CHAPTER 8

Convictions

8.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

In chapter 7 we worked from the realm of social structures upwards. We argued that the location of a group within the evolving social structure leads to a mental predisposition which is relatively predictable. When mental predispositions become focused and conceptualised in concrete and specific terms we call them interests. The pursuit of interests needs to be legitimised and this leads to ideological justifications. This is, it seems, as far as we can get from this side of the relationship between structures and convictions.

We now have to work from the other side. We distinguish between three types of conviction: those based on religious or metaphysical presuppositions (A-type); those related to cultural group identification (B-type); those related to the distribution of economic resources (C-type). To this we add vital interests, which do not seem to belong to the category of convictions, yet they contain elements of meaning and normativeness and that

makes them, to a certain extent, comparable with convictions (D-type).

We then analyse the relation between these convictions, first on an intra- type, then on an inter-type basis. Here we account for the strange fact that one finds, for instance, Christian capitalists and Christian socialists, Moslem nationalists and Moslem liberals.

Finally we try to determine whether there is a direct correlation between structural location and conviction. Here we observe that although convictions seem to be more structure-related as we move down the list of types quoted above, we find, at least in principle, each conviction on each rung of the structural ladder. The theory we develop in this regard leads us directly to the next chapter where we analyse the conflict-ridden relation between convictions and interests.

Most of the specific convictions mentioned in this chapter have been extensively described and documented in the literature. Since this study is supposed to be as brief as possible, we shall not fill pages with a duplication of this work but simply assume a working knowledge of the convictions concerned. This consideration makes this chapter much shorter than it would have been otherwise.

8.2 MAIN CONVICTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

8.2.1 A-type

Convictions relevant to the South African scene which focus on a religious or metaphysical system of meaning include the following (see Kritzinger 1984 for details):

(a) *African traditional religions* and worldviews. There are, of course, many original types, e.g. those of the Zulu, the Nama, the Bolubedu. There are also differences in integrity: Some are still intact, some are adapted and syncretistic, some are in flux, some in dissolution. One quarter of the Black population or more may fall into this category (Kritzinger 1984:22).

(b) *Hinduism* is the majority conviction among Indians (62,4%).

(c) *Islam* occurs among Indians (18,8%) and some Coloured groups (6,3%).

(d) *Judaism*, both in liberal and orthodox forms occurs only in the Jewish community (2,6% of Whites), although statistics also record about 5 800 Blacks, Coloureds and Asians confessing the Jewish faith (South Africa 1982c:122).

(e) *Christianity* is the greatest category but it includes a number of basic types: sectarian, pentecostal, fundamentalist, main line (Afrikaans reformed type, English low and high church types), liberal, syncretistic etc. The following percentages of racial groups claim to adhere to the Christian faith in one form or another according to the 1980 census: Whites 91,8%, Asians 12,5%, Coloureds 87%, Blacks 74,1%).

(f) *Secular humanism* which holds strong convictions concerning the dignity and autonomy of the human being but may remain sceptical or agnostic in the metaphysical realm.

(g) *Scientific-technological pragmatism* - the practical worldview of the secular scientist, technician and professional with a strongly utilitarian stance.

(h) *Individualist materialism* - the world-view of the secularised business elite, but also of great sections of the worker population. (This must be distinguished from the metaphysical materialism of Marxism. See par. 8.2.2 below).

(i) *Indifference*.

The latter three cannot be accounted for statistically because most of their adherents nominally belong to religious communities.

NOTES

1. In the multipurpose survey on intergroup relations conducted by the HSRC the following responses were received (Whites n=635, Indians n=848, Coloured n=759, Blacks n=969):

   79,93% of Whites, 92,22% of Indians, 93,54% of Coloureds and 78,02% of Blacks confessed that religion played an important or very important role in their lives. The 'very important' responses were consistently much higher than the 'important' responses.

   78,98% of Whites, 71,11% of Indians, 75,49% of Coloureds and 62,22% of Blacks believed that religious movements have a very important or important influence on South African society in general. Here the 'important' responses were consistently slightly higher than the 'very important' responses.

2. Outstanding statistical features include the following:

   Whites: 45,6% belong to one of the three Afrikaans Reformed churches, 18,8% to the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, 11,9% to the Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

   Asians: 62,4% belong to Hinduism, 18,8% to Islam, 12,5% to a Christian denomination.

   Coloureds: 26% belong to the Dutch Reformed church, 23,6% to the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

   Blacks: Roughly a quarter belong to African traditional religions (possibly more, because some may claim a church affiliation for status reasons), 29,3% belong to African Independent churches (which are growing rapidly), 44,8% to other Christian churches (9,9% Roman Catholic, 9,2% Methodist, 6,5% Dutch Reformed).

3. With the exception of African traditional religions and African Independent churches there does not seem to be

any clear evidence of a correlation between position in the power structure and religious affiliation.

