

SECOND CARNEGIE INQUIRY INTO POVERTY
AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The end of apartheid?
Some dimensions of urban
poverty in Windhoek
by

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INTRODUCTION

It is now precisely a decade since the Portuguese coup of April 1974 heralded the large scale changes in southern Africa which forced South Africa to abandon its attempts to incorporate Namibia and at least recognise the principle of independence for its erstwhile 'fifth province'. Yet diplomatic efforts to achieve an internationally acceptable solution have so often petered out, and dramatic announcements on the imminence of independence so often proved false that one is forced to treat current moves towards military disengagement with caution.

While Namibia's international status has not changed, and the resumption of direct rule by the Administrator-General at the beginning of 1983 has prompted some observers to suggest that the same is true of internal conditions, such a judgment would be less than accurate. With the appointment of Justice Martinus Steyn as South Africa's first Administrator-General in Windhoek in September 1977, a new, transitional, phase in Namibia's history began. His initial brief was to prepare the country for elections in terms of procedures agreed with the Western Five Contact Group, by removing discriminatory laws, freeing political prisoners and liaising with the UN Representative.

He did rapidly repeal a number of pillars of apartheid, notably the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Proclamations, the 1922 Native Administration Proclamation as amended, the 1927 Prohibition of Credit to Natives Proc., and those sections of the 1956 Natives (Urban Areas) Proc. pertaining to the burden of proof by blacks of exemption from other provisions, the 72-hour, influx control and curfew clauses. Sale of land in locations was also legalized (cf 99-year lease in SA).

Independence failed to materialize as envisaged, however, and following the breakdown of negotiations, SA unilaterally held elections to a Constituent Assembly in December 1978, amid allegations of coercion and

interference (Ellis 1979; SWAPO 1981). These were boycotted by SWAPO and the Namibia National Front, and were won by SA's protegee Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) with a large majority. At their behest the Administrator-General transformed the Constituent Assembly into the National Assembly with legislative powers in mid 1979 while in July 1980 a separate executive (the Ministers' Council) and SWA/Namibia government service were created. Additional discriminatory legislation was repealed, notably with regard to segregation of urban residential areas, other urban land, and most public amenities. Discrimination in the public service (including the police, prison service and military) was forbidden and a single set of salary scales instituted.

Despite these moves, and much rhetoric about change, the DTA was hamstrung by its own ethnic structure and that of the second-tier 'representative authorities' it helped spawn. More substantive change was not forthcoming. In much the same way as the Muzorewa administration in Zimbabwe, it could not produce the necessary 'goods' and ultimately fell from its tightrope between South African dictates on the one hand and domestic black credibility on the other, in January 1983 (Simon; 1983a).

Research into the effect of the changing dispensation in Windhoek from 1977-82 showed that, although potentially significant in the long run, most legislative measures towards normalization have had only limited incremental or cosmetic impact in the short term. Some blurring of the racial geography has occurred, people of different skin pigmentation can marry or cohabit and (at least in theory) share a beer in any hotel, while private schools are now allowed to admit pupils of all races. Initial opposition by right wing whites to these 'liberalizations' did on occasion lead to verbal or violent incidents, but on the whole change has received at least de facto acceptance (Simon 1983b). The one measure which has had immediate structural impact on urban areas in general, and Windhoek in particular, was the abolition of influx control. This will be returned to later.

Does all this add up to the end of apartheid and a new, non-racial society, as the DTA, most Namibian whites and the SA government would have us believe? Few Namibian blacks would agree; important social services remain segregated, little in their lives had changed, while much of 'the system' and many of its administrators survive. The purpose of this paper is to examine economic conditions in Windhoek during the period of DTA rule for evidence of change with particular reference to conditions for apartheid's chief victims, the black and coloured working class. It will show the overall persistence of a racial class hierarchy, despite the upward mobility of a small coloured and black bourgeoisie. Many workers still earn poverty wages in an essentially unchanged economic system. Although this paper's focus is largely economic, poverty is not solely a matter of income levels. In the Third World, in particular, poverty is a structural condition, and may be defined as unequal access to the bases for accumulating social power. These bases include productive assets, financial resources, social and political organizations, social networks and appropriate knowledge, information and skills (Friedmann 1979: 101). The main evidence will therefore be linked to criteria governing differential access to some of these, namely housing, health services and education so as to emphasise the structural nature and pervasiveness of urban poverty.

LEGISLATION, ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND ORIENTATION:

The legal changes already referred to have mainly indirect import to the present topic, although the effect of easier access to urban areas for jobseekers from the ranks of rural un- and underemployed has been considerable (see Below). Among specifically economic legislation since 1977, three measures warrant mention. Firstly, contractual and procedural matters governing apprenticeship were altered by the Apprenticeship Amendment Proclamation of 1979. Its effect is, however, still uncertain. Secondly, the Registration and Incorporation of Companies

in South West Africa Proclamation (No. AG.234) of 1978 required all firms operating in Namibia to be locally registered or incorporated, as an important step towards increasing domestic control, uncoupling the economy from SA and rendering corporate tax payable locally. Thirdly, the Income Tax Amendment Act, No.1 of 1981, extended liability for personal tax from whites, coloureds, Bastards and Namas to the whole population. Although hailed in the press as yet another blow against discrimination, the additional revenue was tiny (SWA/Namibia 1980:50), while the simultaneous switch from a progressive to a uniform tax rate was actually regressive, with low income earners relatively and absolutely worse off.

Namibia's economy is highly integrated with, and dependent on, that of SA, which is the source of most imports and destination of major exports. Given Namibia's size, aridity, low population threshold, proximity to SA and the effects of SA government policy, little secondary activity occurs locally. Windhoek is the country's economic centre, with wholesale, retail, distribution and service activities serving the local and often national market. Such manufacturing as does exist is concentrated in food processing, light engineering, motor repair and modification, printing and publishing, and some building materials. These are generally highly perishable or bulky products which do not require very high market thresholds. Employment opportunities are thus limited and relatively inelastic outside of the construction sector, although the small economy as a whole is very vulnerable to cyclical fluctuations. These all have implications for labour and its organizational ability (see below). A sample survey of Windhoek firms revealed virtually no change in their geographic pattern of trade or operational structures from 1977 to 1981, while general economic indicators failed to reveal any distinct structural, as opposed to purely cyclical,

change (Simon 1983b). A high degree of continuity with the pre-1977 period can thus be inferred. It is against this background that conditions in the workplace must be seen.

