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UNEMPLOYMENT AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA: SOME INCONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE FROM CAPE TOWN

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CSSR Working Paper No. 24
December 2002

Published by the Centre for Social Science Research
University of Cape Town
2002

Copies of this publication may be obtained from:

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Price in Southern Africa (incl. VAT and postage): R 15.00

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ISBN: 0-7992-2158-9

Designed by: A.Siljeur, Data First Resource Unit

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Unemployment and Distributive Justice in South Africa: Some Inconclusive Evidence From Cape Town

Abstract

The study of attitudes toward distributive justice remains poorly developed in South Africa. We know little about the ways in which old and new social cleavages are actually seen, and hence how they might be transformed into political cleavages. Some preliminary, essentially qualitative data has suggested that there are a number of issues on which the employed and the unemployed hold contrasting attitudes, and that there is a growing perception on the part of the unemployed that they have distinct interests to the employed. The 1993 PSLSD survey suggests that attitudes are influenced by the labour market status of other household members as well as the respondent's own status. Evidence from the 2000 survey of Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain (Cape Town) reveals a picture of concern over inequality, massive support for government spending to counter poverty and inequality, but reduced support when respondents are faced with the prospect of increased taxes. We also found evidence of scepticism around unions and strike action, together with a confusing mix of pro- and anti-business sentiments. But we did not find any clear evidence that labour market status – or the labour market status of other household members – influenced attitudes in a significant way. Our data does not suggest that, in this particular area, there is much likelihood of unemployment becoming the basis of a major political cleavage.

Since 1993 researchers in South Africa have enjoyed an abundance of quantitative data on the extent and patterns of inequality in South Africa.[1] Not only has the design of the population census been improved markedly, but there has been a proliferation of household surveys with large and countrywide samples. We now know a lot about distribution in South Africa (see, *inter alia*, Bhorat *et al.*, 2001; Leibbrandt and Woolard, 2001; May *et al.*, 2000; Seekings, 2000). But how do South Africans see, understand and respond to the unequal distribution that exists

[1] This is a minimally revised version of a paper presented at the 2nd FES/DPRU Conference on Labour Markets and Poverty, Johannesburg, October 2002. I am grateful to Servaas van der Berg and Tom Hertz for suggesting improvements.

in their society? What kinds of inequality are considered just? What do they think the government should do about inequality? Should public expenditure be increased if it entails higher taxes? Do citizens have obligations to each other? There exists little research on these issues. Given the presumed political implications of the country's unequal distribution, it is curious that the study of distributive justice remains poorly developed.

The study of popular attitudes toward distribution has always been dominated by specific concerns of national political importance. Thus, amidst the revolutionary prospects of the mid-1980s, scholars began to examine the extent of socialist views on economic transformation (e.g. Orkin, 1986). When democratic elections became imminent, scholars wondered whether the country's new black citizens had expectations of economic change that could not be met. Empirical research into these questions was pioneering in the broader study of popular political culture and opinion, and served to qualify or undermine many conventional wisdoms. Thus Charney, using evidence from focus groups in rural and urban areas, demonstrated that 'the public is considerably more aware of the limits facing the new government, more realistic in its expectations, and more patient and hopeful about the future than conventional wisdom holds' (1995: 1). Johnson and Schlemmer, using opinion poll data, found that a minority of new citizens had more militant views but the majority held surprisingly moderate views on many issues; Johnson and Schlemmer concluded that most of the ANC's supporters could be described best as 'social democrats' (1996: 88-9; see also Nattrass and Seekings, 1998).

These studies initiated the analysis of perceived distributive justice in South Africa, but they did not produce any comprehensive overview of South Africans' views. This was not simply due to a lack of evidence. It is likely that the surveys used by, for example, Johnson and Schlemmer might yield much wider-ranging analysis than these two scholars attempted. The larger political parties certainly collected considerable data on public opinion, including data on distributive justice, for their own strategic planning during the 1994 election campaign (and surely thereafter also); much, perhaps most, of the data collected was never analysed. The Human Sciences Research Council conducted a series of surveys between 1994 and 2000, but the research output has been rather underwhelming (see Rule, 2000; Klandermans *et al.*, 2001). Most curiously of all, perhaps, most of the data on distributive justice from the four South African 'waves' of the cross-national World Values Study – in 1981, 1990, 1995 and 2001 – has yet to be

analysed.[2] It is true that South Africa did not participate in either the International Social Justice Project[3] or surveys conducted as part of the International Social Survey Program (which included a module on Social Inequality)[4], but a lot of data is sitting in un- or under-used data-sets.

In post-apartheid South Africa the political implications of inequality continue to depend on the ways in which social and political cleavages are formed and reformed. The central question in the study of attitudes toward distributive justice now is surely not the extent of socialist values or the extravagance of popular expectations, but rather the ways in which *intra*- and *inter*-racial cleavages combine and conflict. In previous work we have argued that under apartheid class replaced race as the foundation of inequality in South Africa (Nattrass and Seekings, 2001; Seekings and Nattrass, forthcoming; see also Crankshaw, 1997). The widening of intra-racial inequality is linked to the deepening of new intra-racial social cleavages, perhaps the most important of which is the divide between employed 'insiders' and unemployed 'outsiders' in the 'new' South Africa.

The emergence of a new social cleavage between employed insiders and unemployed or otherwise marginal outsiders has been examined in some detail in the context of contemporary Europe (see Matheson and Wearing, 1999). But South Africa and Europe are very different places, of course. Whilst much of Europe is post-industrial, South Africa can be described better as post-agrarian. Peasant society has disappeared, but not because everyone has been absorbed into industrial employment. The result is the country's exceptionally high rate of unemployment, whether measured in the Eurocentric 'narrow' or more appropriate 'broad' terms.