4. African traditional religions are more prominent in rural (31,2%) than in urban areas (15,7%) suggesting that cultural disorientation, acculturation and a shifting perception of social status play a role, apart from exposure to Christian missionary activity and demonstration. These religions are probably concentrated in the lowest income groups.

5. African Independent churches do not betray a rural bias. They may appeal mainly to the poorer Black sections of the population in the first stages of cultural disorientation and acculturation.

6. The geographical distribution of religious affiliations shows marked patterns: for instance, Dutch Reformed in the Karoo, Methodism in the Ciskei and Transkei, African traditional religion in Gazankulu (Kritzinger 1984). But these patterns seem to be due to historical accident rather than to any correlation with the centre-periphery structure.

8.2.2 B-type

Convictions relevant to the South African scene which focus on cultural group identity include the following (See Leatt *et al* 1986):

(a) *Tribalism* - both original and reinforced Government policy.
(b) *Pan-Africanism* which is a reaction against the colonial experience and a result of the struggle for independence in Africa (Le Roux 1979).
(c) *Ethnic nationalism* among Blacks which is induced by the 'Black nations' and 'national states' policy of the Government.
(d) *Black Consciousness*, which is a reaction against White domination, Black dependency and the ethnic nationalism induced by divisive policies.
(e) *Afrikaner Nationalism* - both of the "verligte" and the

"verkrampte" variety - which is partly a reaction against British domination, partly a spill-over of European nationalism and partly self-assertation in the face of the "Black danger".

(f) *"Whitism"* - a sort of loyalty based on belonging to the privileged White elite as a whole over against other racial groups.

(g) *Broad South-Africanism*, which strives for a common loyalty of all South Africans regardless of their background. The inclusive nationalism of Black-led liberation movements belongs to this category.

(h) *British Imperialism*, which believed in the historic mission of the British people in the world as a whole. It played a great role in Southern Africa during the 19th century but is now largely a thing of the past.

(i) *Universalism* alias individualism alias liberalism. There is no conscious group loyalty but one believes in the equality and dignity of all men regardless of race, nationality, age, sex or creed.

8.2.3. C-type

Convictions relevant to the South African scene which focus on the distribution of economic potential (which also implies social status and political power) include the following (See Leatt *et al* 1986):

(a) *African communalism* - both the traditional type and the idealised forms proposed by Blacks who are disillusioned by Western capitalism. This category also includes some vague notions of African Socialism, particularly of the Tanzanian variety.

(b) The South African version of *patriarchal feudalism* still to

be found in the rural community.

(c) *Free enterprise capitalism* of the radical (Friedmanian) or the political (Keynesian) types (O'Dowd 1984). This is the ideology of the White business elite and has been emphasised recently by Government leaders.

(d) *Social democracy*, a version of which determined Afrikaner economic policies since the early decades of union but limited to the White group (O'Meara 1983).

(e) *Marxism*. Floating Marxist ideas are becoming common among Black population groups. A systematic form of Marxism-Leninism is adhered to by the exiled SA Communist Party and by some leaders of banned Black organisations such as the ANC. Its influence among Black opposition groups and the urban Black youth is increasing rapidly (Vilakazi 1984). Influences of Neo-Marxism, Euro-Communism, Democratic Socialism (Prague spring, Allende's Chile, Yugoslavia), and Maoism may be present among a few intellectuals but are without significance at this stage.

(f) *Western communalism* has spilled over from the USA and Europe to some isolated White youth groups but is without significance.

(g) *Anarchism*. Philosophical anarchism does not seem to play a role. But anomy born from the desperation of marginalised groups, particularly unemployed youths, is probably quite common.

8.2.4 D-type: Vital interests

Needs and desires are roughly correlated with the four positions in the need-potency model: absolute poverty, relative deprivation, relative privilege, absolute affluence (See par. 4.2 above). The combination of material and socio-psychological needs and desires leads to a mental predisposition. When this is

focused on specific and concrete wants or demands we call the outcome interests. Interests are, therefore, interpreted and prioritised needs. As such they contain elements of meaning and normativeness. Interests include income, working conditions, leisure, family cohesion, access to recreational and cultural facilities, freedom of association participation in political decision-making, information, religion, aesthetic and, erotic satisfaction, etc.

8.3 COMBINATIONS AND SYNCRETISMS

8.3.1 Combinations of convictions within types

In principle, convictions within each of the four categories do not form natural combinations. Where they do occur, people operate on various levels, e.g. materialism in business, scientific-technological pragmatism in professional gatherings and Christianity in family life. We call that syncretism. There is also the possibility that two convictions combine into a new synthesis. Then a new conviction emerges. Examples of exclusiveness within each type are the following:

(a) You cannot be an orthodox Jew and an African traditionalist at the same time. The rigid monotheism of the former precludes the religious dependence on ancestors in the latter (A type).

