level. Wage settlements at the local level on the basis of profitability and a company's ability to pay may reinforce such developments.

**DIVIDED LABOUR MARKETS AND SECTORAL UNIONISM**

Another scenario is a type of sectoral unionism developed on the basis of economic growth in certain sectors while there is stagnation in others. Sectoral wage bargaining may reinforce such a trend. This type of unionism will not only concentrate upon bread-and-butter issues, but also include training, grading, sectoral restructuring concerning productivity and retrenchment "packages", etc. Whether political demands are included in the strategies of such unions will depend upon the degree to which these touch directly upon "their" labour market.
Sectorwise bargaining may lead to strong unions where economic growth is good, or where union bargaining power is strong. There are many labour movements across the world which are dominated by single unions or driven by a few strong union affiliates, while bargaining demands and success in others follow behind. The federations in such a scenario tend to develop into bureaucratic machineries while power and influence remain with a few affiliates. Strong economic growth or relative national economic dependency upon certain sectors may explain the development of such divided labour markets. Even though unionised workers may constitute a marginal proportion of the formal workforce or the population at large, they can nevertheless be a significant actor if they control an important economic sector. Another closely related development is one in which membership markets are divided between unions and federations, preventing union competition for occupational groups.

A more centralised sectoral system of wage formation and bargaining is already developing in South Africa. Certain economic sectors are gaining ground while others are losing out. COSATU's financial problems and leadership brain-drain may also drive the federation more towards dependency upon (some of) the affiliates. While developing more internal consistency in wage levels and benefits within the sector, differences between sectors and groups of workers may increase. Federations dominated by membership constituencies may push in the direction of narrow job-related issues in a short-term perspective, while opening up for differing developments in wages, and benefits between groups of constituencies in a long-term perspective, and thereby potential internal cleavages.

**Political Unionism**

Unions based upon narrow membership constituencies tend to limit their concerns to job-related, sector-specific issues, whereas political unions encompassing broader interest groups often address a wider range of issues. So-called encompassing unions (Olson 1971) - unions that organise large and different parts of the labour force - often address a wider range of issues than only workplace related conflicts; they are said to be more likely to pursue class compromise-strategies in practice than unions with more narrow membership basis. The wider the constituencies, including white-collar workers, crafts workers and artisans, the stronger will the pressure be for labour movements to push towards an organisation representing broad social interests while reconciling internal conflicts in external compromises and moderation.

COSATU, FEDSAL and NACTU already to some extent follow a strategy of political unionism through participation in political fora like NEDLAC. Several factors may push COSATU in particular towards a broader role and responsibility to the nation: past political involvement, their alliance with the ANC in the current government, the considerations for nation-building and democratic stability in general as well as increasingly different internal constituencies. COSATU's broad strategy of recruitment aimed at integrating white-collar workers and professionals as well as retaining blue-collar workers may easily shift the union movement towards broader goals, national responsibility and more moderation in wage demands. Pursuing a strategy of centralised collective bargaining will easily push in the same direction.
For political unionism to succeed, it requires a certain centralisation of union structures in order to create loyalty amongst members. Political involvement and national responsibility on the one hand, and centralisation of union structures on the other hand tend to reinforce each other. A strong federation is needed to drive a united labour movement forward and create internal consensus for compromises. At the same time, COSATU as a federation is facing internal organisational problems - with financial difficulties, loss of leadership and union officials in the post-elections period as well as a lack of internal work satisfaction and motivation in a period of massive uncertainty. Strategies will also have to be developed to fulfil the activity and expectations at the shop-floor level in order to reduce the gap between ordinary workers and leadership, between top and bottom in the organisation. Strategies to recruit white-collar workers and white workers specifically, will also imply including occupational unionism with industrial unionism side by side in the federation, and this again may generate internal cleavages.

COSATU's political alliance and increased responsibility towards non-members may also give other more independent unions advantages in terms of union growth. If political unionism is seen to hamper the improvements in living standards for workers in the formal sector, unions which focus on economic bread and butter issues more successfully may gain weight and influence.

**RADICAL UNIONISM**

A final scenario is the development of radical unionism in independence and opposition to the political government. Such a scenario may materialise on the basis of frustration amongst members with either political compromises or lack of improvement in living conditions. Wild-cat strikes towards the end of 1994 may indicate such internal frustration. Likewise the radical criticism of the tri-partite alliance within certain fractions of COSATU.