WAGE AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS: THE EXTENT OF LABOUR POVERTY

The 1975 Windhoek Municipal Census provides the most recent data on white and coloured employment structures (Table 1). These reveal an even distribution of white men in occupational categories 2-7 and predominance over white women in all but the non-manual categories 6 and 7. Similar numbers of coloured men and women were employed, overwhelmingly in semi- and unskilled categories. Professional and administrative jobs (categories 2 and 5) were monopolized by whites, the overwhelming majority being men. No comparable data for blacks are available, but 95% were unskilled and concentrated in domestic service (20.5%), construction (17.2%) and retail and wholesale trades (15.6%) (Municipality of Windhoek 1976:76). Table 6 illustrates the major job categories and corresponding wages. In the ensuing analysis of recent trends, the public and private sectors are treated separately by virtue of differing data bases and their likely reactions to change.

(a) Private Sector

As part of the study of contemporary change, information on 220 employees in 35 firms was obtained during interviews with senior management in the first half of 1981. Since all firms refused direct access to their records and permission to interview staff, the data supplied cannot be said to represent a strictly random sample or a uniform sample fraction, but are adequate for purposes of indicating the relevant structural relationships. Nearly two-thirds of the sample were employed in wholesale, retail, accommodation and catering, with another 25% in manufacturing, and the rest split between transport/communications and financial/ business services. They thus represent a reasonable cross-section of the city's employment structure

TABLE 1

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION
BY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY

POPULATION GROUP AND SEX	OCCUPATION	EMPLOYMENT										TOTAL
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	
White Males	1	3	71	1	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	81
	2	22	145	348	36	243	48	98	9	23	61	1 035
	3	276	313	259	101	67	287	499	48	76	24	1 950
	4	363	155	156	95	22	144	224	26	49	26	1 260
	5	29	87	74	23	150	539	224	44	21	24	1 215
	6	152	198	121	73	172	193	90	11	12	22	1 044
	7	353	326	179	89	207	521	127	27	13	21	1 863
	TOTAL	1 198	1 295	1 138	422	861	1 732	1 262	166	194	178	8 446
White Females	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	2	0	46	275	3	45	8	3	1	0	49	430
	3	7	42	126	5	46	21	10	2	3	71	333
	4	9	18	198	1	14	39	6	1	1	37	324
	5	2	0	3	0	15	79	12	1	2	7	121
	6	35	120	114	28	290	295	97	11	12	41	1 043
	7	112	230	244	46	445	929	181	32	18	60	2 303
	TOTAL	166	462	961	83	855	1 371	309	48	36	265	4 556
Coloured and Baster Males	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	2	0	19	16	1	4	4	0	0	0	9	53
	3	1	4	0	0	1	11	77	4	2	4	104
	4	20	27	37	36	6	209	964	9	24	49	1 381
	5	0	2	2	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	12
	6	0	3	1	0	2	7	3	1	0	2	19
	7	4	8	7	3	9	94	53	3	2	12	195
	TOTAL	25	64	63	40	24	327	1 099	18	28	77	1 765
Coloured and Baster Females	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
	2	0	26	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	51
	3	0	4	56	1	1	2	3	0	0	1	68
	4	2	7	35	2	3	108	60	2	2	674	895
	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	6	0	0	2	1	3	26	4	0	0	2	38
	7	1	6	23	0	28	408	59	0	1	44	570
	TOTAL	3	43	140	4	35	544	126	2	3	724	1 624

Note 1) These figures do not include non-residents, dependant children, housewives, scholars, retired and unemployed persons.

Note 2) Codes : Occupational Categories

1. Member of the armed forces.
2. Professional worker, e.g. architect, engineer, teacher, jurist, etc.
3. Skilled manual worker, i.e. a person with a recognised diploma/certificate in the technical/mechanical field, e.g. craftsman, mechanic, electrician, engraver, glass and pottery worker, bricklayer, farmer, nurse, draughtsman.
4. Semi and unskilled manual worker e.g. farm labourer, apprentice, production and construction workers, labourer with no recognised qualification.
5. Administrator.
6. Non manual qualified staff possessing recognised diplomas, degrees or certificates e.g. typists, C.I.S. clerk, commercial traveller.
7. Non manual unqualified staff e.g. receptionists, clerks, commercial travellers, shop assistants.

: Employment Categories

1. Railways
2. Government and semi-government (excluding railways)
3. S.W.A. Administration
4. Municipal
5. Financial, professional and medical
6. Retail and wholesale
7. Industrial
8. Transport (excluding railways)
9. Miner or farmer
0. Services e.g. domestic, entertainment, religious

Source: Municipality of Windhoek (1976): Windhoek Municipal Census, May 1975. V.2. Results, p.74

Table 2 shows the racial occupational structures to be significantly different, with whites again dominating the skilled professional and administrative categories, coloureds overwhelmingly, and blacks exclusively concentrated in semi- and unskilled positions. The individual company profile - incidentally of a 'progressive' subsidiary of an image-conscious multinational - (Table 3) reveals the same discontinuities. There has thus been little change in racial employment structures in recent years, although a certain proportion of the coloured group have experienced upward economic and social mobility as a result of the enduring skilled labour shortage. This is illustrated by the degree of overlap between white and coloured in Tables 2 and 3. A similar process has occurred in SA itself.

The racial distribution of wages in the sample is shown in Table 4, (and for the individual company*in Table 3). These correspond to the occupational structure and educational levels, and the correlation of wage with race was high ($R=0.7050$). Given the large proportion of whites in the sample, the fact that the overall distribution is skewed towards the lower end of the spectrum, emphasizes the low wages of most coloureds and especially blacks. The median lies in the R501-600 class.

