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How to cite this thesis
A History of Noordgesig to 1994: Changing Coloured Identity

BY WENDELL MOORE

MA DISSERTATION
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MASTER OF ARTS

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UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
SUPERVISOR: PROF P. ALEXANDER
CO-SUPERVISOR: PROF N. ERLANK
Submission date: May 2015
Declaration

I declare this dissertation is my own unaided work. It has been submitted for the degree, Master of Arts in humanities to the University of the Johannesburg in South Africa. It has not been submitted previously for any other degree or examination at any other University.

..........................................................

Wendell Moore
2015
Abstract

This dissertation presents a history of the coloured township of Noordgesig, adjacent to Soweto, from its establishment in 1939 up to the end of apartheid in 1994. It made use of archival documents related to the township and inhabitants’ experiences of living there. The study therefore employed a qualitative framework to describe the multi-layered history of Noordgesig.

The township was established as a temporary home for the poorest class of coloureds removed from inner city slums. Moreover, the authorities considered the type of coloured people it housed comparable to blacks in terms of class, skin colour and identity. Additionally, Noordgesig’s geographical location next to Soweto and its temporary status, because it was only proclaimed a coloured group area in December 1988, were all major factors in its development.

The literature on coloured townships in South Africa is largely based on experiences encountered in the Cape region. However, while this literature concurs that coloured racial identity is heterogeneous, fewer studies regard other local constructions of the identity. Rather many of these studies make broader claims to a national character of colouredness based on these regional findings. This gap in the literature emphasizes the need for more local studies of coloured history in other parts of South Africa.

This is the first academic account of Noordgesig and the first recent study of a coloured township in Johannesburg. The research forms part of an exceedingly limited number of studies that seriously regard identity experiences in Johannesburg’s coloured townships. It shows the degree to which coloured experiences in Noordgesig were shaped by particular local circumstances. Therefore, I challenge the literature of coloured identity in South Africa because I show how research on another part of the country deviates with what is generally asserted about coloured history.

There are two other arguments that complicate, and show the nuances embedded within, the histories of coloured townships in South Africa. Firstly, in Noordgesig, the interrelation between race, ethnicity, class, and housing, influenced how local constructions of identity experiences were produced and what types of transformations these went through during the twentieth century. The people housed in the township tended to be darker skinned poorer coloureds marginalized by the state, other coloureds and the black people of Soweto.
Secondly, I probe Adhikari’s assertion that coloured identity remained remarkably stable during the last century. Segregated coloured townships, away from interracial housing that many people had lived in, shifted how identity was experienced among coloureds in Johannesburg. For instance, relationships between Noordgesig residents and its black neighbours in Orlando, Soweto gradually became strained during apartheid. In the 1940s and 1950s, Noordgesig residents shopped, attended dances and shared trains with Orlando residents, but by the 1960s, the Noordgesig Tenants’ Association feared racial hostility might take place between coloureds in Noordgesig and the blacks of Soweto.

The experience of Noordgesig’s inhabitants in terms of race and class, as well as the changes to coloured identity over time, provide a more complex history of the township. The similarity of the coloureds housed at Noordgesig to blacks, in class, identity, skin colour and ethnicity, justified its placement next to Orlando. Accordingly, there are relations between infrastructural development that influenced how and where the township was constructed and the type of coloured person accommodated. Nonetheless, the temporary nature of the township remained present in the minds of residents and authorities, from its establishment, ultimately until its proclamation as a coloured group area at the end of apartheid.

The importance of this history is that the substantial amount of research about Soweto does not include Noordgesig, while more generally, urban histories focus on South Africa’s black rather than coloured townships. Therefore, this study raises new questions about coloured identity, and history, and shows that there is a need for more studies of coloured townships outside of the Cape region: in this way providing a fuller account of Johannesburg’s urban history.
Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of Noordgesig residents. I would like to thank all the interviewees, Gifi, Bok, Auntie Bernie, Auntie Yvonne and Auntie Gene, Sister Glover, Sister Nadine, Auntie Poppie, Auntie Freeda, Auntie Lucky, Auntie Joyce and Bra George. I would also like to acknowledge Melissa and Mrs Williams whom I interviewed but sadly passed away before the research was completed.

Additionally, I would like to thank all the staff at the various archives I consulted for providing invaluable assistance and patience in retrieving historical documents for my usage.

I would also like to show gratitude to Ernest Latola for helping me complete some of the interviews. In addition, the field workers who aided in the electoral day research, including, Tamlyn, Jenine, Lorna and Lysander. As well as all those who provided invaluable informal interview material including, Raven Martin, Basil Douglas, Oom Charlie, Jeffery March and Bobo’s.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my family for supporting me: Lee my son, Joshua my other son, Carmen my partner, my mother, sister and Uncle Lucas. I dedicate this to my father but more especially my mom for believing in me. Thank you!
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<th>Full Form</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACAA</td>
<td>Alexandra Coloured Associated Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APO</td>
<td>African Peoples Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZAPO</td>
<td>Azanian Peoples Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Black Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCM</td>
<td>Black Consciousness Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEE</td>
<td>Black Economic Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLA's</td>
<td>Black Local Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSAS</td>
<td>Congress of Southern African Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSATU</td>
<td>Congress of South African Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPRC</td>
<td>Coloured Persons’ Representative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Democratic Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCC</td>
<td>Johannesburg City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCEA</td>
<td>Joint Council of Europeans and Africans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JECC</td>
<td>Joint European and Coloured Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHB Ref</td>
<td>Johannesburg Reference library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEUM</td>
<td>Non-European Unity Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAB</td>
<td>National Archives of South Africa (Pretoria)</td>
</tr>
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<td>SAIRR</td>
<td>South African Institute of Race Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>South African Students’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>United Democratic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WITS</td>
<td>University of Witwatersrand Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRAB</td>
<td>West Rand Administration Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWI</td>
<td>World War One</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>World War Two</td>
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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

1.1 Problem Identification

My first memories of Noordgesig are of a church with tall slender trees (the NG Kerk), of the smell of burning coal stoves and the overwhelming smoke cloud that would hover over the township in the early evenings as the sun set. I also recall the bare dirt sports grounds clearly, as well as the fact that the house my grandmother occupied was rather small with only two bedrooms, a living room-cum dining room area, a kitchen, and bathroom. I was also acutely aware that I was in an area of Johannesburg where coloureds lived, and whose mother tongue was Afrikaans.¹ These memories are from the early 1980s on my visits to my grandmother from Swaziland where I was living at the time.

Photograph 1.1: A view from outside my house in Noordgesig²

¹ The term coloured is used with respect to those who might term themselves as such. No inverted commas are used (i.e. ‘coloured’), or capital letters (i.e. Coloured) because they insinuate that the identity does not exist in the South African context or that it is only existent here. By embracing the term coloured I am trying to represent (as best as I can) a people in all their individual, local, racial, political, social and economic circumstances. To be sure, I too am uncertain of my own South African colouredness let alone those of other people, but I am not in denial of the identities’ relevancy to many people of South Africa. For R.E. van der Ross the term coloured is not degrading and rather depends on how it is used. There are also language constraints that make the term useful to use, and, as he believes, there is a coloured people. R.E. van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes: An Inside look at the Coloured People (Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers, 1979), 3-4. Note that the dissertation will explain and discuss more fully the history of this term in Chapter 2, p.27-42.

² Note the mine dumps in the background.
Noordgesig township (literally, north view/facing) is situated at the edge of Soweto’s northern most boundary, but within its territory. It is the first township seen on entering Soweto from the frequently used New Canada Road. Outsiders as well as residents, in the majority, recognize Noordgesig as a coloured township. The township is one of the multiple locations that make up greater Soweto. However, this is difficult to discern from historical works, which, if they mention Noordgesig at all, only name it, and predominantly focus on the establishment of Orlando in the 1930s, and then later in the 1950s, the construction of Meadowlands and Diepkloof, or the uprisings of 16 June 1976. The historical analysis of Soweto largely ignores Noordgesig. To be sure, there is no complete historical record of the coloured people of Johannesburg and their living areas. Thus, Adhikari points out that, in South African history writing, coloureds are often ‘written out of the narrative and marginalized to a few throwaway comments scattered through the text’.\(^3\) Noordgesig was not administered as part of greater Orlando until after the end of apartheid, and is therefore distinguished from it, which consequently might offer a reason why histories of Soweto never include its establishment in their analysis.\(^4\) Because it was established for coloured occupation, government documents relating to Noordgesig are filed in the various departments dealing with coloured affairs and not those of Orlando or Soweto. Accordingly, a study of this township fills in this absence in historical literature.

Noordgesig Township was established on the farms Diepkloof and Klipspruit purchased by the Johannesburg City Council (JCC) during the 1930s, which would only in 1963 become collectively known as Soweto. Township areas in the southwestern areas of Johannesburg established prior to the apartheid era include Kliptown in 1904, Orlando East 1932, Pimville 1934, and Noordgesig 1939.\(^5\) The

---
layout of Noordgesig was approved by the JCC as early as 23 March 1937. Therefore, the history of this township must be included not only when writing any history tracing the origins of the southwestern areas of Johannesburg just prior to World War Two (WWII), but also in studies of early black township formations on the Witwatersrand.

Aerial Photograph 1.1: Noordgesig Soweto showing Orlando (East and West) and Diepkloof

The shortage of black housing was desperate particularly near the end of the 1930s up to the end of the 1940s. The South African war effort however curtailed housing construction, which was slowly becoming a priority for the JCC, the Transvaal provincial government, and the national government. The substantially increased rates of urban migration into the cities, particularly in the Witwatersrand, preceding and during WWII, caused by increased manufacturing industries and employment opportunities there, culminated in this shortage of accommodation for new arrivals. Squatter camps were common during the early to mid-1940s and spread throughout what today is Orlando West and Moroka townships in Soweto. By the end of the

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6 SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057, 10 March 1939. I have used 1939 as the establishment date because the first loan was granted during this year, but as I discuss in Chapter 3, the actual construction and completion of houses occurs between 1940 and 1942.

7 See ethics section 1.3 on the use of racial terminology.

8 The term squatter camp is problematic but commonly used to describe the ‘informal settlements’ created by the housing shortage and massive urban migration during the war period. See Chapter 2, p14-27.
1940s, the National Party (NP) government was faced with the challenge, greater than before, of trying to house these people. Motivated by the Group Areas Act of 1950, large numbers of people were displaced and forcibly removed from urban areas. This resulted in an unprecedented growth in new townships allocated in Soweto by the state. Noordgesig, ‘Coloured Township Adjoining Orlando’ was already a decade old when Diepkloof and Meadowlands were built to house a good majority of those forcibly removed, particularly from the western areas of the city.

The coloured population is far smaller than that of blacks in South Africa and is one reason why fewer studies concerning coloured housing in Johannesburg exist. Moreover, the coloured population of Johannesburg is minor compared to that of Cape Town so that most studies about coloured people tend to focus on that city. It is not just at city level where this population difference occurs but also at the provincial level. For instance, in 1960 the coloured population in the Cape Province was 1,330,089 or more than 12 times the Transvaal population of 108,007. While in 2001, Gauteng’s coloured population was 337,974 (3.8% of the province total) compared to the Western Cape at 2,438,976 (53.9% of the province total). Therefore, research on coloured people mostly focuses on the Cape and pays less attention to those found in other regions, cities and townships. Therefore, the significance of this dissertation is that it engages with how coloured identity existed in one township of Johannesburg that adds to the scant literature in this regard.

Nonetheless, coloured identities are intensely contested in South Africa and, because of their heterogeneous nature, necessarily vary geographically. Furthermore, ‘the apartheid government in particular, was a powerful allocator of identity’, so that in order to appreciate coloured identities’ nature, local coloured

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10 SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: 10 March 1939. The Township itself was designated for coloured occupation in the original government documents dated to the late 1930s. Soweto for many inhabitants of Noordgesig means the ‘other’, which is both denied and accepted.  
experiences must be better understood. Therefore, how apartheid laws influenced Noordgesig resident’s experiences in the urban milieu will form an important component of this study. However, focus on apartheid’s categorizations and other external identifications do not ‘cover the interior dimensions of the concept [coloured]’ and reveal little about the ‘significance of coloured identity for the people who have identified or have been identified as such’; i.e. they do not probe deeply enough into ‘coloured self-understanding’. This dissertation avoids grand narratives of colouredness by paying specific attention to the dynamics of individual coloured experiences and inhabitant’s political, economic, and everyday social activities. Furthermore, Noordgesig’s history provides the opportunity to show the changes that have occurred in three historical epochs: one decade before apartheid begins, the early apartheid era to 1976, and the late-apartheid period to the elections of 1994.

What is the history of Noordgesig Township in Soweto and its residents from its establishment, through to the end of the apartheid era? Recording this history is the ultimate aim of this dissertation. To answer this question the dissertation will provide an analysis of the coloured identity experiences of Noordgesig residents and show how these have been shaped and changed over time in relation to other identity experiences in Johannesburg and South Africa.

Ultimately, the dissertation makes two key interconnected arguments that complicate the history of Noordgesig and how identities have been constructed there. The arguments provide a complex analysis of the township and revolve around how local constructions of coloured identity are shaped by specific experiences. The dissertation shows that the experience of coloured people in Noordgesig accentuates the heterogeneous nature of the identity. For the most part, however, coloured identity has been grouped as a homogenous national whole. The arguments that illuminate local identity experiences include, the shifting dominance between race, class,

17 Texts that group the identity under a national whole include for example, Adhikari, Not White Enough, 2005; Adhikari, ‘Contending Approaches to Coloured identity and the History of Coloured People of South Africa’ History Compass, (2005), 1-16; Ahluwalia & Zegeye, ‘Between Black and White’, 253-280; and to some extent Erasmus, Coloured by History, 2001.
ethnicity and skin colour in Noordgesig, and lastly, changes to coloured identity experiences over time.\textsuperscript{18}

The first argument shows that the relationship between race and class, but also skin colour and ethnicity, complicated how coloured identity was experienced in Noordgesig. Prior to apartheid, class, with its linkages to race, colour, respectability and ethnicity were the determining features in the establishment of the township. However, apartheid era townships, located in group areas, resulted in society beginning to regard their identity constructions more firmly in racial terms. To be sure, class, ethnicity and colour remained areas of concern during the apartheid era for the state as well as the public. From the late 1970s, the state as well as South African citizens began to use social mobility, ethnic associations and ‘grey [living] areas’ as a way out of these racial bindings.\textsuperscript{19}

Lastly, the dissertation argues that coloured identity experiences in Noordgesig indeed went through changes during the last century. Segregated coloured townships, particularly after the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950, reorganized coloured identity and changed the experiences people would and could have amongst themselves and with others. The dissertation also points cautiously to a second change occurring after the 16 June 1976 Soweto uprisings, as coloured people began to evaluate their position as a liminal group in relation to black politics: This argument however requires further study.

1.2 Research Methodology

The study used a qualitative framework to describe the multi-layered history of Noordgesig. Archival source materials directly related to the township are adequately available while secondary source material are scarce. Primary sources included archival documents related to the establishment of Noordgesig as well as life history interviews of Noordgesig residents. Allocating equal weight to archival data and life history interviews was a priority. The primary archives used were the National Archives of South Africa in Pretoria (SAB) and the University of Witwatersrand (WITS).
Department of Historical Papers, as well as records obtained from the Johannesburg Public library (JHB Ref).

Archival data provided a glimpse into the state’s involvement in the development of the township. This data provided evidence that showed how Noordgesig was designed as a temporary measure for lower class coloureds. Archival data was especially important in recreating the history of the township at its embryonic stages as most of the original residents from the early 1940s are either deceased, were too young at the time to recall finer details, or, have moved out of Noordgesig. The earliest resident of Noordgesig interviewed, came to the township in 1943 at the age of thirteen\(^{20}\). However, the National Archives provided less useful information about Noordgesig from the mid-1960s onwards.

The Department of Historical Papers at the University of the Witwatersrand also provided useful government documents as well as source materials from organizations and groups interested in coloured affairs, such as the Joint European Coloured Councils (JECC), the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), or, the various papers of individuals concerned with the administration of Noordgesig or coloured affairs. However, these too did not provide enough information about Noordgesig at the end of apartheid. The Johannesburg Public Library was extremely useful in filling the gap in archival documents related to Noordgesig from the late 1960s to the end of apartheid. The documents found there were principally from the City of Johannesburg, Coloured and Asian Affairs Department year-end reports.\(^{21}\) Altogether, the archives consulted enabled me to piece together the many administrative affairs concerned with Noordgesig as well as a few important personal documents, for instance letters of the Noordgesig Tenants’ Association.

Life histories provided information pertaining to the personal and group experiences of Noordgesig residents. The interviews conducted were with various age cohorts. The ages of interviewees ranged from 87 (Auntie Joyce) to 38 (Bok). Thirteen interviews were completed, five of which used the help of a fieldworker. In total there were four men and nine women interviewed. Many of the interviews were in the presence of relatives or friends. In essence, therefore, more than thirteen people were interviewed. Table 1.1 below, presents the interviewees.

\(^{20}\) Interview Auntie Poppie, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014.

\(^{21}\) The department’s name changed over the course of some years and began to include the administration of white housing as well as a few black compounds by the 1980s.
Most of those interviewed were older than 60 and provided useful information about living in the township during the apartheid era. Three of the women had lived in Noordgesig since the 1940s. The limitations to the life history interviews were that fewer were conducted with men and no formal interviews were conducted with people in their fifties. This age group would have been those who were students in and around the 16 June 1976 uprisings. The section dealing with these uprisings, Chapter 5, however, used two interviews of residents, who were politically active in the late 1960s and early 1970s archived at WITS. Moreover, a number of useful informal interviews were conducted over the course of the fieldwork that added to the narratives I had received.

**Table 1.1: The Names, Other People Present and Ages of the Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Other people present</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auntie Joyce</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister Glover</td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auntie Poppie</td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Williams</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auntie Yvonne</td>
<td>Auntie Gene</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister Nadine</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auntie lucky</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bra George</td>
<td>Guests</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auntie Freeda</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auntie Bernie</td>
<td>Daughters (40s), (30s)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifi</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr White</td>
<td>Mother (63)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bok</td>
<td>Wife (39)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Life history interviews conducted by author and field worker Ernest Latola.

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23 The titles used here are how I refer to these people as a community member. Therefore, it is a sign of respect to call an older person Auntie, while I use first names for people my age. I had never met Mrs. Williams before the interview, and this was the title we addressed her with there. I have titled Bra George as such, which is a colloquial yet respectful acknowledgement of an older male person. Mr. White is my age and I commonly refer to him as such, rather than his real name Keith. The sisters are women of faith.
Through establishing contacts with residents (I also live in Noordgesig) it was possible to get people who were happy to be interviewed and could further refer me to people who would fit my criteria and be willing to be interviewed. My residency in the community required an extra awareness of my own predispositions while also becoming ‘part of the interactions of the setting’ as an ‘ethnographic self’. My participation as an observing resident fits the description of the in-depth on site fieldwork required in ethnography. Everyday contact and access to the township meant that personal observations could become evident in presenting this history, although, I have tried to limit this bias. Jacob Dlamini, however, has called for more ethnographic accounts of South African townships, in an effort to understand the nostalgia of some people’s accounts of life during apartheid. This formed a foundation for the need to understand ordinary coloured people’s lives more thoroughly. The life histories presented a nuanced understanding of the interests and concerns of the community that formed over time and how these were constructed and deconstructed.

Interviews were conducted with Noordgesig residents only, many of whom did identify themselves as coloured (however not all did). Furthermore, permission to use personal documents such as photographs, letters, rent papers, and pay slips presented in the process of the interviews, benefited the research. The interviews primarily focused on gathering information, stories, and personal narratives related to the history of Noordgesig. Through the interviews, it was possible to analyse how apartheid shaped inhabitants’ lives and the ways in which people responded. Tales of

26 J. Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia* (Sunnyside, Auckland Park: Jacana, 2009). The literature covering nostalgia is broad and is not covered here, nor is the term used extensively in the dissertation.
27 Based on the appeal to rethink how we write about apartheid history, this dissertation did not follow the more common political narrative provided through the leadership of Auntie Vesta Smith or Basil Douglas. Auntie Vesta Smith is regarded as a stalwart of the anti-apartheid struggle and received a state funeral by the ANC government in 2013. Basil Douglas led the rent boycotts in Noordgesig and surrounding coloured areas during the early 1990s, and remains an active politician today. However, I have had a number of informal interviews with Basil Douglas in the course of this research and this did provide invaluable information. See for example Auntie Vesta Smith, SAHO [http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/vesta-smith](http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/vesta-smith) Accessed 27 October 2014.
gangsterism, alcohol and violence were also conveyed to me, but the focus for this dissertation, was on other life occurrences such as those experienced through church and sport. This was a necessary requirement in order to side-step stereotypical portrayals of coloured townships and their residents. Moreover, it allows the dissertation to provide a narrative from the perspective of the working class majority. To be sure, many people, particularly the more elderly, referred to church without the researcher even posing the question.

The open-ended questions of the formal interviews provided a glimpse of how inhabitants experienced Noordgesig as well as giving context to the political, social, and economic history of the township. Although the original intention was to record all the interviews, it was decided that detailed written notes would be used instead because of the discomfit that I found amongst interviewees when trying to record them. Without recording however, I was able to allow the conversation to be more intimate yet comprehensive. The oral investigation paid particular attention to the activity of individuals as well as the complex issues of class, gender, local, and national politics that no doubt infuse their narratives. They provide a fresh account of township life, not necessarily away from politics, but rather, from the view of people whose everyday experiences of apartheid were not only those of oppression or political activism.

From archival data and the life histories collected, as well as pertinent secondary sources, it was possible to recreate a social, political and economic life of the community and its residents. The post-data gathering phase made use of a chronological outline of the history of Noordgesig that made it easier to distinguish similarities and differences. This allowed the researcher to periodize the information to establish trends and patterns. Cross-referencing life history and archival data with secondary sources enabled an extensive discussion of the main themes of this research: namely, Noordgesig Township and coloured people's experiences of living there.

1.3 Ethical Considerations

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29 ‘There are many myths about the Coloured people of South Africa; most of them are based on ignorance or error and supported or nourished by self-interest and prejudice’. Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 1.


31 See Laws et al., Research for Development, 399.
Being aware of the inherent shortcomings and biases of a position as both researcher and resident of Noordgesig required careful and constant reflexivity. Moreover, this historical analysis only provided a singular interpretation of the township to which many inhabitants can add. Additionally, this dissertation has at times used racial terminology that may be considered as being politically incorrect. For instance, the term ‘coloured’ describes all those people who would refer to their identities as such. The term ‘black people’ in this dissertation has a double meaning. On the one hand, it refers to all those who would define their identity as black as opposed to coloured. On the other hand, it also describes all ‘non-white’ South Africans. Sometimes however the dissertation will refer to ‘blacks, coloureds, and Indians’ to describe people who are not white and to make it clear when it is referring to population groups who were most affected by racism and segregation in South Africa. For Ahluwalia & Zegeye this approach is called ‘critical anti-racism’ and consciously ‘works with and takes into account the notion of “difference”’.33

Sensitive issues exposed in the interviews meant that additional awareness was required when discussing these. It was necessary to inform all interviewees of the reason for conducting this research and his or her right to refuse, at any time, to answer a question or even participate in the process. All of the interviewees provided their consent. The dissertation uses the real names of interviewees unless they have refused this option. It was also communicated to participants that no reward would be offered to them for their part in this research. Upon completion, this research will be a recorded history of Noordgesig that will be made available to the public library of Noordgesig and a shorter version for upload onto the internet.34 Reporting-back to the community is an important part of this kind of history writing. However, due to time constraints this was limited, although the production of a simplified version of this dissertation will take a step in this direction.

Other ethical considerations included listening attentively with an open mind to people relating their experiences and the relationship of people identifying as coloured to other South African groups. Derogatory words at times surfaced, as well as political

32 The very fact that ‘black people’ is the politically correct descriptor for coloureds and Indians is a form of racial bundling that the reaffirmation of coloured identity post-apartheid is questioning. I myself disagree with describing coloured people as black more especially in political categorizations.

33 Ahluwalia & Zegeye, ‘Between Black and White’, 263.

34 A part of this introduction has already been uploaded. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noordgesig Accessed 4 March 2015.
positions that I did not agree with. However, these were invaluable aspects of the interview process and have been analyzed academically. Extra care, compassion, and attentiveness were helpful tools when interviews opened wounds and intruded into the personal lives of respondents. Nonetheless, some of the older interviewees were very willing to talk about their history; in fact, they felt like it was a way of getting it off their chests and ensuring that ‘those who actually were there’ told the story of ‘original’ Noordgesig. Interviewing these older persons was also difficult, and at times, testimony was scattered, repetition common, and dates uncertain.

1.4 Structure of the Study

The dissertation has so far provided a brief sketch of the intentions and rationale as well as the methodological approach used and ethical considerations encountered. It will proceed in Chapter Two, by providing an analysis of the relevant literature particularly on township formations in Johannesburg and South Africa, to offer an overview and historical background. Of particular importance was locating the gap in the literature on coloured townships in South Africa. I argue that this is because South African urban historiography has predominantly focused on black township formations. The chapter also presents the dominant literature on coloured social identity constructions in South Africa in order to contextualize the township of Noordgesig. This does not mean Noordgesig is important because coloureds live there: Rather, the imposed and claimed identity, as well as coloured initiative, make Noordgesig different to the rest of Soweto and therefore a necessary point of departure. It concludes with an analysis of the strengths and weakness of coloured historiography in South Africa.

The dissertation continues, in Chapter Three, by piecing together the early history of Noordgesig, from the late 1930s. It largely makes use of archival data, but also life history narratives, to sketch the township’s establishment and the changes that occurred up to 1948. The chapter highlights the politics of racial proximity to Orlando for Noordgesig inhabitants and the direct links these had to class differentiation. It also provides insight into both government and non-governmental

36 For instance, Interview Auntie Lucky, Noordgesig Soweto, 5 September 2014; Interview Auntie Poppie; Interview Mrs. Williams, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014.
institutions established in the township as well as a brief comparison with Coronationville, the other coloured township established before WWII.

The dissertation will proceed in Chapter Four to analyse how apartheid affected as well as shaped identities and the social responses of Noordgesig residents until the drastic changes of the mid-1970s. This chapter will engage with how inhabitants of Noordgesig responded to the limitations imposed by apartheid. The chapter argues that the apartheid state’s more centralized approach to housing, and its focus on race over class, hampered the localized and heterogeneous nature of coloured identity. Furthermore, an analysis of the township’s temporary status is provided as well as the state’s failure to proclaim it a coloured group area, largely because of its class categorization, that bred contention amongst different actors in the township.

The changes forced upon the state by students of Soweto on 16 June 1976 are a watershed moment in apartheid hegemony over political, social, and economic conditions in South Africa. The dissertation continues in Chapter Five to discuss the political climate that created the conditions for nationwide rebellion. It focuses on not only the political activities of Noordgesig residents in the fight against apartheid, but also how inhabitants navigated their way through these years. It cautiously argues that this period culminated in the start of a second change to coloured identity. It was near the end of apartheid in December of 1988 that Noordgesig was proclaimed a coloured group area. However, this never influenced how residents had lived in the township nor how they continued to do so until the Group Areas Act was repealed in 1991. The chapter also provides analysis of the various changes in labour, civil society and state policy particularly in the Soweto and Johannesburg areas and Noordgesig inhabitants’ participation in the uncertain climate preceding 1994.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review: Urban Housing and Coloured Identity

2.1 The History of ‘non-white’ housing in Johannesburg

This chapter will engage with the history and historiography of black housing in Johannesburg. It will firstly discuss academic works concerned with township formations in Soweto from the 1930s to 1994. The lack of literature on Noordgesig as an important early member of the southwestern complex of townships that make up Soweto today is noted. What will be argued is that Noordgesig is often left out of any constructive discussion because it is a coloured area misplaced in the maze that is black Soweto. The chapter will also engage with coloured historiography and identity construction in South Africa to provide background and situate Noordgesig in Johannesburg’s urban history as one of the city’s earliest coloured townships.

The discovery of gold in the Transvaal during the late nineteenth century gave birth to the city of Johannesburg. Before the turn of the century, housing a rapidly growing black population already was a problem for the city.¹ Still, even though there were limited public housing programs in both location and compound form put in place, there were separate areas set out for ‘black, Malay and Asian occupation’.² In 1903, residents from the ‘Coolie Location’ were moved to Klipspruit to improve ‘public health’ in the city. The government’s lack of awareness and concern for black housing was due to their logic that an urban black population did not exist because they were temporary residents of the city.³ In the early 1900s, the intention was to plan Johannesburg in the ‘colonial image’. This was not efficient however, obliging the establishment of the Transvaal Townships Board in 1905.⁴ Sites for blacks were called for in 1909 but neither municipalities nor township boards had clear power prior to

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World War One (WWI) to create townships or forcibly move people. In fact, the establishment of Klipspruit ‘was almost the only attempt that the municipality made until 1918 to deal with the question of housing the ‘non-white’ population resident in Johannesburg’.5

The national government intervened during WWI, as a matter of social urgency, and by its end, the JCC was reiterating the call for local authorities to have planning powers to improve the social and physical structures of the city.6 An influenza epidemic in 1918 guaranteed that health concerns remained an urban planning theme after WWI - the solution being slum clearances.7 The state’s use of urban planning was a way of reconstructing society to dictate and restrict black settlement in urban areas and to ‘regulate the private subdivision of land for urban uses’.8 Notwithstanding, from the early 1920s, an urban culture was taking form in the mostly unregulated inner city slum yards of Doornfontein, the Malay Location and Ferreirastown for example. Although a large proportion of the black population were not born in the city and had rural linkages, the ‘multiracial character’ of these living quarters were ‘particularly noteworthy’.9

The Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 separated urban planning for ‘locations’ from that of white South Africa, and gave local councils the responsibility to provide housing for blacks.10 Even though this Act alongside the 1930 amendment and the Slums Act of 1934 affected the geography of multiracial living in Johannesburg, it ultimately failed to segregate the races entirely. Moreover, the establishment of the ‘model native township’ Orlando, in 1932, did not ease the steady and increasing movement of black people towards the cities. Urban policy during the 1930s organized society for black labourers and white employers without wanting to pay the social costs of urbanization.11 Furthermore, urban planning prior to the 1940s was largely based on class differentiation rather than on strict racial distinctions.12

5 N. Mandy, A City Divided: Johannesburg and Soweto (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1984), 174.
7 Ibid, 198.
8 Ibid, 193-194. The Transvaal Provincial Local Government (Stallard) Commission of 1922 was preferred to the Goodley Report that had recommended urban segregation and the establishment of ‘native villages’ where home ownership would be encouraged.
‘With influx control in ruins, the pass laws in strong contention, and the housing policy in crisis owing to the squatter problem, the Urban Areas Act by the mid-1940s seemed moribund’.  

Map 2.1: The Principle Living Areas for ‘non-whites’ during the mid-1940s

![Map showing living areas for blacks, coloureds, and Indians during the mid-1940s]

Source: Beavon, Johannesburg: The Making, 100.

Map 2.1 provides an indication of the living areas for blacks, coloureds, and Indians during the mid-1940s. At this point, an urban lifestyle was firmly being established and particularly romanticized in Sophiatown’s case. However, during WWII house building and infrastructural development slowed down and eventually

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14 Note that Noordgesig (1) and Coronationville (2) and are not included in Map 2 possibly because they housed so few people at this time.
stopped, leading to increased overcrowding.\textsuperscript{16} The dire housing shortages and the squatting problem that arose during these years forced the state to react and tackle black housing.\textsuperscript{17}

Post WWII cities began to use racial zoning, forthrightly; i.e., with ‘…the idea of planning racially distinct, well-separated zones’.\textsuperscript{18} Essentially this required a ‘national’ policy for racial zones in cities, which at the time did not exist legally.\textsuperscript{19} Prime Minister Smuts and the United Party had failed to deal with urban problems or offer any alternative to segregation ‘as the prime means by which the problems of the cities would be solved’. Furthermore, the Sauer Report of 1947 had not suggested how compulsory segregation could be achieved. The NP government used this indecision as a platform to commit to the idea of enforced segregation as a solution for the urban dilemmas.\textsuperscript{20} The Group Areas Act of 1950 provided the legislative basis to segregate all race groups.\textsuperscript{21} With this Act, the term ‘township’ acquired its popular meaning in the South African lexicon; i.e., ‘the large, segregated public housing estate, usually on or beyond the urban periphery’.\textsuperscript{22}

Beavon posits that what emerged over the period 1940-1976 was a large, sprawling urbanized area without true urban amenities stating that,

\begin{quote}
by the end of 1947...Johannesburg was by then to all intents and purposes the most segregated city in South Africa, and ironically would be less affected from a spatial point of view by the policy of apartheid than the other cities of the country.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

The townships in the southwestern region of Johannesburg, until the 1950s, were known as \textit{Vukuzenzele} (get on and do it for yourself) and only became collectively named Soweto in 1963.\textsuperscript{24} The paternalistic nature of pre-apartheid locations was replaced by the 1950 Group Areas Act, which ‘…went about destroying housing that did not fit the pattern’ especially targeting ‘poor but racially mixed and relatively central

\textsuperscript{16} Mandy, \textit{A City Divided}, 176.
\textsuperscript{17} Frescura, ‘The Spatial Geography’, 107.
\textsuperscript{18} Mabin & Smit, ‘Reconstructing South Africa’s’, 203-204.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid}, 204. Italics theirs.
\textsuperscript{23} Beavon, \textit{Johannesburg: The Making}, 121, 127.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Ibid}, 121. Most of the houses constructed were the 51/6 type or ‘matchbox house’. My family’s house in Noordgesig is the 51/9 type which includes an interior bathroom. Mandy, \textit{A City Divided}, 179.
neighbourhoods’. For Crankshaw, the state’s overbearing nature meant in Johannesburg, ‘[m]uch of its differentiation in terms of geography, housing and, class structure was eliminated by the homogenizing policies of the first two decades of apartheid’. Nonetheless, there were frequent disputes between a council concerned with creating a practical city for its labouring black population (within the confines of a liberal segregationist policy) and the government’s objectives of fulfilling apartheid. Indian and coloured city dwellers were directly affected by apartheid’s forced removals. Segregated residential areas and services ‘facilitated the reification of group identities’. ‘This often had the effect therefore, of embittering and politicising populations that had not really presented any serious problem of control for white South Africa previously’.

Increased concern over the high population of blacks in cities and their growing protest and militancy (such as the Defiance Campaign of 1952), forced the 1950s NP government to implement large-scale housing for this population group. Nonetheless, the state would still consider such, urban area townships as ‘outposts of …homelands, providing “temporary sojourn” for all Africans, irrespective of their place of birth or the duration of their stay in the city’. Alongside this, the government attempted to curtail black urban population growth and eliminate urban unemployment through influx control policies. Nonetheless, more stringent control measures did not diminish the existing ‘urban black problem’, although it had by the late 1950s slowed black immigration to the city.

Stricter measures, however, resulted in more protests as ‘a gradual process of coalescence was taking place [amongst anti-apartheid organizations], which would manifest itself in the political ferment of 1959-1961 … masked by the blanket of repression that was thrown over South Africa in the following decade’.

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33 Ibid, illi-xx.
concerned with the control of space, its occupation and use on a racial basis, and while initially designed for the cities, by the 1960s was used to exclude all blacks, coloureds and Indians from the 'political process of the country'. Thus, the evolution of apartheid from basic segregationist origins to separate development began during its most 'successful' period in the 1960s.

By the mid to late 1960s, the expansion of townships was not a major urban policy concern because of an increased focus on rural Bantustan development. As a result, the growth of informal residents in the form of sub-tenants and sub-letting once again increased. Another consequence of Bantustan development was a renewed effort to house coloureds in Johannesburg. Initially, coloured group areas were concentrated in the western parts of the city after the implementation of the Group Areas Act. During the mid-1960s, this would also include areas in the south west of the city at the far end of Soweto. Virtually the entire Indian and coloured populations were displaced in major urban areas and placed in group areas, particularly in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. However, as the housing needs of coloureds began to be addressed, the state had to deal with the pressures of rising political dissent.

A number of key events rocked the state from the early 1970s that issued a new course for government action, particularly in its urban environments. The 16 June 1976 Soweto revolt mobilized nationwide struggles revolving around issues such as rent, local authorities, and labour concerns. Furthermore, a direct consequence of the uprisings was the state favouring 'improved transport, electrification and a good water supply in the townships'. The uprisings also resulted in a shift in adult roles with children and the youth beginning to see themselves as 'leading the older...

37 Mabin, 'The Dynamics of', 38.
39 Some of these include the 1973 Durban strike, growing international pressure, and regionally the independence of left leaning states in Mozambique and Angola.
generation to freedom’. Township space become the platform to carry out the struggle from the mid-1970s onwards. For Bollens, ‘The city is both a stage that things happen to, but also an actor that influences what is happening’. The uprisings of 16 June 1976 significantly shaped the townships role in struggle politics and irrevocably altered the political environment in South Africa.

After 1977, the government began to accept blacks as permanent citizens of the city. At this time, the centralized urban planning of the apartheid government began to include more private sector involvement, and for a while housed the Department of Planning in the office of the Prime Minister, after PW Botha’s inauguration in 1978, highlighting the importance of housing. With the hope of co-opting more coloured and Indian support, the Tricameral parliament was established in 1983 and a ‘fragmentation of planning activities’ occurred. Indian, coloured, and black Bantustan leaders became involved for the first time in the profession of urban planning in South Africa. The attempt by the state to include more blacks, through the establishment of the Black Local Authorities (BLA’s) in 1983, received a backlash when the raising of rents as well as a rejection of the Tricameral parliament led to revolts starting in Sebokeng in 1984. These quickly spread throughout South Africa until a semblance of order resumed in 1987.

The reformist approach to urban planning in the late apartheid period reversed the years of anti-urban policy, which occurred once ‘grand apartheid’ designed Bantustans. Nevertheless, the rejection by P.W. Botha of political compromise, in 1986, meant that urban planning became part of security management: i.e., increasing service delivery to the townships - particularly the ‘troublesome’ areas - became a measure to stop political revolt. This followed the establishment of ‘controlled informal settlements’ such as Khayelitsha in Cape Town in the mid-1980s and Orange Farm in Johannesburg at the end of the decade. During this period, small numbers of middle and upper income blacks, coloureds and Indians were also being absorbed

42 Ibid, 39.
44 Morris, Soweto: A Review, 19.
47 Ibid, 211.
48 Ibid, 212.
49 Ibid.
into certain white residential areas through measured racial reform. By 1990, the apartheid era was clearly on its deathbed.

Apartheid policies had created by the early 1990s a society in which ‘…very few people had ever lived any part of their adult lives in racially integrated neighbourhood conditions’. However, this does not mean social interactions failed to occur, as surely they have between Noordgesig and its first neighbours in Orlando Township. Moreover, places work better if imagined as occupying a space of interconnectedness, as opposed to being bounded. They are made up of social interactions, and human experiences, which are not static. It is with this in mind that this study will consider the historiography of urban housing in South African cities, Johannesburg, Soweto and coloured townships.

### 2.2 Urban Historiography in South Africa

Freund’s history of African cities, inserts South African examples without presenting them as exceptional, as is often the case in comparing the country to the rest of the continent. In fact, Bickford-Smith, in a study of urban historiography in South Africa, highlights Freund’s claims that South African cities even follow similar evolutionary stages when compared to African and world cities. In this critical reflection of urban history writing in South Africa, Bickford-Smith notes that focus is almost exclusively placed on the black experience and urban policy, rather than the social history of these cities. Thus, authors such as Parnell and Mabin described these histories that regard race as central to the social history of townships almost a ‘racial fetishism’, and for them, studies of urban society do not begin at race but are part of an ‘intricate development’ of economic, social and political factors. While Bickford-Smith shows that Beavon’s history of Johannesburg attempted to exhibit actions of ordinary citizens,
he is more concerned with 'constructed space and built environment' than 'how people experienced the city through time'.

Yet recording the 'black experience' has not particularly included coloured and Indian urban historiography particularly well. Thus, the history of coloured housing in Johannesburg is limited to discussions of evictions from interracial inner city slums and the development of the western areas. In fact, no history of the coloureds of Johannesburg exists. Therefore, depicting Noordgesig as a 'coloured township' is necessary because of the gap in the literature referring specifically to where coloureds lived. Moreover, histories of Soweto do not have any reference to Noordgesig.

For Bonner, the literature of South African urbanization tends to neglect first-generation immigration into the towns, between the 1930s and 1940s, which was a product of a complex combination of factors, including the independent movement of women to towns, the 'changing residential ecology' on the Rand and the forms in which industrial wages were paid. Bonner criticizes the 'push and pull' theory which he argues, only explains why people went to the city but not 'why they decided to set down their roots and remain'. Nonetheless, Bonner fails to explore if the coloured people of Johannesburg had similar experiences or if the state considered them urban citizens. Moreover, Crankshaw has shown that the class divisions of the pre-apartheid era, based on education level, occupation, and wealth began to be ignored in favour of blacks' 'legal urban status' during apartheid.