Such unionism will in reality develop with much of the specific characteristics of the industrial unionism which gives priority to bread-and-butter issues. However, the long-term goals will be centred around opposition to the capitalist economy on the basis of socialist agendas.

**A VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

"Big black labour" today combines elements of all four scenarios, with political unionism carrying most weight in COSATU. The future may still see a combination of all four models: COSATU combining strong elements of political unionism with strong affiliates concentrating on sectoral demands while radical and industrial unions compete on the side. Labour's own vision for the future may also be a combination of varying strategies and decision-making levels in what has been referred to as "strategic unionism" (Holdt 1992). Such a vision may imply political involvement while maintaining market interventions and negotiations with employers at local and
sectoral levels. It may imply centralisation in order to respond quickly and effectively to political and economic issues while maintaining decentralised, local activity. It may be a combined labour movement of different interests, blue- and white-collar workers, white and black workers as well as different income and social groups, all united in order to strengthen democracy and build a new nation.

There are two immediate dangers for COSATU. One concerns is the pitfalls of becoming more oriented towards industrial or sectoral unionism. This will reduce the political influence COSATU has at the national level. The other danger is that successful industrial, sectoral or radical unions competing on their side may gain escalating ground amongst their members. On this basis, the largest danger may be connected with following one strategy or pursuing one scenario at the expense of others. To some extent, COSATU will have to continue as a multi-interest, all-embracing organisation which follows several strategies at the same time. Internal consolidation has, however, become pivotal. Unions will have to meet the expectations of their members towards better living conditions and higher wages. Internal consolidation and external power become more difficult with increasingly divided internal interests and groups of constituencies. And the more centralised the organisation, the less tolerance for lack of success.

All these issues raise urgent choices for labour about how to deploy their limited organisational resources and which goals and strategies to choose. In reality, it may become a choice between continuous inroads into new occupational groups or internal consolidation, or between collective bargaining at the national level or local bargaining in the company. One critical factor for the role of labour as an agent of democracy, and indeed for labour's strength and survival in itself, is connected to the ability of both the government and labour to negotiate the tightrope between worker demands for decent wages on the one hand and their acceptance of a "social wage" including pensions, health and services on the other hand. The most difficult, but also urgent question is therefore one of internal consolidation. In a society characterised by rapid change, unions face an increasing number of contradictory choices and dilemmas. But improved living conditions for workers in the formal sector are necessary in order for the unions to maintain loyalty among the members in the future.

The problem is that unions also receive contradictory signals from their own members. Workers are divided and contradictory. They are collectively oriented, yet individual and instrumental in expectations to their own standards of living. Workers have confidence in democracy, but also expect to influence the course of democracy themselves. Workers want unions to be involved in politics, but almost half the workers want unions to concentrate more upon bread-and-butter issues in the future. The strategies and goals of labour will have to be based on a fine balance between representing while simultaneously shaping the interests of workers. A majority of workers say that how far you get in life and what you achieve is first and foremost dependent upon your own personal work and resources. Others believe that where they come from, luck and coincidence or who they know has determined the course of their destiny. Only a small minority say that their achievements have been influenced first and foremost by their skin colour or by organisational affiliation. One out of four say solidarity is the least important part of democracy. Close to one fifth
believe freedom is most important. These are the workers whose cooperation employers will need in order to generate economic growth. These are the workers who will be the watchdogs of South Africa's new democracy.

To sum up the challenges of the nation-building process and the role of labour can be illustrated by a comment made by one of the workers during the survey:

“Yes, I have big dreams. But dreams depend completely on yourself. No one else can achieve them for you. But you need as an individual the freedom to achieve. You can't let other people restrict you. I sympathize with the ANC and praised them for fighting the system. But it's not just for me, it's for all the people who want to challenge themselves and improve and have a better stake in society as a whole. That was the whole point of fighting apartheid because it limited you. So why now go for an ANC system that will possibly have some sort of limitations imposed on individuals. The success and rewards belong to us!”
APPENDIX I
SOUTH AFRICA IN A SMALL NUTSHELL

APARTHEID'S LEGAL BASIS

The population of South Africa has been estimated between 40 and 43 million, of which an estimated 76% is classified as African, 12.8 per cent as whites, 8.5 per cent as «coloured» and 2.6 per cent as Indian. Apartheid separated the population into four main categories which, were prescribed separate residential areas. Political, economic and social rights were linked to group affiliation and area of permanent residence, rather than to citizenship. The cumulative weight of apartheid marked every aspect of society, with the distribution of resources like education, infrastructure, health- and social services varying according to residential areas and than again with the segregation of population groups and race. There are also differences in distribution of resources between groups living in the ten so-called homelands (established by the apartheid government as «bantustans» areas) and groups living in other parts of South Africa.

