The Impact of Racial Inequality on the Pursuit of Mountain-Based Leisure among Black Recreation-Seekers in Cape Town, South Africa, 1910-1969

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Abstract

Recreational interaction with the Table Mountain Chain at the Cape in South Africa probably dates back to the early days of European exploration from the 15th century onwards, when sailors and traders would often take the opportunity for a mountain walk after months confined in a cramped ship. While the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape were undoubtedly intimately familiar with the Table Mountain Chain, this was for reasons of survival and not for the purpose of recreation. From the time of colonial settlement in 1652 and during the ensuing centuries of colonization, the use of the mountain chain was governed by politics, specifically the factors of race and class. The consequence was that the recreational use of the mountain was largely restricted to that of the white elite, who was serviced on the mountain by the black underclass in the role of porters, cooks, and servants. Due to the inequalities inherent in colonial society in Cape Town, which saw black South Africans relegated to subservient roles and manual labor, a significant trend in black recreational interaction with the nearby mountains was able to emerge only during the early years of the 20th century. Despite the racial inequalities of the segregation and apartheid eras encompassed by the period 1910-1969, this major trend in black recreational interaction with the mountain chain was able to develop, only to be severely and negatively impacted by the realities of racial inequality towards the end of this period.

Key words: mountain-based recreation, racial inequality, Cape Province Mountain Club, Mountain Club of South Africa, South Africa
Introduction

Recreational interaction with the Table Mountain Chain in Cape Town, South Africa dates back to the days of European exploration from the 15th century onwards, when ships bound for the East Indies stopped over at the Cape, and sailors and traders climbed Table Mountain for recreation and exercise after being confined in cramped quarters for months on end. The native inhabitants of the Cape were undoubtedly intimately familiar with the mountain chain, as they were dependent on it for their very survival: for hunting; for fresh water; for gathering of wild fruits, roots, and nuts; for their encampments; and for grazing their cattle.

The climbing of Table Mountain by black recreation-seekers in Cape Town in any significant number however dates only from about the early 20th century. The reason for this is that, since the early days of colonial settlement at the Cape in the 17th century, the use of the mountain chain was governed by the factors of race and class. Hence, for most of the colonial era (from settlement in 1652 to 1909), the black underclass (slaves, servants, and the laboring poor) mainly interacted with the mountain chain either for reasons of survival or for the purpose of work, such as chopping and carrying wood back down the mountain, or doing the laundry of...
affluent folk in mountain streams, not for leisure purposes. During this period, the recreational use of the mountain was largely restricted to that of the social and governing classes, viz. the white elite, whose lavish picnics, “champagne tiffins,” and overnight excursions to the summit of Table Mountain were carried and served by a retinue of black porters, cooks and servants.

The earliest evidence of black recreational use of the mountain is to be found during the mid-19th century, when the pupils of Zonnebloem College, an Anglican institution established on the slopes of Table Mountain to educate the sons and daughters of African chiefs went on regular mountain excursions, accompanied by their teachers, as an integral part of their school program, as well as during their leisure hours. This example was, however, an exception, as most black interaction with the mountain during the 19th century was for pragmatic reasons, such as working as laborers on the excavation of reservoirs on Table Mountain, and it would not be before the early 20th century that black South Africans (specifically from the “colored” community) turned to the mountain for recreation in significant numbers.

This study aims to, firstly, describe the emergence of the trend of black South Africans (overwhelmingly from the “colored” community) seeking to engage in mountain-based leisure opportunities and the sport of mountaineering in the 20th century, specifically during the period 1910-1969; secondly, to identify and explore the reasons for the emergence of this trend, as well as the socioeconomic and political factors governing its development; and thirdly, to describe the various forms of mountain-based leisure pursuits which developed during this period. This paper will conclude by analyzing the impact of sociopolitical factors (such as racial inequality, segregation, and discrimination), which shaped and directed the pursuit of mountain-based leisure pursuits by black recreation-seekers in Cape Town during the period under review and indeed continued to impact upon these pursuits during subsequent decades.

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54 In addition to recreation, over the centuries, the mountain chain served as a location for residences, farms, reservoirs, cemeteries, plantations, military forts, and even mines. Edna Bradlow, “Human History of Table Mountain,” in The Mountain: An Authoritative Guide to the Table Mountain Chain, edited by Douglas Hey (Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers Limited, 1994), 15-30; Jose Burman, A Peak to Climb: The Story of South African Mountaineering (Cape Town: C Struik, 1966), 5-14.
58 Hodgson, A history of Zonnebloem College, 1858 to 1870, 260-262.
59 Anglican clergymen, who preached to the laborers who lived on the summit for the duration of the construction projects they were engaged in, noted the extremely poor living and working conditions of these men who were engaged in hard, physical labor in the quarries. Father Congreve, The Cowley Evangelist, 1900, 62-66.
This paper is a contribution to the existing literature on the leisure pursuits and recreation activities of black South Africans, which has demonstrated the inextricability of race and class on the development of sport and the pursuit of leisure activities.\textsuperscript{60} However, research on mountaineering as a leisure pursuit and sport in South Africa (whether among black or white South Africans) is a greatly under-researched field, with only a handful of publications available thus far.\textsuperscript{61} Despite the vigorous growth of mountain walking and climbing as recreation and sport among black South Africans in Cape Town during the 20th century, as well as the establishment of at least three mountain clubs, the story of the development of mountaineering among this community has remained something of a “hidden history.” Notwithstanding, this is an important story, integral to the history of recreation and sport in South Africa.