(b) You cannot be an Afrikaner nationalist and a universalist liberal at the same time because the open acceptance of all people as of equal right and dignity in the latter precludes the rigid particularism of the former (B-type).

(c) You cannot believe in capitalist free enterprise and in Marxism-Leninism at the same time because the state planned and operated economy demanded by the latter

contradicts the *laissez-faire* principle of the former (C-type).

(d) The demand of workers to receive a greater share of the proceeds of a company is in conflict with the project of share holders to maximise their profits (D-type).

8.3.2 Combinations of convictions between types

In contrast with intra-type combinations, combinations between the four categories seem to occur quite naturally. Here we are faced with two basic questions:

8.3.2.1 Are there any necessary combinations? My hypothesis is that there are none. The combinations that do exist are mainly due to other factors. Let us look at two examples:

(a) African traditional religion (dependence on ancestors) in type A is historically combined with tribalism in type B, communalism in type C and the socially sanctioned need to satisfy basic essentials in type D. But there is no compelling reason why dependence on ancestors cannot go along with universalist views, why tribalism cannot be combined with free enterprise, why communalists cannot be in a position where they long for the satisfaction of elitist need patterns.

(b) There is a historical affinity between secular humanism (type A), individualist universalism (type B), free enterprise liberalism (type C) and middle-class patterns of socially sanctioned need satisfaction (type D). But there is no compelling

reason why a secular humanist cannot be a follower of the Black Consciousness ideology, why a universalist cannot be a Marxist, why a believer in free enterprise cannot have a need satisfaction pattern typical of absolute poverty. While such combinations are obviously not common, they do occur.

8.3.2.2 Are there any impossible combinations? My hypothesis is that there are none, although for historical reasons some combinations do not occur. Let us again look at two examples:

(a) In South Africa a follower of Judaism (type A) is unlikely to be an Afrikaner Nationalist (type B), the latter is not likely to be a Marxist-Leninist (type C), who in turn is not likely to belong to the financial elite (type D). The point is that all these cases could, theoretically, occur if the circumstances were conducive to the combination concerned. Afrikaner Nationalism is, in fact, often combined with a faith strongly oriented towards the Old Testament, while socialist tendencies were not foreign to Afrikaners when they were in an economic underdog position. In low class circles such tendencies persist, mitigated only by an awareness that the real proletariat in South Africa is Black.

(b) Fundamentalist Christianity (type A) is not very common in the Black Consciousness movement (type B), the latter is not readily combined with feudal-patriarchal attitudes (type C), while these

are not often found among unemployed urban youths who are suffering from absolute poverty (type D). But the point is that all these combinations are possible.

8.4 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CONVICTIONS AND STRUCTURAL POSITIONS

8.4.1 The independence of convictions from structural positions and vice versa

The next question is whether there are any necessary or impossible combinations between certain convictions and positions in the power system. My hypothesis is similar to the above: necessary - none; impossible - none.

In the case of type A this is fairly obvious. There are Moslems, Hindus, Christians humanists and materialists in the economic elite and right through the system up to the marginalised.

In the case of type B it is clear that there will be a concentration of tribal- lists in the underdog population while universalists will be found mainly in the economic (and intellectual) elite. But, again, there is no compelling reason why a universalist must belong to the economic elite while a tribalist cannot.

In the case of type C it seems as if there is a natural affinity between an elitist position and free enterprise liberalism. There also seems to be a natural affinity between an underdog position and socialist convictions. Once again, this is not necessarily the case. Many American workers believe in free enterprise while Marxist revolutionary leadership is actually recruited from the

bourgeois elite (the "avant-garde"). The Buddha and St. Francis of Assisi are other examples of diagonal combinations between privilege and concern for the underprivileged. Such combinations are, in fact, quite common. The affinity observed above is, rather, due to the ideological utilisation of a conviction by the group concerned; it is not an inherent necessity. We shall come back to that.

The most likely set of correlations can be found between position in the power system and the sanctioned urge to satisfy certain types of needs and desires. A millionaire is likely to crave for a yacht in Rio de Janeiro while a subsistence peasant may want a hand tractor to plough his field. But even here the evidence is not entirely conclusive. There are rich people whose consumption patterns are relatively austere while poor people are known to indulge in television sets and cars even at the expense of a healthy diet. The rich have become their reference group and social acceptability is measured against living standards represented by status symbols. Material constraints and limited horizons rather than mentality prevent them from adopting the consumption patterns of the rich.

We conclude that structure-related needs and desires are only one dimension of interests, the other being their interpretation and prioritisation. Consider the following possibilities:

(a) An African traditionalist who reached the level of the economic elite may have been encouraged by dreams in which an ancestor directed him to apply shrewd business tactics, not by *laissez-faire* capitalism.

(b) A believer in free enterprise who ended up at the bottom of the pile may simply conclude that, personally, he is no

good for competition and become fatalistic and lethargic, instead of turning to socialism.

