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AFRICAN MANUFACTURING
SECTOR : A SOCIO-SPATIAL
ANALYSIS**

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DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIT

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Abstract

The independent trade union movement has become increasingly significant in the popular struggle against racial capitalism in South Africa, yet it has so far attracted comparatively little attention from geographers in the region. One of the concerns of this paper, then, is to consider ways in which the spatial configuration of South African industry affects workers organisations. In this context, the focus centres upon strike activity in the manufacturing sector. An analysis of the changing composition, fortunes and strategies of the trade union movement since the 1950's - substantially reviewed here - shows how such activity is influenced by factors at work within the state apparatus and within the unions themselves, and is indicative of the ever-changing relationship that exists between these two. Our major objective here, though, is to demonstrate how certain spatial and temporal variations in strike action may also be related to particular developments in the structure of South African capitalism. The forces underpinning the emergence of a spatial/sectoral division of labour and the contradictory imperatives driving industry towards the centralisation and decentralisation of capital are the developments under review.

1 Introduction

In their important review of recent developments in southern African human geography, Beavon and Rogerson (1981) note the belated appearance of studies which document the conditions under which the working classes of the subcontinent struggle to survive. Studies such as these herald a crucial shift in direction for a largely introspective and reactionary geographical community (see Crush, Reitsma and Rogerson, 1982). Nevertheless, McCarthy (1982) and Wellings and McCarthy (1983) have expressed concern at their tendency to separate the subjects of analysis from the political context and their apparent reluctance to consider the question of strategy from

the various positions assumed by labour, capital and the state. The fundamental mistake of much writing on the 'working class experience', they argue, is a proclivity to "over-emphasise the economic basis of domination at the expense of the political process of its overthrow" (Molotshungu, 1982, 41). What is required, then, is some consideration of the opportunities for, and constraints on, various forms of resistance at specific historical moments and in particular social formations.

To date, most geographical work in South Africa that has examined these strategic issues has focused on conflicts within the sphere of social reproduction; housing, education and transport being the key issues (see, for example, Mabin and Parnell, 1983; McCarthy, 1983; McCarthy and Smit, 1984). Struggles at the point of production, on the other hand, have commanded comparatively little attention. This contrasts sharply with the situation in other social sciences where labour and trade union studies are now central to the research agenda.

In several respects, this view is underpinned by an important debate concerning the nature of class struggle and state intervention in South Africa. Thus, while Davies, Kaplan, Morris and 'O Meara (1976) have argued that the contradictions most directly and acutely reflected within the state are those among fractions of the dominant classes, Bozzoli (1978), Clarke (1978) and Innes and Plaut (1978) have placed the struggle between capital and labour at centre-stage in their analysis of the apartheid state. In particular, Innes and Plaut (1978, 52) maintain that "one cannot understand the changing form of

the capitalist state without locating the state in the relations of production determined by the development of the struggle between capital and labour". Hence, it is with the independent non-racial trade union movement that most social scientists see the greatest opportunities for making gradualist advances towards democracy in South Africa (see, Bonner, 1983; de Clerq, 1979; Hemson, 1978; Hirson, 1979; and Magubane, 1979; 1983, esp. pp.35-51).

In addition, the substantial concessions that growing worker power has extracted from both capital and the state since 1977 and the significant advances in organisation, membership and militancy that the union movement has achieved recently have served to sharpen awareness of this struggle (see Bonner, 1983; Lambert and Lambert, 1983; Morris, 1981). Furthermore, the basis of conflict between capital and labour has itself extended with the onset of recession in 1981 (Lambert and Lambert, 1983, 249), the deepening crisis of accumulation in an economy still heavily dependent on mineral exports (see Bienefeld and Innes, 1976; Williams, 1977), and the redirection of South African capital investments overseas (see Kaplan, 1983). "Such is the progress that has been made", Bonner (1983, 16) writes, "such is the confidence being exhibited by African workers, that commentators from big business, from the state, from internal political organisations and from many quarters outside of South Africa are hailing the independent trade union movement as the subcontinent's unbound Prometheus, a vehicle for major industrial and political change".

The paper begins with a periodisation of strike action in the

manufacturing sector since the 1950's. This is followed by a consideration of certain spatial variations with reference to empirical data from the 1970's and 1980's. Our intention here is to move beyond a descriptive 'geography of strikes' (see Bennett and Earle, 1982, for instance), to seek explanations for these variations in the trade union movement (its strategies and changing fortunes), the state's responses to it, and in certain structural features of South African capitalism, notably the metropolitan concentration of capital (and attempts to engender a countervailing decentralisation of capital), and the spatial/sectoral division of labour. In a more general context, such developments in the economies of capitalist societies have become increasingly important as foci for geographic research (see, for example, Dunford 1979; Massey, Doreen 1983; Massey and Meegan, 1982), but their implications for trade union organisation and worker militancy have been largely ignored.¹ This largely exploratory analysis therefore attempts to identify and situate questions of geographical interest relevant to worker activism in South Africa. Further research on these lines may then provide a basis for comparative work at an inter-regional or international level. Finally, although the geographical dimension to worker activism is to be stressed here, it is important to emphasise that this is only one of the factors that influences the development of the trade unions, and therefore to locate our geographical analysis within a broader discussion of strategic issues. To this end, we focus upon more general determinants of strike action in the final section of the paper.

2 A periodisation of strike action in the manufacturing sector since the 1950's

2.1 Methodological considerations

The empirical description of class action is methodologically and conceptually problematic. Those researchers interested in moving beyond simply theorising about class strategy towards an historically specific description of class struggle are faced with a complex set of questions concerning the reliability and representativeness of available data sources and the validity of various forms of interpretation (see Hyman, 1972 for a description of these problems with reference to strike data).

In our case we were primarily interested in detailing the spatial and temporal bases of strike activity in the manufacturing sector and relating these to broader structural features in the organisation of South African capitalism. In this respect, a variety of problems were encountered. First, it is only very recently that employers have had to report all strikes and work stoppages. Thus, the several monitoring services have been forced to rely on press and trade union sources in various combinations and to various degrees to supplement and cross-check official figures. Secondly, workable common definitions of what constitutes a 'strike' or a 'work stoppage' have yet to be developed as a basis for assessing labour disputes. As a result, there are significant discrepancies in the strike figures released by the independent consultancies and the official monitoring service. In 1983, for example, the number of strikes was reported

variously as 124, 190, 196, an 'official' 336 and 396 (Howe, 1984a, 9). Notable inconsistencies were also evident in terms of monthly trends, numbers of workers, man-hour loss and strike triggers (see Howe, 1984a, 6-13). Furthermore, these figures contradict those cited by the unions themselves. Wherever possible, therefore, we have cross-checked official and other data sources with press reports, labour action news, and other publications such as Work in Progress (WIP) and the South African Labour Bulletin (SALB). However, while our data set covers most of the strikes that took place in 1982 and 1983, only 40% of all known strikes were documented in sufficient detail to be included in our analysis of the period 1974-1983.

Secondly, and most importantly, it is by no means clear what strikes actually mean in terms of class struggle. For example, individual strike actions differ quite markedly in the level of worker consciousness involved, often developing out of disputes which are quite specific to particular work places. It would be wrong, then, to blandly equate strike action with fundamental class struggle. So whilst we do regard strike action as a form of class struggle, we would agree with Lenin's (1975, 375) contention that strikes express "the class struggle in embryo, but only in embryo". Third, while our analysis concentrates on some of the structural conditions under which strike action occurred, we also regard local features to be important reasons for the spatial, sectoral and temporal variations in strike activity in South Africa over the past forty years. Finally, our analysis focuses on the manufacturing sector where most post-World War II strike action has occurred. This should be set in contrast to the

period up to the 1946 mineworker's strike when most strike activity took place in the mining industry (see Bozzoli, 1979; Simons and Simons, 1969; van Onselen, 1982, 1-40; Webster, 1978 for detailed accounts). Similarly, the growing significance of the retail sector with respect to recent strike action (see Bendix 1984; Howe, 1984a, 16; WIP, 1984) and the re-emergence of trade union activism on the mines in 1983 and 1984 should be acknowledged (van Niekerk, 1984).