Uncovering this “hidden history” has been made more difficult by the fact that primary sources are extremely difficult to access, since material such as club minutes and newsletters have either been lost or not preserved,\textsuperscript{62} or the documents are not available to non-members.\textsuperscript{63} As a consequence of these obstacles, information for this paper had to be drawn from the minutes and journals of the Mountain Club of South Africa (MCSA), which detail its interaction with black mountain clubs and mountaineers. Primarily, however, direct information on the topic was obtained from past and current members of the Cape Province Mountain Club (CPMC) in the form of oral interviews conducted by the writer; as well as from transcripts of interviews with former District Six residents conducted by the then Director of the District Six Museum and held in the Museum’s archival holdings. Finally, historical and political context was provided through


\textsuperscript{63} Peter Bruyns, personal communication, October 12, 2017.
the consultation of various secondary sources, covering the colonial, segregation, and apartheid eras, up to the late 1960s.

**Mountain-Based Leisure Pursuits in Cape Town in the Postcolonial Era of Segregation, 1910-1947**

The white elite of Cape Town continued their mountain-based leisure activities during the 20th century and, in fact, these became formalized, since the MCSA had been established in 1891, not only to cater for the burgeoning interest of the social and professional elite in the emerging sport of rock climbing, but also to establish a much-needed mountain rescue service. However, given the *de facto* existence of racial segregation in society since early colonial times, membership of the private-interest organizations and facilities frequented by the upper class was restricted to white partakers, and, in this regard, the MCSA was no exception. Despite the fact that the Club’s Constitution was silent on the matter, the Club’s unwritten rules restricted membership to white South Africans, hence there was no question of black South Africans becoming members of the Club. This was despite the fact that many black men, by virtue of their work as independent mountain guides in the late 19th century and mountain rangers employed by the local authority, were expert mountaineers. The MCSA was well aware of their existence, as one of their objectives was to secure the services of competent men familiar with Table Mountain who could act as guides or porters to the public. Thus, it seemed that the only role for black South Africans in the new Club was a subordinate one.

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64 Mountain Club of South Africa, “The Mountain Club, its origins and doings during the first two years,” *The Mountain Club Annual*, 1894, 7.


69 For example, veteran climber Carlie Fisher began work as a Waterworks Ranger in 1902. Anonymous, “Veteran climber has many memories,” *CapeTimes*, February 1954.


71 This was very similar to the situation facing Africans in the tourism industry emerging around the Kruger National Park during the early 20th century. In the country’s national parks, Africans were only welcome in the cultural role of tourist attractions, but not to enjoy the tourism facilities as tourists in their own right. Jacob Simon Tilo Dlamini, *Putting the Kruger National Park in its Place: A social history of Africans and conservation in a modernizing South Africa, 1900-2010* (Doctoral dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, 2012).
While this paper mainly focuses on the impact of racial inequality in mountain-based recreation, an interesting element to note is that the pursuit of mountaineering was largely male-dominated, as could be seen in the leadership roles and membership composition of the MCSA.\footnote{Mountain Club of South Africa, “The Mountain Club, its origins and doings during the first two years,” \textit{The Mountain Club Annual}, 1894, 9.} This likely had a lot to do with sexist notions of mountains being the domain of men, resulting in an original prohibition on female membership, which, however, was changed by 1892.\footnote{Mountain Club of South Africa, Special General Meeting, 20 June 1893, MCSA Papers (B1.1 Vol. I, 23/10/1891-20/11/1895, BC 1421 MCSA). Special Collections, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.} The discomfort with female participation in mountain-based pursuits was undoubtedly due to the fact that, during the Victorian era, the notion of passive femininity held sway, and there was a widespread perception that, given their “childbearing function”, sport in general and strenuous activities in particular were unsuitable physical activities for women.\footnote{These attitudes were also common among black communities, with the first sports clubs and activities for women beginning in the 1880s for “suitable” sports such as croquet and tennis. Andre Odendaal, \textit{The Story of an African Game} (Cape Town: David Philip, 2003), 48; Allen Gutman, \textit{Women’s Sports: A History} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 2; Ilse Hartmann-Tews and Gertrud Pfister, “Women’s inclusion in sport: International and comparative findings,” in \textit{Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective}, edited by Ilse Hartmann-Tews and Gertrud Pfister (London: Routledge, 2003), 267-268.} Notwithstanding, female climbers in the MCSA went on to defy the conventions of the late 19th century and became active and able climbers.\footnote{Joan Mason and Diana Wilson, “100 Years of Women’s Membership of the MCSA: Some highlights and achievements,” \textit{Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa} 97 (1995): 114-123.} By the mid-20th century, while acknowledging that “the female has established herself among us - ever more equal”,\footnote{Mountain Club of South Africa, Johannesburg Section, \textit{The Diamond Years, 1931-2006} (Johannesburg: Mountain Club of South Africa, Johannesburg Section, 2006), 25.} some male mountaineers also lamented that “we have lost the mystique and hearty exclusive maleness which the mountaineer once imagined was his forever”.\footnote{Mountain Club of South Africa, Johannesburg Section, \textit{The Diamond Years, 1931-2006}, 25.} More than a century later, it seems that sexist notions still linger, as women have remained a minority in the club.\footnote{Peter Grobler, “Foreword,” \textit{Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa} 103 (2000): 3.}