Is there evidence of the emergence of new patterns of intra-racial class consciousness in post-apartheid South Africa? It is of course quite possible that

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[2] The number of countries participating in the WVS has risen to 65 by 2001. Although South Africa participated from the outset, the sample was not fully representative until the fourth wave in 2001; the samples in the first three waves omitted sections of the black population. See further Kotzé (2001) on the South African WVS and the extant analyses of the data.

[3] The ISJP was conceived in 1986 for the comparison of perceived social justice in capitalist and communist societies. The first wave of surveys was conducted in 1991, in five capitalist and seven post-communist states. See Kluegel, Mason and Wegener (1995).

[4] The ISSP was inaugurated in the mid-1980s, with annual surveys on a variety of topics in, by now, thirty-three, mostly industrialised countries. Besides Europe, North America and Australasia, the ISSP covers the Philippines, China, Costa Rica and Chile. The surveys included short modules on inequality beliefs in 1987, 1992 and 1999, and modules on the role of government in 1985, 1990 and 1996. See www.issp.org.

new processes of stratification are happening in some objective sense, but are not reshaping the consciousness of the people involved. South Africa might not comprise two racially-bound 'nations' according to economic criteria, but might be in a cultural sense.

Some time ago two researchers found some evidence on the emergence of attitudinal cleavages rooted in labour market status. Møller (1992) and Charney (1995) suggested that unemployed people see themselves as having distinct interests and concerns to the employed. Møller's study was based on a combination of qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey in 1987-89 of 1300 unemployed African people in Soweto, Mdantsane (East London) and the Greater Durban area. She showed that the unemployed see themselves as different to employed workers. The unemployed not only had a far lower perceived quality of life than township dwellers as a whole, but also experienced higher levels of anxiety, fear and depression than did working people. Møller reports that 55 percent of her unemployed respondents said employed people did not really care about their welfare, and she found overwhelming agreement with the statement that 'people who lose their jobs, lose their friends'.

Both Møller and Charney found that unemployed people were critical of trade unions' roles in inhibiting job creation. As one person told Møller: 'Employed people are striking for better wages; their protest blocks the chances for the unemployed' (1992: 137). Charney also found that many people in his focus groups in late 1994 were critical of strikes because they were seen as discouraging investors and jeopardising growth (Charney, 1995: 29). The attitudes of many working and most unemployed people were found to differ with regard to the priority attached to job creation. Each of the focus groups in Charney's study was asked the following: 'Some people say, "Workers should get the highest possible wages they can, based on their skills and experience." Others say, "Workers should be willing to accept lower increases so that more people can get work." What do you think?'. Almost all of the groups favoured the second option – with the dissenters coming from precisely those groups that stand to gain the most from a high-wage, low-employment scenario ('trade unionists and some formal township dwellers, particularly better-educated youth'. These different perspectives on the justice of rewards reflect the position of most of the urban, industrial working class above the median but below the mean income, whereas the poor and unemployed are solidly below the median.

The work of labour economists suggests that not all unemployed are in the same class position, i.e. they are not all in equally 'outside' positions. Some unemployed people enjoy relatively good access to opportunities to find employment, primarily through the networks of friends and family. Other unemployed people lack the social capital needed to secure employment, and face the probability of extended unemployment. These later constitute an 'underclass' in the sense that they are especially disadvantaged, not only unemployed but facing especially poor employment prospects (Seekings, 2001).[5]

There is some weak evidence that this kind of difference among the unemployed is reflected in their attitudes. The 1993 PSLSD data-set (collected by SALDRU at UCT and the World Bank) allows us to analyse aspects of attitude formation that are beyond most opinion polls because, unlike most polls, the PSLSD survey collected data on the household and other household members besides the respondent. It also collected more detailed occupational data than is common in opinion polls. This permits an analysis of the effects on some attitudes of the labour market status of *other* members of their household, and of the class position of the household as a whole (where class is defined on the basis of occupations of all household members, ownership of income-generating assets and entrepreneurial activity). Unfortunately the survey asked very few attitudinal questions. One question asked was: 'What in your opinion could government do to most help this household improve its living conditions? In other words, what do you need most?' [sic]. Respondents were asked to name three things, and then rank them in order of importance. One category of answers was "jobs', which is somewhat ambiguous as it could mean either more or better jobs.

[5] Another approach to conceptualising the class position of the unemployed might be to examine their 'employability' (as Bhorat has done). The unemployable might be considered a different class to the employable. This approach would focus more on human capital, whilst mine focuses more on social capital. The relative importance of these two is an empirical, not a theoretical, matter, and needs to be analysed using panel data.

Table 1: Percentage of respondents saying that "jobs" were the most important problem, by household class and labour market status

Class	*Labour market status of respondent*					*All respond-ents*
	Unemp-loyed	*In regular employ-ment*	*In casual employ-ment*	*Self-employed*	*Not in labour force*	
Upper class		11			23	14
Semi-professional class		25			32	30
Intermediate class	49	22	43		30	29
Core working class	56	32			31	35
Marginal working class	57	24	34		22	29
Underclass	52				33	43
Residual (Non labour force) class					17	19
Total	53	23	38	32	24	29

Source: PSLSD, 1993. Note: cells omitted if insufficient n. Classes are defined in terms of occupation of household members; households in the underclass have unemployed but no working members; households in the 'non labour force class' have neither unemployed nor working members. Households classified in terms of self-employed members (excepting professionals) are excluded from all but the total row above. For further detail, see Seekings (2000) and Seekings and Nattrass (forthcoming).

Table 1 shows how respondents' answers were influenced by both household class and their own labour market status. As we can see in the final column of Table 1, the percentage of respondents who prioritised "jobs" varied by class: from less than 20 percent for the highest classes, to 43 percent for the underclass. If we look at the other columns, we can see that labour market status counts also. Jobs were prioritised by over half (53 percent) of the unemployed respondents and 38 percent of respondents in casual employment, compared to just 23 percent of respondents in regular employment and 24 percent of respondents who were not participants in the labour force. Even within classes we can see that labour market status matters. In every class for which we have sufficient sub-samples, the proportion of unemployed respondents who prioritised jobs was much higher than the proportion of respondents in regular employment. Thus unemployed individuals in core working class households were almost twice as likely to say that jobs were the top priority than individuals in regular employment in the same class.