2.2 A periodisation of strike action : 1950 - 1984

The magnitude and spatial location of strike action has varied dramatically in the post-World War II period. The former is most evident in Figure 1 which indicates the proportion of workers in the manufacturing sector who were engaged in strike activity between 1954 and 1983. This time series is best periodised into four phases which correspond roughly to the shifts in political action by oppressed groups in South Africa noted by a variety of writers (Bonner, 1980; de Clerq, 1979; Lodge, 1983; Magubane, 1979; 1983; see McCarthy, 1983, 39 for a periodisation from 1910 to 1960).

2.2.1 First phase : 1950 - 1963 The strike action of the 1950's assumed the form of national 'stay-away's', freedom rallies and demonstrations which encouraged workers to articulate grievances other than those manifest at the workplace and to form alliances with more politically oriented resistance organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC). This formed part of a national campaign organised to protest against the apartheid legislation introduced by the National Party Government, elected to office in 1948. The stay-

away's built upon a tradition of resistance going back to the 1920's and were particularly effective in the 1940's when the organisational strength of the Council of Non-European Trades Unions (CNETU), which claimed 119 affiliates and 158,000 members in 1945 (Harsch, 1980, 218), was at its peak. Equally, more conventional strike action - first prevalent on the gold mines in 1901-2 - reached a new peak during the Second World War: 304 strikes involving 58,000 blacks took place between 1939 and 1945 even in the face of legislation outlawing strike activity (Magubane, 1983, 41). Furthermore, in 1946, black workers staged their largest strike when 75,000 gold miners walked out on the Reef.

By the early 1950's, however, CNETU was in decline following the collapse of the mineworkers strike and the promulgation of the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act which effectively silenced its leadership (Lodge, 1983, 17-20). Membership of black trade unions fell to 38,000 in 1950 (Magubane, 1983, 46). Furthermore, in the wake of a series of stay-away's between 1950 and 1952, the government passed a number of wide-ranging laws affecting both the control and organisation of labour. In particular, the 1953 Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act denied Africans union recognition and prohibited strikes, while the 1956 Industrial Conciliation Act 28 excluded Africans from the legal definition of 'employees' (see Marsh, 1982, 50).

Faced with the requirements of the 1953 Act, the South African Trades and Labour Council (SAT&LC), by then the largest body of registered

and unregistered unions, split into two factions. One section, which subsequently formed the Trade Unions Council of South Africa (TUCSA), decided to follow the recommendations of the Act and exclude black workers from its affiliates. An alternative conciliation machinery was then set up on their behalf consisting of works committees under management guidance. The other section voted to reject the proposals and in 1955 the South African Council of Trades Unions (SACTU), representing twelve unions (8 African, 3 'Coloured' and 1 White), was created out of this group.

SACTU's growth was remarkable. Emerging from the split with SAT&LC with 12 affiliates and 20,000 members, SACTU claimed to represent 53,000 workers in 51 unions by 1961 (Piper, 1984, 10). SACTU also organised some 569 strikes between 1955 and 1961, the majority involving black workers (Lodge, 1983, 193). This rise to prominence is all the more remarkable given, on the one hand, the overwhelming dominance of transitory migrant labour in the urban industrial economy at that time, and the steady increase in the level of state intervention in the field of labour relations on the other (see Lambert, 1983).

SACTU was also interesting for the very clear position it immediately assumed on the issue of political involvement. Like CNETU, SACTU was "allied politically with the ANC and insisted on the inseparability of the industrial and political struggles" (de Clerq, 1979, 72; see also, Bonner, 1980 and Luckhardt and Wall, 1980). Thus, "from its inception, SACTU recognised that... to obtain a real transformation in the position of black workers would inevitably involve conflict with

the state" (Lodge, 1983, 190). As a result, SACTU was prominently involved in the Alexandra Township bus boycott of 1957 and in calls for general stay-aways in 1958 and 1961 aimed primarily at the state. However, wide ranging 'security' legislation was introduced in the late 1950's and early 1960's to clamp down on black activists and popular organisations. The ANC was banned in 1961 and many of its leaders imprisoned while SACTU officials were arrested and convicted on insurgency charges under the 1962 Sabotage Act. Moreover, between 1960 and 1966 160 SACTU officials were banned for taking part in SACTU and other trade union activities (Magubane, 1983, 46). By 1963, then, weakened by detentions, bannings and general harassment, SACTU was forced into exile.

2.2.2 Second phase : 1964 - 1972 The state's campaign of repression ushered in a second phase notable for the limited activity by oppressed groups against the state and capital in South Africa. As Hemson (1978, 19) notes, "these years were a period of setback for the political resistance, marked by drawn out political trials and long prison sentences for the leadership. Many working class militants left the country and joined the military wing of the ANC, and intense pressure drove the SACTU unions underground". The effect of state repression is clearly evident in the reduction of strike action during the 1960's. This limited protest at the point of production is especially significant given, on the one hand, the rapid expansion of industrial capitalism and accelerated proletarianisation during this period (Bloch, 1981; Innes, 1983a; Nattrass, 1981), and on the other hand, the rise in black unemployment (Simkins, 1978) and the decline

in black wages relative to those of whites.²

2.2.3 Third phase : 1973 - 1978 This period of acquiescence came to an end in the early 1970's when a spate of strikes provided the impetus for the emergence of a new wave of independent unions (see, Bonner, 1980; Hirson, 1979; Joakimidis and Sitas, 1978; 1979). During the 1960's, an average of 2,000 workers went on strike each year. The early 1970's witnessed a slight rise in these figures with six strikes and 5,000 strikers in 1972, but in the first three months of 1973 alone 160 strikes involving 61,000 workers were called. These were concentrated mainly in Durban but they spread to East London and the east Rand later (Lodge, 1983, 326). The general impulses for these strikes probably lay in rising unemployment due to increasing capital intensity in the manufacturing sector (Nattrass and Brown, 1977) and in the demands placed upon workers for increased productivity at a time when the real value of wages was declining (Saul and Gelb, 1981; Williams, 1977).

As Lodge (1983, 327) notes: "their scale, spontaneous character and degree of success made these strikes unique in South Africa's labour history". Workers avoided all contact with formally constituted conciliation bodies and relied not on negotiation but on brief but intense body blows to management. Their concern was almost exclusively with wages. For instance, 88% of the strikes in our sample for 1974 were called over wage disputes (see also, Joakimidis and Sitas, 1978). However, it soon became clear that spontaneous strikes and the gains enforced by them could not be sustained on a national basis without solid organisational structures on the shop-

floor. Hence, in marked contrast to CNETU in the 1940's and SACTU in the 1950's, the new unions which formed after 1973 were organised and constituted bottom-up, factory by factory (de Clerq, 1979, 74). Their main concern, then, was to represent workers democratically, not to engage the state on overtly political issues (Hirson, 1979, 133-143; Hemson, 1978; 18-26).

