TOWNSHIP FAMILIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A PILOT STUDY.

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ABSTRACT

On-going research into township family life in Natal has pointed to the need to develop a conceptualisation of the family that is appropriate to local historical and material conditions. In particular, such a conceptualisation should take account of the effects of rapid social change on township family relations. On the basis of a critical review of existing definitions of the family, the present report contributes to the establishment of such a conceptualisation. To this end, it draws on in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with 22 members of five township families in early 1988, where respondents spoke in detail about their family life. It draws on these interviews with the aim of establishing "grounded theory"[1] *viz*: a theory of the family grounded in the concrete experience of township residents as reflected in their accounts of their day-to-day experience. Drawing on a detailed analysis of these interviews, the report outlines an indigenous theory of the family. This theory reflects the implicit definition of the family underlying the township respondents' accounts of their family experience. This indigenous theory of the family defines it in terms of (i) the composition of the family; (ii) power relations within the family; and (iii) functions of the family. On the basis of the interview data, the report outlines a conceptual framework which builds on the notions of contradiction and culture. This framework is offered as a potentially useful analytic tool for investigating the impact of social change on the family, as defined by the indigenous theory. The report concludes with a critique of the concept of 'family disintegration', which is often used to describe changing social relations in township families. It is argued that the family is currently the strongest and most empowering social institution in the disrupted fabric of township social life.

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1   Glaser and Strauss (1967), p1.

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CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF THEORETICAL ISSUES

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of South Africa since the 1800's has seen the development of capitalism gradually drawing large numbers of black South Africans from rural to urban areas. This process has wrenched them from a traditional pre-capitalist mode of production into a diversity of living arrangements in a variety of urban, township and squatter areas as they have become drawn into the capitalist workforce.

This on-going process of urbanisation has had a profoundly disruptive effect on African social relations. Hand in hand with the disadvantages attendant on any urban workforce under capitalism, has been the added 'structural violence' of the apartheid system. Black people have had inadequate access to housing, health care and welfare, and education. Furthermore the state has waged an on-going repressive and often violent campaign to hamper the organisation of effective resistance to economic and political oppression of black South Africans.

Comment on the current social, political and economic crisis in South Africa often refers to its deleterious effects on the everyday life of black urban South Africans - and in particular on 'family life' in the townships.

Against this background, and in response to repeated requests by various township community groupings and individuals, the Natal Family Project was set up to investigate the breakdown of township family life in South Africa, and the social, psychological and organisational effects of this process. (Hayes and Morris, 1987) This project situates itself within a historical materialist framework. Its basic assumption is that the experience of particular families cannot be understood independently of the broader social, economic and political context of family life.

The pilot phase of the project - on which this thesis is based - used semi-structured open-ended interviews to gather detailed data about a large number of issues that affect family life, such as unemployment, political conflict and repression, changing relations between male and female and young and old, and the changing role of tradition in peoples' lives.

As the research progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that the notion of "the family" is, as Barrett and McIntosh assert, a "slippery phenomenon", meaning different things to different people. (1982, p8).

Thus, for example, in political discourse it is clear that the family is not only a social and economic institution but also an ideological construct (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982). To illustrate this point, the authors offer an analysis of the way in which the New Right in Thatcher's Britain has promoted a definition of the family that is quite consistent with its overall political agenda.

More relevant to the concerns of this thesis, Hassim and Meterlerkamp (1988) provide an analysis of: (a) the way in which the notion of the family is manipulated by the South African state, as part of its programme for social and political control of black South Africans, and (b) the way in which Inkatha serves to reinforce this ideological construction.

The family is also a contested terrain within academic work. In sociological and anthropological studies, for example, definitions of 'the family' abound, each conceptualising the family from a broad variety of theoretical perspectives, and with a variety of ends in view.

Most of the sociological writing on the family however has been done with the modern, western nuclear family in mind, against the background of a capitalist social system. Thus Morgan (1975) criticises both functionalist and Marxian approaches to the family which often tend to "presuppose a traditional model of the nuclear family where there is a married couple with children, where the husband is the breadwinner and where the wife stays at home to deal with the housework" (p96).

As opposed to much of family sociology's focus on advanced capitalist societies, anthropological work on the family has tended to focus on pre-capitalist social systems (so-called 'primitive' or 'pre-literate' societies) (Bloch, 1983). Like their sociological counterparts, these anthropological perspectives do not always seem immediately

applicable to township social relations. These fall into the *transitional* area between the capitalist social forms assumed by much sociological work on the family, and pre-capitalist social forms assumed by the anthropological work.

Furthermore, mainstream anthropological studies are argued to be limited by their static, ahistorical nature (Guy, 1987), making little attempt to come to grips with the socially and historically specific nature of social relations, and the mechanisms of interaction between phenomena such as the kinship, descent and the family, and the broader social, political and economic structures in which these are embedded.

These limitations make much of this work unhelpful for this project's attempt to locate the township family in the context of wider social relations.

In starting to analyse its empirical data, the Natal Family Project is faced on the one hand with a plethora of concepts of the family, each of which do not seem 'quite right' for its purposes. On the other hand it is faced with a mass of interview data which abounds with respondents' implicit assumptions about the structure, composition and power relations of township family life.

The aim of the present report is to begin to generate "grounded theory" - the term that Glaser and Strauss (1967) apply to the process of "discovering theory from data". Its aim is to derive the 'indigenous theory of the family' implicit in empirical interview data with township families (that has been collected during the project's pilot phase). This will be located within a historical materialist theoretical framework. This "grounded theory" of the family will be offered as the basis for a working conceptualisation of the family for township research. In other words, the project aims to contribute to the endeavour of constituting the township family as an object of research.

At this stage it must be emphasised that the present report is based on a small pilot sample of families. Its aims are correspondingly modest: to generate tentative hypotheses to guide future research on township family life in a rapidly changing society.

This aim will be pursued along the following lines: the first chapter of this report discusses the problems inherent in the enterprise of defining 'the family'. This is followed by some methodological comments on the status of individuals' accounts of their lives and on the enterprise of integrating such accounts within an over-arching theoretical framework - in the interests of constructing working hypotheses grounded in concrete research data. (Such working hypotheses would serve as analytical tools for future research into township family life.) The chapter will conclude with a selective review of current literature in the interests of establishing a historical and materialist framework for township family research. Chapter 2 will examine the the empirical data of the Natal Family Project in an attempt to construct an 'indigenous' theory of the family based on the research interviewees' detailed accounts of their family life. Chapter 3 draws on the theoretical review and the indigenous theory in its presentation of a set of analytical tools to guide further township family research.

2. 'THE FAMILY': PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION.

"Social science does not have an adequate definition of the family or a coherent set of categories from which to analyse it, or a rigorous conceptual scheme to specify what is significant about it." (Poster, 1978, p ix)

Laing wryly comments that: "we speak of families as though we all know what families are." (1978, p3) Sociologists, for example, have devoted much attention to the notion of the family, and their definitions are often plagued with implicit and unacknowledged assumptions about social relations (Ziehl, 1988). It is beyond the scope of the present report to provide a detailed review of attempts by sociologists to define 'the family'. One excellent and accessible review is provided by Haralambos (1984).

Much sociological writing uses the notion of 'the family' and 'the nuclear/bourgeois family' interchangeably:

"The ideological implication of this is that they put forward the notion that only nuclear families qualify as true families. An unduly specific definition of the family is inhibiting both for the development of theory and for research. It obscures the variety of ways in which the family manifests itself in social reality and prevents or makes it difficult for theorists to treat all family forms as families in their own right." (Ziehl, 1988, p7)

Even those sociologists who do not fall into this ideological trap, and are specific about the socio-economic location of the family that they refer to, have tended to take the middle class family as their point of reference - usually because they are writing from within middle class societies, or are involved in middle class political struggles.

This comment applies to work such as Barrett and McIntosh's (1982) *The Anti-social Family*, for example, which focusses on the dominant family form in advanced capitalist societies, looking at the role of the nuclear family form in capitalism and the role it plays in the formation of gendered subjectivity. Thus, in relation to the needs of the present project, although this work stresses the useful general point that one cannot isolate the family from the wider system of social relations in which it is embedded, it illustrates this with specific examples from advanced capitalist societies. In addition, Barrett and McIntosh's wider

political agenda is not directly relevant to township families, who are not presently deeply invested in issues such as a woman's right to abortion, or lesbian motherhood, (which are the preoccupation of white middle class western feminists such as Barrett and MacIntosh.)

Texts on the sociology of the African family are scarce. Some of those that do exist (eg Kayango-Male and Onyango, 1984; Olatunde Odetala and Ademola, 1985) fall into the trap of uncritically applying concepts derived from the sociology of the family in western-industrial society to Africa. These studies pay scant attention to the problems of imposing assumptions appropriate to capitalist social relations in Europe and America to vastly different social formations in Africa.

Faced with the confusion resulting from attempts to define 'the family', some writers prefer to throw out the concept altogether - preferring to speak of 'the household' (Guyer and Peters, 1987) or 'the domestic group' (Ziehl, 1988). Taking up a suggestion by Cuvillier (1954), Ziehl argues that since 'the family' is such an elusive notion, one should simply abandon it, and replace it with the notion of 'domestic group'. She provides a two-pronged definition of this concept:
a) a "functional definition", based on two needs: the need of children to be nurtured, and the need of parents to nurture together with their need for emotional support, and
b) a "descriptive definition", viz the matrifocal cell, as suggested by Haralambos, who argued: "that it is necessary to redefine the family and state that the minimal family unit consists of a woman and her dependent children, own or adopted, and that all other family types are additions to this unit" (Haralambos, 1984, p326)

On one level this is as reasonable a definition as some of the others to be found in the many introductory sociology texts. On the other hand it is also fraught with the problems inherent in such definitions. This report will not focus on the merits or demerits of the content of Ziehl's definition at this stage beyond saying that her suggestions are certainly not unproblematic.[1]

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[1] For example, one could debate the ideological implications of postulating nuturing and emotional support as universal human needs, and as the central functions of a family defined in terms of a woman and her children.

At this stage our only comment will be three more general criticisms of the type of argument she is offering:

i) Ziehl fails to indicate how the **strategy** of simply replacing the complex and confusing notion of 'the family' with the notion of 'the domestic group' (arbitrarily assigned a [problematic] two-pronged definition) contributes to clearing up the conceptual confusion around the family. All she has done is to replace the slippery notion of the family with an equally slippery notion of the domestic group. Thus her solution sidesteps the family problem and creates a new one - the domestic group problem - rather than making a major contribution to the debate.

ii) On the one hand Ziehl succinctly argues:

> "there can never be one correct definition of the family ....'the family' is defined by different people and institutions with different purposes in mind, and that each definition has its value (only) within the context with which it is used" (1988, p16)

She then proceeds to do exactly what she has criticised however: to provide a universally applicable definition of the family on the basis of a theoretical review of (by her own admission) highly problematic theoretical writings in sociology - and with no outline of the particular context to which this definition should apply.

iii) Following from point ii, this project would argue that the main problems around defining the family is the fact that there is no such thing as 'the family' conceived of as a stable, universal or transhistorical category. Families are the historically specific manifestations of particular sets of social relations. Thus it is pointless to offer a definition of the family that is not immediately qualified by an account of **which** family is being referred to. This would involve the specification of a particular group of people, embedded within a clearly specified set of social relations. Definitions of the kind offered by Ziehl - that attempt to provide a content-free skeletal definition, that would characterise **all** family forms, rather than **specific** ones - create as many problems than they solve.

Many sociological and anthropological theories of the family flounder because they try and strip 'the family' - a complex set of historically specific social relations - of its social and

historical specificity, in order to establish a universally applicable definition of the 'essential family'.

It is argued here that the resulting definitions almost always include some sort of ideological bias in favour of a particular view of social relations, gender roles or human needs.[2] Others involve the generalisation of the the experience of one specific set of social relations to personkind in general - as Engels (1972) does in his history of the family in his work *The origin of the family, private property and the state*. Although this work obviously cannot be criticised for being ahistorical, it can be accused of generalising what is at best history of the western capitalist family form to 'the family' in general.

In the process of stripping particular family forms of their social and historical spec such definitions attempt to turn the family - a dynamic and extremely comple process embedded in a wider set of social relations, with its existence intimate with the reproduction and transformation of these social relations on the one h retaining a degree of autonomy on the other - into a static and ahistorical institutio

Donzolet (1980) suggests an alternative approach to the family, to replace the vain for a unitary definition. In developing his argument for the importance of regarding family against the backdrop of specific social historical circumstances, he emphasises class differences in families. He stresses that the processes constructing bourgeois family practice are quite distinct from those relating to the working class family.

In addition, he traces the history of the family in France comparing the modern family with that of the mid-eighteenth century. At that time, he argues, family authority was endorsed and supported by the state. This situation has been altered by a process of gradual transformation whereby families have gradually lost this authority, and become a "relay, an obligatory or voluntary support for social imperatives" Donzolet, 1980, p103).

"Far from being the plexus of a complex web of relations of dependence and allegiance, the family became the nexus of nerve-endings of machinery that was exterior to it." (p92)

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2   See Barrett and McIntosh 1982 for detailed discussion of this point.

:hese lines, Donzolet argues for a notion of the family as the site of intersections of
ocial forces rather than as an ahistorical and pre-given institution:

"he method we have employed tries to avoid this danger by positing the family, not as a point of
:parture, as a manifest reality, but as a moving resultant, an uncertain form whose intelligibility can
.ly come from studying the system of relations it maintains with the socio-political level. This requires
; to detect all the political mediations that exist between the two registers, to identify the lines of
ansformation that are situated in that space of intersections." (Donzolet, 1980, p. xxv)

port is situated in the genre of writers such as Donzolet, in the sense that it will seek
:eptualise the process of changing family relations in a particular social and historical
t. Rather than attempting to locate or construct a static notion of the family
ndent of its wider historical and social location, and its dynamic nature, an attempt
: made to investigate the family as an institution at the intersection of a very
:ally specific and complex network of social relations.

these lines this report will seek to conceptualise the family along three intersecting
;ions:

the institutional dimension, where institutions are defined as the major organised
systems of social relationships in a society, within which norms, values and ways for
behaving are transformed into relatively enduring, standard and predictable
patterns;

the historical dimension, situated at the point of articulation of modes of
production; and

a materialist dimension, taking into account the intimate relationship of the family
with wider social forces (viz: the economy and the state) by which the family is
partially penetrated, and from which it is partially autonomous.

3. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES.

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." (Marx 1951, p225)

This report seeks to examine the changing face of township family life in the context of the process of changing social relations. It takes as its empirical starting point the pilot data of the Natal Family Project - in-depth interviews conducted with 22 members of five township families in early 1988.

