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CULTURE CLASS AND CONSCIOUSNESS IN CONTEMPORARY NATAL

> 'It is one of the most important features of Marx's theory of class.....that it attempts to take account of the interplay between the real situation of individuals in the process of production, on the one side, and the conceptions which they form of their situation and of the lines of social and political action which are open to them, on the other' (Bottomore,1965:20)

Although class is the key concept in any Marxian analysis of society, approaches to this subject vary tremendously, even within what may be broadly defined as the 'radical' perspective. On the one hand, there are the grand theories, of great analytical elegance, propounded very persuasively by theorists who are academically far removed from the raw material of social science study, the lived experience of daily life reflected in the consciousness of individuals who constitute society, whose goal is not necessarily to seek a 'fit' between theory and subjective reality (e.g. structuralists such as Althusser and Poulantzas). At the other extreme, it is fatally easy, in one's preoccupation with meaning and individual consciousness amongst members of a particular society or class, to lose sight of one of the major goals of rigorous social science research, i.e. the development of analytical insights which will explain and predict (Wright,1978:12).

My approach[1] in this paper is in line with the stricture of Wright (1978:10) that an approach to this topic should 'insist that Marxist theory should generate propositions about the real world which can be empirically studied'; in attempting to 'tread the path between these two extremes' of experience and structural determination (Bozzoli,1983:10), it is also in the spirit of this, the present, as well as past history workshops. Whilst my focus is on the contemporary situation here in Natal, the genesis of the paper is to be found in the works of historians such as Coplan(1980a,b;1985), Koch (1983) and LaHausse(1983;1984), dealing as they do with working class culture in the context of the production and consumption of alcohol.

Working from the assumption that 'it is no longer possible to believe that a class can be understood apart from its culture' (Genovese, cited by Hugo,1976:149) I shall explore the whole question of working class consciousness in and around Durban at the present time and, from the material I present, I shall draw some inferences on this topic for the province as a whole. Recent work by Sitas (1986b) refers to the existence of working class culture amongst members of trade unions in Durban, but how extensive this type of shared consciousness is is difficult to assess. Are there, for example, any signs that it is exerting a pervasive influence over the lives of residents of areas such as townships and peri-urban settlements, the populations of which are, for the most part, probably working class (in terms of the definitions discussed below). In exploring this issue I shall focus primarily on shebeens in the context of the wider environments of which they are part, and in my discussion I shall draw on material from research I am currently engaged in, as well as insights obtained from other fieldwork (that of my colleagues and my own) and of published material.

There are several very good reasons for focusing on shebeens in the quest for working class culture. They have, in recent literature, been closely connected with an emerging working class culture since the earliest days of urbanisation in South Africa (Coplan,1980a,b;1985; LaHausse,1984). Owing their genesis to the illicit liquor trade which 'created an African home industry which became the basis of African proletarian social and cultural as well as economic innovation' (Coplan, 1980:11), they were, in LaHausse's words, 'of central importance in the long process of forging a popular cultural identity amongst subordinate classes in the town' (1984:50). Other commentators, too, have recently commented on the role of the shebeen in the promotion of sub-cultures (Ndabandaba,1986; Rocha-Silva,1985).

DE HAAS

Shebeens - now also termed 'joints' or 'spots'/'spotties' - continue to play a pivotal role in black communities, providing, as they have done since the earliest days of urbanisation in South Africa, a crucial survival strategy amidst urban and rural poverty, and facilitating a spirit of community and sociability in areas noticeably lacking in anything approaching adequate social amenities. If working class culture is a pervasive force in black communities it should be reflected in their shebeens. In different parts of the world, members of different socio-economic strata tend to patronise different types of drinking establishments (see, e.g. Gottlieb,1970), and recent research in South Africa tends to confirm that this trend is occurring here also, in that shebeens in certain areas are reflecting the growing socio-economic differentiation which is occurring(Schmidt, 1974;1980). Even the type of liquor consumed has important status connotations, ijuba (packaged sorghum beer) tending to be associated with poorer persons, and whisky and certain brands of beer (e.g. Amstel) being associated with elite status.

Before, however, proceeding with some descriptive material, some clarity about the use of concepts is called for: What is meant by 'working class culture? Whilst the working classes are mentioned with increasing frequency in recent publications and debate on both historical and contemporary political and social processes in South Africa (Coplan,1980b;Sitas 1986a,b;Smit,1983;'Debate', S.A.LAbour Bulletin, Vol.10), the theoretical foundations of this concept are seldom explored - Crankshaw's recent (1986) article being a noticeable and welcome exception. In other words, exactly who, in terms of objective structural criteria, constitutes the working class is not spelled out in detail.

Since most of the recent discussions about class in South Africa are informed by the theories of Wright and/or Poulantzas, I shall touch briefly on the main differences between the approaches of these two important theorists insofar as they concern a definition of the working class (although I realise that my gross oversimplifications cannot in any way do justice to the subtleties of their arguments).