Racism in South Africa did not start with the National Party (NP), which came to power from 1948. Racism had existed as part of the political and legal system before this period. However, the NP government gave politics and the legislation the form of total segregation and «separate development» that we know today as apartheid. The root of all further statutory discrimination was to be found in The Population Registration Act, which laid the basis for classification according to race. The Land Act and The Group Areas Act regulated residence and the property and use of land in respectively rural and urban areas. The Separate Amenities Act gave regions and localities access to regulating access to and use of amenities like hotels, transport, restaurants, etc. according to race. Although all persons were registered by race in the Population Register, their classification in the register did not determine their race for all purposes - this was dependent upon the legislation in question. A person could hence be white for some purposes, «coloured» for others and African for yet another purpose.

Parliament consisted of three houses or chambers: a House of Assembly (for whites), a House of Representatives (for «coloureds») and a House of Delegates (for Indians). The distribution of tasks between the chambers in Parliament followed a separation between «own» and «general» affairs. «Own affairs» were matters that affected one specific population group; «general affairs» were all matters that were not «own affairs», such as defence, foreign affairs, law and order, transport and the like.


2Statistics continue to be collected along racial lines in order to monitor change and evaluate efforts at social integration.

3The two chambers for «coloureds» and Indians were established in 1985 Before then there were no political rights for these groups.
If disagreements occurred between the chambers in parliament, the Presidents' Council had the final say. Africans were supposed to exercise their political rights in the "black national states" ("bantustans" or "homelands") in terms of what the government characterized as "separate development".

The ideology of apartheid or "separate development" affected practically all aspects of South African law and reality. Separate development called for the creation of national states through the 1950s in which blacks would be able "to govern themselves". Four so-called "independent" states were established during the 1970s while another 6 areas were so-called "self-governing" states. A prerequisite for this policy was that land was set aside within South Africa for occupation by blacks. "Scheduled areas" had already been set aside for reserves in terms of the Native Land Act (1913) and additional land was released through the 30s and later. Approx. 14% of the land area South Africa was hence set aside for about 85% of the population.

The reasons for the highly segregated labour markets in South Africa are to be found in the general policy of apartheid, Bantu education and discriminatory practices in distribution of resources, as well as more direct measurements of discrimination - in particular the Job Segregation and Job Preferences Acts.

Legal provisions on job segregation specified which population groups should work in which sectors and occupations, while specifications on job preferences stimulated that certain groups should be preferred for specific jobs unless there was a lack of labour power or for other reasons. In this way, economic sectors and occupations became segregated, and also regions. Western Cape was for example specified as a "Coloured preferential area", which made it extremely difficult for Africans to find work there.

The years of negotiations

1990 saw the beginning of political change in South Africa, with the unbanning of the ANC, PAC, AZAPO and SACP and the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. While many would agree that the date 2 February 1990 in this respect marks a shift in the political climate in South Africa, others will hold that the basis for the political change started years back when both external and internal factors increasingly made it impossible for the apartheid regime to govern. In fact, increasing internal resistance and external pressure had created the conditions for a gradual lifting of apartheid laws and not a complete turn-around in 1990. Furthermore, whereas most people see February 1990 as the definite turn in apartheid politics, others will point out that this was not necessarily a point of no return. Four years of hard negotiations on an interim constitution, free elections and the establishment of democracy were to follow.

Multi-party talks between the NP regime and the main challenger ANC as well as a host of smaller parties and groups started in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in 1990 and broke down two years later (June 1992). New talks, now renamed the Multi-Party Negotiations Process, started half a year later. The main

President de Klerk opened the Parliament on 2 February 1990, making announcements of the political reforms.

For more detailed records of the negotiations process, and its controversies and compromises, see Tjønneland (1994) and Friedman (1993).
conflicts in the talks involved to minority rights or protection with the following controversies over federalism, separation of a «white homeland» (Volkstatt), length of the interim period, economic «guarantees», etc.

The talks finally reached a conclusion towards the end of 1993 with the establishment of a new multi-party council, the Transitional Executive Council, to oversee the work of De Klerk and his cabinet in the period towards the elections. Finally, the Interim Constitution was signed at the end of 1993, paved the way for elections. This Constitution is to govern the country until the next general election in 1999; it provides a list of 33 Constitutional Principles binding the Parliament. A new constitution will have to be adopted within two years from the start of the new parliament by a two thirds majority of the Constituent Assembly.