At this point it is important to take a stand on the status of individuals' subjective accounts in the research process. Levin *et al* (1987) emphasise that while such individual accounts have an essential role to play in the social sciences, they are only one part of a larger picture:

"Micro foundations are important for macro social theory because of the ways they help focus our questions, and because of the ways they enrich our answers. But there is much more to science than their elaboration." (1987, p83)

Morris (1987) expands on these points in a critique of the methodological individualist tendency in the work of the social historians of southern Africa in the 1980's. They focus almost exclusively on individuals' accounts of their experience in their construction of history. Morris argues that this restriction of focus to the subjective accounts of the experience of the "ordinary person in the street", precludes researchers from "grasping and revealing the totality of contradictions and forces structuring the lives of the 'ordinary person in the street'". (p 9)

While individuals are important sources of information about their own lives and their own experiences, the accounts that they give of their lives and experiences are necessarily limited and biased:

"Those people do not comprehend with clarity the social forces structuring their social lives, behaviour and consciousness. If they did, we would have no need for a theory of ideology, for ideology and the process by which individual consciousness is ideologically structured would have no place in social reality.

"Marxist analysis sets out to take into account the views of the oppressed classes as well as those of the dominant classes, and *the social forces that none of them comprehend consciously*, and thereby produce an analysis of the totality of contradiction and forces characterising a particular society, community or event. It does this so that the rural and urban oppressed may comprehensively understand the social forces they only inchoately comprehend as manipulating, determining and oppressing them, not only against their will but often outside their immediate consciousness." (Morris, 1987, p9, my emphasis)

Against the background of the importance of locating individuals' accounts of their experience within the context of a wider social theory, this project approaches the interview data in the manner outlined by Preston-Whyte and Miller (1987):

"To make sense of the text, or the events it captures, two levels of analysis are attempted: first, in terms of meanings attributed by the actors concerned to their actions, and second in terms of meanings imposed on the actors by a process of structural transformation of which they may not be aware, but which nevertheless limits their degrees of freedom in action." (p1)

Thus it will attempt at all times to locate the individuals' subjective accounts of their experience within a framework that is sensitive to the wider structural relations and social forces within which this experience is located.

In attempting to outline a theoretical framework that takes account of this "process of structural transformation", this report will take as its starting point Marx's dictum that 'people make their own history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing'. Two inter-related assumptions will be made as elaboration of the 'unchosen circumstances' in which people make history:

i)   that the present is critically influenced by the past, and

ii)   that individual experience is critically influenced by wider social relations.

The implications of these two assumptions will be spelt out during the course of this report. Suffice to say at present that they commit us to locating the family as an **institution** at the intersection of what have already been referred to as the **historical** dimension and the **materialist** dimension respectively.

Historically, this report will aim to understand township social relations in terms of their location at the point of articulation of two modes of production: a pre-capitalist mode of production[1] (where the family was the basic unit of both production and reproduction) and a capitalist mode of production (where the growing complexity of the forces of production has gone hand in hand with the development of an increasingly complex set of relations of production - and while the family remains as the basic unit of reproduction, its role in the process of production becomes a far more complex and diffuse one).

From a materialist standpoint, we will argue that at any one point in time the family is embedded in a wider set of social and economic relations - a complex network of economic and political relationships, which we will refer to as the relationships implied by the economy and the state.

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1   The rural roots of black South Africa people have been historically diverse to the point that what we will refer to as 'pre-capitalist' social relations probably constitute several different modes of production. This point will be taken up in a later section.

4. MATERIALIST PERSPECTIVE ON THE FAMILY

"According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the last resort, the production and reproduction of immediate life. But this itself is of a two-fold character. On the one hand the production of the means of subsistence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools requisite thereof; on the other, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social institutions under which men of a definite historical epoch and of a definite country live are conditioned by both kinds of production; by the stage of development of labour on the one hand and the family on the other." (Marx and Engels, 1968, p455)

4.1 The premises of Marx's materialist method.

In *The German Ideology*, in a chapter entitled: "The premises of the materialist method", Marx outlines the following five principles of human existence. These principles "have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today". (cited in MacLellan, 1977, pp165-169)

i) The first premise of all human existence, and therefore of all history is the premise that people must be in a position to live in order to be able to 'make history':

"But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing, and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself." (p165)

ii) The action of satisfying these needs, and the instruments of acquisition that are acquired in this process, lead to the production of new needs.

iii) The third circumstance that enters into historical development from the very outset, is:

"... that men, who daily remake their own life, begin to make other men, to propagate their kind: the relation between men and women, parents and children, the family ... The family, which to begin with is the only social relationship becomes later, when increased needs create new social relations and the increased population new needs, a subordinate one ..." (p166)

iv) The production of life, both of one's own in labour, and of fresh life in procreation, is therefore a social as well as a natural process, and cannot be understood independently of this social dimension. Marx defines the concept "social" as "the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner, and to what end".

"It follows from this that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a 'productive force'. Further, that the multitude of productive forces accessible to men determines the nature of society, hence, that the 'history of humanity' must always be studied and treated in relation to the history of industry and exchange ... it is quite obvious from the start that there exists a materialistic connection of men with one another, which is determined by their needs and their mode of production, and which is as old as men themselves. This connection is ever taking on new forms, and thus presents a 'history' independently of the existence of any political and religious nonsense which in addition may hold men together." (p167)

v) The fifth aspect of human history is the existence of consciousness and language, which "arise from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men ... consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning, a social product". (p167) Initially in simple early societies, human beings' restricted relations to nature means that their relationships to each other are also restricted - consciousness takes a simple "sheep-like" or "tribal" form. However this simple consciouness is developed and extended through increased population - which goes hand in hand with increased productivity and increased needs. This process finally leads to a division of labour at the moment when the division of material and mental labour appears.

With the development of the division of labour, the three basic 'moments': the forces of production, the state of society, and consciousness, "can and must come into contradiction with one another, because the division of labour implies the possibility, nay the fact, that intellectual and material activity - enjoyment and labour, production and consumption - devolve on different individuals".

In opposition to German idealism, Marx emphasises the material base of all consciousness:

"even if theory, theology, philosophy, ethics etc comes into contradiction with the existing relations, this can only occur because existing social relations have come into contradiction with existing forces of production." (p167)

These five premisses form the framework for the present report's attempt to conceptualise the family. We start with the assumption that in order to survive, human beings must produce and reproduce. In the process of production and reproduction they enter into

social relations. The most basic social relations are family relationships, but as the process of production becomes increasingly complex, the family becomes part of a broader network of (historically specific) social relations, and cannot be understood independently of its inter-connection with them.

4.2 Leonard's key concepts in a materialist analysis.

This research attempts to integrate individual social actors' subjective accounts of their experience of family life within the context of a wider theory of the transformation of the township family under specific conditions of social change. In any attempt to locate individual's accounts of their lives within a wider theory of social relations, it is appropriate to provide some 'conceptual bridges' across the notorious gulf between macro-theory and micro-accounts of peoples' subjective experience. These concepts should provide analytical tools for beginning to tease out the impact of wider social forces such as the economy, the family and the state on 'the everyday life of the ordinary person in the street', as manifested in the empirical interview data.

Leonard (1984) sets himself the task of using Marx's materialist theory of history as the basis for an exploration of:

> "the nature of human consciousness, how it is constructed within specific historical conditions, how it is manipulated in the interests of particular class, gender and ethnic groups, and how such manipulation might be more effectively resisted". (p2)

He locates this task against the backdrop of what he calls the "gap in marxist theory". Sarte has also referrred to this gap:

> "Marxism lacks any hierarchy of mediations which would permit it to grasp the process which produces the person and his product inside class and within society at any given historical moment." (Sartre, 1963, p56).

Thus Marx's writings do not provide an explication of the mechanisms whereby individuals internalise capitalist social relations, and reproduce/transform these in the context of submission/resistance to dominant social forms.

Leonard's starting point is the existence of societies in which individuals take their place within a set of social relations of superordinacy-subordinacy, according to their class, gender and ethnic status.

His work is particularly useful for our purposes for the following reasons:

1.   It provides a framework for a consideration of the family's articulation with the wider social relations of the economy and the state.

2.   It provides (a) an account of the impact of these three intimately inter-connected phenomena (the family, economy and state) on individual life experience, and (b) it does so in a way that points towards the possibility of operationalising Marx's theory of social relations in a manner that will permit us to analyse individual accounts in terms of a wider social theory.

Leonard begins with the contention that human beings are produced by the social relations characteristic of a specific social formation at a particular point in history. These social relations centre on production and reproduction, embody contradictions and within the social formation of capitalism, are based upon class, gender and ethnic domination. As Leonard notes: "The individual's life experience and personality structure is determined by a unique biography situated within a specific set of class, gender and ethnic relations." (1984, p109)

The individual connects to the social world through two kinds of interrelated experiences - material relations and ideology. The individual's material activities and exchanges at work, in the family, and in many other contexts are penetrated by meanings, definitions and 'common sense' assumptions. The latter reflect the ideologies through which a class, gender or ethnic group maintains its internal coherence, makes sense of the world, and either legitimates its dominant position in the social order, or validates its resistance to domination.

Leonard postulates three social determinants of the individual: the economy, the family and the state. The relative significance of these determinants will vary according to the

individual's class, gender or ethnic position, "though we would maintain that in contemporary bourgeois democracies, the economy and the family are overall more important determinants than direct state intervention" (p110).[1]

The relationship between the family on the one hand, and economy and state on the other is a complex one, its complexity encapsulated in Leonard's claim that: "the cultures of families and their internal relationships are relatively autonomous of the economy and the state, although deeply penetrated by both". (p110)

Leonard's insistence on maintaining the tension between the "relative autonomy" of the family on the one hand, and its "deep penetration" by the economy and the state goes hand in hand with his warning against the tendency to see the contemporary family as almost entirely functional to the needs of capital. Such a view has dominated sociological thinking on the family for many years (Haralambos, 1984). In Leonard's opinion:

> "It is more useful to avoid such over-functionalist explanations and to see the family as to some degree relatively autonomous in relation to the capitalist mode of production, sometimes in conflict with its demands, though most usually accomodating to them." (1984, p10)

An adequate conceptualisation of the family should be sensitive to the family's intimate link to economy and state, and should start to unpick the complexity of a link that is simultaneously 'relatively autonomous' and 'deeply penetrated' by them.

The economy.

The economy plays an important role in the shaping of individual consciousness in the sense that:

> "capitalist productive and social reproductive labour, directed towards the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of the labour power upon which it rests, requires the performance of productive labour, socially necessary labour and the consumption of commodities." (Leonard, 1984, p110)

Each individual submits to and struggles against these requirements depending upon the chance effects of personal biography, and the overall balance within the social formation of

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1   This is a questionable point given the role of state-sponsored education in this process.

class, ethnic and gender forces. Leonard (1984, pp110-111) outlines a number of the processes whereby the economy shapes individuals:

a)   The nature of abstract wage labour provides the individual with a social identity and means of material support, but at the same time subjects individual needs and capacities to the imperatives of capital accumulation and profit. The degree of alienation experienced in wage labour will be related to the individual's class, gender and ethnic position.

b)   Domestic labour plays an essential role in capitalist production in terms of its task in reproducing labour power. While this phenomenon is, like wage labour, a source of social identity, it subordinates those who perform it to essentially servicing and nurturing activities. In addition it contributes to maintaining and perpetuating women's oppression and male domination - since women tend to carry the responsibility for domestic work.

c)   Family members have to sell their labour power for wages. In this way the economy regulates the level of material subsistence maintained by individuals and their families. It also regulates the allocation of resources within families for consumption. Low levels of material subsistence have physically and psychologically damaging effects upon the individual: including outcomes such as nutritional deficiency, anxiety, depression.

d)   Although the consumption of commodities is obviously necessary for survival in a modern society, this consumption is permeated with the capitalist imperative to create new needs for new products in order to promote capital accumulation and profit. The process of social mediation of needs affects the individual through the linking of consumption with self-identity and social status, especially in relation to class, gender and age. This process involves, for example, the urge to buy products that will deteriorate quickly, and the inducing of feelings of worthlessness and guilt when poverty prevents the purchase of such products.

The family

The family is the material and ideological location within which most people are socialised to become 'competent members' of their particular society. It is within the family that most children are reared to take their place in the superordinate-subordinate hierarchy of their particular social formation.

The family plays a vital role in the constitution of the individual as a social actor who acts, and is socialised to act, in a particular socio-historical context and who must meet the demands of a reality which already exists before her individual life takes its course. The family initiates the child to take her place in this pre-existing reality - within the framework of the possibilities and constraints society affords to individuals according to their class, gender and ethnic status.

The family also provides the context for the perpetuation of what Leonard calls "the ideology of familialism", a celebration of the nurturing roles of women, the subordination of children and other requirements of the social order.

Individuals are constituted via the place they take in the shared web of meanings that constitute the social world. They are born into an already constructed social world of meanings. Hall (1983) refers to this world of meanings as ideology:

> "the mental frameworks - the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation - which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works." (p 59)

The family - by presenting to the child a particular version of a constructed reality - plays a key role in the ideological interpellation of human subjects.

"Interpellation" refers to the process whereby ideology constitutes individuals as members of a historically specific social formation. (Althusser, 1971). Leonard (1984) defines interpellation as follows:

> "Ideologies interpellate or speak to the individual from his or her birth in the form of expectations concerning how to behave, think, feel and what objectives to pursue. These ideological definitions and

expectations become part of the individual's world view, so as to produce a gendered class subject who is required to submit to the social order and prepare for labour within it." (Leonard, 1984, p115) .

Therborn (1980) outlines three modes of 'ideological interpellation', which serve to explicate the process whereby individuals internalise and reproduce networks of unequal social relations (according to varying degrees of submission or resistance):

i) The first mode takes the form of the assumption that existing class, gender and ethnic relations are 'natural'. For example, girls identifying with their mothers will often come to see female submissiveness as simply something 'in nature', symbolised by the possession of certain sexual attributes. The interpellation of class and ethnic subordinacy and superordinacy also depends on the legitimation of existing forms of oppression as 'natural' rather than socially constructed.

ii) The second mode entails the assumption that existing social relations are right, just and desirable. The perpetuation of capitalist social relations requires not only that individuals accept the existing social order as a 'natural' system of hierarchies, but also so far as possible, regard them as good and beneficial. For example, the bourgeois male child will come to take for granted the superiority of mental compared as opposed to manual labour as a preparation for a class-appropriate education. Many working class women will be subjected to the idea that intellectual work is 'not for them' - and that domestic labour is the enjoyable and fulfilling path to becoming a 'good mother'.

iii) The mode is the assumption that existing social relations represent the only possible way in which the world could be arranged. Hand in hand with the idea that unequal power relations are natural, and good, goes the idea that it is impossible to have alternative relations. To 'go against nature' is not only wrong, but also impossible. The acceptance by the child of the surrounding social world, its relationships and hierarchies, as the only possible world is important for the reproduction of the social order.