The state's initial response to these developments was to push through the Bantu Labour Regulation Act in 1973 which provided for 'liason committees' under half management/half worker control to represent black workers under the TUCSA umbrella. This was immediately rejected by the new unions which continued to operate outside the legislative framework. However, in the wake of the Soweto uprising in 1976 many union leaders found themselves banned or detained and subject to continual harassment. Police intervention in labour disputes also intensified and strike action decreased (Bonner, 1983, 16; Joakimidis and Sitas, 1979; Lambert and Lambert, 1983, 220). Substantial wage increases conceded by employers in all sectors of the economy after 1973 also affected the level of strike action (Hemson, 1978, 20).

2.2.4 Fourth phase : 1979 - 1984 In the face of post-Soweto repression most unions adopted a defensive posture but this proved to be a useful period of consolidation. The newly developed strength of the independent unions was therefore much in evidence during the strikes of 1980 and after, particularly in 1982 when the number of strikers was as high as 13% of the black labour force in the manufacturing sector (130,000 workers according to Bendix, 1984, 35).

This increased level of strike activity reflects not only the mobilisation of the working class (in 1976, 75,000 Africans were enrolled in unions but by 1981 this had increased to 220,000, 150,000 of whom were represented by independent unions; Dekker, 1983, 65), but also more permanent gains in the continued growth of the independent union movement with larger groupings having stabilised their memberships and developed new democratic structures. Three of these groupings merit discussion here (for useful overviews, see Bonner, 1983 and McShane, Plaut and Ward, 1984).

The first of these groups formed the Confederation of Unions of South African (CUSA) in 1980. The general characteristic of these unions at that time was a heavy emphasis on consultation with management and a concern with the legality of industrial action. Subsequently, this position was modified. In addition, CUSA has identified with facets of Black Consciousness (BC) ideology, stressing its commitment to black leadership of affiliated unions. At the time of writing, CUSA represents 11 unions. A second group emerged from an alliance between two organisations formed in 1973, the Trade Union Advisory and Co-ordinating Council (TUACC) established in Durban and the Industrial Aid Society set up in the Witwatersrand. These unions aimed at gaining recognition employer by employer through solid mobilisation on the shop-floor. A shop steward system, based in part on the British model, was drafted into their constitutions, the leadership insisting on democratic representation. TUACC and a number of other unions subsequently united to form the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) in 1979 (Bonner, 1980, 188) which quickly developed into the largest and best organised trade union grouping for Africans

(Lodge, 1983, 347). FOSATU has focussed its attentions on resolving industrial disputes and earning recognition from employers, encouraging its affiliates - currently numbering 9 - to concentrate on organisational issues (Passmore, 1981). On the other hand, FOSATU's political standing is accorded a low profile, although its rejection of CUSA's BC ideology is clearly evident. A third group of unaffiliated unions - the so-called 'community unions' - are distinguished by their positions on several issues. In particular, these unions have assumed a more militant posture on community involvement in labour disputes (through consumer boycotts, for example) and on worker participation in political activism outside the factory gates.

To return to the question of strike activity, though, it is apparent that the mobilisation of workers in the new unions has, as Lambert and Lambert (1983, 218) argue, provided a "solid, now permanent basis from which there has surged a persistent energy manifesting itself in strike action". An analysis of the 1982 strikes clearly reflects worker concern with organising themselves, many strikes being called for union recognition and over unity issues such as dismissal of fellow workers.³ Another indication of the increasing intensity of strikes and the superior worker organisation of the 1980's is found in the increasing number of work-days lost to the production process through industrial action. The mean duration of strikes in 1974, for instance, was 3.9 worker days compared to 10.2 in 1982. Also of interest in 1982 were the strikes which occurred in sectors of the economy which, while prone to intense but infrequent spontaneous

disputes, have been traditionally difficult to organise. For example, 30,000 workers on eight mines struck over low pay increases in July 1982 inviting massive reprisals from the police and employers (Massey, David 1983, 444-447).

The momentum waned slightly in 1983, however. Department of Manpower figures suggest that the number of strikes fell from 394 in 1982 to 336 in 1983, with the number of workers involved dropping proportionately more, from 141,571 to 60,332 (Howe, 1984b, 4-5). A similar trend is indicated by Bendix (1984, 35) although her figures of 43,421 strikers and 190 strikes in 1983 differ considerably from those issued by the government. Hence, notwithstanding the fact that at least one independent monitor suggests that the number of strikes had actually increased (to 396) in 1983 (see Sunday Times, 1984a), and that analysis of strike triggers demonstrates that wider organisational issues continue to assume more importance than wages disputes,⁴ Bendix (1984, 39) argues that "on the whole, labour action during 1983 lacked the direction, drive and concentration which was a marked feature of strike action in, particularly early, 1982".

Yet, whereas Howe (1984b, 4) suggests that "these developments may be attributed to the initial effects of recessionary conditions in 1983, specifically the latent threat of retrenchment and unemployment", the deepening recession in 1984 has not been accompanied by the expected decline in strike activity. On the contrary, 'official' figures indicate that the number of strikes in 1984 stood at 249 by August, with the number of workers involved rising to 60,000 (Rand Daily Mail, 1984). Similarly, the number of man-days lost in 1984 through labour

action was estimated at 300,000 by June (compared to 124,000 in 1983 and 365,000 in 1982), and a record 500,000 at the end of the year (Financial Mail, 1984a; Sunday Tribune, 1984). Furthermore, 1984 has been marked by several very large strikes. For example, more than 60,000 black miners refused to go on shift in September in support of a 25% wage demand - their first legal strike (for details see, Obery, 1984a and van Niekerk, 1984). Equally significant was the involvement of FOSATU, CUSA and other unions in the November two-day stay-away in the Vaal Triangle and East Rand in which between 300,000 and 800,000 workers were involved (see Financial Mail, 1984e).

Hence, in sharp contrast to the oft-made prediction that the deepening recession - threatening further retrenchments in all industrial sectors - would inhibit labour action in 1984, Howe now remarks that "the upswing in strike frequency since mid-1983, particularly over wage-related issues, belies such an interpretation. It indicates that in the long term, recessionary conditions have anything but an inhibiting impact" (Financial Mail, 1984c, 51). In consequence, then, as union membership increases and as unions continue to consolidate their organisational structures, labour disputes are now expected to intensify in 1985 in response to inflationary pressure on wages and accelerating unemployment (see Sunday Times, 1984c; Sunday Tribune, 1984).

3 The geography of strikes in the manufacturing sector : 1974 - 1983

These quantitative and qualitative changes in strike activity at a

national level disguise important regional variations. Two geographical differences are noticeable. First, there is an enormous disparity in strike activity between rural and urban places. During the period 1974 to 1983, whereas over 97% of all manufacturing strikers were employed in metropolitan areas, these areas accounted for less than 80% of all manufacturing jobs over this period. Second, the relationship between the intensity of strike action in the manufacturing sector and the numbers employed in manufacturing for the individual metropolitan areas is far from linear. Distinct regional differences are evident; in particular the Durban/Pietermaritzburg (DBN/PMB) and Port Elizabeth/East London (PE/EL) areas stand out as 'high strike' regions (see Figure 2). Over the past decade, both have had strike activity rates (obtained through standardising for the number of manufacturing workers in each region) far in excess of those found in the Pretoria/Witwatersrand/Vereeniging (PWV) complex and Cape Town (CT).

These spatial imbalances obtain not only for the number of strikers in each area but also for the average size of strikes. On the whole, the average number of workers involved in each strike in the DBN/PMB and PE/EL areas was much larger than elsewhere.⁵ Finally, there is evidence, albeit slightly weaker, for a spatial/sectoral bias in strike action over this period (Table 1). In particular, one notes the importance of strike action in the Durban and East London textile and clothing industries especially in 1974 and in the Port Elizabeth motor vehicle multinationals in 1982.