The 1990s witnessed high and increasing numbers of political murders and violence. From 1990 until the beginning of 1994 some 12,000 people died in politically motivated violence. The conflicts were complex, with major frictions based on political conflicts, ethnic and regional differences, social hierarchies and the fight for scarce resources. Splits caused by apartheid, uneven distribution of resources and ideological cleavages increased the number of conflicts, threatening political stability and democratic progress. In many cases, violence could have been shown to be orchestrated or arranged by the state security forces. The violence and threats to democracy reached a climax with a wave of bomb explosions in the weeks immediately prior to the elections.

Those who had refused to take part in the talks were generally conservative right-wing groups. The Freedom Alliance brought together the two main white right-wing groups, the Afrikaner Volksfront and the Conservative Party, as well as three conservative African groups represented by the homeland governments of Ciskei and Bophutatswana and the Inkatha Freedom Party. Splinter groups from the Afrikaner Volksfront (an umbrella organisation for several Afrikaner groups) finally broke out of the Volksfront. They formed the Freedom Front under General Constand Viljoen and went to contest the elections on the campaign of a white Volkstaat. The Inkatha Freedom Party also joined in at the last minute, on the background of promised increased independence and power for the Zulu king, federalism and other issues.

On the left, there were also smaller groups that refused to take part in the talks. The most important was the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, which did not take part in the Transitional Executive Council, but decided to join the elections. AZAPO (Azanian People's Organizations), which had played an important role in the revival of the black consciousness movement throughout the 1970s, decided to boycott the elections as well.

The April 1994 elections finally buried apartheid and laid the basis for a non-racial democracy. The core of the Interim Constitution is the provision for a Government of National Unity (GNU) in which all parties with 5% of the national vote are entitled to a proportionate number of ministerial portfolios. The elections simultaneously selected a legislature and a body which (when sitting with the Senate) will write the new constitution, to be drawn up within a period of 2 years. All in all, 19 par-

*Relative to the number of seats held by other parties.
ties contested the national elections, with the number of provincial elections varying between 7 and 14. The ANC won 63% of the vote for the national assembly and seven out of nine provinces. The National Party won 20% of the national vote and the province Western Cape, while the Inkatha Freedom Party won 11% of the national vote and the province Kwazulu/Natal. New elections for Parliament are to be held by 1999 at the latest.
APPENDIX II
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMES

ANC  African National Congress
APLA  Azanian People's Liberation Army
AWB  *Afrikaanse Weerstandsbeweging*
BCM  Black Consciousness Movement
COSATU  Congress of South African Trade Unions
CP  Conservative Party
CSS  Central Statistical Service
CWITU  Chemical Workers Industrial Union (COSATU affiliate)
DP  Democratic Party
FA  Freedom Alliance
FEDSAL  Federation of South African Labour Unions
FF  Freedom Front
FITU  Federation of Independent Trade Unions
FOSATU  Federation of South African Trade Unions
GNU  Government of National Unity
HSRC  Human Science Research Council
IFP  Inkatha Freedom Party
LRA  Labour Relations Amendment Act
MDM  Mass Democratic Movement
NACTU  National Congress of Trade Unions
NEDLAC  National Economic, Development and Labour Council
NEHAWU  National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (COSATU affiliate)
NP  National Party
NUM  National Union of Mineworkers (COSATU affiliate)
NUMSA  National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (COSATU affiliate)
PAC  Pan Africanist Congress
PFP  Progressive Federal Party
POTWA  Post Office and Telecommunications Workers Association (COSATU affiliate)
PPWAWU  Paper, Pulp, Wood, and Allied Workers Union
PWV  Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging region
RDP  Reconstruction and Development Program
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SACCAWU</td>
<td>South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (COSATU affiliate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACOL</td>
<td>South African Confederation of Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACP</td>
<td>South African Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACTU</td>
<td>South African Congress of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACTWU</td>
<td>South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (COSATU affiliate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALB</td>
<td>South African Labour Bulletin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TGWU</td>
<td>Transport and General Workers Union (COSATU affiliate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPA</td>
<td>Transvaal Provincial Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUCSA</td>
<td>Trade Union Council of South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>United Democratic Front</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX III
SAMPLING, ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING THE SURVEY

EXISTING DATA

Knowledge is power. Reliable representative data are a crucial tool for future political planning and priorities as well as for the union movements' own strategies and organisational structures. However, social science documentation and knowledge has been widely regarded as inadequate and/or politically biased in South Africa. The government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994) itself states that there are no adequate instruments to evaluate and monitor poverty. Without underestimating the amount of valuable research being done, general problems and shortcomings have been described when it comes to the degree of valuable input in terms of providing instruments for identifying key social and political problems and thereby for policy-making and further research.