Leonard (1984) delineates three ways in which family serves to perpetuate the *status quo:*

i) family relations are based on gender and age hierarchies of subordinacy and control - biological factors (sex differences and the dependency of young children on adults) are used to legitimate gender oppression and parental authority, preparing the child to take their place in the hierarchical social world

ii)   family practices prepare and maintain children for wage labour, domestic labour and nurturing roles appropriate to their class position and gender

iii) family practices aften communicate wider ideologies appropriate to the production of class and gender subjects, including acceptance of the existing social order and the impossibility of changing society in the interests of its most subordinate members.

Inseparable from the role the family plays as the ideological location of the developing child, is its location of the child in a specific material context. The place children take on the gender-class-ethnic subordinacy-superordinacy continuum will be determined not just by the web of beliefs into which the family will initiate her, via a complex variety of family processes and interactions. Their relation to these beliefs will also be reinforced by the material location of the family - material pressures faced by the family (eg poverty, inadequate housing, depression and guilt associated with unemployment) are bound to affect profoundly the nature of individual experience, and of the way in which individuals locate themselves in the world.[2]

For example, the class-specific nature of the father's wage labour will greatly influence the kind of social world and its associated values and imperatives which he imposes on the family from outside. Thus a father might bring into the family the strains of a hard and competitive struggle for survival on the one hand, or the possibilities of collective and co-operative activity on the other; the desperation and fear of redundancy and unemployment on the one hand, or the self-confidence arising from secure and enjoyable work on the other.

The state

Leonard argues that:

> "The state reflects, in its organisation and policies, the precise balance of class, gender and ethnic forces at any given historical point." (1984, p112)

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2   The empirical section of the thesis will provide several examples of the way in which the working class township family inserts its members into a subordinate position on the social hierarchy, and the way in which both material and ideological family practices often serve to ensure that they stay in this position.

Leonard (p112-3) outlines several instances of the way in which the state shapes human consciousness:

a) Certain state practices define what is normal and what is deviant: ideologies of law, of the family, of mental health and physical fitness underpin the material practices of medicine, welfare, education and the penal system.

b) Certain state practices reinforce gender, class, ethnic and age hierarchies and differentiations. The educational system is dominated by practices directed towards preparing the individual for wage and domestic labour through the acquisition of capacities considered appropriate to class, gender and ethnic position and through attitudes of subordination to authority.

c) Certain state practices actively discriminate against and/or stigmatise particular social strata or groups.

d) Certain state practices directly or indirectly propagate the world view of a dominant class, gender or ethnic group. An essential part of the ideological legitimation of the social order is the process whereby major elements of dominant ideologies are condensed into 'common sense' understandings of the social order.

Individuals' relationships to all forms of state intervention will be characterised by both submission and resistance. This degree of submission and resistance will be influenced by class, gender and ethnic position - the extent to which state practices serve the interests of an individual's class, ethnic or gender grouping.

4.3 'Relative autonomy' of the family?

Leonard's insistence that the family be regarded as "relatively autonomous" of economy and state, while simultaneously "deeply penetrated by them" is particularly important in the light of Marx's theory of social change. According to Marx, it is the contradictions that develop within the social relations sustaining a particular social formation that provide the motor of change.

This view contradicts the position among those socialist feminist writers who blame all the evils of the nuclear family on capitalism. As Haralambos observes: "Everything they dislike

about the family is blamed on capitalism. And everything that is bad about the family is seen to support the capitalist system." (1984, p368)

One major problem of the socialist feminist view is that it blinds critics of the nuclear family to the fact that many exploitative aspects of family life are not limited to capitalist society. (This point will be taken up later in our discussion of the family in pre-capitalist societies.)

Another major problem with the view of the family as blind servant of capital is that it precludes the possibility that the family might play a dynamic role in the process of social change. It does not leave adequate theoretical space for the family as a site of resistance against dominant social forms, or for theorising the changing role of the family in a changing society - where the family is seen as playing an active role in social and economic changes, rather than simply mirroring changes happening outside it. Thus although the family does support capital in many ways, the family-capital relationship is by no means a smooth one, and is riddled with contradictions.

Segalen (1986) speaks of the family 'resisting' as well as 'adapting' to social developments. She calls on researchers of the family to:

> "try to discover how the family has lived through ... economic, social and cultural upheavals ... and how it has resisted them, and how it has contributed to them". (p2-3)

The following points are offered in an attempt to point to some of the many complexities of the family-economy relationship:

1. The transmission of a material and ideological context is not a straightforward process. The material and ideological location of the child within the family is riddled with contradictions, and is always to some degree problematic for both the social order and the individual. In working class families for example, these contradictions open up the possibility for resistance to those social imperatives that favour the superordinate minority to the detriment of the subordinate majority.

2. Apart from contradictions that develop within a set of social and economic relations, there is also a a complex morass of random and accidental events that play a major role in the process of history. Marx and Engels (1968) warn of the dangers of simplifying the complexity of the way in which economic imperatives assert themselves. They refer to:

> "... the endless host of accidents (ie of things and events whose inner connection is so remote or so impossible to prove that we regard it as absent and can neglect it) ..." that intervene in the economic determination of our existence (p694).

Todd (1985) argues for the role of chance in the development and persistence of various family forms, in opposition to "historians and sociologists who have made determinism an article of faith, devoting themselves to the search for cause if they are modest, and to discovering the meaning of history if they are ambitious." On the one hand he argues that the type of family form plays a profound role in the ideological systems of various societies. However on the other hand he emphasises that these family forms are often determined largely by chance and not necessarily always to wider social and economic relations.

He argues for the existence of seven basic family forms, distributed randomly across the globe irrespective of climate, relief and geography on the one hand and economy on the other.

> "Affective rather than rational, originating by chance hundreds of years ago and according to individual choices made in small communities, later expanding through the demographic growth of tribes and peoples, family systems perpetuate themselves imply by inertia ... This combination of anthropological types, coming down to us from an indeterminate past, has in the twentieth century played a trick on the ideal of modernity. It has seized and deformed it, in each region twisting it into a latent value-system which, put into an abstract, depersonalised form, has in one place produced the French revolutionary ideal, in another Anglo-Saxon liberalism, in another Muslim fundamentalism ..." (Todd, 1985, p198)

3. There is also significant variation from one family to another in the way which they serve to shape individual family members in the interests of perpetuating the social *status quo*:
i) Each family is composed of a unique conglomeration of idiosyncratic individuals, and there is no uniformity in the way in which individuals internalise social imperatives. Different individuals submit to/resist their socialisation in different ways. Thus notions of subordinacy appropriate to a child's social class, for example, may not operate in a clear cut way due to resistance in the child, or in the working class mother or father.

ii) There is a wide range of variation in the degree to which particular families carry out these roles, and a wide range of particular family cultures and practices which will shape the specific experience of the individual within the family. Different families will develop idiosyncratic rituals, world views, parenting styles and so on.

4. The family is but one of a range of social guides which fashion its members' development and experience of the world. Other competing influences will come to bear on the lives of differing family members to varying degrees (eg workplace, peer group, school) and will often interpellate messages that contradict those of the family.

5. The working class family might serve as an important site of resistance to exploitative social relations. Humphries (1977) criticises those who argue that the family persists in a capitalist social order only because it is in the interests of capital that it does so. She argues that:

> "The resilience of the family derives in part from workers' defence of an institution which affects their standard of living, class cohesion and ability to wage the class struggle." (p241) In a detailed analysis of the working class family in Britain she argues that in some ways the family serves to protect the interests of workers to the detriment of capital." (p241)

She bases her argument on the assumption that in order for a subordinated social grouping to organise any kind of struggle against oppressive social relations there must be a sense of solidarity in the community. According to this argument, the family plays a vital role in cementing and strengthening oppressed communities - giving their members a secure base from which to organise for a better society.

7. The final point to be made here against the postulation of a functional relationship between the family and the economy leads us to a point already made in this report. The family must be seen not only along a 'materialist dimension' but also along an 'historical dimension'. The set of social relations which we refer to as the family pre-dates capitalism by a long way. Any attempt to understand the family purely in terms of its interactions with the economy and the state at one period in history (ie purely in relation to capitalist social relations) ignores the fact that the family spans an on-going series of ever-transforming

social formations - characterised by different sets of economic and political relations to those characteristic of capitalism.

> "What is required is that we show the way in which the development of the capitalist mode of production affected pre-existent family forms, and investigate the outcome of such transformations in terms of the tendency to maintain or undermine the stability of the formation concerned." (Harris, 1985, p181)

The French marxist anthropologists's notion of the articulation of modes of production provides a useful starting point for conceptualising the transformation of the family over historical time. The next section looks at their framework for locating the family at the point of articulation of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production (the 'historical dimension').

5. A HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK FOR FAMILY STUDIES

This section suggests that this notion of 'articulation' of modes of production - as outlined by the French marxist anthropologists[1] - may provide a useful analytical tool for locating the family along its historical dimension. It begins by outlining what is meant by 'articulation', and continues by suggesting the relevance of this notion for the analysis of the impact of colonialism and capitalism on southern African social relations.

5.1 Articulation of modes of production.

The establishment of capitalism in any social formation necessarily implies the transformation, and in some ways the destruction, of formerly dominant modes of production. Furthermore, the expanded reproduction of capital tends to make this mode extend to other social formations, whose component modes of production are referred to as pre-capitalist (in the sense that they pre-date capitalism historically, and are characterised by different relations of production).

There have been several attempts to characterise the complexity of capitalism's relationship to pre-existing modes of production. These include the notion of succession or evolution from one mode of production to another (exemplified by the five stages model in the tradition of Marx and Engels); the notion of the dissolution of one mode of production and its transcendence to another; and the notion of transition from one mode of production to another.

Foster-Carter (1978) argues that none of these attempts adequately account for the complexity of the interaction between one mode of production and another:

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1   The 'French marxist anthropologists' (Bloch, 1983) or the 'new economic anthropologists' as they are sometimes called (Foster-Carter, 1978), include French writers such as Rey, Meillassoux, Godelier and Terray. Members of this group draw their inspiration from a very specific form of 'marxism' viz: Althusser's interpretation of Marx. This is manifest in their use of Althusserian language, of aspects of his methodology, their interest in Marx's mature works - *Capital* in particular - and their development of Althusser's particular focus on the notion of modes of production and their 'articulation'.

"On the contrary, this capitalism neither evolves mechanically from what precedes it, nor does it necessarily dissolve it. Indeed so far from banishing pre-capitalist forms, it not only coexists with them but buttresses them, and even on occassion devilishly conjures them up ex nihilo." (p51)

Thus for example Laclau (1971) identified elements of feudalism in Latin American societies - not as discrete or incongruent pockets of an old order in otherwise capitalist societies - but rather as an instrinsic and structured part of the wider social formation. He outlined a process whereby far from always dissolving the old order, the impact of capitalism in this region actually intensified certain feudal relations of production.

Various writers have suggested ways of understanding this contradictory process. Thus Meillassoux describes pre-capitalist forms as "being undermined and perpetuated at the same time". (1972, p103) Poulantzas refers to "complex forms of dissolution and conservation" (1974, p148) and Bettelheim also refers to the tension between "conservation and dissolution", backed up by his claim that "all reality is contradictory". (Bettelhiem, 1971 cited in Foster-Carter, 1978, fn 18).

The notion of the articulation of modes of production is often seen to have originated in Althusser and Balibar (1970). For example, commenting on a gap in Marx's work, Balibar observes that:

> Capital, which expounds the abstract theory of the capitalist mode of production, does not undertake to analyse concrete social formations which generally contain several different modes of production, whose laws of coexistence and hierarchy must therefore be studied." (p207)

Later in the same work, Balibar comments:

> "Periods of transition are therefore characterised by the coexistence of several modes of production ... the problems of the transition from one mode of production to another ... englobe several systems and their relations." (p 307)

Foster-Carter (1978) claims however that neither Althusser nor Balibar provided an adequate or clear definition of the notion of articulation. He points to Rey's work[2] on the

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2   Little of Rey's work has been translated into English, and this report draws on secondary sources (Bloch 1983, Bradby 1985, Foster-Carter 1978) in its account of his thinking.

transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe as the most thorough-going attempt to explicate this notion. Rey tries to develop a single analytical framework that will comprehend both this European transition, as well as the articulation of capitalism with other pre-capitalist modes.

He specifies three stages of articulation:
i)   an initial link in the sphere of exchange, where interaction with capitalism reinforces the pre-capitalist mode
ii)   capitalism takes root, subordinating the pre-capitalist mode, but still making use of it
iii) - the total disappearance of the pre-capitalist mode.

Rey postulates the notion of contradiction as the key to understanding this dynamic:
i)   contradiction between the different logic of different modes of production,
ii)   contradiction between the interests of different classes in the social formation constituted by these articulating modes of production, and
iii)   contradiction between the development of the forces of production and the relations of production within this social formation.

Below it will be argued that the economic anthropologists over-emphasise the role of abstract economic forces in social change at the expense of the role of human individuals locked into the everyday struggle with the concrete material conditions of their existence. The concluding chapter of this thesis will suggest a range of contradictions that the articulation of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production throw up in the spheres of culture, ideology and consciousness. It will point to these contradictions as an important factors in changing social relations in families.)

This section looks at applications of this abstract framework to African social relations under the impact of colonialism and capitalism. It begins by looking at the history of southern African social relations in terms of the articulation of capitalist and pre-capitalist social forms. It then investigates the possibility of examining current African social formations (such as the township family for example) in terms of the dialectic of dissolution/conservation of traditional pre-capitalist social forms.

In summary, it will be argued that the notion of 'articulation of modes of production' forms a useful tool for investigating the 'historical dimension' of current township family relations. However an important qualification should be made here. In township social relations the process of drawing African people into the working classes of a capitalist social system is at its most advanced. Some might seek to go a step further and say that this process is not only advanced, but also completed. They might argue that in terms of Rey's three stages of articulation outlined above township social relations had progressed to stage iii) *viz* the total disappearance of the pre-capitalist mode.

While this might arguably be true in economistic terms, this thesis will argue that this is not the case in ideological terms. In order to develop this point we must briefly refer to one of the most general and fundamental criticisms of the French marxist anthropologists - their failure to take account of the role that human consciousness and ideology plays alongside economic forces in the process of social change. (Bloch, 1983) Thus while economically speaking some might argue that the notion of pre-capitalist modes of production no longer has any analytical usefulness in understanding township social relations, ideological remnants or 'hangovers' from pre-capitalist modes of production are still an important presence in township family ideology, and are hence still a crucial influence in family relations. Furthermore it will be argued that contradictions between ideology and material reality is an important key to understanding the changing face of township family life.