4 Capital accumulation and the regional basis of strike activity

Three related aspects of the spatial organisation of capitalism may be suggested as reasons for the geographical variability of strike action in South Africa. These are: (i) the concentration of manufacturing in a small number of metropolitan centres, (ii) the emergence and intensification of a spatial/sectoral division of labour, and (iii) the increasing control of monopoly capital over accumulation.⁶

In the first place, the proportion of all manufacturing in South Africa undertaken within the major metropolitan areas (PWV, PE, DBN, CT) has increased substantially in the post-war period - from 59.4% in 1946 and 63.4% in 1967/68 to 81.3% in 1979 (calculated from South Africa 1954; 1974; 1984). This trend towards metropolitan concentration (see Bloch, 1981 and du Plessis, 1978) has continued in spite of the governments' industrial decentralisation programme (Rogerson, 1982a) and has been heavily influenced by the locational strategies of multinational corporations (Rogerson, 1981, 1982b, 1982c).

Second, the location of manufacturing employment in the post-War period exhibits a marked shift towards regional specialization and the emergence and entrenchment of a spatial/sectoral division of labour (see Harvey, 1974; Massey, Doreen 1978; Holland, 1976, 200-207). This is demonstrated by calculating coefficients of concentration for the major manufacturing sub-sectors in South Africa (those accounting for 5% or more of total manufacturing employment) for the census years 1946, 1967/68, 1972, 1976 and 1979 (Table 2). This shows that whilst

some industries have become more dispersed, the textiles, clothing, motor, machinery and the raw-material bound iron and steel sub-sectors exhibit relatively high levels of concentration, the first three of these reflecting small increase in concentration over the 12 year period between 1967 and 1979. Finally, these spatial shifts reflect a general restructuring towards monopoly forms of accumulation (see Innes, 1983a; Bloch, 1981; du Plessis, 1978). All of these have had important implications for working class organisation.

4.1 Metropolitan concentration of manufacturing industry First, the mobilisation of labour has been made somewhat less problematic by its growing concentration in the metropolitan centres in response to the locational policies of industrial capitals and moves towards monopoly conditions in accumulation. Hence, "as capital has become increasingly concentrated and centralised under monopolies, so have the material conditions been laid for a major advance to a historically high level of organisation and strength of the black working class" (Southall, 1984a, 34). Peet (1983, 122-124) makes a similar observation in the case of the United States.

4.2 The spatial/sectoral division of labour Second, a marked shift towards regional specialisation in several industries has provided superior conditions for the mobilisation of workers in associated industrial unions. For instance, the Durban and East London industrial centres have important concentrations of textiles and clothing factories. Whereas only 3.0% of all manufacturing employment is based in East London, for example, it accounted for 12.1% of

employment in textiles in 1979, this one industry providing 32% of all jobs in the area. Similarly, whilst 17% of all manufacturing employment is located in Durban, it accounted for 32.1% and 34.8% of textiles and clothing jobs in 1979. This has had a significant impact upon the strength of the textile and related unions which find themselves able to organise effectively on a regional basis. The National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW), for example, has been particularly prominent in recent years. An equivalent situation exists in the motor industry, the majority of the assembly multinationals having located in the small industrial centre of Port Elizabeth. Although Port Elizabeth accounts for only 6% of all manufacturing employment, 30% of motor assembly jobs are based there, providing nearly one third of all jobs in the area. Significantly, the motor industry has been particularly strike prone since the 1970's (see, Southall, 1984a, 10-15).

On the other hand, while all industries are strongly represented in PWV with significant concentrations of metal manufacturing and machinery factories obtaining, it does not stand out as a 'high strike' region relative to the number employed in the manufacturing sector. Only MAWU - the Metal and Allied Workers' Union - has been consistently active there over the past few years.⁷ In attempting to explain this observation, considerations such as differing union strategies and organisational profiles would be important, but one may also suggest that variations in average firm size and average wages (arising from differences in the forms of production and the centralisation of capital) contribute to imbalances in strike activity.

4.3 Factory size and wages The former hypothesis may be evaluated with reference to Table 3 which indicates average firm sizes for the census years 1972, 1976 and 1979. This shows that textile factories in Durban and East London and motor assembly plants in Port Elizabeth are significantly larger than their competitors elsewhere and most other industries. In 1979, for instance, motor assembly factories in Port Elizabeth were 4.4 times larger than the average for the industry. Equivalent figures for the textile industry in East London and Durban are 3.4 and 1.5.⁸ The motor industry, of course, is dominated by a few multinationals. Hence, Southall (1984a, 16) argues that the fundamental reason why NAAWU (National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union) "has been able to achieve a high level of organisation is that with only a dozen or so major assembly plants within the industry, gaining entry to any one of them has brought access to a substantial workforce".⁹ Accordingly, NAAWU claimed a membership of 18,390 late in 1983 out of an estimated 47,570 workers in motor assembly (Southall, 1984a, 17) which reflects a membership of 39% of the workforce, discounting the contributions of the smaller unions active in the industry. Similarly, several large manufacturers monopolise the textile industries. The Frame Group, for example, employs 33,000 out of around 115,000 in the industry, with most of their factories concentrated in and around Durban. In contrast, metal and machinery manufacture is characterised by relatively small firms. Consequently, whereas MAWU claims a membership of 35,000 this is dispersed throughout 180 factories (Southall, 1984a, 17), and compares with a potential membership of some 200,000 to 300,000.

Some assessment of the latter hypothesis may be obtained from Table 4 which documents average wages for blacks in the last two census years. This indicates that the worst paying industries, besides food, are textiles and clothing. The chronically low wages in the clothing industry, where the majority of workers are women, is especially stressed by the figures (see Southall, 1983: 18-20 and WIP, 1982). Moreover, the ratio between white and black wages (calculated for 1979 in the table) is highest in these two industries. These factors will clearly have an important impact upon union activism in Durban and East London where textiles and clothing manufacturing is particularly concentrated. Furthermore, wages in East London fall consistently below the national average in all industries including textiles, whilst the average ratio between white and black wages is the highest in the country. This may further contribute to worker militancy in that area. In contrast, machinery and metal workers appear to be relatively well paid, while the racial wage ratios are lowest in these two industries.

4.4 Industrial decentralisation Also relevant to a discussion of spatial variations in trade union activity is industrial decentralisation which has been government policy since the 1950's (see Maasdorp, 1982 and Rogerson, 1982a). Although the programme has encountered little success in reversing the trend towards the centralisation of industrial production, there has been a significant increase in industrial relocations to decentralised areas in the past two years. Accordingly, the proportion of manufacturing employment located in declared decentralised areas has risen considerably since

the 1970's, rising from 12.3% and 12.9% in 1972 and 1978 to 19.3% in 1984 (Wellings and Black, 1984, 18). Obviously the provision of incentives in decentralised growth points - substantially improved in 1982 - has been central to this process. Hence, it may be correct to argue that decentralisation is essentially an artificial process without economic rationale and is therefore unlikely to seriously challenge metropolitan dominance in industrial production.

Alternatively, it has been suggested that the present pattern of decentralisation contains a more or less 'spontaneous' component which is responsive to differences in labour costs between metropolitan and peripheral areas. Notwithstanding problems associated with the shortage of skilled labour, poor productivity and high turnover, a series of recent studies have shown that the abundance of super-cheap labour in non-metropolitan areas is a major stimulus to decentralisation, ranked a close second to incentives (Wellings and Black, 1984, 24-27). As a result, Bell (1983) has argued that a re-organisation of the regional division of labour may be emerging to offset the declining international competitiveness of South African industry. Specifically, this involves the relocation of labour intensive and highly deskilled forms of production to peripheral areas where labour costs are substantially lower, a form of decentralisation that could be sustained if incentives were gradually reduced or phased out altogether.