A similar pattern is evident with respect to levels of satisfaction (see Table 2). Respondents were asked: 'Taking everything into account, how satisfied is the household with the way it lives these days?' Respondents were asked to circle one of five possible responses on a standard five-point Likert scale, extending from 'very satisfied' to 'very unsatisfied'. The final column indicates clear differences in satisfaction by class. The preceding columns show clear differences within classes according to the labour market status of the respondent. Thus the proportion of respondents in the upper class who said they were satisfied or very satisfied was above 60 percent. In the intermediate and core working classes, the proportion was about 40 percent when the respondents were in regular employment but only 20 percent or lower when the respondent was unemployed.

Table 2: Percentage of respondents saying that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with life, by household class and labour market status

Class	Labour market status of respondent					Total
	Unemp-loyed	In regular employ-ment	In casual employ-ment	Self-employed	Not in labour force	
Upper class		71			61	66
Semi-professional class		42			43	40
Intermediate class	20	45	23		37	38
Core working class	15	37			24	29
Marginal working class	13	29	19		25	25
Underclass	17				16	16
Residual NLF class					23	23
Total	19	45	26	35	30	34

The next two tables show that the labour market status of *other* household members also makes a difference to the answers given by respondents. Tables 3 and 4 disaggregate the six shaded cells in Tables 1 and 2, separating respondents living in the same household as unemployed people from respondents living in households where no one is unemployed. The cells are those for respondents in regular employment and not in the labour force, in the intermediate, core working and marginal working classes. Table 3 shows that respondents are more likely to say that jobs were the most important problem if other members

of their household were unemployed. Table 4 shows that in general declared satisfaction is lower if other members of the household are unemployed.

Table 3: Percentage of respondents saying that "jobs" were the most important problem, by household class, own labour market status and presence of unemployed people in household

Class	Household includes unemployed people?	Labour market status of respondent	
		In regular employment	Not in labour force
Intermediate class	Yes	26	34
	No	22	29
Core working Class	Yes	37	39
	No	31	28
Marginal working class	Yes	28	29
	No	23	19

Table 4: Percentage of respondents saying that they were satisfied or very satisfied with life, by household class, own labour market status and presence of unemployed people in household

Class	Household includes unemployed people?	Labour market status of respondent	
		In regular employment	Not in labour force
Intermediate class	Yes	28	29
	No	47	39
Core working Class	Yes	28	16
	No	38	27
Marginal working class	Yes	22	29
	No	30	24

These findings require us to be cautious in interpreting opinion polls that do not collect any information about other members of the household besides the respondent. It seems likely that the priorities of respondents who have jobs are likely to vary according to whether or not there are other members of their households who do not have jobs. Opinion polls that do not collect such data

are at risk of painting a somewhat misleading picture of the effects of labour market status on attitudes.

The rest of this paper explores the relationship between labour market status and some attitudes to distributive justice using data from an experimental module of questions on distributive justice included in a survey undertaken in one magisterial district in Cape Town at the end of 2000. This survey covered a mix of urban poor, working-class and middle-class African and coloured people. Compared to the population of South Africa as a whole, most of our respondents were in the top three if not the top two income quintiles. This is certainly not the ideal sample to use to assess attitudinal differences. But, as we shall see, unemployment rates were very high. If unemployment correlated with different views on distributive justice issues within this sample, then we could be confident that the social cleavage of unemployment is generally consequential in terms of attitudes.

What we found was a curious mix of attitudes. On a number of issues we found divergent responses. But the differences rarely correlated with labour market status. Indeed, in some instances there was actually the inverse of the relationship that we had expected. Taking into account a wide range of indirect labour market and other factors fails to explain most of the variation in attitudes. Our findings are, to put it bluntly, inconclusive: we find weakly significant relationships between various independent variables and some of the attitudes recorded in our survey, but even taking into account a wide range of prospective independent variables fails to explain most of the variation in popular attitudes. This is not a unique South African situation. The study of popular attitudes over distributive justice in other parts of the world has shown that 'country' is the most significant factor explaining attitudes in international studies; intra-national factors (class, education, age and so on) are rarely anywhere near as significant, even in explaining variation within national samples (see Svallfors, 1997; Matheson and Wearing, 1999).

The 2000 Khayelitsha/Mitchell's Plain Survey

The magisterial district of Mitchell's Plain covers the bulk of the Cape Flats to the east of central Cape Town. It includes the city's African townships of Langa, Nyanga, Guguletu and Khayelitsha, as well as numerous informal settlements. It also includes extensive areas that under apartheid were classified as 'coloured', but no formerly 'white' group areas. In total, according to the 1996 Population Census, the district's population stood at about 730 000, or 29 percent of the city's

total population. In racial terms, the population of the district is approximately two-thirds African and one-third coloured. In terms of income, the population extends from the poor to the moderately rich, although most households probably fall into the third and fourth income quintiles for the country as a whole.

In November/December 2000 we conducted a survey focused on labour market issues. The sample encompassed just over one thousand households, spread across the district. We tried to interview every adult member of these households, but only succeeded in collecting data on about 86 percent of the identified adult household members (this includes a number of adults interviewed by proxy, i.e. where information was provided by another member of the household). This gave us a total of 2644 adult respondents. We failed to collect usable data on labour market status on 146 of these, giving us a usable sample of about 2500 adults.