5.2 Social formations in pre-capitalist societies in South Africa.

A precise characterisation of pre-capitalist societies in southern Africa is a difficult, if not impossible task, given that the forces of capitalist production have entered this area over an extended period, with differing impacts in specific regions, bringing contradictory and varied changes and uneven development.

However, despite diversities of time and region, Bonner (1980) argues that in general, pre-capitalist social formations in southern Africa can be characterised in terms of the articulation of two separate modes of production:

i) that of lineage (referred to by Guy (1980) as the 'patrilineal lineage system', and by Slater (1980) as the 'homestead production complex');

ii) and that of the tributary state, which controlled essential economic resources (the allocation of land and cattle) and their distribution.

Through the appropriation of these resources, the state (or more concretely, the chief) had vital control over the production and reproduction of the lineages which made up the social formation. Given the low level of population, soil fertility and technology, it was control over people which was the crucial key to social power. (Gluckman 1965, Goody 1971, Meillassoux 1972)

Mainstream anthropology often defines lineage as an expression of **biological** relations. For example, Vivelo (1978, p161) defines a lineage as:

> "a descent group consisting of persons unilineally descended from a known ancestor through a series of genealogical links or relationships they can trace."

Marks and Atmore (1980) argue that lineage cannot be reduced to an expression of purely biological or genetic relations. They suggest that lineage is more usefully defined as a specific social grouping of biological relations which have **socially** determined functions:

> "'It is above all', as Meillassoux has suggested, 'the expression of the relations of production and reproduction' in these societies, and provides their legitimising ideology." (op cit, p11-12)

Marks and Atmore (1980) point to the central organising function of lineage relations in pre-capitalist Zululand: the king was regarded as 'the father of the people', and the chiefs drew their authority in terms of their place in a hierarchy of inter-connected lineages, whose inter-relations were controlled by a complex system of the exchange of women and cattle (Guy, 1987).

Within each lineage, production took place in the homestead and its environs. It was in the charge of the male homestead head, the father and husband, whose role was largely supervisory, and who ranked his wives and their children in discrete households within the homestead. His daughters and wives worked in the agricultural and domestic spheres. Men

worked with the livestock, while boys were responsible for herding. Most of the labour within the homestead was spent in producing the means of subsistence upon which the homestead depended. Both sexes were involved in domestic manufacture, but the fundamental division of labour within the homestead was based on gender and age - the married men on the one hand, and the wives and children on the other.

Labour expended within aggregations of homesteads structured on these principles provided the productive base of Southern Africa's pre-capitalist societies. There were variations in size, internal structure, spatial organisation, in their links with other homesteads, and the manner in which they were incorporated into the wider political structure. However according to Guy (1987), these were variations on a common pattern, "differences in degree, and not differences in kind". (p21)

Agricultural production absorbed the greatest proportion of labour, and was largely for subsistence. Surplus was consumed for the most part within the family group. It was possible, however, to accumulate surplus cattle.

Guy (1987) criticises the tendency in much anthropological literature to regard the value of cattle in a "static" way - as simply accumulated wealth/bride-price. He argues that their ultimate value lay in their ability to secure the reproductive and productive capacities of women for the homestead. The exchange of cattle for women only took place on condition that the new wife fulfilled her productive obligations in her husband's homestead, and that she fulfilled her reproductive role - if she failed in either of these, cattle could be returned and the marriage dissolved.

He argues that the dynamic social principle upon which South African pre-capitalist societies was founded was the continuous acquisition, creation, control and appropriation of labour power. This labour power was realised by men, through the exchange of cattle for the productive and reproductive capacities of women. The process of the organisation of these societies around the creation and control of labour power gives rise to what he calls the "social laws of motion" which provide the key to the understanding of pre-capitalist social relations, both within the homestead, and within the wider political system.

Thus we have a situation where production is centred within the homestead, and kin relations provide the channels for a complex system of exchange of women's productive and reproductive capacities. It was the surplus in cattle that provided the material basis for the fundamental divisions in the social structure. Women and children were denied the possession of cattle, and in this way the control of the productive process remained in the hands of married men. Guy (1987) emphasises the cleavage between dominant married men/homestead heads and subordinate women and children, the product of whose labour was appropriated by their husbands and fathers.

Following Terray's and Rey's claim that the notion of class provides a useful analytical tool for understanding social divisions in pre-capitalist societies[3], Guy (1987) argues that this cleavage between women and children on the one hand, and husbands/fathers on the other was so fundamental that it can usefully be called one of class:

> "It was a relation of exploitation based on male rights to the means of production in the form of cattle and land, in which surplus was accumulated in labour power, and realised in the accumulation by fathers and husbands of cattle, wives and daughters." (p24)

Guy argues against those writers (such as Harries, 1982) who have tended to isolate kin relations as the central organising features of pre-capitalist social formations. He argues that while the notion of kinship is clearly an essential concept for understanding them, it is only one part of a larger process of appropriation and control.

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3   Rey argues for the applicability of the concept of class for all societies. He argued that in an African lineage-based society, for example, the elders can analytically be seen as a class in relation to the various members of lineages, or similarly women can be seen as a class in relation to men. "Rey argues that exploitation as defined by Marx can be shown to take place in social formations where the lineage mode of production is manifest, whether Marx thought it did or not. Rey repeats the statement by Marx in The Communist Manifesto, which many Marxist anthropologists and Engels, have variously tried to avoid, that the history of ALL existing society is the history of class struggles." (Bloch, 1983, p160)

Terray echoes Rey's argument for the application of the notion of class to pre-capitalist societies on the grounds of his argument that the 'core' of a relation of production is exploitation. He claims that class relationships pertain in all social formations, and that class is the totalising concept of historical materialism. He justifies the existence of 'class' in all societies by defining exploitation "not ... in the strict meaning of the term, but more generally speaking, the specific mode of the drawing-off, allocation and utilisation of surplus". (Terray, 1975, cited in Ennew, 1979)

"Political power in Southern Africa's pre-capitalist societies ... was in fact based on massive, ingenious extensions and improvisations on the principles derived from the social laws of motion within the homestead based on the cattle/women/power dynamic. These in turn were restricted by the nature of the level of development of the forces of production and until these changed, social organisation could not change fundamentally." (Guy, 1987, p28-29)

This system of power, based on the control of women and children by adult men, went hand in hand with an ideology of adult male dominance both in the areas of age and of gender relationships. These points will be taken further in later sections which examine the way in which ideological hangovers from this pre-capitalist past play a role in informing power relationships within township families - particularly power relations between adult men, and women and children. Before proceeding to these issues, the next section turns to comment briefly on the impact of changing forces of production on African social relations.

5.3 Impact of capitalism on African social relations

It is against the historical background of the changing forces of production that this project locates itself - in the townships of the 80's where the process of long-since departed colonial and capitalist penetration of the pre-capitalist social forms of southern Africa is arguably at its most advanced. This ongoing penetration by capital has been an uneven process. Capitalism in South Africa, developing under the constraints of the imperatives of segregation and later of apartheid, has drawn differentially on different African communities, depending on region and specific historical circumstances. In the early colonial period, some communities were reduced to slavery/completely destroyed (eg San). Others were drawn on in such a way that migrant labour became an imperative. For other communities the process of commodification of labour has progressed so far that people have been drawn off the land completely and become fully integrated into the capitalist economy as wage labourers. This is the case for township African people.

However, as the movement towards proletarianisation has taken place, pre-capitalist social influences have continued to have a significant bearing on ideology, consciouness, social structure and historical development. The homestead, the family, the transfer of property from husband to wife's father, and patriarchal authority remain as social features of sufficient importance to attract the attention, and sometimes cause confusion, among

township people. The impact of capitalism has served to both dissolve and reconstitute aspects of pre-capitalist social structure, fragmenting them, remoulding them, creating from older forms a new society in which aspects of the old are retained, abandoned or reappear in a new guise.

As wage labour and urbanisation have become institutionalised in peoples' lives, this process has produced living structures in urban areas which manifest an intermingling of pre-capitalist and capitalist influences. Certain of the old ways remain only as myths which are inappropriate to the reality of people's current lives. Others remain as sources of survival in the face of the massive structural problems of their day to day existence.

According to Murray the impact of capitalism on pre-capitalist social relations has resulted in the dissolution of certain aspects of pre-capitalist family life, and the conservation of others. Referring specifically to the family he comments:

> "The dissolution/conservation contradiction is an expression of the articulation of the capitalist mode of production with a pre-capitalist mode of production." (Murray, 1979, p144, fn 14)

Wolpe (1972) has applied the notion of conservation-dissolution to changing social relations in southern African in general, and to the family in particular. He raised this issue in relation to the dual nature of the African labour reserve, whose role was simultaneously to supply labour, and also to provide part of the means of subsistence of that labour.

At different periods in different areas, capital required the penetration of pre-capitalist social formations in such a way as to partially 'free' labour from the land, but at the same time to sustain their ability to reproduce the labour force. Hence kinship relations were simultaneously 'dissolved' in some sense, and 'conserved' in another. This was ensured by the state's failure to provide adequate assistance such as social security and retirement benefits with regard to the reproduction of the next generation of workers, responsibility for which continued to be vested in social relations in the labour reserve.

> "Accessibility to the migrant-worker of the product (and of the 'social services') of the Reserves depends upon the conservation, albeit in a restructured form, of the reciprocal obligations of the family." (Wolpe, 1972, p435)

Murray (1979, 1981) discusses the usefulness of the notion of a dialectic of dissolution-conservation of pre-capitalist social formations in understanding changing family structure in the 'rural periphery' of southern Africa. He focusses in particular on family life in Lesotho, from which black migrant labour is drawn on a large scale to meet the needs of the South African mining and manufacturing industry.

Murray (1979) argues that: "the study of changing family structure is properly the study of social process". He criticises those writers who, in the absence of adequate evidence to reconstruct the process of change, subscribe to the 'great divide theory of history', which implies a gulf between social formations of the 'past' and 'present'.

> "The past in this sense is a more or less hypothetical base-line, a reconstruction of traditional society which is contingent on our relative ignorance of pre-colonial conditions and which is largely derived from ethnographies conceived within a synchronic and functionalist paradigm." (Murray, 1979, p139)

Murray cites a particularly prevalent example of the tendency to reduce complex processes to relatively clear-cut 'before and after' scenarios. This is the tendency to describe changes in family life in Lesotho over the last hundred or so years as a 'movement' from the extended family to the nuclear family accompanying the transition from a 'traditional subsistence economy' to a 'western-oriented cash economy'. (Poulter, 1976 cited in Murray, 1979, p148-9)

In such contexts the phrase 'extended family' is used to refer to any of the following:

i) the agnatic lineage, comprising the descendants in the male line of an ancestry about three generations above the senior living generation;

ii) a collection of people, related to a particular individual in various ways, who gather on occasions such as ancestor rituals, marriage feasts and funerals; and who may participate in processes of dispute resolution or form a pool of co-operative labour; and

iii) a loosely defined network of relationships outside those of immediate kinship, upon which individuals can rely if they require hospitality, assistance or if they are in trouble.

Murray reviews various ways in which the notion of 'extended family' has been used by writers in oppposition to the migrant labour system, in an attempt to draw attention to "powerful and pervasive ideological stereotypes of the family" that lie behind their arguments. (1979, p149) He identifies two "fallacies of essentialism" in these arguments:

i)   On the one hand Murray refers to those writers who argue that the system of migrant labour goes against the Christian belief that 'those whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder' ie that a man and his wife should have the right to live together and bring up their children in a stable social environment. He argues that this position involves an uncritical imposition of western categories and values onto African family life.

ii)   On the other hand Murray refers to those writers who denounce the way in which the migrant labour system has destroyed the extended family - the basis of African culture. This argument assumes that African family life is different from that of the west. One particular danger of this view is that it "effectively endorses the habit of capitalist employers and others who use the phrase the 'extended family' in a residual sense to refer to something that allegtedly accommodates everyone (the sick, the unemployed, the elderly) in default of decent wages or adequate social security arrangements". (1979, p151)

Murray argues that both formulations ignore the complexity of the impact of capitalism on pre-existing African traditional social formations. Changing family structure cannot be understood in terms of static, ahistorical forms such as 'nuclear' and 'extended' family. Rather it must be seen as part of a larger on-going temporal process of structural transformation in southern African social relations. Rather than try to reduce complex social relations to static descriptive categories, an attempt should be made to account for social relations as process-in-time, and to explicate the social and political conditions under which particular descriptive stereotypes of the family are transformed/perpetuated.

Having argued however for attention to continuity in family relations in addition to focus on change, Murray cautions against simplistically counterposing evidence for dissolution

and evidence for conservation of an 'allegedly traditional way of life'. "Rather," he argues, "the apparent continuity of custom must be analysed as an integral and vital aspect of underlying structural transformation." (1979, p156)

Processes that might seem contradictory when counterposed out of context may even appear to be consistent with one another when placed in the context of broader structural processes. Murray (1981) illustrates this point with detailed case studies of families in the rural periphery of Lesotho, showing evidence of the continuity of stable agnatic structure which endures through several generations, despite evidence of high rates of individual mobility, conjugal instability, illegitimacy, desertion and the break-up of families.

At first glance one would cite evidence of illegitimacy, desertion and so on as evidence for fundamental dissolution of family structures. Yet all these disruptive phenomena have little affected the basic agnatic structure of small communities as assessed in terms of genealogical relations between household heads.

He emphasises that the processes of family breakdown and continuity are not contradictory processes.

> "Indeed, far from being contradictory in their implications, both the conservation and the change are rooted in the political economy of the labour reserve. The stability of residential alignments in many areas of the periphery is directly related to the severity of South African influx control and of land shortage. A man does not have the effective option either to move with his family outside the labour reserve, or to move away from his home area within the labour reserve, since he is even less likely to be allocated land elsewhere. On the other hand, the instability of conjugal relationships, the haphazard patterns of socialisation and the high rates of illegitimacy are all largely attributable to the circumstances of migrant labour." (1981, pp112-3)

Both the work of Wolpe and of Murray is open to the criticism of economic reductionism in the sense that they focus exclusively on the economic determinants of changing family relationships - in particular on the way in which the conditions of migrant labour have selectively promoted certain features of pre-capitalist family relations and destroyed others. While such economic determinants provide an important part of the explanation of changing social relations, it is important also to take account of an equally important level

of explanation viz: the role of conscious human beings continually grappling with the constraints and possibilities of their everyday material life circumstances.

An adequate understanding of these changing social relationships cannot fail to take account of human subjects, locked into an on-going dialectic of "psycho-cultural" adaptation and resistance (Coplan, 1982) as they struggle to take control of their concrete life circumstances against a barrage of structural limits and pressures. The final chapter of this thesis will take up these points in its location of the family at the intersection of a range of cultural pools - each one embodying a particular group's set of responses to the challenges set by its material context.