Government housing for coloureds in Johannesburg existed only at Coronationville and Noordgesig up until the early 1950s. As more coloured group areas were proclaimed from the 1950s onwards, inter-black racial prejudice, or, coloured/black racism, became a feature of these segregated coloured townships as La Guma depicted with regard to District Six in Cape Town. Furthermore,

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56 Ibid, 300.
63 Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, 118.
segregation also meant coloureds associated primarily amongst themselves. For Adhikari, La Guma’s novel presents the social reality of living in a coloured township; ‘far from reflecting a Manichean world of white versus black in South African society, the novel operates in a more fluid milieu of complex social relations and multifaceted social identities in the specific urban setting of District Six’.64 Some academic literature does exist that depicts life in coloured townships, perhaps not as personally as La Guma’s did, but at least highlights some of the complexities of life there.65

Aerial Photograph 2.1: Noordgesig (highlighted) in Soweto and western coloured areas66

![Aerial Photograph of Soweto and western coloured areas](http://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/798026033)


Muller, for an example, compared the political economy of the coloured and Indian communities of South Africa. This important comparison requires more attention from academics considering both groups’ historical minority status.67 Likewise, Brindley provides an account of Western Coloured Township, but this work

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64 Ibid, 129. This is in reference to *A Walk in the Night and Other Stories* by Alex La Guma published in 1962.  
66 Note Noordgesigs’ position as part of the Soweto complex, compared to the other labelled coloured townships.  
comes across as an ethnographical account of an outsider. She rightfully notes that the township had the appearance of a slum and regards apartheid as the cause of coloured people losing confidence in themselves. However, her focus then turns to gangsterism in the township, which she does not adequately blame on the planning and design of the area, but admits that the poor socio-economic standing of the community had a part to play. Nonetheless, Brindley points out that housing remained inadequate; adding that better facilities, cheaper rentals, and a need for a revised housing policy is still required. Yet her key argument proposes a relation between the problems of the community and uncertainty about their identity, noting, ‘...lack of identity of the coloured person to be the key issue around which revolves his personal despair’. In conclusion, Brindley regarded Western Coloured Township in the 1970s as ‘an area of sub-standard housing characterised by neglect, overcrowding, and their attendant social ills’. These texts fail to link urban history adequately enough to explain the dynamics and complexities within coloured living areas. Thus, Bickford-Smith notes, ‘the problem for most South African urban historians has been difficulty in weaving historical geography, economic history, and social history together’. Moreover, because there is limited attention given to the voices of ordinary people, a top down approach to understanding these localities tends to be provided. For example, Adhikari largely uses documents of coloured elite professionals and a very small number of life histories. Dismissing the ‘everyday’ resident’s story of their community is common in the literature. While Adhikari points out the lack of adequate regard for coloured history, his focus is social identity rather than township formations. To understand the nuances of ‘local histories’ requires an analysis that places residents first, while inserting that locality within a broader context.

The date 16 June 1976 is considered a watershed event in anti-apartheid activity within South Africa and the starting place for the end of apartheid. For Brewer,

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69 Brindley, *Western Coloured Township*, 11.
70 *Ibid*, 33-34.
72 *Ibid*, 79.
73 Bickford-Smith, ‘Urban History’, 300.
74 Nonetheless, Adhikari’s book must be praised for trying to understand coloured identity in South Africa by using only historical records written by coloureds.
75 See Adhikari, *Not White Enough*, xi, xiii.
76 See Massey, ‘Power-geometry’. 
the events of 1976/1977 stimulated, using Gramsci terminology, an ‘organic crisis’ affecting the economic, political and cultural spheres of society irrevocably which forced change from below and above.\[^{77}\] Forcing Afrikaans to be the medium of instruction in Soweto’s black schools was the catalyst for the uprisings, but it was not, to be sure, the only reason for the uprisings. For Morris, ‘the underlying causes of the riots and the unrest that continued through 1976 and 1977 would likely have included the prevailing poor socio-economic conditions, the lack of security and the resentment and the frustration felt by urban blacks’. Furthermore, dissatisfaction with the education system was evident since the establishment of separate education in 1953.\[^{78}\] For Hirson, there are multiple interconnected factors that culminated in the uprisings including ‘the strains in the South African economy, the wave of labour strikes, the new military situation, the resurgence of African political consciousness and the rapidly altering position in the black schools…’\[^{79}\]

Urban studies discussing the political ramifications of the uprisings and the townships’ place in it became prominent post-1976.\[^{80}\] Fewer studies exist on the role of Johannesburg’s coloured townships in these.\[^{81}\] However, Dlamini, an important contemporary historian, warns against presenting all blacks as victims of apartheid, freedom fighters or collaborators.\[^{82}\] Furthermore, writing any history of coloured townships has to come to terms with the positive associations with apartheid that many of its population, young and old have.

Notwithstanding, coloured people did participate, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, in the formation of independent and active trade unions, civic organizations, as well as political movements such as the United Democratic Front (UDF), which further advanced changes and necessary reform to the South African

\[^{80}\] For example Hirson, *Year of Fire*; Morris, *Soweto: A Review*.
\[^{82}\] J. Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia* (Sunnyside, Auckland Park: Jacana, 2009).
political landscape. By the mid-1980s, township residents had embarked on a rent boycott that was difficult for the state to punish because it involved so many people. As one participant stated, ‘They’d had enough. That’s how the rent boycott started’. Bozzi’s approach, in her analysis of Alexandra during the 1980s, reconstructs this historical period using evidence of leaders but also everyday participants of the revolt in the township. Yet, as Adhikari notes, while coloured townships were involved in making South Africa ‘ungovernable’, the perception that they would join squarely with blacks against apartheid was miss-read in the mid to late 1980s and clearly expressed, for a large section, in their support for the NP in 1994. Therefore, Mckaiser deals with race and other awkward issues by facing them head on rather than hiding behind the façade that the ‘rainbow nation’ is alive and well, arguing instead that race remains a source central to the unease of most South Africans in the post-apartheid state.

This dissertation remains optimistic that South Africans can also look beyond race, or the seemingly bounded limitations of coloured identity politics, as well as overworked apartheid legacies, to focus also, on how individuals and groups responded to internal and external pressures. Township residents and their particular experiences, shape what has been, and are important to them personally and publically. There are vast volumes of research discussing post-apartheid South Africa and the assertion of interests and identities. Nonetheless, attention to specific localized expressions of interests still require further evaluation. As such, Bickford-Smith highlights the need for local case studies of particular townships with their specific racial identities, which remain an important feature of urban histories post-apartheid:

Producing ‘whole’ and comparative urban histories clearly requires the building blocks provided by case studies of parts of cities, particular citizens, or periods. Such case studies predictably still dominate South African urban history. What might seem less predictable is that so many remain explicitly or implicitly ethnically and racially compartmentalized. Given the demise of apartheid and the criticism of obsession with race in the mid-1990s…this is perhaps surprising. But the close correlation over time between (historical created) space and ethnicity or race in

83 N. Alexander, Some are more equal than others: Essays on the Transition in South Africa (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1993; Brewer, After Soweto, 5; Christopher, The Atlas of Changing; Mabin ‘The Dynamics of’.
84 Freund, The African City, 135; Holland, Born in Soweto, 96.
85 Adhikari, Not White Enough, 156.
86 Mckaiser, A Bantu in my’.
South African cities makes this at least understandable as a research topic strategy. It is also how many scholars (and citizens) would continue to perceive the social ‘reality’ of the South African urban past and present...thus a range of urban South African ethnic and racial groups, and the spaces they inhabited (and that inhabited them) have continued to be the focus of urban histories since 1995.88

Keeping this statement in mind, this dissertation unearths the submerged, silenced, and poorly documented history of Noordgesig Soweto, with a strong emphasis on how coloured experiences there influenced its functionality as a township.

2.3 A History of Coloured Identity

This section will present the literature of coloured racial identity in South Africa. The aim of which is to illuminate coloured people’s context so that the analysis of ‘Noordgesig: Coloured Township’ can be better understood.89 The Coloured People of South Africa’s early heritage between the seventeenth and nineteenth century stems from four root groups; a) local aborigines (the Khoisan people) b) white colonists c) slaves brought from abroad d) and indigenous Africans 'to a lesser extent'.90 In the Eastern Cape, Natal and the Transvaal, interracial unions between white men and black women, as well as intra-coloured unions, added to this racially mixed people in the nineteenth and twentieth century.91 It is because the mixtures of people that formed the coloured group are so varied that the identity is decisively heterogeneous.92 Many slaves, as well as their children and other people born of interracial unions, gradually accepted the languages, customs and culture of both whites and ‘native’ populations, but also reinterpreted these in their own ways.

88 Bickford-Smith, ‘Urban History’, 303
89 This is how government documents referred to the township from its establishment through its various stages of development in the 1940s and 1950s.
The term coloured has historically been used in many parts of the world to refer to all 'non-whites'.

In South Africa, coloured identity was situated midway between black and white for the state and by many coloureds themselves. What often shapes coloured identity is shame, ambiguity, discomfort, and miscegenation’s sexuality. Moreover, there is an unresolved sexual politics to coloured formation. The silences of the encounters between European men and slave and ‘KhoiKhoi’ women existed as both desire and repulsion. The shame of the offspring of such relations has ‘…undergirded the social fabric of coloured identity and accounts for the ambivalence [for the state, those not coloured, and some coloured people] associated with it’.

Eugenicist theories perceived a degeneration of the white race that resulted through miscegenation. The illegitimate offspring made the accepted wisdom of the moral superiority of the white race fallible. These ‘mullato’ children immediately became political by providing a buffer zone between white and black race politics, the mainstay of segregationist South Africa.

The African People’s Organization (APO), formed in 1902, was a coloured political organization under the leadership of the influential Dr. Abdurrahman, and was the dominant coloured organization until more radical movements emerged in the late 1930s. For Adhikari, the APO only sought limited cooperation with black political organizations because its assimilationist ideals meant any closer association jeopardized their chances of acceptance into the dominant society.

While other Southern African countries might understand the term coloured and use it to describe a part of their population, their comprehension of this category is not as ingrained and practiced as it is in South Africa.

This sexual element is constant and a ‘defining’ feature of coloured identity stereotypes to this day especially with regard to coloured women who are often seen as sexually available. See M. Adhikari ‘“God made the White Man, God Made the Black Man...”’: Popular Racial Stereotyping of Coloured People in Apartheid South Africa, South African Historical Journal, 55, (2006), 142-164, 152; G. Smith “Brown Skin: A Journey of Discovery” in K. Hlongwane, S. Ndlou & M. Mutloatse, eds, Soweto 76: Reflections on the Liberation Struggles – Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of June 16 1976 (Johannesburg: Mutloatse Arts Heritage Trust, 2006).

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Nonetheless,
even white liberals of the SAIRR and the Joint Council’s requests for less stringent segregation were steadily ignored by the state, as were the prescriptions of government commissions of inquiry into the coloured people in 1937 and 1976.\textsuperscript{102} For Adhikari, coloured politics up to 1948, contrary to the idea that they were largely about protest and resistance, was more complex. He states, ‘[t]here was opposition, to be sure, but there was also a degree of acceptance of the racial order and an attempt to work within the system for the benefit of the coloured people’.\textsuperscript{103}

Hendricks argues that by taking the 1904 government census as the beginning of official coloured classification means that this ordering became possible due to the prior existence of people identifying as coloured, or outsiders identifying these individuals and communities as coloured.\textsuperscript{104} The term’s first national employment, which distinguished between blacks and coloureds, was made possible through the 1923 Native (Urban Areas) Act. By WWII, the term had become a category used explicitly to describe this group of South African citizens. Identity formation prior to the apartheid era is as equally important not only for those the state would later confer designated identities onto, but also for Afrikaner nationalist identities consolidated in this period.

The coloured people of South Africa are not the sole population group with mixed hereditary in South Africa. However, it is implicit in South African racial understanding to view only coloureds as people who have undergone processes of hybridity and creolization.\textsuperscript{105} To be sure, interracial people exist within whiteness as well as blackness. In an early pamphlet entitled \textit{Miscegenation}, it was estimated that over 739,000 of the 1.9 million ‘European’ population of the Union (1935 figure) had ‘Non-European’ blood in their veins.\textsuperscript{106} Identifying who a coloured person is, and is not, has proved to be problematic. Their skin colour, hair texture, phenotypical features, religion, class or language could resemble any other South African person,

\textsuperscript{102} Lewis, \textit{Between the Wire}, 3, 173. Although liberal segregationist efforts at times were also harsh. See Chapter 4 with regard to their planning of Noordgesig and agreeing to the creation of a predominantly coloured group area in the western areas from the 1940s.

\textsuperscript{103} Adhikari, \textit{Not White Enough}, 96; Lewis, \textit{Between the Wire}, 5. To be fair, so were the ANC at this point in history.

\textsuperscript{104} Hendricks, ‘Ominous’ Liaisons’.

\textsuperscript{105} In the United States of America, the state and African Americans consider even light-skinned people as black. Neither was there ever a systematic effort to distinguish and segregate the lighter shades of brown or the ‘mestiza’ (i.e. mixed) children from black people. As such they assigned the term black to all those with even a ‘drop of black blood’.

white, black or Indian. Therefore, ‘it is impossible to operate a distinction between
coloureds and other South Africans’ because, ‘…differentiation binds them to, rather
than distinguish[es] them from, the South African population as a whole’.107

However, ‘[i]dentify is always in the process of formation’ and recognizes
difference to ‘other’ identities.108 Arguably, the most contested identities in South Africa
historically have been Zulu, Afrikaner, and coloured identities.109 For Reddy the
coloured identity is the most problematic identity in South Africa, hence its - continual –
denial.110 Moreover, trying to define what coloured identity is proves complex
because ‘it encompasses a wide variety of peoples and … perspectives of
interpretations of this identity that influence how it may be defined’.111 One definition
of coloured identity posits that it is

…a dynamic and fluid identity belonging to a specific group in South Africa, most often
attributed to persons popularly perceived as being of mixed racial and ethnic descent, who,
over time and due to specific historical, cultural, social and other factors, have undergone
various changes in their perceptions of their identity as coloured people.112

Moreover, ‘the great problem in the search for coloured identity does not reside
so much in the concept Coloured, as in the concept of identity’.113 It is for this reason
therefore that ‘[d]espite the apartheid government’s attempts, there is currently no
single coloured identity or definition of “colouredness”’.114 These factors have
motivated this dissertation to focus consequently on the experiences of coloured
people as opposed to their identities. This confusion in identity politics is apparent in

109 See for example Durrheim et al., Race Trouble; Jung, Then I was Black. Zulu identity is contested from the reign of Shaka and the misinformation of the Mfecane period. Other black groups in Southern Africa also contest its place as arguably the most dominant ‘ethnic’ South African group. Furthermore, the violent episodes of the 1980s and early 1990s are in part a manifestation of the contestation surrounding this black identity. For black people in the diaspora the term Zulu is alongside Swahili, Yoruba, Ethiopian or Egyptian viewed with endearment and is highly recognizable but a poorly understood identifier of ‘Africanness’.
113 Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes, 34.
the story of Sarah Laing who was born to white parents but had the skin tone of a coloured person. She was raised as a white girl until the state reclassified her as coloured at the age of ten. Her story shows not only how untidy race classifications could become and how political the middle ground of colouredness is, but also that experiences shape identity constructions.\textsuperscript{115} Hence, Van der Ross sums up some of the puzzling elements, thus:

\begin{quote}
Over more than three hundred years there has developed in South Africa a number of persons of mixed origin, who have in common a sufficient number of physical traits, within varying limits and to such a degree that they may be called a population group. This population group is identified by law and to a large extent by tradition as the coloured people. But there are also many people belonging either by law or by tradition, or by both, to this group, who display physical qualities widely differing from those regarded as typical for the group, thereby at once giving evidence of the groups heterogeneity and explaining why there are difficulties when attempts are made to treat the group as a unit for whatever purposes\textsuperscript{116}
\end{quote}

Alternatively, by replacing black, with coloured, in Hall’s description of black identity:

\begin{quote}
The [coloured] I’m talking about is a historical category, a political category. In our language, at certain historical moments, we have to use the signifier. We have to create an equivalence between how people look and what their histories are. Their histories are in the past, inscribed in their skins. But it is not because of their skins that they are [coloured] in their heads.\textsuperscript{117}
\end{quote}

The apartheid regime’s taxonomies further separated coloureds into sub-racial orders and black people into ‘tribal’ groupings (Zulu, Sotho etc.) precisely because colour does not equate to an identity for either coloured, black or white people. The classifying of coloureds shifted in the early 20th century from an ambiguous, scientific, but not definitive categorization, to the more supposedly precise, unambiguous, and certain apartheid era classifications.\textsuperscript{118} While the many amendments to apartheid Acts made it more difficult for reclassification from one ‘pure’ identity to the next, these still continued to occur regularly\textsuperscript{119}. Nevertheless, the apartheid state’s attempt at classification recognized the heterogeneous and diverse range of coloured people.

For black conscious adherents, what needed to be recognized instead was the oppression that all people of colour faced. The importance of BC during the early to mid-1970s was that it added another layer to how coloured identity was constructed

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{stone} J. Stone, \textit{When she was White: The True Story of a Family Divided by Race} (New York: Miramax Books/Hyperion, 2007).
\bibitem{van_der_ross} Van der Ross, \textit{Myths and Attitudes}, 35. Emphasis in italics from original.
\bibitem{hall} Hall, ‘Old and new Identities’, 53.
\bibitem{rankin} Rankin, \textit{A Socio-Demographic}; Reddy, ‘The Politics of Naming’, 68, 74. Defining colouredness remains problematic and I would agree that no definition that encapsulates all those who call themselves coloured exists.
\end{thebibliography}
and could be experienced for the majority of coloureds. Adhikari states, ‘accepting the
tenants of BC did, however, mean consciously displacing colouredness from its
pedestal as their sole or primary social identity and according it a secondary status, if
only in the arena of politics or for symbolic reasons’.\textsuperscript{120} Therefore, coloured students
were among the first to join Soweto students in revolt on 16 June 1976.\textsuperscript{121}
Furthermore, BC was the step, in the early 1980s, to a complete rejection of coloured
identity of the mass democratic movements.\textsuperscript{122} This was particularly true of the UDF,
which associated itself with the non-racism of the ANC. Yet even still, the coloured
experiences of language, townships, colour and culture could not be ignored.

During the Black Conscious Movement (BCM) of the 1970’s and the UDF era
in the 1980’s, coloured identity was located within black racial identity and it was
politically correct to talk of the ‘so called coloureds’.\textsuperscript{123} The argument was rooted in the
logic that coloured identity, and the experiences they encountered, was imposed onto
people who did not clearly fit into either black, white or Asian groupings of the state.
The majority of coloureds however, rejected both black and white overtures to join
their ranks. Thus, both left wing radical black politics, as well as, white politics regarded
as collaborationist and oppressive were dismissed. Thus, the BCM failed to gain the
majority of coloured converts, as had the Coloured Persons’ Representative Council
(CPRC) or the 1983 Tricameral parliament. Therefore, Adhikari notes that for the
majority of coloureds their identity was not a simple white invention, while cognizant
of apartheid’s divide and rule tactics too.\textsuperscript{124} Identifying as black was political, but so
could be identifying as coloured. It was political exactly because the core elements
Adhikari notes: ‘assimilation’, intermediate status’, ‘racial hybridity’ and ‘marginality’ are
intensely political features.

Coloured political activism, nonetheless, was always in the periphery of the
‘black’ struggle for freedom: ‘Coloured political organizations were doomed to be bit
players on the political stage, and coloured protest politics was little more than a
sideshow in the national arena’.\textsuperscript{125} While it is wrong to assume the dynamics of

\textsuperscript{120} Adhikari, \textit{Not White Enough}, 145.
\textsuperscript{121} Brewer, \textit{After Soweto}, 86.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Ibid}. Rejectionism had begun in the 1960s particularly amongst coloured elite as BC ideology began to gain
acceptance.
\textsuperscript{123} See Brewer, \textit{After Soweto}; Erasmus, \textit{Coloured by History}; Jung, \textit{Then I was Black}.
\textsuperscript{124} Adhikari, \textit{Not White Enough}, 144.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Ibid}, 18.
opposition were the same for blacks as they were for Indian and coloured communities, ‘fierce’ struggles did take place in these townships. For example, ‘…one of the largest incidents, in terms of both numbers participating and geographical spread, was the April 1980 boycott by coloured students protesting against inferior education’. Throughout apartheid the state conceived of coloureds as being ‘better than blacks’, and many coloureds indeed felt themselves to be a more sophisticated class.

In the post-apartheid state they have retained the identity of the ‘other’; ‘not black enough’, neither opulent enough to offer the state any advantages. To be sure, legal discrimination affected coloured communities and townships, as it did all South African people, since, and even before, the infamous Native Land Act of 1913, culminating in the numerous racist Acts of apartheid. As with other communities, coloured people were able to refashion how they viewed and lived their lives in an oppressive system and continue to do in the post-apartheid state.

2.4 Coloured Historiography and Coloured Identity

Identity – who we are, where we come from, what we are – is difficult to maintain… we are the ‘other’, an opposite, a flaw in the geometry of resettlement, an exodus (Edward Said)

This dissertation presents the links between various authors of coloured identity, in an effort to understand these experiences as they occurred in Noordgesig. It discusses Adhikari’s argument that the identity remained mostly stable through the twentieth century. Alternatively, Erasmus points to ‘creolization’ and ‘cultural creativity’ as a way to understand coloured identity. Lastly, those that tend to reject the identity, often take an elitist non-racist stance, that makes use of ‘so called coloured’ terminology. This section therefore examines coloured historiography and coloured identity in South Africa from pre-apartheid to the end of apartheid.

Identity formation in South Africa must be reflected upon historically: Not only as the product of the apartheid era but also moulded through slavery at the Cape,
colonialism, and segregation; just as much from external factors as internal agency. However, a sizable amount of research on identity formation in South Africa focuses primarily on those fostered under the apartheid regime. In the case of coloured identity, a host of authors trace its origins to the turn of the 20th century, but gloss over the slavery period.

'Slaves formed the original core of the coloured population' who originated from the East Indies, including Malaysia and Indonesia also India, Madagascar as well as East and West Africa. Yet coloured people have been more strongly associated with their Khoisan heritage because the slave culture at the Cape was not as 'vigorous' as in the new world, therefore a 'conscious identification' with a slave past has not survived beyond emancipation. Secondly, descendants of slaves wanted 'to escape the stigma of slave ancestry'. At emancipation, in 1838, the heterogeneous group's sole common feature was that they were of mixed heritage. The group's movement to the cities and their close living quarters led to the invention of a 'common lifestyle' which 'helped to interpret the world through a new but common prism'. Yet coming together at the Cape colony also crystalized differences between them from religion to class, education and colour.

However, a second and perhaps more important argument is that the common feature that bound these emancipated slaves was their class. Adhikari argues that the 'crystallization' of the identity from the late nineteenth century had a labour component. At emancipation, the various heterogeneous black labouring classes at the Cape Colony were able to integrate '...based on a common socio-economic status and a shared culture derived from their incorporation into the lower ranks of Cape colonial society'. Before the term coloured became popular by the mid-1880s terms such as 'bastard' and 'half caste' were the 'most common epithets used to refer to this social

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132 For example Durrheim et al., *Race Trouble*; Jung, *Then I was Black*.
133 Hendricks, 'Ominous' Liaisons', 30. Due to constraints of space and relevancy, this dissertation has only presented a summary of the slave period.
134 Martin, 'Whats in the Name ‘Coloured’'.
135 Adhikari, “‘God made the White Man’. 
136 Martin, 'Whats in the Name’, 252.
137 ibid.
group or to individual members'. The mineral revolution saw the emergence of a fully-fledged coloured identity to claim labouring positions of relative privilege. From the early 20th century, literature about coloured people was produced that has over the years formed discourses on their identity in South Africa.

The older literature on coloured people, presents coloured identity as a product of miscegenation, for example, W.H. MacMillan's, The Cape Colour Question and J.S. Marais, The Cape Coloured People. While those produced near the end of apartheid focus on ‘coloured protest politics and the social injustices suffered by coloured people’; for example R. van der Ross, The Rise and Decline of Apartheid, G. Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, R. du Pre, Separate but Unequal or I. Goldin, Making Race. Yet few of these deal with racial stereotyping, or definitions of ‘who or what the coloured people are’, that has become more popular in post-apartheid identity literature.

There are four schools of thought regarding coloured identity: essentialist, instrumentalist, social constructivism and postmodern creolization. The above-mentioned authors fit into the first two discourses, namely, essentialist and instrumentalist respectively. Essentialist literature, popular from the 1930s, was grounded on the notion that coloureds were closer to white culture than that of blacks and were the products of miscegenation. Instrumentalist literature, which emanated from the 1980s, heavily influenced by black consciousness, regarded coloured identity as an invention of the state. As such, the term ‘coloured’ was rejected as a creation of the white ruling class in an effort to divide and rule the black population. Thirdly, social constructivism, which gained prominence from the early 1990s, stressed the

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138 Adhikari, ‘“God made the White Man”, 151. S.P. Cilliers, The Coloureds of South Africa: A Factual Survey (Cape Town: Banier Publishers, 1963), 11. He also agrees that the term coloured people was applied to an emerging labour class.

139 Adhikari, ‘“God made the White Man”, 144-145.

140 Ibid, 142. Nonetheless, these texts provide important insights about coloured people in South Africa and are valuable to the historiographical record of coloured identities.

141 Adhikari, ‘“God made the White Man”, 142; Lewis, Between the Wire, 2. Another useful text about coloured stereotypes is Van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes. This dissertation has largely reviewed the contemporary literature, more especially Adhikari, Erasmus and Zegeye, but has also regarded older texts on coloureds such as S.P. Cilliers, 1963, The Coloureds Of South Africa, A. Muller, 1968, Minority Interests; M. Brindley, 1976, Western Coloured Township; R. Van der Ross, 1979, Myths and Attitudes; S. Rankin, 1986, A Socio-Demographic Profile and G. Lewis, 1987, Between the Wire and the Wall.

142 Adhikari “God made the White Man”, 34; M. Adhikari, Introduction: Predicaments of Marginality: Cultural Creativity and Political Adaptation in Southern Africa’s Colonial Communities in M. Adhikari ed. Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2009), viii-xxxii. The term miscegenation often has negative connotations but in fact all people are the product of mixtures of races!
complexity and agency of coloured people in creating their own identity. Lastly, the postmodern creolization school regards cultural creativity and cultural borrowing as most important to the identity. Its formulation does not however view the identity as ‘…simply a mish-mash of borrowed traits from other groups, but takes on a life and meaning[s] of its own’. However, it was the authors of essentialist and instrumentalist discourse, who paved the way for social constructivism and post-modern creolization theorists operating within new boundaries provided by a post-apartheid dispensation.

This section therefore problematizes the most established of these authors, Adhikari, particularly his argument that coloured identity remained mostly stable during the 20th century. He argues that ‘continuities’ ‘were more fundamental to the way in which it operated as a social identity and a more consistent part of its functioning than the changes it experienced’. Thus, while admitting to there being changes, Adhikari suggests that these still did not manage to alter the essential features of coloured identity. For Adhikari there are four ‘core’ and ‘enduring characteristics’. Firstly, he argues, coloureds aimed for acceptance into white society, which he terms ‘assimilation’. Secondly, coloureds feared losing their racial privileges and being ‘relegated to the status of Africans’, hence their ‘intermediate status’. Thirdly, he posits that there are negativities surrounding coloured identity especially due to its ‘racial hybridity’. Lastly, ‘marginality’ presented limitations to social and political action by coloureds. For Adhikari it is marginality, which is most important.

To be sure, creolized inter-racial people exist throughout the world. As such in another text, Adhikari provides an innovative way of looking at coloured experiences (i.e. mixed heritage history) regionally in Southern Africa. In South Africa, this group became an official category through segregationist efforts but also vitally, through self-

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143 Adhikari, ‘introduction’, xxii; Petrus & Isaacs-Martin, ‘The Multiple Meanings’, 91. Petrus & Isaacs-Martin argue for social constructivism and post-modern creolization because they consider coloured identity as ‘dynamic and open to a variety of meanings and interpretations’, whereas Adhikari is clearly a social constructivist. This dissertation has also used a combination of these two schools to understand the experiences of coloured identity in Noordgesig.

144 Adhikari, Not White Enough’, xii.

145 Ibid.

146 M. Adhikari ed. Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2009). This book removes the exceptionality of South African colouredness to one that integrates the identity into those found elsewhere in Southern Africa. However, he does argue that apartheid and the creation of racially distinct neighborhoods does provide exception to South African coloured identity and how it was shaped. Adhikari, ‘Introduction’, xii.
identification among coloureds. The coloured people of South Africa have therefore had just as much, if not more input into their identities’ creation than the South African state. Therefore, coloured identity experiences are not necessarily relatable to ‘other’ cultures and customs, but rather, to its own constructions of these.

Coloured people developed independent political, social, economic, and cultural identifications outside of black or white norms. Adhikari adds, ‘At most, social identities can be manipulated by outsiders – but even then, only to the extent that it resonates strongly with the bearers’ image of themselves and their social group as a whole’.[147] Reflecting upon the socio-economic and political factors, as well as, internal and external processes, is imperative to understanding coloured identity experiences. What is also clear, however, is that historically coloureds and blacks in the majority continued to experience comparable political and socio-economic circumstances. Therefore, there is a need for a firmer reckoning of coloured/black relations.

For the APO, and more generally the coloured elite up to WWII, the goal of acceptance into white society remained central to their politics. As such, coloured identity was relatable to an ‘other’ but not to itself. However, during the 1940s and 1950s there was a rise in radical discourse and an emphasis on black and working class unity which avoided treating coloureds as distinct from blacks. The Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), considered the first political body in South Africa to truly embrace non-racism from the early 1940s, used a class analysis to expose how capital divides the black population into African, coloured, and Indian.[148] Nevertheless, the NEUM lost ground to a growing and more active ANC and its newly formed Youth League by the end of the 1940s and ultimately failed at radicalizing the ‘broader coloured community’. [149] Adhikari argues that the idea of the ‘non-European’ in the unity movement was racial in itself and implied a racial and ethnic division within the black population; moreover ‘unconscious racial thinking’ and the acceptance of racial categories predominated society in the early 1950s.[150]

Yet this left wing ideology was more popular amongst the coloured elite and held less sway amongst a conservative coloured majority.[151] It could be argued that until the beginning of the apartheid era, coloured people, to a large extent, seemed to

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147 Adhikari, Not White Enough, 36.
148 Ibid, 102.
149 Lewis, Between the Wire, 230, 242.
150 Adhikari, Not White Enough, 101, 103.
151 Ibid, 47, 98.
have aligned themselves, at least politically, marginally more with the ‘European’ population than the black population. In addition, as apartheid began separating more coloureds from blacks, Indians and whites, I would argue, coloured unity was strengthened and cultural creativity bolstered. The forceful approach to segregation that the apartheid era implemented, rather than being detrimental to understanding the notion of colouredness, in fact stimulated its reorganization.

Nonetheless, the state and academics continued, until well into the apartheid era, to perceive coloured people as lacking independent principles outside of western standards. Culture in South Africa has historically been bound mostly within the limitations of either being black African or white European. Presenting South Africa in this simplistic dualistic manner has meant the exclusion of a multifarious approach to academic dialogue of colouredness. To be sure, many coloureds still identify their white ancestors with pride and know little of any other heritage they might have. Thus, the white ancestors of coloureds are represented as ‘pro-active and familiar’, while the groups black ancestry ‘remain faceless and passive’. A certain amount of ‘historical indoctrination’ has also made coloureds ‘identification pawns’; i.e., coloured culture is dismissed unless it identifies with either black or white culture. This has meant for instance, that Afrikaans has been viewed as the ‘white’ language of Afrikaner nationalists rather than a creole language invented by Cape slaves; or, because many coloureds do not practice ‘traditional black African customs’ they are not ‘African’.

Compounding this, were class, colour and group distinctions within coloured communities that were argued to be ‘inevitably influenced’ by ‘coloureds’ aspirations to be like whites’. Physical differences were a form of class distinction amongst coloureds with fairer skinned coloureds tending to be seen as being of a higher class

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152 Yet lived lives similar to poor whites, blacks and Indians.
154 Although this seems not to apply to Indian or Muslim groups in South Africa.
155 Although a growth in recognition of indigenous African roots (i.e. KhoiKhoi, Khoisan or Griqua for example) has had a certain amount of acceptance by some coloureds post-1994.
156 Adhikari, ‘God Made the White Man’.
157 Coloureds have historically been linked to white cultural norms rather than to black African ones. Relating colouredness to white culture has become accepted by many coloureds and believed to be a better representation of their identity than black ancestral heritage. This false truth is not easy to dismiss. What is lacking however is analysis of whether or not coloured culture is in fact neither black nor white but intensely coloured.
and darker coloureds considered to be of a lower order.\textsuperscript{158} While self-racism is a prominent feature of the coloured experience, I would argue it is not indicative of what coloured identity is.\textsuperscript{159} The heterogeneous nature of the coloured people has meant that not only do most coloured people have a very racially diverse extended family, but also that, the ‘other’, remains those outside of the group (largely blacks and whites). All the same, certain black people express crude forms of racism towards coloureds and many coloured people do the same towards blacks and amongst themselves.\textsuperscript{160} Class, colour and race continue to play a leading role in the debate about colouredness.

The reality is that the majority of coloured people are blue-collar labourers and live in poor neighbourhoods in rural and urban areas throughout South Africa. Nevertheless, the coloured elite by the mid-1960s, along with left wing sympathizers, had begun rejecting their coloured identity.\textsuperscript{161} Already by the early 1960s, \textit{Torch}, NEUM’s mouthpiece newspaper written for a coloured readership, began using quotation marks and ‘so-called’ to qualify this racial identity.\textsuperscript{162} However, the majority of coloureds did not reject their identity. Therefore, what the identity was that the majority of coloureds did claim remained an unanswered question. Adhikari does not answer this question yet he is clear that the majority did not follow the positioning of the elite. Adhikari offers limited evidence of the non-professional majority that shows how their identity constructions remained ‘remarkably stable’, or, different compared to the rejectionist tide.\textsuperscript{163}

Adhikari’s argument that coloured identity had an overall stability during the twentieth century works well when it seeks to explain the national coloured group, but not as smoothly when regarding local variations of the coloured experience. However, Adhikari has produced an important work that shows clearly a national coloured

\textsuperscript{158} Cilliers, \textit{The Coloureds of}, 27.
\textsuperscript{159} Adhikari, \textit{Not White Enough}, xii. Coloured self-racism was evident from the 1930s already, see, Cilliers, \textit{The Coloureds of}, 27.
\textsuperscript{161} Adhikari, \textit{Not White Enough}, 134.
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Ibid}, 110, 113-114.
\textsuperscript{163} To be sure, this dissertation while offering more in providing oral evidence from ‘ordinary’ Noordgesig residents does not do justice – because of logistical constraints – to providing a complete account of these.
identity construction and therefore cohesion amongst coloureds, which discredits the idea that the group lacks unity (if this is a fitting assessment). Yet, even if unity is, and was lacking amongst the national coloured group, which is debatable, this should not lead to the common assumption that this lack of cohesion is because coloureds have no culture, are apolitical and pledged allegiance to the state during apartheid.

The apartheid state persevered in its assessment that coloured people were apolitical and aligned to it. Throughout the Union and apartheid era, coloureds did have some means of political franchise (even if these varied from microscopic to minor at different times). For example, the state established the CPRC in 1964 and the Tricameral parliament in 1983 both of which failed. The ideal for government was to reproduce an apolitical group with no real power who would accept token franchise benefits. However, the very conception of colouredness is political in itself and underpinned by historical and socio-economic experiences. Reclaiming this inherent politicised nature is a challenge for coloured historiography and counters claims that this people were the ‘house nigger’ during the apartheid era. In addition, up until the mid-1980s coloured politics had received little attention in South African history.

This dissertation argues that not enough effort to compare coloured and black identities has occurred in the literature. Moreover, Ahluwalia and Zegeye, argue for greater clarity when highlighting the differences in ‘coloured experience’ from that of ‘black identity constructions’. Doing this they argue, requires changing how identity is discussed and finding coloured similarity to the ‘other’ as opposed to difference. In Noordgesig, despite the differences to black Orlando there are commonalities including class, colour, housing and socio-economic conditions. Moreover, neither is there enough effort to link different coloured identity experiences existing within South Africa with one another. These comparisons would enhance future studies of coloured people. In both instances, exposing similarities rather than differences would accomplish the task more productively. Furthermore, the closed binaries of collaborator/freedom-fighter, oppressor/victim that pervade popular history writing and

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164 Informal interview and discussion with Basil Douglas, Noordgesig Soweto, 9 March 2014. A description was given by Mr. Douglas that coloureds historically (or at least in the apartheid era) were similar in social role to the ‘house nigger’, as espoused by Malcom X in his analogy of the differences between blacks during the slave period. The same term is used by another interviewee, also an active politician in Noordgesig as is Basil Douglas; Raven Martin, Noordgesig Soweto, 7 May 2014.

165 Lewis, Between the Wire, 1.

166 Ahluwalia & Zegeye, ‘Between Black and White’, 272. See also Martin ‘Whats in the Name’, 262.
the presentation of coloureds during apartheid also needs to be re-assessed. This would dispel the myths that coloureds were puppets of the apartheid regime and victims (in Marxist ideology) of false consciousness.¹⁶⁷

This dissertation suggests that there are four arguments that add to the assessment of coloured identity provided by Adhikari. Firstly, there were subtle changes over the course of the twentieth century in how coloured identity was experienced. While Adhikari is clear that post-1994 coloured identity has experienced rapid transformation as greater freedom has given expression to social identities and the term coloured has become ‘rehabilitated in public discourse’, he argues for the stability of the identity prior to this.¹⁶⁸ However, some form of change must have occurred during the preceding period, which explains how it was possible for the drastic deviations from the perceived norm since the elections of 1994 to have taken place. This is because historical change is a process rather than an event. Secondly, Adhikari’s study tends to focus on the Cape rather than Johannesburg, which has its own historical context and identity edifices. Thirdly, I concur that coloured racial identity is not homogenous and varies from province to province, city to city, location to location - hence, the importance of studying local coloured racial identities such as those that occur in Noordgesig to problematize broad claims of its national character.¹⁶⁹ Lastly, a shift in coloured identity experiences, at least in Johannesburg, occurred once coloureds were segregated from other population groups, particularly blacks and Indians, but also, poor whites, from the 1930s to 1960s. This changed how coloured people related to themselves as well as to other racial groups. Adhikari admits in Burdened by Race that the book’s shortfalls include no real account of coloureds in the nineteenth century, little on the gendered production of coloured identity and inadequate focus placed on coloured experiences in South Africa produced outside of the Western Cape.¹⁷０

¹⁶⁷ Brewer, After Soweto, 37; Field, ‘Fragile Identities’, 108; Jung, Then I was Black.
¹⁶⁸ Adhikari, Not White Enough, xv.
¹⁶⁹ Some texts that discuss the national character of coloured identity include, Adhikari, Not White Enough; Ahluwalia & Zegeye, ‘Between Black and White’; Erasmus, Coloured by History. If more local histories of coloured townships and their people’s identity experiences are produced, an explanation might be provided as to why coloured identity was not entirely dismissed by the majority of coloured people, even with the popularity of BC amongst many of its youth from the 1970s.
2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a synopsis of black housing development in Johannesburg from the 1930s to the end of apartheid. It argued that South African cities must be located within a wider context that includes equally coloured living areas, which are sorely lacking, because emphasis is placed on studying black townships. It has shown that urban history is more concerned with constructed space than how people experience the townships or city. Health concerns, coupled with the segregation produced by the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, became an excuse for slum removals during the 1930s. These however failed to decrease growing rates of black urbanization and the development of independent multiracial living areas. Thus, by the 1940s a racial legislative basis for urban planning was called for, distinct from class, to tackle urban problems head on.

The creation of racially distinct townships directly affected coloureds and Indians. Forced removals of these people occurred particularly after the Group Areas Act of 1950 and continued through the 1960s. Black housing efforts, which had been at the forefront of urban planning until the early 1960s, were reduced as the state focused on Bantustan development. Consequently, coloured housing construction in Johannesburg increased. Segregated townships redirected what the experience of coloured people was in the city and fostered an increase of black/coloured racism. The chapter shows that there is a poor representation in the literature of the everyday lives of residents of Johannesburg's coloured townships and thus argued for more local histories of these townships.

The events of the mid 1970s made townships the centre of struggle as well as of academic enquiry. Coloureds did participate in the national anti-apartheid struggles and rent boycotts of the 1980s that made South Africa ungovernable. The state attempted to co-opt them but failed. Coloured participation in the anti-apartheid struggle nonetheless did not mean rejection of their identity. This chapter has argued that there are specific and localized changes to coloured identity that occurred during the twentieth century.