The regular recreational use of the Table Mountain Chain by black communities may be traced back only to the early 20th century, when the youth in areas with easy access to the mountain began rambling and hiking on the mountain. This included certain areas in the city itself, predominantly “colored” areas such as the Bo-Kaap on Signal Hill, as well as “colored” enclaves in mainly white suburbs all the way around the mountain chain to the coastal village of Simon’s Town. Among the enthusiastic mountain walkers in the early years of the 20th century was Bernard Combrinck, who lived in central Cape Town and who grew up to become a teacher, and whose son, Irwin, would also become a keen mountaineer.\footnote{Irwin Combrinck, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, September 14, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.} At about the same time, Terence Fredericks’s paternal grandmother, who lived in the Bo-Kaap, was an enthusiastic
mountain walker, who would later introduce him to mountain walking.\textsuperscript{80} Other recreational walkers who lived in close proximity to the Table Mountain Chain were the young daughters of the prominent Gool family,\textsuperscript{81} who lived in central Cape Town. Minnie Gool and her sisters became enthusiastic mountain ramblers in about the mid-1920s through the invitation of Carl Fisher (a mountaineer who subsequently became a founder member of the CPMC) and his friend, Carelse.\textsuperscript{82} Mona Galant was another young girl who used to love walking up to Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain during the early 1930s from her home about a kilometer away in upper Claremont.\textsuperscript{83}

It should be noted that the two dominant characteristics of these mountain walkers are that they were mostly “colored” and male. At a time when most young women were expected to be at home, carrying out domestic duties, the Gool daughters and Mona Galant,\textsuperscript{84} members of the tiny, educated middle class in the early years of the 20th century, were the exception, rather than the rule. So was Terence Fredericks’s grandmother,\textsuperscript{85} who, unlike many of the women of her generation (she had probably been born in the 1890s), worked (in a printing works), and, hence, like many of the CPMC members, was from the lower middle class. For most young women and girls of this period, however, their recreational experience was more akin to that of the friends of a young girl in the 1920s, who were not even allowed to play in the street outside their homes.\textsuperscript{86} As Odendaal has noted:\textsuperscript{87} “In a strongly patriarchal society, (…) women did not have the same freedom to play and follow sport”. The same applied to non-competitive sport and recreation pursuits (such as mountaineering and mountain walking).

One of the main reasons that these leisure-seekers were predominantly “colored” was because of their residential proximity to the mountain chain. An additional reason that “colored” leisure-seekers greatly outnumbered black Africans was because the increasingly rigorous implementation of residential segregation had resulted in smaller numbers of black Africans in urban Cape Town.\textsuperscript{88} Further, the authorities had also been limiting African migration to the

\textsuperscript{80} Terence Fredericks, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, October 14, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.
\textsuperscript{81} The Gools were a prosperous merchant family, whose son and daughters later became involved in radical politics.
\textsuperscript{82} Minnie Gool, Interviewer Unknown, Transcript, August 2000, Digging Deeper Exhibition, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.
\textsuperscript{85} Terence Fredericks, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, October 14, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.
\textsuperscript{86} Galiema Brown, personal communication, August 24, 2004.
\textsuperscript{87} Andre Odendaal, \textit{The Story of an African Game} (Cape Town: David Philip, 2003), 129.
\textsuperscript{88} The authorities had deliberately targeted African residents in urban areas such as District Six, forcibly removing them, using the outbreak of bubonic plague in 1901 as justification, as well as the establishment of the segregated African location of Langa in 1927. Christopher Saunders, “From Ndabeni to Langa,” in \textit{Studies in the History of Cape Town, vol. 1}, edited by Christopher Saunders (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1984), 223.
Western Cape through various measures (including “influx control and a ““colored” Labor Preference Policy”) since the early years of the 20th century. By the 1940s, with these controls becoming stricter, the number of Africans in Cape Town was declining, with thousands “endorsed out”, i.e. expelled from the region.

Another important factor contributing to the phenomenon of mainly “colored” leisure-seekers on the mountain was the entrenchment of the racial hierarchy in society, which had placed black Africans at the bottom of the socioeconomic and political ladder since colonial times, while “colored” South Africans were relatively better off, with more political rights and access to non-menial jobs off limits to black Africans. One exception to this pattern of mountain leisure-use by “colored” South Africans was that by the residents of the African township of Luyolo on the slopes of Red Hill outside Simon’s Town, to which workers and their families had been relocated from quarters near the harbor in 1900. From Luyolo, residents had direct access to the mountain and, although little information about their recreation use of the mountain is available, it is highly likely that residents used their surroundings for recreation during their leisure time.

In the low-income enclaves in suburbs close to the mountain chain, the youth, who were confined to narrow streets with few outdoor recreation facilities, used the mountains as a leisure space, green open space, and play park. Hence, residents in the “colored” enclaves in suburbs such as Sea Point, below Signal Hill, Protea Village, below the Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden on the southern slopes of Table Mountain, Claremont, and the coastal villages of Kalk Bay and Simon’s Town went rambling, swimming in dammed up sections of streams, blackberry picking, collecting pine kernels, and even dancing to the fiddle in meadows on the lower mountain slopes.