(c) There are said to be Marxists who maximise their profits only to use their proceeds and their status to further the Marxist cause.

(d) A person in absolute poverty who is determined to satisfy the basic essentials of his family may rapidly climb the social ladder while a rich person giving away too much of his earnings because he has a conscience about a high standard of living, may end up being a poor man.

These observations lead to a further important hypothesis: Any person can be convinced, in principle, of any concrete set of propositions in any of the four types of convictions, irrespective of his/her position in the potency grid. Conversely, any person of whatever conviction can, in principle, arrive at any position in the potency grid, depending on circumstances which lie outside the inherent nature of the conviction concerned.

8.4.2 The interaction between convictions and structural locations

In the previous sub-section we argued that convictions are independent in principle from structural location, and vice versa. This double statement maintains that neither is a simple and straight-forward derivative of the other. This also means that we distance ourselves from both the classical materialist and idealist positions. The double statement does not imply, however, that there is no relation between the two entities concerned. They are, rather, independent variables in a complex pattern of interaction which can be summarised in the following hypotheses:

(a) There is a continuum of entities ranging from religious or metaphysical convictions to structural position (for the lower four entities of chapter 6, figure 1):

religious/metaphysical convictions
convictions concerning cultural identity
convictions related to resource distribution
vital interests
structure-induced mental predispositions
material and socio-psychological needs
structural position

(b) As we move down the list, the weight of concrete, specific, structure-related needs and desires increases (and vice versa).

(c) As we move up the list the weight of comprehensive horizons of meaning and normativeness increases (and vice versa).

(d) Vital interests are the pivotal entity between convictions and structural positions because they contain both the element of meaning and normativeness and the element of structure-related needs and desires.

(e) While the relation between structural location and interests is relatively straightforward, the relation between convictions and interests is fraught with conflict.

Chapter 7 analysed the relation between structural position and mental predisposition, extending the discussion up to the justification of interests. In chapter 9 we shall discuss the conflict-ridden interaction between interests and convictions. Before we come to that here is some empirical evidence concerning the present chapter to think about:

A-type convictions

1. In the multipurpose survey on intergroup relations of the HSRC, I compared income with religious affiliation and found no correlation whatsoever in all four race groups.

   Whites (n=682) reached their numerical top frequency in the R10 000- R15 000 income category. Top frequency for all religious groups lay in or around this income category as well, with the exception of 'no religion' which had a slightly higher frequency in the R20 000 - R25 000 category.

   For Indians (n=907) the top frequency was divided between the two income categories R1 000 - R4 000 and R4 000 to R7 000, as was the peak for all religious groups with a slight emphasis on the lower category. Coloureds (n=771) reached their top frequency in the R1 000 - R4 000 category with almost as many in the below R999 category. There was a slight variation of religious affiliation between these two groups, e.g. Roman Catholics and Eastern faiths reached a higher peak in the higher income category with a spill-over to the R4 000 - R7 000 category, while Afrikaans and English churches had their peak in the lower category. It could be that the former two types of conviction are slightly elitist.

   Among Blacks (n=909 PWV only) population frequencies reached their peak in the R1 000 - R4 000 income category and all churches reached their peak there as well, including 'Black churches'. This is rather surprising because I assumed that African Independent churches are concentrated more on the lower income ranks. Perhaps the reason for this finding is that only urban Blacks of the PWV-area have been covered in the HSRC survey.

2. One has to add, however, that denominational affiliation is a very poor indicator of A-type convictions since it only covers the institutional aspect. Without doubt there are vast differences of theological understanding and spiritual commitment within each denominational institution. And such differences cut across denominational boundaries. Liberation theology and the charismatic movement, to quote only two relevant examples, can be found in a great variety of churches and in most cases they are in opposition to other movements within each of those churches. To reach a valid conclusion regarding the interaction of structural position and A-type conviction one should correlate these two entities more directly. It is, for instance, unlikely

that there is much sympathy for liberation theology (including Black theology) amongst privileged Whites, where spiritualising tendencies can be expected to be much more prominent.

3. In the multipurpose survey quoted above the following responses were registered to statements which could be construed to be expressions of withdrawal from social issues and social involvement respectively Clearly, the withdrawal syndrome has a higher frequency among Whites in both cases:

	Whites	Blacks
"A religious movement should not get itself involved in politics."		
all agree	79,28%	54,55%
all disagree	14,75%	28,19%
"Social justice should be the most important item in the work of religious movements."		
all agree	37,37%	64,33%
all disagree	40,40%	12,44%

In spite of these findings, Whites show a remarkable openness towards the social responsibility of the churches; 52,10% thought that religious organisations should bring the different population groups closer together; 54,16% thought that religious movements should cooperate to change South African society; 44,82% thought they should protest peacefully against injustices. On the other hand Blacks (and other underdog population groups) were remarkably undecided on these issues - a phenomenon which we discuss on p. 194f. below.