The chapter then discussed coloured identity historically in South Africa, arguing that it must reflect not only the apartheid era but also the slave, colonial and inter-war period influences. The term ‘coloured’ was both imposed by others and actively created and reinterpreted by coloureds themselves. Furthermore, coloured
identity needs to relate to itself rather than to the dominant black and white cultural
identifications of South Africa. No adequate definition of coloured identity exists
precisely because of its local heterogeneous nature. Moreover, rather than
emphasising coloured identity this dissertation will regard instead coloured people’s
experiences in Noordgesig. Therefore, more studies that begin from the local context
and spread outward are required. This would counter-balance the dominance of
national and inward looking studies of coloured identity that try to string together
commonalities across South Africa but pay little attention to local non-Cape variations
of coloured experiences. Lastly, coloured identity constructions must move away from
collaborator/freedom fighter, oppressor/victim gulfs that limit understanding of both the
complexity and simplicity of living in a coloured township as ordinary coloured people.
CHAPTER 3
Noordgesig’s Establishment: Class, Race and the Politics of Proximity

3.1 Overview of Racial and Class Proximity

Noordgesig’s significance to early housing efforts in southwestern Johannesburg is implicit in its geographical location as first neighbour to Orlando.¹ By the late 1930s, Noordgesig was already a planned coloured township with inhabitants housed in temporary tents and brick homes when parts of Orlando West were only being purchased for housing development, while the purchasing of Meadowlands Small Holdings had yet to be completed.² The township is thus a valuable site to trace how interracial relations existed between coloureds and blacks. This section recreates portions of the experiences of Noordgesig residents in the 1940s in an attempt to show these relations. The fact that class is an important factor in the establishment of the township proves an intriguing angle of enquiry that I explore more deeply in this dissertation. This was done through a comparison with Coronationville, established in 1937, for a ‘higher class’ of coloured than those housed at Noordgesig. In fact, the township was a ‘temporary measure’ in much of the early correspondence, reserved for ‘lower class’ coloureds evicted from inner city slums.³ A number of delays also characterized its establishment in the late 1930s and early 1940s when work actually began on building houses there.

This chapter begins by showing that by the mid-1930s the city of Johannesburg actively sought separate housing for coloureds. It provides evidence that the development of Noordgesig reflected the debate about black/coloured relations and

¹ Is Noordgesig part of Soweto? The inhabitants of Noordgesig consider themselves as a neighbour ‘to’, rather than an equal member ‘of’. They consider Soweto independently from their township. Nonetheless, its architecture, layout, geographical location and class status similarities make it impossible to deny that it is a township of Soweto. Moreover, it shares with Soweto social services, spaces and places such as the power station at Orlando, a well-known landmark for any Soweto resident as well as the Orlando police station and post office. These landmarks frame the geographical awareness people there and in Orlando have. It is easiest to relate Noordgesig to Coronationville, the only other coloured township in the late 1930s, but what is particular about Noordgesig is that it is Orlando’s first neighbor.

² SAB, NTS, V914, Ref. # 51/313N(1)–VOL(2): Department of Native Affairs: municipality of Johannesburg, extensions to Orlando township, 30 August 1939.

³ The temporary nature of Noordgesig, because of its uncertain proclamation status, remained a concern until the end of apartheid. See section 4.5 and Chapter 5 in this regards.
their differentiation, as well as class and colour distinctions within race groups. It highlights the importance of class for the establishment of Noordgesig that was to house coloureds considered racially analogous to blacks. Furthermore, it shows how the middle status of a coloured person was switched back and forth, from a likeness to whiteness, to one closer to blackness, at the authorities’ whim. The conditional placement of Noordgesig next to Orlando was ideologically supported by the racial and class distinctions of the state.

In the early part of the twentieth century, a politics of difference existed between blacks and coloureds. However, political organizations such as the APO aimed at reconciling these differences through asserting similarity - even if it had an assimilationist agenda. Dr Abdurrahman argued that the white elite was using black labour to enrich only themselves; thus making the important link between race, labour, class, and inequality.4 Prime Minister Hertzog in November of 1925, in a discussion of the ‘coloured problem’, remarked on the ‘inseparable’ nature of black and coloured issues.5 His answer lay in the separation, therefore, of coloureds from blacks, in order to address the social ills facing coloured people and to solve the black labour problem. From the late 1920s, the interwar government consequently embarked on a process of buying property throughout Johannesburg with the expressed vision of creating racially segregated residential areas.6

However, The Commission of Enquiry into the Cape Coloured people, 1937, highlighted that prior to the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 no segregation existed in law to differentiate between black and coloured residential areas. This Act empowered the Governor-General to enforce residential segregation of blacks from other population groups. To do this, it provided a definition of blacks that excluded coloured persons. The Commission also noted that these two groups had been living side by side in Johannesburg further problematizing its definition and the separation of black and coloured people.7 Therefore, early housing efforts for coloureds was really

4 WITS, AD3244: SAIRR, 1905-1961, 9th Annual Conference of the APO, address by Dr. Abdurrahman, 1912. It is unclear if Dr. Abdurrahman’s reference to ‘blacks’ was applicable to all ‘non-whites’? Earlier he distinguishes between coloureds and ‘natives’.
5 WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, General Hertzog, Discussion of the coloured problem, November 1925.
6 For example purchasing farm properties in the southwestern areas where Orlando West and Moroka were developed. For discussion on the geography of racial separation see, A. Christopher, The Atlas of Changing South Africa (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).
about identifying and separating them from other racial groups by creating a perceived difference between them and blacks. Furthermore, this identification and separation was based foremost on class differentiation. Race and class however, are inseparable in the study of South African history. For Crankshaw, however, class played a bigger part in the establishment of early locations of Johannesburg for both residents and the state, which were eroded by apartheid’s racial policies. In Noordgesig, complex applications of class and race identified the township’s first residents as racially mixed coloureds from the lowest strata of class.

The Joint Johannesburg Coloured Organizations declared that by 1935 the majority of coloureds lived in slum areas and other ‘native’ townships, as well as Albertsville, Alexandra and the Malay location. They added that at this time a major housing shortage existed for the coloured population of Johannesburg and that no separate area from blacks had been established. A report in The Star, 1935, noted similarly that the coloureds of Johannesburg felt the municipality had forgotten their housing needs. In fact, the 1937 Commission of Enquiry into the Cape Coloured Population estimated that only 5% were satisfactorily housed.

Elite coloured representatives of non-government bodies as well as white authorities of the state called for separate housing for coloured people. However, some coloured organizations operating where large populations of coloureds lived, such as the Alexandra Coloured Associated Association, seemed not as anxious for separate housing. Nonetheless, the philanthropic mixed non-state bodies pressed for there to be separate housing provided for coloureds. An address by Councilor Freemen at a JECC meeting 1936, pointed out that the time had come to house those who were ‘neither Europeans or natives’ because no housing provision existed for

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9 SAB, TPB, 2262, Ref. # TALG1/18285/24 – TALG/18353/24: Memorandum: Western areas Johannesburg, 29 May 1950; WITS, AD1433: Joint Council 1924-1954, Joint European Coloured Council (hereafter JECC) meeting minutes ‘housing at Orlando’, 23 June 1939.
10 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, The Alexandra Coloured Associated Association and the Joint Council, 6 September 1938. It was reported that Alexandra townships population included 30,000 ‘natives’ and 4,000 coloureds. This was one of the largest concentrations of coloureds in Johannesburg, in an established township, before the occupation of Coronationville or the construction of Noordgesig.
11 WITS, AD843/B: SARRR, Joint Johannesburg Coloured Organizations, 1908-1962.
12 The Star, 14 August 1935 in WITS, AD1433: Joint Council of Europeans and Africans (Hereafter JCEA).
13 WITS, AG2703: Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs, Annual conference minutes, 1957-1962. By 1960, only 33% of coloured people were satisfactorily housed.
The Johannesburg JECC’s continued pressure paid off. It had purchased a 200-acre site for the establishment of Coronationville coloured housing scheme by the mid-1930s. The Joint Council agreed that it would accommodate about 1,200 families but that ‘it would be impossible to give the right of purchase in this township’.15

By the late 1930s, the state had begun to construct segregated residential areas and to separate blacks from coloureds. Regarding coloureds as having an affinity to white culture presented problems in housing these people for the interwar government. For example, the organizations interested in the welfare of coloured people argued that it was detrimental to the maintenance of coloureds’ likeness to white culture and an offense for them to live lives similar to blacks.16 Thus, Reverend Mullineux’s address to the Joint Council in 1939, noted that while there was a need for more housing, ‘[p]utting coloured people in native locations had a demoralizing effect’.17 However, this statement contradicts the reality that coloureds were already neighbours with blacks in inner city slumyards and freehold locations and likely not demoralized by this fact.

Furthermore, there is little evidence that less well-off coloured people felt threatened by living in mixed areas prior to the creation of segregated coloured townships, and in fact, the contrary may be true. Yet, the coloured elites hopes of assimilation into Western society prompted an almost ‘civilizing mission’ toward their fellow coloured brethren - If the coloured working class were more cultured, they felt, they (coloureds) would be more readily accepted into the dominant society.18 To be sure, the relationship between coloureds and blacks remained (and still remains) obscure and at times was (can be) unfriendly with profanities thrown around by both sides.19 Nevertheless, the history of coloured racism, and black racism, needs further

14 WITS, AD1433: 1924-1954.
15 Ibid. This position would change in the apartheid era and Coronationville would become one of the first coloured housing schemes offering home ownership of government built homes.
16 Most notably the Joint Councils. The truth of the matter is that socially and economically coloureds have always been and continue to be relatable to blacks. Yet, some coloureds would never admit to living lives similar to blacks.
17 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954: Reverend J Mullineux’s address to the Joint Council, 14 December 1939.
interrogation to gain a better comprehension of the coloured/black relationship in South Africa.  

One response to the 1937 Commission of Enquiry into the Cape Coloured People, agreed with General Hertzog that the relationship of coloureds and blacks was not a similar phenomenon and that the de-linking of these two groups was necessary. This became a possibility, according to the SAIRR, during the 1930s when the classification of ‘non-European’ was sub-divided into ‘Bantu’, ‘Asiatic’ and coloured. Nonetheless, because both the state and non-governmental bodies recognized that the majority of coloured people lived in interracial living areas their separation required a definition of a coloured person that not only distinguished them from blacks but also distanced them from whites.

The Draft Bill to provide grants to physically unfit Europeans and coloureds in 1938 defined a coloured person as neither Asian, nor a member of any aboriginal South African group, or an African American and was a person who did not live in a native location. Many definitions that followed gradually deposed entirely the European link to colouredness but stressed nonetheless that coloured culture remained ultimately closer to Europe than to Africa. While this was partially true, it denied coloured people the ability to understand, create, and define their own identity outside of either white or black culture. State segregation, based on class differentiation and racial distinctions, gave the impetus for coloured people to develop how their identity was to exist in these new townships.

The complex politics of proximity between races (i.e. the policies that sought to limit the interaction of different race groups through segregated residential areas that were adequately apart from one another), intertwined with class, determined why, who, and where people could reside. The National Convention of Organizations

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20 Literature is being produced particularly on contemporary xenophobia, although few connect this to the late 1980s and early 1990s so called ‘black on black’ violence. Even less has been written specifically on coloured racism.
22 WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, (specific year unknown).
23 Segregation was also a way of solving the ‘poor white problem’ who resided in these interracial areas.
24 SAB, VWN, 2597, Ref. # 2W026: Draft copy of the proposed Invalidity Bill, 26 April 1938. In 1938, most coloureds in Johannesburg lived in mixed areas proclaimed neither coloured, ‘native’, white nor Asian. While it was possible, during the inter war years, to proclaim areas for certain races, these were only enforced widely after the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950.
25 This set the foundations upon which the apartheid government would only build upon rather than redesign.
Interested in the Welfare of the Coloured People in July 1938 recommended that ‘wherever ground is set aside for the establishment of a location or township for non-Europeans, the coloured people should be separated from the natives’.\textsuperscript{26} Furthermore, the Convention stated, ‘[t]hat when a coloured township has been established, coloured persons should not be permitted to reside in neighboring native locations’.\textsuperscript{27} Noordgesig is an extraordinary example of a township that epitomizes the notion of coloureds having to live apart from blacks but ironically also closer than most coloured areas in Johannesburg, with only a road as the border. Moreover, it highlights how class factors decided what type of coloured would live in this township.

The JECC minutes of a meeting in 1939, regarding ‘housing at Orlando’, with reference to Noordgesig, show how ingrained was the notion of class as well as the idea that a coloured township should never be placed near to a native location:

\ldots the original plan was to put the so-called class D coloured people at Schoongezicht. The deputy town clerk had shown him a map which showed that this township was adjacent to Orlando, but on the town side. IT WAS NOTED that representations might be made to move this township further away from Orlando and native influences.\textsuperscript{28}

Significantly, class, as well as the proximity to black ‘influence’ are reasons for wanting Noordgesig resident’s removal. It is unclear where the term ‘Class D’ coloured comes from, nor, if it was a commonly used term by the Joint Councils. While it refers here to people, in other documents relating to the establishment of Coronationville, it refers to the type of houses built. Housing ‘Class D’ coloureds (the last class level for coloureds) adjacent to the already established Orlando ‘Native’ Township was only possible because of this class positioning. Noordgesig would not have been approved had these people been classed similarly to those moved to Coronationville.\textsuperscript{29} Still, it is remarkable that housing even the lowest class of coloureds close to blacks was problematic, irrespective of the two group’s socio-economic similarities.

One reason coloureds were moved to Noordgesig was to limit interaction with black people whose influence was not meant to ‘infiltrate’ them. However,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{26} WITS, AD3244: SAIRR, 1905-1961, National Convention of Organizations Interested in the Welfare of the Coloured People, July 1938.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} ibid
  \item \textsuperscript{28} WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, JECC meeting minutes ‘housing at Orlando’, 23 June 1939. Emphasis Thiers. Class D coloureds are the poorest class of coloured defined in this document. Noordgesig had a number of names at its establishment; see later sections in both these regards.
  \item \textsuperscript{29} See for instance documents that describe who would be housed at Coronationville and Noordgesig, WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, 23 June 1939; WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, Report of the Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population, 1937.
\end{itemize}
Noordgesig’s establishment next to Orlando meant this separation was poor and incomplete.\(^{30}\) The township, however, was the only accommodation available to hundreds of coloureds evicted from inner city living areas but had the drawback of being too far out and ‘…completely overshadowed by the native township of Orlando’. St. Albans Anglican church therefore recommended that more sites for coloured housing be proclaimed that did not have the ‘…disadvantages of Noordgesig’\(^{31}\). The township’s close proximity to blacks and the threat to colouredness this posed are significant. The ideal of segregation required the removal of coloureds from exposure to the ‘swaart gevaar’ (black threat) which only social distance and geographical separation could create.

Nonetheless, the Northern provinces of South Africa in the early 1940s placed no obligation on municipalities, government or provincial councils to provide separate coloured housing. Therefore, in a memorandum concerning the granting of franchise to coloureds in the Transvaal, it was suggested that only Coronationville offered adequately built houses for this purpose. In addition, it was stated that the quantity of these houses did not ‘remotely’ meet the needs of the coloured population in Johannesburg.\(^{32}\) The memorandum described Noordgesig as being of ‘a much lower order’ than Coronationville stating, ‘The houses are of a slum type, rather than sub-economic; the site of the township immediately adjoins Orlando, the great city of Africans, there is no street lighting nor fencing, and only one main made road’. They added further that the municipality’s answer to criticisms of Noordgesig’s poor conditioning, made by the Coloured Advisory Council, was that the township was built ‘…for the type of coloured people who are near-native in their standard of living’.\(^{33}\) The memorandum pointed out that this was an excuse, made by the municipality, for the poor condition of houses at Noordgesig. Arguing instead, that while Noordgesig in the early 1940s housed former slum dwellers, ‘… these people were of the average type of Cape Coloured …apart from a few families where there is definitely an African partner to the marriage, there is not one coloured family to be found in Noordgesig

\(^{30}\) The ‘infiltration’ of black ideals and people remained a major factor in the temporary nature of Noordgesig until the 1980s and the possibility of its inhabitant’s relocation. See section 4.5 and Chapter 5.

\(^{31}\) WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, Memorandum of St. Albans (Anglican) Church on coloured housing, 1943.

\(^{32}\) WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Memorandum concerning the case for granting franchise privileges to the Cape Coloured people in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State (no date).

\(^{33}\) *Ibid.* Italics mine
that is near native in its habits'. The inhabitants' lower class identification, compared to Coronationville, exonerated the city for the inferior conditions at Noordgesig. Importantly however, because the racial identity of the people of Noordgesig was ‘near native’, their proximity to the black township of Orlando could be further justified and ideologically supported.

The Housing Committee’s Report of the JECC in 1944 noted with regard to Noordgesig that it was ‘entirely unsatisfactory’ for coloureds ‘owing to its position and the class of house built thereon’. It added further that even residents did not think it was acceptable and only remained there because no other suitable housing was available in the city. These statements reiterate the uncomfortable proximity of Noordgesig to Orlando and the low class of houses built there for coloureds. Moreover, it was evident that racial separation was to be justified by class distinctions during the late 1940s. The state used socio-economic standing and class differences amongst coloureds in considering the establishment of new coloured townships. A speech made by Dr. Malan, just prior to election victory in 1948, openly admitted that class differences and exceptions existed within the coloured community that were guiding tools for the development of urban coloured housing. He stated, ‘… provision must be made, with government support, to make provision for better housing for coloured people, special attention being paid to the requirements of the more civilized ones among them, but in any case separately and at a distance from native locations’. Noordgesig was by then a housing scheme catering to these ‘less civilized’ poorer coloureds. These were coloureds, who tended to be darker skinned, with a parent who might be black. They were coloureds who thus could be housed near and even within the black townships in southwestern Johannesburg because they occupied a position bordering that of blackness.

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34 Ibid.
35 WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, Johannesburg JECC, June 1944. This report recommended that Western Native Township be designated coloured, Sophiatown and Martindale designated white, Meadowlands and Diepkloof offered as townships for blacks and Lenasia be made available for Indian occupation. All of these became policy and were implemented with the passing of the Group Areas Act in 1950. This highlights the influence that the Joint Councils had over housing policy in the 1940s. Furthermore, the term Cape Coloured used in 1944 refers to the entire population of coloureds in Johannesburg. However, by the interwar years the term coloured was already specific to people not considered black, white or Indian. When exactly the term became distinguishable from ‘coloured’ meaning all blacks, coloureds and Indians is uncertain. During the apartheid era the term, Cape Coloured became one of the many sub-divisions of the group set into law.
Even by 1949, the City Council’s planned re-zoning of the western area complex, noted that, ‘Noordgesig [should] be reserved for such families of mixed race as cannot be classified as either coloured or native’. The ambiguity of the people of Noordgesig was clear; they were neither coloured nor black. They were...black coloureds? Those people that even apartheid classifications of the next decades could not classify. Perhaps they were coloureds too close to black, or even, blacks too close to coloureds. Still somehow, they were close enough to black (yet differentiated from them) and located next door to Orlando. Significantly, this classification of Noordgesig’s residents as neither coloured nor black occurred just after the start of the apartheid era. Although, at the establishment of the township the City Council had also struggled to define those to be housed there and therefore kept class as the distinguishing agent. Basing housing policy on class meant that those housed at Noordgesig included darker skinned people not clearly identifiable as black African but fitted within the accepted social identity description of a coloured person.

### 3.2 The Construction of Noordgesig

Noordgesig was to house at least 1000 families. The non-European and Native Affairs Committee agreed that only 400 houses be built at first to ascertain the response of coloureds. If the scheme proved successful, the remaining houses would be completed. However, only 350 homes were built between 1940 and 1942. The original proposal for Noordgesig included separate hostels for 250 males and 250 females, which were never constructed. Significantly, up until the formation of Soweto and its designation as a city, Noordgesig like all the townships in the southwestern parts of the city were outside the municipality of Johannesburg, but because the land was the property of the JCC meant it fell under the council’s control.

Additionally, and what perhaps accounts for the delay in constructing houses at Noordgesig between 1940 and 1942, besides approval being granted by 1939, is that a planned coloured township called Olympia is shown on a map dated 29 April 1939. Olympia Township was to be located close to Pimville in the southwestern

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37 SAB, TPB, 2262, Ref. # TALG18323: Memorandum: Western Areas Johannesburg, 31 October 1949.
38 SAB, NTS, 5915, Ref. # 51/313N(2) vol 2 - 51/313N(1) vol3: Department of Native Affairs, Johannesburg, 29 April 1939.
39 SAB, TPB, 1166, Ref. # TA26/94245 – TA16/9435: Memorandum, Johannesburg Municipality, Clinic Facilities at Noordgesig, 27 December 1944.
40 SAB, NTS, 5915, Ref. # 51/313N(2) vol 2 - 51/313N(1) vol3: 29 April 1939.
area and on the map is labeled as, ‘proposed site for Coloured Township’. Interestingly, this map showed existing townships in the southwestern parts of Johannesburg which in 1939 only included the former Klipspruit/Pimville and Orlando, but did not indicate Noordgesig as either established or proposed.41

All the same, there is clear evidence that the state intended to build a coloured township adjacent to Orlando by 1937/1938. In July 1938 proposals were made by the Native Commissioner to exchange 102 acres of Orlando township’s ground with 102 acres of the farm Diepkloof (the future site of Noordgesig), owned by Consolidated Main Reef Mines and Estate LTD. This had been given notice in The Star on 13, 20 and 27 of October 1937.42 An additional 99 acres was being purchased from the same mining corporation for the establishment of this coloured township. The Native Commissioner added that if the housing scheme was a failure, both pieces of land were to be transferred to the native revenue account and because the land had not been proclaimed, there was ‘no curtailment of the existing location’.43 From its beginning, therefore, ‘Noordgesig coloured township’ had the possibility of being handed over to Orlando but was saved by the fact that it had not been proclaimed for any race group.

However, the plans to build Noordgesig were not passed without difficulty from the various housing departments. The Government Gazette of South Africa, no. 84 of 1940, made official the proposal to establish the township. Yet, the Township Board, in October 1940, persisted in trying to withdraw the application to have construction proceed.44 This is surprising since the Township Board appears to have been the authoritative department regarding the establishment of housing for ‘non-Europeans’ in the 1940s. The departments involved in establishing new townships in the city included at this time, the Non-European Affairs Department (national), the Townships Board (provincial and national) and the Johannesburg City Council (municipal). Requests made by the City Council had to be approved first by the Township’s Board

41 See section 1.1 and Klipspruit/Kliptown confusion.
42 SAB, NTS, 5915, Ref. # 51/313N(2) vol 2 - 51/313N(1) vol3: City of Johannesburg, municipal offices Johannesburg, notice in the Star 13, 20, and 27 October 1937, 24 November 1937; SAB, NTS, 5915, Ref. # 51/313N(2) vol 2 - 51/313N(1) vol3: Native Commissioner R.W. Norda letter to the director of native labour, Municipality of Johannesburg: exchange of 102 acres of ground at Orlando for 102 acres on farm Diepkloof owned by Consolidated Main Reef Mines and Estate LTD, 23 July 1938.
43 SAB, NTS, 5915, Ref. # 51/313N(2) vol 2 - 51/313N(1) vol3: Native Affairs Department, handwritten memo, 3 January 1938; SAB, NTS, 5915, Ref. # 51/313N(2) vol 2 - 51/313N(1) vol3: 23 July 1938.
before they could be granted. City Council proposals also had to be submitted to the non-European Affairs Department for housing. In this case, the City of Johannesburg, owing to the real lack of housing for coloureds increasing because of slum clearances, forced through the establishment of Noordgesig by aligning itself with the influential advisory Johannesburg JECC. In order to do this, it would have required the non-European Affairs Department’s involvement in order to stave off the Township Board’s request to discontinue plans for its establishment. Nonetheless, the application was made by the Town Clerk of Johannesburg to establish Noordgesig on 25 June 1940. Special note was given regarding ‘the need or desirability of establishing the township’ but the application went on to add that ‘Abramstad’ was ‘required for slum clearance purposes as a coloured housing scheme’. It is not implausible that the JCC forced through this application because there were already coloured people in need of housing, living in makeshift accommodation in what would become Noordgesig.

The name change from the original application name of Abramstad to Noordgesig is worth a mention. The Township’s Board, seemingly forced to comply with the city council’s decision to establish a coloured township adjoining Orlando notes:

…it is necessary to advise you that the designation ‘Rusoord’ is not available and that the name ‘Mooigesit’ is likely to be confused with ‘Mooizicht’, a railway station in the Orange Free State. ‘Noordgesicht’ is not acceptable as it is a hybrid. Its Afrikaans equivalent ‘Noordgesig’ is, however, available and will be recorded in respect of the proposed township…

Other names put forward by the council included, Schoongezicht and Volkshawe, which were also rejected by the postal authorities concerned with the naming of townships. The administrator of the non-European Affairs Committee granted a sub-economic housing loan on 29 November 1940. Since the loan was granted at the end of November 1940, the construction of Noordgesig only really began in 1941. Moreover, on December 2, 1942 the City Treasurer questioned why the housing

45 SAB, CDB, 3318, Ref. # TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2106 – TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2110: Application for permission to establish a township under the provisions of the townships and town planning ordinance of ‘93’, 25 June 1940.
46 Ibid. Abramstad was the name given in the application for what would become Noordgesig.
47 SAB, CDB, 3318, Ref. # TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2106 – TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2110: Township’s Board, coloured housing scheme: near Orlando letter to town clerk, 13 June 1940. Italics mine. Other names given to Noordgesig in 1940 during the application process included, Kleurstad, Afgunsville, and Sonopstad.
48 SAB, CDB, 3318, Ref. # TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2106 – TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2110: Municipal offices Johannesburg, coloured housing scheme near Orlando, farm Diepkloof # 9, 18 June 1940.
scheme of Noordgesig was ‘not’ complete when the Council had already spent the money allocated to it.\footnote{SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: Johannesburg City Treasurer, 2 December 1942.} 

There were also other delays in the construction and completion of the first phase of the township. These included, limited funds being available, rapid urbanization that led to a serious housing shortages, the manufacturing restrictions of WWII, and the inadequacy of the tender companies building Noordgesig. The original application for a loan of £401,075 made by the Council to the central housing board in Pretoria, in 1939, for housing at Noordgesig was rejected because they had made too many requests for funds. A national shortage of housing meant resources were limited at this time.\footnote{SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: Johannesburg Municipality; Housing Schemes, 1941.} In a meeting of the Johannesburg JECC in 1939 it was pointed out that the City Council would provide for some time no further funds for the building of houses at Schoongezicht.\footnote{WITS, AD1433: Joint Councils, 1924-1954, Johannesburg JECC, September 22 1939.} Thus, the allocation of funds to Noordgesig were limited and frequently frozen. The township’s precariousness and the uncertainty of government housing departments to begin construction there added to the refusal to grant the loan.\footnote{In 1940 the townships board had attempted to withdraw the application to establish Noordgesig. SAB, TOD, 2240, Ref. # 39/1684/6: Townships Board, letter to the Transvaal Education Department, 8 October 1940.} Ultimately, Noordgesig was built in stages, with the Council applying for funds to complete one section before requesting additional funds for the next.\footnote{SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: Letter from the City Treasurer to Mr. Ivan Walker Chairman of the National Housing and Planning Commission, 2 February 1950.}

The decision to build the township coincided with the commencement of WWII, leading to conflicted interests. There were restrictions during the war period on housing owing to manufacturers having to supply goods to the country’s war effort. This made the task of getting the materials necessary to complete Noordgesig very difficult.\footnote{See B. Hirson, \textit{Yours for the Union: Class and Community Struggles in South Africa, 1930-1947} (London: Zed Books, 1990).} The construction of the first houses at Coronationville seems not to have had such postponements because building started there in 1937. Ultimately, the construction of the Noordgesig’s first 600 homes continued until after the end of the War. In fact, only in 1950 was a request made for the completion of the intended 1059 homes at Noordgesig. The Executive Committee of the Johannesburg Coloured
Housing Schemes referred to resolutions dating back to December 1940, September 1944, and September 1946 to argue for the township’s completion.\textsuperscript{56}

Added to these interruptions was the liquidation of the construction company that was in the process of building an additional 250 homes after the original 350 were built in 1940/1942. Therefore, ‘134 houses at various stages of erection, none of which was completed, and 116 [that] had not been started’ were recorded in a 1947 report of the Special Housing Committee.\textsuperscript{57} The Council recommended the canceling of Interlock Construction Corporation’s contract that made them liable for funds paid to them. The new tender construction company Messrs. Anderson Construction Company was to complete the partly built homes and erect the remaining homes.\textsuperscript{58}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Cost (£)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14/10/1947</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>190,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/12/1950</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>184,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/06/1952</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>39,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/07/1954</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>39,000</td>
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After WWII, and when the necessary augmented funds were allocated for black housing, a fifteen-year reduction in resources for coloured housing in the Johannesburg area began. Nonetheless, in 1947 the City of Johannesburg requested funding for the completion of 250 additional houses at Noordgesig from the National Housing and Planning Commission.\textsuperscript{59} The houses they constructed were poorly built and had no flooring, similar to the first 350 houses of the township.\textsuperscript{60} In 1950, an additional loan was requested to complete 350 more houses at Noordgesig.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{56} SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: JHB Housing Scheme, Coloured Housing Scheme – Noordgesig, Sub-economic Loan 401,075 Pounds, 1941.

\textsuperscript{57} SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: Extract from Report of Special Housing Committee to Council Meeting, 24 June 1947.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{59} SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 - 27/110057: National Housing and Planning Committee, 1947.

\textsuperscript{60} SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: Local Government and Johannesburg Town Clerk, 18 November 1948; SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: Letter from the Department of Health to the Provincial Secretary Regarding the Proposed Housing Scheme at Noordgesig, 26 September 1940.

\textsuperscript{61} SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref.# 25/11057 – 27/110057: National Housing and Planning Committee, Letter to the Town Clerk from the Secretary of Health Regarding Application for an Increased Loan of £190,707, 8 March 1950; SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: Johannesburg City Council Proposal for a Scheme, 29 August 1950.
construction that took place in Noordgesig since 1947 is shown by the City Treasurer’s Department’s letter to the National Housing and Planning Commission and presented in Table 3.1.\textsuperscript{62} 850 houses had been built by the mid-1950s with an additional 70 and later 139 houses after 1955 in the last two remaining undeveloped corners of Noordgesig, which brought the total to 1059 houses completed in Noordgesig before 1960.\textsuperscript{63}

3.3 Moving into Noordgesig

While the state acted as paternal provider, on the ground, various people used the newly built houses as a way to enrich themselves. The City of Johannesburg noted in February 1939; ‘…it has come to the notice of this department that certain individuals are interviewing the coloured population and advising them that it is necessary to join certain associations in order to be eligible to acquire accommodation in this proposed coloured township’. Sometimes these people were also required to pay for application forms.\textsuperscript{64} The city’s failure to provide adequate information to those eligible for accommodation at the new townships of Noordgesig and Coronationville gave the opportunity to these groups to exploit hopeful candidates.

Furthermore, there seemed to be a great deal of confusion with the particulars of the new housing schemes for coloureds, regarding for example the rentals and conditions of housing. Many people were not sure how to get application forms or apply for this housing. J.A. Gordon’s letter in this regard states: ‘I understand there is a form for applicants but I have not seen one. We really need the information in order to guide our people, as apparently few of them know the facts’.\textsuperscript{65} The administrative difficulties in ensuring houses were available for evicted coloureds prior to moving to Noordgesig was evident. The JCC was to blame for this unpreparedness that lead to the usage of temporary accommodation before the allocation of homes – an important component in the process of moving into Noordgesig and the experiences of original inhabitants. Interestingly however, possibly because of class differences, no evidence

\textsuperscript{62} The first 350 houses built in 1940/1942 required sewage and electrical reticulation, therefore the loan shown for October of 1947 includes the cost of doing these upgrades to houses built more than half a decade earlier.

\textsuperscript{63} SAB, TPB, 2500, Ref. # JALG 56/11057 – JALG 60/11057: Secretary of the National Housing Office, 26 August 1955; SAB, TPB, 2500, Ref # JALG 56/11057 – JALG 60/11057: Memorandum: Johannesburg Municipality, 2 November 1955.

\textsuperscript{64} WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, City of Johannesburg Non-European and Native Affairs Department, 15 February 1939.

\textsuperscript{65} WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Letter to Mr. McEwan from J.A. Gordon, 29 August 1939.
was found showing if temporary accommodation existed in Coronationville as they did in Noordgesig. Nevertheless, by January 1941 a total of £81,812 was spent on the first 350 houses of the scheme.\textsuperscript{66}

The ‘lower’ classes of coloureds housed at Noordgesig meant, inevitably, poorly constructed houses there. In an early letter to the Johannesburg JECC, September 6, 1940, the ‘...deplorable housing conditions existing at Schoongesicht adjoining Orlando’ were noted.\textsuperscript{67} While construction had occurred at Noordgesig by 1940, according to a government letter, the first resident of Noordgesig only moved into his house in June of 1942.\textsuperscript{68} Hence, it is unclear if the Joint Council was in 1940 referring to houses that were being built or the temporary accommodation made available for people awaiting the completion of their new homes. This depended also, on whether people were evicted from the various slum areas of the city before or after the ‘temporary measure’ at Noordgesig had been completed.\textsuperscript{69}

In a letter from the City of Johannesburg to George Rorke (Bra George), who had requested the council to clarify reports of the possible removal of Noordgesig residents that the Soweto Council had taken on 27 June 1985, it states, with regard to the township’s establishment:

Noordgesig was established in 1939 primarily to house those approximately 300 homeless coloured families who were squatting in tents and iron shacks in a church yard in Vrederdorp and in an open veld next to Orlando, which at that time was enclosed by an iron fence. To relieve the situation, the council erected out of own funds houses and subsequently, coloured families from other areas were moved to Noordgesig. It is interesting to note that Mr. Keyser was the first applicant to be accommodated in Noordgesig from a waiting list...which was allocated to him on 21 June 1942.\textsuperscript{70}

It is clear that the establishment of Noordgesig in 1939 and the completion of houses in 1942 meant that temporary accommodation had been available to coloureds who lived in ‘tents and iron shacks’ in ‘an open veld next to Orlando’. Furthermore, the oral history in the township imparts that ‘Oupa Keyser’, as he is popularly referred to, was indeed the first resident of Noordgesig.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{66} WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, Department of Public Health Report, 24 November 1941.

\textsuperscript{67} WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Johannesburg JECC, 6 September 1940.

\textsuperscript{68} Private collection of Oom Georjie: City of Johannesburg, Housing department letter to G Rorke a resident of 468 Modder St, Noordgesig, 27 June 1985.

\textsuperscript{69} WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, 6 September 1940.


\textsuperscript{71} See for instance Interview Auntie Freeda, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014; Interview Mrs. Williams, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014; Interview Auntie Poppie, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014.
Bureaucratic inefficiency in handling coloured affairs, which was the preserve of various state departments, made it more difficult to address the intricacies involved in evicting people and ensuring all the families removed had alternative housing. The long procedure of informing those affected by the demolition of houses under the Slum Act was summed up by the JCC in 1942. The final decision to demolish houses was made by the Public Health Committee who then provided a list of all coloured persons needing re-housing which was submitted to the Non-European and Native Affairs Department. Each individual was then consulted and accommodation offered at Coronationville or Noordgesig. Prior to eviction or demolition, a notice was sent to applicants advising them that a house was available. According to this letter, the response to these final notices was poor and only 20% ‘accepted accommodation’. This statement disregarded the possibility of the various procedures not working ‘in sync’. Rather, the coloured community was blamed for failing to take the notices of eviction seriously nor seeking accommodation in new government schemes. This also points to coloureds having been quite satisfied at living in inner city and western area yards. In 1943 St. Albans (Anglican) Church reasoned that coloureds preferred the central areas of the city because of the cheaper transport costs, closer proximity to work, and the inconvenient and distant housing schemes for coloureds which had poor shopping facilities and restrictions on visitors to municipal housing schemes.

Auntie Poppie’s family arrived in Noordgesig in 1943 when she was 13 years old. Auntie Poppie recalled that when she arrived in Noordgesig there were just a handful of occupied houses (she states about ‘10 homes’). The houses were built a few at a time. In 1943, there were only ‘ou look’ (old look) houses in the bottom west and east sections of Noordgesig. This colloquial description was (is) used to distinguish the first generation of 350 houses built at Noordgesig from all those that followed. An example of one of these homes is shown in Photograph 3.1. According to Auntie Poppie, the ‘rock and roll’ section, (another colloquial description for the bottom most western part of Noordgesig and the last section completed in the township) at this time, had tents which people lived in while waiting for their houses to be built. When a train crash occurred in 1949, she recalled that people were still living in tents there. Mrs. Williams jokingly added that the government had promised

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72 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, City of Johannesburg, letter to the Johannesburg JECC, 8 June 1942.
73 WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR 1908-1962, Memorandum of St. Albans (Anglican) Church on coloured housing, 1943.
74 See Map 4.1 that shows where these sections are and the various colloquial names for them.
to make a memorial honoring the victims but that this never happened. Like Auntie Poppie, Mrs. Williams also remembered people staying in tents when she arrived in Noordgesig and that these were quite numerous in the late 1940s. Both women recalled that the train line went through Ballenden Street in what today divides the ‘rock and roll’ section from the ‘ou look’ section of Noordgesig. The train track was only later moved to its current position, at the far western edge of the township, before the ‘rock and roll’ was built, offering proof that this section was indeed the last area built in Noordgesig in the mid to late 1950s.

**Photograph 3.1: An ‘ou look’ home on Park Road**

Auntie Poppie recalled that a police officer controlled access into and out of Soweto at the intersection dividing Noordgesig from Orlando on the Main Road. The name given to this police officer was ‘ou double-up’. While it was easy to walk through the two townships, if you were a resident, vehicles were scrutinized. In fact, it was quite necessary to go into Orlando for Noordgesig residents because the only shops during most of the 1940s were at Vukapansi in Orlando (that are still in operation) which included a butchery and a general grocery store. The division was

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75 Interview Auntie Poppie; Interview Mrs. Williams. Sadly, Mrs. Williams passed away in October 2014.
76 Interview Auntie Poppie; Interview Mrs. Williams.
77 A ‘double-up’ in township slang is a thoroughfare frequently used, often in reference to a short cut.
further symbolized in a fence that extended from Station Road up to the top half of Noordgesig, but seems not to have existed at the bottom section of Noordgesig.\footnote{Interview Auntie Poppie.}

As the state pressed ahead with segregation policies in the 1930s and 1940s, a steady weakening of relations between blacks and coloureds began to occur. This coincided with the creation of the coloured townships of Coronationville and Noordgesig and the proposal for the establishment of a coloured living area in the western parts of the city. In 1944 the Johannesburg JCEA noted the ‘…deterioration of relationships between the coloured and African people … it was suggested that one of the subjects which has caused some ill feeling recently is the question of housing particularly in the Western areas’\footnote{WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, JECC, letter received from the Johannesburg JCEA, 17 August 1944.} The deterioration of relations between the two groups, in this example, was with regard to the government plan to remove blacks from the Western Native Township and re-zone it as a coloured area. This highlights the role government policies played in creating tensions between blacks and coloureds from a seemingly closer arrangement prior to the 1940s, to one that even in the post-apartheid period remains uncertain.\footnote{This uncertainty is evidenced by President Zuma’s trip to Eldorado Park on 14 May 2013, which was trumped as a show of ANC solidarity in the fight against drugs in coloured communities. Alternatively, the failed policies of the Democratic Alliance (DA) in ameliorating gang related activities in the Western Cape. Both of these were unconvincing and poor attempts at appeasing coloured constituents.}

Moreover, for the Teacher’s League of South Africa, the fear of a white backlash was real. If they (the coloured elite) angered the authorities by speaking out against increased segregation, their assimilationist ideals were likely to be compromised.\footnote{The League was mainly for coloured teachers and published the Educational Journal from May 1915. By the early 1940s, the majority of coloured teachers were under its wing. Adhikari, \textit{Not White Enough}, 79.} Nonetheless, residential segregation was an ideal they disagreed with, arguing, using essentialist discourse, that coloureds could not be separated from Europeans.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, 88-89.} The coloured elite of the APO and the Teacher’s League disagreed with segregation because it limited their chances of assimilating into the dominant society.

In responding to questions about the relationship between black and coloured residents of Orlando and Noordgesig during the early years of the township, Auntie Poppie recalled that people from Noordgesig drank in Orlando and had to walk to the train station there. Therefore, interactions with blacks was common and easy. While she suggested that a better relationship existed in the 1940s and early 1950s with
blacks, she also was clear that there was a distinction between black and coloured people. Mrs. Williams also noted that there was a good relationship between blacks and coloureds (in the 1940s and 1950s) and mentioned that she had friends in Orlando. In fact, Noordgesig residents used to frequent Orlando on weekend evenings for entertainment because there was no hall in Noordgesig at the time. Additionally, there was no legal distinction between coloureds and blacks with regard to living areas; neither was there in the 1940s a method to force coloureds to live in the two townships the state had provided for them.

The legalities around ‘compelling’ coloured slum dwellers to reside in areas set aside for them was the agenda of a Joint Council meeting, 1944. It noted that no legal machinery existed for the council to enforce movements to the new housing schemes at Noordgesig and Coronationville. The reason this was tabled, was that in 1944 there existed vacant accommodation at Noordgesig even though many coloureds had been displaced from slum premises. They added that while suitable accommodation existed many did not take the offer ‘presumably [for] certain financial considerations’. The Joint Council then proposed that the only legal way of forcing occupation would be to zone the whole of Johannesburg into areas permitted for ‘Europeans’ and other areas for ‘non-European’ populations. For the ‘non-European’ section, the council asked for further differentiation into coloured, ‘native’ and Indian. This was argued to be a necessity for South African urban planners if the desired segregation of residential areas was to be fulfilled. It also meant that the class and race of the future occupants would decide the standard of houses built.