91 Goldin, Making Race, 35-36.
92 A. Thomas, “‘It changed everybody’s lives’: The Simon’s Town Group Areas Removals,” in Lost Communities, Living Memories: Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town, edited by Sean Field (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001), 83.
93 As a historian has noted, “Their story still needs to be told.” Thomas, “‘It changed everybody’s lives’: The Simon’s Town Group Areas Removals,” 83.
94 Irwin Combrinck, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, September 14, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town; Yousuf Rassool, District Six: Lest we forget (Cape Town: University of the Western Cape, 2000), 3-4.
99 A. Thomas, “‘It changed everybody’s lives’: The Simon’s Town Group Areas Removals,” 96.
It was the community of District Six, situated at the foot of Devil’s Peak,\textsuperscript{100} which was a particularly important nursery of mountaineering talent. One of the reasons for this was that a number of social organizations operated in the area, such as the Marion Institute, the Silvertree Boys’ Club and the Scouts, whose programs gave youngsters (mostly males) their first taste of mountain-based leisure activities. The Marion Institute, a recreation club that offered a range of leisure and sporting activities to both boys and girls, became the home of the Marion Pathfinder Troop during the 1930s.\textsuperscript{101} whose activities included camping.\textsuperscript{102} The Scout troops based in District Six, at first called Pathfinders to distinguish them from the white South African Scout movement,\textsuperscript{103} used an area on the lower slopes of Table Mountain as their training ground.\textsuperscript{104} The Silvertree Boys’ Club was established in 1932 to offer recreation and sports activities to the children of District Six, as well as the neighboring low-income suburbs of Woodstock and Salt River.\textsuperscript{105} The activities of this club would, in subsequent years, include mountaineering and even rock climbing.

The Cowley Brothers, a group of Anglican missionaries based in Chapel Street in District Six, was another group that sparked the interest of District Six youth in mountaineering, as Dirk Ziervogel found.\textsuperscript{106} Ziervogel, who had left an unhappy home life as an adolescent in about 1912 and found refuge with the Cowley Brothers, had his interest in mountaineering stimulated by the missionaries. He became a keen mountaineer, who later joined the CPMC, a District Six-based mountain club. The Cowley Brothers, many of whom were enthusiastic mountain walkers, sometimes went on walks with the students from Zonnebloem College, such as the seventeen year-old Charles John Mditshwa, grandson of “the old chief of the Pondeansi.”\textsuperscript{107} One such excursion included the young Evi, in Cape Town on holiday from St. Matthews College in the Eastern Cape.\textsuperscript{108}

George Rudolph, a Scout Master who worked for the Forestry Department of the City Council, used to take District Six Scouts on overnight camping trips to Postern Cave on Table Mountain during the 1930s, and it was Rudolf, a self-taught face-climber, who subsequently

\textsuperscript{100}The mountain next to Table Mountain, part of the range surrounding central Cape Town.
\textsuperscript{101}Francois Cleophas, \textit{Physical Education and Physical Culture in the Colored Community of the Western Cape, 1837-1966} (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa, 2009), 188-190.
\textsuperscript{102}It is speculated that some of this scout troop’s activities may have taken place on the nearby mountain, even though this was not recorded. The Marion Institute, “The 23rd Annual Report and Financial Statement, January 1-December 31, 1938,” \textit{The Marion Institute Annual Report}, 1939, 4.
\textsuperscript{103}Francois Cleophas, \textit{Physical Education and Physical Culture in the Colored Community of the Western Cape, 1837-1966} (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa, 2009), 179.
\textsuperscript{104}Cleophas, \textit{Physical Education and Physical Culture in the Colored Community of the Western Cape}, 181.
\textsuperscript{105}Cleophas, \textit{Physical Education and Physical Culture in the Colored Community of the Western Cape}, 194.
\textsuperscript{106}Brian Brock, personal communication, February 8, 2016.
\textsuperscript{107}Father Noel, Letter, \textit{The Cowley Evangelist}, May 1908, 114.
\textsuperscript{108}Father Superior General, Letter, \textit{The Cowley Evangelist}, February 1911, 35-36.

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initiated Irwin Combrinck into the sport of rock climbing. Combrinck recalled that, as a young lad living in District Six in the mid-to-late 1930s, he was a member of the Scouts and later, probably during the 1940s, participated in the activities of the Silvertree Boys’ Club. It was through the Scouts that he went up the mountain for the first time, followed by regular climbs, as well as scouting activities in the Glen (a nature area situated between Table Mountain and Lion’s Head), which his troop, the First Cape Town Scouts, looked after. Additionally, Combrinck pursued his love for the mountains and mountaineering through the Silvertree Boys’ Club, as the Club took their members on regular mountain hikes.

Other former District Six residents followed a similar trajectory via the Scouts; for example, Terence Fredericks, who belonged to the 11th Cape Town Scouts, went camping on the mountain with his group, together with the 2nd Cape Town Scouts of St. Mark’s Church, and used the Glen to earn his training badges; while Vincent Kolbe remembered playing in the quarry on Devil’s Peak, and, as a member of the Scouts in about the mid-to-late 1940s, recalled trips to the Glen and to the summit of Table Mountain. The renowned novelist, the late Richard Rive, who was also a District Six resident, was a member of the King’s Scouts, and has recalled similar memories of scouting activities in the Glen during the same period.

Given the growing popularity of mountain-based recreation, it is unsurprising that, by the beginning of the 1930s, Table Mountain was attracting increasing numbers of “colored” hikers and ramblers, as noted by the MCSA at the time. By this stage, the racial stratification of society in Cape Town had become so entrenched, that there was no question of admitting these keen mountaineers, nor did they seek to do so. Instead, in 1931, one of these District Six-based mountaineers approached the Treasurer of the MCSA “with a request for information with a view to forming a colored mountain club”. The MCSA took no action, but it seemed that, by