Table 5: Labour Market Status among Adults in KMP, 2000

Labour market category	*Number*	*Percentage*
Employed	1158	46
regular wage employed	882	35
self-employed	210	8
casual employed	66	3
Unemployed	1011	40
Active job-seekers	448	18
Exclusive network job-seekers	173	7
Marginalised unemployed	390	16
Non Labour Force Participants	329	13
Total	2498	100

We are yet to conduct a full analysis of the 'missing' adults in the survey, but it is clear that they are disproportionately men and are likely to be disproportionately in employment of one kind or another. If, as is likely, the missing adults are not occur at random in the sample, then we cannot conclude that the unemployment rate is almost 50 percent – as might be implied by Table 5. What Table 5 does tell us is that we have significant numbers of adults in each of the seven labour market status categories listed. The categories in the Table are as defined by Nattrass (2002). The employed are divided into regular wage employed, the self-employed and casual employed. Unemployed are divided into active job-seekers, network job-seekers (who rely on friends and family networks to find job opportunities) and marginalised unemployed, who

do not look for work in any way, although they say they want work. Table 6 disaggregates the sample by gender, race and age, as well as labour market status.

Table 6: Labour Market Status by Gender, Race and Age (%)

	Gender		*Race*		*Age*					
Labour market category	*M*	*F*	*Col*	*Afr*	*18-23*	*24-29*	*30-39*	*40-49*	*50-59*	*60+*
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Employed	**55**	**39**	**52**	**44**	**23**	**46**	**61**	**59**	**50**	**23**
regular employed	46	27	45	31	17	37	46	46	37	13
self-employed	5	11	5	10	3	7	11	11	9	9
casual employed	4	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	1
Unemployed	**34**	**45**	**27**	**46**	**64**	**50**	**34**	**30**	**25**	**18**
active job-seekers	20	17	10	21	29	25	13	14	10	6
network job-seekers	5	8	6	7	11	7	8	5	4	1
marginalised unemployed	9	20	11	18	24	18	13	11	12	11
Non Labour Force Participants	**10**	**15**	**21**	**10**	**13**	**4**	**5**	**12**	**25**	**59**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
n	1044	1436	731	1751	530	458	651	450	249	160

Attitudes in Khayelitsha/Mitchell's Plain

The module ('M') on distributive justice comprised thirty-six agree/disagree questions (the last of which was not on distribution but rather concerned HIV/AIDs). Many of these questions were taken from or derived from questions used in the ISJP or ISSP. In addition, we asked all respondents twelve agree/disagree questions on unemployment (F3.1-12), and respondents who were unemployed or did not participate in the labour force were asked another nine agree/disagree questions (F32, 1-9).[6] Thus respondents should have been asked a total of between thirty-five and fifty-six questions with some bearing on distributive issues and the consequences of distribution.

[6] We erred in not asking some of these questions of everyone in our sample.

Our goal was in large part experimental, in that we wanted to examine what kinds of questions seem to 'work' in the South African context. As ever, we were constrained in the number of questions we could ask, and had to omit many questions that we would have liked to ask.

We asked three questions concerning general aspects of life in South Africa. Slightly more agreed than disagreed that 'people today are better off than their parents 25 years ago' (M4, 53 percent agreeing or agreeing strongly, compared to 36 percent disagreeing or disagreeing strongly), with almost no difference between coloured and African respondents. Views on whether 'overall, the this country is moving in the right direction' (M15) and whether 'the government is doing a good job' (M17) were more racially divided. On both questions, African respondents were more positive (about 50 percent agree versus about 32 percent disagree) and coloured respondents were more negative (about 30 percent agree versus 50 percent disagree).

Table 7: How People Become Rich

	Strong-ly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
M1: If you work hard today you can get rich in SA today	15	19	11	33	22	3.28	1.38
M2: It is easy for children from poor families to get a good education	29	29	9	22	11	2.57	1.39
M3: If you get a good education, it is easy to become rich in SA today	8	17	14	38	23	3.52	1.23
M9: Many poor people are poor because they are lazy	44	22	13	13	7	2.17	1.31
M21: Many people in this country receive less income than they deserve	2	4	11	41	41	4.16	0.92
M32: Inequality continues because it benefits the rich and powerful	3	5	16	43	33	2.98	0.98

Our first major bundle of questions concerning social justice concerned how people become rich, i.e. the perceived causes of poverty and inequality (see Table 7: In this and the following tables, the mean is calculated through coding strongly disagree as 1 through to strongly agree as 5). Good education was seen

as a route to affluence (M3), but fewer respondents said that it is easy for children from poor families to get a good education (M2). Respondents were divided over whether affluence could be achieved through hard work (M1), but very few agreed that poor people were poor because they were lazy (M9). There was very strong agreement that many people receive less income than they deserve (M21) and most people agreed that inequality continues because it favours the rich and powerful (M32). We also asked a batch of questions about unemployment (F3). These clearly indicated that, in the view of our respondents, some people had much better chances of finding a job than others. In sum, our respondents tended to view South Africa as a society with unequal opportunities, although hard work might provide a route to prosperity.

Table 8: Government Policies

	Strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
M7: The value of the state old age pension should be increased	1	2	6	31	60	4.46	0.81
M13: The government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income (like it does for old people through the old-age grant)	6	9	10	38	37	3.91	1.17
M16: The government should provide free health care	3	4	4	32	57	4.35	0.96
M27: The government should spend more on education and health	1	3	5	34	57	4.43	0.79
M18: The government should help the unemployed	1	2	4	37	56	4.47	0.72
M5: The government should ensure that all schools are equally good	1	2	4	38	56	4.47	0.71
M6: The government should provide better education for children from poor families to ensure that they have the same opportunities as children from richer families	0	1	3	32	64	4.57	0.66
M12: The government should reduce the differences in income between rich and poor people	5	7	12	39	38	3.98	1.09

A second bundle of questions interrogated attitudes toward government policies, especially government spending (see Table 8). Five questions elicited almost identically patterned responses, with between 75 percent and 94 percent of respondents agreeing (including agreeing strongly) to statements implying that the government should spend more on old-age pensions (M7), a basic income grant (M13), health care (M16), and education and health (M27). A similar proportion agreed that the government should help the unemployed (M18), although the statement did not refer at all to expenditure; elsewhere in the questionnaire we asked specifically how much respondents agreed that 'the government should provide jobs for everyone who wants one' (F3.11), and got almost identical results. Our respondents massively favoured government action and expenditure in a range of areas.