These comments conclude the theoretical chapter of this thesis. It is on the basis of the explications of the 'materialist' and 'historical' dimensions of family social relations outlined above that the following chapter turns to examine the empirical family data.

INTRODUCTION.

This chapter draws on the data gathered by the **pilot study** of the Natal Family Project. This pilot study data consists of interviews with a sample of working class township families, conducted in February 1988. In the light of rapidly changing conditions in South Africa in the late 1980's it is important for the reader to bear in mind the precise point in history at which the interviews are located.

In the interests of contextualising this data, the section that follows will focus briefly on the history of the Natal Family Project, before turning to provide details of research subjects, interviewing procedure and data analysis.

1. THE NATAL FAMILY PROJECT.

The literature on the social and psychological aspects of African working class township life is sparse, superficial and poorly theorised. Against this background, the Natal Family Project was established with the intention of starting to fill this gap, in the light of specific organisational work and interests. The project was established in close liaison with Oasssa (Organisation for Appropriate Social Service in South Africa). The motivation for the project, as well as its organisational derivation is discussed in detail in Natal Family Project documents (Hayes and Morris, 1987).

Broadly, the purpose of the project was to investigate the impact of capitalism and apartheid on African family life (with a focus on the "disintegration" or "breakdown" of township families), and the social and psychological effects of this process (Hayes and Morris, 1987).

The pilot study aimed to establish focus areas for the project. It consisted of interviews with a small sample of working class township families. These interviews aimed to elicit the following: respondents' accounts of their family life, the way in which they perceived family life to be changing from one generation to the next, and what they regarded as the most pressing problems in their day-to-day existence.

1.1 The semi-structured open-ended interview schedule.

Based on the very sketchy literature on township family life, as well as the researcher's personal experiences and impressions from counselling working class township people who had been victims of various forms of political repression and violence, a lengthy and open-ended interview questionnaire was compiled. It included about 80 questions, some of which were of a general nature, and others specifically tailored for different generations/age groups. It was by no means rigidly adhered to. Its purpose was rather to encourage respondents to talk about their family life.

The questionnaire is included in Appendix A. It covered issues such as the following:
i) individual biographical information and household details (kin/tenant relations, household headship, economic status)
ii) respondents understanding of the notion of 'the family'
iii) relationships between the generations
iv) issues of respect and authority within families
v) conflicts within particular families, between family members and other sectors of the community
vi) the value attached to traditional African family structures, customs and values, and alternative values and norms
vii) socialisation of children, parenting problems, peer socialisation, rearing children in conflict-ridden community
viii) family attitudes to educational issues, school boycotts and so on.
ix) economic and political pressures and family tensions, unemployment, political detentions, political unrest, army and police in the townships
x) the family's role as a support system, other support structures for family members
xi) family attitudes to the future
x) feedback from respondents on the interview situation as well as the content of the questions.

1.2 Selection of respondents: limitations of present study

At this stage some comment must be made about the limitations of conducting township research in the present social and political conditions. Under current conditions of fear and repression, township residents who are seen to associate with researchers often place themselves and their families in considerable danger. This places very real constraints on researchers, both in terms of selection of sample as well as data-gathering techniques. (Zulu, 1989)

The process of choosing a township in which to conduct the pilot study, and the problems encountered in the process of locating families to interview against the backdrop of an on-going spiral of violence and suspicion between various community groupings and the police, are documented in the Natal Family Project's first progress report (Campbell, 1988a). The project had no control over the selection of the families.

This constraint was an inevitable aspect of conducting research in the townships which were, at the time of the research was conducted (the late 1980's), in a state of civil war. The atmosphere of fear and suspicion made township residents reluctant to divulge detailed information about their lives and activities, giving the researcher little control either in the selection of research respondents or in the way she was able to record the data (certain families were not prepared to allow their interviews to be tape recorded, for example). A major constraining factor in the selection of families was the impossibility of approaching families without a lengthy and cumbersome process of introduction.

In the face of such constraints researchers must regard themselves as lucky to interview whoever they can, and to get whatever information they can. Under these conditions it is obviously impossible to conduct empirical research using conventional social science methods with regard both to selection of research sample, as well as data-gathering techniques.

The 'selection process' used by the township civic organisation that established our contacts with families was to ask five of its members (each member living in a different area of the township) to find one family that was willing to be interviewed.

In each of the five families the members of the oldest generation in the family (all aged between 50 and 60) had been born in rural areas, and come to town on reaching work-seeking age. Thus all their children were first generation township born, and their grandchildren second generation township born. They all had close links with a rural way of life that had presented its members with conditions quite different to those of the day-to-day demands of working class township existence.

In this sense these families are fairly typical of Durban township families in the late 1980's - consisting of a rural-born older generation, and their urban-born children and grandchildren. The vast majority of Durban township residents who were born in the years between 1928 and 1938 (ie aged 50 to 60 in 1988, when the present research was conducted) would have been born and reared in a rural area, moving to the urban areas in their late adolescence or early adult years. (Edwards, 1989)

Families selected were an 'atypical' sample of township families in the sense that each family had at least one member who had been subject to police detention without trial or political imprisonment. This was due to the fact that two members of the Natal Family Project had been involved in organisational work with political detainees. On this basis, one of the project's contacts interpreted the project's brief as falling in the specialised area of the effects of detention on township families, and set up the contacts on this basis.

It must be emphasised at the outset that these families were not intended to be a representative sample of the township population. The size and specificity of the sample obviously limits the generalisability of the findings of such an enterprise. It must be emphasised that the these family interviews were intended to form the basis for a **pilot** study. The present report has the modest aim of generating hypotheses on a small-scale, rather than establishing a set of firm generalisations about its township families. Its intention is to contribute to the opening up of the field of township family research. It makes no claims to constituting a substantive study, neither is it in the position to draw bold and confident conclusions about its area of focus.

1.3 Details of respondent families

A brief outline of five households follow. All the families were working class. Parents in all the families had been employed as labourers, domestic servants, messengers or illegal (unlicensed) railway station hawkers. Families A and E said they were financially secure. Each of the other three families spoke at length of dire financial problems. Names and identities have been disguised - this was the basis on which respondents agreed to be interviewed.

1) **Household A**: Mr A and Mrs A have had 11 children, six of whom have died of illness (details of deaths on p). With them live their son, Tom, their daughter-in-law, Cilla and their two children. Eight tenants (no relation) live in two small outside rooms. Mr A constructed these to bring in extra income when his son Tom served five years in jail as a political prisoner. Mr A collects a pension from his previous employer, and Tom A has what the family considers a 'well-paid' job.

The following family members were interviewed:
i)   Mr A, 60 years, completed Std 4, pensioner (ex-messenger).
ii)   Mrs A, 60, Std 2, housewife (ex-domestic).
iii)   Their son, Tom A, 34, Std 8, employed.
iv)   Their daughter-in-law, Cilla A, 30, Std 5, housewife.
v)   Their granddaughter, Gugu A, 15, scholar.

2) **Household B**: Mr and Mrs B have had 10 children together, and Mr B has two children by another liaison. They live in the house with seven of these children (six of whom are unemployed and one a scholar), and three grandchildren (all scholars). One of their children died in a fire, and another disappeared some years ago, under mysterious political circumstances. One of their daughters has been detained without trial for 15 months. Mr B is the only formally employed member of the household. Mrs B tries to bolster his income by buying and selling second-hand clothes.

The following family members were interviewed:
i)   Mr B, 53, Std 6, labourer.

ii)   Mrs B, 52, Std 6, buys and sells clothes.

iii)   Their eldest son, Sipho B, 36, Sub-B, disabled alcoholic.

iv)   Their second-youngest son, Siza B, 17, Std 3, unemployed.

v)   Their youngest son, Purpose B, aged 15, Std 7 scholar.

vi)   Their grandson, Vela B, aged 13, Std 5 scholar.

vii)   We spoke briefly to another son aged 23, who appeared to be an untreated schizophrenic.

3) **Household C:** Mrs C, a widow whose husband was murdered by gangsters many years ago, lives with five of her seven children (four of these are unemployed, and one a scholar). There are also five small grandchildren in the house. The family has no regular income at all.

The following family members were interviewed:

i)   Mrs C, 50, Std 5, disabled (formerly domestic worker and railway station hawker).

ii)   Her son, 23, Cedric C, Std 7, unemployed.

iii)   Her son, 21, Jack C, Std 8 scholar.

4) **Household D:** Mrs D has had ten children, one of whom died in a fire. Her Inkatha husband left the family when she refused to evict one of her sons who is a UDF political activist. She lives with eight of these children and one grandchild. Their only regular source of income is her epileptic daughter's disability grant.

The following family members were interviewed:

i)   Mrs N, 51, housewife (former domestic worker).

ii)   Her son, Zenzele D, 21, a scholar in Std 8.

iii)   Her son, Themba D, 17, unemployed.

iv)   Her daughter, Nomusa D, 24, unemployed epileptic.

5) **Household E:** Mrs E has three children. She lives with these three children, a daughter-in-law, a distant relative and five grandchildren. This family is financially secure - both Mrs E, her two sons, and her daughter-in-law are employed.

The following family members were interviewed:

i)   Mrs E, 60, Std 5, a railway station hawker.

ii)   Her son, 38, Lungisile E, artisan.

iii)   Her daughter, 26, Angela E, Std 10, unemployed.

iv)   Her grandchild, 15, Gugu E, scholar in Std 7.

1.4 The interview process

The interviews, averaging three hours in length (per individual), were conducted in Zulu with the help of an interpreter. They took place in the homes of the respondents. A few of the interviews were tape recorded, and later transcribed and translated into English. In the vast majority of cases however the respondents refused to allow tape recording of interviews (they refused on the grounds that township residents often associate tape recorders with police informers, and that many suspected police informers have lost their lives). In these cases, the interviews were recorded in short-hand and later transcribed by one of the interviewers.

In the feedback sessions at the end of each interview, every respondent commented that the questions had been appropriate, and had succeeded in covering the range of problems faced by township families.

1.5 Analysis of interviews

The analysis of the pilot data for this particular report formed the **second** stage of an on-going process of data analysis. The first stage yielded detailed case studies of two of the families, as well as an in-depth preliminary report on inter-generational relations within families. It was during this first stage that the need for clarification of the notion of 'the family' became evident, leading to the second stage of analysis - on which this thesis is based. This section gives a brief account of these two stages.

Qualititative analysis of open-ended data is, as Jones (1985) describes it, "hard, tedious slog". The initial analysis of the Natal Family Project data was no exception to this rule.

Mostyn (1985) emphasises that: "the one absolute requirement for the qualitative analyst is that s/he must continually be analysing the data". During the first stage of analysis the researcher spent ten weeks (on an average of nine hours a day, six days a week) immersed in the data using the method of thematic analysis as outlined by Bromley (1986). A detailed account of this process is outlined in Campbell (1988c).

This analysis resulted in two detailed case studies - of family A and family B (Campbell, 1988d, 1988e). These case studies focussed on:

> i) the nature of the family problems outlined by respondents
> ii) the impact of these problems on family relationships, and
> ii) coping mechanisms used by each family in the face of these problems.

These case studies were followed by a detailed report on one of the most pressing problems facing family life - that of the often extremely stressful transformation of inter-generational relationships in families (Campbell, 1988f). It was during the process of report-writing that the researcher became acutely aware of the urgency of establishing an appropriate definition of the family. It was against this background that the present study was initiated, and the second stage of data analysis took place.

By this time the researcher was thoroughly acquainted with the data. She returned to the data anew in order to pose the following question: What do the respondents mean when they speak of 'the family'? Further detailed immersion in the data focussing on this question yielded the following 'raw categories' which served as general headings or themes under which respondents' accounts of 'the family' could be classified:

> i) the composition of families
> ii) the functions of families, and
> iii) power relations within families.

These three headings formed the basic categories or themes within which interview data was classified. The information falling into each theme was then subjected to the processes

of structuring, restructuring and refining according to Bromley's (1986) guidelines for thematic analysis. Bromley's method represents a simple method for sorting qualitative data under an increasingly specialised series of files.

The method is facilitated by the use of a word-processor. The following example illustrates this process. An initial examination of the data yielded the three themes outlined above. Three files were created, one for each theme. The interviews were then 'sorted' so that all the information relating to each theme was placed in its appropriate file. Then, for example, the information in the file entitled: **functions of the family** was divided into headings such as **the family's function as a material support system**. This sub-theme was further refined under headings such as **expectation that father should be breadwinner**, which was further refined under headings such as **economic constraints which make it difficult for fathers to live up to this expectation**. Each heading, sub-heading and sub-sub-heading was then illustrated by appropriate quotations from the interviews.

Once the sorting and refining process was completed, the information was used to compile the following account of the 'indigenous theory of the family'.

2. THE CONTEXT OF TOWNSHIP FAMILY LIFE

2.1 Introductory comments.

Chapter 1 emphasised the importance of locating the family within a specific socio-economic and historical context. A paper by McKay entitled "Factors influencing family life in Natal" (1988) deals in some depth with the structural impediments that impact on African family life. She identifies factors such as inadequate housing, educational facilities and health care; township political struggles - often resulting in loss of life and large scale community disruption; legislation affecting child care and maintenance, influx control, labour, health and welfare. The reader is referred to McKay (1988) for an elaboration of these points.

Because of the project's undertaking to disguise all information that would point to respondents' identity or area of residence, this section will not include a detailed history of the township in question. However, certain general features of township life were mentioned again and again by interview respondents as having a major impact on family life, and will be constant themes in the sections to follow. The most frequently cited problems were ' unemployment, particularly among the youth, and the low salaries paid to workers. These were often inadequate to support large families (economically active people are often expected to support large numbers of indigent family members and 'hangers on'). This report will refer to these problems as 'economic problems'.

The second most frequently mentioned problems were political conflicts, which the present project will refer to as 'political problems'. These conflicts were reported to take the form of clashes between those loosely referred to as UDF/Cosatu supporters and vigilantes. Respondents reported that these vigilante groupings aimed to quell political protest and resistance by UDF/Cosatu members. They were generally understood to be composed of an informal alliance between Inkatha supporters, the police and other reactionary individuals - often older men who were angered by the growing militancy of the township youth, and were motivated by a desire to 'put these young upstarts in their place'.

These conflicts - which usually had their roots in some form of ideological conflict between various groupings - were often said to be exacerbated by 'tsotsi's' - the criminal element in the township who were said to be quick to turn the existence of political conflicts in the township into an excuse to cause trouble.