In defining the working class, the fundamental difference between the two theorists is that Poulantzas's definition is far narrower, and includes only manual workers engaged in the production of material goods. Whilst to Poulantzas economic criteria remain central to any definition of class, they are insufficient in themselves to place a position in a particular class, for political and ideological criteria must also be taken into account. For example, Poulantzas classifies mental labour, supervisory posts, technicians and civil servants in the 'new petty bourgeoisie' category of 'non-productive wage-earning workers' (Poulantzas, 1973:37,his italics) who, unlike the working class, do not produce surplus value and who, at the ideological and political level, are engaged in reproducing the existing political system, and who have access to, and control of, knowledge relating to production.

In order to place Wright's definition of the working class in perspective, it is necessary to consider briefly his conceptualisation of contemporary society, containing as it does a subordinate Petty Commodity Mode of Production as well as the dominant Capitalist Mode of Production (Poulantzas also allows for the existence of more than one mode of production). The basic Bourgeoisie/Proletarian dichotomy remains within the dominant mode of production, and the petty bourgeoisie fall within the petty commodity mode of production. This schema, of dominant and subordinate mode of production, allows for certain 'contradictory locations within class relations', which are central to Wright's model of class analysis.

The fundamental criteria employed by Wright to assign class position are (i) control over money capital; (ii) control over physical capital; (iii) control over labour, and class positions are assigned in terms of degree of control/ lack of control over each of these aspects of the relations of production. As opposed to Poulantzas's differentiation between manual and mental labour,

Wright considers the extent to which some occupations allow more job autonomy than others in assigning them a class position. Consequently, those engaged in mental labour (who are excluded from the working class in Poulantzas's terms) would not necessarily belong to some category intermediary to Bourgeoisie and Proletarian, and could be assigned to the working class, e.g. jobs involving routine work which provides little or no scope for job autonomy (Wright,1978:97): In fact,

> 'it seems almost certain that large majority of white collar employees, especially clerical and secretarial employees, have - at most - trivial autonomy on the job and thus should be placed within the working class itself' (ibid:81)

However, as Nzimande points out (1986:49), in the South African context job autonomy is not a pertinent factor insofar as blacks are concerned since, compared with white artisans, any scope for autonomy is severely limited.

Other positions, contradictory in terms of control over one or more, but not all three, processes of capitalist production, would be assigned to one of the contradictory locations between the two modes of production (e.g. semi-autonomous employees between petty bourgeoisie and proletarians), or between the two classes of the capitalist mode of production (e.g. those in supervisory, managerial positions in industry, or, within bureaucratic structures, functionaries such as policemen and high school teachers because of their 'execution of state policies and the dissemination of ideology' (ibid 95)

To Wright, then, workers are defined in terms of their exclusion from control over any of the three underlying dimensions of capitalist production (or being linked to such positions through family relationships), or through occupying similar class positions (i.e. being totally excluded from control) within 'political and ideological apparatuses, i.e. positions which are excluded from either the creation or execution of state policy and ideology' (ibid:97). Wright's notion of a 'class trajectory' allows students or pensioners who have occupied, or will be occupying such positions in the future, as well as the temporarily unemployed, to be included in the working (or other) class. The category of 'permanently unemployed' he recognises as 'more problematic', and having pointed out that

> 'while it is certainly the case that the conditions of the permanently unemployed can engender an anti-capitalist consciousness, it is less clear whether they would systematically generate or sustain a socialist consciousness' (ibid:94)

he provisionally places them in the working class as a 'marginalised segment'.

Wright, of course, is working from an American perspective, and the class position of unemployed workers in South Africa, with its vast numbers of unemployed, (who do not have recourse to the sort of welfare benefits that Americans do) presents special problems, especially insofar as the development of a common class consciousness is concerned. As Lloyd (1982:68) points out, referring to the situation elsewhere in Africa, 'the unemployed do not constitute a category with a common set of experiences .../whose/ aspirations and...strategies vary widely'. One particular problem is that large numbers of the unemployed turn to the petty commodity mode of production in order to survive, and whilst some would fit into Wright's petty bourgeoisie category because they do not employ, and consequently do not exploit (e.g. a hawker), many would probably fall into a contradictory position; the problem here is that informal sector operations tend to generate attitudes favourable to entrepreneurship, which clearly stand opposed to working class identity and attitudes (e.g. some shebeen operators with working class backgrounds, when asked to comment about preferred ways of making a living, expressed a preference for running a 'legal' business such as a bottle store; see also Schärf 1985). Related to this, of course, is the question of those workers who supplement inadequate earnings through informal sector activity, who would be subject to a conflict of interest (i.e. worker solidarity versus private enterprise). Bearing in mind Wright's caveat, the fairly large category of chronically unemployed (such as the Matapudaka I shall discuss below) and the ubiquitous tsotsi type element could surely be linked only very peripherally to

the working class, being not directly engaged themselves in the production process, and would probably be better categorised as lumenproletariat?

Whilst I consider it is important to note some of the problems which arise in applying theories developed in Europe and America to South Africa because of the implications for class consciousness, and because it seems that a great deal more work needs to be done in this field, it is obviously far beyond the scope of this paper to attempt any evaluation of which is better suited to an analysis of South African society. I shall therefore follow the trend in the literature on the subject and adopt Poulantzas's distinctions between the new petty bourgeoisie which category includes white collar workers, professionals, technicians etc. and confine the term working class to those manual workers directly engaged in the production of commodities.