Three questions examined the perceived role of government with respect to inequality in particular (see Table 8). Our respondents agreed overwhelmingly that the government should ensure that all schools are equally good (M5) and 'should provide better education for children from poor families to ensure that they have the same opportunities as children from richer families' (M6). We found only slightly lower agreement with the statement that 'the government should reduce the difference in income between rich and poor people' (M12). These responses indicate strongly egalitarian preferences.

Table 9: Attitudes to Taxation

	Strongly disagree %	disagree %	neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %	Strongly agree %	Mean	Standard deviation
M8: The government old-age pension should be increased even if it means that people like you have to pay higher taxes	11	18	15	28	27	3.42	1.36
M10: Poor people pay too much tax	12	15	27	29	16	3.23	1.23
M11: Taxation should be increased so that more money is available for the government to spend.	26	25	19	20	10	2.63	1.33
M14: People like you pay too much tax.	10	15	26	29	20	3.34	1.24

Questions about government policies often focus on the benefits rather than the costs. We asked a set of questions probing perceived willingness to pay taxes (see Table 9). When asked whether old age pensions should be increased 'even if it

means that people like you have to pay higher taxes', the proportion of respondents who agreed strongly fell by half from 60 percent (M7) to 27 percent (M8), and the proportion who disagreed or disagreed strongly rose tenfold, from 3 to 29 percent! Almost half of our sample agreed that 'poor people pay too much tax' (M10) and over half were opposed to increasing taxes 'so that more money is available for the government to spend' (M11). Half the sample thought that people like themselves paid too much tax (M14). Enthusiasm for government spending is clearly greatly reduced when there is the prospect of paying higher taxes.

Given our concern with the labour market, we asked a set of questions probing respondents' attitudes toward unemployment, employment and trade unions. We have already seen that there is little support for the proposition that poor people are poor because they are lazy (M9, see Table 8 above) and overwhelming agreement that 'the government should help the unemployed' (M18, see Table 8 above). Are trade unions seen to 'look after the interests of the unemployed' (M19)? On this we found a spread of responses, from 19 percent disagreeing strongly to 13 percent agreeing strongly (see Table 10). We found a similarly wide spread of responses to the statement 'workers go on strike too often' (M28) and a high level of agreement that 'it is bad for the economy for workers to go on strike' (M30). At the same time, most respondents agreed with the statement that 'workers cannot get a fair wage unless they go on strike sometimes' (M29). It seems that there is at least some scepticism around unions and strike action.

Table 10: Attitudes to Unions and Strikes

	Strongly disagree %	disagree %	neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %	Strongly agree %	Mean	Standard deviation
M19: Trade unions look after the interests of the unemployed	19	21	24	22	13	2.88	1.31
M20: Employers should be allowed to hire temporary workers when their workforce is on strike	33	22	13	21	11	2.56	1.41
M28: Workers go on strike too often	12	24	21	27	16	3.12	1.27
M29: Workers cannot get a fair wage unless they go on strike sometimes	3	9	17	43	27	3.82	1.04
M30: It is bad for the economy for workers to go on strike	6	12	24	40	18	3.51	1.11

Finally, we examined attitudes towards government, business and investment (see Table 11). We found strong agreement that South Africa needs investment and that allowing business to make profits is the best way to encourage investment (M34, M35). But responses to our other questions paint a confusing picture. Respondents agreed that financial incentives are important (M31) but were divided over the importance of inequality for prosperity (M33). Respondents also said that large companies had too much power (M22), and expressed support for the government playing a bigger role in running large companies (M26). Opinions were divided over whether ordinary workers could manage companies effectively without bosses (M23). This seems to be a confusing mix of pro- and anti-business sentiments.

Table 11: Attitudes toward Business

	Strongly disagree %	disagree %	neither agree nor disagree %	Agree %	Strongly agree %	Mean	Standard deviation
M22: Large companies have too much power in SA today	2	5	27	39	27	3.84	0.95
M23: Ordinary workers could manage companies effectively without bosses	16	24	22	25	13	2.95	1.28
M26: The government should play a bigger role in running large companies	3	6	22	39	30	3.88	0.99
M31: People will not take on extra responsibilities at work unless they are paid to do it	3	7	15	46	29	3.91	1.00
M33: Large differences in income are necessary for SA's prosperity	22	20	22	24	12	2.83	1.33
M34: The country needs more investment if the economy is to grow with a rising standard of living	2	3	17	46	32	4.04	0.87
M35: Allowing business to make profits is the best way to encourage investment	2	5	23	43	27	3.87	0.94

Because some of the KMP questions were taken from international studies – the ISJP and ISSP – the responses in Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain can be compared with those from other countries. Cross-national comparisons are bedevilled by differences in the ways that questions are understood, and the KMP

sample was, of course, not a national one.[7] But the magnitude of differences between responses in different countries is striking.

Table 12: Some Cross-National Comparisons: Percentage agreeing or agreeing strongly with statements

	Govt should reduce income inequality (KMP M12)	Inequality is necessary for prosperity (KMP M33)	Govt should provide jobs for all (KMP F3.11)	Govt should provide a basic income (KMP M13)
KMP, South Africa	77	36	88	77
Australia	52	64	49	61
West Germany	76	73	78	57
Norway	72	79	90	86
USA	49	65	54	39

Source: ISSP data, presented in Matheson and Wearing (1999)

Table 12 shows that our respondents in Cape Town were in general as egalitarian as Norwegians (although they did not share the latter's view that inequality was necessary for national prosperity), and were considerably more egalitarian than Australians and Americans.

Explaining Variations in Attitudes

The tables above indicate quite high variance (excepting Table 8). Do differences in attitudes reflect positions in the labour market? Do the unemployed appear to have different attitudes to the employed? Are there differences of opinion among the unemployed or the employed, and what explains any such differences?