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109 Irwin Combrinck, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, September 14, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.
111 Terence Fredericks, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, October 14, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.
112 Vincent Kolbe, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, September 15, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.
113 Shane Graham and John Walters, eds., Langston Hughes and the South African Drum Generation: The Correspondence (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 78.
114 Mountain Club of South Africa, Annual General Meeting, December 1931, MCSA Papers (BC 1421 B1.7 Vol. VII, 13/12/1926-11/06/1941), Special Collections, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.
116 Mountain Club of South Africa, A Meeting of the General Committee, April 1931, MCSA Papers (BC 1421 B1.7 Vol. VII, 13/12/1926-11/06/1941), Special Collections, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.
the middle of the year, the CPMC had been established,\textsuperscript{117} with the MCSA’s Annual Report for 1931 noting that:

During the year a non-European club has been started under the name of the ‘Cape Province Mountain Club.’ The new club has the sympathetic support of the Mountain Club of South Africa.\textsuperscript{118}

The founding members of the Club, which was based in District Six, were C. Fisher (Climbing Leader), C. Petersen (Chairman), K. Petersen (Treasurer), C. Townshend (Secretary), H. Flowers, J. Kannemeyer and B. Steyn.\textsuperscript{119} Although little is known of the socioeconomic standing of the Club’s membership, in contrast to that of the MCSA, members were probably drawn from the lower middle class, as working class people involved in manual labor would, in all likelihood, not have had the leisure time, inclination, or aspiration to become involved in mountaineering. Petersen, for example, was a bookbinder by trade,\textsuperscript{120} while others, such as Fisher\textsuperscript{121} and Townshend worked for the City Council as Mountain Rangers.\textsuperscript{122} The fact that this group was aware of the existence of the MCSA (probably having come across them on their own mountain excursions), and aspired to establish a similar organization themselves (as shown by their request for advice in starting their own club) points to the middle-class aspirations of the founder members.

Like the MCSA, the founding leadership of the CPMC was male-dominated and, while little is known of the composition of its early membership, it is likely that its membership too was male-dominated. This was probably strongly influenced by the fact that two of the members of its Executive were mountain rangers (an exclusively male profession), together with the likelihood that earlier traditional notions of what constituted “suitable” sporting and recreation pursuits for women and girls, which constrained female participation in physical activities, still prevailed in society.

The factors of race and class dictated the nature and extent of the relationship between the two clubs. On the part of the MCSA, its relationship with the CPMC was fairly cordial, but paternalistic. The fact that the new club required the assistance of the MCSA meant that the relationship was placed on a paternalistic footing from the start, and this, together with the subordinate political status of black South Africans at the time, meant that unequal power relations between the two clubs was inevitable. The junior status of the CPMC, together with the

\textsuperscript{117} Mountain Club of South Africa, \textit{A Meeting of the General Committee}, July 1931, MCSA Papers (BC 1421 B1.7 Vol. VII, 13/12/1926-11/06/1941), Special Collections, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.


\textsuperscript{119} Cape Province Mountain Club, \textit{A Brief History of the Cape Province Mountain Club}, 2011, retrieved from \url{http://capeprovince-mountainclub.co.za/index.php/about}.

\textsuperscript{120} Cape Province Mountain Club, \textit{CPMC}, 2012, retrieved from \url{http://capeprovince-mountainclub.co.za/index.php/cpmc}.

\textsuperscript{121} Anonymous, “Veteran climber has many memories,” \textit{Cape Times}, February 13, 1954.

\textsuperscript{122} Helen February, personal communication, June 26, 2009.
MCSA’s position as a well-resourced and staffed club with an educated, affluent membership, plus forty years of mountaineering experience, put the newly-formed organization at an immediate disadvantage. That a relationship of equality between the two organizations was not really possible was highlighted by the fact that the MCSA perceived the CPMC not so much as a fellow mountaineering organization, but rather as a useful mechanism for handling the “increasing numbers of non-Europeans” using Table Mountain for recreational purposes.

**Mountain-Based Leisure Pursuits in Cape Town in the Early-to-Mid-Apartheid Era, 1948-1969**

As in earlier years, the popularity of mountain-based leisure activities among low-income communities living close to the mountain chain continued in the post-World War II era, especially in District Six and Protea Village, which greatly contributed to the pool of mountaineering enthusiasts during this period. Hugh Stephens, whose mother’s family came from Protea Village, often stayed over during the 1960s, becoming a nature lover and mountain hiker in the process and, in his adult life, an expert rock climber and CPMC member. During the 1950s, the next wave of District Six-based youngsters were initiated into mountaineering; for example, George Gangat had his passion for mountaineering and rock climbing ignited by David McAdam, a warden at St. Mark’s Community Centre, who was also involved in the Silvertree Boys’ Club. McAdam, who regularly took youths up Table Mountain, was a face climber and member of the MCSA. Gangat’s experience was similar to that of a young Sea Scout in District Six, who was first taken up the mountain by McAdam in the late 1950s.

It was through McAdam and his mountain excursions that a number of boys were brought into the field of mountaineering, rock climbing, and subsequently into the CPMC. Further, the continuing mountaineering activities of organizations such as the various District Six Scout troops, which met at the Hyman Lieberman Institute and went on regular mountain camping trips, and the Silvertree Boys’ Club, taught many young boys the skills of mountaineering and thus were especially important in sparking a love of mountains and mountaineering among the youth of District Six.

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126 George Gangat, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, October 5, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.
127 Armien Harris, personal communication, May 22, 2010; George Gangat, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, October 5, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.
128 Armien Harris, personal communication, May 22, 2010.
129 Brian Brock, personal communication, October 19, 2015.
While individuals and organizations definitely played a significant role in stimulating an interest in mountaineering in the low-income communities of Cape Town in the post-war decades, for many, the mountain was the means of escape - an escape from the crowded homes they lived in, the narrow streets devoid of play parks, green space, and sporting facilities, as well as an escape from violence in the home and on the streets, or just from the vicissitudes of family life. As in previous decades, the neighboring mountains were regularly used as recreation grounds by the children and adolescents of District Six, with groups of young boys exploring the lower slopes of the mountain in the 1950s and, as they grew older, venturing higher up the mountain. This was the experience of former District Six resident, Patrick Pasqualle, who recalls regularly going for mountain walks by himself as a child, venturing further and further up Devil’s Peak.