Turning now to the question of what is meant by the other component of 'working class culture', i.e. culture, whilst there is general agreement amongst social scientists that it refers to a 'way of life' of a group of people, there are differences in opinion about exactly which components of that way of life should be included. In its original - and what is now termed 'totalist' - sense, as used by early ethnographers, it was used to refer to artefacts and behaviour, as well as ideational systems, of the different societies in the world. Whilst this type of usage was of value in describing the total way of life of a relatively isolated group of people it presents problems in contemporary societies where various cultures co-exist, and a 'mentalist' approach, which focuses on shared systems of ideas, norms, knowledge etc. - 'shared standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating and acting' (Goodenough,1970:99) is more appropriate.

Recent writers on working class (also termed popular by some) culture in South Africa tend to focus on both the ideational and behavioural (action) components of culture, which is, of course, consistent with the Marxian premise that working class consciousness will lead to political action that transforms the social formation. Sitas, e.g. (1986b:88)speaks of 'normative communities', and of customs, mores and instrumental codes of conduct, and LaHausse (1984:2/3) refers to it as

> 'the means whereby social groups "handle" the lived experience of their material conditions of existence to produce an expression and representation of these conditions in a variety of attitudes, values, symbols and practices'

In the South African context, the action has taken the form of musical, artistic and theatrical expression (Naledi Writers,1985; Sitas,1986b;Coplan,1980,1985) and action against political injustices in the country (Naledi,1985). Sole (1985:51) cites the Burns and van der Will definition which I too shall adopt for purposes of this paper:

> 'By proletarian culture we understand those ways in which the working class actively and consciously seeks to shape its own social identity as a class and, by so doing, differentiates itself from the values and principles of the dominant class'

Before moving on to the subject of working class culture in Durban, some comments about the role of 'traditional' (i.e. what is perceived by individuals as being 'traditional' or 'customary) culture here in Natal. First, however, we need to look at some fallacies surrounding this concept.

The fact that culture is merely a conceptual tool which is useful in describing and analysing society has, unfortunately, been lost sight of by some social scientists - as has the fact that it comprises learned attitudes and behaviour, and that it is inherently fluid, flexible and changing. I am referring of course to those adherents of the 'ethnos'[2] school of volkekunde whose ideas have been adopted with such fervour by the policy makers of our country, and used to provide an ideological justification ('ethnicity') for the bantustan system;

the success (from the point of view of its perpetrators) of this ideology is attested by the acceptance by the majority of whites of the 'naturalness' of group differences, and the disunity which the bantustans have sown amongst many members of the black population. Migrant labour has promoted conservatism amongst workers 'encapsulated' in hostels and compounds, and has divided the urban black populations Here in Natal, culture, to some black persons, has become more than a flexible, changing normative system which operates in certain circumstances (e.g. when someone dies), because it has been carefully manipulated - presented as some immutable code of behaviour - to disguise the nationalistic aims of some politicians (recent Chaka Day posters provide an excellent example of the way in which 'culture' and 'nation' are equated). In any discussion of working class culture in Natal it is essential to bear in mind the divisions in the different communities which this type of political manoeuvring has engendered.

Quite apart, however, from those who identify themselves closely with 'Zulu' politics in the guise of cultural conservatism, black persons in Natal do, on the whole, still attach a great deal of importance to what they perceive as 'tradition', which they may refer to as Zulu, black, or African custom, especially that which surrounds important events in the life cycle, such as marriage and death, or that which relates to the correct attitudes and behaviour towards other people (e.g. norms of reciprocity, or an attitude of respect on the part of a wife towards her in-laws, manifest in her behaviour and style of dress when in their company). However - and this is of crucial importance - what is perceived as 'traditional' culture is one of various models of behaviour which operates selectively in specific situations; the meaning which is attached to it, and the form of expression it takes, varies considerably with age, sex, educational status, urban/rural background etc. That 'traditional' norms are appropriate in specific contexts is illustrated by the case of a highly qualified professional man, occupying a relatively prestigious position in industry and politically radical in his outlook, who is called upon fairly frequently to play the role of an umkhongi (negotiator) in wedding arrangements, because of his expertise concerning 'traditional' procedures. That 'traditional' values are still important is illustrated by the case of a highly qualified professional woman, also fairly radical politically, who wishes to have ilobolo paid for her when she marries because of it being an African custom. In recent years there has been a resurgence of pride in cultural heritage, doubtless related to an espousal of the values promoted by the Black Consciousness movement (see, e.g. Manoma,1981).

Preliminaries over, I turn now to the question of the extent to which working class culture exists, and is manifest in the daily lives of the black residents and workers of the greater Durban-Pinetown area. Before focusing on shebeens in the context of the areas of which they are part, a few comments about residential arrangements for blacks in and around Durban may serve as a useful background.

The black population of the metropolitan Durban-Pinetown area is accommodated in different ways:

1. Single sex accommodation (privately,provincially/government run) hostels and compounds (probably in the region of 100 000, mainly men, housed this way), and in domestic servants quarters. Some hostels fall within, or adjoin, townships.
2. Townships of varying sizes, ranging from approximately 10 000 persons to over 300 000.
3. Old established peri-urban areas under the nominal control of chiefs and izinduna.
4. Vast squatter areas, with a total population well in excess of a million, which usually adjoin townships or peri-urban settlements.