There are relatively few independent sources of information and data in South Africa. Several contributions rely on each other, so one should be cautious about drawing too firm conclusions on their basis. Such data sources have been used in this report to present a broad-brush picture of profile and trends, rather than detailed conclusions.

Furthermore, it is difficult to acquire data-sets which are presented according to consistent factors or boundaries. Some information for example, is presented in statistical region boundaries and local government areas, whereas other data are available only in non-corresponding administrative boundaries (Regional Services Council areas). Furthermore, the borders of Gauteng have fluctuated over the years. Finally, whereas some of the national data cover the population in the whole country, other data excludes people in the former «independent» homelands, while other exclude people living in all (both «independent» and «self governing») homeland areas. To make matters still worse, some of the statistics gathered before 1990 also include Namibia.

Hall (1993) has identified three groups of problems with the existing data and research on development in Gauteng. First, there are problems emanating from the deficiencies in the current approaches to data collection and research, for example the lack of household data. Published data also give disproportionate attention to the main metropolitan areas of South Africa in general and of Gauteng in particular. Key disaggregations, like gender, have furthermore been overlooked in the past. Second, while much research and data exist, access to such sources (including public sources) is restricted by confidentiality and commerciality. Third, the racially divided, multiple levels and sources of authority operating in the region, and the numerous, often confused, definitions of their boundaries, complicate the task of gathering region-wide statistics.
SAMPLING

Sampling depends upon what kind of information about the population is available, and therefore encounters considerable difficulties in South Africa. First of all, there is no reliable source of information about who and how many actually live in South Africa, or in the Gauteng area. Population estimates in Gauteng vary by 100% or more. The 1991 census is of limited use because it has (as all previous censuses) generally underenumerated the population, especially the mainly African population in informal, and, in previous years, illegal forms of residence (Mabin and Hunter 1993). There are no maps covering several of these townships. Although the shortcomings of the 1991 census have in part been corrected by later research adjusting for undercounting, the census should be used as indicative rather than factual information. However, other sources of population figures for separate individual townships and this is needed for sampling are even worse. The April 1994 elections demonstrated well enough that previous population estimates were "guestimates". This was confirmed by the Independent Elections Commission after the elections.

Problems in estimating the informally housed population has had a major influence on the reported population figures. Such problems are related to high mobility of the informally housed population, land invasion of free settlement areas, and the "demolition" of illegal structures. The number of informal backyard structures and occupied garages is especially hard to estimate.

The sampling in this study has been based on the "best possible" instruments for population estimates, but they are not optimal. We carried out sampling on the basis of population estimates in formal as well as informal areas, using a stratified random sample.

Township residents make up the bulk of the workforce. The main part of the survey, and thereby the sampling, therefore took place in the traditional black townships and not in the traditional white suburban areas.

The five subregions of Gauteng differ. There is a tendency for similar types of industrial and economic activities to cluster in particular localities. This means that the subregions have different sources of economic income and thereby provide information on different parts of the labour market. The Pretoria area will have a relatively large proportion of government and administration employment. Manufacturing in this area is dominated by the metal and automobile sector. Wits or central Johannesburg will be relatively dominated by private services, trade and finances. East Rand is dominated by manufacturing, i.e. metal products and machinery. West Rand is overwhelmingly a mining area. Vaal, finally, is also a predominantly manufacturing area, but dominated by industrial chemical sectors, basic metals, fabricated metal products, machinery, etc.

1The census was not a census covering all households and people in the black areas, but a sample of areas and townships. The population estimates have in certain areas been corrected by aerial photographs taken by the Transvaal Provincial Administration. The photos were used to count number of stands in the area which were than multiplied by the average number of people living in formal houses and informal structures respectively.