Most youngsters preferred to ramble on the mountain as part of a group, who, as they grew older, began camping in the caves of Table Mountain over weekends and public holidays, especially during Easter. Spending their leisure hours camping in the mountain caves, armed with just some provisions and blankets, was a cheap and convenient way for groups of adolescents and young adults (usually all male) to entertain themselves during their leisure hours. As Joe Schaffers has reminisced, “We could enjoy ourselves for virtually nothing.” An additional advantage of camping was that it offered a way of escaping from adult supervision, which no doubt contributed to its popularity during the 1950s and 1960s, as attested to by the archival photographs held by the District Six Museum.

In the formal field of mountaineering, the post-World War II period was to prove a difficult one for the CPMC, as the National Party won the 1948 elections on an apartheid platform, premised on white superiority and economic discrimination in favor of white South Africans, as well as the implementation of racial segregation in every sphere of life. In this favorable socio-political and economic climate for white South Africans, the MCSA forged ahead, its young climbers opening up new and difficult routes on Table Mountain and further

133 Patrick Pasqualle, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, November 5, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six Museum, Cape Town.
134 Joe Schaffers, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, March 8, 2000, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six Museum, Cape Town.
135 Patrick Pasqualle, personal communication, August 17, 2017.
136 Stan Abrahams, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, May 3, 2000, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town; Patrick Pasqualle, personal communication, August 17, 2017.
137 Joe Schaffers, personal communication, August 28, 2009.
afield, as well as abroad, forming strong and cordial links with foreign mountain clubs and cultivating a special relationship with the Government, resulting in benefits for the Club.

The CPMC, on the other hand, was severely constrained in its development since its members were often unable to afford the expensive mountain boots and equipment required for rock climbing, nor could it charge the high subscriptions necessary to improve its mountain hut or hire permanent premises to hold its meetings. The lower wages members earned also meant that they did not have access to the private transport required to climb mountains further afield, let alone abroad. Further, given the prevailing racial prejudices of the period, particularly in the rural areas, not only was it often not possible for the CPMC to develop cordial relationships with white farmers, whose land had to be crossed in order to reach the mountains, but unpleasant encounters sometimes had to be endured.

The CPMC sought to overcome the restrictions and racial discrimination of the apartheid era by undertaking its first expedition abroad (Kilimanjaro in 1951), acquiring mountaineering expertise through interaction with foreign mountain clubs, and nurturing the next generation of talented mountaineers. The sharing of mountaineering skills with white climbers was difficult since “mixed” climbing was frowned upon by the MCSA, but nonetheless occurred on rare occasions, such as when individuals like Barry Fletcher formed a partnership with the CPMC’s leading climber, Charley Hankey, during the 1950s. Notwithstanding these difficulties, members did their best to overcome them, forming links with foreign mountain clubs, such as the European Alpine Club in the 1950s, and opening up important new routes on Table Mountain as well as elsewhere in the Western Cape during the 1960s. Nor did CPMC members restrict their activities to Club members, being very willing to train non-members, such as the adventurous young Andy Johnston and his friend Alfie Turner, who were initiated into rope climbing on Table Mountain in the late 1950s by CPMC members Willie Moon and Hennecke.

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140 For example, in return for instruction in basic rock climbing techniques to South African Air Force personnel, the Department of Defense gave a “generous donation” to the Transvaal Section, while the Natal Section was able to negotiate a reduced cost for visits to mountain areas in “Native Reserves.” Mountain Club of South Africa, “Annual Report, 1958,” Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa 61 (1959): 111.
141 Patrick Pasqualle, personal communication, August 17, 2017.
142 Colleen Knipe-Solomon, personal communication, June 22, 2009; Patrick Pasqualle, personal communication, August 17, 2017.
144 Barry Fletcher, personal communication, October 06, 2017.
146 Jose Burman, A Peak to Climb: The Story of South African Mountaineering (Cape Town: C Struik, 1966), 52.
147 Andy Johnston, personal communication, August 24, 2017.

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Given the increasing popularity of mountain-based leisure pursuits among the “colored” community in Cape Town during the post-World War II decades, the question that needs to be asked is: why? One of the most important contributory factors was the increase in the number of “colored” high schools during this period, resulting in a growing number of students enrolled at high school. This in turn contributed to a higher number of lower middle-class and middle-class “colored” people in Cape Town, who had the leisure time and the means to pursue middle class interests such as mountain hiking and climbing. Many of these high school students, who had not been exposed to these pursuits previously, were now given the opportunity as they were taken on mountain hikes by their teachers. One such example was Irwin Combrinck, a teacher at Livingstone High School in the mid-to-late 1950s who took his students on mountain hikes, thus establishing a culture of mountain hiking at the school. Although this school was situated in lower Claremont, some distance from the mountain, it did not stop a tradition of mountain hiking from taking hold - a tradition that was still flourishing during the 1960s. At Harold Cressy High School (situated in District Six), it was CPMC member Lionel van der Horst, who led groups of students on regular mountain hikes in the late 1950s.