B-type convictions

1. In the multipurpose survey of the HSRC responses to the statement "If people of all colours can *mix freely*, they will live in peace" were as follows:

Whites	Afrikaans speaking (n=381)	English-speaking (n=259)
agree	11,55%	30,88%
disagree	78,74%	48,65%

Blacks (n=915 PWV only)	
agree	80,40%
disagree	13,04%

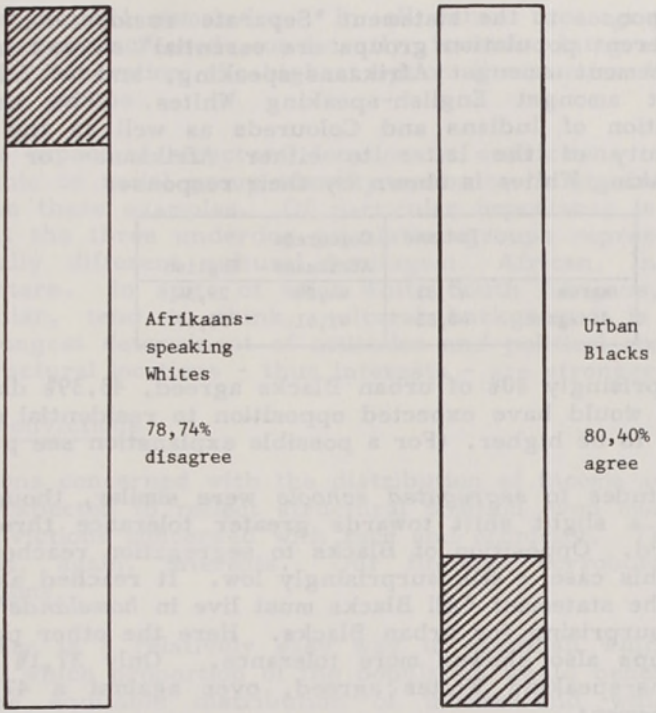

Figure 1: Responses to the statement: "If people of all colours can mix freely, they will live in peace"

Amongst Coloureds 75,75% of the Afrikaans-speakers (n=528) and 83,33% of the English-speakers (n=151) agreed. Among Indians 68,49% agreed (n=730, English-speakers only).

The correlation between structural position and conviction is highly conspicuous in this case. It can be explained as follows: In a situation where racial barrier obstructs vertical mobility this is beneficial to the interests of the White elite and detrimental to the interests of the Black underdog. That the English-speakers are slightly more liberal is due to historical factors (cf. 7.3.1) and also to the fact that Afrikaans-speakers are in a slightly less advantageous position on the labour market on average than English-speakers. Those threatened most by competition from down below have often been shown to be most hostile to integration not only in South Africa but elsewhere as well.

2. Responses to the statement "Separate *residential areas* for different population groups are essential" showed an 85,31% agreement amongst Afrikaans-speaking, and 68,72% agreement amongst English-speaking Whites. The ambiguous position of Indians and Coloureds as well as the cultural affinity of the latter to either Afrikaans- or English-speaking Whites is shown by their response:

	Indians	Coloureds	
		Afrikaans	English
agree	47,81	44,89	29,34
disagree	40,83	42,61	58,67

Surprisingly 40% of urban Blacks agreed, 43,39% disagreed. One would have expected opposition to residential segregation to be higher. (For a possible explanation see p. 247f).

3. Attitudes to *segregated schools* were similar, though there was a slight shift towards greater tolerance through the board. Opposition of Blacks to segregation reached 54,70% in this case - still surprisingly low. It reached almost 80% in the statement "All Blacks must live in *homelands*", not at all surprising for urban Blacks. Here the other population groups also showed more tolerance. Only 37,1% of Afrikaans-speaking Whites agreed, over against a 47,9% disagreement.

4. The most remarkable findings came to light in the question "Who will form the government under which you and your family will live *in 20 years' time*?". Obviously responses to such a question will not only be guided by historical speculation but also by hopes and fears, thus by vital interests. Only 4,84% of Whites and 20,15% of Blacks believed that the Government will be entirely Black. Only 15,25% of Whites and 27,05% of Blacks believed it will be White. Only 19,21% of Whites and 0,66% of Blacks believed that it will be run by the White-Coloured-Indian dispensation of the new constitution. The majority of all race groups, in contrast, believed that it will be run by all races together: Whites 40,18%, Indians 41,88%, Coloureds 42,36% and Blacks 34,61%. So, as far as the *future* dispensation is concerned there seems to be more consensus than could be expected.

5. In a question which asked what the relationship between different population groups *should* be, ranging from complete segregation to complete integration, the majority of Whites (34,16%) opted for partial segregation and partial integration with a strong tendency towards segregation

amongst the remainder. In all other race groups percentages increased consistently towards integration with 'total integration' the highest option (just under 40%) in all three groups.