2Local authorities may also give inflated estimates so as to qualify for a higher grade of local authority and thereby receive more subsidies and loans from the Transvaal Provincial Administration or the Regional Services Council concerned.
Average incomes also differ between the various sub-regions of Gauteng. Racial disparities are lower and average incomes higher in central Wits than in the region as a whole: 30% higher than the Gauteng average (1985 CSS). Around 31% out of the African households in Johannesburg lived below the Minimum Living Level (MLL) in 1991 (Hall et al. 1993) compared to almost 29% in 1982 and approx. 21% in 1973 (Nel in Pillay 1984). Data from the 1991 Census indicate that the percentage of households living with incomes below the MLL in the West Rand is 42%, in the East Rand 36%, in Pretoria 35% and in the Vaal triangle 50%. Median household income in the Vaal is the lowest in the metropolitan part of the region, while the incomes received by households in Pretoria statistical region are the highest (Hall et al. 1993).

Formal townships are also in many respects different from the informal, or squatter, areas. Average household incomes in formal settlements have been estimated to be twice those received in the informal areas (Sapire and Schlemmer 1990, Hall et al 1994). Informal areas are dominated by more recent «immigrants» to Gauteng, with various implications for political affiliation, urban culture association, etc.

Social Surveys, a Johannesburg-based market research company, was responsible for the sampling. The sample was first stratified on the basis of the five subregions in Gauteng and on the basis of formal versus informal areas or squatter camps. Within each of the ten strata, we selected one area with a probability proportionate to the number of people living in the township. The principle followed was to make a cumulative list of areas according to the population figures. The selection of areas was done in such a way that each area had a possibility of being selected according to the number of people living there. Big, or densely populated areas hence had a higher possibility of being selected than smaller areas. Population estimates for the townships were based upon the 1991 Population Census, TPA (Transvaal Provincial Administration) estimates of number of stands in specific areas, or in a few areas simply well-qualified «guestimates». Where all we had was the estimate of number of stands, we multiplied this by the average number of people living per stand: 7.5 per formal house and 4.38 per informal household (Social Surveys 1994). The areas selected and the relative numbers of workers selected are found in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretoria</td>
<td>Mamelodi</td>
<td>Stanzaville</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16%)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaal</td>
<td>Evaton</td>
<td>Orange Farm</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Rand</td>
<td>Mohlakeng</td>
<td>Munsieville</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13%)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Rand</td>
<td>Wattville</td>
<td>Daveyton</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannesburg</td>
<td>Soweto</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Doornkop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(28%)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
White workers were selected as a separate, random sample in an area called Germiston on the East Rand of Johannesburg. Our aim was to find a sample of people representing more traditional workers and who would therefore be comparable to our black workers. A total of 141 workers were selected. Because of the limited number of people in this separate sample, they have not been included in the analysis with the black workers, but the information provided on the basis of these interviews has been used as comparison.

VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND REPRESENTATIVITY

Problems may occur in surveys, opinion polls, etc. are due to the risk of selecting people in the sample who do not represent the population at large. While the aim is to generate information about the population on the basis of a small sample, we may for various reasons have ended up with a sample with characteristics which do not correspond to their proportion of the population.

All in all, our sample does seem reasonably representative in terms of the population of black workers above the age of 18, to judge from other information gathered on key social and economic dimensions. Below follows a comparison of data from our sample compared with that gleaned from other statistics. The main scope of such a comparison is to provide an idea of the validity of our data. Measuring the complete accuracy of our data is not possible on the basis of existing statistics. The main reason is that most other data cover the whole population and not only workers in the formal workforce, who we expect to be better educated, paid and more male dominated than the population at large.

The gender composition of our survey corresponds well with census data showing that 43% of our workers are women, compared to the census estimate of 39% in the formal economy being female in 1991 (the proportion of women taking part in the formal economy is growing by approx. 4.1% yearly compared to an estimated increase of 1.6% for men, RRS 1994). In terms of age, a large bulk of the Gauteng population seems to be found between the ages of 25 and 34. The 1991 census found that 22% of the African population was between 25 and 34 in age, which is higher than any other 10-year cohort. The same age group amongst our workers in fact constitutes almost half the workers in our sample. Looking at the African population between the age of 20 and 60, as seen by the 1991 census, shows us that a gross estimate of 30% of this group is between 25 and 34. We must expect that the formal workforce, however, absorbs a higher proportion of this group of people, which are usually perceived as being in their most productive life phase.