Some of these residential areas are in 'Natal', and are administered through the relevant government departments; some fall under the control of KwaZulu. Some generalisations are possible about townships, peri-urban areas and squatter settlements: All contain a cross-section of the population in terms of socio-economic

standing, ranging from large numbers living in dire poverty to a small percentage enjoying relative wealth (in the larger townships some differentiation in residential areas is becoming evident in that special areas are now set aside for those who are able to purchase/build their own houses with financial assistance in the form of loans). All contain voluntary associations such as stokfels, burial societies and groups based on church affiliation, and shebeens proliferate. When it comes to an assessment of political trends, however, generalisations become more difficult. Some of these communities are politically cohesive (such as the township I shall describe), others are torn apart by the sort of vigilante activity which is occurring elsewhere in the country. In the recent past some townships have been conceptualised as more 'Pro Inkatha' than others, but it is extremely difficult at present to make assessments of the extent of support for this organisation, as opposed to UDF affiliates, because of the tensions which exist between the two types of organisation , and fears about the consequences of any overt support for the UDF faction. For example, people refrain from expressing political opinions openly on buses or trains, fearing the presence of informers (perhaps with a pocket tape recorder) since no criticism of the KwaZulu leadership is permitted. In the vast squatter areas which ring Durban Inkatha membership is usually a prerequisite for the right to settle on a minute piece of land.

It is obvious then, that in focusing on two areas amongst the many types I have outlined that I make no claim to 'representativeness' of data (a virtually impossible task in the present type of research). However, I have selected two very different areas (insofar as geographical location, method of administration and type of political groupings which are present are concerned), one a ward of a peri-urban area, which I shall term the Reserve, the other one of the smaller townships, which I shall refer to as the Township.[4] In the Reserve, no political groupings are present apart from the local Inkatha branch, and the efforts of community based groupings are directed mainly towards the improvement of community facilities (installing a water pipe, for example). The Township is politically cohesive, with huge grassroots support for organisations affiliated to the UDF; one of the factors responsible for its cohesiveness was its united stand against increases in housing and transport costs, and its struggle in these areas has been cast in a 'working class' mould by commentators.

Common to both these areas however, is a preoccupation with class (klass or iklasi) as a way of categorising fellow residents and visitors, as evident in common expressions such as uyangi klass (you're inferior, you have no class) and angisiyona levo klass (I am not that type of person). People are classed according to their appearance and habits (style of dress, cleanliness, type of accommodation/furniture, type of liquor consumed), behaviour - 'respect'is frequently mentioned, and the 'putting on of airs' is frowned upon . Education and high status occupations are important factors, and so is community involvement (although what this involvement amounts to seems to differ in the two areas). In the Reserve, 'high class' persons include isinduna and (elected) councillors, as well as a worker who is a trade unionist, and high school teachers, businessmen etc. In contrast, in the Township councillors are definitely not included (quite the reverse, those few who still participate in local authority structures are generally shunned) but those who have served sentences for political offences, or have been detained for political reasons, are held in high esteem. These differences relate no doubt to differing perceptions about what constitutes desirable community involvement which, in the Reserve, is manifest in participation in community development projects and, in the Township, in its political life. Having touched on some of the major differences and similarities in the two areas I now turn to a more detailed examination of firstly, the Reserve and its shebeens, and secondly, the Township and its shebeens.

The Reserve and its shebeens

My focus is on a relatively small area, one ward (isigodi) which probably does not differ significantly from other wards in this peri-urban area. In terms of socio-economic status it contains a cross section of the black population - labourers, domestics, teachers, nurses, clerks, a lawyer, drivers, businessmen, and many who are engaged in informal sector activity, especially shack shop and

shebeen operators and taxi drivers, i.e. members of all classes, using Poulantzas's criteria. With the exception of a tsotsi element (which does not have the same name as that applied to the Township criminal element), none of the categories which exist in the Township are found; an attempt to form a 'Rasta' group was prevented, for it was considered a bad influence.

Apart from the status distinctions I have already referred to above, people in the Reserve are still placed in different categories which relate to the extent of their adherence to 'traditional' values. The most 'traditional' are referred to as amabhinca, and the 'in-betweens' as amagqagqa. Amabhinca women, who generally do not work outside of the Reserve, are still distinguished by their beadwork and the men, when at home, dress in distinctive shorts and shirts (for work they dress as other men). Amabhinca children attend school, but not usually beyond primary level. Although most bhinca are working class, some own stores, such as Mr F.M. who runs one of the better shebeens in the Reserve and is something of an entrepreneur. Educated to Std.II level he no longer works himself, for he has three wives who run the shebeen and he employs a young woman to run his shack shop. He has various vehicle which are put to commercial use (vans, a truck for transport, and a taxi) and he owns two sports cars.

Into the amagqagqa category fall those persons - some of whom are well educated and 'respectable', some of whom are tsotsis - who adopt the ways of both 'traditionalists' and more'western' (for want of a better word) persons. No particular name is attached to those who are neither amabhinca or amagqagqa but they may, on occasion (as, e.g. when dressed up to go to a meeting or to church) be referred to as u-spensa or s'cathe (educated persons).