Chikane's (1986) account of the violence associated with this on-going political conflict in the townships of the 80's starkly depicts the environment in which the projects' respondents live their lives:

> "The world of the township child is ... a world made up of teargas, bullets, whippings, detention and death on the streets. It is an experience of military operations and night raids, of roadblocks and body searches. It is a world where parents and friends get carried away in the night to be interrogated. It is a world where people simply disappear, where parents are assassinated and homes are petrol bombed. Such is the environment of the township child today." (p342-343)

Families with politically active members live in constant fear of political detentions - with the wide range of problems that these create both for detainees, and their families. Apart from the fear of detention is the fear of attack by rival political groupings or the police. Homes with politically active members are also vulnerable to petrol bombings or arson.

In addition, the past couple of years has seen large numbers of youth leaving the country for political reasons. In most cases they do not tell their families that they are leaving - so it is not unusual for families to report the 'disappearance' of a teenage son, who simply left home one day as usual, and did not return. Parents' attempts to locate these children are usually futile, and they are left to suffer the anguish of not knowing whether their offspring are alive or dead.

The issue of housing was mentioned as a severe problem. Each house consisted of two small bedrooms, a small living room, a kitchen and a bathroom - and it was not unusual for such a building to sleep 16 or more family members. The B family reported that their one son had to sleep on a sponge mattress in the garden when a relative from a rural area came to stay. At night there was not even space on the kitchen and bathroom floors to accomodate an extra person.

In addition to inadequate housing, many respondents complained of poor physical conditions in the township. Homes are often poorly constructed, roads are bad - some untarred, and almost inaccessible, others scarred with potholes. Services are unreliable. Water supplies are often cut off without warning. In addition, drainage in many areas is poor. At the time of the interviews (early 1988), heavy rains had flooded or damaged many homes in the township.

Families spoke of, or evidenced, high levels of untreated mental and physical illness. Community health and welfare facilities are seen to be inadequate, and even where these facilities do exist, families often lack the skills to avail themselves of these benefits and facilities. Rates of infant mortality are high, and life expectancy for adults is low (in the A family for example, six of the 11 children born to the family have died - three as infants, and three as adults, through tuberculosis, assault and alcoholism respectively).

In general it may be said that many township families suffer from multiple problems - which they are often unable to tackle, either due to structural constraints of township life (eg unemployment, housing shortages); lack of material resources (eg money to buy food, busfare for workseeking); or lack of survival skills (eg initiative to identify and mobilise support from welfare organisations). Such circumstances mean that in many cases these families are powerless to improve their life circumstances, and simply perpetuate their marginalised status.

The next section offers the case of the B family as the basis for further discussion of these points.

2.2 Case study

Mr and Mrs B have been married for 35 years. They are both in their 50's. Mr B works as a labourer for a large company in Durban. He has been in his present job for 18 years, and has never been unemployed since he started working in 1948. Despite the fact that he has always been employed, he has never been paid enough to support his large family. He and his wife speak of the family's history in terms of a perpetual struggle against hunger. Mrs B

worked as a domestic until her marriage when she had to give up work to care for her children. She supplements the family income by buying second hand clothes in the white suburbs, and selling them for a small profit in the townships.

Mrs B and Mr B have had 10 children together. Mr B also has two children from an extra-marital relationship:

1) Sipho (36) was severely injured when he was hit by a bus several years ago. Prior to the accident he had been a stable employed person who had already started to pay lobola for his girlfriend. The accident left him disabled - he is unable to walk properly. He tried to get compensation for the accident from the bus company - but gave up when the lawyer he had approached demanded a large sum of money in advance. Since the accident he has deteriorated into a hobo and an alcoholic, and is permanently intoxicated, spending most of his day in the bush near his home with his hobo friends. He has two children by his girlfriend Thuli. He has no income, and lives with his parents.

2) Mandla (33) is unemployed, and suffers from tuberculosis. He has a five-year-old child, and lives away from his family home.

3) Mphumi (30) is a sangoma, and has a 'private practice' as a herbalist in the city centre. She charges R2 a consultation. She was married for a short while, but her husband died. She has no children, and does not live with her parents, but visits often, and makes a financial contribution to the household.

4) Philani (29) has been unemployed for four years. According to his mother, he makes a great effort to find work at the beginning of each year. However he usually gives up after a few months, and spends the rest of the year enjoying township social life. He has three small children by three different women (all three children are five years old), and seems to stay with each of these on an erratic basis.

5) Thuli (26) is a teacher. She lives away from her parents. She has a 'coloured' child who stays with Mr and Mrs B, and attends a 'coloured' school in Wentworth. She makes a small contribution to the child's upkeep, but does not have much to do with the B household.

6) Tim (24) has suffered from an undiagnosed and untreated mental illness for about eight years. His contact with reality is tenuous, and he becomes angry and violent if

he does not get his own way, and has the unhappy habit of destroying groceries that are not locked up. He spends his days hanging around the neighbourhood, and seems to be well-known and tolerated by the community.

7) Lindi (22) has been in detention for 14 months. The family are not clear as to the reason for her detention. Prior to her detention she lived with her parents. She has a six-year-old child which her parents are supporting.

8) Dennis (21), a political activist, disappeared without trace from the family home some years ago. They have no knowledge of his whereabouts. Mrs B fears that he is dead. The family are frequently harrassed by the police (who claim that Dennis went to Tanzania for military training) who storm into the house - usually in the middle of the night - and accuse the family of hiding him. The family occasionally hear rumours that Inkatha members are plotting to burn down/bomb the house. (All of the families interviewed spoke of the intimate link between Inkatha members, the local police force, and vigilante groupings.)

9) Siza (19) suddenly and inexplicably refused to attend school after Std 3. He has never managed to find work, and appears severely depressed, often considering suicide. He lives with his parents. He says he lacks both the transport money and the clothing to look for work (eg he does not have any shoes).

10) Purpose (15), a scholar in Std 7 at a local school, also lives with his parents. He is optimistic, energetic and appears to be doing well at school. He is his father's pride and joy. Mr B places all his hope for the future in his youngest son: "My wish for all my children is to see them achieving great heights. A good example is Purpose. I wish to see him reach university level where he will get even more than one degree up to the level of being a professor - so that the whole image of this house will change, having at least one person from the house who achieves things to show that even if we are poor we can produce a person who commands respect outside."

Mr B also had two children by another woman during the early years of his marriage to Mrs B, and these children have also formed part of the family circle.

11) Toto (34) is unemployed. His one arm is paralysed as a result of a gang fight some years ago. He seems to spend some of his time in the B household.

12)   Noms (would have been 32) died mysteriously in a fire while staying with her boyfriend some years ago. Although there were other people in the house at the time, no one went to her aid. A police investigation was unable to ascertain the cause of her death. She left two sons:

Khumbulani (16) who lives elsewhere - but is supported by the B household, and

Vela (13) a Std 5 pupil, who stays with the B's. Vela is a motivated scholar, who is doing well at school.

At the time of the interviews, according to the family's account, there were five children staying in the household , all unemployed, and three grandchildren (with a fourth grandchild in the country also dependent on the B's for maintenance). Apart from these permanent residents, there also seems to be a 'floating' population of other family members - children and grandchildren - who seem to pass through and stay there on an irregular basis.

The B family present themselves as a demoralised and disempowered family pummelled by a host of external pressures over which they exercise little control. They have few survival skills, and few problem-solving skills. Their strucural economic problems (large number of dependent children and grandchildren, poorly paid father, poverty) are severe and would tax even the most resourceful family.

Because they have so few life skills, they have little chance of improving their economic situation - and yet by the same token their poor economic situation is exacerbated by their meagre skills - a painful vicious circle - and one that is obviously detrimental to the well-being of individual family members, as well as interactions in the family as a whole. A great deal of their energy is dissipated in unresolved family and personal tensions, and in vain, unskilful and poorly orchestrated attempts to improve their position.

Family relationships are characterised by marked tensions, communication is poor and problem-solving skills are poorly developed. The more competent family members have simply withdrawn from the family circle. The two employed children have left home. Mr B appears to have removed himself from the family as much as possible. He gives them

money every week, and then spends most of his free time away from the house - mostly with his girlfriend in town.

The remaining children and grandchldren are either too young, too sick, lacking in life skills or too demoralised to be anything more than a drain on the household resources. Mrs B seems to hold the family together almost single-handedly. She has tried to be an active agent against her own poverty, through all the means available to an uneducated, unskilled woman - buying and re-selling second hand clothing, approaching neighbours for help, pestering her husband etc. Her efforts have left her physically debilitated (high blood pressure and anxiety symptoms) and the family often go hungry.

Leonard (1984) comments on the role of the family in maintaining the marginalised status of subordinate class and ethnic groups. Two features of the B family's life circumstances throw light on our interest in the role of the family in the process whereby disempowered/marginalised individuals or groupings perpetuate their own marginalisation:

Marginalising processes: The self-fulfilling prophesy.

The first of these is the family's implicit assumption that certain of its members will never be competent adults. When asked if he thought his children would be able to support him in his old age, Mr B gave a bitter laugh:

> "I always wonder whether such a time will ever come, but I have many doubts. I don't see them as capable of doing it."

Siza B (17 years old) constitutes a good example of the way in which this assumption may serve as a self-fulfilling prophesy. Family members who have never been employed are regarded as children and treated as such. The finding of a job is an important marker in the transition from childhood to adulthood in the community. High youth unemployment in families has created a generation of young people who not only lack jobs, but also lack a clearly defined role. These young people are poised in limbo. They are too old to be children, but do not have the job that would mark their entry into competent adulthood. Unemployment prevents them from leaving their family of origin to find a home of their

own. Most women do not regard unemployed men as desirable candidates for stable, long-term relationships. For those unemployed men who do establish permanent liaisons marriage is usually out of reach because they lack the wherewithal to pay *lobola*.

Neither Mrs B nor Mr B see Siza as an adequate, competent adult in any way. From their point of view this is an accurate perception of him. He has a Std 3 education, no survival skills, and seems not to have shown signs of resourcefulness or initiative. However it appears that at the age of 17 Siza has already been 'written off' as someone who will never be able to care for himself.

This is done in a variety of ways. Siza told us for example that his small nieces and nephews treat him disrespectfully because he is unemployed. Fifteen-year-old Purpose already accepts that Siza will never find a job, and that he, Purpose, will have to support him when their parents die. When the family were asked to send one of their sons to town on Saturdays for a gardening job they sent Purpose even though Siza was available, and even though Purpose had to miss badly-needed extra lessons that he had been attending at school on Saturdays. The family no longer buy clothes for Siza - such resources are saved for the more promising members of the family who need clothes either for school, work, or work-seeking - he does not have any shoes and only owns one T-shirt and a pair of shorts.

Siza, a healthy and reasonably intelligent person, appeared to be suffering from chronic depression. In a family where energy and resources are scarce, he had been dismissed as an insoluble problem at an early age, and family energies had been turned to more important things. In a sense he did not cause any trouble, besides being another mouth to feed. He had no serious need for clothing, busfare and so on, neither was he harrassed by the police like of his other siblings.

He articulated his feelings of depression and sense of powerlessness clearly and fluently when asked about his present life style:

> "There are no advantages I can mention in my life, only disadvantages like these: I cannot get work, I do not have money to go and seek a job, so I am compelled to hang around here which is very bad and boring ... it is very difficult to get a job if you are not educated."

"I feel shy and ashamed of myself to the extent that I do not even try and approach ladies, because I think they'll wonder who I think I am to come near them."

"Being continually unemployed makes me feel disappointed and bored to the extent that I often think suicide would be better than living like this."

It seemed however that Siza's family were unaware of how he was feeling. When asked if he had discussed these feelings with anyone, he said he had not. The reason for this lack of communication was not because he regarded his feelings as 'secret'. Probing revealed that no one had ever asked him how he felt, and it had never occurred to him to tell anyone. There appeared to be two reasons for this silence. The first was that the issue of what the researchers would have referred to as 'personal feelings' simply did not arise within the family. Secondly it appeared that no one in the family took much notice of him. He had not done anything to merit anyone's attention for years. He was not politically active, like Dennis and Lindi for example. Not being at school or at work he was not considered to be in need of clothing and busfare like certain other family members. He was simply a rather shadowy presence in the family who did not loom large in anyone's calculations or considerations.

Marginalising processes: family's lack of survival skills

The following example also serves to illustrate the way in which the family, with its meagre life skills, serves to perpetuate its members' marginalisation. Despite the fact that many members of the family are extremely anxious to improve the family's position, they have failed to obtain the welfare benefits/assistance for which certain members of the family are eligible.

This section looks at the way in which the B household had attempted and failed to get help for Tim and his mental illness.

The family have tried on several occasions to get Tim (who undoubtedly suffers from some chronic mental illness) to see a doctor. However he refuses to go, saying there is nothing wrong with him, and becoming angry and violent when they try to insist. One day recently (about 8 years after he first became 'mad') they did manage to get him to go to the hospital

- and sent him with Siza, asking Siza to explain his mental problem to the doctor. However when they got to the crowded outpatients department of the hospital, Siza was instructed to wait outside - and Tim hustled off into a queue to see the doctor. It appears that Siza was too overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle of the place and intimidated by the brusque authority of the nurses even to try and explain his mission. Tim - who refuses to acknowledge that he is 'mad' - simply showed the doctor a sore on his toe, and was treated for this and sent home.

The account of this experience was similar to that of Sipho's attempts to get compensation from the bus company (for the leg injury sustained when he was hit by a bus) and a disability grant. Unsophisticated young men, with no knowledge of their rights or of the services available to help them - and unfamiliar with queues, forms, long passages and impatient impersonal civil servants have little chance of accessing existing services to meet their needs.

Both Sipho and Tim are unemployable on medical grounds and would be eligible for disability grants. The struggling family fails gain access to two such grants which would immediately double the household income.

Through their long history of privation, and their lack of street-wise survival skills and energy the family is demoralised and apathetic. Even after the researchers offered to facilitate this process, the family failed to approach the magistrate's court to get the identity documents that are a prerequisite for grant applications. They are unfamiliar with the notion of welfare benefits, and thus arrive at these busy offices/hospitals with little idea of what they have come for. They lack the assertiveness to deal with a situation where they might sometimes be required to understand English, or fill in forms they don't understand, or find their way around unfamiliar and intimidating parts of the city. They appear to have accepted the daily struggle against hunger as part of their lot, and seem incapable of taking up opportunities to improve it.

Further discussion of the B family will follow during the course of chapter 2.

3. INDIGENOUS THEORY OF THE FAMILY

Implicit in the interview respondents' transcripts and underlying their accounts of there family life were three notions that seemed to be central to what they regarded as 'the family'. These notions involved their conceptions of:

i)   the functions of a family
ii)   the composition of a family, and
iii)   the power relations within a family.

The content of these three notions appears to be an accepted part of township ideology. Despite a wide and ever increasing diversity in the composition, functions and power relations within township domestic life, respondents seemed to share an ideal view of family functions, composition and power relations. This ideal view serves as a reference point against which all families are implicitly measured and judged. This is the view that this report refers to when it speaks of the 'indigenous theory of the family'. This ideal-type reference point serves township people as a norm of what families ought to be, and is spelled out as follows:

Functions of the family.