The impact of structural location on convictions concerning ethnic or racial group identity seems to be absolutely clear from these examples. Of particular importance is the fact that the three underdog population groups represent three totally different cultural heritages: African, Indian and Western. In spite of what White South Africans, in particular, tend to think, cultural background is not the strongest determinant of attitudes and political convictions, Structural locations - thus interests - are stronger.

C-type convictions

Convictions concerned with the distribution of income and wealth can be expected to reflect structural position even more clearly than convictions concerned with race and ethnicity. The crucial factor is, again, interests. Our findings corroborate these expectations.

1. There is a relatively easy way to establish which groups and which proportion of the population would benefit from a more equitable distribution of income and which would suffer loss. One simply has to plot the income curve over against a horizontal line depicting average income. In chapter 3, section 3.3.1 figure 8 we have plotted gross income against average private consumption expenditure for reasons explained in note (b) below. Assuming that taxation and investment remain unchanged the graph shows that approximately 77% of South African earners would gain from a more equitable distribution of income, 23% would suffer loss.

   Notes

   (a) Since the dependency rate among the poorer sections of the population is much higher than among the richer sections, the percentage of those who would gain in terms not of income earners but population as a whole would be even higher.

   (b) It is not very meaningful to utilise a straight average income per earner (this would amount to the GDP per earner at factor prices which was R6 603 in 1980) because the presence of the high income group distorts the picture considerably.

In the first place much of the income of the high income group is reinvested in the productive process and in the second place progressive taxation implies that much of the tax burden is carried by the latter. If we wanted to disregard these two factors, the quantity to work with is private consumption expenditure per earner which amounted to R3 473 in 1980 (calculated from South Africa 1982b: table 21.16 and South Africa 1982a: table 8). This figure is not entirely compatible with the gross income graph but since savings and investments as well as taxation are not very substantial at that income level it is accurate enough for our purposes.

In figure 2 of this chapter we plotted gross income according to race groups in 1980 over against average private consumption expenditure. It would seem that the following proportions of the race groups concerned would gain from a more equitable distribution:

Whites	26%
Asians	58%
Coloureds	72%
Blacks	97%

Mindful of not only the higher dependency rate amongst poorer sections of the population, but also of the fact that a number of earners have been included in the richer groups who are economically not active but earn an income supplementary to that of the main bread-winner (say by means of shares on the stock exchange, rents etc.) the ratios will in fact be more skew than these figures suggest.

Can convictions be shown to be correlated to these ratios? Indeed they can. In the multipurpose survey of the HSRC the responses to the statement "Peace in South Africa can only be ensured by equal redistribution of wealth among all inhabitants" (the most radically socialist statement in the survey) were as follows:

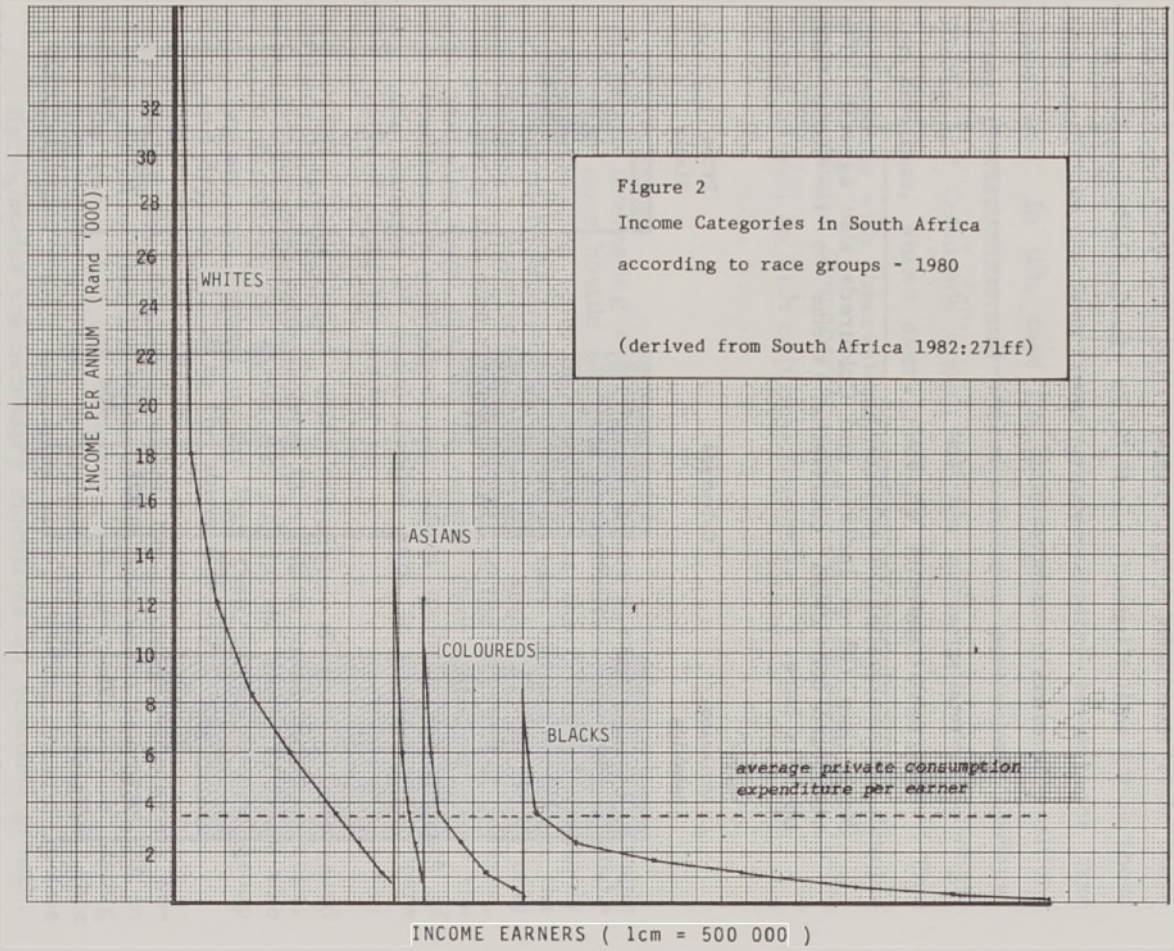

Figure 2
Income Categories in South Africa according to race groups - 1980

(derived from South Africa 1982:271ff)

Whites	Afrikaans-speaking (n=381)	English-speaking (n=259)
total agree	19,42	25,03
total disagree	67,72	57,53
Blacks (n=915 PWV only)		
total agree	82,18	
total disagree	8,52	

More than 70% of Indians and Coloureds also agreed. The structure-conviction correlation seems to be more than obvious here.

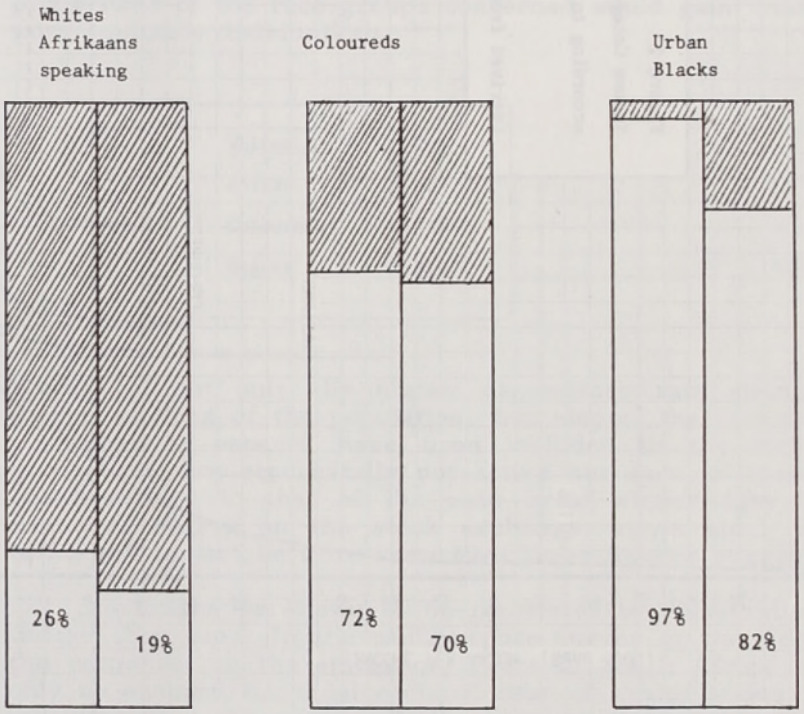

Figure 3: Correlation between percentage of population group which would gain from redistribution of income (left column) and percentage of group with socialist leanings (right hand column).

The point to be made is that there is a structural propensity of those below the line (thus those who would gain from equity) to opt for some kind of socialist redistribution of income while there is a structural propensity of all those above the line (thus those who would suffer loss from greater equity) to opt for free enterprise. In this case the link between structural position, mental predisposition and interests becomes particularly obvious. Blacks and Coloureds would, on this basis, opt overwhelmingly for socialism, Whites overwhelmingly for free enterprise. This corresponds with observations made at mixed conferences devoted to such issues (Nürnberger 1978a: 11ff.; Nürnberger 1979a: 16ff.) as well as with empirical research.

NOTES

(a) It is interesting that the Afrikaans-speakers in the sample were more hostile to equal redistribution than the English-speakers, in spite of the fact that the latter are commonly believed to be less religious and more materialistic than the former. Apparently those who acquired privilege only recently and who are still aware of the abysses of poverty, are also more anxious to defend their position, while the traditionally privileged can afford to be more unaware of the dangers of social decline and, in consequence, more relaxed about the matter.