A Johannesburg JECC meeting in 1943 pointed out that the living conditions were poor at Noordgesig. It stated that residents were living in much the same conditions as they had in the slums they had been removed from. The houses people lived in had no floors, ceilings, outside locks (padlocks), nor, adequate lavatories and fencing. In fact, the houses built in 1940/1942 were ‘identical’ to those built in Orlando West according to the Provincial Secretaries Office in 1943 that stated further that ‘the

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83 Interview Auntie Poppie; Interview Mrs. Williams.
84 Interview Auntie Joyce, Noordgesig Soweto, 5 September 2014. Interview Auntie Poppie; Interview Mrs. Williams.
85 This contradicts Auntie Poppie’s assertion that there were people living in tents because no houses existed for them to stay in.
86 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Joint Council meeting, February 15 1944.
87 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Johannesburg JECC minutes of meeting, 22 March 1943.
rents should be fixed at the same rate’. Noordgesig’s inhabitants, therefore, did not occupy a much higher status, in the view of officials, than blacks. A description of Noordgesig offered by *The Star* in 1944 concluded that the township was ‘where poorer coloured people live’, remarking also that there was no electricity and that water was provided at an extra cost. There were also a small number of tarred roads in the township and many of the unpaved roads and pavements were ‘deeply rutted’. Thus, what was deemed satisfactory for black housing also seemed reasonable for the poorest class of coloureds.

82-year-old Mrs. Williams, originally from Kimberly, would elaborate with a sense of humor on the poor conditions at Noordgesig in its early years. She remembered the dirt roads and the lack of electricity when she first arrived in Noordgesig in the mid-1940s. The toilet, she humorously recalled, was a ‘drie beene’ (three legged) chamber pot with a tap right next to it outside. The collecting of waste was a messy affair that sometimes had its contents partially spilled in the yard. She said playing when the refuse collectors came was hazardous as they could easily throw all the sewage they collected out in front of your home. Even Auntie Joyce recalled that they did not eat until the sewage had been collected because the stench it made was unbearable. There were also only coal stoves in use and when a fire was made the house would get dark with smoke. Therefore, Mrs. Williams added that the house had to be cleaned every time the stove was used, to get rid of the soot.

Mrs. Williams argued that with the ‘new look’ houses (any houses that were not built with the ‘face brick’ of the original homes), standards deteriorated when compared to the ‘ou look’ models; adding that the ‘rock and roll’ had the cheapest houses built in Noordgesig. She went so far as to call these houses ‘vrot’ (rotten). Auntie Vesta first occupied Mrs. Williams’s house, situated in the ‘rock and roll’. Mrs. Williams’s family put in flooring made of cow dung and mud, which they collected from the surrounding farms at a time when Noordgesig’s sunrise was unobstructed by gold mine dumps. Yet, even with ample space available around Noordgesig, the site was considered a

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89 *The Star*, ‘Fine School Built By Native Youths: City Councilors Tour the Non-European Areas’, 4 December 1944 in WITS, AD1912: SAIRR.
90 Interview Mrs. Williams.
91 Interview Auntie Joyce.
92 Interview Mrs. Williams.
93 Ibid.
poor place for coloureds. For Cassey, while places have had ‘varied production across time for its existence’ it is sites that are ‘empty’.\textsuperscript{94} The external infrastructural agencies, created the site for Noordgesig, but do not reveal the experiences inhabitants had in creating their living place. Moreover, Noordgesig’s place next to Orlando meant there was an influence of black cultural traits.

Thus, in a 1943 Johannesburg JECC meeting it was noted that ‘sufficient’ houses be built at Coronationville to house all Noordgesig residents because of the slow ‘infiltration’ of ‘natives’ there.\textsuperscript{95} As a result, a Council member of the Johannesburg JECC moved a motion on 23 March 1944 ‘[t]hat Noordgezig should be abolished as an area for coloured people’ because of its racial proximity to Orlando’s ‘negative’ influence.\textsuperscript{96} It is unclear however if the ‘infiltration’ of blacks referred to here was in regard to blacks getting housed at Noordgesig, or, the social interaction of residents, either by walking through each other’s townships, or, interacting more socially with one another through drinking, romantic relationships, participation at sporting events or church, for example. Moreover, proximity to a black area was not only specific to Noordgesig but to Coronationville as well, at least until the mid-1950s. Coronationville was built opposite Western Native Township and Newclare, which were only proclaimed coloured group areas in the early 1950s. However, this influence is never discussed in the government documents referred to in this dissertation. The fact that Coronationville’s occupants were considered a higher class and were likely fairer skinned, the chances of the influence of black culture over their colouredness was perhaps considered less possible, or even impossible.

Even though Noordgesig was established after Coronationville, by 1947, according to the Non-European Affairs Department, there were 350 registered families living there compared to 250 in Coronationville. They further estimated the number of unattached coloured persons living as sub-tenants in both Noordgesig and


\textsuperscript{95} WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Johannesburg JECC, minutes of meeting, 5 April 1943.

\textsuperscript{96} WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Johannesburg JECC, minutes of meeting, 23 March 1944. This motion was agreed to by the council with the Rev. Clack of the Noordgesig Ebenezer church, who had been approached by the government in 1943 to establish a school at the church, the only member dissenting. Note the spelling for Noordgesig four years after its establishment and name was approved.
Coronationville at 250 males and 350 females. Official records of sub-tenants would have included those who occupied a room within the house and not a backyard shack as was common in Orlando Township in the 1940s. However, it does not negate the possibility of unaccounted for tenants living in the household even if they did not occupy a backyard dwelling. Moreover, bureaucratic rules and regulations were a major inconvenience to residents. Those who visited the township were required to obtain permits to visit their family and friends and a sub-tenant’s fee was charged for all those who visited and stayed overnight.

The railway was the main source of transport into and out of Noordgesig and therefore promoted regular interaction between coloureds and black people. This is further evidenced in what was in 1949 the largest railway crash in the Union’s history: On 28 April a train accident occurred between new Canada station and the Lamlamkunsi halt at Orlando. Seventy-two people died and ninety-two were injured, forty-nine of them seriously, and scores more sustained minor injuries. Of the dead, which were separated according to race, two were Europeans, fourteen were Indians, twenty-six were coloureds and twenty-four were blacks. Nearly 8000 people gathered at the scene on the following Thursday before the mass funeral at Croesus cemetery; ‘at about 10o’clock in the morning natives, Indians and coloureds began streaming to the spot’. Twenty-six double decker buses were stationed in ‘Noordgesicht’ location to take mourners of all races, black, coloured, Indian and white to the cemetery.

3.4 Provision of Institutions and Services in Noordgesig

The role of non-governmental bodies such as churches, Noordgesig Residents’ Committees and the recreational activities that tenants participated in were important

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97 WITS, AD3244: SAIRR, 1905-1961, Non-European Affairs Department, 1947. Note the high number of single female occupants.
98 WITS, AD1433: Joint Councils, 1924-1954, 22 March 1943.
99 This is highlighted because Noordgesig’s location is dissimilar to other coloured townships in Johannesburg. Unlike the western parts of the city, which in the 1950s would be developed and become home to many coloured townships, Noordgesig has no neighboring coloured township. However, when Coronationville was built in 1937, Western Native Township, Sophiatown and Newclare were close neighbours and predominantly black and mixed areas until the 1950s.
100 Rand Daily Mail, ‘72 Killed, 92 Injured In Rail Disaster near Orlando, 29 April 1949 in WITS, AD1912: SAIRR. Although this leaves six deaths that are unaccounted for.
101 Rand Daily Mail, ‘8000 Mourners Attend Service For Crash Victims’, 2 May 1949 in WITS, AD1912: SAIRR
102 Ibid.
to Noordgesig’s establishment. In fact, they were equally significant to the township’s development as were the government institutions and services provided in the township including, schools, sports facilities, shops, clinic and transportation systems. These formed part of the permanent social landscape for Noordgesig’s inhabitants. They were spaces residents used to fulfill much of their social, economic and political activities. Moreover for Dugmore, ‘the [Ebenezer congregational] church played an important role in the development of the sense of "being Coloured" in the wider Johannesburg and Reef area, and of “being part of” a developing Coloured community’.\footnote{H. Dugmore, “Knowing all the Names”: The Ebenezer Congregational Church and the Creation of Community among the Coloured Population of Johannesburg, 1894-1939, (1992), 64-81, Available from  http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4222/1/harry_dugmore_-_knowing_all_the_names.pdf Accessed 20 May 2015.} As such, the church and other non-governmental bodies must be included in discussing Noordgesig’s establishment. Moreover, many of these governmental and non-state bodies were provided and operational prior to the apartheid era. These physical features shaped how and where the experiences of coloured identity occurred in Noordgesig. It is fitting therefore that such a discussion begins with the church, the most dominant of these institutions.

The oldest church in Noordgesig, which Oom Georgie’s wife so clearly pointed out, is her own, the Ebenezer church. In a 70th anniversary pamphlet of the church, which she promptly provided, it noted that land was granted by the JCC to establish the church in Noordgesig in 1939. The church officially opened on 24 September 1942.\footnote{Interview Bra Georgie and guests, Noordgesig Soweto, 24 April 2014; Private collection of Oom Georgie’s wife: ‘Clinton memorial church Noordgesig, 70th anniversary’, Ebenezer Congregational Church – SOWESTRA.} The Ebenezer church would also be home to Noordgesig’s first school. In fact, the Ebenezer church for one member (not from Noordgesig) was “the church of the Coloured people”.\footnote{Dugmore, “Knowing all the Names”, 64.} Other churches existing in the township when Auntie Yvonne moved there in 1952 included the NG Kerk, the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, and the Apostolic Church.\footnote{Interview Auntie Yvonne and Auntie Gene, Noordgesig Soweto, 13 February 2014.}

According to a 1945 report of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, there was a request for stands from the Minister of Native Affairs to erect an Apostolic Church at Noordgesig and Coronationville. The congregation of Apostolics in Noordgesig in 1945 was noted to be made up of 30 people who were using a house
to worship in. What is interesting about the Apostolic mission’s request is that it argued that when Noordgesig Township was laid out, a limited number of stands was made available for the erection of churches. Continuing, that those that were provided were given to denominations with the largest congregations. However, the Ebenezer church only had a congregation of ‘5000 confirmed members’ in the Witwatersrand area by the 1930s but was, nonetheless, the first church in the township.

Many of the archival documents retrieved showed the churches concern particularly for housing shortages for coloureds and ensuring that the living conditions of all ‘non-Europeans’ were dealt with suitably by the state. The church was also concerned with socio-economic improvements, particularly schooling. Thus, Imray states that ‘… the history of missions in South Africa is so largely a history of native education that it is clear that the churches … have felt that education should be a potent factor in bringing Africa to Christ’. The Ebenezer church in Noordgesig fulfilled this function until the completion of the first school premises in the early 1950s.

The request for the establishment of a school began in the first year of construction of Noordgesig. The Coloured Welfare Association had requested the establishment of a school in the township as early as 19 July 1940 from the Secretary of the Transvaal Educational Department. A possible explanation for why the discussion of schools occurred prior to people moving into their homes in 1942 is that town plans for new townships required school sites to be marked; but this argument falters. There is a need for an appropriate population of children in an area before

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107 SAB, NTS, 5618, Ref. # 48/313I – 51/313I VOL I: Apostolic faith mission of South Africa, E.H. Wilson overseer Cape coloured section, 8 August 1945. In an interview with Mr. White, he was adamant that the majority of Noordgesig residents had originally been a part of the Apostolic church. Interview Mr. White and his mother, Noordgesig Soweto, 29 April 2014.


109 Private collection of Oom Georgie’s wife: ‘Clinton memorial church Noordgesig, 70th anniversary’.

110 See for example WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, 4 November 1943; WITS, AD3244: SAIRR, 1905-1961, evidence submitted to the Native Laws Commission of Enquiry by the social and industrial committee of the diocese of Johannesburg (no date).


112 SAB, TOD, 2240, Ref. # E39/1684/6 – E35/1700/37: Letter from the Coloured Welfare Association to the Secretary Transvaal Education, 19 July 1940. The letterhead used by the Coloured Welfare Association is actually of the Vrederdorp Coloured Welfare Association. This is interesting since many of the residents of Noordgesig come from this part of Johannesburg and because it was established earlier, had a more organized Coloured Association.

113 SAB, TOD, 2240, Ref. # E39/1684/6 – E35/1700/37: letter from the Secretary Transvaal Education Department to the Witwatersberg schools Krugersdorp, 20 August 1940.
a school can be constructed. Thus, while Noordgesig was formerly populated from 1942, in government built homes, people had lived in provisional structures in the ‘veld next to Orlando’ as least by 1939.\footnote{See for instance the many documents pointing out that people lived in Noordgesig prior to 1942: SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref.# 25/11057 – 27/11057: Johannesburg City Council, Sub-economic Housing Loan: Coloured Township Adjoining Orlando, 10 March 1939; SAB, CDB, 3318, Ref.# TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2106 – TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2110: Application by town clerk to establish Noordgesig as noted by province of Transvaal: Application for permission to establish a township under the provisions of the townships and town planning ordinance of ’93’, 25 June 1940; SAB, CDB, 3318, Ref. # TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2106 – TAD 4/8/PB 4/2/2 2110: Government Gazette no. 84 of 1940: Proposed establishment of Noordgesig (coloured) township, 1940.} Therefore, it was possible in 1940 to request the establishment of a school there.

There were also bureaucratic delays in establishing schools at the township caused by the temporary nature of Noordgesig. A letter from the Transvaal Education Department August 1940, pointed out that ‘[t]he Townships Board has advised the Department that the City Council of Johannesburg has withdrawn its application for permission to establish Noordgesig (coloured) township on the farm Diepkloof 9, District Johannesburg’.\footnote{SAB, TOD, 2240, Ref. # E39/1684/6 – E35/1700/37: letter from the secretary Transvaal education department to the Witwatersberg schools Krugersdorp, 20 August 1940.} Nonetheless, in October 1941, the Johannesburg JECC discussed schooling at the township pointing out ‘… that a large number of families had taken up residence in this township and that there was no school for the children’. The Council therefore recommended the opening of a school by early 1942 regardless of the township’s precarious status.\footnote{WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Johannesburg JECC, October 1941.} The decision to establish a school was delayed until August 1943 when permission was granted to establish three schools in the township.\footnote{It is unclear why three sites are needed for school premises. Perhaps it is the inclusion of a crèche alongside a primary and a high school which accounts for this number.} The first ‘hired’ school was to open as soon as temporary accommodation for it had been found.\footnote{SAB, TOD, 2240, Ref. # E39/1684/6: The Inspector of Education, Krugersdorp, 6 August 1943.} This request for a school premises was still unresolved on 27 September 1943 when the same Council had written to the secretary of the Witwatersberg School Board, stating:

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\text{…as soon as the hiring of the Ebenezer Congregational Church had been arranged and the necessary staff and equipment obtained, the school would be opened. As the congregational church has only three classrooms, the Rev. Mr. Clack had been approached by the Education Department to lend his church. He said he was agreeable if the government would erect a small storeroom, as he had no place to store the church seats during the week … there are about 300 children in Noordgezig, and it was understood that the department would not open the school unless they had sufficient accommodation for all the children.}\footnote{WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954. Letter to the Secretary of the Witwatersrand School Board, 30 July 1943. The importance of the church in providing the premises for the first school also indicates that the Ebenezer church was the township’s first.} \]
Of the 300 children of school age, it was noted that some parents were compelled to send them to schools outside the township, while others attended the ‘native’ school at Orlando and some children were not getting any schooling whatsoever.\(^{120}\) This is another example of the interaction with blacks from the very start of the township’s history and a continuation of inter-racial dealings, which the early inhabitants of Noordgesig had been accustomed to in their previous residential areas. Secondly, the non-attendance of some school children must be noted because it remains an area of concern for contemporary Noordgesig.

The first school was accommodated in the Ebenezer church from the early 1940s. The Ebenezer Congregational Church provided several education premises for coloureds in Johannesburg prior to apartheid.\(^{121}\) This was necessary because in the Northern Provinces education was not compulsory for coloureds and most schools were housed ‘…with rare exceptions in overcrowded halls … tents, stables, [and] church buildings….’ \(^{122}\) Moreover, the closest government school to Noordgesig for coloureds, by the early to mid-1940s, was in Vrederdorp.\(^{123}\) This is a further indication that many coloured children that were attending school did so with blacks. This quite possibly was also true for the majority of coloured people still living in Johannesburg’s many interracial living areas. Additionally, a JECC memorandum of 1943, noted, ‘the pressures of economic circumstances induces Cape coloured parents to withdraw their children from school against their better judgment, in order that the child may contribute to the family income’.\(^{124}\)

What was taught at these church schools might have been equal to whites, but the premises used to provide education to coloured children were inferior, as shown above. In fact, prior to the NP victory in 1948 it was not certain whether there was a discernible difference in the education provided to white and coloured pupils at mission schools.\(^{125}\) Moreover, subsequent to Bantu Education in 1953, coloureds, like most

\(^{120}\) Ibid.


\(^{122}\) WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Memorandum regarding Cape Coloured people’s franchise in the Transvaal and Orange Free State (no date).

\(^{123}\) Ibid.

\(^{124}\) WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Memorandum to the Joint Health Commission from the JECC, 27 October 1943.

\(^{125}\) This might not have been true for blacks however and is only applicable to mission schools.
blacks, and Indians (at least those who could afford it) received a better education from church schools, and at least a moderate education from government schools. Oom Georgie attended pre-school at the age of six at the Ebenezer church school in 1952, the last few years of its existence.

Aerial Photograph 3.1: Noordgesig showing schools, roads, institutions and surrounding townships

Auntie Poppie recalled the church school and the makeshift crèche housed at the Westling church in the 1940s. Mrs. Williams added that the public library servicing Noordgesig was next to the Vukapansi shop in Orlando in the 1940s when the site for the new government school was just an open field. School was held in two sessions; one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Auntie Poppie could remember some of the teachers - although it is unclear if these were teachers at the Ebenezer church or

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126 Education remains of utmost importance to the upliftment of coloured people. I have observed over the years that there is a lack of urgency about education in Noordgesig; the importance is rather emphasized on getting work as an employee or self-employed artisan. To be fair, similar complaints can, and are directed at the state of education for black South Africans.

127 Interview Oom Georgie and guests.

128 Interview Mrs. Williams.
at the government school that was newly established by 1950. These included Mr. Louw from Kliptown, and a Mr. Lepere. Mrs. Williams on the other hand, recalled that these were teachers at the Ebenezer church school including as well Mr. Martins, and a white teacher named Mr. Leroux. Auntie Poppie however recollected that all the teachers were coloured. Auntie Bernie, who attended the newly built municipal school in the 1950s and 1960s, confirmed that all the teachers there were coloured.

The building of the municipal school had begun in January of 1949, to accommodate the 600 families living in Noordgesig.

Other social services provided for by the state included a clinic. The reasons for the request to establish the clinic (besides the obvious health concerns) was that the residents of Noordgesig had to use the clinic at the ‘Orlando native location’. It seems that this was a burden not only to the coloured residents, who complained at having to attend the same clinic as blacks and of using the same ‘garments’ etc., but also for the authorities’ segregation policies and the maintenance of better services for coloureds who were considered inherently better than blacks. However, for Auntie Yvonne, Baragwaneth hospital was fondly recalled as being very clean and the hospital of choice for Noordgesig residents in the 1950s until Coronation hospital was built.

The clinic was approved in February 1945.

There also existed a Tenants’ Committee in Noordgesig, which was described in a hand written note by the local government inspector in 1946 that was elected by tenants of Noordgesig and worked in conjunction with the Non-European Affairs Department. According to the Non-European Affairs Committee, ‘it advise[d] the department on matters affecting the township, settle[d] domestic disputes, interview[ed] troublemakers when asked to do so, generally assist[ed] in the smooth running of the township and organize[d] communal activities’. The functions of the

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129 Interview Auntie Poppie; Interview Mrs. Williams.
130 Interview Mrs. Williams.
131 Interview Auntie Bernie, her two daughters and two grandchildren, Noordgesig Soweto, 25 April 2014.
133 SAB, TPB, 1166, Ref. # TA26/94245 – TA16/9435: Memorandum, Johannesburg Municipality, Clinic Facilities at Noordgesig, 27 December 1944.
134 Interview Auntie Yvonne and Auntie Gene.
135 SAB, TPB, 1166, Ref. # TA26/94245 – TA16/9435: Letter to Town Clerk from the Provincial Secretary, 6 February 1945.
136 SAB, TPB, 2331, Ref. # TA146/5734 – TA162/5734: The Local Government Inspector, 18 November 1946.
137 SAB, TPB, 2331, Ref. # TA146/5734 – TA162/5734: Non-European Affairs Committee, 28 October 1946.
tenants’ committee that operated it seems, only in coloured townships, were similar to the statutory advisory boards existing in black townships; therefore, it was recommended that the committee members be paid an equivalent salary of £3 a month.\textsuperscript{138}

Nevertheless, what the residents of Noordgesig clearly remember preserving order were the community police as well as the white authorities who lived in the township and managed it. Auntie Poppie remembered the caretaker, a white woman by the name of Mrs. Howick, who lived where the police station currently is located in Noordgesig.\textsuperscript{139} Not only white professionals lived in Noordgesig and Auntie Poppie also recalled an Indian doctor who operated from premises on Station Road who serviced the community as well. Residents including Oupa Sherman and Mr. Smith were police officers in the late 1940s and 1950s and upheld order in the community.\textsuperscript{140} Commonly referred to as ‘black jacks’, these community police made sure there was little crime as attested to by many interviewees.\textsuperscript{141} The ‘black jacks’ were very strict or ‘stout’ (naughty but strict), as Mrs. Williams captivatingly pointed out. When people were caught for offences they were put in the ‘kal kamer’ (the naked room) stripped of their clothing as punishment, until they were released.\textsuperscript{142} Dlamini also tells the story of ‘black jacks’ in Katlehong, riding around on their bikes with offenders running behind them, never even thinking of escaping these ‘stout’ police officers.\textsuperscript{143}

Travel was done primarily by rail for much of the 1940s, while bus routes were still in their infancy. The railway service has been in existence through the southwestern area since before Orlando was built in 1932. In 1941, discussion was already underway regarding the creation of a bus service in Orlando to ease train congestion.\textsuperscript{144} The poor state of the roads in Noordgesig was of concern to the public utility transport corporation that serviced the area and offered to alter its route because of this.\textsuperscript{145} The bus service provided transport to ‘three’ schemes of 100, 250 and 350

\begin{enumerate}
\item[Ibid.]
\item Rent was paid at this premises prior to it being used exclusively as a police station
\item Interview Auntie Poppie.
\item For instance, Auntie Joyce, Mrs. Williams, Auntie Freeda, Auntie Yvonne, Auntie Gene, and Auntie Lucky all argued that less crime existed in the early years of Noordgesig.
\item Interview Mrs. Williams.
\item Dlamini, \textit{Native Nostalgia}.
\item SAB, NTS, 5914, Ref. # 51/313N(1)VOL(1) – VOL(2): Native Commissioner: Internal bus service, Orlando, 3 January 1941.
\item SAB, TPB, 2500, Ref. # JALG 56/11057 – JALG 60/11057: Extract from the Report of Special Housing Committee to Council, 25 August 1953.
\end{enumerate}
houses. The cost to resurface the bus routes was to be apportioned between the three (autonomous it would seem) schemes at Noordgesig. The special housing committee noted the urgency of resurfacing this vital route because it provided transport not only for coloureds from Noordgesig but also blacks from Orlando. Thus, Auntie Freeda noted, there was a bus stop on Bergroos street and that people from Orlando also used this service.

Although the shops at Noordgesig were constructed in the first construction phase of 1940/1942, most shopping was done in the city or in Orlando. Early residents however, claimed they did their everyday grocery shopping at Orlando because there were no shops in Noordgesig in the early 1940s. The shops might have been built by 1942 and did not have any businesses running out of them, or, people were used to shopping at Vukapansí in Orlando. Moreover, by the late 1940s, the shops at Noordgesig, housed in cramped quarters, were considered inadequate by municipal authorities. The increasing population of the township required better local shopping facilities. Rentals were charged according to the size of the unit and the conditions of lease were similar to those of black townships except that the applicant had to be coloured.

The local sports grounds were another important feature of daily life in Noordgesig and a central meeting place for residents. There was more diversity in sports played in the 1940s and during the early to mid-apartheid eras in Johannesburg than in the contemporary era. The variety of sporting codes was highlighted by the Non-European and Native Affairs Department for Johannesburg in 1942 which

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146 Separate funding was provided to the various housing schemes making up Noordgesig as if it were independent units that the bus company was providing transport to, rather than considering all the schemes as comprising a single unit. This was pointed out by the secretary of the national housing office in a letter to the Town Clerk, 13 July 1954, expressing some surprise that, '... there has been virtually a diversion of funds between these schemes'. It is uncertain if the Housing Commission thought that the requested loans from the Council were for separate schemes within the vicinity of Noordgesig was or not.

147 SAB, TPB, 2500, Ref. # JALG 56/11057 – JALG 60/11057: 25 August 1953.

148 Interview Auntie Freeda.


150 Interview Auntie Freeda; Interview Auntie Poppie; Interview Mrs. Williams.

151 WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908 -1962, Manager of the Non-European Affairs Department of the City of Johannesburg, 1948-1949.

152 WITS, AG2703: Non-European Affairs, 1952-1956, Councilor L.V. Hurd, (no date).

153 This has declined in the post-apartheid era. During apartheid not only were there more sports played but they were also more gender neutral, although the predominant sport was still soccer. Auntie Yvonne played professional hockey and toured the Netherlands and Zimbabwe before South Africa was formally banned from the international Olympic committee in 1970. Interview Auntie Yvonne; E.S Reddy, http://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/doc/SPORT/SPORTRAM.htm Accessed 16 November 2014.
showed that it included soccer, basketball, athletics, rugby, cricket, tennis, cycle clubs and ‘one girl’s hockey team’. The city of Johannesburg invited tenders in 1948 to construct a rugby field, a soccer field, and two tennis courts in Noordgesig. However, Auntie Lucky, who was a young girl in the late 1940s, noted that in the early 1950s there were no houses in the top half of Noordgesig and that they used to watch ‘bi-scope’ (films) in the open veld where the grounds were constructed.

**Photograph 3.2: The shops at Noordgesig built in the early 1940s**

Some residents enjoyed a drink at the grounds while enjoying the game. Nevertheless, alcohol consumption and alcoholism, has been considered stereotypically a coloured phenomenon in South Africa. For instance, an answer given to the Native Laws Commission of Inquiry, stated, ‘… it is a matter of common knowledge in South Africa that alcoholism … is one of the factors of major importance in the submission of a considerable proportion of the coloured people…’. While it would be foolhardy not to admit that alcoholism has existed and does exist in Noordgesig, as it does in any other South African township or suburb, what is unclear is if this is a problem associated with colouredness or not.

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154 WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, Non-European and Native Affairs Department for Johannesburg, 1942. It would be interesting to know if this was the same hockey team Auntie Yvonne and Auntie Gene played for during the 1950s and 1960s in Noordgesig.


156 Interview Auntie Lucky, Noordgesig Soweto, 5 September 2014.

157 WITS, AD3244: SAIRR, 1905-1961, (no date, speaker unknown).

158 Stereotypes of Native American ‘reserves’ and their inhabitant’s for instance also spend a lot of time on alcoholism. I will not deny the existence of the problem, but I would argue that the focus on alcohol sidelines
director of the Brewers Institute of South Africa in 1962, argued it best: ‘[n]ext to politics, liquor is probably the most controversial topic one can introduce into discussion in this country’.\textsuperscript{159} There are a number of reasons why people were induced to alcoholism, including historical, psychological, or political factors. However, one simple explanation was the poor socio-economic conditions of most coloured living areas. The 600 families occupying Noordgesig by 1949 had no recreational facilities, therefore the manager of the Non-European Affairs Department of the City of Johannesburg 1948-1949 warned that ‘[t]his is making itself felt in increased drunkenness and lawlessness amongst the older boys and men’.\textsuperscript{160}

The South African government had an almost prohibitionist attitude towards providing alcohol to coloureds and more especially black people.\textsuperscript{161} Liquor laws varied from province to province and were stricter on coloureds in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State than in the Cape and Natal where at least limited amounts were permitted. However, the threat of arrest loomed for all those in possession of too much alcohol. Those coloureds that sold alcohol needed a license, as did blacks and Indians in these provinces.\textsuperscript{162} Notwithstanding, there were ways in which people circumvented the law by producing illegal brews, similar to the prohibition era of the 1920s in the United States of America. Both coloureds and blacks frequently did so, as revealed in the commonality with some of these brews even today in Noordgesig (such as pine tops) as well as their colloquial Afrikaans names.


\textsuperscript{160} WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, (no date).

\textsuperscript{161} White liquor only became available to blacks from 1962. N. Mandy, \textit{A City Divided: Johannesburg and Soweto} (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1984), 187.

Photograph 3.3: A photograph hanging in Auntie Joyce’s house showing a popular Noordgesig soccer team in 1971 including the three Mackett brothers\textsuperscript{163}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{photograph3.3}
\end{center}

Source: Photograph by author. 1) Tyrone Mackett, 2) Charles Mackett 3) Winston Mackett.

An apartheid era circular from the Native Commissioner to all Chief Native Commissioners dated 1958, asked them to provide the names of illicit alcohol in their regions and the substances used to brew it\textsuperscript{164}. A regional native commissioner from Potchefstroom made some interesting notes when he described some of these brews: ‘Choppers … this is an exceedingly strong substance as is evidenced by its name meaning ‘so skerp soos ‘n byl’ (sharp as an axe)’. Alternatively, ‘Motubane…the name means “hy maak mal” (it makes mad) and is descriptive enough of the strength of [sic] concoction’.\textsuperscript{165} What is interesting here is the fact that the ‘by naam’ (common street

\textsuperscript{163} The Mackett brothers were frequently named as outstanding football players by interviewees alongside many others Note that the soccer club used the name of a popular professional English team.

\textsuperscript{164} SAB, HKW, 1/1/3, Ref. # 17/1/15 – 17/4/1: The native commissioner, circular to all chief native commissioners in each region, 1958.

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{Ibid.}
slang name) of both Choppers and Motubane is given in Afrikaans. This is important because the culture of such slang links directly to the interaction between blacks and coloureds, as well as black people’s ‘love- hate’ relationship with the Afrikaans language.\textsuperscript{166} ‘Hy maak mal’ sounds strikingly similar to the type of colloquial pidgin Afrikaans common amongst coloureds.

Besides drinking alcohol, the residents of Noordgesig also sang, danced, and fell in love, as Auntie Lucky described so beautifully. Auntie lucky, born in 1937, was nine years old when she moved to Noordgesig with her family. The first house her family lived in was too small for their four children so they later moved into a larger unit. She attended primary school and high school in Noordgesig, more than likely firstly at the Ebenezer church because the school at Noordgesig was only built by the early 1950s.\textsuperscript{167}

It was at school that she began her small but episodic singing career. Noordgesig, she noted, frequently won the ‘Istadford’ inter-school singing competitions. It is here that she learnt to sing and hone her craft. Soon her talent became recognized outside of Noordgesig - presumably through the singing competitions - and the Manhattan Brothers, a popular musical act at the time, caught wind of her. The group approached her to join the band at her house with her mother present. They had wanted her to join them on a trip overseas but her mother refused to allow this because she was still only a young teenager. She did however allow her daughter to sing with the group at local events. Auntie Lucky learnt to sing songs in vernacular, in the places around Johannesburg where she performed, even though she could not speak an African language. Her small career as a part time singer began to end when she was in her mid-teens. Auntie Lucky enjoyed this part of her life even though the living conditions in Noordgesig were poor. She remembered rubbing candle wax on her skin - used as a type of lotion - to get rid of the ‘skerf’ (dry skin). She noted that her family was very poor and that she often had no shoes to wear. She recollected how her mother, who worked in Doornfontein, would buy a cake every Friday after work, to be only eaten on Sunday, yet this was always the best part of her week.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{166} See Dlamini, \textit{Native Nostalgia}.
\textsuperscript{167} Interview Auntie Lucky.
\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Ibid}. 
3.5 A Comparison with Coronationville

Living conditions were better in the other coloured township, Coronationville, built just two years prior to Noordgesig. By 31 August 1937, the Johannesburg JECC year-end report noted that the evictions from slum areas at Bertram’s had forced the construction at Coronationville to be speeded up. In another Johannesburg JECC meeting, in September 1939, those placed in Coronationville were recorded as being from the Malay location. Still, in later correspondence, dated November 1939, the housing problem for persons ejected from the Malay location seemed to have been solved because the council had ‘... erected temporary accommodation for these people at Schoongezicht’. This is a significant point that offers supplementary proof that people had certainly been living in ‘temporary accommodation’ at Noordgesig prior to houses being built there. Furthermore, it suggests that although Noordgesig was officially established in 1939 it possibly had inhabitants living there prior to those of Coronationville. Auntie Poppie was adamant that Noordgesig is older than Coronationville. She was old enough at the time to recall this development clearly.

Nonetheless, the class-based infrastructural dynamics, which decided who lived in Coronationville and Noordgesig, are more significant to regard when comparing these two townships. Over time, these have created differences in the coloured identity experiences between inhabitants of the two townships. Class A, B and C houses were planned for Coronationville. Class A were superior to sub-economic European housing; Class B houses were similar to European sub-economic housing and Class C homes were inferior to European sub-economic housing. The ‘class D’ house is discussed in this meeting of July 1937:

i.e., housing for those people whose standards of living nearly approximate to that of the natives was to be provided in another township probably to be called Jubilee or Schoongezicht near to Orlando. A certain amount of water and sanitary charges would be free. Provision was being made for schools, churches, a communal hall and open spaces.

169 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, JECC, 31 August 1937.
170 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, JECC, 22 September 1939. The total membership of the Johannesburg JECC as of October 1941 was 37 Europeans and 150 coloureds.
171 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, JECC, November 1939. It is unclear if these people moved out of Noordgesig once houses were built at Coronationville.
172 Interview Auntie Poppie. Many residents commonly hold the assertion that Noordgesig is the oldest coloured township in Johannesburg.
173 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, JECC, July 1937. The layout of Noordgesig was approved as early as 23 March 1937; SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057, 10 March 1939.
This is one of the earliest references to Noordgesig, and in comparison to Coronationville, it was clearly designed as a township for ‘the poorest class of coloured’, as so bluntly stated in a later meeting of the Joint Council in July 1939. The conspicuous idea put forward was that the coloureds to be housed at Noordgesig were somehow closer to blacks because of their lower class status. Those of Coronationville were culturally similar to whites because of their middle class characteristics. The JCC added with regard to class divisions amongst coloureds: ‘there is a third class who are no better off economically than the natives, and for this class, which we believe constitutes the majority, provision is to be made in a township being established adjoining Orlando’.

The council’s motives for establishing Noordgesig included the availability of cheap land and a pre-existing railway line that passed through the area. Furthermore, they stated that ‘if the scheme proves a failure the township could be added to Orlando and made available to natives’. In June 1939 the Housing Sub-Committee of the Johannesburg JECC agreed with the class distinctions made by the municipality and further suggested that Coronationville and Schoongesicht should be based on the existence of three grades of people within the coloured community. First, the slum dweller who must be moved in the interest of the community; two, the section that seeks a decent life but is unable economically to obtain proper housing; and lastly, those who can afford to house themselves. Although these grades of coloureds were based on class, they were also premised on skin colour and perceived similarities with blacks. Darker skinned coloureds were more likely to be housed at Noordgesig and lighter skinned coloureds at Coronationville.

For the Joint Council, Coronationville was a place where sub-economic housing would ‘give escape’ to those coloured slum dwellers who only live there by ‘economic compulsion’. However, for the lower grade of coloured, ‘the real slum dweller’, it stated, ‘Schoongezicht … [would] rehabilitate them in the eyes of their fellows and rescue the children from continued or deeper degradation’. The type of coloureds

175 SAB, TPB, 2494, Ref. # 25/11057 – 27/110057: Johannesburg City Council, Sub-economic Housing Loan: Coloured Township Adjoining Orlando, March 10, 1939.
176 Ibid.
177 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Housing sub-committee of the JECC, June 1939.
178 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, JECC, 12 June 1939.
179 Note that the literal translation of the name ‘Schoongezicht’ or ‘Skoongesig’ in Afrikaans is ‘clean face’.

housed at Noordgesig were looked down upon by other coloureds and trapped in a cycle of poverty. Housing therefore, also had a healing purpose capable of restoring the dignity of poorer coloureds and preventing them from spiraling into black culture, away from coloured and white societal norms. What was degrading and in need of rescuing for these ‘true slum dwellers’ housed at Schoongezicht, was their colouredness. Because coloureds were perceived as belonging to a higher class and development standard than blacks meant they should not be living in conditions comparable to those of blacks.

The contradictory class differences between the two townships was further discussed in terms of the need for transport services to be increased in and around Coronationville because it was needed ‘...when providing for the needs of a community which lives at a European standard’. However, for Schoongezicht, ‘[t]he rail service from such a place as Orlando is designed to meet the urgent needs of the wage earner, not his family’. Noordgesig residents had to make do with the railway for any transport needs. Therefore, while housing was a remedy to increasing class and respectability of the poorer coloureds, poor public transport for Noordgesig residents was deemed adequate for this laboring class.

By 1952, according to councilor L.V. Hurd, Coronationville consisted of 500 'very well built houses' of a standard higher than any other sub-economic housing scheme in the western area townships. The class, colour and racial differences between Noordgesig and Coronationville inhabitants were apparent; for instance he noted, ‘The Township was designed for the better type of coloured, with an income of £30.0.0 per month’. This in contrast to that of Noordgesig, meant to ‘...cater for the poorer type of coloured and mixed families, i.e. coloured men married to African women, the income limit is £20 per month’. Race was included in the description of who constituted the ‘poorest type of coloured’. However, although this report was made during the early years of apartheid, it bears many similarities to previous pre-apartheid conceptions for Noordgesig. What was distinguished here were the racial mixtures that made up some of the families of Noordgesig. No longer were the inhabitants considered only as coloured people who were ‘near native’, but were then also regarded as racially mixed and unclearly distinguished therefore in the sub-

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180 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, JECC, 12 June 1939.
groupings for coloureds described by the Population Registration Act of 1950. The lower income of the inhabitants and their racial similarity to blacks also meant that the houses built in Noordgesig were similar to those built in Orlando, yet of a lower standard and smaller than those built in Coronationville were. This was also considered a means of keeping the rents low.\footnote{ibid.}

However, by 1952 the class disparities between the two townships were not adequately revealed in the facilities existing in Coronationville, many of which also existed in Noordgesig. In fact, some facilities lacking in Coronationville could be found in Noordgesig including more shops, an almost complete sports field, and a school that accommodated 600 children that was completed in 1950. According to councilor L.V. Hurd it also had a nursery school ‘…the only coloured nursery school in the whole of the Johannesburg area’, a clinic and plans for the construction of a community center.\footnote{ibid.}

Conversely, a large variance existed between the rents paid by Noordgesig residents compared to those of Coronationville in 1952.\footnote{ibid.} The hefty inconsistency in rents paid in the two townships was partly because the JCC had made provision to provide both sub-economic and economic housing in Coronationville whereas Noordgesig was strictly a sub-economic housing scheme. Nonetheless, a discrepancy is still easily noted. By 1954, a very small total, 13.2\% of the township residents could easily afford the houses they stayed in and most must have just barely managed to get by.\footnote{ibid.} In a schedule to determine those inhabitants of Noordgesig that exceeded the income limit, it found that most houses’ incomes were approximately £30 a month (the income limit) with the highest income recorded at £69.1.10.\footnote{SAB, GEM, 759, Ref. # H28/76/6 – H28/76/13: City of Johannesburg, schedule of dwellings occupied by tenants exceeding income limits. Noordgesig, July 1957-June 1958.} Only 112 households in Noordgesig between 1956 and 1957 had monthly salaries over £20.\footnote{ibid.} In comparison, the highest income received by a Coronationville resident was £98.13.4 between 1957 and 1958, while the average income for residents was approximately £40. Many inhabitants had higher monthly incomes than Noordgesig’s
highest income receiver of £69.1.10.\textsuperscript{188} Thus, the development model used in Noordgesig was failing to ‘rehabilitate’ these coloureds. Rather than developing the inadequate social amenities such as transport, housing, or employment opportunities, the state remained a paternal figure and provider for many coloureds there.\textsuperscript{189}

However, a 1952 report by the Southern Transvaal Regional Committee of the SAIRR, contradicted official plans to house only poorer coloureds at Noordgesig and noted that some of the evicted coloureds could afford to pay economic rental rates.\textsuperscript{190} Therefore, it was possible in the early 1950s for residents from Noordgesig to be offered accommodation at Coronationville when they required better suited and larger premises for their family. For instance, Auntie Poppie, who had been staying as a sub-tenant in Noordgesig after getting married, applied for a home and was offered residence in Coronationville. She however chose to remain in Noordgesig.\textsuperscript{191} Therefore, by the 1950s class was no longer the determining factor in deciding where coloureds could reside. The apartheid government’s focus on race reduced class distinction’s centrality to the housing of people.

Moreover, coloureds proximity to blackness was not just defined by housing similarities and geographical location, but also in terms of how they fitted into the conceptions of coloured identity constructed by the state and those of the broader coloured community. It was possible therefore to live in Noordgesig, ‘bordering Orlando’, and be considered economically capable of affording the rentals at Coronationville, but also vitally, coloured enough to do so. Nonetheless, for the authorities and ‘other’ coloured people of Johannesburg, Noordgesig inhabitants’ colouredness was easily overlooked as bordering on being too close to black identity in terms of class, colour and experiences.