The education profile of our workers shows that almost one third of the workers have only achieved Standard 5 or less, i.e. primary school. About 40% of the workers have completed Standard 6 or 7 (24%) or Standard 8 (16%), i.e. secondary school as their highest educational qualification. In a 1987 survey conducted by the Human Science Research Centre (HSRC)³ about 17% of household heads was found to have achieved Standard 8 or higher. The 1991 census shows that 20% of the African population by than had achieved Standard 8 or higher (Hall et al 1993). The data

³ With a sample of 26,293 household heads over the age of 20.
from the Development Bank of Southern Africa concerning the whole population show that 33% of the population in Gauteng had finished primary school in 1989, an additional 39% secondary school and 7% had finished tertiary education, while 21% had no formal education at all (Mabin and Hunter 1994). Our proportion of workers with Standard 8 or more is far higher (48%). The comparison however, seems reasonable seeing that we have included only workers in the formal workforce, while other statistics also include unemployed and informally employed, youth, etc.

As to status composition of our workers, 63% are married, 26% is single, 4% widowed and 7% divorced or separated. This corresponds roughly to data quoted by Schlemmer and Sapire (1989).

The 1991 Population census estimates that the black workforce in Gauteng is divided as follows among the economic sectors: 14% work in manufacturing, 5% in construction, 4% in transport and communications, 11% in trade and retail, 9% in mining, 1% in electricity, gas and water, 2% in financing and insurance and an estimated 26% in services. These data are not comparable with ours because of the different demarcations of sectors and the specific problems in separating public from private employment and trade from other services. Furthermore, our survey concerns employed workers, not self-employed and people with their own small businesses. Our sample shows that 28% work in the manufacturing sector, 7% in transport and communications, 6% in mining, 9% in health, 7% in education, 5% in civil service and 11% in other services, 6% in construction, 1% in electricity and 3% in financing. We believe that it is essential to separate between public and private sector employment, both because of the different wage- and benefit levels of public and private employees and because of the different nature of the work. An estimated 27% of the whole sample of black workers work for the public sector, mainly are in health and education.

Statistics on income levels, are particularly difficult to generalise or use for comparisons. When asked in survey interviews, people themselves generally tend to underestimate their incomes. Existing data on income levels are limited in that they cover only information from selected employers, specific limited sectors, or companies, regions or occupational categories. The 1991 census did not ask questions on personal income. Finally, most income statistics cover gross incomes, and not net take-home pay as ours (which we believe is both more accurate and reliable).

Estimated average net income amongst our black workers is about R1100. Mabin and Hunter (1993) estimate average income to be approx. R2100 in 1985, but their figures include self-employed, managers, etc. The Employment Research Unit estimates average monthly income to about R958 for the formal sector (ERU 1992).

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4One of the main problems with census information is the relatively high proportion of people employed in «unspecified» sectors (about 20%). Some, but far from all, of the informally employed will be included in this category.

5An additional small group work in farming and agriculture (3%).

6We used the same demarcation of economic sectors as was used by the World Bank in their Poverty Study in South Africa (1994). Coding of occupations followed the International Standard Classification of Occupation, ILO.

7Compared to 10% in the Mabin and Hunter data. This may be explained by hostel dwellers not being included in our sample.

8We asked them, however, to give their net incomes to minimize the underestimation.
and the Labour Research Service operates with an average income figure of some R930 (LRS 1994). Gross incomes are estimated to about R2250 for blue collar workers in Gauteng (LRS 93). Minimum wages range from R400 a month to R1982 (Levy 1994) and are estimated to be between R900 and R1000 in the construction, trade and catering sectors (LRS 1994).

Mistakes or problems of misrepresentativity may occur because of sampling, errors being made in the process of interviewing, faulty interviews or simply because certain groups of people are not willing to give interviews. Socalled «refusal rates» will always have to be calculated with. The important question is how big the refusal rate is and whether it is skewed, whether certain groups tend to refuse to give interviews more than others. During the States of Emergency from 1986 to 1990, political sensitivity clearly made such surveys difficult, if not impossible. Even now, the problems especially in the pre-election period should not be underestimated. A refusal rate of around 30% is to be expected. This clearly becomes most of a problem if the refusal rate is skew, i.e. dependent upon political affiliation or other background factors. Non-responses, because people are not at home at time of interview, etc. may be reduced by callbacks. Refusals due to political reasons, or fears of violence and intimidation in the area are more difficult to avoid. We chose a cautious strategy and selected the areas and timing of interviews according to thorough evaluations of potential trouble-spots. Townships and the extent of violence and trouble differ from week to week. While one week violence may increase and the area may be considered a «no-go area», the next week it may be calm and safe. The refusal rate in our survey was approx. 20%. (Social Surveys 1994). The large majority also answered all questions in the interview. On questions on personal income, we had a low refusal rate of about 1% for black workers (5% for the white workers) while on politics, there was a group of about 12% of the black workers (10% of white workers) who did not want to name their party loyalty.