In daily life, however, these categories do not mean much, for interaction and socialisation does occurr to a certain extent as, for example, when a bhinca man sits with a non-bhinca - perhaps well educated - person in a shebeen.

Politically, diverse attitudes exist. As already noted, the only 'political' organisation in the Reserve is Inkatha, but the extent of its support is, as elsewhere, difficult to guage for, as in the squatter settlements, new settlers are required to pay Inkatha dues, and these dues are also added to school fees. Predictably perhaps, the amabhinca are said to be pro-Inkatha. There are no overt political tensions between the two main political camps, probably because no overt political activites which are not Inkatha-organised take place in the area (a COSATU trade unionist's activities, for example, are confined to the work place) and political issues are not widely discussed, for here, as elsewhere, there are fears about the existence of informer networks.

Most residents patronise shebeens, bhinca women and some (not all) Zionists and members of other denominations which forbid the use of alcohol being the main exceptions. Most of the shebeens cater for a cross section of the Reserve community, i.e. for customers belonging to both the working class and petty bourgeoisie (or even, in some instances, the bourgeoisie), as the following two fairly random examples show:

> Mrs S. is a middle-aged woman with a working class background who also engages in other informal sector activities. She sells a variety of drinks - juba, beers and 'hot stuffs' (brandy, cane). Her customers include educated (white collar) people, workers, scholars. Amongst the workers are amabhinca.
>
> Mr and Mrs D.'s shebeen is run by Mrs D.(her husband is employed in a petty bourgeoisie position), who also has other informal sector interests. The shebeen sells various types of liquor, including whisky, but no juba.

However, some shebeens, because their drinks are more expensive, tend to attract better educated better educated persons, e.g.

> Mr and Mrs M.'s shebeen is situated in their smart, modern house. Both husband and wife are employed in petty bourgeoisie positions, and are also engaged in other, fairly small scale, entrepreneurial activities. They sell a variety of liquor including 'hot stuff' and whisky, as well as wines, beers and _juba_. Customers include clerks, teachers, nurses, but also members of visiting soccer teams drawn from different class backgrounds. Recreational activities include music, dancing and watching T.V.

There are also shebeens, however, which tend to attract mainly 'working class' people, e.g.

> Mr and Mrs J.M.'s daughter, a high school scholar, runs the shebeen for her parents, and sells beers, _jubas_ and Smirinoff. Customers are mainly regulars, and are drivers, factory workers and pensioners.

Some cater almost exclusively for the poorer members of the community, e.g.

> Mrs A.N. is a middle-aged woman of working class background. She sells gavine, which she purchases from a local producer, _juba_ and _isigulu_ (home brewed sorghum beer). Her customers are workers and pensioners. This shebeen has a 'low class' image.

Now although the majority of shebeens attract customers of different socio-economic status, if size permits (e.g. more than one room available) different types of people may sit apart with their friends, who are likely to share their status. The main distinction is between the _juba_ and non-juba drinkers; _juba_ drinkers almost invariably sit apart - for there are negative connotations attached to this drink, which is thought to be messy, and may even be thought to result in incontinence if too much is drunk.

Certainly in the majority of these shebeens, in which working class are present together with members of the petty bourgeoisie, there is no sign of anything approximating a working class culture, in terms of ambiance and subjects of conversation. What of the minority which attract almost exclusively the workers and poorer members of the community, such as the two described above? These working class shebeens certainly do not reflect a working class culture which reveals a consciousness arising from the objective structural location of the patrons. Discussion (unlike in the more socially heterogeneous shebeens, where much of the discussion is in English) is in either Zulu or Zulu/_tsotsi-taal_ (Zulu/Afrikaans mixture), mainly about local community affairs and local gossip. Entertainment is usually in the form of Radio Zulu (hardly likely to promote a working class consciousness!), or the patrons themselves singing 'Zulu songs'. Although there are community members (such as T.L. who holds a position in a COSATU trade union) who might conceivably participate in the sort of working class cultural activities described by Sitas, the Reserve obviously does not provide a suitable setting for the carry over of work-related norms and values to this community setting. Norms and values operative in the community seem to be a combination of what are perceived as middle-class and 'traditional' cultural models.

The Township and its Shebeens

Apart from individual assessments which are made concerning a person's 'klass' along the lines discussed above, a large proportion of the younger members of this community (probably about three quarters of those below 40-50) fall into one of several distinct categories, some of which (e.g. Cats and Dudes) are present in other urban areas in South Africa. In this Township the following groups are well represented: Pansulas, Dudes, Cats (no supercats), Rastas, _Matapundaka_ (sometimes referred to as 'Durban Dusts'), Born Agains (which include