The inhabitants of Noordgesig did not dismiss the class status provided to them by the state and have rather chosen to interpret these in their own ways. Thus, Auntie Poppie noted that Coronationville was not for higher class or lighter skinned coloureds per se by the 1950s; but if you were from Noordgesig then, ‘they didn’t recognize you’

\textsuperscript{188} SAB, GEM, 759, Ref. # H28/76/6 – H28/76/13: July 1957 – June 1958.
\textsuperscript{189} This historical factor continues to plague coloured people in the contemporary period especially in their concept of what the state is to do and not to do for them.
\textsuperscript{191} Interview Auntie Poppie; Interview Mrs. Williams. Mrs. Williams also chose to stay in Noordgesig instead of moving to Coronationville after being offered a house there.
because it was conceived that ‘Noordgesig is a bad place’. ‘They’, the Coronationville inhabitants, did not ‘recognize’ Noordgesig residents as their equals and assumed that poverty must be rife and the township a ‘bad place’ to live for coloureds. The comparison of these two townships clearly involves perceptions of the ‘other’ developed by the state and by coloured inhabitants themselves.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the establishment of Noordgesig in the late 1930s highlighting the interconnectedness of class, race and colour further complicating simple constructions of coloured identity experiences in the townships of Johannesburg. With increasing urbanization of blacks in Johannesburg from the 1930s, housing shortages became dire. Coloureds at this time lived predominantly in the interracial inner city ‘slum’ and earlier established locations such as Alexandra and Sophiatown. The city council began to seek the segregation of coloureds from blacks especially after The Slums Act of 1934. However, it was difficult to segregate and differentiate coloureds from blacks in Johannesburg. This was especially evident in the case of Noordgesig where complex applications of class, race, colour and coloured identity experiences were used to establish who could reside in the new township.

This chapter showed that Noordgesig was established in the late 1930s as a temporary measure for the lowest class of coloured. People lived in Noordgesig prior to houses being made available to residents, many of whom clearly recalled tents housing people in the 1940s and the generally poor conditions of the houses and services provided. Still, interaction with Orlando residents was common and their relationship friendly, even if this was regarded as an ‘infiltration’ of ‘natives’ by the authorities. Noordgesig’s close proximity to Orlando was justified because its inhabitants were classed as ‘near native’. Noordgesig residents shared trains, buses, drank together, shopped at the same stores, and attended dances in Orlando. The ‘desirability’ of Noordgesig for coloured occupation questions how coloured identity experiences were understood by the state. Setting restrictions to the racial proximity of coloureds to blacks was a structural effort based on preventing the intensification of coloured identities that boarded on blackness.

192 Interview Auntie Poppie. It is unclear from Auntie Poppie’s interview what period she was referring to. However, it seems this is when she moved into the ‘rock and roll’ in the 1950s as a married person.
This chapter also highlighted that Noordgesig’s construction was to ascertain the response of coloureds to the township. If successful, it would remain for coloured occupation. Noordgesig’s establishment came without the approval of the Townships Board. Added to this were the delays caused by the commencement of WWII, limited available funds and the inadequacy of the construction company. However, the township’s construction was necessary to ease housing shortages facing coloureds. The township was extended until its completion just before 1960.

I have argued that government institutions and non-governmental bodies are equally important with regard to providing places that made the social landscape of Noordgesig bearable. The chapter points out that the church (especially the Ebenezer Congregational Church) was concerned with housing as well as with the education of coloureds in Noordgesig and throughout the city. The need for a school as early as 1940 attests to the fact that residents were living there prior to houses being built. Interviewees recalled the school, clinic and sports events at the grounds, yet it was the ‘black jacks’ strict order that many remembered fondly. The colloquial slang names of homemade brews suggest that alcohol consumption was a pastime shared with black people. Notwithstanding, people sang and danced while facing poverty everyday.

Yet, the living conditions at Noordgesig were hasher when compared to Coronationville. There were evident class differences in the establishment of the two townships. Better houses were constructed in Coronationville because of the presumed higher class of people to be housed there. Clearly, Noordgesig was for ‘other’, lower class, more than likely darker skinned coloureds, which would ‘rehabilitate’ them in the eyes of their peers and the authorities. Yet from the 1950s, it was possible for Noordgesig residents to receive accommodation at Coronationville as race and coloured identity experiences that followed the norm became more important than class under the apartheid regime. Nonetheless, Noordgesig remained a place regarded as a low class coloured neighbourhood by ‘others’ which was evident in the lower salaries residents received compared to Coronationville. This stigma was sustained in the early apartheid era and expanded upon as changing identity experiences were formed in new coloured group areas.
CHAPTER 4

Apartheid and Noordgesig to the early 1970s: Changing Coloured Identity Experiences

4.1 Apartheid and its Acts

When Western Native Township became an exclusive coloured area in the early 1950s and Newclare, Riverlea, Bosmont, and Eldorado Park in the early to mid-1960s, a new history of coloured housing in Johannesburg and coloured people’s relation to blacks began to be written. However, moving coloured people to group areas was not an easy task in Johannesburg because they were a sizeable and dispersed population in the city. Secondly, the specificity of the black/coloured relationship that existed in Johannesburg is incomparable to other cities of South Africa, particularly those in the Cape region. The fact that these two groups often lived in a single community and had shared experience’s meant it was problematic to undertake the differentiation and identification of coloureds from blacks faultlessly. Lastly, until the end of the 1940s, only limited housing for coloureds had been established in Coronationville and Noordgesig, therefore removing people identified as coloured was near impossible given the lack of available municipal housing.

The National Party (NP) won the elections on 26 May 1948 on a platform to make apartheid its policy. The people of South Africa, at first, were unclear how this policy would rearrange social relations within the country. Moreover, the various coloured political organizations did not understand the implications of an NP victory nor the ‘ruthlessness of the post-1948 destruction of their rights and dignity’. Coloured political groups had failed to achieve their goal of ‘equal rights with whites’ but had maintained their ‘relative privilege in social, economic and political spheres as compared to the African majority’. The apartheid regime systematically eroded these privileges while also using them as a bargaining tool to lure coloured people to work with the system.

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1 G. Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African ‘Coloured’ Politics (Cape Town & Johannesburg: David Philip, 1987), 244, 256.
2 Ibid.
In a public relations paper of September 1948, the NP argued that various forms of apartheid had existed before its rule. It offered that the development of the idea had steadily advanced until its final arrangement as apartheid. The public office stated: ‘In the past, solutions to the main racial problems of South Africa have been offered by politicians under different names – General Smuts used the term “parallelism”, General Hertzog favoured the word “segregation” and Dr. Malan has popularized the word “apartheid”’. This assessment has its merits, because racial policies had existed in South Africa from the first European settlers. However, it underestimated (perhaps because this statement was made at the very beginning of apartheid) the embedded, controlled, and forceful nature of the racism that the apartheid regime would become infamous for.

Dr. Malan’s definition of apartheid included the function it should play in South African society: Its aims being the protection of the white race, and the idea that ‘non-European’ populations should develop their own communities separately. Apartheid was essentially a policy of ‘separateness’ from the mid to late 1950s, with specific designs of impeded development for its black citizens and fast tracked progress for its white residents. Hence, Ramphele described it as one of the most successful affirmative action programs the world had ever witnessed. Ultimately, apartheid was a development strategy that effectively enabled the white population of South Africa but created what Walter Rodney called the ‘underdevelopment’, economically, socially, and politically, of the black, coloured and Indian sectors of the country.

It is a challenging task to ascertain how apartheid affected the coloured population as a whole, because as has been argued throughout this dissertation, the identity’s heterogeneous nature means it is highly localized, varying nationally, provincially, at city level and even within specific townships. Apartheid, on the other hand, was a national endeavor with a top-down policy that was detrimental to an essentially locally produced coloured experience. The apartheid government showed

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3 Apartheid commenced when racist policy throughout the west was being steadily phased out as national policy, and in Africa, through decolonization and nationalist efforts. However, white South African voters contrary to world opinion voted for an NP government that had campaigned for a policy of apartheid.
4 SAB, BPA, 34, Ref. # 36/2, 36/3, 4-B16: Public Relations Office, London, 27 September 1948.
5 SAB, BPA, 34, Ref. # 36/2, 36/3, 4-B16: Public Relations Office, London, South Africa reports on non-European affairs, bulletin no.9, report on Native Laws Commission, 18 May 1948.
6 M. Ramphele, Laying Ghosts to Rest: Dilemmas of the Transformation in South Africa (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2008).
7 W. Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 1972 (2012)).
8 WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, (No date).
its prowess to centralize key government functions early. It began by passing laws such as the Population Registration Act of 1950 that further categorized coloured people, but unintentionally highlighted the diverse nature of the group.\(^9\)

One way to learn how apartheid imprinted itself onto the experiences of coloured inhabitants living in townships is by showing how specific apartheid Acts affected people’s socio-economic and political livelihoods. This section will however limit the discussion briefly, to how the Group Areas Act of 1950 influenced coloured communities, particularly in Noordgesig. It must be remembered that Noordgesig was only proclaimed a coloured township near the end of apartheid but was administered from its establishment as an area for coloured people. Therefore, the township was never legally a coloured group area, for most of apartheid, which problematizes how it existed and the coloured identity experiences that were created there.

Life histories also provided useful ways to understand how the Group Areas Act directly affected individuals. Mrs. White, for instance, noted intriguingly that her father was a white German who lived with his family in Noordgesig until he passed away in the late 1970s. She had actually grown up not realizing her father was white and only stumbled on his pass book, which confirmed his race grouping. It seems this was never mentioned in the household. Children born of racially mixed relations during the apartheid era were usually outcasts of their white family.\(^10\) What was captivating about her story was that her father was informally accepted as coloured by the state for bureaucratic simplicity for the duration of his sojourn in the township. His acceptance in the community however was based on earned trust due to his marriage to a coloured woman as well as his assimilation into the Noordgesig lifestyle. Moreover, since the township was not proclaimed for any specific race group, this made it easier for the state to ignore the presence of a white man living amongst coloureds.

Mrs. White’s parents were originally from the Malay location in Vrederdorp, and later moved to Noordgesig where she was born in 1951. She has nine brothers and sisters, five of whom were born in Noordgesig. Some of her siblings passed for white because they had fairer skin. They used this to their advantage, and if for instance they were out in town and happened to see their darker relatives they would ignore

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\(^9\) WITS, A1132: Lewis, 1949-1978, (No date). The Population Registration Act, 1950 #30 formally distinguished the race groups of South Africa as Asians, coloureds, whites and blacks.

\(^10\) See the story of Sandra Laing in this regard. J. Stone, *When she was White: The True Story of a Family Divided by Race* (New York: Miramax Books/Hyperion, 2007). Although rare, it was not impossible for a white person to live in black townships during apartheid.
them in order to maintain the norms of white society’s conduct with other races.\textsuperscript{11} This was a form of reclassification (even if it was not formal) that created an internal racism, as coloureds began to ‘discriminate against each other’ on the basis of colour.\textsuperscript{12} Yet, unless reclassified, these fairer skinned coloured people still lived in poverty stricken coloured group areas.

In Trotter’s discussion of the recollections that coloured people have of forced removals he argues that communities throughout the world look to historical suffering for memories of group cohesion: For example the black Americans and slavery. For many coloured people, forced removals detached them from the ‘good ole days’ of their former living areas. Thus, for many of those removed it was group areas that created divisions and animosity among different races.\textsuperscript{13} This was also true in Noordgesig, where interviewees argued that relations with blacks in Orlando deteriorated over the years. However, Noordgesig is a special case because it existed as a coloured township that was not recognised (i.e. not formally proclaimed a coloured group area) by the state. Secondly, most of the township’s inhabitants were moved to Noordgesig prior to apartheid, thus their experiences differ from the forced removals that the majority of coloureds faced throughout South Africa after 1950.

Trotter argues that there are three types of memory of these removals, firstly, counter memory – nostalgia about the past especially about interracial harmony. Auntie Yvonne, for example, recalled fondly her time in the mixed community of Vrederdorp. Secondly, comparative memory – nostalgia that life then was better than it is now and that eviction changed this especially in terms of crime and poverty. Most interviewees argued that Noordgesig had less crime in its early years between the 1940s and late 1950s. Poverty, they argued, was not so much created by their families forced housing in the township but by apartheid, more especially however by the changes in the political system after the end of apartheid. Lastly, commemorative memory – an idealized version of their old neighbourhood serves an emotional need and helps sort out confusion of the new setting and the official transcript of those

\textsuperscript{11} Interview Mrs. White, Noordgesig Soweto, 29 April 2014.
neighbourhoods. Interviewees used this form as well, particularly in comparing an older idealized Noordgesig to later versions, more especially post-apartheid views of the township.

Nonetheless, coloured group areas ‘radically reshaped coloured peoples experience in the last half-century, giving concrete social, spatial and political expression to the coloured racial category’. Moreover, ‘Group areas united coloured people as a group in a fashion unprecedented in South African history’. The group cohesion fostered in coloured group areas was vastly different to how coloured people had lived in Johannesburg before - in relation to others but more especially themselves.

For many Noordgesig inhabitants, apartheid was a political, social and economic system that functioned better (or benefitted them more) than the post-apartheid state. As such, apartheid’s influence over people in specific urban areas is being re-examined in the post-apartheid era outside of only its oppressive nature. Its racial structures were sometimes elastic and fragile as noted in Mrs. White’s father’s case, while its development ideal of separateness failed to indoctrinate many Noordgesig residents and black South Africans in general.

There were more subtle ways to deal with the ‘boere’ (farmer, but in this case, the white man) as Mrs. Williams and Auntie Joyce attested. Mrs. Williams regarded the Afrikaner government as uncivilized; ‘n boere bly rooi’ (stays raw). She tested her relationship to white authority through acting subservient or doing what was not allowed: For instance, she used to sit on occasion on the ‘nie blanke stoele’ (‘non-white’ chairs) cheekily. She also told the story of a white policeman telling her what the colours of a robot meant because she was coloured and assumed she did not know. She replied, ‘yes baas’ (yes sir; literally baas translates to boss and was used by many blacks, coloureds and Indians when speaking to a white person ), but under

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14 Trotter, ‘Trauma and Memory’, 56-65.
15 Trotter, ‘Trauma and Memory’, 71.
16 Ibid.
18 Interview Auntie Poppie, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014; Interview, Mrs. Williams, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014.
her breath she thought to herself this man must think ‘I’m dom’ (stupid) and come from the farms, she told us humorously.\textsuperscript{19}

Auntie Joyce also recalled that the word ‘\textit{baas}’ and acting compliant could be used in reverse - that is, to the advantage of the user rather than the superior authority it is directed to. She noted that during a raid on her home (Auntie Joyce used to sell alcohol, but I do not think she would say she had a shebeen at her home) the ‘\textit{boere}’ played with the dogs when they were supposed to be searching because of her demeanor with the authorities. She noted that on encounters with the white police it ‘breaks his \textit{pluk}’ (breaks his spirit/willingness to do) if you use the word ‘\textit{baas}’ when talking with him in a subservient tone. Still, she also recalled that the police were also helpful and would carry her groceries across the street for her at times, all that was needed was a ‘sorry \textit{baas}, please could you help me.’\textsuperscript{20}

The most common place ‘non-whites’ interacted with whites was at the workplace. Auntie Joyce remembered how happy she was the day she got her first job putting undercuts away in a factory. She had stood outside of the company the whole day until she saw the manager who eventually told her to come in and work. She learnt how to use a sewing machine without training. Auntie Joyce remained employed in the garment industry for many years and retold an interesting story of finding a bag of company money that was in the possession of a white woman where she worked.\textsuperscript{21} The woman had misplaced the bag and thought it had been stolen, but Auntie Joyce had put it at her workstation and gave it back to her the next day. The white woman was very grateful and declared when thanking Auntie Joyce; ‘\textit{jy is nie my nasie, maar vandag ons is saam}’ (you are not of my nation/race, but today we are together).\textsuperscript{22} Even during apartheid, the racial divides could be transgressed and humanity found.

Nevertheless, the apartheid state endeavored to create a clear cut black and white South Africa. Racial classification for coloureds and Indians was situated midway between these groups. While the state had some use and clarity on the coloured affair, the early apartheid government was almost dismissive of the Indian population of

\textsuperscript{19} Interview Mrs. Williams.
\textsuperscript{20} Interview Auntie Joyce, Noordgesig Soweto, 5 September 2014.
\textsuperscript{21} Six of the women I interviewed were employed in the garment industry often at the same factories. The period they worked there ranged from the 1950s to late 1980s. By 1946, more coloureds were employed in industrial occupations than agricultural, especially in clothing manufacturing and as sewing machinists, but also in food, drink and tobacco manufacturing, as well as general factory workers. Lewis, \textit{Between the Wire}, 227.
\textsuperscript{22} Interview Auntie Joyce.
South Africa. For example the public relations office of the National Party in 1948 disclosed, ‘[t]he party holds the view that Indians are a foreign and outlandish element (vreemde en uitheemse), which is unassimilable. They can never become part of the country and must therefore be treated as an immigrant community’. The repatriation of this community was espoused as well as disallowing new Indian immigrants into the country. This statement highlights the NP’s ideological stance regarding Indians and their desire to simplify South Africa’s race problems into a black/white dichotomy.

Perhaps more than any other group, the Indian people of South Africa were the most affected by the implementation of the Group Areas Act. The discussions and proceedings of the United Nations in 1953 clearly agreed, stating, ‘[t]he Group Areas Act was not only an unjust piece of legislation, but it involved a series of measures entailing uprooting of many thousands of people, loss of property, ruined lives and eventually economic strangulation of the entire Indian community’. Minority groups faced the wrath of the Act because it was easier for the state and city councils to force their removal than the overwhelming black majority. In Johannesburg alone, some 17,000 Indians were uprooted out of a total population in the city of 21,576 and a loss of property amounting to $25 million. A total of just over 175,000 Indians in South Africa, nearly half the ‘indo-Pakistan’ population of South Africa were forcibly moved. This Group Areas Act was a sustained attempt to create a truly segregated society, and more than any other, was efficacious in dividing South African society. Moreover, this Act was responsible for rearranging the spaces of interaction of people, from formerly racially diverse living areas, to the racially homogenous neighbourhoods of segregated townships.

4.2 Coloured People and Apartheid

The apartheid state, however, struggled in cornering the coloured people: It failed to make them the intermediary race group - a broker between white and black politics

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24 This dissertation deals with the failing of academia to weigh in seriously on the debate about coloured people, particularly outside of the Cape region of South Africa. However, the Indian people of South Africa, it could be argued, are even more marginalized in a predominantly black and white South Africa. More also could be done to establish the relationship between coloureds and Indians in South Africa.


26 Ibid.
with an affinity to white norms and values. Hutt rightfully reasoned that because coloureds come from ‘fundamentally different’ social surroundings compared to most whites, assuming their attraction at times was misplaced. These experiences, he argued were shaped by degradation, poverty, lack of hope and low morale, which while applicable to blacks was more prevalent amongst coloureds. While Hutt was quite obviously in agreement with differentiating people according to their perceived racial potential, his argument that class and socio-economic experience must be included in the analysis of colouredness is what is noteworthy.

The apartheid state attempted to offer race over class as the defining feature of its policy. The contradiction in this was the inexorable link between these two socially constructed concepts. Moreover, apartheid was not a total realignment of racial policy in South Africa, although structurally far more pronounced. Furthermore, the fact that coloured people had no homogenous race or colour challenged the state’s racial classifications. Nonetheless, the apartheid state continued redefining the coloured race group, while at the same time, paying little attention to their class and socio-economic experiences that were adding layers to their identity. Yet, defining a coloured person proved problematic for the apartheid state. It was not so much its definition that needed clarification, but who was, or, was not to be included in this group.

In 1947 the office of the High Commissioner in London highlighted that the term ‘coloured’ described a narrow set of people in South Africa. They occupied an

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27 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Prof W.H. Hutt ‘Economic Factors Bearing on the Future of the Coloured People’ (no date). Thabo Mbeki’s notion of ‘two worlds’ existing in South Africa would place most coloureds historically, not in the middle, but clearly on the side of the ‘have not’s’.
28 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, (no date).
29 Ibid.
30 Crankshaw, ‘Class, Race and Residence’.
33 SAB, BPA, 34, Ref.# 36/2, 36/3, 4-B16: Office of the High Commissioner, London, ‘The Cape coloured peoples of the Union of South Africa’, paper no. 2, 3 May 1947. I would argue that while the term coloured describes a small population group that is specific to Southern Africa, it can encompass an even wider range of people. This however, still requires further research.
exclusive position but were also paradoxically a mixed and racially diverse group of people, making it simultaneously the most inclusive of South African people. The combination of two divergent points of departure is where early essentialist writers of colouredness failed; offering an exclusivity without adequately addressing the inclusive factors that account for diversity. In 1948 the NP’s public relations office in London therefore advised that apartheid between coloureds and ‘Europeans’ be implemented and also applied between coloureds and blacks.\(^3^4\) This was important because identifying and separating coloureds from blacks, using a politics of class and proximity to ‘others’, had ultimately not curtailed interracial living areas prior to 1948.

It was not surprising then, that by the 1950s, and particularly after the signing of the Freedom Charter, many coloureds aligned themselves with other oppressed groups. This convergence with black politics and the inadequate definition of ‘Coloured’, put forward by the state, meant ‘purely coloured political organizations and political activity was increasingly less relevant to many of those categorized as coloureds’\(^3^5\). For Malgas, however, coloured’s and white’s cultural and linguistic linkages meant that unity with blacks was difficult to put into practice. He argued, ‘[w]hile unity with the African people has been theoretically accepted as an essential for the overthrow of economic and political barriers, there exists the subconscious fear that this unity would result in a total alienation from the base’.\(^3^6\) However, the ‘base’ Malgas referred to was not coloureds’ presumed cultural affinity to whiteness, as the author reasoned, but rather, the ‘base’ that is colouredness. Therefore, the subconscious fear he advanced was in reference to the move away from the sanctity of colouredness that would result from aligning to struggle politics dominated by black people. Nonetheless, increasingly and necessarily, coloured political organizations aligned themselves with the oppressed during the middle to late apartheid years.

For the state, however, coloureds remained theoretically aligned to whites, even if they were removed from any further social intercourse through economic and political measures of separation. They became ‘bosom buddies of convenience’ rather than of necessity. For instance, through speaking the same language, but not through party politics or shared residential areas. The NP’s 1957 statement of government policy with reference to the coloured people amplified, ‘there is no desire on the part

\(^3^4\) SAB, BPA, 34, Ref. # 36/2, 36/3, 4-B16, 1948.
\(^3^5\) Lewis, *Between the Wire*, 262.
\(^3^6\) WITS, Malgas, ‘The Coloured People of South Africa’, 58.
of either the white or the colored people that there shall be social intercourse between them, and social separation is accepted by both as the definite and settled policy of the country’.  

The apartheid state, however, was shortsighted in thinking they could count on historical coloured allegiance. In January 1957 the Alexandra Coloured Associated Associations (ACAA) noted for instance that ‘the coloured people were eligible as purchasers of stands in the township from its establishment, but they did not buy because [illegible] they feared that the township would attract the poorest type of whites with whom the coloured people did not wish to be mixed’.  

They go on to add that ‘as soon as the township was turned into a coloured and native township, coloured people began to buy stands, and at first the coloured residents were in the majority’. Alexandra became a majority black township from the 1930s and more especially with slum clearances that forced people into the closely lying area. There are many significant points made here. Firstly, coloureds also lived in Alexandra and in its early years were in the majority. Secondly, coloureds dreaded living with ‘poor whites’ which lowered their ‘respectability’ as a group, but were willing to live with blacks. Lastly, slum clearances not only moved coloureds into new areas of the city but also badly affected older established places of residence for coloureds in Johannesburg. Wealthier coloureds able to buy stands in freehold townships such as Alexandra, Newclare or Sophiatown, felt that former slum dwellers eroded their ideals of respectability. Most notably, it highlighted how the allegiances that the apartheid state took for granted, between whites and coloureds, had been overridden by coloureds who considered themselves more ‘cultured’ than poor whites and slum dwelling coloureds. However, the resilient nature of coloured people is most typical amongst the working class majority rather than the wealthy elite minority.

Auntie Poppie, for instance, worked in the garment industry from the 1950s, at a factory called Lovable, earning £6 a week, which was the top wage for a factory worker at the time - I am sure this only applied to female coloured employees. Auntie

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37 WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962.
38 Ibid. Italic mine.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
Poppie noted that the factory started with a majority of coloured female labourers and only later began hiring black women. The starting wage, she recalled, was £4 a week for a woman of colour working in the garment industry. Still, with these meagre wages, Auntie Poppie and the other female garment workers from Noordgesig, made a living and raised families from the 1950s through to the height of the apartheid era during the 1960s. Auntie Lucky was also employed at Lovable (a bra factory) and at Duckson (which produced men’s pants) as well as Filnoma (which produced clothing). She clearly recalled that more women worked in the garment industry than men.

Coloured people therefore did not fit into the compartments created for them by the state and even responded to state definitions of who constituted membership to their group. Some examples of contention include simply that ‘coloured people are not a ‘race’ or group… we are simply South Africans …’ Some of the speakers at the 1961 South African National Convention included coloureds, as the following personal testament noted:

Many attempts have been made to define the ‘coloured’ people. Scientists have tried to do so by pointing to certain common physical characteristics, but this has failed. In law, we are defined as being what is left of the South African population after all other groups have been accounted for. This is not helpful either… we are a recognizable and significant group only in the sense that the people who have made laws for this country have singled us out as a separate group, differing from the whites, the Africans and the Asians. We are not discriminated against in exactly the same way as Africans and Asians are discriminated against, we are subjected to that social type of discrimination reserved for ‘coloured’ people, and it is in this sense, that we are a separate ‘coloured’ people.

Coloured people in the majority occupied a low socio-economic position during apartheid, despite assumptions that they were a class just above blacks. Poverty, a proletarian class, and a lack of internal unity were contributing factors to the problems facing coloured communities in 1960. Theron also noted that the coloured population growth rate since 1951 was twice as fast as that of whites at 35 per 1000, and higher than the ‘Asiatic’, 29.7, and Black, 27.3, populations - in fact the coloured population

42 A gap in the historical literature of South Africa during the 1960s exists because of the focus on the formative years of early apartheid and later years particularly from the waves of strikes through the early 1970s onward.
43 Interview Auntie Lucky, Noordgesig Soweto, 5 September 2014.
45 Ibid. The convention was a gathering of various groups in South Africa to discuss the government’s plans to make the country a Republic and what this meant for ordinary citizens with special concern for ‘Non-Europeans’.
46 Coloureds placed as a buffer between whites and blacks during apartheid never meant they constituted a middle class in socio-economic or political terms during this period.
in 2011 officially equaled, for the first time, that of the white population of South Africa at 8.9% of the total.\textsuperscript{48} Therefore, during the 1960s, there was a younger age distribution amongst coloureds and consequently a higher dependence ratio caused by the high number of non-productive members; i.e. 45% of the coloured population in the 1960 census were in the 0-14 age group.\textsuperscript{49} 68.8% of coloureds lived in urban areas compared to 83.1% for whites and 31.6% for blacks in 1960, although barely one third of the coloured population was economically active (in 2011 approximately 60-68% of coloureds participated in the labour force while 22-31% were unemployed). Those who were employed in 1960 included mainly artisans and production labourers, 35%: fishermen and farmers, especially farm laborers, 22%: and service labourers, mostly women domestic servants, 21%.\textsuperscript{50}

These statistics are an important guide to the historical socio-economic conditions coloureds faced during early apartheid. They are, however, unable to show how social interactions across the racial divide constantly took place at a human level, regardless of legal divisions and socio-economic positioning. More especially, not only do they ignore interactions amongst black, coloured and Indian people but also those that occurred with whites. Therefore, as is often the case in debating the apartheid era one must take note of the contradictions. Perhaps the most significant, for this dissertation, is that in Johannesburg, the relations between coloureds and blacks metamorphosed negatively, particularly after the creation of separate racial residential areas that came into wide-ranging existence after 1950.

In addition, the political relationship of coloureds to the white apartheid government was of more critical benefit to the state than it was to coloureds themselves. It justified apartheid for their white electorate and appeared to be including a ‘non-European’ South African population group for its international investors. Furthermore, if coloureds aligned to the state, this provided some economic stability by ensuring a secure pool of semi-skilled and unskilled workers. In fact, there was a willingness of a number of coloured elite to work within the system in the 1960s in

\textsuperscript{50} Statistics South Africa, Census 2011. Note the discrepancy in rates of labour participation in 1960 at approximately 33% and in 2011 at approximately 64%. Does this contradict the indictment that coloureds had more work during the apartheid era? WITS, AG2703: Non-European Affairs, 1957-1962, 1964; WITS, AG2703: Non-European Affairs, 1957-1962, SAIIR, 1957. Other occupations included, building workers (i.e. carpenters, masons, and bricklayers), factory workers, messengers and gardeners.
response to the state’s creation of the Coloured Persons Representative Council (CPRC). As such, a new phenomenon in coloured politics was created that saw the emergence of coloured political parties.\textsuperscript{51} Therefore, the coloured group was imperative to the state especially during the apartheid era - easily dismissed if affirming white superiority yet vital when granting concessions.

Nevertheless, it is uncertain whether coloureds actually benefitted considerably more in socio-economic terms than blacks did during apartheid, but, it is abundantly clear that the majority never aligned themselves particularly strongly to the state. The NP’s attempt at cooption through the CPRC between 1969 and 1980 failed to defuse ‘coloured opposition to apartheid [and satisfy] coloured demands’.\textsuperscript{52} It must be noted however that many coloureds in Noordgesig argue that ‘life was better’ during apartheid, when compared to the contemporary post-apartheid society. This perhaps does mean some substantial socio-economic and political benefits reached coloureds from the apartheid state. It could also be a false political consciousness adopted by coloureds, which was the result of state policy then, and now which addressed(s) coloured issues apolitically.\textsuperscript{53} However, ignoring this view of the past disregards important aspects of how coloured identity has existed historically, which might have nothing to do with benefits or false consciousness, but rather to do with actual memories of a good life.

Auntie Freeda, who was also employed in the garment industry, experienced her teenage and young adult life during the ‘heydays’ of apartheid. She was born in 1947 and came to Noordgesig, after her family moved from Vrederdorp in 1948, first living on Mapondo Street (renamed Bergroos Street [date unknown]) until her family moved into Winter Street in 1951. Auntie Freeda reminded us that Oupa Keyser was not only the first person who moved into Noordgesig but he was also the first baker. In addition, her next-door neighbour was the first person to own a taxi in Noordgesig. Oom Israel, also an early resident, she recalled, was a member of the ‘Black Jacks’. The ‘Black Jacks’ included Mr. Leo, Sam Visage, Mr. Rock, Oupa Johnson and Oupa Major whom she recollected, as others had, were very strict. By 1956/1957, the two white women officials in Noordgesig included Mrs. Tucker at the clinic and Mrs. Howick at housing. Auntie Freeda first attended the Ebenezer Church School and after the

\textsuperscript{51} Lewis, Between the Wire, 273.
\textsuperscript{52} Lewis, Between the Wire, 275.
\textsuperscript{53} For discussion about the nostalgia about apartheid see, Dlamini, Native Nostalgia.
construction of the primary school, became one of the first students there. She noted
that the temporary structure of the school was promised an upgrade by the apartheid
government but this was never fulfilled – this same structure is still in use today.\textsuperscript{54}

Some of the shopkeepers at Noordgesig during the mid-1950s included Mr.
Smith and Mr. Philips as well as Mr. Moosa an Indian shopkeeper. Mr. Moosa’s shop,
she recalled, was burnt down with the uprisings of 1976. She stated that the 1950s
were ‘nice’ but by the 1960s, gangs became a feature of township life. Peter Windel,
who was a gangster before Malagog, she claimed, wore a big hat with a long coat,
which earned him the nickname Al Capone.\textsuperscript{55} Although gangs respected the elderly,
they preyed on younger people. Nevertheless, Auntie Freeda considered it was much
safer during the 1960s then in contemporary South Africa even with apartheid and
gang warfare both rife.\textsuperscript{56}

The people of Noordgesig determined how their life in the township would exist
rather than state agencies and plans. As such, the eventual aim of the more
centralized administration of the Department of Coloured Affairs, established in 1958,
was to enable coloured people and organizations to render all welfare services
themselves.\textsuperscript{57} In order to work, this strategy required intertwining a centralized state
department with a decentralized system of local coloured development initiatives. This
is because coloured areas are heterogeneous and locally based so therefore work
better with a system controlled predominantly by city level bureaucracy, which had
been the case prior to the apartheid era. Nevertheless, the apartheid state’s more
centralized ideal for coloured administration was denied its paternalistic drive by the
secretary of coloured affairs, I.D. Du Plessis, who maintained that, ‘[t]he department,
however, does not view its role as that of a dispenser of alms to the coloured
community’.\textsuperscript{58} However, self-sufficiency was difficult to attain as the Manager of the
Johannesburg Non-Europen Affairs Department, Mr. Carr asserted, because the low

\textsuperscript{54} Interview Auntie Freeda, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014.
\textsuperscript{55} Malagog however is often claimed to be Noordgesig’s first gangster.
\textsuperscript{56} Interview Auntie Freeda.
\textsuperscript{57} WITS, AG2703: Non-European Affairs, 1957-1962, Institute of Administration of European Affairs, 11\textsuperscript{th} Annual
Most welfare services were transferred to the Department of Coloured Affairs in 1961. By 1962 legislation was
in effect to transfer all primary and secondary education to the department as well. SAHO
\url{http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/apartheid-government-establishes-%C3%A3%C2%A2%C3%A2%C2%82%C2%AC%C3%AB%C2%9Cdepartment-coloured-affairs%C3%A3%C2%A2%C3%A2%C2%82%C2%AC%C3%A2%C2%84%C2%A2-cad} Accessed 08 April 2015.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
level of socio-economic development in coloured townships meant that the independent running of them by coloureds was not possible.\textsuperscript{59} Mr. Carr argued that the level of poverty for coloureds on the reef was higher than 70\%, with I.D. Du Plessis admitting that a figure of 80\% was closer to the truth.\textsuperscript{60} The highly centralized - although decidedly concerned with separate self-development - apartheid state engaged with groups of people whose politics required a more localized approach to governance.

Regardless of state plans, life during apartheid was not overshadowed, for some Noordgesig residents, by the failures of local government or the oppressive nature of the regime. Lasting social and love relationships were formed during these times that meant more to people than external structural forces. For Auntie Lucky, what was memorable was the lasting relationship she formed with a man, her love story. She got married at the age of 18. She had met her husband while she was at the sports grounds watching soccer. She had noticed him before, and on one particular day, in order to get his attention, threw a soccer ball at him. At the end of the game, he walked her home. They soon began dating and in time became lovers. When she fell pregnant, or, because they were in love, Gabriel proposed to her. Her first-born, Greg was born on 22 September 1957. The couple was married when Greg was 3 months old, on 17 December 1957. She stayed at her parents’ house with her husband and child for the first few years of her married life. She noted that when she met her husband he was quite ‘a clever’ or a ‘tsotsie’ as she described him, but would eventually end up a well-respected pastor in Noordgesig and a good husband.\textsuperscript{61}

Auntie Lucky became a ‘pastor’s wife’. The way she said this, and from the rest of the story she told, it was clear that this came with many responsibilities. She had to be an upstanding community member that provided support to her husband while maintaining her own independence. Nonetheless, although her husband was a man of God, he also had a short temper and took ‘no nonsense’. Her husband, Gabriel,

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} A tsotsie was a name given to ‘small-time criminals’ during the 1940s and 1950s, although the title persists today. A tsotsie was a ‘clever’, people who at first ‘relied more on their wits than on violence to manipulate the white system. As conditions in the townships worsened, they turned to robbery, muggings and other violent crimes’. They had their own sense of style and dress as well as language called ‘tsotsie-taal’. SAHO, http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/gangsterism Accessed 21 May 2015. ‘A clever’ can also refer to a tsotsie but also a person who is street smart, as more than likely in the case of Auntie Lucky’s husband.
died in the year 2000.\footnote{Interview Auntie Lucky.} However, her reminiscing about him would continue for the rest of the interview and we listened to a story of love and fairytale.

Her love story also had a sad twist to it. Auntie Lucky has a rare RH- blood type while that of her husband was RH+. This highly uncommon combination of blood types, discovered after Greg was born, forced her to stay for an additional 2 months at the hospital after giving birth. When she fell pregnant a second time, she again stayed at the hospital for two months. She explained that she had to have a blood transfusion after giving birth or she might have died. The hospital paid her R30 for her blood. Auntie Lucky gave birth to six children all of whom died in infancy. She was even encouraged by the hospital to have more babies even though she did not want any more. In fact, the director of blood transfusion came to her house to encourage her, in the name of science, to have more babies, so they could access her blood. Her husband supported her through her pregnancies and the deaths of their children (she added). In total, she had four boys and three girls with only Greg, her first born, surviving infancy. After the sixth child died, she wanted a hysterectomy and only two people had her blood type in the entire country: One lived in Cape Town and the other in Vereeniging. After three days, she received the blood that could only come from another person with RH- blood type.\footnote{See about the RH blood group system, \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rh_blood_group_system} Accessed 23, October 2014.} Although Auntie Lucky lost six children, she feels that she has ‘the world’s children’ from everywhere always around her.\footnote{Interview Auntie Lucky.}

4.3 Coloured Housing in Johannesburg, 1950 to mid-1970s

What the apartheid regime tried to control was infrastructural development, which largely meant building more homes for ‘non-whites’. The NP government took over the housing problems that had escalated during the war years, and in the 1950s invested heavily in trying to reduce shortages. This development plan was highly contested throughout the 1940s, but eventually made possible by the Group Areas Act of 1950 and others that sped up housing delivery.\footnote{WITS, A1132: Lewis, 1949-1978. See also the reports given in various newspapers throughout the 1940s noting the new ways government was trying to deal with the housing backlog. There were also debates and disagreement with the proposed apartheid policy that at first disagreed with, for instance, the training of black builders to build their own homes. \textit{The Star}, ‘State Scheme To Train Natives To Build Own Houses’, 3 May 1946;}
Building Workers Act meant blacks could become builders, which lowered building costs and alleviated labour shortages. The Native Services Levy Act of 1952 forced employers to provide for their black employees’ housing needs. Lastly, the Site and Services Scheme of 1953 allowed ‘…families to build their own temporary dwellings pending the erection of permanent houses’ with the government providing water, and other services to these sites. The housing division of the City Council of Johannesburg, formed in 1954, now felt equipped to tackle the housing shortage.\(^{66}\)

The southwestern area of the city was the prime development area for black housing from the 1950s.\(^{67}\) In 1953, 17,814 houses had been built for black people, which increased to 58,890 by 1962.\(^{68}\) Nonetheless, black housing still faced a heavy backlog in the mid-1950s even as the rate of construction skyrocketed. The state also applied rigorous controls over urbanization and by the end of the decade influx control was a deterrent to black urban migration.\(^{69}\) However, following the seven years of intense building of the mid to late 1950s black housing funds were seriously reduced. In 1962, only 2000 houses were completed and in 1966, only 395 houses were built, one quarter of the total amount built in 1965.\(^{70}\) While the picture looked dismal for blacks in Johannesburg up to the 1960s, it was stark for coloureds as well.

The City of Johannesburg noted that coloured housing was in disarray and in its annual report of 1950-1951 it estimated that 550 coloured families needed housing caused by evictions alone. Those evicted were usually the ‘poorest type’ who had no place to go they added.\(^{71}\) According to Councilor L.V. Hurd, by 1952, there were approximately 31,000 coloured people in Johannesburg and the majority lived in ‘shockingly overcrowded conditions’.\(^{72}\) By this time, only 1,100 sub-economic houses had been built for coloureds, divided between the townships of Coronationville and Noordgesig.\(^{73}\) Noordgesig therefore, was an accepted settlement for coloureds by

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\(^{67}\) WITS, AG2703: Non-European Affairs, 1952-1956.

\(^{68}\) WITS, A1132: Lewis, 1949-1978.

\(^{69}\) WITS, A1434/1.1: 1966.


\(^{71}\) WITS, AD843/B: SAIRR, 1908-1962, City of Johannesburg, Annual Report of non-European Affairs Department, 1950-1951.


\(^{73}\) Ibid.
1952. Nonetheless, the need for more coloured housing in Johannesburg remained fruitless until well into the late 1950s and particularly the early 1960s when certain parts of the city were proclaimed coloured group areas: For example, Western Coloured Township, Riverlea, Newclare, and Eldorado Park.