Many sources (Horrell 1967; ILO 1977; Winter 1977; O'Callaghan 1977; SALB 1978; Cronje and Cronje 1979, Moorsom 1979) suggest that poverty wages are the norm. Analysis of coloured and black incomes in the sample revealed that 43% of the 67 blacks earned less than the April 1981 Household Subsistence Level (HSL) of R233.76, and 69% less than the Household Effective Level (HEL) of R350.64. Nineteen per cent of the 59 coloureds fell below the R272.12 HSL for coloureds, and 37% below the HEL of R408.18. 18.3% of the entire sample thus earned less than the HSL and 31.2% less than the HEL. Virtually all the blacks were male

TABLE 2

OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF SAMPLE BY RACE

Category	White		Coloured		Black		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Manager, owner, administrator	29	31.5	3	5.0	0	0.0	32	14.5
Professional qualified	4	4.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	1.8
Technical, skilled qualified	17	18.5	3	5.0	0	0.0	20	9.1
Clerical, secretarial qualified	7	7.6	2	3.3	0	0.0	9	4.1
Semi- and unskilled manual (unqualif)	4	4.3	24	40.0	62	91.2	90	40.9
Semi- and unskilled non-manual (unqual)	31	33.7	28	46.7	6	8.8	65	29.5
TOTAL	92	41.8	60	27.3	68	30.9	220	99.9

TABLE 3

EMPLOYMENT PROFILE BY RACE IN A WINDHOEK FIRM

Job Group	<u>Whites</u>					<u>Coloureds</u>					<u>Blacks</u>				
	Tot No.	No. Women	Ave Age	Ave Srvce	Ave Wage(R)	Tot No.	No. Women	Ave Age	Ave Srvce	Ave Wage(R)	Tot No.	No. Women	Ave Age	Ave Srvce	Ave Wage(R)
1	1	0	35	11	2195	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	0	41	17	1900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	1	0	46	22	1611	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	3	0	46	20	1486	1	0	24	0	1300	-	-	-	-	-
5A	3	0	37	9	1326	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	3	1	43	14	1140	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6A	2	0	43	18	1315	1	0	34	0	908	-	-	-	-	-
6	7	0	33	5	980	1	0	24	0	819	-	-	-	-	-
7	5	3	34	1	709	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	30	3	656
8	6	4	37	1	761	2	0	33	1	634	-	-	-	-	-
9	6	4	28	3	629	1	0	23	0	450	3	0	32	5	515
10	1	1	20	1	413	2	0	24	1	586	-	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0	30	4	324
12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	0	43	4	325
13	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	22	3	279	7	0	33	4	269
14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	33	5	267
TOTAL	40	13	37	12	1171	9	0	26	1	711	24	1	34	4	392

NB: Age & Service periods both in years.
 Job Groups ranked by decision-making responsibility and initiative in terms of the Paterson job evaluation system.

Source: data supplied by a firm. Job groups rank decision-making responsibility and initiative in terms of the Paterson job evaluation system.

TABLE 4

1981 MONTHLY WAGE LEVELS OF THE SAMPLE BY RACE

(IN S.A. RAND)

Wage Group	White		Coloured		Black		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0-100	0	0	0	0	4	6	4	2
101-200	0	0	5	8	17	26	22	10
201-300	0	0	9	15	21	32	30	14
301-400	3	3	8	14	9	12	20	9
401-500	5	5	9	15	9	14	23	11
501-600	6	7	7	12	5	8	18	8
601-700	5	5	3	5	0	0	8	4
701-800	3	3	10	17	0	0	13	6
801-900	11	12	4	7	2	3	17	8
901-1000	9	10	2	3	0	0	11	5
1001-1250	22	24	0	0	0	0	22	10
1251-1500	8	9	1	2	0	0	9	4
1501-1750	6	7	1	2	0	0	7	3
1751-2000	6	7	0	0	0	0	6	3
over 2000	7	8	0	0	0	0	7	3
TOTAL	91	100	59	100	67	100	217	100

NB: Sample size = 220; wages of three individuals were missing.

manual workers, while the coloureds were in both manual and non-manual categories. Despite its shortcomings and conservative nature, the HSL has been used because it includes Windhoek, and is still the most widely cited indicator - an important consideration for comparative purposes (Table 5). The Windhoek HSL is higher than anywhere in SA, reflecting Namibia's import reliance and high unit transport costs from SA. The 16.3% and 14.2% increases in the HSL 1980-81 for blacks and coloureds respectively can be compared with the 13.7% increase in the all-item Consumer Price Index from March 1980 - March 1981, and a massive 34.9% rise in the food-only Index (Simon 1983b: 343) to indicate how severely the working class was affected. Virtually all employers claimed to raise wages in line with inflation, though no concrete evidence was provided. The widespread payment of poverty wages and arguments presented in the following paragraphs make this assertion doubtful, however.

Many employers attempted to justify paying their black labourers very low wages on two broad grounds. Firstly, it was incumbent on employers to pay the R15 housing levy or hostel (compound) fees and usually part or all of the transport costs of their workers, which greatly increased the real cost of earnings to them and value to employees. Secondly, unskilled workers were claimed to be 'stupid', 'lazy', or had 'terribly low productivity'. For example, the worst single case of exploitation, in which women bottle-sorters at a soft-drinks plant were paid R 58-60 p.m., was justified in terms of low productivity or enthusiasm, and particularly the fact that the women were all married, hence not the chief or sole breadwinner, and thus did not need so much money. Examination of the black income data shows that 25 (86%) of the 29 earning less than the HSL were also below the Primary HSL of R210.69 (which excludes rent and transport). Moreover, many large employers do not provide adequate transport for their black workers, carrying them standing,