Zionists)[5], and Activists. These names refer to the male members of the groups, the females/girlfriends also having their own distinctive names, e.g. Pansula girlfriends are known as Mahosa, Matapudaka girlfriends as Tap, Activist girlfriends as Comrades. Members of each group have distinctive forms of greeting (e.g. Pansulas - sytha majita; Cats - 'Larger my man', Born Agains: Amen Mgalwane). Whilst the different groups tend to draw most of their members from similar socio-economic backgrounds, some contain a fair number of both working class and petty bourgeoisie. Members of different groups exhibit different life styles based on style of dress (especially), type of liquor consumed (e.g. Cats tend to favour gin because it is thought to be sexually stimulating, and 'keeps them going' with women) and type of music/dance favoured (e.g. Pansulas do a quick jive termed soathula or spansula). In terms of their distinctive lifestyles, including shared jargon, different norms, values and goals, these groups (with the exception of the Matapudaka) could be termed cultural groups. A brief description of the major characteristics of these groups follows:

Pansulas: They are said to be dominant in the Township at present, as compared with others who are 'cool' and keep a low profile. They are mainly of low educational background (but some have had high school education), and working class if and when employed. Most are convicts ('jail birds') and there are further subdivisions into categories in terms of which prison gang they belonged to[6] (e.g. 26's, 28's, mpathas). Their interests centre on drinking and associating with their girlfriends - i.e. when they are not engaging in their 'profession' of stealing and robbing. Their dancing style - a quick jive - like that of the Dudes reflects the premium they place on individual achievement.

Dudes: Educationally they usually (but not always) have several years of high school, and may have achieved Std.8 or Std.10; some are still scholars. Occupation-wise this group includes workers as well as members of the petty bourgeoisie such as clerks, technicians, teachers. Members are known as abadlalisi ('jollers') because they enjoy taking different women out. They have their hair permed and wear highly expensive, fashionable clothing.

Cats: Most are married men, but interested in maintaining a youthful image. Like the Dudes most, but not all, are members of the petty bourgeoisie. They claim to have a great deal of expertise on the subject of consumer goods such as cars.

Rastas are identified by their dreadlocks and brightly coloured (red,green,yellow) clothing. They do not drink (some exceptions) but smoke marijuana, and are often vegetarians. They tend to keep to themselves, listening to their reggae music, and do not generally patronise shebeens. They are of working class backgrounds.

Born Agains are very religious, and do not drink or smoke (ideally, that is). They socialise mainly with other church members, and are often seen in the company of church elders. They do not follow township dress fashion because they believe they should distance themselves from tsotsi elements. They are mainly working class.

Matapudaka ('Durban Dusts') are sometimes referred to as 'left overs', or as being of a 'non existing class' because they do not (as other groups do) strongly identify with their 'class', having been placed in it by other Township residents. Most are illiterate, or have little education. They are viewed by the township residents as drunkards, usually drinking the only liquor they can afford - juba, mayine, isikulu, s'gatha and other concoctions. Because they rely, in their poverty, on cast-offs, they have no particular style of dressing. For income they rely on casual work; in the words of an informant they are the 'workers of the workers', a true example, perhaps, of Marx's lumpenproletariat. Objectively they could, at best, be thought of as marginally working class.

Activists as their name implies are at the forefront of the political struggle which rages in the Township. They do not dress in a particular style, because they do not believe in wasting money on clothing and benefitting the state/capitalists. They are youth organisers, trade unionists etc. In terms of objective class positions, members would fall into either worker (mainly) or petty bourgeoisie (white collar/

professional) category.

To summarise, whilst workers would predominate in categories such as Born Agains, Rastas and Activists, they may also be found amongst the Cats and Dudes.

With few exceptions (mainly Pansulas and Matapudaka) these categories do not exist in the nearby (to township) hostels. Hostel inmates are categorised as impohlwa by township residents and, amongst themselves, differentiate either on the basis of whether a person is legally renting a bed, or is sharing the bed rented by a relative or friend (imbemba), or as originating from a certain rural area (abakhaya - home people). The population of the hostels is almost entirely working class (some petty bourgeoisie do manage to secure some of the better rooms). Divisions between hostel residents and townspeople are, as elsewhere in South Africa (Wilson,197 evident and have, in the recent past, erupted in violence.. The discussion of shebeens which follows concerns only those in the Township. (hostel shebeens are similar to what I have termed Type A below).

Shebeens in the township fall into two broad categories: Type A, which probably constitute at most one fifth of total shebeens) I shall term 'customary' in that they cater for older persons who could be categorised as fairly 'traditional' in outlook, who often maintain strong rural links (these people are termed makuduka). At this type of shebeen the main drinks which are served are ijuba, isigulu and mahewu. There is no disco or other type of contemporary popular music such as jazz, disco or soul, but 'traditional Zulu' type music (termed umbhaqanga, umgbashiyo with Zulu lyrics) is played. People listen to this music, and sometimes they sing and dance. For example,

> KwaMaG. shebeen is run by MaG., an elderly woman with no education, who has been running a shebeen for forty years. She sells juba, isigulu and s'gatha. Her customers are Matapudaka (but do not like to be referred to as such). Apart from entertainment from Radio Zulu, customers play draughts, dice and sometimes cards.