Some of the questions posed to black workers were not given to the sample of white workers. Questions for example on the tri-partite alliance and which organisation they thought had been most instrumental in uprooting apartheid were deleted or rephrased in order not to offend the workers or make them refuse to finish the interviews.

Problems of inaccuracy or risk or errors may also arise in the process of collecting data, i.e. in conducting the interviews. We had briefing and training as well as debriefing sessions with the fieldworkers to eliminate any uncertainties as to how questions were posed. Fieldworkers were selected on the basis of race, gender and language in order to crosscut the most best known barriers to respondents.

The type of random sample that we use is simply a cost-reducing tool in our research. It is the entire formal workforce we want to talk about. However, since we can speak only on the basis of a sample, there will always be a statistical marginal error. Surveys will always involve a certain proportion of uncertainty since we rely upon interviews with a sample of people instead of with the whole population. This uncertainty is called variance and can be measured by so-called standard error estimates. The size of uncertainty we have to accept depends amongst other things upon the number of observations in the sample and how the specific characteristics we study are distributed in the whole population. Although the marginal error is not menti-
ened in the presentation of data results in this report, it should always be kept in
mind. If, and where, the answers to specific questions differ very little between groups,
group differences and thereby conclusions concerning such differences, will be con­
nected to large insecurity and mentioned specifically.

LIMITATIONS

The data presented here are drawn on the basis of a survey, not a census. We can only
draw a picture of relative distribution of population and variables, not give separate,
exact and absolute numbers for variables like population, labour force, etc. Taking
into consideration that population figures for Gauteng are highly disputed, the ab­
solute results in our survey will also be vulnerable to inaccurate estimates of the total
population.

The Gauteng snapshot which we have presented here gives indications, but no
concrete knowledge, as to South Africa as a whole. Gauteng differs in some respects
from other parts of the country. Regional economic activity differs in that manufac­
turing as well as the finance and service sectors are more important, while mining is
less important than in the country as a whole. Personal disposable income per cap­
ita is 76% higher in Gauteng than elsewhere in the country. Despite high and rising
unemployment and poverty, decline in real output, decline in manufacturing output
and lack of any formal activity in the townships, Gauteng is considerably better off
than the rest of the country.

Hostel dwellers in the area have not been included in the survey. We intended
initially to draw a separate sample of hostel dwellers in order to cover their specific
political background and priorities. However, for political reasons, and especially the
fact that several of these hostels are dominated by the IFP, we were not granted ac­
cess to these areas in the pre-elections period. The survey result on which this report
is based is therefore instead a random sample of workers within the townships.

Quantities of, say, bread may be easy to measure, but measuring of alienation or
empowerment is harder. We have trusted the workers’ own subjective sense of influ­
ence and power as operationalisation of personal alienation and as a good indicator
of objective influence.

Furthermore, this report has aimed to uncover the process of political learning at
work and in unions. There is a methodological problem in assessing learning: it is in
essence a time process, but we have data from only one point in time. Furthermore,
it is difficult to assess whether unions have made workers more politically active or
whether they were more active before they joining the unions. We have tried to solve
this problem with control questions on activity and organisational membership before
they organised and by comparing different groups of unionised workers.

*There were an estimated 305 000 hostel beds in Gauteng in 1992 (Hall et al. 1993).
APPENDIX IV
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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COSATU 1995. The Outlook for 1995 - A COSATU Perspective


South Africa has given birth to a democracy and thereby to majority rule. But who is the majority? Which interests is the government to represent? What do people actually expect and want from democracy? It is easy to assume that if a majority of people supports a political party, the party programme is supported by a majority of the people. But does this assumption hold true?

Workers and the labour movement have been an important driving force behind the democratisation in South Africa. Many expect workers to be the backbone of the new fanged, multiracial democracy. This book looks at some of the factors that shape working class consciousness and democratic culture in South Africa. The focus is on how South Africans view their own living and working conditions, the role of the unions and politics, democracy and the future. The answers are based upon a recent survey of interviews with about 1000 workers in and around Johannesburg.

Liv Tørres has lived and worked in South Africa for several years. She is particularly concerned with the political role and future challenges of the trade union movement.

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