Auntie Yvonne’s and Auntie Gene’s family were evicted from the Fordsburg area and moved into Noordgesig in 1952. Auntie Yvonne confirmed that Fordsburg was multiracial at this time. Although a fence divided where her family had lived from lower class ‘boere’, this did not deter interaction with them as well as black, coloured, Indian, and Chinese residents. Both sisters felt that the rift between the races deepened during apartheid. Auntie Yvonne was 17 years old when they were temporarily housed in tents in the ‘rock and roll’ section of Noordgesig before moving into ‘rainbow valley’ (another colloquial term for a section of Noordgesig).74

The various governmental departments concerned with coloured housing assumed that by building homes, socio-economic hardships would automatically diminish. While addressing the Joint Council on the ‘Economic Factors bearing on the Future of the Coloured People’ Hutt argued conversely that sub-economic housing was not a panacea, suggesting that the conditions that force coloureds to live in poverty would persist and not reduce the rent burden.75 He added that housing only partially concealed these problems and at the same time bolstered ‘up the monopolistic organization of the building industry’.76 Hutt continued, regarding slum clearances, that it moved poorer classes of people to areas were their needs would be invisible or ignored and it forced people who could scarcely afford to pay rents to pay even more.77 These statements showed the government’s inadequacy in dealing with either the ‘coloured problem’ or the foresight to realize they were re-creating ghetto-like conditions in the new housing schemes under construction. That was the result for example in the western coloured areas proclaimed from the 1950s to early 1960s.78

74 Interview Auntie Yvonne and Auntie Gene, Noordgesig Soweto, 13 February 2014.
75 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Prof W.H. Hutt.
76 The white owned construction industry was dependent on lucrative government tenders. Furthermore, white building artisans constructed houses in the southwestern areas until the early 1950s that increased, rather than decreased, the salary bill of these companies.
77 WITS, AD1433: Joint Council, 1924-1954, Prof W.H. Hutt.
The forced removals emanating from this proclamation was one of the most notorious urban planning exercises ever undertaken in South Africa during apartheid.\textsuperscript{79} Thousands of black people were moved to Meadowlands and Diepkloof, which in 1963, along with the already existing townships there, would collectively become known as Soweto. The name Soweto derived from the first two letters of the longer name South Western Township and was agreed to by most residents because it sounded like an African name.\textsuperscript{80} By 1964, the population of Soweto was 482,651, yet blacks were still considered to have tribal affiliations and therefore a rural basis to their existence in cities.\textsuperscript{81} This does not seem to have applied to coloureds, who, if they lived in urban areas, were perceived as urban citizens. Apartheid policy, rooted in the development ideology of modernization, linked coloureds’ apparent connection to European culture, to their right to the city. Therefore, for white housing, it was a question of where and how to place these far enough from blacks, but a little closer to coloured and Indian areas.\textsuperscript{82} Thus, an urban racial hierarchy existed in housing people in Johannesburg; whites first, blacks last, coloureds and Indians in between.

From 1939 to 1962 a small administrative section in the European Affairs Department of the JCC had dealt with the welfare and housing of coloureds and Asiatic communities.\textsuperscript{83} It was financed from the General Rate Fund and not the Bantu Revenue Account so did not benefit from Bantu beer profits; its sole income was the renting of property that made coloured housing heavily subsidized by the council.\textsuperscript{84} This generated a dependent nature of coloureds to state welfare, particular housing, that sped up dramatically in the mid to late 1960s. By 1963, only 4,415 houses, along with 110 flats, had been built for coloureds, compared to the 21 townships comprising of 53,293 houses constructed within the Soweto complex alone.\textsuperscript{85}

Western Native Township became Western Coloured Township, and as parts of it were rebuilt, they were designated as ‘Westbury’. Construction began in the

\textsuperscript{79} Several authors focus on this moment in apartheid history, but less discussion is provided for the slum removals and the townships that were created prior to the Group Areas Act of 1950.
\textsuperscript{80} SAHO, \url{http://www.sahistory.org.za/places/soweto} Accessed 6 May 2014.
\textsuperscript{83} WITS, A1434/1.1: Activities of the Non-European Affairs Department, February 1964.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
mid to late 1950s and by 1964 had provided 2,500 coloured families with homes.\textsuperscript{86} Coronationville had duplex-type flats added to it in 1959/60.\textsuperscript{87} Lenasia was also developed at this time as an Indian housing scheme.\textsuperscript{88} The first 623 ‘low-cost’ houses were built in Riverlea in 1962 with later developments completed in 1965 and 1966.\textsuperscript{89} Bosmont was developed to resettle coloureds living in white group areas particularly from Albertsville. It was an ‘owner built’ location and therefore regarded as a ‘prestige coloured suburb’.\textsuperscript{90} For Newclare, the council built in 1967/68, 902 flats to replace the ‘500 slum dwellings’ existing there.\textsuperscript{91} This would be the largest concentration of this type of accommodation for coloureds in the province.\textsuperscript{92} Parts of Claremont were also set aside for coloured housing in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{93} Yet Auntie Bernie’s comparison of the past with contemporary South Africa shows that strategies of survival in Noordgesig required more than just secure housing.

Auntie Bernie was born in Noordgesig in 1952. Her parents had moved from ‘Fietas’ to the new coloured township in 1949.\textsuperscript{94} Auntie Bernie noted that Noordgesig was much safer when she was growing up in the 1950s and 1960s. According to her, the township only began having gangsters later in the 1970s and 1980s. The gangsterism was a territorial dispute between young males living at the bottom section of Noordgesig and those that resided over the Main Road in the top section. She noted that it was safer for children and teenagers in the 1960s - comparing it to the drug abuse prevalent in the township today - because there was only alcohol, cigarettes, or, ‘dagga’ (marijuana).\textsuperscript{95}

Nevertheless, she argued that there was more poverty during apartheid. As such, some parents took their children out of school so they could work and provide


\textsuperscript{87} JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1975-1977.

\textsuperscript{88} WITS, A1434/1.1: February 1964.

\textsuperscript{89} Riverlea also has a clear class division between the low class houses built in ‘Zombie’ (this is the colloquial name used by residents there) and the top half of the township, which was ‘owner built’ and is comparable with many white suburbs.

\textsuperscript{90} This perhaps is one reason that it has been regarded as a township where ‘larnie (white) coloureds’ live for many Noordgesig residents.

\textsuperscript{91} JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1975-1977.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{93} WITS, A1434/1.1: February 1964.

\textsuperscript{94} ‘Fietas’ is a colloquial name for an area comprising of Pageview and Vrederdorp which was a multiracial living area well into the 1960s. City of Johannesburg, \url{http://www.joburg.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&id=290:life-behind-the-scars-of-fietas&Itemid=51} Accessed 11 March 2015.

\textsuperscript{95} Interview Auntie Bernie, her two daughters and two grandchildren, Noordgesig Soweto, 25 April 2014.
for the household. In her case, her two older daughters left school in order to support
the family in the 1980s. Auntie Bernie also worked as a garment worker, which mostly
consisted of machine work in the 1970s. Like many other interviewees, Auntie Bernie
agreed that there was sufficient employment during the apartheid era. Still, it was lots
of work but for little pay, she added. For her, life overall is therefore better in the post-
apartheid era than it was during apartheid. Her daughter interjected in disagreement,
stating, ‘no, it’s not better now’. Auntie Bernie’s daughter had a more positive view
of the past than her mother who lived through apartheid’s strictest years. Nonetheless,
what is important here is that gangsterism and school aged children working were
some of the ways to survive apartheid inside Noordgesig.

Nationally, part of the difficulty of housing coloureds was the large number of
people that had to be moved. Secondly, the CPRC, that became effective on 2
October 1964, had minimal power over housing policy. It had no power to create law
without approval from the Minister of Coloured Affairs, and all motions they put forward
had to be approved by the State President. However, the biggest concern was the
continued restructuring of departments controlling the affairs of coloureds and Indian’s
particularly at the city level. The coloured and Asian division of the City of
Johannesburg was set up in January of 1963 and operated under the jurisdiction of
the manager of the non-European Affairs Department to 1969, and the Clerk Council
until 1975, when its status was raised to an independent department of the Council.
Not only was there citywide bureaucratic discrepancies determining the control of
coloured affairs, but these were likewise prevalent in provincial and national
departments as well. However, the JCC’s main concern for coloureds between 1963
and 1975 was providing housing, according to the Coloured and Asian affairs report,
1975-1977. In 1970, Lenasia, Nancefield, and Eldorado Park were incorporated into
the Johannesburg municipal area.

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96 Interview Auntie Bernie.
98 WITS, A1132: Lewis, 1949-1978; JHB Ref, Blue Books, RP 21-35, Dup B1 Books: City of Johannesburg,
Nevertheless, housing shortages for coloureds continued throughout the 1970s. This was the result of overspending on white housing schemes.\textsuperscript{102} Table 4.1, presents the loans approved, expended and dwellings completed between 1 August 1920 and 31 December 1973, according to the Local Authorities’ National Housing Fund. Coloured housing received the second highest amount of loans, even higher than that for black housing; while white housing loans were almost double that for black housing. Furthermore, more houses for blacks were built than all other race groups combined. This infers smaller, cheaply built homes compared to whites who had more allocation of funds but fewer, although more expensively built homes. In the end, it is clear that if there remained a housing backlog for coloureds, the backlog for blacks was far worse.

As more coloured townships were built, a high relocation rate of coloured people to these new group areas became evident from the 1960s and into the 1970s. Moreover, this movement of people to new, often home ownership schemes followed a class pattern. Allowing coloured people to own and build their homes began in the mid-1960s with the owner built houses located at Bosmont.\textsuperscript{103} Eldorado Park was also established at this time, and became the premier site for coloured home ownership. Many families from Noordgesig, who could afford it, moved to the more suburban Eldorado Park in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s.

Table 4.1: Loan amounts and numbers of dwellings for each race group, 1920-1973

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Loan amount approved since 1920 (R)</th>
<th>Loan amount expended by 1973 (R)</th>
<th>Number of dwellings approved since 1920</th>
<th>Number of dwellings completed by 1973</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>270 092 392</td>
<td>179 281 817</td>
<td>169 901</td>
<td>137 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>98 264 354</td>
<td>85 893 152</td>
<td>39 694</td>
<td>36 468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>234 852 562</td>
<td>203 180 474</td>
<td>377 127</td>
<td>348 946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>416 302 872</td>
<td>323 821 435</td>
<td>88 775</td>
<td>74 408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{103} JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1975-1977.
Coloured people were willing to relocate to better neighbourhoods on a voluntary basis but many continued to resist forced relocations to group areas. For example, in 1975, in Johannesburg, 1520 coloured people who had received notices to vacate in terms of the Group Areas Act refused to accept alternative accommodation in group areas.\(^{104}\) This statistic highlights the continued difficulty of relocations but also the political pressure this put on the government departments dealing with black, coloured, and Indian housing. Additionally, by the mid-1970s the land proclaimed for coloured group areas was quickly being used up while the rate of migration of coloureds to Johannesburg was increasing.\(^{105}\) The construction of homes in Noordgesig was already completed in 1961 and it was still one of the larger coloured areas when these new coloured townships were only beginning to be established.

### 4.4 Housing in Noordgesig, 1950s to mid-1960s

In 1950, the new school was opened, the sports ground had been turned on in Noordgesig. A communal hall was necessary for Noordgesigs’ increasing population by the early 1950s, as church halls and another small hall in the community were providing for this need. In addition, the roads in 1950 were still in ‘bad condition’ but work had begun on this.\(^{106}\) There were also ‘state-aided products’ sold in the community because a large number of the community still belonged to the lower income group.\(^{107}\)

The house my family currently occupies was built along with the 150 houses constructed in 1954. These formed part of the ‘new look huise’ (houses that did not use ‘face brick’ used in the original 1940/1942 batch of houses) and are colloquially called ‘doll houses’. These were smaller houses and semi-detached.\(^{108}\) This batch of houses was also a temporary measure according to the National Housing Office; ‘The construction of 150 houses in the existing Noordgesig Township is an emergency measure to accommodate displaced coloured families. The scheme will be completed

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\(^{105}\) JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1975-1977.  
\(^{106}\) WITS, AD843/B: SAIIR, 1908-1962.  
\(^{107}\) ibid.  
\(^{108}\) SAB, TPB, 2500, Ref. # JALG 56/11057 – JALG 60/11057: Architectural Plans for Semi-detached Houses, Drawing #JM/N/1, Standard Housing for Coloureds at Noordgesig for the City of Johannesburg, (no date).
in 2 months from approval’. Thus, additional houses at Noordgesig, fifteen years after the first houses were built, remained an ‘emergency measure’ caused by continued slum removals.

Throughout its construction phases, Noordgesig was used as a dumping spot for evicted coloureds. Temporary accommodation during this period was common. A 1952 report of the housing sub-committee states that 100 ‘breeze blocks’ homes were to be constructed in Noordgesig as an emergency measure. Likewise, in the mid-1950s, some 25 coloured families were provided with temporary accommodation in ‘corrugated iron huts’ at Noordgesig. Breezeblock housing was also used in the temporary accommodation provided in Orlando West from the mid-1940s, to shelter those displaced due to the squatter movements. Moreover, the issue of temporary housing in tents came up repeatedly in conversations with Noordgesig residents as well as in archival material.

For example, in August 1955, religious bodies provided 24 large tents in the township to accommodate families evicted from European areas or buildings that had been declared slums. Nonetheless, in 1955, Noordgesig was the only coloured area where space existed for a few more houses to be built, in addition to the 850 existing homes. Adequate coloured housing in the city remained in short supply and temporary accommodation in tents continued to be provided in Noordgesig to alleviate this pressure. For example, in 1956 nearly 2000 coloured families were ‘virtually homeless’ and ‘living under appalling conditions’. This forced the council to erect ‘fifty tents on a portion of ground adjacent to Noordgesig, … and more recently a number of wood and iron huts have been placed at the disposal of some of the coloured families who could not find accommodation elsewhere, as a temporary measure’. It is fascinating

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110 SAB, TPB, 2500, Ref. # JALG 56/11057 – JALG 60/11057: Report of Housing Sub-committee, Special Meeting, 16 May 1952. Noordgesig residents often mention breezeblocks, however, it is uncertain if these are the so-called ‘nylon’ houses or not.
112 For instance Interview Auntie Poppie; Interview Gifi, Noordgesig Soweto, 25 March 2014; Interview Auntie Yvonne and Auntie Gene.
113 SAB, TPB, 2500, JALG 56/11057 – JALG 60/11057: City of Johannesburg; Letter to the Provincial Secretary from the Johannesburg Acting Town Clerk, 29 March 1956.
114 Ibid.
that even during the construction of the second last section in Noordgesig (see Map 4.1), tents still housed coloured families waiting for homes.\textsuperscript{115}

The remaining two vacant areas, by the mid-1950s, were located at the western bottom section of Noordgesig, one block down from the Catholic Church (commonly referred to as the ‘rock and roll’ in Noordgesig) as well as the top south eastern most corner section next to Diepkloof (commonly referred to as the ‘new look huise’). The ‘rock and roll’ would be the last area constructed in Noordgesig according to Auntie Poppie.\textsuperscript{116} Among locals, the various stages of development at the township are as follows chronologically; 1) the ‘ou looks’, the first houses built at Noordgesig prior to the apartheid era in the bottom western section along the Main Road. 2) Soldad huise (soldier houses) built for veterans of WWII.\textsuperscript{117} 3) The ‘new look’ houses built with ‘big blocks’ after the ‘ou looks’. 4) ‘Rainbow valley’ part of the new look houses, 5) the nylon houses and ‘doll houses’ also part of the ‘new look’ houses. Lastly, 6) the ‘rock and roll’ in the bottom section of Noordgesig.\textsuperscript{118}

Auntie Joyce, was born in 1927, and the oldest person I interviewed. She lived a good majority of her life in Sophiatown until her move (or removal) to Noordgesig’s ‘rock and roll’ in the mid-1950s.\textsuperscript{119} Auntie Joyce was humorous and constantly joked sarcastically about life in the township. She arrived in Noordgesig with her children, two boys, and one girl, when the bucket system was still in use, and the stench removed by using ‘dip’. Sewage connection to Noordgesig was delayed and the township was only fully connected to the service by the mid to late 1950s. Furthermore, the pail system must have been used at the temporary accommodations provided to people in Noordgesig. However, Noordgesig’s sewage system was connected before the adjacent Orlando Township for blacks. A comment by the Johannesburg town clerk in 1956 noted that sewage was to be connected in Noordgesig, but the ‘City Engineer’s Department is heavily committed to the provision of pail services in the existing Native

\textsuperscript{115} If the ‘rock and roll’ area was the last section built, it more than likely is the land referred to as ‘adjacent’ to Noordgesig, where these people were temporarily housed.
\textsuperscript{116} Interview Auntie Poppie.
\textsuperscript{117} It is unclear when these houses were built. There are only a handful of these homes (10 perhaps). If they were built for veterans as the local term, ‘soldad huise’ implies more than likely they were built after 1945.
\textsuperscript{118} Interview Auntie Poppie. See Map 6.
\textsuperscript{119} It is not clear if Auntie Joyce was forcibly removed from Sophiatown to Noordgesig. It seems she was able to stay in Noordgesig because she was married to a coloured man although I have no proof for this. She is a dark skinned woman who has the accent of a black person although I felt that if I asked her she would clearly state she was coloured.
townships and in the area being developed for site and services schemes'. Thus, race played a part in sewage connection; for coloureds, it was a necessity while for blacks it was not. Even so, sewage connection to the whole of Noordgesig was a slow process and delays were common.

**Map 4.1: Noordgesig before the ‘rock and roll’ and far southeastern portion bordering Diepkloof and Orlando were built, circa 1956 and their colloquial names**

Most of the ‘rock and roll’ had been built by the time Auntie Joyce arrived, but a few temporary tents remained in usage. She declared that the residents of Noordgesig came from all over the city rather than any specific area of Johannesburg. Inspectors, she recalled, went door to door checking to make sure everything was in order at the council homes. In fact, she remembered one family that was evicted from Noordgesig because their children were rowdy. Auntie Joyce is also adamant that life was definitely better in Noordgesig for most of the apartheid era; for instance people used to greet one another and want to know where a person was if they did not see them for a while. She believes there was more respect in the past than there is today. For entertainment, in the 1950s and 1960s, she recalled that they used to walk to Duka hall in Orlando, or use the train to Protea for dances because there was no hall in

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120 SAB, TPB, 2500, Ref.# JALG 56/11057 – JALG 60/11057: City of Johannesburg, Proposed Scheme for the Erection of an Additional 139 dwellings for Coloureds at Noordgesig, 11 September 1956.
Noordgesig at the time. Auntie Joyce noted that Noordgesig and Orlando residents never fought with each other at these dances. In fact, she felt that, overall, the relationship between coloureds from Noordgesig and blacks from Orlando was good at this time. Still, she added, you had to be careful and ‘know your place’ because ‘that’s how you stay[ed] out of trouble’.121

An additional 201 houses were constructed after 1955, making the total number of homes completed in Noordgesig 1059 by 1961, according to the City of Johannesburg. With a population of approximately 1,500 people, there were only five municipal police officers (black jacks) in Noordgesig.122 Bra George was born in 1945 and his father was a member of the ‘black jacks’, so named because of their black uniform.123 He showed me a picture of this group in their space at the rent office where the police station is currently situated.124 Bra George recalled that the hall was opened around the same time South Africa became a Republic in 1961 and money changed from pounds, shillings and pence to rands and cents.125 Bra George attended Grades 1 and 2 at the Ebenezer church beginning in 1952 before attending the newly built Noordgesig School, which, at that time only offered classes from standard 1 to 8. Bra George therefore had to complete matric at Coronation or Newclare High, as did most Noordgesig students at the time. He finished his matric in 1964, which was taught mainly in Afrikaans. He also noted that when Eldorado Park was created in the mid-1960s, some of the people from Noordgesig moved to this new location. ‘In those days’, he added, ‘what is now known as Ennerdale was called Grasmere’.126 Bra George characterized apartheid as being more ‘disciplined’, and because of this the crime rate was lower and gangsterism was the pursuit of only a few.127 Furthermore, because there were more jobs, crime was never the only viable option anyway. However, workers living in Noordgesig had no security of tenure, nor, was the township status ever secure.

121 Interview Auntie Joyce.
123 Interestingly, he remembered my own father as an older ‘Pretoria boy’ whom he had known in Newclare.
124 See for instance interviews with Auntie Poppie, Mrs. Williams, Auntie Freeda, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014 and Auntie Yvonne who all spoke of the ‘black jacks’ and the respect they had in the community. See also Dlamini, Native Nostalgia.
125 Interview Bra George, Noordgesig Soweto, 24 April 2014.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
4.5 Noordgesig’s Temporary Nature: State Versus Tenants

As indicated, Noordgesig was only officially proclaimed a coloured group area in 1988. Therefore, the legal status of coloureds living there remained insecure from its original planning in 1937 through to almost the end of apartheid. The residents of Noordgesig had to live with the constant possibility of removal and the township being included into Orlando. This was noted in 1965 by the Department of Coloured Affairs:

Noordgesig is n gebied wat as deel can Johannesburg se suidwetelike bantoewoongebiede beplan is. Sodra alternatiewe huisvesting aan kleulinge wat in Noordgesig woon, voorsien is, sal dit vir bantoe behuising aagewend kan word [sic]

(Noordgesig is situated in the southwestern parts of Johannesburg where Bantu housing has been planned. As soon as alternative housing for coloureds staying in Noordgesig is acquired, the township will be turned over for Bantu housing). They go on to add that,

die sekratarie van beplanning het heirdie department in kennis gestel dat na sy meaning voldoende grond vir baie jare vir kleulinge aan die Witwatersrand geproklameer is in dat op hierdie stadium geen bykonstige geroepsgebied(e) vir genoembe bevolkingsgroep beoog word nie [sic]

(the secretary of planning told this department in confidentiality that his understanding of the area is that since it has been used for coloureds for so many years in the Witwatersrand, and was never proclaimed, it means that it could never be given over to another race group).

Even though there was a plan to remove the coloureds staying in Noordgesig once suitable housing was found elsewhere, the fact that by 1965 Noordgesig was already a quarter century old meant there was some claim to the township’s continuance. This was true for the residents of Noordgesig as well as the state that had effectively been administering the township as a coloured group area since its establishment in 1939. Yet, as will be shown later in this section, this claim to the township in the 1960s was made from government authorities and not residents themselves. In fact, the Noordgesig Tenants’ Association agreed with the idea of removing the residents of the township away from the influences of Orlando. Some of the authorities however, were claiming to speak on behalf of residents who felt that since their township had not been proclaimed for any race group there was no legal

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129 SAB, BAO, 9429, Ref. # A19/1306/30 Vol 1 - 1 A19/1306/25 Vol 3: Die streeksverteenwoordiger, Department van Kleurlingsake, Johannesburg; aanwending van Noordgesig as stedlike bantoewoongebied, 25 November 1965.

130 Ibid.
method to force them to leave. For example, the secretary of *Gemenskapbou* (Community Development) informed the Department of Coloured Affairs about the coloureds in Noordgesig, stating,

...(dat daar by die beplanning van gekleurde groepsgebiede te Johannesburg voorsiening gemaak is vir die uitendelige hervestiging van die gekleurdes van Noordgesig veral in die gebiede van Moonshieville, Klipriviersooglandgoed en Nancefield. Daar kan egter nie met hul hervestiging n begin gemaak word nie, behalpe op n vrywillige basis, omdat die gekleudes, wat daar woonagtig is, nie onbevoegdes is nie, aangesien die gebied nie vir n ander rassegroep geproklameer is nie [sic].

(...that from the planning of the coloured group areas in Johannesburg it was never seen to, that the removal of coloureds from Noordgesig or in the areas of Moonshieville, Klipriver and Nancefield was undertaken. Therefore, there can never be a start to this removal now, unless on a freewill basis, because the coloureds that stay there now argue that the township was never actually proclaimed for any other race group).

Noordgesigs’ temporary nature was a source of confusion amongst numerous government departments. The muddle was further illustrated by the Department of Coloured Affair’s letter to the secretary of housing asking for clarification on the issue.

...(sal ek bly wees, ten einde die department in staat te stel om die oprigting van n hoerskool vir kleulinge in noordgesig te oorweeg, indien u my in kennis kan stel of dit beoog word om Noordgesig as bantoe-gebied te proklameer, en indien wel, of u enige aanduiding kan gee wanneer dit sal gebeur [sic].

(...I would be happy to find out once and for all the department’s stance on the construction of a high school in the coloured area of Noordgesig, and perhaps you can fill me in on the plan to change Noordgesig to be proclaimed a Bantu living area, and if this is the plan, when will it happen).

This declaration illuminates the bureaucracy involved in trying to proclaim Noordgesig a black area. The root of the problem lay in the original proclamation of Noordgesig as a ‘temporary’ location for coloureds in the late 1930s and since then, administering the township as if it were a coloured group area. By the 1960s, the government departments involved in managing Noordgesig, therefore, felt it was only right that coloureds continued living there and that rather than removing the residents, the township should be proclaimed officially a coloured group area. Its proximity to the black people in Soweto was less of a concern than the bureaucratic responsibility of removing inhabitants into other suitable accommodation.

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Although the objective for Noordgesig to be proclaimed a black housing area existed, authorities claimed no alternative housing was built for the coloureds living there to move into. This is not true, because, from the early to mid-1960s, there was a considerable amount of coloured housing built particularly in the Eldorado Park area, as well as Bosmont, and Riverlea. So it was possible, if desirable, to remove Noordgesig residents to any one of these townships.\textsuperscript{133} What was at stake here was enforcing the removal of another residential area within Johannesburg, particularly since the western area forced removals had been a tedious decade long project. Moreover, there was no reason to move coloureds from occupying land that did not affect the white population. The proximity of Noordgesig’s coloured population to a black location no longer was a major concern for authorities; especially because they were both not close to any white group areas. In addition, the residents of Noordgesig had a rightful claim to the land and houses, having been there since 1939. Furthermore, if the state were to proceed with forced removals in Noordgesig it would set a precedent for other townships that had similar proclamation statuses such as Moonshievle, Klipriver and Nancefield.

However, what is remarkable is that the Noordgesig United Tenants’ Association as well as the Noordgesig Tenants’ Association both sought alternative accommodation for the coloureds of Noordgesig. The township’s status nonetheless also affected these organizations. As such, they were not recognized by the JCC and could not be represented on the Coloured Management Committee.\textsuperscript{134} The Noordgesig United Tenants’ Association had an interview with I.D. du Plessis, the Secretary of Coloured Affairs in Cape Town, about the township's proclamation status. They proposed, ‘...that the undefined area of Noordgesig be proclaimed a group area for the bantu group and that the coloured inhabitants of this area be re-settled en-bloc in a proclaimed area for coloureds, within the municipal boundaries of Johannesburg’.\textsuperscript{135} Their request rested on the fact that Noordgesig is bounded almost completely by the black townships of Orlando and Diepkloof, therefore they felt

\textsuperscript{133} Indeed, many residents of Noordgesig did migrate, of their own accord, beginning from the 1960s, to these new townships. As such, a number of coloured families in Johannesburg still have family ties to the location.

\textsuperscript{134} SAB, BAO, 9429, Ref. # A19/1306/30 Vol 1 - 1 A19/1306/25 Vol 3: Noordgesig United Tenants Association, letter to the regional representative of the Department of Coloured Affairs, 21 November 1964. The address given to this association is 735 Arum Street, Noordgesig, President J.J. Marais, Chairman D.J. August, and Secretary G.K. Beck.

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Ibid.}
‘…confident that the authorities would accede to [their] request and that the Government policy on the separation of the Races will be honored and that Separate Development for [them] will at last become a reality.’ 136

These statements are complicated: On the one hand, it could quite simply be that the Tenants’ Association used the language of apartheid to try to get the state to react; if they seemed to be agreeable with apartheid, the state might be compelled to honour their request. On the other hand, this explanation does not do justice to the reverence that many coloured people had, and still have, for the apartheid state. If this is the case then perhaps the Noordgesig United Tenants’ Association was actually presenting a case that the majority of coloureds living in Noordgesig believed. They also wanted to live in a proclaimed coloured area, not situated so close to a black township as compared with most other coloured townships in Johannesburg. A township where blackness was not an everyday issue as it was in Noordgesig. 137

The Noordgesig United Tenants’ Association further stressed that Noordgesig’s close proximity to a black township meant that to all ‘intents and purposes’ it was an area better suited for black people and not coloureds. 138 To illustrate and substantiate their claim that Noordgesig was essentially part of Soweto, it noted that the nearest post office and police station was in Orlando and that black traffic officers patrolled in Noordgesig. Although the City of Johannesburg agreed to maintain the township as a temporary measure, it disagreed with the request to have Noordgesig proclaimed a Bantu group area and resettle the coloureds living there on portions of the farm Mooiplaats as the Association had suggested. The city argued that,

It has always been the intention that as soon as it is possible to provide suitable alternative accommodation for all coloured residents of Noordgesig, the use of Noordgesig as a coloured township will be discontinued. Lack of adequate accommodation has so far precluded this possibility. Under these circumstances, it would be foolhardy to proclaim Noordgesig a group area expressly for Bantu occupation. On the contrary, the situation would become confused by such a proclamation and the plight of coloureds living there insecure. 139

The City was again concerned with setting a precedent that other areas could follow. It wanted to dodge enacting a forced removal, because there was no alternative

136 Ibid.
137 This is a standout feature of Noordgesig; one that I think has created a type of colouredness that is more adept to looking outside of itself rather than relying on self-inspection only. The social atmosphere in Noordgesig is therefore unlike most other coloured townships because of its proximity to Soweto and daily interaction with its black residents.
139 SAB, BAO, 9429, Ref. # A19/1306/30 Vol 1 - 1 A19/1306/25 Vol 3: City of Johannesburg, letter to the Department of Coloured Affairs regarding the requests made by the Noordgesig United Tenants Association, 25 February 1965.
accommodation available, and kept in mind the upheavals caused by the western area relocations. Moreover, it claimed that Noordgesig’s continued occupation by coloureds was in the best interest of its residents. However, the Tenants’ Association argued that the interests of residents were going to be jeopardized if they continued to live next door to a black township.

In this regard, and perhaps the most oddly fascinating statement made by the Noordgesig United Tenants’ Association, pertaining to the close proximity of coloureds to blacks, was that, ‘[i]ll feeling and animosity are not entirely absent’ in this relation.140 This they argued could result in ‘racial conflict’, maintaining that there were,

‘...inherent dangers of having a small minority group so close to the areas ... whose inhabitants cannot be said to be entirely free of hostility toward other racial groups. We hate to speculate what will be our fate in the event of a major racial disturbance. We leave this to your imagination’.141

The association added that Noordgesig residents would defend themselves if they had to.142 This was a heavy indictment directed at black people. Blacks were considered instigators of racial ‘hostility’ rather than white people or the apartheid regime. This shows how distanced coloured politics was from struggle politics for these association leaders in Noordgesig. Moreover, it played into the hands of a government still very fearful of the ‘swaart gevaar’ (black danger). The ‘major racial disturbance’ for the Tenants Association was black hostility towards coloureds. This was similar to the conceptions of the apartheid government about black anger directed at white people. It is also possible that these remarks were made by a handful of elite coloured representatives that were not speaking for the majority of coloureds living in Noordgesig.

Nonetheless, from these statements it is possible to argue that many residents of Noordgesig were not as comfortable living so close to blacks by the 1960s as they were in the 1940s and 1950s. This was partially because of apartheid policies that separated residential areas, which ended the interracial living patterns of inner-city slums where the majority of Noordgesig residents had come from. It also highlights the cleavages that existed between coloureds and blacks that escalated in separate living areas. Thus, while ‘ill feeling and animosity were not entirely absent’, the resultant ‘racial conflict’ that might occur were a combination of apartheid policies that

141 Ibid.
142 Ibid.
made race the underlying societal norm, as well as, historical factors that stressed the differences between coloured and black cultures, as opposed to similarities. Moreover, such statements clearly indicate a change in how coloured identity experiences in relation to black identity experiences existed, at least in Noordgesig, during the 1960s, and complicates the stability of the identity, which Adhikari points too. However it does show the ‘core’ ‘characteristics’ of coloured identity that Adhikari asserts remained intact such as assimilation, intermediate status of the identity, marginality and racial hybridity.

Notwithstanding the differences residents of Noordgesig had with their neighbours, one thing is certain, that their living conditions were comparable. For Sister Glover, who has dedicated sixty-two years to feeding the needy, alleviating poverty remains of utmost importance. She began serving food to the needy in 1962, from her home, after seeing the desperate poverty in the city on her daily travels to her workplace. When asked about the relative poverty in the apartheid years compared to contemporary South Africa she pointed out that there were people in need of food then as today. For Sister Glover, no discernable difference exists between the poverty levels of apartheid and those seen in contemporary South Africa. Her calling was outside of politics in the social empowerment of Noordgesig and the numerous other Johannesburg areas she has worked in.

Sister Glover thinks of herself as ‘Tshikanoshi’ (a person who walks alone), a Sotho or Pedi name and a fitting description for Noordgesig, which has existed separately from Soweto. The name refers to a goat that lives in the Blouberg Mountains. This goat has spectacular horns and moves in the mountains alone. People come from miles away to catch a glimpse of it, which they say possesses magical powers. If a person spots this goat, it is believed that their lives will be blessed. Magical realism best describes Sister Glover’s explanation of Tshikanoshi, and her

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144 Ibid.
145 Interview Sister Glover, Noordgesig Soweto, 28 May 2014. These include Eldorado Park, Meadowlands, and Orlando for example.
146 Ibid. The name Tshikanoshi was told to me in confidence and from what I know is not a commonly used name by people in Noordgesig towards her. The spelling is uncertain because she said I should spell it the way I thought it should be spelt.
conclusive belief in the power of prayer. She too was saved by prayers at a pilgrimage to *Moria* as a sickly baby with epilepsy and at home with malaria at the age of 14.\(^{147}\)

Sister Glover was born in Vlakfontein in Northern Transvaal, 25 June 1928.\(^{148}\) She clearly remembered receiving her calling at the age of 14. She had been away on a choir tour outside of her place of residence and had contracted malaria. Upon her return, many people prayed for her. Then in a vision of herself, as a young child ringing the churches bells, she envisioned herself calling people to hear the word of God. She recalled that when she began recovering from the sickness she spoke in tongues that only younger children understood. She has been fulfilling this duty ever since.\(^{149}\)

Sister Glover was employed until her retirement at the age of 60 when she began to pursue her work at the feeding scheme full time. She had worked as a button and garment maker in the city of Johannesburg like many of the women I interviewed. Sister Glover recalled the story of getting to her service in Doornfontein Johannesburg central, before work early one morning. On the way, a bucket of sewage was thrown on top of her from one of the buildings in the inner city. She was covered in sewage, but her bible, which she held under her armpit, was not. Therefore, after cleaning herself off at the church and being provided with a set of clothing to wear from a much larger woman, she held her service for that morning regardless of the stench.

**Photograph 4.1: Sister Glover**

Source: Photographs from Bing.com


\(^{147}\) *Ibid.* Zion Christian Church (ZCC) members undertake the pilgrimage to Moria in Limpopo annually.

\(^{148}\) According to some media reports, she was 85 in 2012 and born in 1927. However, the Noordgesig community celebrated her 86\(^{th}\) birthday in 2014.

\(^{149}\) Interview Sister Glover.
4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that apartheid was based on racial taxonomy and the development potentials of the various population groups. The state’s willingness to centralize local administrative duties alienated coloured people’s identity experiences, which remained largely heterogeneous. Nonetheless, it showed how apartheid affected coloureds with special reference to Noordgesig. It briefly analyzed the effects of the Group Areas Act of 1950, which forcefully evicted many coloureds, and Indians.

Many coloured people dealt with apartheid and separate living areas in subtle ways: through accepting for example a white man living in a coloured area or, using the term ‘boere’ to their own advantage. Humanity existed even if group areas were designed to keep people apart. This chapter highlighted how acts of apartheid obstructed coloured people’s socio-economic and political livelihoods while also unearthing the subtleties and contradictions of its system that was not always only remembered for its oppression by residents.

I therefore related experiences, recollections and stories of apartheid through the lenses of ordinary people. The interviews highlighted how despite the challenges, humanism was still invoked in everyday activities. They showed that there was a living Noordgesig, regardless of apartheid. There were shopkeepers, bakers, and taxi owners operating independent businesses in the township; as well as the ‘black jacks’, gangs, and white women superintendents. Nonetheless, even with gangsters and the hardship of life from the 1960s, many interviewees regarded life during this part of apartheid as better than the contemporary period because of the respect, order and discipline it instilled.

The state’s involvement, funding and legislation for black housing development in the 1950s had slowed down by the 1960s. This prompted a recommitment to coloured housing needs. Cheaply built homes, but of a much higher standard than accommodation provided for blacks, were made available for coloureds from the 1960s. The state assumed that housing would solve its urban problems but instead increased the plight of township dwellers. For instance, sewage and electricity connections were slow, the condition of roads was poor, houses poorly built and social services limited. Moreover, housing in Noordgesig was still a temporary measure. Tents and other forms of emergency accommodation continued to be used prior to houses being made available. By the mid-1950s, colloquial names were used by
residents for each new section built in the township with only two undeveloped sections remaining.

However, Noordgesig’s proclamation status remained insecure by the mid-1960s and the possibility of its residents’ removal a real threat to the township, as was its location next-door to Orlando. The city however had no alternate accommodation and enacting another forced removal was not a viable option. Moreover, it was not only the department’s concern with regard to coloureds, but also tenants of Noordgesig who thought their colouredness was at risk. The relationship to blacks had deteriorated in Noordgesig by the mid-1960s as racial differences became prominent. A changing coloured experience began to take form amongst the inhabitants of Noordgesig. Yet the commonality between the townships was in the poverty they faced which deepened during apartheid. Class similarities continued as evidenced in Sister Glover’s feeding scheme that served(s) Noordgesig and many Soweto residents. Nonetheless, the political consciousness that shaped the coloured inhabitants of Noordgesig during the 1960s shifted from the mid-1970s as Soweto townships became embroiled in anti-apartheid activities.
CHAPTER 5
Noordgesig from 1976 to the end of Apartheid:
Identity Experiences in Transition

5.1 Overview

The state had effectively quelled anti-apartheid political organizations when black consciousness politics grew to prominence in the late 1960s. The socio-economic conditions of blacks was poor and getting worse. The international community, new outspoken regional critics, as well as internal pressure, led to the rise of new voices of revolution that undermined apartheid’s legitimacy. In Noordgesig, a cell of BC adherents including Clarence and Weizmann Hamilton, Chris Wallis and Johnny Ramrock were anti-apartheid activists from the late 1960s until their exile (1974 for Clarence Hamilton and 1976 for the rest of the group). Economically, South Africa was in the grip of a major recession from the 1970s, and workers began demanding higher wages and the right to organize unions. Regionally, nationalist struggles in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe gave a new sense of hope and direction to a stagnant revolution. The uprising that erupted on 16 June 1976 signaled a start to the end of apartheid.

Forcing Afrikaans as the language of instruction in Soweto’s black schools was the catalyst for student action. Beavon argues that ‘[t]he revolt could have been ignited by any one of the number of privations and impoverishments that existed in the township and amongst its people’. It can thus be argued that there were a number of factors that led to the uprisings which for Morris ‘would likely have included the prevailing poor socio-economic conditions, the lack of security and the resentment and the frustration felt by urban blacks’. Furthermore, unrest within black schools did not begin on 16 June 1976, and was present ever since the Separate Education Act of

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1 Interview Clarence Hamilton, 26 October 2004, archived at WITS, A3191-B-46-1; Interview Weizmann Hamilton, October 2004, archived at WITS, A3191-B-101-1. There are other prominent political activists from Noordgesig including, Ottie Beck, Vesta Smith and Basil Douglas.
3 Ibid, 144.
1953; for instance, with the ANC boycott of 1955 where parents kept children away from school.⁵

Sister Nadine moved to Noordgesig in May of 1976, and revealed that while Noordgesig residents and school goers were active in the uprisings they were not as active as the black children and youth of Soweto.⁶ What is certain, however, is that education for black people was in a far dire state of affairs than that of coloureds and Indians. For instance, the per capita expenditure on education for black children in 1976-1977 was R48.55; coloureds R157.59; Indians R219.96; and whites R654.00. Alternatively, the teacher-pupil ratio for South Africa in 1977 was 1:49.7 for blacks; 1:29.2 for coloureds; 1:27.1 for Asians; and 1:19.6 for whites.⁷

This Chapter will show the political involvement of one group from Noordgesig in the period just prior to the uprisings. It will also focus on how the experiences of coloured people resident in Noordgesig were shaped during and after 16 June 1976. Additionally, the Chapter will examine how Noordgesig inhabitants traversed through the tumultuous last decade of apartheid, which introduced the Tricameral parliament, the establishment of the UDF and other civic organizations, as well as the rise of black labour unions. Moreover, this chapter aims to paint a picture of the everyday township politics surrounding rent, poor socio-economic conditions and employment. It will argue that the multiple political, social and economic dynamics, operating in the last fifteen years of apartheid, also led to a transition in coloured identity experience.

5.2 A Snapshot from Noordgesig

The Hamilton brothers grew up in Noordgesig in the 1960s.⁸ Their story is one of difference yet familiarity to coloured identity experiences that occurred there. They were not part of a political family as perhaps that of Ottie Beck or Auntie Vesta Smith’s households: they were English speakers in an Afrikaans community, and from a comparatively well off working class family, whom Clarence noted, owned one of the first house phones in Noordgesig.⁹ Both brothers attended the local primary school

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⁵ Ibid: 182.
⁶ Interview Sister Nadine, Noordgesig Soweto, 28 May 2014.
⁸ Interview Clarence Hamilton; Interview Weizmann Hamilton.
⁹ Ottie Beck is considered by Basil Douglas to be the true stalwart of Noordgesig’s anti-apartheid struggles. His real name was Godfrey Kenneth Beck. He was still on the list of the South African internal security agency in 1989 although he was deceased. Government Gazette, # 1645, Publication of list in terms of section 27(3) of the Internal Security Act, 1982 (Act 74 of 1982), 4 August 1989. http://0-
then moved on to St. Barnabas College, a private multi-racial school (i.e. for blacks, coloureds and Indians) in the late 1960s.