Since it is difficult to disaggregate the effects of incentives from other imperatives towards decentralisation, the latter thesis is not

easy to substantiate. At present, 'spontaneous' decentralisation - if it really exists - would appear to be limited to a relatively small number of growth points with certain positional, infrastructural and agglomeration advantages, located mostly on the metropolitan peripheries. On the other hand, if such a re-organisation of industrial production does develop on a major scale it will have serious implications for the trade unions who will then have to mobilise workers in a far greater number of manufacturing centres. Simultaneously, the advantages for trade union organisation afforded by the concentration of industry in four or five metropolitan centres will be lost. More serious, though, will be the problems of operating in the bantustans if it emerges that a large proportion of industrial relocations are directed towards these areas.

Wages range from 30-50% of their metropolitan equivalents in bantustan industries. Essentially, this results from differences in the supply of labour (arising from 'influx control' policy which re-directs 'surplus' labour from the cities to the bantustans) but the concentration of trade union activity in the metropolitan areas has also been instrumental in widening wage disparities. Whilst unions have made substantial advances in the major industrial centres, those that have attempted to mobilise workers within the bantustans have been frustrated by highly conservative managements, unsympathetic local authorities and particularly repressive labour relations legislation. As Whiteside (1984) and Haysom and Khoza (1984) demonstrate, trade unions have virtually no means of operating legally in any of the bantustans. Transkei and Venda for instance, have passed their own Industrial Conciliation Acts which - in ironic

contrast to the South African equivalent - make no provision for trade unions or employer organisations. In some cases, minimum wage rates have been introduced to substitute for collective bargaining, while archaic employment regulations allow employers to enforce a longer working week and avoid metropolitan health and safety norms (see Lawyer, 1983 and Whiteside, 1984). In addition, direct state repression has been employed in many instances to curb union activities. The banning of SAAWU (South African Allied Workers' Union) in the Ciskei is one example of this (Green and Hirsch, 1982).

The prospects for union activity in bantustan industries are difficult to assess. Doubtless, the independent unions will become more active in the bantustans and attempt to forge recognition agreements and to bargain with individual employers independently of the legislative framework. In August 1983, for example, although wage determinations secured in metropolitan areas have been held not to apply to bantustan industries, MAWU managed to reach an agreement over wage increases with one manufacturer covering all of its factories including one in KwaZulu (see Wellings and Black, 1984, 28). On the other hand, though, given their interests in attracting industrial investment, there seems little likelihood that the more viciously repressive regimes such as those in Ciskei and Transkei will relax their control over trade union activities. Moreover, it is extremely unlikely that trade unions will be successful in raising bantustan wages to metropolitan levels given a continuation of the system that concentrates surplus labour in the impoverished reserves.

4.5 Summary Analysis of the period 1974 to 1983 suggests that the recent surge in, and the regional variations of, strike activity in the manufacturing sector are related at least partially to; (i) the centralisation and concentration of capital in metropolitan areas, (ii) the spatial/sectoral division of labour, and (iii) wage levels and factory sizes in particular industries. However, whilst it is clear that the changing nature of South African capitalism has been favourable for labour organisation in some respects, its negative implications should be equally stressed. For one thing, the centralisation and concentration of capital has increased the already high level of unemployment (Simkins, 1982) - allowing management to further threaten recalcitrant workers with replacement - and the level of inflation thereby eroding the gains made by union action. Moreover, under monopoly or near-monopoly conditions, capital is better placed to weather any dispute or strike. Indeed, in 1983 and 1984 there were abundant signs that certain employers, having recovered from the shock they had suffered in 1982, were once again resorting to strong-arm strategies. Finally, Bonner (1983, 30-31) notes that the recent rapid growth of union membership and strike activity has outstripped the unions' present organisational capacities and the current stretching of resources is actually counter-productive to sound union development. Similarly, the growing concentration of workers in large factories has presented problems for the formation of genuinely democratic structures in shop-floor organisation. Hence, Southall (1984a, 36) cautions that "... although monopoly capitalism may be providing conditions for the more effective organisation of the black working class, there can be no mechanical assumption that this, in turn, will lead necessarily forward to a triumphant political

assault on the apartheid state, for that will depend as much upon the adoption of appropriate strategies by the emergent unions, their success in forging an organic unity and the ability of the working class to develop suitable class alliances".

5 Conclusions: other determinants of strike action in South Africa

Contrary to claims that black workers will not be allowed to mount a serious challenge to the apartheid state and that ultimately "... only an underground struggle stands any chance" (Plaut, 1984, 118) of achieving liberation, the independent union movement has made remarkable advances in recent years. Union membership now stands at about 550,000 (1984) - out of an estimated 2.7 million strong black labour force - compared to 16,000 in 1969. Equally, the unions' organisational structures have developed rapidly, becoming less vulnerable to harassment by the management and the government, and better prepared to battle for their members. Accordingly, labour action - now a consistent rather than sporadic factor - has forced both capital and the state to make significant concessions on organisational issues and conditions for workers. Arguably, then, the re-emergence of independent black union power comprises one of the most important developments in the contemporary struggle against racial capitalism. It should, therefore, become a major focus of research for geographers interested in strategic questions pertaining to the working class experience in South Africa. A cautionary note, however, is appropriate at this juncture for it is important that research in this area is pursued critically and that the

understandable but dangerous tendency to place too much emphasis on the unions' successes (and hence to describe it as an 'unbound Prometheus', for example) and too little on its problems (both as a union movement and as a factor in the liberation struggle) is thereby avoided. Similarly, close attention should be paid to other determinants of strike action lest the geographical dimension is accorded undue importance. It may be useful, then, to consider here some of the other factors that have an important influence on worker militancy in South Africa.

5.1 Levels of mobilisation and migrancy Although there have been many 'spontaneous' strikes in South Africa, strike action is largely contingent upon union-directed mobilisation of the labour force. But despite their recent growth the independent unions represent only 20% of black workers in the country (Dekker, 1983, 65). Furthermore, as described here, union activity is heavily concentrated in the metropolitan centres and certain industries. Conversely, particular sectors of the economy - notably mining and agriculture - have so far proved very difficult to organise for long-term as opposed to spontaneous action, and any industry dominated by migrant labour will always present problems for labour mobilisation. Notwithstanding a growing preference in several industrial sectors for a more skilled and residentially stable workforce, long-term migrants still constitute the backbone of the labour force in South Africa (see Southall, 1984b, 7-19 for a detailed profile). In 1984, about 52% of African workers employed in 'white' urban areas were migrants compared to 28% commuters and 20% 'urban insiders'.⁹

Migrants have conventionally been portrayed as reluctant trade unionists for several reasons. Obligated to return frequently to their rural 'homes' and live in hostels or compounds both socially and spatially distanced from the township communities, migrants are deliberately cut off from 'urban insiders' and their more radical tradition of political resistance. Moreover, whereas migrants do acquire an awareness of exploitation at the point of production common to all workers, their participation in labour action has much more serious implications. Unlike 'urban insiders', for example, the loss of a job is followed by deportation to one of the impoverished bantustans in which alternative wage-earning opportunities are almost non-existent and from which the chances of re-employment are near zero. Equally, being "dependent upon poverty wages for their subsistence, there is little material basis for migrants to sustain a withdrawal of labour" (Southall, 1984b, 31). So, although the state has now conceded the right of migrants to join trade unions, and while migrants have not been entirely acquiescent in labour disputes, it is still evident that the unionisation of the workforce is least advanced where migrants are particularly marginalised. On the other hand, where migrants are heavily concentrated - notably in the mining industry - rather than dispersed throughout different industries and different factories, union representation and labour action is increasing (see Southall, 1984b for further discussion).