TABLE 6

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT AND AVERAGE 1980 STARTINGWAGES FOR BLACKS REGISTERED IN KATUTURA

Occupation	No. of Workers				Ave. Monthly Wages(1980) (R) ¹	
	1975 Total	Male	Female	1980 Total	Local	Migrant
Construction workers	3 664	3 660	-	3 660	87.00-96.75	48.38
General labourers	3 463	764	251	1 015	86.00-107.50	96.75
Cleaners	3 017	1 775	320	2 095	107.50-129.00	86.00-107.50
Domestic servants	2 125	1 400	600	2 000	35.00(women)	60.00(men)
Factory workers	1 488	1 380	160	1 540	103.20	44.50
Messengers/delivery	698	713	-	713	129.00-150.50	107.50-129.00
Truck drivers	678	630	-	630	150.50-172.00	129.00-150.50
Wash and ironing	583	-	642	642		
Nurses	365	20	420	440	106.67-310.00	
Clerks and cashiers	200	230	120	350	250.00-280.00	250.00-280.00
Truck labourers	118	140	-	140	55.00	45.00
Garage labourers	102	114	-	114	172.00-193.50	129.00-150.50
Teachers and translator	91	115	25	140		
Petrol pump attendants	84	85	13	98	172.00-215.00	129.00-172.00
Farm labourers ²	71	85	-	85		
Constables: municipal	84	28	-	28	200.00	
Constables: police	63	64	-	64		
Constables: railway	13	25	3	28		
Waiters	59	60	40	100	60.00	60.00
Mine workers	42	-	-	-		
Shop workers	35	30	10	40		
Prison warders	33	12	3	15		
Speculators & hawkers	27	31	-	31		
Ministers of religion	27	35	-	35		
Guards	22	30	-	30		
Announcers & reporters	21	40	15	55		
Cooks	21	25	13	38		
Taxi drivers	14	17	-	17		
Court interpreters	7	9	-	9		
Laboratory Assistants	5	10	20	30		
Barbers	3	5	30	35		
Companions	3	-	-	-		
Shoemakers	2	-	-	-		
Sales agents	2	40	10	50		
Garage owners	1	2	-	2		
Cloth makers/tailors	-	0	5	5		
Unemployed	619	1 472	2 922	4 394		
TOTAL	17 229		5 622	18 668		

¹ Where available. Hourly wages have been converted to monthly equivalents on the basis of an average 45-hr week, although some unskilled workers may work up to 60 hrs. Weekly wages were converted by a factor of 4.3.

² Employed on city commongage.

Sources: (1) Municipality of Windhoek (1978): Windhoek - Central to South West Africa/Namibia. pp.17-18

(2) McNamara K. (1980): Report of Working Committee on a Strategy for Alternative Low-Income Housing for Katutura. Windhoek:McNamara & Associates (mimeo).

NB (a) These are only estimates based on a sample.

(b) Very few wages are above the April 1980 HSL of R201, thus corroborating the employment survey data.

wholesale and retail trade (McGrath 1978: 156), which is the most important element in this sample.¹ While the ratio of racial average wages may in fact have declined since 1970, as in South Africa, it is likely that the absolute wage gap will have risen since the mid-1970s (cf. Natrass 1977: 408-409). There is also no necessary direct relationship between a reduction in mean racial wage ratios, or an improvement in aggregate racial shares of income, and the distribution of income. Moreover, as shown in Table 1, two thirds of the blacks in this sample earned considerably less than R300 p.m., so that the average figure was distorted by a few high wages. The lowest white wage recorded was R17 higher than the average black wage, which itself lay between the HSL and HEL.²

Wage rates in Windhoek varied by sector, as shown in Table 7. Although the intersectoral differences for the whole sample were not statistically significant, those for individual race groups were. Note also that, whereas the highest average white and coloured wages were in transport and communications, the highest average black wage was in manufacturing.

(1) A major problem in comparing wage ratios is the variety of bases on which these measures are calculated. For example, Cronje and Cronje (1979: 43) mention an overall white:black ratio of 25:1 in Namibia in 1976. Such national figures are heavily skewed by low agricultural wages and unemployment. Comparison would require a similar sectoral balance. Some ratios are computed on a gross racial share of income basis, others per capita and others per recipient (e.g. Natrass 1977; McGrath 1977, 1978). Keenan (1981b) reveals the misleading nature of many official statistics and claims based on them.

(2) Colby, Ditzian and Waxmonsky (1977: 245) reported a similar finding in East London, although when adjusted for missing values, their estimated mean lay between the Primary HSL and the HSL proper. Leistner (1964) failed to relate black wages in Pretoria to the cost of living.

TABLE 7

MEAN WAGE (AND STANDARD DEVIATION) BY RACE AND SECTOR

Race	Manufacturing	Retail/Wholesale	Transport/Communic	Business service
White	1 062 (403) range: 375-1 833	1 140 (530) range: 315- 3 000	1 606 (1 102) range: 450-3 842	1 603 (1 389) range: 578-4 417
Coloured	496 (243) range: 125-900	538 (307) range: 125-1 667	726 (218) range: 475-870	625 (530) range: 250-1 000
Black	344 (199) range: 58-900	278 (145) range: 80-831	304 (131) range: 200-520	268 (150) range: 167-440

TABLE 8

EMPLOYMENT: MUNICIPALITY OF WINDHOEK

Category ¹	White	Coloured & Baster	Black	Total
I	0	— 1 007 —		1 007
II	191	50	235	476
III	329	4	3	336
IV	13	0	0	13
TOTAL	533	— 1 499 —		1 832

- ¹I = semi- and unskilled
 II = possessing secondary schooling and training certificate
 III = qualified professionals
 IV = top managerial (Dept. heads & deputies & Town Clerk.)

Women formed a 23% minority in the sample, and earned significantly less overall. Among blacks the difference was insignificant, except for those below the HEL. Among whites and coloureds, however, the differences, both overall and by income category, were significant (although there were no males below the HSL for comparison). In many cases the traditional sexual division of labour was operative, making direct comparison difficult, but where this was possible, women invariably earned less. Similar problems exist throughout the Third World (e.g. May 1979 on Zimbabwe). The proportion of economically active women in Windhoek is lower than that of men among both whites and coloureds (no separate figures by sex are available for blacks). Whereas the figure for white women rose from 23.8% in 1960 to 28.4% in 1975, the figure for coloured women fell from 49.1% to 33.1% over the same period (Municipality of Windhoek 1976: 73). The last mentioned percentage may not, however, be accurate. Many black and coloured women are engaged in domestic service rather than the formal sector, and are even worse off. There is thus widespread wage discrimination, both by race and by sex.