The family should perform the following functions:

i)   an agent of reproduction of children
ii)   an agent of socialisation for family members
iii)   a material support system for family members
iv)   an emotional support system for family members.

Composition of the family

The norm for family composition was as follows: a group of kin, usually residing in one household, and usually centred around a mother and father, their children, and sometimes

their grandchildren. Parents, children or grandchildren who have left home either temporarily to work or study or permanently to set up households of their own, are still considered family members. In addition to this core group there is also a fairly far-ranging set of more distant relatives - related either by blood or by name - who also have right of access to the family circle, with a reciprocal network of privileges/responsibilities embodied in the three above-mentioned functions.

Power relations within the family

According to respondents, power relations in the domestic unit - constructed around the notions of respect, obedience, authority - should be based on a rigidly defined hierarchy determined by age and gender. The precise form of this hierarchy is complex and detailed. However the general form is that adults are superordinate to children, and males to females.

One's position on this hierarchy goes hand in hand with a clearly defined code of behaviour towards other family members - this behaviour being characterised by a complex code of respect, obedience and authority. Those at the top end of the hierarchy could expect to be treated in clearly defined degrees of respect and obedience from those lower down on the hierarchy.

The changing face of township family life?

It will be argued on the basis of the data that the indigenous notions of family functions and family composition were intimately connected with a particular view of power relations within the family. Such power relations are based on age and gender - together with a complex network of norms defining the appropriate degree of respect and obedience due to members of differing degrees of superordinacy or subordinacy.

The account of this process implicit in the interview data is consistent with Guy's (1987) characterisation of the changing face of African social relations under the impact of capitalism in terms of the declining power of married older men. He refers to them as "a

defeated and disappearing class"[1]. This point will be followed up later in this chapter. For the moment the report simply mentions that the respondents gave accounts of this decline in both the material and the decision-making dimensions of community social relations in general, and family relations in particular.

On the material front, adult men were traditionally the guardians of wealth and resources both within the community and the family. Now for many working class families - although the tradition of the desirability of male economic dominance still has strong currency - fathers are often not even able to provide for the most basic needs of family members. On the decision-making front, married older men also no longer hold undisputed sway. There is evidence of a decline in the centrality of their role in shaping community opinion and decisions.

Obviously this phenomenon (together with the decline in their material well-being) is part and parcel of the gradual incorporation of the formerly dominant classes of a variety of pre-capitalist social formations into the disenfranchised working classes of the succeeding capitalist social formation.

However it will be argued that even though the decline in formal political power of married older men has a long history dating back to the first thrusts of capitalist penetration in southern Africa, until fairly recently they retained a fair amount of social power within community and family relations. This was fairly unproblematic within a capitalist social formation which accomodates the oppression of women and children on a variety of fronts (Poster, 1978).

According to respondents, their recently accelerated decline in power has gone hand in hand with factors such as:

i)   dramatic economic pressures on family life,

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1   Guy develops the economic anthropologists' suggestion that the notion of class (used by Marx in his analysis of capitalist social relations) is also a useful analytical tool for describing relations of exploitation in pre-capitalist social formations.

ii)   social change happening at a pace which many of these rigid traditionalists are unwilling or unable to assimilate into their world views, and

iii)   the growing assertiveness of township youth, particularly under the impact of large-scale education and politicisation of youth in the past 20 years. This was widely seen to have provided the youth and certain more progressive members of the older generation with the intellectual tools to criticise current social relations, and to conceive of alternative social arrangements.

In their accounts of these changing power relations, much energy and time was devoted to discussing the disintegration of traditional notions of respect - particularly what was perceived as the breakdown of respect on the part of the younger generation for members of the older generation.

The following section will examine the large amount of data dealing with changing power relations within the family, and the inter-connected phenomena of changing family composition and functions.

It must be emphasised that many of the problems outlined in the accounts of the respondents are not unique to township families in the late 1980's in their general outline - and many of them would be typical of a wide range of working class communities under conditions of rapid social change. For example, inter-generational problems are a common feature of a wide range of societies over a long range of historical time. However it is suggested that the way in which such problems manifest themselves, and the way in which individuals and families respond to them cannot be understood independently of the specific social and historical context of those particular individuals and families. Furthermore it is argued that if any process of reconstruction of South African society is to occur, it should be informed by a detailed understanding of the way in which social conditions have impacted on the lives of ordinary people over years of hardship and struggle.

In the remainder of chapter 2, the report will draw on four inputs:

i)   the indigenous theory of the family implicit in the accounts of the social actors

ii)   the way in which social actors/respondents perceive the family to be changing

iii) their explanations for for these changes

iv)   the researcher's over-arching theoretical framework that will seek to draw attention to some of the 'structural transformations' (often outside the respondents' conscious awareness) underlying these personal accounts of family life.

3.1. FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

There was unanimity amongst the respondents that the family's central functions revolved around children - reproduction, their socialisation, their material support and housing until such time as they became adults (defined in terms of their ability to earn their own living and set up house on their own), and their emotional support throughout their childhood and adulthood. Parents hoped that their children would in their turn support them in their old age.

3.1.1 THE FAMILY AS AGENT OF REPRODUCTION

The fact that families were the most appropriate places for the reproduction of children was a unanimous and uncontroversial theme emerging from the interview data. However there was wide reference to two changing trends in relation to children.

1. The first of these was the ever-increasing number of unmarried mothers - and the decreasing age at which women had their first children. A large number of teenagers are pregnant by the time they reach the age of 17 or 18. Many of these young women often receive no maintenance from the child's father, thereby burdening their own parents with yet another mouth to feed. Thus, for example, one of Mrs C's daughters, aged 21, already had three children by three different men - not one of whom contributed to child support. The girl had been forced to leave school when her first child was born, and had never been able to find a job.

One older woman cited a neighbour's child as an example of a growing trend for a teenage girls' parents to be saddled with the responsibility of supporting her fatherless children:

> "In this area a child of 13 years old became pregnant. And now we find that this baby is fatherless. When she pointed out one (boy), he said it was not him - that he was not alone and that two others had been in that girl. In this way he avoided being penalised and paying for the baby." (Mrs D).

This change was reported to have taken place against the backdrop of a the erosion of traditional customs which served as safeguards against accidental pregnancy. Respondents

reported that traditional rituals and customs surrounding sexuality, courting and marriage had become transformed in significant ways. Thus for example a teenage girl's peer group - which once played an important role in the preservation of her chastity - often served to encourage sexual activity at an early age, within relatively casual relationships. One young woman spoke of the way in which her peers looked down on those who were not sexually active. Furthermore, many young woman regarded the label of 'inyumba' (a childless woman) as a grave insult.

2. Respondents commented that the crippling burden that large families place on the family flies in the face of African tradition where children were regarded as a sign of wealth rather than poverty. Mr B observed that:

> "I grew up knowing that a person with many children was a rich person, but I have been proved wrong in this family - having many children is more of a burden, and is causing me life problems. We knew in our (rural) areas that the ladies in the family brought a lot of investment by going out and getting married. Men would bring wives, and expand the family. All is the opposite here. Girls get pregnant, and nobody pays for them. Those boys (who make the girls pregnant) don't want to work, instead they become members of groups and gangs, and end up being useless."

Mr B (father of 12) contrasted his family's constant fight against hunger with the relative availability of food in the rural area where he grew up.[1] In his opinion, his sons would be unlikely to have families the size of his:

> "They have seen what it is like to grow up in a large family where there is not enough money to buy food, and hunger is the order of the day - I doubt whether they will repeat my mistake."

Respondents of the older generation regarded large families in general, and teenage pregnancies in particular, as one of the most serious community problems. However despite their insistence that they deplore this trend, there is a very strong resistance by teenagers' and their parents to the use of contraception.

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1 In section x this report discusses the way in which members of the older generation tend to glorify the past compared to the present, and the rural way of life as opposed to the urban one:
   "Our precious food in those days was amasi. We had plenty of livestock - even milk was plentiful but amasi was our first choice so there was no need for any family to think of family planning - because they lived in plenty. Today that is a dream, and people need to see the differences."

Respondents commented that most teenage girls refuse to use contraceptives because it is widely held, particulary by the township men, that women who use contraceptives are 'sexually weak' and not good lovers. Furthermore men regard the fathering of children as a sign of manhood - and since they are very often not forced to take responsibility for these children they do not see any reason to practice contraception. Thus for example Philani B (26) who was unemployed, and who had no fixed abode (he had left his parents' home and seemed to stay with friends and lovers on a drifting basis) had three children by different women.

Many young people said that contraception did irreversible damage to one's health. Many parents are opposed to the use of contraceptives because they believe that a woman who has used contraceptives is unlikely to be able to have children at a later stage. In a society where a woman's identity is very closely tied up with her ability to have children, this is considered a possibility too alarming to risk.

Responses in the area of sexuality and contraception were invariably riddled with inconsistencies, as the following transcript from Cedric C's interview shows:

Q: What do you have to say about the growing birth rate - particularly amongst teenage mothers?
A: The economic situation is the cause of this. Most girls are keen to get good things which they don't have in their families because of poverty. They fall in love with most boys from rich families not because they love them seriously but because they see some material gains which they get at first. But when they fall pregnant they find themselves on their own and that is the cause of unnecessary pregnancy. They even fall in love with taxi men - unmarried people who don't feel much about young children - because they see those cars they drive and the money they have.
Q: What do you think of Family Planning?
A: Family planning is not an idea I favour much, but understanding the problem that many girls are facing I would prefer that they all practice it. It is a good idea for married people because they reach an agreement in doing it - but for an unmarried person to practice family planning is not dignified. The problem with family planning with most girls is that they don't command much respect among boys if they use contraception, but it is good for their security because whenever they become pregnant and have illegitimate babies - we as brothers suffer a lot bringing up these children where the fathers are avoiding the responsibility.
Q: Would you avoid such responsibility?
A: I believe we must talk with the pregnant girl's family - I don't see the reason why people run away from girls (ie they have made pregnant)
Q: Do you regard children as a burden or source of joy?
A: The problem is that girls are not respecting themselves and become very loose, causing the problem that we all face. Economically unwanted children are a burden but for married couples they are a blessing.

Q   Is contraception a women's or man's responsibility?
A: Woman's - because they are always tempted by boys. They listen to various people who promise them heaven and earth. They need to secure their lives very well in the face of these temptations.

There is a wall of silence around sex and sexuality between mothers and teenage daughters. · Many mothers feel embarrassed to talk about sex. Others believe that talking about sex to young girls will put the idea into their heads (the implication being that they would not have this idea otherwise). Many many mothers feel that by discussing contraception with their daughters, they will be seen as sanctioning sexual permissiveness.

Thus for example although the E family spoke anxiously about the financial burden of unwanted pregnancies among teenagers, Gugu E (16 years old) said she had no idea what 'family planning' meant:

> "I always hear them on the radio saying that young women should come to the family planning clinic for 'advice' - and I always wonder what 'advice' means when they say this all the time."

She said that she had never discussed this mysterious issue with anyone.

The complexity of changing practices related to courting and sexuality, and the confusion and suspicion about contraception in a community that speaks of teenage pregnancies as one of the greatest economic drains on already over-burdened families is an important area for future research. An important aspect of the complex of factors implicated in family stress is the inability of families to meet the material and physical needs of their members.

Despite the financial strain of teenage pregnancies on already over-burdened families, however, township families are adapting to this growing phenomenon. The adaptation of families to this reality is an example of the elasticity and adaptability of families to changing social circumstances. In cases where the unmarried fathers are unwilling to take responsibility for their children, the tendency seems to be for the unmarried girls' family to accept responsibility for the baby. A 35-year-old mother of a 16-year-old daughter and 18-year-old son commented that it was established practice for the girls' family to take over such children:

"I have told my daughter that the day she has a baby she will leave school and get a job to support it - I am not going to take responsibility for her mistakes like all the other township mothers do when their teenage daughters have babies. I have also warned my son to be careful - but if he makes a girl pregnant that is her family's problem, not mine."

In a detailed case study of the pregnancy of a teenage schoolgirl and schoolboy, Preston-Whyte and Miller (1987) document the detailed series of traditional procedures carried out by both the boy and the girls' family after the birth of an illegitimate baby. While such practices exist, they could obviously only function in cases where the baby's father is willing to 'admit' paternity, and where the boy/man's family are sympathetic to the young girls' predicament.

Preston-Whyte and Miller point to the apparent contradiction between the fact that many African parents profess to be deeply distressed by the possibility of teenage pregnancies, and yet take no steps to prevent such pregnancies from happening, and accept them quite philosophically once they happen. They point to the inconsistency between the:

"professed powerlessness of parents to control their dependent children, and ... their tolerance and support for situations which they claim to abhor", arguing that "there are no strong retributive sanctions operating, such as disowning the girl, or forcing the boy to marry her. This tends to suggest that Zulu parents are, in fact, more ready to accept the situation than they are willing to admit" (p26,p22).[2]

They argue that the structural process underlying this apparent contradiction is an adaptive strategy. It enables female-headed families to reproduce themselves despite changing social relations that no longer ensure that men are an intrinsic part of family constellations.

Our interview transcripts do not replicate Preston-Whyte and Miller's empirical findings. Unlike their case study where the father of the child, and his family, accepted full responsibility for the pregnancy, in the families we spoke to few of the teenage daughters' lovers accepted any responsibility for the children.

The birth of these children often resulted in the mothers having to leave school earlier than necessary - unskilled and virtually unemployable in the competitive scramble by young

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2 This comment would probably be true of parents from a wide variety of social formations, and not only of African parents.

people for work. The teenagers' mothers, while expressing a great deal of love and affection for these grandchildren, always referred to the birth of these children as a blight on their daughters' prospects, and a chronic financial drain on tight family resources.

In contrast to Preston-Whyte and Miller, this report would offer a competing explanation of the underlying structural forces at work in explanation of this apparent contradiction. It is argued here that the high rate of teenage pregnancies serves to disempower young women at a time when male dominance is more threatened than ever before in the history of African social relations. This phenomenon represents the structural forces of patriarchy asserting themselves at a time when the economic and social status of adult men is diminishing.

Rather than strengthen the female-headed family unit as Preston-Whyte and Miller suggest, this situation serves to undermine the future prospects of the young mothers. It often puts an end to their education, and permanently impairs their employment prospects. Thus their chances of setting up a comfortable home for themselves and their families are considerably weakened. In those fortunate cases where the child's father is willing to admit paternity, it disempowers the young women in their relationships with to these men. Without the security of marriage there is no certainty that these fathers will continue to pay maintenance any longer than they feel inclined. Any dispute with the child's mother is likely to result in rapid withdrawal of maintenance.[3] This means that these young women often choose to tolerate all manner of abusive treatment rather than to assert themselves in what they experience as bad relationships - when assertion could mean risking an end to child support.