High school students were also exposed to fellow students who were enthusiastic mountain hikers. For example, Andy Johnston, a former resident of Walmer Estate (a suburb adjacent to District Six), remembers going up Platteklip Gorge in the early 1950s with his classmates from Trafalgar High School (situated in District Six), while in the 1960s, Stephen Joyi, a former Livingstone High School student, was introduced to mountaineering by some of his classmates, who lived in Protea Village.

Another important question to be posed is why the sport of mountaineering, as well as mountain-based leisure pursuits, continued to be male-dominated. While later generations of the CPMC acknowledge that, generally male members outnumbered female members, they do not feel that the issue of gender was an obstacle in the club. However, this was probably due to the fact that most club recruitment took place within a fairly close circle of family and friends. It is unlikely that, outside this small recruitment circle, young girls would have found it easy to gain parental consent to join the club, for the same reasons that girls in black communities generally found it difficult to claim the leisure time and agency to participate in leisure activities and mountain-based recreation - these would have included patriarchy, traditional notions of the role

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148 For example, Athlone High School was established in 1946 (Athlone High School, n.d.); South Peninsula High School in 1950 (Fleurs, 1996); Alexander Sinton Secondary School in 1951 (Alexander Sinton Secondary School, n.d.); Harold Cressy High School in 1951 (Harold Cressy High School, n.d.); and Wittebome High School in 1956 (n.d.).
149 Irwin Combrinck, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, September 14, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town.
151 Patrick Pasqualle, personal communication, August 17, 2017.
152 Andy Johnston, personal communication, August 24, 2017.
154 Peter Bruyns, personal communication, October 12, 2017; Linda Fortune, personal communication, May 10, 2016.
of women, the primacy of domestic work, religious conservatism, gender inequality, and the lack of recreation facilities.\textsuperscript{155}

An important part of the mountain’s popularity lay in the fact that it offered an escape from the inequalities and discrimination of apartheid. Despite the fact that the 1950s-1960s was a period when the restrictions of apartheid were reaching their zenith, the Table Mountain chain remained free from it, offering a rare respite from the ugly reality that black South Africans were forced to inhabit down below. Hence, many of the mountaineers from that period have noted that the mountains offered a haven from the world of apartheid, saying that: “Table Mountain was the only place that was free, that we could walk to, that didn’t have [apartheid] notice boards”\textsuperscript{156}, “I escaped apartheid through mountain climbing”\textsuperscript{157}, and “It was a getaway from the rigors of apartheid at its worst”\textsuperscript{158}.

By the mid-to-late 1960s, mountain-based recreation among the “colored” community came under threat as a result of the implementation of the Group Areas Act, no. 41, 1950, which brought about residential segregation based upon race. Virtually all the environmentally desirable coastal areas were declared “white” areas, such as Sea Point\textsuperscript{159}, Kalk Bay\textsuperscript{160} and Simon’s Town\textsuperscript{161}, and the “colored” residents in these areas were evicted from the early-to-late 1960s onwards. In 1957, a substantial area close to Table Mountain, including those surrounding the Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden, was declared a “white Group Area”\textsuperscript{162}, which resulted in the eviction of the “colored” residents in these areas in 1959, with the removal of Protea Village residents taking place from 1965 to 1970.\textsuperscript{163} As in the case of evictees from other “white” areas, the residents of Protea Village were removed to purpose-built, bleak dormitory suburbs on the Cape Flats, with few, if any, green open spaces or other urban amenities (including adequate


\textsuperscript{156} Joe Schaffers, personal communication, August 28, 2009.

\textsuperscript{157} Linda Fortune, personal communication, May 10, 2016.

\textsuperscript{158} Stephen Joyi, personal communication, June 30, 2010.

\textsuperscript{159} Michele Paulse, “‘Everyone had their differences but there was always comradeship’: Tramway Road, Sea Point, 1920s to 1962,” in \textit{Lost Communities, Living Memories: Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town}, edited by Sean Field (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001), 55.


\textsuperscript{161} A. Thomas, “‘It changed everybody’s lives’: The Simon’s Town Group Areas Removals,” in \textit{Lost Communities, Living Memories: Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town}, edited by Sean Field (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001), 92.


public transport), and situated a considerable distance from their former homes on the lower slopes of the mountain.\(^{164}\)

District Six was declared an exclusively white residential area on February 11, 1966,\(^{165}\) and the forced removal of residents took place from 1968 onwards,\(^{166}\) in a process that took place throughout the 1970s. Residents of the area were dispersed all over the Cape Flats, destroying many social, cultural, and sports clubs and institutions in the process.\(^{167}\) Being marooned on the Cape Flats in townships situated at a distance from the mountain chain meant that those who wished to continue their mountain activities now had to use their limited leisure time and money to reach areas that had been easily and freely accessible before. The inevitable consequence of the evictions from these environmentally desirable areas with their easy access to nature is that, over time, the evictees (like most of the black population already in the townships) became alienated from the natural environment and issues related to it.\(^{168}\)

For many, another inevitable consequence of being removed from much-loved homes situated close to the mountain was that they lost the intimate connection with the mountain that regular interaction had established. This in turn led to feelings of estrangement which, fueled by anger and resentment at their forced removal, resulted in a refusal to continue mountain-based recreation or even to pay a visit to the area where their former homes were located.\(^{169}\) This growing disaffection from, and even antagonism towards, their former neighborhoods had a negative impact on the popularity and frequency of mountain-based leisure activities undertaken by former residents in the decades following the evictions, as could be seen in a number of negative impacts. For example, a survey of visitors to a number of South African botanical gardens (including Kirstenbosch) showed that 90% came from the white population group\(^{170}\) - a


\(^{166}\) Felicity Swanson and Jane Harries, “‘Ja! So was District Six! But it was a beautiful place’; Oral histories, memory and identity,” in *Lost communities, living memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town*, edited by Sean Field (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001), 63.