Among blacks, wages also varied significantly with age and length of service in the firm, although not with the length of service in the present job. Average service periods in all the groups were over three years, although in many individual instances periods of 2-6 months were recorded. The correlation between time in the firm and time in the present job was high for the entire sample (0.8004), but higher for blacks, especially those below the HSL (1.00) and HEL (0.9695), than for coloureds (0.710 and 0.7724 respectively). This suggests that semi- and unskilled blacks, in particular, tend to hold only one job per

employer, and thus have virtually no intra-firm upward mobility. Wages are not highly correlated with service periods for these groups, suggesting that their wages do not rise proportionately over time.

This classic proletarian predicament can only be explained with reference to the wider structural dimensions of poverty, and in particular to education. Wages within the sample as a whole, and for the coloured subset separately, varied significantly with the level of schooling attained. This was not true among blacks in the sample primarily, it would seem, because their levels of both formal schooling and remuneration were so low. The mean educational achievement for the entire sample was Std. 7, with Std. 9 for whites, Std. 7-8 for coloureds and Std. 3 for blacks respectively. Those earning less than the HSL, between the HSL and HEL, and above the HEL were separated by a least a year's schooling in each case. The question of access to educational and other social services will be returned to in the final section.

In line with changing circumstances, racial discrimination is supposedly being removed from the workplace. The Private Sector Foundation launched a Code of Employment Practice during 1981, and politicians made periodic appeals for change and condemnations of 'outmoded practices'. Some firms have made sincere and successful attempts in this direction, especially subsidiaries of foreign and large South African corporations conscious of their image abroad. However, they are still in a minority. Only one employer interviewed admitted that his firm had done little so far; the rest denied the existence of racial discrimination on their premises. The data presented here, and regular race-specific vacancies advertised in the local press (even by firms in the sample) show otherwise.

(b) Public Sector

Despite its importance as a source of employment in Windhoek, the paucity of data obtained on the public sector restricts analysis to little more than description. In 1975 the Municipality, Railways and Government/ Administration employed 10,824 out of the 33,650-strong workforce. 53% of public employees were white, 3.5% coloured and 43.5% black. Government reorganization makes comparison with contemporary data difficult: race is no longer recorded since the unification of government (i.e. civil service) employment conditions and salary scales in 1980, while, because of frequent staff movement, data are not recorded by locality. Rough estimates provided by personnel officers during interviews suggest over 9,000 government posts (excluding police, prisons, military) in Windhoek in October 1980, while the South African Transport Services (S.A.T.S.), South West African Broadcasting Corporation (S.W.A.B.C.) and Municipality accounted for an additional 7200. This would represent an overall sectoral increase of well over 50% since 1975.

There are over 600 different salary scales in the Civil Service and no average wage data could be obtained. At the end of 1980 un- and semi-skilled labourers' wages in the public sector ranged from R87.50 to roughly R300 p.m., a high proportion thus earning well below the April 1981 HSL figure (R87.50 is a mere 37.4% of the HSL). Some unskilled black employees of the Administration for Whites earned R78 p.m. but take-home pay was only R12.30-R19.03 after deduction of hostel and transport fees and medical/pension contributions (Windhoek Observer 11/4/81). By contrast, personnel with Matric plus further training earned R283-R779 p.m., qualified professionals R535-R1, 732, and top managerial staff R1, 781-R2, 525 p.m., the last-mentioned representing the highest civil service salary.

Other public bodies such as the S.W.A. System of S.A.T.S., the S.W.A.B.C. and Municipality of Windhoek also claim to have abolished racial discrimination, although the first-mentioned is still run as an integral part of its South African parent and the Windhoek press regularly carries claims of racism by its staff. The Municipality phased in a single set of work conditions and salary scales from 1978, which appeared to have proceeded relatively smoothly, barring some problems in introducing the compulsory pension scheme for unskilled workers. It is common for low-paid workers, often having no secure job tenure, to show reluctance in accepting such deductions from subsistence wages, especially as the purported benefits are uncertain and in the distant future. The municipal employment structure is shown in Table 8. Although slow upward filtering of coloureds and blacks had begun by late 1980, whites still occupied most professional and all managerial jobs. The seven Grade III staff who were not white were on the lowest of the 15 applicable salary scales. However, the single uniform employment structure and improved conditions are believed responsible for reducing annual semi- and unskilled staff turnover from an average of 74.5% between 1974 and 1977 to 30% in 1980.

While there does therefore appear to have been some change in the public sector, full evaluation would require more complete data, and most of the structural observations made with respect to the private sector apply equally here. Discrimination may officially have been removed, but reality for the lowly worker is little different. It is probably unrealistic to expect skill and training levels to improve significantly in so short a period, but unless rapid progress is made towards social equality and paying all employees a living wage, class divisions will come increasingly to the fore. However, it seems unlikely that any major changes in the present situation will occur before independence.

Many more white civil servants will probably return to South Africa at that juncture; indeed, the Lusaka-based United Nations Institute for Namibia is basing its civil service training programme on the assumption of having to take over virtually the entire bureaucracy at once (UNIN 1978). This, of course, will have little effect at the bottom of the employment hierarchy, where change is most urgently needed.

There is also a growing army of unemployed in Windhoek as elsewhere, unable even to gain a footing at the bottom of the ladder. Before turning to them, however, a brief note on changes within the very limited labour organizations is appropriate.

TRADE UNIONS: UNFULFILLED WORKING CLASS POTENTIAL

If a well developed trade union movement is indicative of improved labour conditions by virtue of enhanced bargaining power, it is clear why worker exploitation in Namibia persists. Trade unions are still in their infancy, for several interrelated reasons. The first is the difficulty of organizing a largely proletarianized workforce in widely separated urban areas. This has been compounded by active employer and official resistance, especially from the mines, which are highly organized through the Chamber of Mines of SWA/Namibia. The build up and reaction to the 1971/72 Contract Workers Strike illustrates the point (e.g. Kane-Berman 1972; Cronje and Cronje 1979; Moorsom 1977, 1979; SALB 1978). The third obstacle reflects the territory's economic structure, in that skilled (essentially white) workers are in short supply and have fairly strong bargaining positions, while increasing unemployment of un- and semi-skilled workers has rendered their position progressively weaker.