In South Africa we might plausibly expect that any of the following factors shape distributive justice attitudes, especially on issues relevant to employment and unemployment:

- the current labour market status of the respondent
- the labour market status of other household members
- qualifications and past work experience
- the employment/unemployment history of the respondent

[7] There are, of course, many other difficulties in cross-national comparisons, even when using semi-standardised data such as the ISSP or ISJP surveys. Response rates differ, and the patterns of non-responses are rarely similar. Coding is not always standardised (for example, data on occupations).

- the employment/unemployment histories of other household members
- individual earnings
- household income
- age
- race

First, we examine these factors with respect to selected questions from our survey:

- M1: If you work hard you can get rich in SA today.
- M4: People today are better off than their parents were twenty-five years ago.
- M8: The government old age pension should be increased even if it means that people like you pay higher taxes.
- M19: Trade unions look after the interests of the unemployed.
- M33: Large differences in income are necessary for SA's prosperity.

These are all questions to which there was a wide dispersion of responses – in contrast to questions such as the ones on government spending, where there was near unanimity that the government should spend more (see Table 8).

The Effects of Labour Market Status

Table 13 sets out the means and standard deviations for responses to these five statements, broken down by labour market status. (Whilst the precise definition of labour market categories is inevitably somewhat arbitrary, using alternative categories does not appear to make any difference to the general results). There is little obvious rhyme or reason in the results. Self-employed respondents record a higher mean for M1, which is perhaps unsurprising – but so too do network job-seekers, and in fact all unemployed categories score higher means than regular or casual wage employees. The lack of variation between categories is most striking for M19 and M33. In contrast, almost every cell has a high standard deviation.

Table 13: Selected Attitudes, by Labour Market Status

	If work hard, then get rich (M1)		*Better off than parents (M4)*		*Increase pensions even if more tax (M8)*		*Trade unions look after unemployed (M19)*		*Inequality is necessary (M33)*	
Labour market category	*Mn*	*SD*	*Mn*	*SD*	*Mn*	*SD*	*Mn*	*SD*	*Mn*	*SD*
Employed	3.17	1.38	3.17	1.40	3.39	1.38	2.82	1.32	2.79	1.34
regular wage emp.	3.09	1.37	3.21	1.38	3.39	1.36	2.82	1.31	2.80	1.36
self-employed	3.45	1.40	3.02	1.48	3.37	1.40	2.73	1.35	2.78	1.27
casual employed	3.21	1.38	3.25	1.39	3.45	1.51	3.03	1.33	2.79	1.27
Unemployed	3.37	1.39	3.20	1.46	3.37	1.36	2.86	1.32	2.82	1.33
Active job-seekers	3.41	1.40	3.18	1.40	3.36	1.37	2.85	1.33	2.81	1.27
Network job-seekers	3.36	1.41	3.36	1.46	3.42	1.40	3.04	1.34	2.82	1.44
Marginalised unemp.	3.29	1.37	3.15	1.44	3.37	1.35	2.79	1.30	2.91	1.23
Non LF Participants	3.35	1.35	3.26	1.43	3.67	1.26	3.16	1.23	2.95	1.31
Total	3.28	1.38	3.20	1.41	3.42	1.36	2.88	1.31	2.82	1.33

Earlier in the paper we saw that the labour market status of *other* household members appeared to influence some attitudes, according to the 1993 PSLSD data. Is there evidence of similar effects in the KMP data? Table 14 indicates the distribution of respondents by labour market status and the labour market status of other household members.[8] It shows that at least half of our sample lived in households where someone else was working, and a similar proportion lived in households where at least one other adult was unemployed. We therefore end up with a good mix of households in terms of possible combinations of the labour market status of our respondent and other household members: employed respondents in households without unemployed members; employed respondents in households with unemployed members; unemployed respondents in households with employed members; and unemployed respondents in households without any employed members (as well as equivalent combinations for non-participants in the labour force). This should enable us to test whether the patterns found in the 1993 national PSLSD data are reflected also in the 2000 KMP data from Cape Town.

[8] I must point out a serious flaw in the data reported in these tables. I have been unable to separate out those households which have missing adults, i.e. where we failed to collect full data on one or mor adult household members. Because of this there will be a number of individuals who have been mistakenly included in the "no" column rather than the "yes" column in Table 14, as the missing adults might be either unemployed or working, The percentages for "yes" are almost certainly underestimated. This does not affect our analysis of attitudes, however, because we are omitting individuals in households with missing adults unless a non-missing other adult is already recorded as either working or unemployed (depending on the question).

Table 14: Labour Market Status of Adults and Other Household Members

	Are any other household members unemployed?		Are any other household members in regular wage employment?	
Labour market category	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Employed	51	49		
regular wage employed	52	48		
self-employed	46	54		
casual employed	62	38		
Unemployed			48	52
Active job-seekers			46	54
Exclusive network job-seekers			50	50
Marginalised unemployed			49	51
Non Labour Force Participants	47	53	50	50
Total				

Table 15: Selected Attitudes, by Labour Market Status of Respondents and of Other Household Members

	If work hard, then get rich (M1)		*Workers go on strike too often (M28)*		*Increase pensions even if more tax (M8)*		*Trade unions look after unemployed (M19)*		*Inequality is necessary (M33)*	
Labour market category	*Mn*	*SD*	*Mn*	*SD*	*Mn*	*SD*	*Mn*	*SD*	*Mn*	*SD*
Respondent in regular wage employment, in household without any unemployed members	3.06	1.37	3.20	1.31	3.55	1.32	2.82	1.32	2.75	1.37
Respondent in regular wage employment, in household with one or more unemployed members	3.13	1.36	3.05	1.24	3.23	1.38	2.83	1.29	2.84	1.36
Unemployed respondent, in household with another member in employment	3.31	1.39	3.03	1.25	3.30	1.35	2.80	1.28	2.82	1.34
Unemployed respondent, in household without any member in employment	3.46	1.39	3.12	1.33	3.48	1.38	2.95	1.37	2.82	1.33
Non labour force participants, in household with at least one working member	3.21	1.38	3.35	1.26	3.57	1.25	3.11	1.19	2.97	1.34
Non labour force participants in households with at least one unemployed member	3.27	1.46	3.39	1.29	3.77	1.25	2.88	1.31	2.82	1.34