5.2 The recession Although 1984 was marked by a significant increase in strike action over 1983 - contrary to the expectations of most observers - it is still clear that the unions have been hard hit by

the deepening recession. The recession is now beginning to bite very hard in South Africa, particularly in the manufacturing sector in which total employment fell 5.2% between 1982 and July 1984 against 1.9% in all sectors excluding agriculture (calculated from Central Statistical Services, 1984, 3). With their largely unskilled memberships black South African unions are particularly vulnerable to retrenchments during recessionary periods and to increases in the level of automation that usually follow. Furthermore, unskilled workers are relatively cheap to replace should they decide to strike : there is no shortage of potential scabs among the unemployed. As Lodge (1983, 350) notes, "the unions' efforts to organise the unemployed so as to inhibit the dismissal and replacement of workers are a recognition of this weakness".

Hence, whereas FOSATU claims to have "achieved a lot, mainly in reducing the number of workers who were retrenched" during the recent downswing, it also notes that "the recession has been a problem and there have been fewer signs of worker militancy because workers are still rebuilding their strategies and working out the best tactics for the situation" (Leadership SA, 1984, 9 & 11). Less equivocally, Obery (1984b, 74) points out that at least one union (MAWU) was "not in a position to stop retrenchments per se, and while certain gains were made in the form of negotiating retrenchment procedures with employers, the unions remained essentially in a defensive position". On the other hand, given the levels of representation and organisational sophistication that have now been achieved in many unions they "should be able to weather the recession and have a firm platform from which to sally forth when conditions improve" (Bonner,

1983, 35).

5.3 Skill levels Innes (1983b, 182) suggests that increasing capital intensity, by creating the need for a larger cadre of skilled workers, has strengthened the bargaining power of this fraction of the workforce since their replacement is more costly for capital. Hence, while it is difficult to assess genuine black advancement in industry given the contradictory forces impelling deracialisation and deskilling of the production process, "a growing shortage of skilled workers and the upward mobility of blacks into skilled positions vacated by whites" may be a major thrust behind developing union power in at least a few industries such as motor assembly (Southall, 1984a, 22).

5.4 Local factors In accounting for strike activity at any particular moment one should be careful not to ignore important local factors. For example, although the iron and steel sector is highly concentrated with very large plants characterising the industry (see Tables 3 and 4) it has been little affected by strike action to date : government involvement in management, and the facts that the largest plants are located outside the metropolitan centres and that the workforce is dominated by migrants are some of the factors responsible for this. In contrast, the Frame Group's long standing refusal to recognise NUTW or other unions and implement wage increases in line with the rest of the industry has had a significant impact upon the mobilisation of textile workers in the Durban area (see Financial Mail, 1984b; 1984d), while international pressure on the motor

multinationals has helped unions to enforce their demands in that industry. Similarly, developments and incidents taking place outside the factory gates which affect workers purchasing power, such as rent hikes and increases in the cost of commuting, may contribute to a decision to strike. The 1973 Durban strikes, for example, would be difficult to explain without reference to several unrelated yet significant factors specific to Durban (see Lodge, 1983, 327 and Institute for Industrial Education, 1976). Finally, the activities and personalities of individual union leaders will be important variables in any situation, just as the long and intense transition of political resistance in the eastern Cape (where SACTU and the BC-movement, for example, were at their strongest) has contributed to worker militancy in Port Elizabeth and East London.

5.5 State and employer reaction to worker militancy Repression and intimidation have always been important constituents of state strategy in response to union organisation in South Africa. Hence, for all the signs of an emerging maturity in South African labour relations there is little reason to expect state repression to diminish, particularly if labour action is seen to be politically directed. The detentions of Chris Dlamini, President of FOSATU, Piroshaw Camay General Secretary of CUSA, and eleven other trade union leaders following the Transvaal stay-away in November were indicative of government policy in this respect. At the same time, just as some industrialists have attempted to escape union demands by redirecting investments to decentralised areas, the state has sought to fragment workers opposition through the relocation of labour. Following the recommendations of the 1979 Riekert Commission (SALB, 1979a), influx

control has been more vigorously pursued to reduce the present concentration of the marginalised proletariat in the metropolitan centres, transfer 'surplus' labour to the bantustans, and thereby undermine the advantages afforded to worker mobilisation by the metropolitan concentration of black workers (Belcher, 1979; Saul and Gelb, 1981, 63-83).

Similarly, most employers still appear to favour a strong-arm approach to the resolution of industrial disputes - the sacking of 6,500 SASOL workers after the stay-away being a recent example - and a variety of strategies such as retrenchment have been deployed to rid factories of militant workers (Leadership SA, 9; Southall, 1984a, 21). Moreover, the concessions so far granted by the state following the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1979 (see Dekker, 1983, 76-80; SALB, 1979b) and the recognition agreements forged between unions and employers do not, by any stretch of the imagination, amount to a normalisation of industrial relations by Western standards.

5.6 Union strategy The independent unions are sharply divided on several question of strategy, and this has a significant effect on the intensity of strike action and the forms it assumes. For example, the unions adopted quite different positions on whether or not to comply with the requirements for registration under the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1979, and a long and acrimonious debate then followed (see Fine, de Clerq and Innes, 1981; WIP, 1983). Similarly, several of the unions that have recently experimented with 'legal' strike action (NUTW, MAWU and the mineworkers' union, for example)

have found that the benefits of pursuing this strategy have been considerably overstated and that 'illegal' action may still be preferable in most cases (Sunday Times, 1984b). More importantly, it is clear that the unions are far from consensus over what role they should play in the broader liberation struggle.

CUSA, for instance, has recently affiliated to both the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the more radical BC-oriented National Forum (see SALB, 1983a). In contrast, whilst FOSATU has taken sides on overtly political issues (such as the white constitutional referendum in 1983 and the 'Coloured' and Indian elections in 1984), participated in national stay-aways (Neil Aggett day in 1982 and November 1984), and organised consumer boycotts (against Colgate Ltd in 1981 for example), it has so far avoided direct affiliation to political bodies like the UDF and hesitated to involve workers in forms of resistance beyond the shop floor. In sum, FOSATU contends that identification with political forces is potentially a divisive factor at this juncture and inconsistent with its aim of establishing an independent workers' movement (Leadership SA, 1984, 10). On the other hand, although it is doubtful whether workers are as yet sufficiently organised and motivated to engage consistently and effectively in political actions outside the factory gates (Schlemmer, Geerdts and von Schalkwyk, 1984), the 'community unions' have argued that since workers are denied access to legitimate political channels, they should be encouraged to express their political grievances and aspirations through their unions (see Mabasa, 1984) and forge alliances with other progressive organisations.

Disagreements over this issue have scored deep rifts in the union movement (see Davies and O'Heara, 1984). Undoubtedly, it has been a major factor underpinning the failure of unity moves since 1981 (SALB, 1983b), and was at least partly responsible for the split in MAWU in July 1984 leading to the formation of a rival union (see Obery and Swilling, 1984, 8-9; Swilling, 1984, 115). There may, however, be some light at the end of the tunnel. FOSATU's and CUSA's endorsement of the Transvaal stay-away in November 1984 (also supported by many political organisations including the UDF) has further blurred the distinction between political and industrial unionism and decreased the distance between the two federations. Hence, the ANC leader Oliver Tambo may be right to assert that the "struggle against racial oppression is merging with the class struggle of the proletariat against capitalist exploitation" (Magubane, 1983, 53). In addition, following a meeting in August 1984, FOSATU, CUSA and four other unions have reached agreement over the establishment of a new federation. The assimilation of 24 unions representing nearly 300,000 workers under one umbrella will be a major step forward for the union movement in 1985. The divisions that remain, though, could well prove to be the union movement's single major handicap in the struggle ahead.