\(^{167}\) Zuleiga Adams, “Memory, imagination and removal: Remembering and forgetting District Six” (Master’s thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa, 2002), 73-75; Felicity Swanson and Jane Harries, “‘Ja! So was District Six! But it was a beautiful place’; Oral histories, memory and identity,” in *Lost communities, living memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town*, edited by Sean Field (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001), 65, 77.

\(^{168}\) This was evident from the fact that, by the late 20th century, support for the conservation movement was restricted to a narrow, white, middle-class support base. Farieda Khan, *Towards Environmentalism: A Socio-Political Evaluation of Trends in South African Conservation History, 1910-1976, with a Specific Focus on the Role of Black Conservation Organisations* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa, 2001), 3.

\(^{169}\) Irwin Combrinck, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, September 14, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town; Pam Jordan, Interview by Linda Fortune, Transcript, October 2, 1999, Table Mountain Interviews, District Six Museum Archives, District Six, Cape Town; John Valentine, personal communication, December 28, 2012; Mary Anne Kindo, personal communication, September 16, 2013.

concerning statistic, even taking into account the fact that the visitor profile has undoubtedly changed to include more black visitors in the intervening years. More recent statistics derived from a survey into the visitor profile to South Africa’s national parks shows a similar disturbing trend, with only 26% being black—a matter of serious concern to SanParks (the national body in charge of national parks), given the increase in the black middle class. Most telling of all is that, in recent years, organizations involved in taking young people from low-income communities on Table Mountain hikes have found that, in most instances, these excursions are the youngsters’ first opportunity for a nature or mountain-based experience.

The destruction of District Six and the dispersal of its residents to various areas of the Cape Flats badly affected the CPMC, since the Club was left “without a fixed venue for meetings and social functions (…) which could act as a focal point for members”. Not only did the Club lose venues such as St. Phillip’s Church in Chapel Street, which had been used to hold social evenings and to show films on rock climbing techniques, but, through the evictions, it lost the nursery where many members of the new generation of mountaineers had been nurtured at institutions like the Scouts and the Silvertree Boys’ Club. Most importantly, it lost the advantage of proximity to Table Mountain, which had been enjoyed by the District Six community. While the existing membership enabled the Club to weather the impact of the forced removals during the 1970s, its negative impact began to be felt by the mid-to-late 1980s, when the Club suffered a loss in membership so steep that it was feared it might have to close.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to show that it was political factors, particularly racial discrimination and racial segregation, that impacted strongly on the mountain-based leisure pursuits engaged in by black South Africans in Cape Town during the period under review. The consequence for black Africans, who were particularly severely discriminated against through the implementation of residential segregation, forced relocation to townships located a considerable distance from the mountain chain, and strict controls on in-migration, was that they were largely excluded from participation in mountain-based recreation and the sport of climbing. Participation in mountain-based recreation was thus restricted mainly to the “colored” communities living in close proximity to the mountain chain, since such factors as time, distance, and cost would also have largely excluded “colored” communities already living on the Cape Flats, some distance from the mountain chain.

171 While this is a survey of all national parks, it points to trends that are, in all likelihood, applicable to visitors to the Table Mountain National Park. South African National Parks, “South African National Parks Annual Report,” 2016, 65.
175 Brian Brock, personal communication October 19, 2015.
The popularity of mountain-based recreation (which grew particularly from the 1950s onwards) among large sections of the “colored” community was fueled by a number of factors - these included their close proximity to the mountain chain, the role played by groups such as the Scouts in promoting mountain-based activities and a love for the mountain, the growth in the number of high schools and the role they played in encouraging mountain hiking, as well as the popularity of camping on the mountain in tents and in caves. Above all, the mountain loomed large as a tranquil haven, an escape from strife in crowded homes, from noisy, congested streets, and from the ugly daily reality of apartheid.

The CPMC, despite its fairly small membership base, nonetheless also contributed to a climbing culture in District Six and further afield, nurturing and developing a number of expert rock climbers. However, the operation and growth of the CPMC was hobbled by the lower socioeconomic and political status foisted upon its membership by apartheid ideology, while the development of the mountaineering expertise of its members was stunted by the racist attitude of its white counterpart, the MCSA, and its refusal to interact with the CPMC on a basis of equality.

The most serious blow to fall on the mountain-based recreational activities, which had emerged among “colored” communities since the early 20th century, was the implementation of the Group Areas Act in the 1960s. This legislation resulted in the eviction of thousands of people from their homes close to the mountain chain and forcibly removed them to distant dormitory townships on the Cape Flats, making it extremely difficult for them to continue to engage in regular mountain-based recreation. These dreary townships were mostly devoid of green open space and lacked the diverse cultural and sporting organizations that had been an integral part of the lives the evictees left behind. The negative impact of this rupture would not only severely affect the social, recreation, and sporting aspects of the lives of those evicted, but that of the next generation as well, entrenching and promoting the alienation of black people from nature and the mountain for many years to come.

It is thus clear that it was the socioeconomic and political factors of racial inequality and racial discrimination that had the most negative impact on the participation of all black people in mountain-based recreation activities during the period under review, since these were the factors that determined who could participate, as well as how, and to what extent they could do so. It is this historical legacy that has negatively shaped and directed mountain-based leisure pursuits, ultimately hindering the development of this form of recreation among the black communities of Cape Town through the ensuing decades, right up to the present.