Type B shebeens, on the other hand, are those which serve a variety of store purchased liquor such as gin, cane, brandy, wine, esprit, and sometimes whisky; some of them also sell juba and occasionally (as in the case of MaK below) home brew. Most play a variety of 'modern' music, such as jazz, soul, fusion, funky, disco, and customers often dance (in their different styles). The majority draw customers from a variety of backgrounds (socio-economic), but Matapudaka do not usually patronise them - if they do they sit separately, e.g. in the kitchen. Pansulas, Cats and Dudes as well as Activists patronise most of these shebeens (as do people who do not fall into any particular category), although some cater mainly for specific categories, such as Dudes, and Cats. For example:

> MaC, a 48 year old woman, caters for all types of customers except Matapudaka (i.e. working class and petty bourgeoisie). She plays Radio Bop, but there is no particular style of music or dancing. All types of store purchased liquor are supplied, including whisky, but no juba
>
> Mr F.D. is a well-educated 29 year old man, who also caters for all categories except Matapudaka. Unlike most of the other shebeens his customers include Rastas, who drink wine and coke and listen to the reggae music he provides for them. He serves all the main types of bottle store purchased liquor.
>
> MaK, a 49 year old woman with a working class background sells sins, cane and beer as well as isigulu and juba. Her customers are mainly Pansulas (who drink everything) and Cats and Dudes who drink the beer, cane and wine. She provides disco music.

> The 'M' shebeen is run by a Std.10 high school student (female) and draws customers from a wide variety of backgrounds, including some Matapudaka (who sit apart to drink their *Juba*). This shebeen is spacious enough for the different categories of persons (Pansulas, Dude , Cats) to sit apart. There is obviously a lot of activity - and a great deal of dancing, especially by Pansulas, and in spite of the fact that some of the troops patrolling the Township make use of it to surreptitiously drink and smoke dagga it is favoured by the Activists.

There are a few shebeens which are more exclusive in terms of who is accepted as a customer, both in terms of sex and behaviour, for example, that which is run by Mr and Mrs D. (husband works in the formal sector, in petty bourgeoisie position):

> They have been running this joint for the past 27 years, and cater only for 'respectable' people, whether Cat, Dude or Pansula. Women are not permitted because fighting tends to occur over women. Most customers are of a Std.8 plus educational level - e.g. technicians, advocates, bookkeepers, teachers and clerks. Most drink whisky.

Whilst Matapudaka may sometimes patronise Type B shebeens (where they are served separately) it is very seldom that a Type B customer would patronise one of the 'customary' shebeens.

To summarise, members of the working class(objectively defined) may patronise either type of shebeen, but the only shebeens which can be said to be truly 'working class' (because of their older, unclassified, or Matapudaka - who are at best marginal working class - customers) are the Type A ones. These Type A shebeens, like the 'low class' ones in the Reserve, could, however, not be said to reflect a working class - in terms of the definition I have used - culture, since their whole ethos is of a 'traditional Zulu' rather than working class nature. Furthermore, many members of the working class positively identify with the sort of middle-class values espoused by Cats and Dudes, which have been assiduously promoted by sophisticated marketing strategies (indeed the literature on these categories seems largely marketing in orientation). Here, in this predominantly working class area, which has been characterised as actively engaged in a working class directed political struggle, the objective class is cross-cut by different values, including those of 'traditional Zulu' and middle-class bourgeois origin. It is the Activists, in whose ranks are included both workers and petty bourgeoisie, who show signs of the sort of values which would dominate a working class culture. Whether, however, this could be truly called a 'working class culture' in the narrow sense of the word (i.e. arising from common experience as a worker), or whether it would be more appropriate to see it as a 'culture of resistance' is a question to which I shall return shortly.

Now whilst the categories I have described exert a pervasive influence in the life of the community, any differences are put aside when political issues which affect the whole community come to the forefront, and the whole Township unites under the leadership of the Activists; this community spirit does not, however, spread to the working class hostels nearby.

What are the implications of all this for working class culture? There is no evidence that in either the Township or the Reserve there is a strong sense of the sort of worker identity which has manifested itself in specific cultural forms in work-related activities, i.e. workers do not, in community life, exhibit their own 'social identity as a class'. Nor do they differentiate themselves from 'the values and principles of the dominant class', for values which are solidly middle-class in their emphasis on status and conspicuous consumption are pervasive. In neither of these two areas - even in the Township where it might be expected - do shebeens exist which can truly be said to reflect working class ideals.

In both areas there is a preoccupation with the image which is presented. For example, in the Township people may give the impression of having a higher status job than they do in fact have, and there is an emphasis on clothing of a particular, expensive brand (e.g. having a Pierre Cardin label); a large informal sector market exists for the redistribution of goods acquired by illegal means (permitting them to be purchased more cheaply than in the stores). Nor is this preoccupation confined to the middle-classes, for poorly paid factory workers too show a preference for dressing above their means. In the midst of the present educational crisis high school scholars identify with the Dudes, and in both areas high school students sit drinking in the shebeens, having extracted money from their hard-pressed parents on various pretexts.