List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
BC	Black Consciousness
CNETU	Council of Non-European Trades Unions
CUSA	Confederation of Unions of South Africa
DBN, PMB, PE, EL, PWV, CT	The Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth, East London, Pretoria-Witwatersrand- Vereeniging, and Cape Town metropolitan centres
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
MAWU	Metal and Allied Workers' Union
NAAWU	National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union
NUTW	National Union of Textile Workers
SAAWU	South African Allied Workers' Union
SACTU	South African Council of Trades Unions
SALB	South African Labour Bulletin
SASOL	South African Coal, Oil and Gas Corporation (translation)
SAT&LC	South African Trades and Labour Council
TUACC	Trade Union Advisory and Co-ordinating Council
TUCSA	Trade Unions Council of South Africa
UDF	United Democratic Front
WIP	Work in Progress

Table 1. The spatial/sectoral basis of strikes in the manufacturing sector: 1974, 1982, 1983¹

Metropolitan Area	Textiles and Clothing			Motor			Other manufacturing sub-sectors		
	1974	1982	1983	1974	1982	1983	1974	1982	1983
DBN/PMB	27.8	33.3	24.1	11.1	0.0	3.7	61.1	66.7	72.2
PWV	0.0	13.4	3.7	0.0	3.4	9.8	100.0	83.2	86.5
PE/EL	27.3	3.0	0.0	4.5	66.7	55.6	68.2	30.3	44.4
CT	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
OTHER	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	100.0	84.4	100.0
South Africa as a whole:									
Strikes	18.0	12.5	7.7	4.9	11.4	10.7	77.1	76.1	81.6
Workforce	13.4	21.0	21.4	4.3	9.4	9.8	82.3	69.6	68.8

Note: Percentages add across the rows (i.e. regions) for each time period.

1: 1974, 1982 and 1983 were the only years in the period 1974-1983 for which our strike records were sufficiently detailed to construct acceptable breakdowns by sector and region.

Source: Authors' strike records (see Figure 1).

Table 2. The spatial concentration of manufacturing in South Africa: 1946-1979.

Manufacturing sub-sector	Index of Concentration ¹				
	1946	1967/68	1972	1976	1979
Food	0.18	0.37	0.35	0.29	0.30
Textiles	0.28	0.44	0.46	0.50	0.47
Clothing	0.12 ²	0.41 ²	0.52	0.50	0.52
Chemicals	0.33	0.31	0.21	0.20	0.16
Non-metallic	0.22	0.27	0.30	0.29	0.11
Iron and Steel	*	0.57	0.55	0.57	0.53
Metal Manufacturing	0.25	0.36	0.30	0.30	0.29
Machinery	0.07 ³	0.59	0.38	0.38	0.40
Elect. Machinery		0.48	0.44	0.37	0.35
Motor	*	0.28 ⁴	0.49	0.45	0.45

1: For technique, see Hammond R, McCullagh P S, 1974 **Quantitative techniques in geography** (Clarendon, Oxford) pp. 58-60.

2: Includes footwear.

3: Machinery and electrical machinery classified together.

4: Includes transport industries.

* Not listed

Source: calculated from South Africa (1954; 1974; 1977; 1979; 1984).

Table 3. Average firm size by metropolitan region: 1972 and 1979

Manufacturing sub-sector		CT	PE	EL	DBN	PWV	All South Africa
Food	1972	108.1	157.4	122.9	156.3	89.3	89.2
	1979	89.6	148.6	109.7	170.9	90.8	122.6
Textiles	1972	130.3	295.3	482.7	260.9	92.5	180.3
	1979	135.6	321.8	558.7	245.3	58.0	164.8
Clothing	1972	117.7	78.5	24.7	95.6	47.9	76.9
	1979	135.4	91.3	39.7	99.9	46.1	86.2
Chemicals	1972	72.3	200.7	94.8	137.4	103.7	111.4
	1979	66.9	78.7	110.8	120.3	121.3	111.2
Non-metallic	1972	70.4	80.3	52.1	152.1	142.0	103.3
	1979	67.7	142.4	45.7	111.0	92.8	80.3
Iron and Steel	1972	63.1	-	-	-	552.6	553.0
	1979	99.7	-	-	153.6	519.8	486.5
Metal manuf.	1972	59.1	51.6	33.5	69.8	66.1	58.3
	1979	44.4	37.3	22.1	42.9	56.4	48.2
Machinery	1972	36.7	45.7	38.1	58.8	90.2	74.2
	1979	27.9	45.6	35.5	44.3	64.3	55.1
Electrical Machinery	1972	73.3	147.0	241.6	77.6	112.1	104.9
	1979	54.9	116.0	291.6	68.4	93.6	85.6
Motor	1972	47.8	630.7	-	134.6	91.0	108.5
	1979	79.4	411.9	-	85.4	97.3	94.4
All industries	1972	80.5	151.5	96.1	106.7	88.5	89.1
	1979	73.3	128.6	95.2	93.2	76.2	77.8

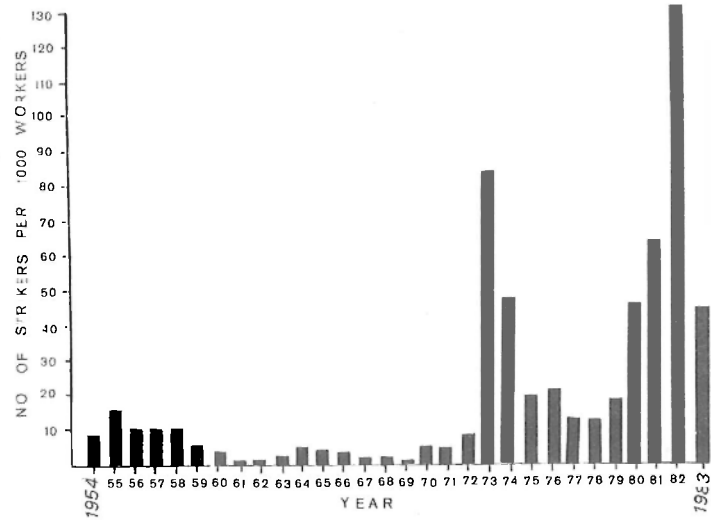
Source: calculated from South Africa (1977; 1984).

Table 4. Average wages for black workers by metropolitan region (1976 and 1979), and average ratio of wages for white workers/black workers (1979).