The main labour legislation, the Wage and Industrial Conciliation Ordinance, No. 35 of 1952, specifically exempted farm and domestic workers, two of the largest groups of employees, from its provisions, and excluded blacks from the definition of 'employee', thereby denying them any legal protection. Unions were opened to all races by the Wage and Industrial Conciliation Amendment Proclamation, No. AG 45 of 1978, which also prohibited affiliation of unions with political parties and receipt or giving of financial assistance between them.

Bonded contract labour and many of the other apartheid laws which indirectly affected black workers, have also been removed. The lack of closed shop agreements has impeded union formation, as non-members benefit from union gains without having to pay membership. There has been marginal improvement, and a willingness among a minority of employers in Windhoek to discuss employment conditions with union representatives, although this generally pertains to specific grievances of individual workers rather than broad negotiations on terms of employment.

In 1981 there were 6 unions registered in terms of the Wage and Conciliation legislation, which entitles them to stop-order rights and Industrial Council membership along the lines of equivalent South African laws. Two operate entirely outside Windhoek, while two others are insignificant and inactive, so that only two need be considered here. The Municipal Staff Association is effective, regularly achieving significant gains for its members. White membership has always been compulsory by closed shop agreement with municipalities, and while now voluntary for existing black employees, it is compulsory

for new ones. The Association had 1,800 members in mid-1981, 750 of them black; 1,000 members - half white and half black - were in Windhoek itself.

The Association of Government Service Officials, registered in 1964, had suffered a decline in membership from its peak of 1,300 to 800 by mid-1981. This included 180 blacks. 300 of the total (including 130 blacks) were in Windhoek. The Association changed its name during the government reorganization; it has lost members through departures for South Africa among conservative employees, and 'defections' to the newly-formed rival Government Service Personnel Association, which was projecting a more progressive and non-racial image and was based within the Central Government rather than the Administration for Whites. The latter Association, though not yet registered and formed only in March 1980, claimed 700 paid-up members of all races, 80% of them in Windhoek, by mid-1981.

Two other unregistered unions need mention. The Nambian Trade Union Council (NTUC) was established under the auspices of SWAPO-D in 1981. Membership appears very limited, although it claims some successes in redressing grievances in individual cases, and makes regular attacks on the existing labour dispensation (Windhoek Advertiser 10/12/81; 5/1/82; SWAPO-D 1981:3-4). The National Union of Nambian Workers (NUNW) was formed in the mid-1970s as the Nambian Workers Union (NAWU). It is affiliated to SWAPO, and as such has faced constant harassment and even imprisonment of its leaders. Although forced to operate more or less underground, it may well have the largest membership of any union in Namibia (no data are available). It has focused chiefly

on the mines - where many Ovambo migrant labourers, many being SWAPO members, are concentrated. More recently a Domestic Workers' Association was formed in Windhoek to improve the lot of the most exploited sector of the urban workforce (Windhoek Advertiser 3/3/82; Windhoek Observer 20/3/82).

The Chamber of Mines of SWA/Namibia compiled a far-reaching set of proposals for a new non-racial labour dispensation in the territory, which included compulsory recognition of trade unions under certain conditions, and enabling, rather than prescriptive, legislation on employee and employer associations (Chamber of Mines 1980). Although enlightened, and a distinct improvement on existing arrangements, they appeared to favour class- and location-specific rather than national unions, and were not supported by existing unions (Windhoek Advertiser 12/3/81, 20/3/81; Republikein 12/3/81). All the registered unions, while now open to all races, are conservative and still represent essentially the interests of semi- and skilled workers, who are predominantly white. The officials remain, virtually without exception, white, and some black members complain privately of being patronized. The role of unregistered unions, while potentially significant, has also not been great thus far. Since the 1971/72 strike there has been little concerted flexing of labour's muscle, which cannot be said to have contributed to any noteworthy improvement in the poverty wages or bad employment conditions analyzed above. The entire union movement is still very small and fragile: the workers' organizational revolution which has been underway in South Africa of late has not yet permeated to Namibia, where the vast majority of workers remain unrepresented and exploited. Major contributory factors

are the labour force's small size in any locality, and the ease with which, in a situation of high unemployment, employers can fire and replace unskilled 'troublemakers'.

POVERTY BEYOND THE FORMAL ECONOMY: UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE 'INFORMAL' RESPONSE

The structural nature of Third World unemployment and its particular historical form in 'Africa of the labour reserves', to use Samir Amin's phrase, are well known and will not be repeated here. Namibia fitted the model well, with contract labour from the northern reserves rigidly enforced. Urban unemployment and underemployment were thus reduced, but displaced to the reserves, where rapid population increase further undermined peasant agriculture (Moorsom 1977, 1978; Gottschalk 1978; Simon 1982). With abolition of formal influx control in 1977 and escalation of the querrilla war, more work-seekers and migrants' relatives flocked to the cities, thereby making the extent of the problem more visible and politically relevant. This development had considerable impact in many spheres: many conservative white politicians conjured up images of a swamping black tide, while overcrowding in Katutura - already a problem because of a deliberate lack of new housing construction between 1968 and 1975 - grew steadily worse. In the short term the hostel and single quarters bore the brunt of this new migration, sparking off violence between DTA and SWAPO supporters. Squatting and stock theft occurred in semi-urban areas. For present purposes the most important effect was to aggravate existing unemployment and reduce the scope for unskilled workers to improve their wages or working conditions by the willingness of newcomers to accept existing terms of employment. However, it must be said that there is no evidence of wages having been

depressed as a result, or of any large scale replacement of workers by newcomers. These arguments, together with usurping of established residents' housing and facilities, were initially used by officials in attempting to instil fear into the Katutura Advisory Board and urging retention of some form of control.