Table 15 reports some of the results if we cross-tabulate selected attitudes against the labour market status of our respondents and of other household members. In some cases there appears to be a pattern. Views on "if you work hard, you can get rich in South Africa today" (M1) appear to be related to our combined labour market categories: the 'more' unemployed the household, so as to speak, the stronger the agreement with this statement. Unemployed people seem to think that there are more rewards for hard work than working people. One possible explanation for this is that working people know that working hard does not result in 'getting rich', either because affluence is defined by a different criterion or because income is drained in supporting dependants, including unemployed dependants. Responses to the questions on strikes (M28), tax (M), trade unions and the unemployed (M19) and the necessity of inequality (M33) do not show any obvious pattern. Standard deviations are high in all categories. A variety of statistical tests (t-tests, one-way ANOVA) suggest that there is no significant relationship between labour market status and these attitudes (except that non-participation in the labour force does seem weakly significant in some cases).

Analysing Indices of Attitudes

To analyse further possible causes of attitudes we construct a series of indices. In each case the index sums the scores on the component questions; where the meaning of the question is reverse, then the inverse scores are used in the index.

- Indexopportunities = M1+M2+M3+M9+inverseM21+inverseM32
- Indextax = M8+M11+inverseM14
- Indexunions = M19+inverseM28+M29+inverseM30

High scores in "indexopportunities" indicate the belief that South Africa is a land of opportunity; high scores in "indextax" indicate approval of high taxes; high scores in "indexunions" indicate approval of unions and strike action. The results for all three indices approximate normal distributions.

There does not appear to be any significant relationship between labour market status and views on any of these three indices. Indeed, it is hard to see any relationship between any of the obvious social, economic and demographic factors and these attitudes. Table 16 shows the means scores for each index according to a range of factors.

Table 16: Mean Scores on Indices

	Indexunions	*Indextax*	*Indexopportunities*
Unemployed	12.0	8.7	15.1
Employed	11.9	8.4	14.7
Not participating in labour force	11.8	8.7	15.7
African	12.1	8.7	14.5
Coloured	11.5	8.3	16.0
Men	11.9	8.4	15.0
Women	11.9	8.7	15.0
below mean earnings	12.0	8.7	15.1
above mean earnings	11.9	8.4	14.8
overall mean	11.9	8.6	15.0
possible range of scores	*4-20*	*3-15*	*6-30*

Regressions fail to indicate many significant relationships. Appendix 1 reports the results of regressing each of these indices against age, individual earnings and education, as well as dummy variables for race, labour market status of both respondents and their families, and the prior history of unemployment of the respondent, fails to generate. For "indexunions", age and education are both significant, with inverse relationships to the index (i.e. older and/or more educated respondents were less approving of unions and strikes). For "indextax", being unemployed and having other employed members of the household were both mildly significant. The regression for "indexopportunities" shows that race is significant. In all three cases, r-squareds are low. Even where there are 'significant' relationships, they are generally inconsequential. It certainly is not the case that labour market status in Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain makes much of a difference to attitudes on a range of social justice issues.

Conclusions

The primary purpose of this paper was to analyse whether there is any clear relationship between labour market status and attitudes, such that we might see the emergence of a socio-political cleavage. Previous data – from the 1993 PSLSD – suggested that there might be such a relationship, albeit a complex one, where attitudes reflect both the respondent's labour market status, the class position of the respondent's household, and the labour market status of other members of the household. Our major finding from our examination of the 2000 KMP data is that there is little evidence for the emergence of distinct attitudes

corresponding to labour market status. Politicians might be able to mobilise around the issue of unemployment, but are unlikely to be able to do so successfully among the unemployed specifically. There is little indication that unemployment is likely to emerge as a new political cleavage in metropolitan South Africa.

This finding might reflect the character of the sample in the KMP survey. First, the KMP survey was limited to one part of one metropolitan area (Cape Town). It is possible that the patterns visible in the national PSLSD data are not visible in this particular metropolitan area. To test this, we went back and re-examined the PSLSD data. In the country as a whole, 53 percent of respondents who were unemployed prioritised jobs, compared to 23 percent of respondents who were working and lived in households where no one was unemployed and 38 percent of respondents who were working but lived in households where someone was unemployed. In Cape Town, the proportions were 65 percent, 27 percent and 41 percent respectively. The difference between responses of employed and unemployed were greater in metropolitan areas in general than in small towns or rural areas. The pattern of different responses remains clear when class is taken into account.[9] In sum, the apparent difference between PSLSD and KMP data is *not* due to the fact that the latter was limited to Cape Town. The KMP survey did, however, exclude the very rich – with no white respondents, and few upper income coloured or African respondents. This might make a small difference, rendering differences muted in KMP compared to even Cape Town as a whole.

There might also be problems with the quality of the data. Most of the attitudinal questions in KMP were asked at the end of the interviews. Interviewer and respondent fatigue might affect the quality of the data. Further analysis of responses by interviewer and location might help detect observable interviewer effects.