According to Weizmann, Noordgesig in the 1960s and early 1970s had a low level of political consciousness.\(^\text{10}\) He had only become politically conscious in college after his younger brother Clarence, who was already active during his secondary education. In fact, Clarence became a national sensation for being the youngest ever detainee, at the time of his arrest in 1973, for printing and distributing subversive pamphlets at Coronationville High School. He had been expelled from St. Barnabas College earlier for writing an overtly political poem.\(^\text{11}\) Clarence added that black consciousness was not popular in Noordgesig. He stated, ‘but in Noordgesig if you seen [sic] in your afro, afro shirt...People were scared. That you were looking for unnecessary trouble, that you were bringing unnecessary trouble to the community’.\(^\text{12}\)

The two brothers and a few of their friends earned the nickname ‘the Young Americans’, in reference to their dress code, afros, and political stance.

Clarence realized his difference (racial and political) to others in Noordgesig in Standard 2 when his teacher called him a ‘kaffir predikant’ (‘kaffir’ preacher). However, it was St. Barnabas to which he moved in 1969 that ‘…became the fountain of [his] political birth’. He joined umbrella BCM organizations in Standard 8 that did not age discriminate and attended national conferences of the South African Students Association (SASO). Clarence moved to Coronationville High School in 1973, and found English-speaking students to be more political than conservative Afrikaans speaking scholars.\(^\text{13}\) Perhaps this is his view considering he was an English speaker who at times found it difficult to fit into an Afrikaans community.

The ‘subversive’ pamphlets called for a boycott of the celebration of Union Day at Coronationville High School. He was arrested at school on 29 May 1973 and spent 40 days in solitary confinement at the infamous John Vorster Square at the age of 18. Weizmann who was at this time also politically active, along with the small Noordgesig group, decided Clarence must not go to prison and began discussing military options.

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\(^\text{10}\) Interview Weizmann Hamilton.

\(^\text{11}\) St. Barnabas College was quite forward thinking for the time however.

\(^\text{12}\) Interview Clarence Hamilton.

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid.
and exile. The group felt they could spark a revolution if they received the necessary training.\textsuperscript{14}

However, they also thought that the ANC had done little to show their commitment to armed struggle by the early part of the 1970s. ‘The Young Americans’ decided therefore, that once in exile, their cell should link with more committed groups such as the Azanian Peoples Organization (AZAPO).\textsuperscript{15} This provides an important way of understanding some of the sentiments students and youth had about the ANC and how the revolution should be fought, ultimately climaxing in the ‘76 uprisings where they took matters into their own hands.\textsuperscript{16} On 27 October 1974, Clarence left to get military training in exile and ended up in Gaborone, Botswana.\textsuperscript{17}

In the meantime, ‘the Young Americans’ that remained in Noordgesig were increasingly scrutinized by the police and getting agitated as they waited for news from Clarence. Weizmann noted that they ‘…couldn’t even have a party without the police standing outside’ but added that police harassment actually reinforced, rather than deterred their convictions to go into exile.\textsuperscript{18} The remaining Noordgesig group were arrested in February 1975, and remained in solitary confinement until November 1975. In early 1976, the charges were dropped for lack of evidence, but the group was immediately re-arrested under the Suppression of Communism Act and Terrorism Act. This charge was also thrown out of court. The group was released in May 1976, banned, and placed under house arrest. On 20 June 1976, they escaped to join Clarence using the cover of the 16 June uprisings.\textsuperscript{19} Sister Nadine recalled that Freddy Arendse had come to her house during the uprisings with some people who were making their way into exile. She however could not tell me who these people were as they only came to her house once and most likely would not have given their names if they were indeed on the run.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{14} In working with Prof. Paul Landau on resistance activities between 1960 and 1963 in South Africa, the idea of small independent groups believing they could literally trigger a wider revolution clearly was apparent.
\textsuperscript{15} The politics of exile, however, made the choices small. Thus, even though there was disagreement, with particularly ANC struggle commitment, it seems most exiles joined the ANC. Interview Clarence Hamilton; Interview Weizmann Hamilton.
\textsuperscript{16} Weizmann criticizes the ANC’s cooption of the 1976 uprisings then and now. See also for discussion of the ANC’s limited underground movement in Johannesburg during the uprisings, T. Simpson, ‘Main Machinery: The ANC’s Armed Underground in Johannesburg during the 1976 Soweto Uprising’, \textit{African Studies}, 70, 3, (2011), 415-436.
\textsuperscript{17} Interview Clarence Hamilton; Interview Weizmann Hamilton.
\textsuperscript{18} Interview Weizmann Hamilton.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{20} Interview Sister Nadine. Possibly this was ‘the Young American’ group who headed into exile on 20 June 1976.
The Noordgesig cell left just four days after the uprisings began in Soweto. They argued that their activism was really to do with getting military training, and while known to some of the student leaders, were not really part of student political action. Nevertheless, they had to walk down Mooki street, past Orlando stadium when ‘Soweto [was] burning’ to sign in at Orlando police station before escaping.21 As to the question, what did they see? In this interview Noordgesig’s residents’ participation and reaction to the uprisings was never addressed. Moreover, Messina argues that there is still a need for a study of coloureds role in black consciousness and their identity within that grouping which these interviews also failed to unearth.22 While the author has stressed that regional focus highlights developments often ‘lost in a national overview’, I would argue that even city or township level analysis, particularly those conducted outside of the Western Cape, such as that of Noordgesig’s Hamilton brothers, provide useful ways of appreciating how BC was understood and experienced by coloureds.23

In Noordgesig, an altar boy named Patrick Randall participated in burning one of Noordgesig’s shops during the uprisings.24 Auntie Freeda said that an Indian shopkeeper named Mr. Moosa had run it.25 Sister Nadine recalled that protesters also burnt the beer hall in Orlando; the remnants of this arson attack are still visible on the buildings top floor shops today she added. Auntie Vesta Smith was arrested as a conspirator in the uprisings and remained in prison from August 1976 to Christmas of the same year along with her heavily pregnant daughter Cecile.26 Some of Noordgesig’s residents felt that she ‘must have done something wrong’, which was the reason she was detained, declared Sister Nadine.27

Sister Nadine is white and moved to Noordgesig on 25 May 1976. She worked at a factory in Robertsham that mostly hired women from Soweto. She noted that many of these women did not know of their children’s plan to march. She recalled on that day that buses were delayed and did not enter Noordgesig because, ‘Soweto [wa]s

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21 Interview Sister Nadine; Interview Weizmann Hamilton.
23 Ibid.
24 Interview Sister Nadine.
25 Interview Auntie Freeda, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014.
27 Interview Sister Nadine.
burning’. Therefore, throughout the uprisings she had to walk to the New Canada train station to catch her bus to work. She recalled once walking ahead of her colleagues on her way home from work and a police officer stopping her. He enquired where she was going and if she knew what was happening in Soweto. Sister Nadine replied that she was only going as far as Noordgesig and had to get home. The police allowed her to pass, perhaps because she was a nun, or perhaps because Noordgesig was a relatively stable coloured township not very active in the uprisings.  

**Photograph 5.1: Sister Nadine (left) and a friend in Noordgesig**

Sister Nadine recalled, after returning from work one day, helping provide children with water for their burning eyes after taking part in a march with Winnie Mandela to New Canada station. This story is similar to that of Auntie Yvonne who stated that during the uprisings (black?) students walked through Noordgesig with no problems and only stopped to ask for water. A few (black?) students who did homework at Sister Nadine’s house provided invaluable information to her about what the children had decided for the next day; whether it would be ‘hot or not’.  

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28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Interview Sister Nadine. The marchers had been shot at with tear gas.
31 Interview Auntie Yvonne and Auntie Gene, Noordgesig Soweto, 13 February 2014. The water she referred to was that given to students shot at with tear gas rather than to drink which is how it sounded at the time of the interview. Furthermore, it seems, this was the only time students marched through Noordgesig’s Main Road, and the only time the uprisings were centered from Noordgesig (even if the majority of participants were not from Noordgesig but from other townships in Soweto).
32 Interview Sister Nadine.
Yvonne therefore, pointed out that the students were not criminal in any sense.\textsuperscript{33} There was a sympathy, if not an empathy, from all interviewees regarding the events of 16 June. One of the interviewees of Holland’s, ‘Born in Soweto’, states eloquently; ‘1976 was beautiful rather than sad. You saw the collective consciousness of a community, its togetherness; workers, kids, teachers all going the same way forward, together’.\textsuperscript{34}

Sadly, however, Noordgesig is mentioned only once in a commemoration book on the 30th anniversary of the uprisings: It was a march through Noordgesig in an attempt to reach new Canada railway station where protesters wanted to demand the release of those detained by the police.\textsuperscript{35} It is disturbing that of the 217 schools and the 10,000 pupils who had participated in the uprising by the second day of the uprisings, along with those no longer attending school, no mention is made of Noordgesig, considering its proximity to Orlando East and West as well as Diepkloof. Noordgesig’s students, youth and adults, participated infrequently in the almost yearlong action of black people, just across the road.\textsuperscript{36} Furthermore, it seems that coloured townships at least in Johannesburg were less active in the uprisings. Hence, Boitumelo Mofokeng, a student in 1977 said she went into hiding in Western Coloured Township because ‘the ignorance of this community about what was going on in Soweto gave me a hiding place’.\textsuperscript{37} However, in the Western Cape, the situation was different, and many coloured students and youth were killed for their participation in the uprisings.\textsuperscript{38}

5.3 Employment amongst Noordgesig Residents during the 1970s

So what were the majority of Noordgesig residents doing for the duration of the year long uprisings? The students and youth, as has been shown, were not frequently participating in the protests, while their parents were indifferent to ‘radical’ politics. It was evident from the interviews that the majority of adults worked while the uprisings were in progress. For the most part, coloured people historically have formed part of

\textsuperscript{33} Interview Auntie Yvonne.
\textsuperscript{37} Hlongwane et.al. \textit{Soweto 76: Reflections}, 160-163.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid}, 10-16.
the lower ‘working class’.\textsuperscript{39} The political economy of South Africa dictated however that they receive better wages and jobs compared to blacks until 1994.

Furthermore, individual coloured townships had specific socio-economic class positioning, as well as a racial positioning.\textsuperscript{40} This is evident in the case of Noordgesig as shown in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, poverty, adversity and poor living conditions were common in almost all coloured townships. The majority of Noordgesig’s residents, therefore, continued to go to work, to support their households, regardless of the uprisings.\textsuperscript{41} There were also internal class distinctions amongst coloureds and a correlation between pigmentation and employment opportunities. ‘Fairer skinned’ coloureds were hired more frequently for semi-skilled positions while darker skinned coloureds performed un-skilled labour.

For example, Mrs. White’s fairer skin colour enabled her to ‘play white’ at her job at Kent Meters Manufactures in the early 1970s, which would not have been possible for a darker shaded coloured - even if they could ‘play white’ just as well.\textsuperscript{42} She became the first coloured employee at Kent Metres where only white women had worked until the early 1970s.\textsuperscript{43} She played white in order to earn a better salary (R40 a week in the 1970s) and to ensure that her co-workers did not get suspicious. Management however did know she was coloured, but probably had hired her to keep their salary bill low. Therefore, from the mid-1970s the company began hiring more labourers that were coloured.\textsuperscript{44} Table 5.1 presents a comparison of the wages received by the various race groups in the 1970s. It is evident that Mrs White’s salary of R40 a week was almost equal to the average coloured wages for the early 1970s. Mrs. White was one of three women who did not work in the garment industry.\textsuperscript{45} Only Mrs. Williams was a homemaker and supported financially by her husband.\textsuperscript{46}

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Comparison of Wages Received by Various Race Groups in the 1970s}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Race Group & Wages (R) & Race Group & Wages (R) \\
\hline
White & 40 & Coloured & 30 \\
\hline
Black & 20 & Indian & 15 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 17. Noordgesig is still considered a lower class coloured township compared to the majority of other coloured townships in Johannesburg.

\textsuperscript{41} This is also true for the majority of black residents in Soweto, although they did join in solidarity with students on some occasions during the yearlong protests. See Hlongwane et.al. \textit{Soweto 76: Reflections}.

\textsuperscript{42} Interview Mr. White and his mother, Noordgesig Soweto, 29 April 2014. A person would ‘play white’ in terms of race and colour as well as class and culture. For example, by speaking ‘high’ Afrikaans in the presence of whites.

\textsuperscript{43} Currently, there are several residents of Noordgesig still employed at Kent Meters, many of whom I know personally.

\textsuperscript{44} Interview Mr White and his mother.

\textsuperscript{45} Namely; Mrs. White, Auntie Gene, and Auntie Yvonne.

\textsuperscript{46} Interview Mrs. Williams, Noordgesig Soweto, 4 September 2014.
Bra George, who is dark skinned, presented me two of his pay stubs showing he earned R131 a month in 1971 doing clerical work at Prudential Assurance Company. In 1980, as the librarian at Noordgesig public library, he received R242.76 a month.\textsuperscript{47} For a clerical worker, it is surprising that his salary in 1980 was lower than the monthly average of 1978 (see Table 5.1). Although there is no evidence proving that he received these lower wages because he was a darker skinned coloured person, it does question how a female factory worker, in the 1970s, when women received lower wages then men on average, could earn more than a male clerical worker.

Bra George added, however, that life was cheaper during apartheid so even these meagre wages stretched a long way. The bus fare to town, in the 1970s, was 12 cents a return trip he reminisced. In this regard however, Auntie Bernie pointed out that there was nonetheless more poverty during the era of apartheid and two of her children dropped out of school to help with the families’ socio-economic needs.\textsuperscript{48} Nonetheless, she agreed that things were cheap and affordable during apartheid and you could buy goods with as little as a penny or a ‘tickie’, because, ‘\textit{die waarde van geld}’ (the value of money) was higher.\textsuperscript{49} Moreover, there seemed to have been an abundance of employment during the apartheid era as repeated by almost all of the interviewees.

Table 5.1: Comparative average monthly salaries (R) of the various race groups and as a percentage of white salaries in South Africa, 1974-1978.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


To be sure, pay was low for all blacks throughout the apartheid era. For example, Morris shows (see Table 5.1) that blacks clearly received inferior pay compared to all other race groups. Secondly, overall wages increased steadily over

\textsuperscript{47} Interview Bra George, Noordgesig Soweto, 24 April 2014.
\textsuperscript{48} Interview Auntie Bernie, her two daughters and two grandchildren, Noordgesig Soweto, 25 April 2014.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
the five-year period for all race groups. Thirdly, comparative advantage was decreasing steadily and blacks finally earned more than half of white wages by 1978. Life for working class coloureds, Indians and blacks was beginning to improve slowly.

5.4 Changes to Coloured living areas from the mid-1970s

The coloured population of Johannesburg in 1977 was 100,000 and the second largest urban concentration of coloureds in South Africa after Cape Town. Noordgesig, at this time, had become one of the smaller coloured townships when compared to Western/Westbury, Riverlea, or Eldorado Park. Furthermore, only in Coronationville, Riverlea and Eldorado Park Ext 2, 4 and 6 were houses for sale to coloured people. The Coloured and Asian Affairs Department report, 1975-1977 added that high rates of urbanization had burdened the inadequate housing arrangements for coloureds even further. It stated:

The continuous and completely unrestricted movement of people to Johannesburg, especially amongst the coloured population group, led to a speedy deterioration of existing housing. Coloured families have been faced with the problem of having to share accommodation or to live under overcrowded and unsatisfactory conditions in dilapidated homes and virtually any type of building or structure capable of providing shelter and protection.

This description of the living conditions of coloured people in Johannesburg alludes to class differentials existing amongst them, but does not explicitly mention it. Nor does it mention if the ‘unsatisfactory conditions’ had anything to do with the proximity of coloureds to ‘others’, particularly blacks. Yet, it agreed that ‘[t]here is natural stratification of society into levels of lower class, middle class, and upper class groups’. The resentment coloured people had of the poor housing conditions they lived in was blamed on the inadequacy of the accommodation provided, rather than the proximity to other racial groups. The politics of Noordgesig’s location next to Orlando, which was so clearly a governmental concern at the township’s establishment, until the mid-1960s, had become by the mid-1970s, regarded as a cause for anxiety by the residents themselves. Therefore, the report stated this about Noordgesig:

During the disturbances of June 1976 in adjacent Soweto, there has been mounting pressure in the area from some of the tenants to move out of the suburb. On the other hand, the

50 JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 2nd Report of Director Coloured and Asian Affairs Department 1977-1978. Western is the colloquial term used for Western Coloured Township.
52 Ibid.
Noordgesig Tenants’ Association ... has, however, requested that the suburb should remain and be proclaimed officially as a coloured area.\(^53\)

The residents offered two contradictory statements: One was to move out to a safer area and the other to remain and have the township proclaimed a coloured group area. However, none of the reasons posed for wanting to move or stay were because of Noordgesig’s proximity to black Soweto. Moreover, the Noordgesig Tenants’ Association which had clearly wanted coloured residents moved out of the township, in the mid-1960s, because of the threat posed by its proximity to black Orlando, had after the uprisings, reversed their decision. Furthermore, ordinary residents, rather than the Tenants’ Association, suggested that the coloured people of Noordgesig must move out of the township. This was a shift from the 1960s where it was unclear what stand inhabitants had with regard to the United Noordgesig Tenants’ Association’s fear of racial hostility.\(^54\) The 1975-1977 report indicated that the experiences of coloured identity amongst inhabitants of Noordgesig were in transition amongst various groups within the township. Additionally, it shows that by the mid-1970s, Noordgesig’s chances of being proclaimed a coloured group area were still uncertain and the status of the community insecure.

Notwithstanding, group area master plans were failing, by the mid to late 1970s, to create purely alienated coloured townships. In fact, in Noordgesig’s case, it was fictitious because it had yet to be officially proclaimed for any specific race group. Secondly, from its establishment, it had housed coloureds and blacks who were married to each other. Lastly, its proximity to Orlando had meant constant interaction over the years between its coloured residents and the large black population of Soweto.

The apartheid state began to realize its strict racial policies had major flaws after the uprisings of 1976. Moreover, because the state understood both the labour turmoil and the political unrest during the 1970s to have been predominantly the work of black agitators, housing coloured people became a strategy of co-option in the face of mounting political uncertainties. Therefore, 1,173 houses, the highest amount of houses ever built for coloureds, took place during the year of the uprisings.\(^55\) Furthermore, the government actively pursued the support of wealthier sectors of the

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) See section 4.5.

\(^{55}\) JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 2nd Annual Report of Director Housing Department 1980/81.
coloured and Indian communities, (and began including blacks by the early 1980s). As such, not only were fewer coloureds relocated after 1976 but the perception that it was problematic for coloureds to live with or near to blacks had altered. However, 700 coloured families in Alexandra and 1,063 in Noordgesig were targeted for removal to coloured group areas between 1977 and 1978. However, not all these families relocated from Alexandra, and none was ever forcibly removed from Noordgesig. To be sure, by the late 1970s, most coloured people in Johannesburg already lived in segregated and proclaimed group area townships so their removal was not necessary.

To satisfy the demand for coloured housing, within prescribed group areas, the JCC had increasingly built flats on the limited available land proclaimed for coloured group areas. The 1975-1977 Annual Report of the Coloured and Asian Affairs Department noted however, that flats were not desirable for most people therefore there was more demand for transfers to houses. Many coloured families moved to the housing development of Eldorado Park that had five extensions by 1977. Today it is one of the largest historically coloured areas of Johannesburg. Another housing development for coloureds was Ennerdale, which according to the Star of February 1977, was to accommodate 100,000 people by the year 2000 and nearly 500,000 a decade later. The Secretary of Community Development Mr. Louis Fouche stated, in a similar vein to governmental proclamations for coloured townships that began in

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56 JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1977-1978. The coloureds of Alexandra shared similar class and proximity to blacks as in Noordgesig. Therefore, it is surprising that the state was willing to relocate them. However, it was also an attempt to deal with troublesome Alexandra. Coloureds forcefully removed from Alexandra were housed at Klipspruit West. Nonetheless, thirty-three coloured families refused to move. An informal interview with Bobo’s, originally from Alexandra, but whose family now resides in Noordgesig, informed me of his uncle still resident in Alexandra who quite possibly is one of these families that refused to be relocated. Informal interview Bobo’s, Noordgesig Soweto, 2014; P. Bonner & N. Nieftagodien, *Alexandra: A History* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008); B. Bozzoli, *Theatres of Struggle and the end of Apartheid* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2004; JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1st Annual Report of Director Housing Department 1979/80.

57 Nonetheless, while unwilling to remove coloureds to house blacks, the state was willing to keep white areas white. The Coloured and Asian Affairs Department was renamed the Housing Department in March 1980 which included the administration of white housing and some black compounds. See, JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: Coloured and Asian Affairs Department Report 1978/79.


59 Prior to 1963, the area formed part of a white group area. By 1965, this had been declared an area for coloured occupation and ownership. There is no precise date online about the start date of construction of Eldorado Park. This seems like another project for the able historian. JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1975 – 1977.

the late 1930s, that Ennerdale was part of a drive by government to, ‘…eliminate the shortage of housing and community facilities among coloured people’. 61

Even though many coloured people had employment by 1977, most families survived on limited incomes, with 41.8% living on less than R150 a month. A rent relief fund therefore assisted families particularly those of ‘older sub-economic schemes’ such as Noordgesig, Coronationville, and Riverlea ext.1. 62 The state also funded many community activities in coloured townships as well as sport and recreation activities. 63 Development plans for respective townships were overseen by Coloured Management Committees, consisting of nine members representing ‘residents in all coloured suburbs with the exception of Noordgesig which [was] not a proclaimed coloured group area’. 64 Accordingly, access by Noordgesig residents to local governing positions was made difficult by its precarious proclamation status. The Housing Department 1980/1981 reported that some residents actively sought representation on the Coloured Management Committee but required special approval from the administrator for Noordgesig to do so. A nomination for Mr. F. Smith was put forward for membership on the Committee to represent Noordgesig from 1982 to 1983. 65

Additionally, the JCC progressively began to offer more home ownership schemes to coloureds, particularly in newer townships such as Bosmont, Eldorado Park, Ennerdale, and Riverlea. Home ownership was only offered to Noordgesig residents in the last year of P.W. Botha’s apartheid government. 66 According to the Housing Report 1982/1983, 832 tenants from Noordgesig had ‘expressed the desire to purchase their houses’ but again its proclamation status denied this prospect. 67 At the same time, residents in Coronationville had purchased almost 70% of the available

61 Ibid. The community development department claims to have built 43,000 homes between 1975 and 1976 but does not make it clear if this is for coloureds (which seems impossible) only, or the total number for all population groups (which is more likely). I think the claim here is to have ‘housed’ 43,000 people rather than having built 43,000 homes. Ennerdale was not mentioned in any of the JCC housing reports from 1979 to 1983. It was first mentioned in the 1984/85 report, which points out Ennerdale Ext 5 and the completed construction of 918 economic units for sale there.

62 JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1977-1978. Note that Coronationville residents were also struggling by 1977 to pay their rent, considering that the township was originally established for wealthier coloureds in 1937.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1980/81; JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: Annual Report of Director Housing Department 1981/82. White housing remained a concern of the Health Department until 1980, illuminating the urban plan to create healthy white neighborhoods away from blacks. This had been the reasoning behind housing ‘non-whites’ separately, at the turn of the century.

66 See following section 5.5 and the proclamation of Noordgesig.

houses for sale there. The report also added that there was concern, within the city’s housing department, with delays in proclamation of group areas.\textsuperscript{68} Noordgesig was not unique therefore in being an unproclaimed coloured group area, even in the last decade of apartheid.\textsuperscript{69} Nonetheless, most coloured townships were indeed proclaimed and in many of those areas it was possible to purchase government built homes. Home ownership schemes suggest the state catered to wealthier coloureds able to afford to build their own homes. Thus, townships such as Coronationville, and owner-built homes in Bosmont, Ennerdale, Eldorado Park, and Riverlea, became residences that upwardly mobile coloured people aspired to live in.

Table 5.2 provides an easy way to compare where houses and flats had been bought or were being sold. In this case, only seven townships, including Noordgesig, out of 20 did not have any houses sold. It also provides evidence that certain townships were able to pay more for rates and services such as water and electricity. For example, Coronationville residents paid more than three times (R452,503) the amount paid by Noordgesig residents (R126,513) for water and electricity, even though the number of houses there was almost half the quantity of that of Noordgesig. The annual report of 1986/1987 tried explaining the low water and electricity payments, declaring, ‘many families in Noordgesig were in poor financial circumstances due to unemployment’.\textsuperscript{70} The Table also provides evidence that the significant coloured population of Johannesburg was no longer possible to ignore in urban planning for the city. Finally, it indicates that wealthier coloureds were well suited to the impending changes within South Africa, because they owned their own homes, while the poor began to be more marginalized as struggling renters. The compression of class that Crankshaw discusses between 1923 and 1970 began to be expanded upon through the 1980s.\textsuperscript{71}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{69} In the 1960s these included, Moonshievile, Nancefield and Klipriver. Surprisingly all these townships are situated in the southwestern parts of the city on Soweto’s edge. More than likely, these townships, similar to Noordgesig, were only proclaimed at the end of apartheid, or, possibly, were never proclaimed. This requires further study.
  \item \textsuperscript{70} JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: Annual Report Director Housing Department 1986-1987. The final report of the director of housing for the year 1987/1988, was not bound, was dated 2 November 1990 and is not of the high quality that earlier reports found at the Johannesburg Public Library were in. The changing political climate might have resulted in this hurried report of a poor standard.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Table 5.2: Number of houses and flats let and sold, annual payments of water and electricity as well as the populations of coloured townships, 1984/1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>Houses sold</th>
<th>Houses let</th>
<th>Flats let</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Annual payments water and electricity (R)</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coronationville</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>290 880</td>
<td>5500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldorado park 2</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>1532</td>
<td>139 581</td>
<td>9325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldorado park 4</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>1509</td>
<td>195 679</td>
<td>10200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldorado park 6</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldorado park 7</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>489 490</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldorado park 9</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2550</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klipriviersoog</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6050</td>
<td></td>
<td>3050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klipspruit west</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>183 975</td>
<td></td>
<td>3625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klipspruit west 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>3675</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klipspruit west 2</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>2850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newclare flats</td>
<td>228</td>
<td></td>
<td>902</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>8400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newclare houses</td>
<td>228</td>
<td></td>
<td>902</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noordgesig</td>
<td>1061</td>
<td></td>
<td>1064</td>
<td>93 717</td>
<td>9025</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverlea</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>1102</td>
<td>378 000</td>
<td>7600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverlea 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>5050</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverlea 2</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>3150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westbury</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>146 185</td>
<td>3375</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westbury 2</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>4725</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westbury 3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>2650</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>703</td>
<td></td>
<td>6500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals 30 June 1985</strong></td>
<td><strong>3776</strong></td>
<td><strong>6548</strong></td>
<td><strong>3292</strong></td>
<td><strong>13616</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 273 507</strong></td>
<td><strong>104300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Nonetheless, the Housing Department, 1983/1984, reported that the waiting list for coloured housing continued to grow ‘with not much relief in sight’.\(^{73}\) Thus, the number of coloureds receiving rent relief increased from 384 cases in 1981/1982 to 1,405 in 1983/1984. At the same time, discounts were given to coloureds to speed up the buying process of homes.\(^{74}\) While progress was being made with regard to coloured home ownership, less headway in relieving housing shortages, particularly

\(^{72}\) Johannesburg’s coloured population recorded by the department was actually 154,750. The totals presented here are missing a large part of Eldorado Park, Eldorado Park ext. 1, 3 and 8 as well as Bushkoppies and Bosmont and coloured residing in the rest of the city. Note also that the coloured population in Johannesburg had grown by 65% or added an extra 54,750 people since 1977.

\(^{73}\) JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: Annual Report, Director Housing Department 1983-1984.

\(^{74}\) Ibid.
for lower income coloureds, had occurred. Admittedly, the department recognized the
general inability of most coloureds to afford rent payments but similarly accepted that
some could afford to purchase their own homes.⁷⁵ In 1983/1984 the principal areas
where houses were for sale to coloureds was in Eldorado Park and Riverlea.⁷⁶ The
city sold 3568 or 78% out of a possible 4579 houses by 1983/1984 to coloured
people.⁷⁷

What is more, class distinctions returned in a more capitalist, as opposed to
racial, manner. The manufacturing industry required semi-skilled workers, rather than
unskilled workers, that in the 1980s were ‘no longer appropriate to the needs of South
African capitalism’.⁷⁸ They were now willing to hire blacks, and not just coloureds and
Indians to these positions. Furthermore, the NP government had changed its class
constituent base to support business interests as well.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the business
elite wanted real reform rather than a ‘reformulation of apartheid’, which the ‘Total
Strategy’ policy of PW Botha enacted.⁸⁰ The President’s ‘Rubicon’ address dispelled
‘any notion of majority rule’ that summarily led to increased international sanctions and
within a month, the business elite were meeting with the ANC in Lusaka.⁸¹

The increasing numbers of poor whites as well as a growing black ‘middle-
class’, created by an opportune yet failing state and big businesses’ call for skilled
workers, led to what Cloete calls the ‘greying’ of areas in the 1980s.⁸² It became
possible for residential neighbourhoods such as Hillbrow to exist, where poor whites,
coloureds, blacks and Indians lived together. By 1988, even white housing shortages
were on the rise so that the Housing Department noted that ‘[t]he number of
applications for [white] accommodation is expected to continue to increase, due to
economic and social factors’.⁸³ The changes in the political landscape regarding white
people’s preferential treatment were slowly eroding. Furthermore, a name change in

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⁷⁵ Originally, the chance to purchase homes was denied to coloured residents in Coronationville in the late 1930s,
See chapter 3.5. WITS, Joint Council, AD1433, 1924-1954.
⁷⁶ Ennerdale is not included here because it lay outside Johannesburg’s municipal area, but by the early 1980s
was also a leading area for coloured home ownership.
1994), 122.
⁷⁹ Ibid.
⁸⁰ Ibid, 135.
⁸¹ Ibid, 135.
⁸² F. Cloete, ‘Greying and free settlement’ in M.Swilling, R, Humphries & K. Shubane, eds, Apartheid City in
June 1988 for the Coloured Management Committee to South Western Management Committee recognized the political changes occurring in South Africa and the term ‘coloured’ was removed to a more, politically correct geographical description. Yet Soweto did not fall under the South Western Management Committee but rather under the Soweto City Council, or the Diepmeadow City Council.

5.5 Shifting Tides after the uprisings and Noordgesig’s proclamation

The state considered the relationship between coloureds and whites as amicable even after the disturbances of 1976/1977. However, many coloureds were obviously not siding with apartheid policies; neither was their politics moving any nearer to adopting black consciousness as a complete replacement of their coloured experience. Therefore, I suggest that a reaffirmation of coloured identity possibly began from the mid to late 1970s based on their historical experience of difference (and similarity) to black political struggle. The process of reaffirmation has become a key feature of coloured identity in the post-apartheid era. In any case, coloured identity was certainly in transition prior to its supposed ‘about turn’ at the elections of 1994. While the majority of coloureds may not have consciously adopted BC tenants, they were using some of its principles to assert their colouredness.

Black consciousness was popular for many coloured and Asian people from the mid to late 1970s and through the 1980s. By the mid-1980s, coloured politics had become ‘subsumed within the broader black political movements’. In practice however, it was not always so easy to transcend race. Moreover, the dominance of race over class as the main ideological driving force behind black consciousness sat uneasily with coloured communities. Indeed, black nationalists sometimes excluded coloureds and Indians. However, black consciousness offered some coloureds, largely the youth and certain elite sections of coloured and Indian communities, a way of understanding that their oppression was the same as all other blacks. Yet, political

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84 Ibid.
85 JHB Ref, Central Witwatersrand Regional Services Council: Minutes of Meeting, 15 November 1988.
86 This argument however requires further research.
87 See for coloured identity stability, Adhikari, Not White Enough.
90 Adhikari, Not White Enough, 5, 144.
resistance occurred in multiple settings for coloureds, as it did for all population groups in South Africa post 1976.

As reform efforts slowly began to improve the lives of blacks, entrepreneurs such as those in the taxi industry began taking advantage of the foreseeable business climate. In the workplace, shop floor stewards and workers’ committees were making more demands as unions gathered strength. The state therefore was forced to review its business and labour policies and its faithfulness to apartheid from the mid-1970s. While at first, directly in the aftermath of the Soweto uprisings there was widespread repression, this was reactionary and by the end of the decade, the state conceded to the labour demands, rising political anguish and township residents’ socio economic grievances.\textsuperscript{91} Freund states that the late apartheid state was concerned with infrastructural developments in black townships, ‘certainly far more so than it would ever admit to its white electorate openly’.\textsuperscript{92} Nonetheless, by the late 1970s, only one fifth of houses in Soweto had electricity.\textsuperscript{93} With state reform came more persistent and intensified resistance from within South Africa, and internationally.

Nonetheless, as much as the uprisings signaled a start to the end of a racist system, they also initiated a dreadful breakdown in societal structures such as family and schooling. It was students who ultimately led the uprisings of 1976/1977, and felt they were in many senses still ‘leading the older generation to freedom’ in the 1980s.\textsuperscript{94} Thabo Leshilo, a student in 1976, noted that slogans such as ‘educate to liberate’ or ‘education for liberation’ and COSASs ‘each one teach one’ had lost ground to ‘pass one, pass all’ and ‘liberation now, degree tomorrow’ by the mid-1980s.\textsuperscript{95} By the end of the decade, when the ANC called on students to return to school, the damage had already been done.\textsuperscript{96} The ANC had claimed the mantle and consolidated its title as South Africa’s undisputed liberation movement in the aftermath of the 16 June 1976 revolt.

Weizmann Hamilton questioned the ANC’s claim to the uprisings: arguing that the 1976 uprisings were not organized by the ANC in any sense. He stated, ‘the ANC

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{91} Morris, \textit{Soweto: A Review}, 18. This perhaps is most embodied in the murder of black conscious leader Steve Biko in 1977.
\textsuperscript{93} N. Mandy, \textit{A City Divided: Johannesburg and Soweto} (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1984), 209.
\textsuperscript{94} Holland, \textit{Born in Soweto}, 9.
\textsuperscript{95} Hlongwane et.al., \textit{Soweto 76: Reflections}, 124.
\textsuperscript{96} Holland, \textit{Born in Soweto}, 9.
\end{flushleft}
was as much surprised, pleasantly surprised by the uprisings, as they were determined to claim political ownership of it, which it wasn’t. By claiming ownership of the uprisings, the ANC situated itself as the leader of revolutionary change within South Africa. Regionally and internationally, the ANC was also championed as South Africa’s legitimate political voice. It was from this point that the ANC began its transition from a liberation movement to a political party. Thus, Weizmann argued that by the late 1970s, the ANC had already made the decision to get rid of white minority rule but not capitalism. What’s more, the ANC’s decision to seal its capitalist endeavour was aided by a visit in 1985, to its Lusaka headquarters, by South African business people and white opposition parliamentarians.

Therefore, putting socialist content back into the forefront of struggle politics was the preserve of various civic organizations and unions that were formed in the 1980s, notably, the UDF and COSATU. Individuals and civil organizations from various population groups formed the UDF in 1983. In 1985, COSATU consolidated a number of smaller unions, formed since the 1970s, to create a broader mass union. Business people sought security and assurance about ANC policy after COSATU’s formation. Beavon states that COSATU’s links to the SACP put fear into business leaders; ‘little wonder that the capitalists had been so anxious to have discussions with the ANC in Lusaka, a few months earlier’.

Weizmann argues that just as the ANC was not responsible for the 1976 uprisings they were ‘…not responsible for the independent development of the workers movement inside South Africa. They were not. The masses themselves looked for an organization that could guarantee them unity and chose the ANC’. What the ANC did, he continued, because of the emergence of a powerful union movement in the 1980s was to dilute the unions’ socialist aims; arguing that at first there was talk within COSATU of socialism, which the ANC quickly and quietly stifled. Weizmann noted

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97 Interview Weizmann Hamilton. See also Simpson, ‘Main machinery’.
98 This historical evidence is an indication of where the ANC’s contemporary neoliberal agenda stems from. It also makes it easier to understand that in 1994 the ANC was never going to accept any program of nationalization or socialism that would upset its capitalist orientation.
100 Ibid, 202.
101 Interview Weizmann Hamilton.
102 Ibid.
further that, ‘The ANC never stood for socialism...They wanted a black capitalist class’.\textsuperscript{103}

The mass movement however, had begun in the townships across South Africa through far-reaching rent boycotts to which both unions and civic organizations, informally and formally, added their leadership. A lack of sufficient funds at the West Rand Administration Board (WRAB) that controlled black affairs for the western parts of Johannesburg, and a refusal of the government in the late 1970s to subsidise electricity in Soweto forced the board to increase rents. These rent hikes sparked the rent boycotts that made South African townships ungovernable.\textsuperscript{104} The JCC tried to ease the burden of rent by calculating rental rates based on ‘breadwinner’s income’ in 1983/1984.\textsuperscript{105} This represented a change in position, set in the Union era, where fixed rentals were set according to the class of house built.

Rent control for coloured people in 1983/1984 was a concern of the Coloured Management Committees that had the total budgets relating to coloured areas submitted to them by the city.\textsuperscript{106} A joint sitting of Council and Housing Departments Management Committee’s alongside the Coloured Management Committee decided allocations for the budget. Determining the budget and the proposed increases in rates and tariffs was for the first time, considered by all three management committees in 1983/1984.\textsuperscript{107} These changes represented national and local political concessions made by the apartheid regime. In Noordgesig, Bra George noted that rents were paid at the rent office without fail, up until the township, in line with the Soweto rent boycotts of the 1980s, initiated its own forms of boycotts under the leadership of Basil Douglas. The slogan they used was ‘\textit{die storie gaan aan}’ (the story goes on/the struggle continues). It is still a popular phrase not only in Noordgesig but also in south western and western protest politics jargon particularly in coloured areas.\textsuperscript{108}

Nevertheless, government statements continued to address the unrest of the 1980s as if only black people participated. Thus the 1984/1985 housing department report noted that a decrease in attendance by evening groups was recorded at

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Mandy, \textit{A City Divided}, 209-214.
\textsuperscript{105} JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1983-1984. It is unclear however if this departmental change was instigated solely by the continued rent boycotts of the 1980s.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} Interview Bra George.
Patmore hall in Noordgesig (colloquially known as ‘Patmore Delux’), ‘probably because of unrest in Soweto which is next door to Noordgesig’.\textsuperscript{109} From general conversations with people over the years, ‘Patmore Delux’ had successful ‘sessions’ (dances) throughout the 1980s. No mention was ever made of attendance being low because of unrest in Soweto to me personally. In fact, the hall continued to be used well into the 1990s when its use for ‘sessions’ was ceased indefinitely.

Noordgesig’s group area proclamation status was still pending in the 1980s, when the Housing Department noted that ‘many of the houses [had] already been improved by the tenants’.\textsuperscript{110} Thus, residents were pro-active in improving their homes before confirmation of the townships group area status. Residents must have felt sure that their place and homes were unmovable and therefore their investments in home improvements were secure. The political climate around Soweto was comparable; group initiative forced changes to the way rent, electricity, water and other services were paid and administered.\textsuperscript{111} Miss C.M. Seefort became Noordgesig’s first representative on the Coloured Management Committee for ward 11, in 1984/1985.\textsuperscript{112}

Yet, the proclamation of Noordgesig as a coloured group area remained unsure. As late as November 1988 Noordgesig had not been proclaimed a coloured area. A Regional Services Council report from that month noted that, ‘recent indications are that this area will shortly be proclaimed for coloured residential purposes...[d]ue to the distance of Noordgesig from other coloured areas residents have not been able to use the facilities provided in other suburbs under the jurisdiction of the management committee’.\textsuperscript{113} Therefore, the reason put forward to proclaim Noordgesig was to ensure its residents could use the facilities provided for other coloureds. On 2 December 1988, Noordgesig was proclaimed a coloured group area. Government Gazette 208 of 1988 stated, ‘I hereby declare that the area defined...hereto shall, as from the date of publication of this proclamation be an area for occupation and ownership by members of the coloured group’.\textsuperscript{114}

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{109}] JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1984-1985.
\item[\textsuperscript{110}] Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{111}] Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{112}] JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: Annual Report of Director Housing Department 1981/82; JHB Ref, City of Johannesburg: 1984-1985
\item[\textsuperscript{113}] JHB Ref, Central Witwatersrand Regional Services Council: South Western Management Committee: Construction of swimming pool Noordgesig, Council meeting, 15 November 1988.
\end{itemize}
The proclamation of Noordgesig is puzzling for a number of reasons. Firstly, as has been noted, by the late 1980s it was clear that apartheid was at its end. Thus, it did not make sense to proclaim Noordgesig, or any other townships with similar proclamation statuses, such as Moonshieville, Klipspruit and Nancefield, because the Group Areas Act was already failing. Furthermore, in June 1991, the Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act repealed the Group Areas Act along with other apartheid laws. In effect, Noordgesig existed as a proclaimed coloured group area for only two and a half years. Why would the government spend time proclaiming an area when they were about to repeal the act all together? What was the purpose of this exercise? Moreover, were such late proclamations in the majority only afforded to historically coloured neighbourhoods rather than black residential areas? In fact, was it predominantly only certain coloured areas that were not proclaimed for any race group, during the course of apartheid rather than black areas?