Manufacturing sub-sector		CT	PE	EL	DBN	PWV	All South Africa
		% of average for the industry					
Food	1976	+16.2	+ 1.4	- 8.4	+24.1	+ 8.2	-20.7
	1979	+10.5	+ 2.9	-14.0	+17.9	+11.1	-16.3
	Ratio	4.0	3.9	4.9	4.5	4.1	4.6
Textiles	1976	+16.9	+ 9.0	-25.9	+ 7.9	+ 7.2	-25.2
	1979	+17.1	+15.6	-35.7	+10.0	+11.5	-19.6
	Ratio	5.1	3.6	6.2	4.6	4.3	5.0
Clothing	1976	+ 4.0	-12.3	-30.7	+ 0.6	+ 9.9	-28.7
	1979	+ 9.8	+ 2.5	- 9.6	- 6.3	+ 5.9	-36.5
	Ratio	6.6	5.9	5.8	7.5	5.3	6.5
Chemicals	1976	- 9.0	+ 0.6	-27.5	+ 9.9	+ 1.3	+14.9
	1979	+ 2.7	-30.2	-12.1	+12.3	- 1.5	+28.1
	Ratio	3.3	4.3	3.2	3.3	3.9	3.8
Non-metallic	1976	+46.1	+16.3	-13.2	+58.2	-15.7	-31.7
	1979	- 7.0	+36.2	-32.0	+61.8	- 6.8	+ 4.9
	Ratio	4.2	2.5	5.0	2.6	4.8	4.2
Iron and Steel	1976	+18.4	-	-	- 3.1	+ 2.6	+20.5
	1979	+27.6	-	-	- 3.0	- 1.2	+20.3
	Ratio	3.6	-	-	3.7	3.9	3.9
Metal manuf.	1976	+12.0	- 4.7	-18.6	+12.0	- 1.8	+18.0
	1979	+ 9.9	- 1.8	-13.3	+12.3	- 1.7	+22.3
	Ratio	2.8	3.0	3.5	3.1	3.8	3.6
Machinery	1976	+21.7	+ 2.7	-35.9	+ 9.5	- 0.7	+30.9
	1979	+29.3	+ 3.1	-17.2	- 0.8	- 0.6	+37.6
	Ratio	2.5	3.4	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.2
Electrical machinery	1976	- 5.4	+ 4.4	-32.3	-18.9	+ 5.3	+22.7
	1979	- 5.9	-13.4	-14.0	-14.0	+ 4.7	+29.5
	Ratio	3.5	3.0	4.0	3.3	3.1	3.2
Motor	1976	+ 8.5	+ 4.6	-	+13.3	- 7.1	+17.4
	1979	+ 6.1	+19.0	-	+ 6.6	-12.5	+11.5
	Ratio	3.3	2.9	-	3.7	3.9	3.5
All industries	1976	+ 2.4	+ 5.6	-32.4	+ 2.7	+11.6	-
	1979	- 0.9	+ 9.1	-29.5	+ 0.8	+12.0	-
	Ratio	4.3	3.4	5.1	4.3	3.8	4.2

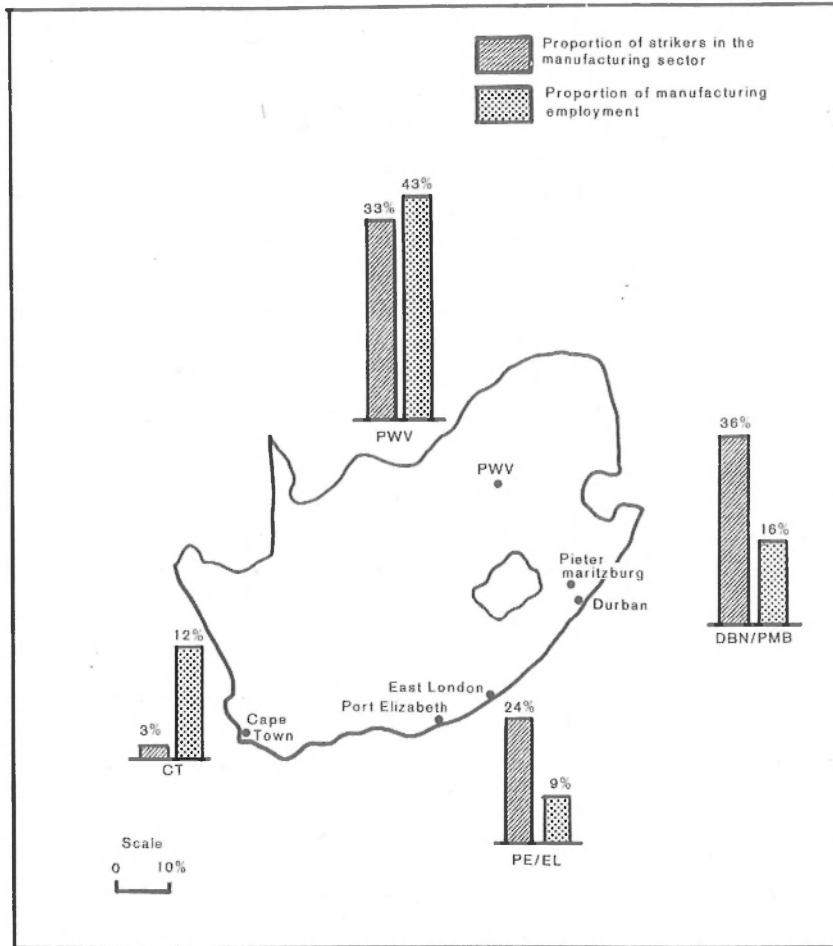
Source: calculated from South Africa (1979; 1984).

Figure 1. Temporal variations in strike action in the manufacturing sector: 1954-1983.



Source: Authors' own strike records drawn from SALB; WIP; South African Institute of Race Relations Survey; South African Statistics, various issues; press reports; labour action news; union records.

Figure 2. Regional variations in strike activity in the manufacturing sector: 1974-1983.



Source: Authors' own strike records (see Figure 1).

Note: Other areas of South Africa (3 percent of strikes and 20 percent of manufacturing workers).

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Notes

1. But see Peet (1983) and Harvey (1982). Similarly, in his review of Massey and Meegan (1982), Beyers (1983, 330-1) complains that whilst they relate job loss to the battle 'between management and labour', they devote relatively little attention to the battle itself and the strategies adopted by capital and labour. However, several analyses of strikes from economic and sociological perspectives are currently available (see, for example, Durcan et al (1983) and Waters (1982).
2. The ratio of average white wages to average black wages increased across all manufacturing sectors between 1965 and 1974; the increase was most marked in textiles and clothing (2.89 to 5.51); calculated from South Africa (1966; 1975).
3. In our 1982 sample of strikes for which full details are 62% were called over wage-related issues (compare 1974 figure of 88%), 4% (recognition), 14% (dismissal of workers), 7% (retrenchment), and 10% (other). Also see, Galin (1981) and Lambert and Lambert (1983, 224).
4. In 1983, a much smaller percentage of strikes than in 1982 were called over wage disputes (32%). 30% were called for recognition and dismissal disputes and many others were called over clear political issues such as the white constitutional referendum in November (Bendix, 1984, 36).
5. The average number of workers involved in strikes in the period 1974-1983 was 378 in CT, 257 in PWV, 635 in DBN/PMB, 1745 in PE/EL and 107 in the rest of South Africa, against a national average of 384.
6. For further discussion of these aspects of capital accumulation see, Stilwell (1982) for Australia; Massey, Doreen (1978; 1983), Massey and Meegan (1982), Morgan (1982) for the United Kingdom; Carney and Lewis (1978) for Europe; and, Harvey (1974; 1982), Peet (1983) and Walker (1978) for the U.S.A.
7. For an analysis of union participation in the 1982 strikes see Lambert and Lambert (1983, 221), and Howe (1984a, Appendix 2) for 1983.
8. The comparatively large size of electrical machinery factories in East London (3.4 times the national average in 1979) is less important considering that these accounted for only 2333 workers in that year, 3.6% of the national total for the industry.
9. Similar observations have been made by Prais (1982) in the cases of Britain and Sweden, and by Murray (1983, 79-80) in the case of Italy. Prais suggests that factories in the United Kingdom with over 2,000 workers are fifty times more vulnerable to strikes than those with less than 100 workers.
10. Calculated from Southall (1984b, 7 & 13). Commuters comprise Africans who live in bantustan settlements situated close to urban industrial centres and commute to work on a daily basis. 'Urban insiders' are defined as those who possess the right to reside in 'white' urban areas in terms of Section 10 of the Bantu Urban Areas (Consolidation) Act of 1945 and its subsequent

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