By 1980 the Ministers' Council, alarmed at the growing unemployment problem, appointed a special committee to investigate possible solutions. It made a long list of short, medium and long term recommendations, most of which, especially for the longer term, were merely general statements (Ministers' Council 1980; Windhoek Advertiser 3/10/80). Some of the short term ones, notably export of labour to the mines of the NW Cape, and promotion of 'appropriate' flexible standards were potentially retrogressive or likely in effect to maintain the status quo. Although most of the proposals were accepted by the Ministers' Council, little evidence of their implementation emerged.

Unemployment has deteriorated steadily, receiving increasingly frequent press coverage (e.g. Windhoek Advertiser 24/3/81; 24/4/81; 30/10/81; 6/1/82; 5/5/82; Republikein 21/5/81; Windhoek Observer 9/1/82). One report suggested a national unemployment rate of 18.1% in mid-1981, i.e. 75,000 out of the 415,000-strong labour force (cf. 10% in 1977/8), but 27.7% if underemployment is included (Windhoek Advertiser 7/8/81:1). Although no data on the structure of unemployment are available, it is a problem exclusive to un- and semi-skilled labour. There has also been police action against unemployed 'vagrants' in Windhoek suspected of having been responsible for rising crime (Windhoek Advertiser 11/3/82; 19/3/82; Windhoek Observer 20/3/82). Between 70 and 100 men congregate daily at the Municipal Labour Bureau near Katutura, while others search for jobs in the city. During working hours, many hundred unemployed men

and women of all ages are evident in Katutura, often patronizing illegal shebeens. The attendant social problems are profound yet there is little hope of improvement in the foreseeable future.

One response to this situation has been a proliferation of 'informal' sector activities by blacks and some coloureds. Although such undertakings have a long history in southern Africa (Van Onselen 1982; Rogerson 1983) rigid control and suppression by the authorities was the norm. With the lifting of some colonial-type apartheid laws in the late 1970s, the consequent rapid urban growth in Windhoek and the effects of recession, more of the 'casual poor' and working class have been forced to use marginal (and often still illegal) income earning opportunities, despite periodic harassment.

I have dealt in detail with the nature of these activities elsewhere (Simon 1984); a few brief comments will thus suffice. Interviews with 'informal' operators supported the circumstantial evidence on poverty, wages and unemployment presented above as motivations for their activities. 72% had been thus active for under five years, the majority of these for less than one year, although 16% claimed over 20 years' experience. Few divulged specific information on income, but 84% claimed it to be very irregular, and only rarely did an interviewee consider him/herself better off financially than in formal employment. Over half those interviewed were women, and many of them aimed to supplement household income or have an independent source of income, rather than at full time employment. These are thus 'subsistence' rather than 'productive' profit-orientated activities (Dewar and Watson 1981). Only 35% of the women, as opposed to 82% of the men, were active full-time. Virtually all operated alone or in pairs, with an occasional trio.

Although there were felt to be some advantages in being one's own boss, conditions and hours were hard, income irregular and profit margins generally low. 72% thought their activities insecure as a result of official harassment and/or competition. Their educational levels were low, but comparable to those of blacks overall. Almost half desired formal employment while most of the remainder felt their present activity to be all that their education and experience permitted, or provided the necessary income supplement.

It is almost impossible to gauge accurately the proportion of people eking out an 'informal' living; besides this will change rapidly with economic conditions and urban growth. In Katutura the figure was unlikely to have been much above 10-15% in 1981, and still lower in Khomasdal. The rising scale of informal activity is undoubtedly a syndrome of contemporary poverty. It has been argued that such activity is functional to the State by reducing the imperative for social welfare provision (Rogerson and Beavon 1982: 263). In Windhoek, at least, the authorities' attitude suggests little such awareness. The State's role as primary provider of education, health and related services is dealt with in the following section, where the wider determinants of inequality and poverty form the main focus.

STRUCTURAL POVERTY: THE PROBLEM OF RELATIVE ACCESS

I have demonstrated the persistence and perhaps even aggravation of urban poverty in Windhoek since the removal of apartheid began. In terms of the structural definition of poverty adopted earlier it remains to relate - albeit perforce extremely briefly - skill levels and hence income earning potential to the wider social formation. The terms of access to the bases for accumulating social power (health, knowledge and

skills through education, social and political organizations, productive assets and income) have long been institutionalized on racial lines. The State's role is crucial not only by virtue of being the major economic agent in Namibia, where over half of all formal employment and most capital investment is in the public sector, but in regulating the political economy of domination. It has seen fit in recent years to lift some racial restrictions, which may well have been seen as hampering the vulnerable yet basically capitalist economy. These moves have certainly benefited a small coloured and black middle class and led to claims that freedom of opportunity now exists. Equally significant, however, is the fact that education and health, in particular, remain effectively segregated.

In 1979 Windhoek's Mayor, an opponent of residential desegregation claimed that

'There are nice houses in Khomasdal and Katutura,
and modest, even poor little houses in Windhoek.

Poverty has nothing to do with where you live'.

(address to SWA Municipal Association, 28 Nov. 1979)

Ironically, the handful of 'nice houses' in Katutura serve merely to highlight the generally poor conditions: ill-maintained match box municipal housing, many with outside latrines and lacking electricity; mainly untarred and unkept roads; inadequate refuse collection with numerous open piles of garbage providing a breeding ground for insects and rodents; poor public facilities; overcrowding; alcoholism, and unemployed people sitting aimlessly around. To residents of Khomasdal and especially Katutura, poverty has everything to do with where you live. And where you live is still a function of apartheid geography for 99% of Windhoek's population.