This research does raise broader questions of significance. In cross-national studies of social justice attitudes, regressions typically result in very low r-

[9] There were too few respondents in Cape Town alone to analyse patterns by class, labour market status and the status of other household members, but this could be done for the metropolitan areas combined. In the 'intermediate class' (across all metropolitan areas), jobs were prioritised by 48 percent of unemployed respondents, 24 percent of working respondents in households without unemployed members and 32 percent of working respondents in housheolds with unemployed members. Core working class: 71 percent, 33 percent and 38 percent respectively. Marginal working class: 69 percent, 25 percent and 33 percent respectively. Other classes have too few members for analysis.

squareds. For example, Svallfors runs regressions for national level data for Norway, Germany, Australia and the USA, regressing attitudes to redistribution against gender, class and labour market status. He reports significant correlations for several class and labour market categories, but the r-squareds range from under 4 percent (Australia) to 12 percent (Norway). Other studies report even lower r-squareds. It appears that, even in cases where other tests show significant relationships, very little of the variance in attitudes in explained by the kinds of factors we are examining. Further research is clearly required, both within South Africa and to integrate the analysis of social justice attitudes in South Africa into a comparative framework.

Appendix 1: Regression results

(1) Index of opportunities

```
      Source |       SS       df       MS              Number of obs =    1215
-------------+------------------------------           F( 12,  1202) =    6.88
       Model |  1068.14449    12  89.0120407           Prob > F      =  0.0000
    Residual |  15549.5148  1202  12.9363684           R-squared     =  0.0643
-------------+------------------------------           Adj R-squared =  0.0549
       Total |  16617.6593  1214  13.6883519           Root MSE      =  3.5967

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
indexoppor~s |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
    a2dummy1 |   -1.84704   .3186377    -5.80   0.000    -2.472188   -1.221892
    a2dummy2 |  (dropped)
newvardummy1 |   .1275058   .3896911     0.33   0.744    -.6370446    .8920562
newvardummy2 |  -.4593624   .4309089    -1.07   0.287     -1.30478    .3860547
newvardummy3 |  (dropped)
otherunemp~1 |   .0020324   .2115293     0.01   0.992    -.4129754    .4170401
otherempin~1 |   .5009847   .2175694     2.30   0.021     .0741266    .9278427
          a1 |  -.0010108   .0100873    -0.10   0.920    -.0208015    .0187798
          a7 |  -.0293663   .0409821    -0.72   0.474    -.1097707     .051038
bornCTdummy1 |   .0828206   .3143582     0.26   0.792    -.5339311    .6995724
    d1dummy1 |  -.2823323   1.371688    -0.21   0.837      -2.9735    2.408836
  d2_5dummy1 |   -.215519   .2292556    -0.94   0.347    -.6653047    .2342666
q3adultdum~1 |   .1342382   .2194732     0.61   0.541    -.2963548    .5648313
monthlytak~y |  -.0001038   .0001104    -0.94   0.347    -.0003203    .0001127
       _cons |   16.37995   .8179716    20.03   0.000     14.77514    17.98476
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

(2) Index of attitudes to taxation

```
      Source |       SS       df       MS              Number of obs =    1164
-------------+------------------------------           F( 12,  1151) =    2.52
       Model |  182.788602    12  15.2323835           Prob > F      =  0.0029
    Residual |   6966.8016  1151  6.05282503           R-squared     =  0.0256
-------------+------------------------------           Adj R-squared =  0.0154
       Total |  7149.59021  1163  6.14754102           Root MSE      =  2.4602

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
    indextax |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
    a2dummy1 |   .0762048   .2181795     0.35   0.727    -.3518693    .5042789
    a2dummy2 |  (dropped)
newvardummy1 |   .4366678    .207838     2.10   0.036     .0288839    .8444516
newvardummy2 |  (dropped)
newvardummy3 |   .2947247   .2991407     0.99   0.325    -.2921974    .8816468
otherunemp~1 |   -.057415   .1491318    -0.38   0.700    -.3500157    .2351857
otherempin~1 |   .3068136    .152275     2.01   0.044     .0080459    .6055813
          a1 |  -.0024091   .0071496    -0.34   0.736    -.0164369    .0116187
          a7 |  -.0262875   .0286267    -0.92   0.359     -.082454    .0298789
bornCTdummy1 |  -.2421753    .214044    -1.13   0.258    -.6621354    .1777847
    d1dummy1 |   1.827071   1.110212     1.65   0.100    -.3511962    4.005338
  d2_5dummy1 |  -.2957508   .1619429    -1.83   0.068    -.6134871    .0219856
q3adultdum~1 |  -.1543588   .1548981    -1.00   0.319    -.4582731    .1495555
```

```
monthlytak~y |  -.0000548   .0000739    -0.74   0.459    -.0001998    .0000902
       _cons |   8.658193   .5087439    17.02   0.000     7.660023    9.656362
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

(3) Index of attitudes to trade unions, etc

```
      Source |       SS       df       MS              Number of obs =    1235
-------------+------------------------------           F(  9,  1225) =    2.59
       Model |  143.288561     9  15.9209512           Prob > F      =  0.0058
    Residual |  7525.78512  1225  6.14349806           R-squared     =  0.0187
-------------+------------------------------           Adj R-squared =  0.0115
       Total |  7669.07368  1234   6.2148085           Root MSE      =  2.4786

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
    indextax |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
    a2dummy1 |   .2788664   .1584125     1.76   0.079    -.0319234    .5896563
    a2dummy2 |  (dropped)
newvardummy1 |   .4190601   .2014222     2.08   0.038     .0238894    .8142307
newvardummy2 |  (dropped)
newvardummy3 |   .4427115   .2848375     1.55   0.120    -.1161119    1.001535
otherunemp~2 |   .1484709   .1456995     1.02   0.308    -.1373772     .434319
otherunemp~1 |  (dropped)
otherempin~1 |   .2659512   .1485497     1.79   0.074    -.0254888    .5573911
          a1 |   .0001468   .0068222     0.02   0.983    -.0132377    .0135314
          a7 |  -.0159356   .0279813    -0.57   0.569    -.0708322    .0389609
q3adultdum~1 |   -.180259   .1508865    -1.19   0.232    -.4762835    .1157655
monthlytak~y |  -4.05e-06   .0000708    -0.06   0.954     -.000143    .0001349
       _cons |   8.051988   .4705351    17.11   0.000     7.128844    8.975132
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
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