The only culture which approximates the sort of ideals associated with working class culture in South Africa is that of the Activists in the Township. However, the fact that the Activists include in their ranks persons who are, strictly speaking, petty bourgeoisie and the fact that the majority of workers in both Township and hostels do not openly espouse these ideals in their daily lives casts doubt on whether this could be called a working class culture in the strict sense of the term. Sole's suggestion that 'culture of resistance', which 'stresses the solidarity of all those - of whatever class - who are oppressed by apartheid..... .....or who oppose apartheid' is more appropriate than 'working class culture' seems a valid one in this case.(Sole,1985)

Now this 'culture of resistance' may not exhibit itself in the lifestyles of the Pansulas, Dudes, Cats etc. but it undoubtedly provides a model for behaviour under certain circumstances, as the unity of the community under the leadership of the Activists shows. What I suggest is that it exists, as the other types of cultural models I have mentioned do('traditional', 'western' etc.) in the minds of members of the communities and, like all such models, it is invoked situationally. For example, a clerk (petty bourgeoisie) who is a Township resident might refer to a 'western' model during his working hours, a 'Cat' model during recreation, the 'culture of resistance' model during times of political mobilisation and the 'traditional' model when his brother marries. How central this particular model would be would, of course, vary from one individual to another, and would also be greatly influenced by the dynamics of the community of which an individual was part. In the Township sufficient political cohesion exists for the Activists' role to be a pivotal one. In the Reserve, where Township levels of conscientisation do not exist, this model is invoked in the work sphere and in trade union activities; at home the trade unionist, T.L. is engaged in community development activities, and in running his informal sector business. People are not only workers - they are umndeni (patrilineal descent group) members, they may be active in church affairs and voluntary associations, and different situations invoke responses based on appropriate models of behaviour.

All this is, of course, not new, for as Epstein's study of a Copperbelt mine showed(195 over thirty years ago, different sets of norms and values are brought into play in different types of situations (work, recreational and political). It is this process, I contend, which continues to operate in society today. It is this situational factor in behaviour, I suggest, which accounts for the fact that some workers, members of Inkatha, did not refrain from attending the COSATU May Day Rally in favour of the UWUSA launch (Morris,1986), for in this situation their identities as workers was primary. It is also another factor which makes a reliable assessment of Inkatha's strength virtually impossible.

I well realise that generalising to the whole of Natal on the basis of these two small unrepresentative areas is hazardous. The question is, if, in a highly politicised community which is an integral part of the largest metropolitan area in Natal true working class culture has not become a pervasive influence, is it likely to have done so in smaller, less industrialised and rural areas which are often (on very slender evidence, for little research has been done) characterised as basically conservative (in the sense of espousing a narrow Zulu nationalism)? I believe not, but obviously a great deal more research needs to be done here.

Finally, what are the theoretical implications of the conclusions I have reached? I believe that much needs to be done in the area of refining theories developed overseas, in the light of prevailing local conditions and research findings. The working class is central to a Marxian analysis of society: If we are to make assertions about the role of the workers in the transformation of society, and deal adequately with the question of whether a class alliance between workers and the middle classes is likely in the specific South African situation, we need a far more rigorous definition of who a worker is. Where, for example, do the Pansulas and the Matapudaka fit, and what of the worker who is also actively engaged in informal sector activites? There seems an obvious need for more,detailed community studies as an aid in testing and refining theories.

Community studies are also valuable in another respect: Whilst my data suggests that,in spite of the great strides which are being made in forging worker identity and a consciousness of class interests in the workplace,we are still a long way from the development of a true working class culture which cuts across the deep divisions which exist here in Natal, it is through detailed studies such as these that those factors which not only divide but unite members of communities become apparent. Different studies can be used for comparative purposes in order to assess which structural factors promote unity as opposed to divisiveness. In this way the concerned social scientist has an opportunity to locate, and perhaps find ways of promoting, those strengths which exist in different communities.

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Footnotes

1. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Mr Phakade Magwaza, who is an authority on the different categories of persons who live in the Township, and who is to produce a book on this topic. I would also like to thank Eleanor Preston-Whyte for reading and commenting on the draft of this paper, and all who have helped with the fieldwork. The opinions expressed in this paper are, of course, not necessarily shared by any of these persons.
2. The term 'subculture' may have certain merits in specific contexts but I shall eschew it for present purposes
3. 'ethnos' refers to 'closed systems into which individuals are born, in which they must live and from which only death can separate them' (Sharp 1980). This approach reifies culture, giving the erroneous impression that 'the boundaries of culture coincide with those of a given human population' (Lye and Murray,1980:18/19)
4. I am attempting - probably unsuccessfully - to disguise the identity of areas insofar as is possible so have omitted direct references to literature about them.
5. Most Zionists are, of course, working class and do not, on the whole, patronise shebeens; they tend to be relatively apolitical because of their 'other worldly' orientation (see Kiernan,1977)
6. The study of these gangs is, of course, an area of tremendous research potential, to which van Onselen's study (1982) is a recent outstanding contribution.
7. I have detailed data on about one third of the approximately 160 shebeens which exist in the Township
8. Whilst workers in hostels have been categorised as being staunch Inkatha supporters, it is, for reasons discussed, difficult to assess. Workers from this particular hostel, e.g. were reported (after the August 1985 unrest) to have been very reluctant to travel to one Inkatha mass gathering on the grounds that 'we do not want to die for a sleek car we do not even get a ride in'
9. There is one shebeen run by an elderly woman with Activist sons who maintains firmly that it is a 'People's shebeen' and she does not recognise categories. At this stage of research I lack information (detailed) on this establishment.

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