- (a) Housing On the whole, the authorities' low income housing policies have not yet found solutions appropriate to the rate and scale of growth in Windhoek and elsewhere or the shelter needs of the urban poor. Despite awareness of the problems and changing needs since 1977 (i.e. family rather than single migrant accommodation) the burden of the past remains strong. No new role for the hostel compound has been found, although portions of the single quarters have now been converted into family units. A one-off core housing experiment bypassed the poorest of the poor, and in any case was abandoned in favour of accelerated construction of existing township house types, although for sale rather than rental as before. The price tag, at R10,600 already in 1981, put these beyond the reach of the most needy residents, even assuming that their names reached the top of growing waiting lists. By far the most significant change was the DTA government's decision in 1981 to sell all existing municipal houses in Katutura to their sitting tenants on a freehold basis. Prices were set on a sliding scale according to age of house and length of occupancy, ranging from full construction costs for post-1975 structures to payment for the plot only at the oldest extreme. As I have set out in detail elsewhere, the initial response was slow for political as well as economic reasons, but the potential future ramifications of an urban black property owning class are far-reaching (Simon 1983b, forthcoming). South Africa itself has now taken a similar course of action, although only on a 99-year leasehold basis (Mabin and Parnell 1983). In Windhoek the option of moving to a better area exists only for a few wealthy blacks.

A certain proportion of the working class are now benefiting from house ownership or extensions of their houses in Katutura, but for the poor the situation is deteriorating as low-cost rental housing is sold off. Incremental core or site-and-service schemes are still officially frowned on, while overcrowding grows steadily worse. For many, the need to squat illegally, despite the insecurity and inconvenience, is finding expression in growing spontaneous peri-urban settlements.

- (b) Health service provision, along with education, has proved a focus of white resistance to change and remains racially segregated. In terms of western criteria of modern, well equipped hospitals, Windhoek is well served; too well perhaps. The problem is, however, that health services are inappropriate to the needs of the poor, both in rural and urban areas. They are overcapitalized, relying on modern technology and curative medicine rather than on a simpler, more dispersed and accessible policy focusing significantly on preventative services. Thus although there is a modern 600-bed hospital serving Katutura and Khomasdal, and a clinic centrally located in each acts as screening centre for minor complaints, the chief diseases are gastro-enteritis and pneumonia among infants, measles among children and TB among adults. These are both preventable and curable given the right conditions, yet people die from them almost daily in the shadows of medical mausoleums. They reflect the socio-economic and environmental conditions in which the urban poor live. While a high percentage of cases are eventually reported, treatment often commences too late, or parents neglect or fail to understand instructions on infant care. Waiting times at the hospital are characteristically long, involving absence from work, with consequent loss of precious income, for those who are employed. But the biggest problem is that

patients discharged from hospital after 'successful' treatment return to the same physical and poverty-ridden environment in which lay the source of their illness in the first place. Alcoholism is also rapidly reaching chronic proportions in response to conditions (Simon 1983c).

(c) Education:

Despite the eventual opening of private schools to all races, state education remains effectively segregated because of the ethnic structure of the second tier authorities. The central Department of National Education has an overseeing role for all races and has made some progress in improving physical conditions, teacher quality and scholastic performance in Katutura. Nevertheless, the poor have no option where to send their children, and Katutura schools remain overcrowded with high pupil:staff ratios and predominantly underqualified teachers. School attendance is still not universal in reality. 'Bantu Education' may have ended in name, but the underlying structures remain, and the education available cannot be compared with that for whites. Conditions in some coloured schools may actually be deteriorating (Simon 1983b).

There has thus been no change in the structure of access to the means of social advancement in the period under review. Existing inequalities and the socio-economic status quo are certain to persist for the foreseeable future. The poor will remain poor because they are poor.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the politico-legal changes in Namibia since 1977, analysis of modern sector employment data has shown the persistence of major structural discontinuities on every socio-economic variable considered. They are strongly interrelated, and can be broadly summarized as the coincidence of race and class, although there has been progressive blurring at the edges. DTA policy aimed to hasten this process, stressing economic achievement (class) over race; but race remains the crucial independent variable, as that still largely determines the quality and level of education an individual receives, and thus the ability to obtain a higher return on his labour in an environment of scarce skills. There certainly appears to have been little improvement in working conditions for unskilled labour in the last few years, although real wages may have risen. This, in turn, is probably due to the effects of the 1971-72 contract workers' strike and increased international attention, rather than purely endogenous factors (see Kane-Berman 1972; Gordon 1977; SALB 1978; Cronje and Cronje 1979:42-44, 77-89; Moorsom 1979). Rising black urban unemployment, particularly since the repeal of influx control laws, has restricted working class organizational ability and pressure for improved pay or working conditions.

Throughout the economy wage increases for skilled labour have been very high indeed, whereas for the unskilled and some semi-skilled the increases have varied, in some cases above the rise in the cost of living, but often below. The 4:1 ratio of white to black wages reflects a few high black salaries rather than average earnings. A significant proportion of semi- and unskilled black and coloured workers earn poverty

wages, and many Katutura and Khomasdal residents have become poorer in real terms in recent years - as evidenced also by housing conditions, disease patterns, rising alcoholism, unemployment and the growth of 'informal' activities. The dichotomy is perhaps most vividly illustrated by the gulf between the 'lower middle class' and poor in Khomasdal (see Municipality of Windhoek 1981). Elsewhere in Namibia, the situation is likely to be worse, Keenan (1981a) clearly demonstrates a similar process in Soweto, Johannesburg, where the economic boom of 1978-80 adversely affected the inhabitants. The 'trickle-down' effect of economic growth, so beloved of the business world and government, is a myth.

The poor will form an increasing proportion of the urban population as migration accelerates, which it is certain to do after independence. Pressure on existing resources, and political demands for structural change will rise accordingly. Many of the features discussed are not uniquely related to apartheid, being more generally features of colonial political economies, of which apartheid is an extreme and distinct form. Evidence from elsewhere in the Third World suggests that the lot of the urban poor seldom improves, while structural inequality and poverty usually persist. On the other hand, some of the changes occurring in Namibia and in the 'independent' bantustans (Parnell 1984), notably the achievement of upward socio-economic mobility by a growing coloured and black middle class, and a change in the basis of low income housing allocation have also now taken place in South Africa without the repeal of apartheid. This forces us to ask how crucial the legislative changes and disputed international position of Namibia have been to the process. Or does subimperial capitalism in southern Africa have its own dynamic which transcends political boundaries, policies and priorities? Only time and further research will tell.

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