My speculation is that the NP government was trying to garner more coloured support prior to handing over political power. The township was only proclaimed because the foreseeable end of apartheid meant the state had to make sure it had secured some constituents. By proclaiming Noordgesig, it was possible for residents to buy houses in the township. If it seemed as if this was made possible by the NP government, they might get the support they needed in the foreseeable democratic election. Alternatively, the township’s notice of proclamation might have just been a formality, a continuation of a delayed bureaucratic process begun almost at the start of its establishment in 1940/1942. However, this argument is not sustainable because the state, at the end of 1988, was more concerned with other more pressing national issues than the quite futile proclamation of any new area.

Notwithstanding, the proclamation of the township did not change how it had existed for most of the apartheid years. It had been administered for almost five decades as a coloured township by the state. Coloured inhabitants made it a place they called home even if their residency and home ownership there was not secure. Noordgesig’s proclamation in 1988, therefore, did little to put at ease residents’ sense of uncertainty. Now that apartheid was almost over, the uncertainty was no longer

caused by the possibility of the township being turned into a black area, but rather was the uncertainty of the black politics of Orlando and Soweto, which would soon be governed by black rules and black people. The ‘swart gevaar’ was now stronger than ever in all spheres of life: social, economic and political.\textsuperscript{116}

Finally, it is unclear why the state proclaimed Noordgesig considering the repeal of the Group Areas Act was already defacto in most urban living areas.\textsuperscript{117} Many parts of Johannesburg’s inner city, such as Hillbrow and Yeoville were already interracial living areas. Moreover, the formal end to legal racism began in September 1989 when F.W. de Klerk came to power, a year after Noordgesig’s proclamation. The new president together with the NP made a clear decision to end apartheid. Their decision was forced upon them due to ‘popular protest and international condemnation’, but at its core was ‘...the profound economic crisis of the country’ which forced change from above.\textsuperscript{118}

5.6 Noordgesig Soweto at the end of Apartheid

*The Star* reported in May 1991 that the residents of the Transvaal province owed R996 million for ‘back rents, electricity and service charges’.\textsuperscript{119} The figures in the other provinces was much less; for instance the Cape Province had a total of just over R109 million while in Natal a total of just over R2.6 million was recorded.\textsuperscript{120} Soweto was particularly involved in the boycotts of rents, electricity and service charges. The Soweto Accord, signed in September of 1990, was supposed to end these boycotts, but by March of 1991, a large number of the residents of Soweto still did not pay for service charges and electricity. The agreement reached was that the government would ‘write off’ R450 million in arrears and resume a R23 monthly fee for service charges and electricity for residents.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{117} SAB, SPM, 365, Ref. # 687/1988, 1988.
\textsuperscript{118} Worden, *The Making of Modern*, 137.
\textsuperscript{119} *The Star*, ‘R996-m Owed by Black Tvl Residents’, 30 May 1991 in WITS, AD1912.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{121} *The Star*, ‘Pay Up, Warns Soweto Council’, 18 March 1991 in WITS, AD1912. The nonpayment of services, especially electricity and water by Soweto residents, continues in the contemporary era. The poor economic standing of many black people remains high and a new fight against economic oppression has ensued since the end of apartheid, and escalated over the years. Therefore, service delivery protests, that are evident today, have a definite historical root to the rent boycotts and making townships ungovernable begun in the 1980s.
Furthermore, residents reasoned that owing to their long history in the township, and in many cases, living in a single house, ownership should be transferred to them, free of charge, rather than rents being paid to the City Council who effectively still owned the houses. However, by the middle of 1991, this transferal had yet to be approved.\textsuperscript{122} To add to the complex situation, arising in South Africa in the early 1990s was intensive and bloody ‘ethnic’ violence that began in the 1980s in Natal, and which soon spread to townships throughout South Africa, particularly those on the Witwatersrand. The marginalization of this violent nature of the transition to democracy from the 1980s, more notably between 1990 and 1994, has meant South Africa’s revolution is popularly but incorrectly regarded as a peaceful one.\textsuperscript{123}

Sister Nadine noted about apartheid that she ‘never thought we would see the end in our lifetime’.\textsuperscript{124} She also summed up the tensions that existed between Noordgesig’s residents and its neighbours, noting that coloureds felt threatened by Soweto. This perhaps stems from the fact that their place in Noordgesig was regarded as temporary, until 1988, while Soweto’s was certain. She also noted that this fear worked in two directions, since blacks were also fearful of Noordgesig. Thus, it was common for coloureds to mock blacks and blacks to mock coloureds. Moreover, I would argue that it was not just a fear of the ‘other’ in terms of race but in terms of place as Massey and Harvey discuss.\textsuperscript{125} Residents had made their place in Noordgesig, regardless if the state and certain sections of the township considered the site as problematic for coloured occupation. Yet by the end of the 1980s, the coloured residents of Noordgesig knew no other place to live but nonetheless feared the other place Soweto, which they regarded as different and distinct from their township. Even so, Sister Nadine stated that she feels more at ease amongst coloureds. Perhaps it is because she blends in more, as she stated.\textsuperscript{126} However, I think it is because she is not treated as ‘white’ or viewed from the perspective of ‘black’. She has become just another member of the multi-racial coloured experience.

\textsuperscript{122} (Newspaper name unknown), 30 May 1991 in WITS, AD1912. While houses have been transferred to the residents of Soweto, there are still many other unresolved issues, such as kinfolk obtaining legal rights to their deceased parents or grandparents home that have yet to be adequately addressed.
\textsuperscript{123} For accounts of violence associated with township politics of the 1980s see, Bozoli, \textit{Theatres of Struggle}.
\textsuperscript{124} Interview Sister Nadine.
\textsuperscript{126} Interview Sister Nadine.
In fact, the majority of blacks, coloureds, and Indian South Africans experienced apartheid outside of only its brutality. Dlamini states that feeling at ease or nostalgic about apartheid is about yearning ‘for order in an uncertain world’.\(^{127}\) It is about rescuing our present from the ‘master narrative of black dispossession’ that ‘blinds us to a richness, a complexity of life among … [coloured] South Africans, that not even colonialism and apartheid at their worst could destroy’.\(^{128}\) Many people I interviewed in Noordgesig viewed the apartheid years in much more of a neutral (even positive), and realistic light rather than an activist or strictly bleak period.\(^{129}\) As Dlamini shows, this is not only true for coloureds but for black people too. It is possible to write about apartheid without descending always into its darkest hours. Writing about apartheid should not present only a collaborationist/activist dichotomy that was largely the case for academics prior to 1994. To be sure, nonetheless, apartheid was not a blessing for any black, coloured or Indian citizen; nor for any white citizen for that matter.\(^{130}\)

Therefore, similar to the views of Dlamini, this dissertation was concerned with trying to rethink how ordinary people lived during apartheid that was not always about struggle.\(^{131}\) Some of the people I interviewed, such as Auntie Yvonne, were contradictorily, also quite active in political activities, yet also maintained a positive view of life during apartheid.\(^{132}\) For Auntie Yvonne, community organizing and the multiple activities that took place whether as sports, through the church, games, picnicking, camps, or group holidays, all seem to have come to an end near the late 1980s. Another activist stated that being in the anti-apartheid struggle as a coloured ‘…we believed in an idealized version of the ANC. Ours was an ethnic sublimation performed at a cost – a truer self was being silenced’.\(^{133}\) Coloured people’s participation in anti-apartheid struggles often was to the detriment of their coloured identity experience.\(^{134}\) Most residents of Noordgesig, as most residents of South

\(^{127}\) J. Dlamini, \textit{Native Nostalgia} (Sunnyside, Auckland Park: Jacana, 2009), 14-16.
\(^{128}\) Ibid, 18-19.
\(^{129}\) Interview Auntie Yvonne and Auntie Gene; See also interview Auntie Bernie.
\(^{130}\) Holland, \textit{Born in Soweto}, 18. Ephrian Tshabalala, Mayor of Soweto in 1983 stated in 1965 that ‘...apartheid is a blessing for Africans’.
\(^{131}\) Dlamini, \textit{Native Nostalgia}.
\(^{132}\) Interview Auntie Yvonne and Auntie Gene.
\(^{134}\) Hlongwane et. al., \textit{Soweto 76: Reflections}, 155. See also for the upsurge in coloured identity post-94, Adhikari, \textit{Not white enough}. 
Africa, were however not activists and one way to comprehend apartheid was through humor.

For 43-year-old Gifi, a father of four, describing Noordgesig was often a comedic affair. He joked about the silly racist laws of apartheid and coloured people. Adhikari suggests that jokes and humour in fact ‘...are authentic reflections of the perceptions, attitudes and norms of the societies in which they circulate, and are often more reliable indicators of popular thinking than the conventional sources used by historians and social analysts’. In one example, Gifi told the story of his grandfather who was a veteran of WWII, and poked fun at him receiving only a bicycle in honour of his service there. About coloureds, whom he considers to have no culture, he stated, they ‘sit op die drade’ (sit on the fence). This is with regard to coloureds’ relationship with blacks and whites, but also has political connotations for the post-apartheid era.

Gifi believes that coloureds do not have an exclusive culture, and rather borrow from others. For Martin however, ‘coloureds did create a unique culture whose manifestations are obvious, a culture they have the right to claim and be proud of’. Nagel posits that while ‘ethic boundaries’ answer the question ‘who are we’? Culture answers the question ‘what are we’. It is therefore necessary to take into account coloured culture in order to comprehend coloured identity experiences. Thus, I found that while it was easy for interviewees to state that they were indeed coloured, questions regarding coloured people’s culture were difficult to explain especially if asked to define what a coloured is.

For Gifi, coloureds are no longer the ‘right hand’ people to whites, as they were during apartheid, and now even more than ever, occupy an intermediary position.

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135 Interview Gifi, Noordgesig Soweto, 25 March 2014. Gifi is of Muslim heritage. While there is a Muslim population in Noordgesig and a house that has been converted into a Mosque, the Muslim population of Noordgesig is small when compared to the Christian population and Gifi was the only Muslim person I interviewed.


137 Interview Gifi, Noordgesig Soweto, 25 March 2014. However, these WWII veterans must have received a pension of some type.

138 Ibid.


141 Interview Gifi.
By sitting on the fence coloured people, he reasoned, could easily grasp onto the culture of whites (what about using it to grasp onto black culture?). He explained this further using comedy once again, stating that coloureds position, *Vis a Vis* whites, during apartheid meant they were the domestic servant that cooked, and the black person the servant that cleaned the yard; they received the leftovers from the ‘*baas*’ while blacks got the ‘*derems*’ (offal).¹⁴² Thus, according to Gifi, coloured culture had always been taking what white culture offered them; for instance, if a coloured person got second hand shoes from his ‘*baas*’, and someone stood on them, they would tell that person that these are the ‘*baases*’ shoes. To Gifi, the shoes signified coloured people’s assimilationist goals and desires to follow in the footsteps of white society, further reasoning that this cultural deficiency has led to constant fighting amongst coloureds for white people’s possessions. Gifi argued that it is for these reasons, coloureds even today, wear fancy shoes; a historical legacy of getting leftovers from whites.¹⁴³

In another interview with a married couple, Melisa 38, and Bok 39, they highlighted the friendly nature of people from Noordgesig.¹⁴⁴ Melisa, originally from Westbury, added that life there was ‘very fast’ compared to Noordgesig.¹⁴⁵ Melissa’s grandfather, who was born in Cuba, became a priest at St. Margret’s Anglican Church in Noordgesig. She recalled that Noordgesig was known as a ‘*kersie dorp*’ (candle town) when she was growing up.¹⁴⁶ This was in reference to the fact that Noordgesig got electricity later than other coloured areas. She noted that this was the common term for Noordgesig in the 1980s, even though the township had electricity by then. Bok, recalled that Riverlea, where he comes from, and Noordgesig, were both labeled, ‘*kersie dorpe*’ because they had no electricity.¹⁴⁷ The ‘*kersie dorp*’, the idea that Noordgesig is backward, of low class, and not up to standard, are key signifiers of how ‘other’ coloureds have viewed Noordgesig in the past and continue to do in the present even if many of them still have familial ties to the township.

¹⁴⁵ Tragically, Melisa passed away in an automobile accident that took also the lives of six young Noordgesig residents, in August of 2014 on their way to work.
¹⁴⁶ Interview Melissa and Bok, Noordgesig Soweto, 27 March 2014.
5.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided some views of Noordgesig residents regarding the uprisings of 16 June 1976. It argued that the events of 16 June could have been caused by any number of socio-economic or political strains of life in apartheid South African townships. Overall there was a sympathy (if not empathy) for participants of the uprising from Noordgesig’s inhabitants. Black consciousness weaved its way into the lives of some Noordgesig residents, though the majority of coloureds there and elsewhere did not view its ideologies as the only option for their emancipation. While some residents did participate in the uprisings, they were not in the majority. Coloured student activism and protest action from Noordgesig seemed to have played a negligible role overall in the uprisings.

The adult population of Noordgesig were instead preoccupied with work rather than committing themselves to protest action. This was necessary because Noordgesig’s residents, as most coloureds, remained low-income earners in the 1970s. Many of the women interviewed were employed in the garment industry but by the mid-1970s, this was changing to include other factory work as well. Moreover, black workers who received the lowest wages, had by the late 1970s, begun to receive pay that was more equitable. Nonetheless, wages went a long way because life was cheaper in the 1970s, even if poverty was common.

To be sure, most coloureds were clearly anti-apartheid. In the aftermath of the uprisings, and during the 1980s, coloured identity experiences were subsumed within the non-racism ideology of the mass movement. The chapter showed how coloureds negotiated their way through the last decade of apartheid and the poor socio-economic conditions faced by inhabitants of Noordgesig. They were paying less for water and electricity than other coloured townships owing to its poorer socio-economic standing and its proximity to Soweto where raging rent boycotts directly influenced their paying habits. The state, therefore, realizing that change was fast approaching started to implement even wider development concessions. Moreover, by the mid-1980s the ANC began aligning itself within a capitalistic framework in recognition of the changing political climate.

Inequality also began to widen in the 1980s as the state began to accommodate more frequently the emergent black ‘middleclass’. For example, home ownership
schemes benefitted wealthier coloureds who could afford to purchase or build their own house. However, home ownership was only offered to Noordgesig’s residents in the last year of P.W Botha’s presidency. This was possible once the township was proclaimed a coloured group area in December of 1988. To be sure, it made little sense to proclaim a township in terms of a law that had already failed and at a time when apartheid’s end was almost guaranteed.

The chapter shows that it is possible to write of apartheid and the people who lived through it by focusing on the ordinary and everyday life experiences outside of struggle politics. Many people I interviewed viewed the past in a positive manner and still found humour in the oppression they faced under apartheid. Nevertheless, what is clear from the interviews analysed is that Noordgesig remained a ‘kersie dorp’, a place considered for poorer coloureds, even by the end of apartheid.
CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to provide a history of ‘Builte’.\(^1\) It also linked coloured identity experiences into the complexities of the township’s past. What has been shown is that academic discussion of coloured townships has to connect also with inhabitants’ experiences of coloured identity in order to better understand their place in South African history. More particularly, these local histories should concentrate on the interconnections that existed between townships and coloured identity experiences outside of the Cape region.

Furthermore, the majority of urban historical studies have focused on black townships. For Noordgesig, the fourth oldest section of famous Soweto, no discussion is mentioned in any of the numerous literature dedicated to this township. Therefore, by recording a history of Noordgesig this dissertation filled in the persistent gap in urban studies literature and furthermore questioned the inadequacy of research on coloured experiences in Johannesburg.

Evidence was provided showing that analysis of a township such as Noordgesig can explain the heterogeneous nature of the identity more intricately than national perspectives that tend to homogenous South African coloured identities. The coloured experience of Noordgesig inhabitants is different to those found in other coloured townships in terms of class, place, skin colour and age.

The dissertation used both life histories and archival documents to piece together this history. These were presented in a manner that focused on urban planning considerations, but also, drew heavily on how the authorities tried to organize coloured people. More importantly, they highlighted the experiences of inhabitants of the township from the decade before apartheid to the early 1990s. The life histories of Noordgesig’s inhabitants focused on the ordinary lives of people, by conducting interviews with Auntie Poppie, one of the earliest inhabitants, to those that only came to the township in the 1980s such as Melisa and Bok.

\(^1\) ‘Builte’ is a common slang name for Noordgesig as is ‘Molofish’ a name used after Clarence Hamilton’s autobiographical TV series entitled “Molofish” set in the township and filmed in the early to mid-1990s.
By exposing the stories of individual inhabitants of Noordgesig, this dissertation has broken away from the tradition of bestowing only political leaders with voice: as such escaping the ‘master narrative’ that is concealing the revelations of the majority of South African citizens. It is essential that more ethnographical accounts of this kind are produced so that a fuller account is made of the township in question and people’s experiences of living there.

The study, at the outset, discussed the existing literature on housing in Johannesburg and the formation of townships for blacks and coloureds. It showed that the focus in South African township history is largely attentive to the formation and contestations of black townships and their identity constructions. An emphasis therefore was attached to how coloured identity experiences, class, as well as ethnicity, influenced the establishment of Noordgesig. The argument made is that it is impossible to understand why this township has not been included in any research involving Soweto, of which there are many, without analysing coloured identity experiences. The township’s exclusion is because it is a coloured township, administered outside of black Soweto for the most part. The dissertation periodized Noordgesig’s history; namely its establishment prior to apartheid, the apartheid years up to the watershed of 16 June 1976, and lastly the period to the end of apartheid. This was necessary because there were changed identity experiences, class, race, and housing circumstances in these three periods.

From the turn of the twentieth century up until the inter-war period, multiracial living areas were deemed ‘inappropriate’, and a ‘health’ hazard for the city. The Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 and the Slums Removal Act of 1934 gave more powers to local authorities to enact ‘slum clearances’ which they argued were needed for ‘industrial development’. Where to place Johannesburg’s black, coloured and Indian populations was based principally, at this time, on class differentiation. Segregation efforts had to determine who was and was not a coloured, which largely meant distinguishing coloureds from blacks. This was problematic especially for those housed at Noordgesig whose class, ethnicity and even skin colour was akin to that of blacks. The township was to house the lowest class of coloureds evicted from inner-city ‘slums’ compared to the higher class of coloureds housed at Coronationville. Thus, the site chosen for the establishment of Noordgesig could be justified in terms of its location next to a black township, even though the authorities frowned upon this ideologically. Therefore, although class was the most significant factor in the
establishment of Noordgesig in 1939 there were other concerns such as proximity to a black township, and the close affinity between the coloureds of Noordgesig and black people.

Noordgesig’s establishment infringed on the racial and class thinking of the time. Its proximity to Orlando and the racial uncertainty of its inhabitants were problematic to the municipal authorities. Nonetheless, it was more convenient for the Johannesburg City Council to make Noordgesig a temporary township for coloured people and administer it as such, even though it was not proclaimed solely for coloureds until 1988, however contradictorily this may have been. The precarious nature of the township, endorsed the possibility of its inhabitants’ pending removal, if ever the moment arrived. Building in Noordgesig was also completed in a haphazard manner and a common feature of the early years of Noordgesig from 1939 – in fact well into the late 1950s – was temporary tent accommodation for residents who were waiting to occupy houses.

Nevertheless, the first inhabitants circumnavigated a messy pail sewage system, the bad state of roads, a lack of electricity, and the overall poor standard of living in various ways. It was possible, as the interviewees showed, to continue to enjoy the spaces of Noordgesig. Relations were also formed with their next-door neighbours in Orlando, where shopping was done, dances were held and friendships made. Consistently, what was argued, is that coloured experiences in the township, and throughout Johannesburg, were transformed once segregated coloured settlements were formed apart from black, Indian, and poor whites. This was in part because most early residents of Noordgesig and Coronationville had been accustomed to living in interracial inner city slums of Doornfontein, Fietas, or the Malay Location and early locations such as Alexandra and Sophiatown. This was also partially true for the residents of coloured townships established from the mid-1950s onwards, such as Western Coloured Township, Riverlea, Bosmont, Newclare, and Eldorado Park. Segregation was complicated in Noordgesig by its proximity to the black township of Orlando, its precarious and temporary nature and its inhabitants’ lower class designation that bordered blackness,

The dissertation has showed that from the late 1940s and the National Party’s rise to power, the importance that class had for the establishment of townships began to wane because of a conscious effort by the state to determine these more strictly on race. Therefore, if you were from Noordgesig, it was possible that residence in
Coronationville might be offered, after the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950. This Act had far-reaching effects on the lives of township residents throughout South Africa. Nevertheless, apartheid’s racial constructions were contested in Noordgesig, as the case of the white man who stayed in the township with his coloured wife and children highlighted. Furthermore, Noordgesig residents used subservience to their advantage and re-directed the insult of having to call a white person ‘baas’, by using it in such a manner that it empowered the user. Yet interviewees used a paternal tone when discussing the white authorities living in the township and the local police officers (‘black jacks’).

Key to the discussion of apartheid and colouredness in Noordgesig was the idea of order and to a lesser extent respectability. Order meant discipline and provided direction. Although the state implemented it in a repressive manner, many residents asserted that, ‘life was better during apartheid’. This is not a simple and ignorant statement made by ordinary townships residents, neither is it apolitical. Rather, this view of the past is a concept that needs further exploration by academics. Moreover, this dissertation used these kinds of reminiscences to expose ordinary experiences of life during apartheid. It was for instance possible to fall in love and suffer the hurt of multiple child loss; it was about the numerous female residents working in one industry over several generations, or about having your children leave school so that they could help provide for the family. All these experiences existed alongside the continued concern about the poor conditions inhabitants lived in.

Housing coloureds was the concern of various state departments. Urban planning became more centralized during apartheid and because of this the local and heterogeneous nature of coloured populations were put at a disadvantage. As such, the forced relocations during apartheid desperately affected coloured and Indian population groups in South Africa. For example, the creation of the western area complex as a predominantly coloured group area, meant, while there was more housing for coloured people, the way they could experience their identity had changed.

From the 1960s to the late 1970s, the state made a more focused attempt to house coloureds, further fostering coloured exclusivism. These segregated townships became a dominant feature of the coloured experience, which had previously only existed in Coronationville and Noordgesig until the early 1950s. Noordgesig is once more different in this regard because of its space for poorer coloureds, its location next to a black township, its temporary status and its age, that all play a part in making the
coloured experience there more complex and nuanced than many other coloured townships in Johannesburg.

Although some Noordgesig inhabitants were political by the late 1960s, and supported black consciousness, the majority of coloureds there did not. Therefore, coloured identity was never completely rejected in Noordgesig or in most other coloured townships. In fact, coloured self-identification grew in segregated coloured townships. This dissertation therefore, cautiously proposes that a subsequent transition period in the construction of coloured identity occurred during the rejectionist era from the 1970s to 1980s. As it became fashionable amongst a minority of ‘coloured’ people to reject their colouredness, the majority in fact began to rethink their identity based on their historical experiences. Furthermore, segregated living made it possible for coloured people to reconfigure amongst themselves what it means to be coloured.

Even though Noordgesig residents did participate in the 16 June 1976 uprisings, the evidence showed that the bulk of residents did not. Most of the interviewees were employees and it was the labour market where their concern lay. The dissertation therefore concentrated on the political economy within South Africa during the mid-1970s to early 1980s. Many residents argued that while pay was low, life was cheaper then. Therefore, food, accommodation and basic services were more easily attainable. The state’s attempt to regain political credibility were undermined however by increased labour unrest, an unsuccessful attempt to co-opt Indian and coloured support through the Tricameral parliament, rent boycotts, civic organizations (UDF) and union formations (COSATU). As such, the state tried to maintain economic hegemony by co-opting wealthier blacks, coloureds and Indians.

By the end of the 1980s, the rent boycotts, intermittent schooling, rural and township violence had taken their toll on ordinary citizens. Yet the ANC, which began early to be drafted by neo-liberal capitalism, and upwardly mobile ‘non-whites’, had gained from government reforms. For the majority of Noordgesig inhabitants, getting rid of white minority rule through activism was not their preoccupation. Many regarded survival, earning a living, religion and recreational activities as ways out of an oppressive system. For Noordgesig residents, ‘die storie gaan aan’, (the story continues), and life had to continue, whether during or even after apartheid.

In closing, the dissertation has made two independent but interconnected arguments that illuminates the history of ‘Noordgesig coloured township’. Firstly, the
The interrelation of race and class complicated how coloured identity was experienced in Noordgesig. Complex applications of these were practiced in the establishment of the township. Nationally, apartheid’s shift to a preponderance for racial distinctions, nonetheless, never denied the place of class. To outsiders and perhaps inhabitants too, Noordgesig remains a township for lower class coloureds.

The second argument, that coloured identity experiences indeed transformed once segregated coloured townships were established, problematizes notions of the identity’s stability. Coloured experiences of their identity began to be reorganized in these townships, that hardened attitudes towards the ‘other’ which had not existed in their previous interracial living areas. Noordgesig’s establishment in 1939 means this change occurred earlier there than in the majority of coloured townships in Johannesburg. Yet Noordgesig’s proximity to and class similarity with Orlando meant sustained interaction with black people and therefore a more subtle notion of ‘otherness’.

Noordgesig at the end of apartheid would be a place that regarded itself as being the mother to all later coloured townships in Johannesburg. A place where it was possible to be poor and coloured, yet proud to come from there. It would be the place Nelson Mandela hid in, as ‘the black pimpernel’. The place that many call ‘Builte’ or ‘Molofish’. It is that place that lies at the edge of Soweto that ‘everybody knows’. That everyone passes. That place ‘via Orlando’, where coloured people live, in Soweto.
Postscript

This dissertation was concerned with the past, and while concluding in the early 1990s briefly engages with contemporary political, social, and economic circumstances influencing coloured people’s experience in Noordgesig and in the country more generally. Therefore, while not a history, this section will show what I have learnt about contemporary Noordgesig to reflect on the township as a resident. The Table below provides some contemporary statistics of Noordgesig.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Census for Noordgesig, 2001 and 2011¹</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td>1.71 km²</td>
<td>1.28 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8,247</td>
<td>12,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>4,836 km²</td>
<td>9,500 km²</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Racial make up</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian/Asian</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.9%</td>
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<td><strong>First language</strong></td>
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<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


¹ The discrepancies in the coloured and black population as well as first language spoken between the two periods was the result of the inclusion of Noordgesig Extension One in the statistics; houses were bought by former residents of original Noordgesig as well as many black people from outside of the township. The extension was built in the late 1990s into the early 2000s. The 2001 land area was mostly made up of vacant property but also included the land used later for extension one. This vacant land was not however included in the 2011 census. Therefore, a smaller land area was recorded in 2011 but with a larger population.
Many South Africans still attach strong commitment to their identities, which ‘...inform day-to-day norms and perceptions of what it is to belong to a community, nation or racialized group’. However, there has been a tendency to homogenize coloured identity experiences in the literature; an effort rooted in trying to understand the assertion and changes to the identity post-1994. For instance, Erasmus tries to address why some coloured communities voted overwhelmingly for the NP in the elections of 1994 and to identify the complexities of coloured identity in the post-apartheid state. Adhikari also discusses the post-apartheid apathy of many coloureds through historical analysis but tends to standardize a national coloured experience. However, Adhikari’s later research on coloured identity experiences in Southern Africa perhaps offers more in recognising differences through similarity. In this way not undermining the array of coloured identities that exist within the whole.

A survey conducted by Gibson and Gouws in 1996, found that nearly one third of coloureds identified as coloured but also with the label African, while a smaller percentage identified with South African. Those who formerly opposed the identity now embrace it, and, those who said they would never vote for a black political group felt honoured by Mandela. Yet still more research is needed to uncover the intricacies of the identity possibly in a comparative method within South Africa between different cities or even internationally.


4 Erasmus, Coloured by History. However, a 50/50 vote for the ANC/NP was recorded in the Transvaal’s coloured areas in 1994. This outcome ‘...has been overshadowed by the enormous support for the NP in the Western Cape’. N. Nieftagodien, ‘Coloureds and South Africa’s First Democratic Elections’, University of Witwatersrand History Workshop, (1994), 1-22.

5 Adhikari, Not White Enough.

6 Adhikari, Burdened by Race.


9 Comparisons between coloured peoples identity experiences in provinces and cities of the North West, Orange Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Gauteng for example.
I can conclude from my own observations and research in Noordgesig that a reaffirmation of coloured identity has also occurred there. Inhabitants, (and many coloured people throughout South Africa) consider themselves ‘not black enough’, and I add, neither economically capable to offer the new South Africa any reason to invest in them. Moreover, the government has extended its hand to Afrikaner people on many occasions. President Jacob Zuma’s visit to the town of Orania on September 14, 2010 provided assurance to the Afrikaner people as former President Nelson Mandela had done in 1995. They were indeed welcomed as Africans whose home is South Africa.\(^{10}\)

However, the helping hand to coloureds has been cursory and always closely linked to earning voter support by political parties. The NP did this in the 1990s, the DA has continued to do this in the Western Cape and the ANC in Gauteng is more concerned about regaining the majority black vote than campaigning for a minority coloured constituency. Many coloureds therefore feel marginalized politically but also declined socio-economic opportunities still afforded whites and the new black elite. This has led to this minority group not only voting differently than the majority of black people since 1994 but it has also afforded them the opportunity to gather what was lost in anti-apartheid struggles – ‘brown pride’.

How Noordgesig has reacted to, and engages with, the post-apartheid state is a reflection of its past. This dissertation has scrutinized how this township’s history offers valuable information with regard to racial interaction between coloureds and blacks based on corresponding working class ethos and living conditions. It also argued that the inhabitants’ coloured experiences in the township, and that of Johannesburg, were shaped and changed by separation from other race groups; even if this was only a street, as in Noordgesig’s case. I have also cautiously suggested that from the mid-1970s, the beginning of a reassertion of coloured identity begins to take root, at first mildly, and post 1994 more strongly.

Many of the people I interviewed in Noordgesig were willing to discuss the history of the township and offer their biographies. They were even more eager to offer their opinions regarding the current state of affairs, especially concerning politics and colouredness. I found that many people often had critical evaluations of their contemporary South African experiences. Frequently, they compared these to the

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provisions afforded coloureds during the apartheid era. Often times, the apartheid period ‘came out trumps’: for example in terms of the order it instilled, the employment opportunities it provided, the overall safety within the townships, the many recreational and sports activities, or the low cost of living. It seems even the added incentive of ‘freedom’, that the post-apartheid master narrative continues to expound, does not measure up to coloured people’s expectations. Freedom is political, but also includes social and economic dynamics. It is these that the coloured people in Noordgesig feel have not come their way since 1994. Politically Noordgesig residents do not have the power to swing the local vote to a party of their choice as larger coloured townships in Johannesburg can. Neither is the coloured vote in Gauteng large enough to determine what party will run the province unlike the coloured constituency in the Western Cape.

Criticism of the ANC was not immediate for a large percentage of South Africans, particularly in the first electoral term of Nelson Mandela between 1994 and 1999. The Thabo Mbeki era to 2008 began to gather dissent from certain political actors as well as the economically marginalized. There have been countless critics of the state during Jacob Zuma’s presidency from 2009. The ANC’s neoliberal stance and the subsequent socio-economic inequality this tends to create have borne the brunt of this criticism. Now that a large percentage of South Africans have begun to question and vote against the ANC hegemony the coloured vote of 1994 seems irrelevant. But is it?

The majority of coloureds who voted for the DA in 2014 is not an ‘inconvenient truth’ anymore. In 1994, the coloured people’s vote for the NP was thought to be delusional. Indeed, many coloured people were anti-apartheid activists or supporters that made this decision all the more bewildering. What was confusing was how they then could choose the ‘enemy’? One answer lies in their identity construction as the ‘other’ throughout South African history. An ‘other’ that was placed as an intermediary between black and white. The ‘other’ whose identity existed because it persistently grasped from ‘others’: it is its heterogeneous nature that makes it whole.

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11 Because it is part of Johannesburg’s Ward 29, which includes part of Orlando East and Diepkloof its vote for opposition parties is often stifled by votes for the ANC.
12 Erasmus, *Coloured by History*.
13 See Martin, ‘Whats in the name ‘Coloured’’.
Cultural identity however is not stagnant and stuck in a traditionalist past. Therefore, coloureds did not have to identify black or ANC. To be sure, the historical legacy, for the majority of coloured people, regarding the ANC or blackness, was distorted by the apartheid state, but it was also, vitally reimagined by coloured people themselves. Since I have argued that the reaffirmation of coloured identity had begun from the 1970s, it was possible by the elections of 1994 that many coloureds decided that the best method to secure their future was with a vote for the NP. Coloureds were not wrong in questioning the affairs of state from 1994. To be sure, Coloured constituents have in all five South African elections voted for opposition parties rather than only the ANC. For Noordgesig inhabitants, matters of trust, capability, corruption, education, and policy, especially with regard to job creation and relieving poverty have swung their vote to historically white political parties.

The late Neville Alexander's, *Some are more equal than others*, looks at the relationship between human choice and historical processes. The choice is to choose your politics without discrediting that decision’s historical reckoning. Coloureds have chosen their politics in the contemporary era as they had during apartheid, where they were considered black enough for the anti-apartheid struggle. Jung’s aptly titled, *Then I was black*, argues how identity politics not only came to the fore post-94 but that they are also still in transition. For coloureds, this meant regaining, through re-evaluation, their misplaced coloured identities lost in the fight for freedom.

Gail Smiths autobiographical notes about the identity’s resurgence are illuminating:

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14 However, in Johannesburg the decision by some coloureds to vote for the NP was also partly the result of a well-run media campaign while the ANC’s campaign was conducted largely ‘door to door’. Nieftagodien provides five more reasons why some coloureds voted for the NP in Johannesburg. 1) The ANC was regarded as black party 2) Coloureds fear of violence and chaos if a black party ruled the country 3) Rumours that pensions would be taken away if the ANC ruled 4) Unemployment would increase for coloureds 5) Coloured people had to let it be known where they stood politically. Nieftagodien, ‘Coloureds and South Africa’s’, 1, 2, 7-8.


17 Jung, *Then I was Black*; See also J. Stone, *When she was White: The True Story of a Family Divided by Race* (New York: Miramax Books/Hyperion, 2007).

For most of my life I have lived in shame. Ashamed of my brown skin, and all I was told I represented: shame, miscegenation, confusion, promiscuity, drunkenness, racism, criminality and vulgarity… But all those years of denial, repression and revulsion for all things coloured had inflicted psychic and spiritual damage on my coloured self. I had actively distanced myself from my people, eschewing all associations for fear of being branded as one of them: racist, fearful, undeserving, aggressive, violent, disaffected mulattoes.19

In Noordgesig, and throughout South Africa, coloured people are more strongly attuning themselves as the architects of their own destiny in the post-apartheid dispensation. Nonetheless, these transformations have ‘…compounded the already existing confusion and controversy surrounding coloured identity’ but have also ‘…created opportunities for new ways of understanding colouredness’.20 Of these, creolization or cross-cultural exchange, because it is largely to do with learning and using from others, is forcing a reconsideration of how all identities are formed, especially in a South Africa that is still looking for ‘new ways in which to relate to one another’.21 The resurgence of coloured identity nonetheless, has been attributed to the ‘fear’ of African majority rule, ‘perceptions of coloured marginalization’ and ‘the need to counter negative stereotyping of coloureds’.22 However, colouredness is not the same for all coloureds.

Hence, two dark skinned, (I am unsure if this has anything to do with their answers or my own interest in dark skinned people who refer to themselves as coloured) ‘coloureds’ when asked about colouredness dismissed the idea. One stated, we are all human, all African, ‘[o]ne face, because we are one nation so I can’t say…it’s nothing like that’.23 The other instead linked colouredness to a Khoisan beginning (yet it must be clear that not all coloureds have Khoisan roots particularly outside of the Cape region) while simultaneously being critical of whose label coloured was; i.e. is it imposed or claimed? He stated,

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20 Petrus & Isaacs-Martin ‘The Multiple Meanings’.
23 Interview RB, Noordgesig Soweto, 7 May 2014. This interview, along with others, was conducted with Noordgesig residents voting in the national elections of May 2014 who also offered valuable insight particularly into coloured identity and post-apartheid experiences.
So I'm confused when people proudly say I'm coloured because that was a term used by the white people to divide us because now they will say this is a Cape coloured, this is a other coloured, and this is a coloured… And then also, some of the people must understand they must not shy away on not being ashamed to be called a Khoisan people because we are the indigenous people of this country.24

What is certain however is that in Noordgesig the perception almost across the board is that the situation for coloureds has deteriorated since the rise to power of the ANC in the early 1990s.25 Many residents argue that Black-Economic Empowerment (BEE) only advantages black Africans at coloured people’s expense.26

Nonetheless, not all is ‘doom and gloom’ in Noordgesig and one conversation with a resident, frequently used comedy to hide sorrow but also express a hidden humour that exists in all (I dare say all coloured people) inhabitants of Noordgesig. The comedy was dry and dark but poignantly addressed the fact that Noordgesig is still viewed as a low class township for coloureds when compared to places such as Bosmont. A definition or statement Gifi makes about coloureds is that ‘they only know how to drink and swear’.27 Kilpatrick has this to say in a rather one-sided comedic book about race in South Africa: ‘…thankfully, coloureds in South Africa haven’t further complicated our lives by refusing to be called coloured’.28

To be sure, the coloured people living in Noordgesig are not the only ones feeling the pinch of a new South African political order. For Sister Glover, poverty remains an ever-present reality.29 As Alexander notes about the negotiations of the early 1990s and the ANC government, it becomes clear that inequality would persist post-independence: ‘… [The negotiations] can, if successful, lead nowhere else but to a slightly modified structurally adjusted racial capitalist system that will continue to generate class inequality largely as racial inequality’.30 He adds that the ANC dispensation therefore was doomed to failure quoting Frantz Fanon, ‘…the beneficiaries of this kind of neo-colonial deal are the rising (black) middle class and

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24 Interview Raven, Noordgesig Soweto, 7 May 2014. However, I submit that sometimes assuming the original people of South Africa (Khoisan) are coloured is misinformed and perhaps are better identified as African.
25 Interviewee Raven did not criticize the ANC and the notion that things are worsening in Noordgesig perhaps because he is an ANC representative.
28 S. Kilpatrick, The Racists Guide to the People of South Africa (Kenilworth: Two Dogs; Burnet Media; Mercury, 2010), 105. This white-sided humor is reminiscent of that of Leon Shuster and the characterization of all blacks, as daft in most of his films. While coloureds and Indians are portrayed as a laughing stock.
29 Interview Sister Glover, Noordgesig Soweto, 28 May 2014.
30 Alexander, Some are more Equal, 30.
the top layers of the skilled and semi-skilled, especially the unionised workers’ and excludes ‘the majority of urban and rural poor’.31

**An ‘ou look’ home on the Main Road with a facelift of zozo’s in its front yard**

Source: Photograph by author

So, if it is not only coloureds facing the onslaught of South Africa’s brand of neoliberalism, why have they taken a different path to ameliorate these pressures? As Peter Alexander and others note, socio-economic protests have risen and continue to rise not only in townships but also amongst organized labour.32 Yet in Noordgesig, bar the 2011 service delivery protest, there has been no regular protesting. For Jackson ‘*Coloureds don’t Toyi-Toyi*: not that they do not complain, but that there are different ways of attending to injustice.’33 As one of her respondents states “That’s not the way we handle our problems” – as if to Toyi-Toyi is really an African thing and, since coloureds don’t Toyi-Toyi, they must not by extension consider themselves African’.34

Nevertheless, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, coloureds do have culture, and by extension of being born in Africa, are African. In fact, I would agree

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31 Ibid: 54.
34 Ibid: 211. Emphasis theirs.
that coloured identity cannot be conceptualized outside of their identity as South African.\textsuperscript{35} Yet black African racial prejudice towards coloureds is based on the notion that they have ‘no nationhood, no identity, no land, no culture’ while they (African blacks) are ‘full blooded…with a history, culture and identity going back centuries’.\textsuperscript{36} Certainly, ‘…white racist values have to a considerable degree been internalized by coloured people who use them’, quite openly in many coloured townships including Noordgesig, and amongst people I know.\textsuperscript{37} Notwithstanding, it must be clear that ‘…the responsibility to change the South African mind set not only rests with coloureds changing their own mind set, but that other groups need to do the same’.\textsuperscript{38} Gail Smith concludes,

\begin{quote}
In confronting my denial and freeing the colonial self-suppressed in the recesses of my consciousness, I have found many things. Knowledge has replaced ignorance. Pride has replaced shame and fear. Compassion replaced derision. The social problems that besiege the coloured community, such as alcoholism, unemployment, violence and crime I now see as legacies of both apartheid and colonialism… Brown skin, how I love my brown skin. The circle is complete\textsuperscript{39}.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{35} Zegeye, ‘Imposed Ethnicity’.
\textsuperscript{36} Adhikari, ‘God made the White Man’, 154.
\textsuperscript{37} Adhikari, ‘God made the White Man’, 161.
\textsuperscript{38} Petrus & Isaacs-Martin, ‘The Multiple Meanings, 100.
\textsuperscript{39} Smith, ‘Brown Skin’, 158.
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