(b) Afrikaans-speakers who "strongly disagree", increased steadily with incomes from 13 - 25% in lower income groups, to 42,55% in the above R25 000 income group. Those who "agree" are highest in the less than R1 000 income group and drop to 12,72% in the above R25 000 category.

(c) Among the English-speakers the "strongly disagree" respondents steadily climbed with income to reach 14,29% in the above R25 000 category. It is clear that a strong commitment to 'free enterprise' among the English elite prevails: Those who earn more, deserve it and income discrepancies are necessary incentives for economic growth.

(d) In contrast, Whites responded much more positively to the statement "Peace in South Africa can only be ensured by guaranteeing greater wealth for the poor". 56,69% of the Afrikaans-speakers and 43,63% of the English-speakers agreed. This inconsistency seems to indicate that an abstract attitude of goodwill and generosity surpassed the readiness for concrete sacrifices.

(e) Apart from the economic reason, there is also a political reason for the phenomenon that the underdog population groups have socialist tendencies. Because of their social impotence, they can only muster power on a collective basis. A collectivist structure-based mental predisposition is the result. In the case of the Afrikaans-speaking Whites this was activated in the form of ethnic solidarity, in the case of the Black population groups it is activated in the form of low-class solidarity. The reason for this discrepancy is also structure-related: Afrikaans-speakers are a minority and could only find a power base in ethnic exclusivism, while Blacks are a majority for whom ethnicity jeopardises the acquisition of power (see 9.2.2 below).

2. Schlemmer (1983c:5) found that of his sample of migrant labourers 74% opted for 'a government which makes Black people as equal as possible in education, wages and housing' (socialist option), while only 25% were in favour of a 'government which rewards clever, hard-working people, allowing them to be wealthier than others' (free enterprise option). In another study of urban Blacks in Natal and the Transvaal, the percentages were much more polarised: 92% for the former, 7% for the latter alternative.

NOTE:

The study also revealed that there had not as yet emerged a clear commitment to a definite ideological strategy for the achievement of these goals. The attitudes between typically liberal and interventionist policies were still relatively balanced. Indications are that if Blacks were allowed to advance rapidly they might opt for the free enterprise system. If not, radical views will, without doubt, find a very fertile ground indeed. Similar findings are recorded by Van Wyk (1984:19) for Black elites. Workers certainly are more critical of the free enterprise system (Nasser 1984). It is significant in this connection that youth (aged 18-24), skilled and semi-skilled workers, those with education between Std. 3 and 7 and those attracted to the ANC are least supportive of private enterprise according to Schlemmer.

These examples leave no doubt concerning the impact of structural position on convictions concerning the distribution of economic resources.

Of course, structural propensity (or mental predisposition derived from structural location) is only one of the factors; interests are interpreted and prioritised needs and desires, and the system of meaning with its normative system also plays a role. Blacks have a communalist cultural background, Whites have been socialised into an individualistic, competitive world. Moreover, there is no compelling reason why a wealthy White cannot become convinced of the merits of Marxist socialism, or that a poor Black cannot become convinced of the merits of free enterprise liberalism. But since needs and desires are powerful motivators the weight of such a structural propensity should not be underestimated. The fact that Indians who have a cultural background different from Blacks, and Coloureds who share the cultural background of Whites, responded much in the same pattern as urban Blacks did, shows where the weight lies.

8.6 SUMMARY

This chapter gave a brief survey of convictions relevant to the South African situation and hypothesised about their relation among each other and their possible correlation with structural positions.

We distinguished between three types of convictions - religion based, culture based and economy based - and enumerated the main groups under each type. We added interests to complete the picture since the latter contain elements of meaning and normativeness (8.2).

We then considered possible combinations. Within a given type there is a certain degree of antagonism and exclusiveness, although syncretisms and syntheses are possible. In contrast, combinations between types are quite common. Thus you find Christians (type A) who are nationalists and Christians who are universalists (type B), Christians who are capitalist liberals, and Christians who are socialists (type C). (8.4).

We then hypothesised about a possible correlation between structural locations and convictions. Here a dialectical answer seems appropriate. On the one hand convictions appear to be quite independent of structural position, and vice versa (8.4.1).

On the other hand these seemingly independent variables do interact in a significant way. Interaction intensifies as we move from religion based, through culture based to economy based convictions. The strongest correlation obviously obtains between structural positions and interests because interests represent structure-induced material and socio-psychological needs (8.4.2).

The overall impression we gain from this chapter is that interests are the pivotal point between structural positions and convictions, containing both elements of structure related needs and desires and elements of meaning and normativeness. While the affinity between structural position and interests appears to be relatively close (cf. chapter 7), the actual conflict takes place between convictions and vital interests. To this area we shall now turn (chapter 9).