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3   Not one of the respondents saw the maintenance courts as offering adequate protection in such cases. Young men appear to have developed a variety of ways of evading even legally defined obligations through ruses such as lying to the court about the number of children that they have, or about the number of relatives that they must maintain single-handed and so on. Rather than continue to pay maintenance after he had quarreled with Thuli B, the father of her child would simply quit his job whenever a maintenance court hearing was pending, and would tell the court that he was unemployed, and thus unable to pay.

3.1.2 THE FAMILY AS AGENT OF SOCIALISATION

Everyone agreed that the family should play an important role in the socialisation of children. This point was not contentious where the smaller children were concerned. All respondents mentioned the role of families in teaching children to be neat, clean and obedient for example.

With regard to older children however there was a great deal of confusion around the issue of socialisation. It appears that children are exposed to a variety of social influences that might lead them to interpret the world in a different way to their elders. Some parents felt that social change had occurred so quickly that many of the recipes for living that they had learned as teenagers were no longer appropriate for their children. They admitted that they lacked confidence in the task of guiding them. Other parents refused to acknowledge that their views were outdated, and doggedly tried to impose them onto their often unwilling and unreceptive children. This produced a great deal of conflict and confusion within some families.

This section examines some of the common themes raised by interview respondents in discussions about the changing nature of the family in the socialisation of township youth.

i) Rural or township upbringing?

Many respondents commented on the relative merits of a rural as opposed to a township upbringing for a child. No consensus emerged, there being a wide range to arguments for and against each locale. Advantages of township rearing included the fact that townships offered children more in terms of educational and recreational facilities, as well as the stimulation of television which was less widely available in rural areas (television was regarded as a valuable educational supplement for children). A major disadvantage of rearing children in townships was the decreasing influence of rural traditions in township society. Many of the adult respondents regarded rural traditions as an essential framework for rearing children to be respectful and obedient citizens. Rural children were generally seen to be more pliable and obedient.

A result of the deeply felt divisions in the volatile township community was that violence had become a commonplace occurence in township life. Gugu A (15) commented that she had witnessed numerous instances of political violence - such as the stoning of buses, the burning of houses and schools, and the breaking of windows. Killings were also common.

> "Killing is very common for people in this township, and they are not even worried when one person kills another." (Mr A).

Opinion was divided as to the effects of the on-going violence on young children. Older parents and women usually said it was bad for young children to be exposed to the killings, stonings and arson that are a feature of township life. However one younger parent, Tom A, thought this exposure to violence was a necessary part of township socialisation. He scoffed at the idea of "hiding reality" from children, no matter what their age.

> "This politicises them and prepares them for life. They might as well be exposed to reality from an early age."

Virtually all the younger politicised men said it was essential for young children to be aware of the violence of township life. This was a necessary and unavoidable part of their political socialisation:

> "Children who see the violence that is part of our lives grow up knowing very well that for them to survive they need to struggle because they will always be deprived of their rights. It is here that they become committed to fight for their rights in the struggle. Through seeing the killings that happen here, at least they can differentiate between killing an innocent person and a collaborator. They are fully aware that someone who sells out his or her people needs to be eliminated therefore they dare not grow up to be SB's." (Cedric C)

> "It is essential that parents take the initiative of explaining every minor issue around violence so that their children know what is good and bad in that violence. They need to be told constructively the cause, who is responsible, what needs to be done to avoid suffering in that situation. It is bad for parents just to dismiss violence as a bad thing without explaining to children who began it, why it began what is the cause, and why are people responding like this." (Jack C)

The fact that killings were regarded as a commonplace feature of township life, and even regarded as a good and necessary thing by younger men, provides an index of the degree of disruption of township life and raises disturbing questions about the psychological

implications of the normalisation of violence for growing children. Chikane (1986) questions the long-term effects of growing up in a community where violence is commonplace for a whole generation of children:

> "The most tragic reflection of the war situation in which South Africa finds itself is that it faces the years to come with children who have been socialised to find violence completely acceptable and human life cheap." (p342)

The family, apartheid and capitalism?

In section 2.2 we started to touch on the way in which poor working class families played a role in perpetuating the marginalisation of the family and its members, using as an example the B family. The analysis revealed:

i)   the way in which the B family had labelled Siza as someone who would never find a job - and the way in which family practices served to reinforce this label

ii)   the way in which family members' lack of survival skills and assertiveness served to deny them access to those welfare benefits they were entitled to.

Examples of this nature serve to illustrate Leonard's point that the family will often play a key role in the ideological and material insertion of its members into a particular class and ethnic group (and in so doing play a key role in the reproduction of a society's power relations). Through the process of socialisation, family members take their place in the world in a way that is appropriate to their class, gender and ethnic status.

This section turns to the data in an attempt to begin examining the part played by the township family in socialising children for their roles in current social relations in the context of:

(a)   the state's commitment to undermining popular community resistance to its authority and to maintaining 'law and order' in the townships, along with its professed view that the family has an important role to play in this process (Hassim and Meterlerkamp, 1988), and

(b)   the economic role that working class township people play in providing a pool of cheap labour for capital, and the role of the family in the reproduction and maintenance of this pool.

A functionalist perspective that sought to focus primarily on the 'deep penetration' of the family by the imperatives of racial capitalism might require us to look at the way in which the family serves to socialise its members into becoming law-abiding and compliant members of an apartheid capitalist society. Family members might be seen to have three options:

(i)   to fill whatever jobs were available;

(ii)   to play a role in the reproduction and maintenance of the work-force as family members of workers; or

(iii)   accept their marginalised role as unemployed persons if jobs were not available.

According to Therborn's (1980) "modes of ideological interpellation", such well-socialised workers and citizens would, for the most part, see their location in a society arranged around hierarchies of class, gender and ethnicity as a natural, desirable, and on the whole unchangeable state of affairs. The family would play an important role in this process of ideological interpellation of subjects in its role as agent of socialisation.

However, this report has already pointed to the dangers of a functionalist perspective that focusses on the socialisation process as the straightforward moulding of children to take their place within pre-existing social relations. One cannot simply view the family's role in this process as that of willing slave of current social conditions. The interview data will not admit of any simple functionalist explanation. It provides ample evidence of the complex and contradictory nature of the socialisation process.

This section examines the data in an attempt to begin to unravel some of this complexity. Does the family tend to serve as a conservative force in the socialisation of children to take their place in an apartheid capitalist society? To what extent do other social groupings serve as socialising agents? do these other socialising agents tend to socialise young people

in ways that conflict or are consistent with the family's role? To what extent are there contradictions internal to the family's socialising mechanisms? This report begins to consider these questions.

Again it is emphasised that the following comments are intended as preliminary hypotheses on the basis of a small amount of pilot data. The issue of socialisation of township youth, and the role of the family and other social institutions in this process will form one of the main foci of the author's forthcoming PhD research.

The family and racial capitalism

To what extent is the present generation of working class township children being socialised to fit in to current social relations of apartheid and capitalism - on both the material and the ideological levels? To a certain extent the **material** foundations of racial capitalism remain largely intact in the sense that township dwellers generally continue to serve the needs of capital by selling their labour power. However on the **ideological** level, the legitimacy[1] of this material reality appears to be having a decreasingly firm hold on township opinion.

The questioning of the legitimacy of the *status quo* is a general historical problem wherever some members of a society exercise power over others. In the case of working class black South Africans, this process obviously dates back to the early days of colonialism and capitalist penetration of this country. According to respondents' accounts however, large-scale popular articulation of dissatisfaction with current social relations in Durban township society is a feature of the past ten to 15 years. Before such time, although there may have been seeds of resistance to the *status quo* in the sense that it was not universally believed to be either a **'natural'** or **'desirable'** state of affairs, township dwellers had on the whole internalised a sense of their powerlessness to change the status quo - and thus saw it as **'unchangeable'**.

Interviews showed evidence of the degree to which respondents of the older generation (between 50 and 60 years of age) had internalised a sense of being powerless victims of

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1   Two kinds of legitimacy - this will be taken up in the conclusion.

social forces beyond their control, and the way in which the younger generation were struggling to resist their parents' world views. The parents' world views tended to be based on the assumption that no matter how exploited and oppressed one might believe working class black South Africans to be, one had no power to alter current social relations. Any attempts an individual might make to do so would endanger their safety and perhaps even their life, as well as the safety and even the lives of their families. Furthermore such attempts would have very little chance of success.

It is beyond the scope of the present work to examine the historical build-up of the growing township resistance (particularly amongst the youth) to the exploitation of working class township people. Instead we will focus on the relationship of this growing resistance to the changing face of social relations within families, and on the traditional role of families as the primary agent of socialisation of their children.

Turning to the data we find that among parents there was general consensus that the task of socialising children was becoming increasingly difficult. Their most strident complaint was what they described as the breakdown of respect by children for adults. However the issue went deeper than this. In a more stable society there would be sufficient continuity between the experiences of succeeding generations for the accumulated wisdom and experience of the older generation to have some bearing on the lives of the younger generation. In township families of the 1980's many members of the older generation felt that social change was progressing at such a rate that children were being faced with situations of which they as parents had no experience themselves. Having little understanding of such situations parents felt they were ill-equipped to advise their children.

In addition, some parents, acutely aware of their own lack of education, and believing that education was in many cases synonymous with wisdom, felt inferior to their children and as a result reluctant to advise them, or to take a strong stand against them in conflictual situations.

Many children seem to reinforce this view, believing that their parents are ignorant and uneducated, and have little of value to teach them.

"The difference between me and my father is that he did not get the education I am struggling for. If you engage in discussion with such people you find that they are quite narrow in their thinking - they only see one side of the argument and are not interested in other sides, and their arguments are quite boring compared to those of boys my age." [Jabu C, aged 21]

"Parents appear as fools to their children, people who just say useless things, whose minds have simply ceased to think wisely - this results in growing disobedience because children do not see any reason to respect them." [Siza B, aged 19]

"Most parents appear as if they are living in a different world. They do not seem to have any way of responding to their childrens' deeds and ideas ... they originated from a completely different environment - if they had grown up in a place like this (township) perhaps they would understand the current situation better." [Themba D, aged 17]

"At one stage I was very negative towards Father, but later I realised that he is very ignorant, and that nothing can be done about this." [Zenzele D, aged 20]

Hand in hand with the growing wave of political conscientisation of youth (respondents said this had been gathering momentum since the late 1970's in the Durban townships), has gone an increased tendency towards mobilising resistance against apartheid and capitalism. However on the whole the state has been successful in undermining the development of strongly organised structures for popular resistance by township youth[2].

Some of the more politicised township youth appear to have directed some of their anger with the *status quo* at their parents. They claim that their parents passively accepted their oppression, and in so doing simply allowed the white racist oppressors to perpetuate the *status quo*. As a result the older generation has bequeathed the younger generation a society in which they are doomed to suffer. This claim by the youth points to a major discontinuity in the perception of the world by some members of the younger generation on the one hand, and their parents on the other. Many of the youth seem to have resisted internalising an important aspect of their parents' frame of reference for analysing the world - namely the sense of defeatism present in many members of the older generation that militates against participaton in activities aimed at social change.

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2   This raises the crucial questions as to whether analysts often place too much emphasis on 'legitimacy' and too little on the durability of social relations through the exercise of naked power/terror.

The youth's claim that their parents might have had any power to change their circumstances seems to be foreign to the average township parent. Several of the parents interviewed articulated their deeply ingrained sense of the powerlessness of black working class people - an unshakeable bedrock of their assumptions about the world and their place in it. This sense was expressed indirectly in a number of ways. Thus for example one mother told how she had berated her son when he told her he was going to ask for a wage increase at work:

> "I told him that he must not bother his employers. If he does not bother them, but simply works hard, they will see for themselves what a good boy he is and will raise his salary. When I started work (as a domestic) I was paid R15 a month for a many years. I never complained to my employers, but simply worked hard and tried to please them."

Mrs D expressed her sense of the powerlessness of township people in the face of the 'white bosses':

> "I grew up knowing very well that I was supposed to depend on the white person. When the children claim that we (black people) are the same as white people, I get confused, because I do not know how we can be equal to people who are our bosses."

According to Mrs A - who grew up on a white-owned farm in a rural area, the possibility of voicing protest against harsh working conditions on the white farm where her family had been labourers for two generations was inconceivable. She told how farm labourers worked long and hard hours for virtually no pay other than meagre rations and the right to live on the white farmers' land. Thus as far as her family was concerned the white farmers' power to evict families from the farms, leaving them homeless and destitute, kept the workers in a state of obedient fear:

> "We often worked for months without being given time off even to go to church. We never complained because we knew our existence would be in danger. Even families who were not complaining could be evicted overnight. We understood those dangers and tried to prevent them as much as possible." [3]

This sense of powerlessness made even the parents that were the most politically conscientised on an intellectual level, feel varying degrees of alarm or even panic at the

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3 This raises the question of the peculiar situation of farm labourers in all capitalist societies. This might be a problem not only of inter-generational and inter-class conflicts, but also of intra-class conflicts among working class people.

childrens' assumption that they, as black members of the working class, had the power to actively resist their predicament. Their deeply ingrained sense of subordination and powerlessness translated into their adult daily lives in the form of an attitude of patient and passive endurance of suffering.

Even those that could understand the rationale of their children's political resistance appeared to find the vigour and fearlessness of the children's active opposition to the current political dispensation shocking, frightening and dangerous.

Mr B - a staunch trade union member - was fully in agreement with the politicised youth's critique of South African society with its attendant humiliations and injustices. However he felt that passive acceptance of the *status quo* was a necessary survival strategy, and was appalled by the youth's assumption that they had the power to challenge it:

> "Although the children are correct, I have fear as a parent ... they cannot rule the world ... there are serious dangers in this kind of thinking that they are not aware of ... I just feel that as long as I am neither dead or arrested, that is enough for the time being. The rest will see for themselves what happens. Whenever I raise my head the government will knock it off. That is my fear, and that is why I do not want my children to be politically active." [21]

Given that the socialisation process within the family involves the parents' transmission of a set of implicit assumptions about the world to their offspring, it appears that many families could potentially play an extremely conservative role in preparing their children to take their place as submissive workers/citizens.

As this report continually emphasises however, the socialisation process is a complex process. The family's role in it cannot be abstracted from its location within a wider set of complex social processes - making it impossible to reduce the socialisation process to an unproblematic transmission of recipes for living from one generation to another.

One complicating factor in the socialisation process, which has already been referred to in this report, is that the family performs its socialising role along with a variety of wider forces, some of which may contradict the family's 'recipes for living'. Many township children are fiercely resistant to their parents' sense of alienation and powerlessness.

These wider forces include: a) the existence of what will be referred to as competing socialising agencies', and b) contradictions within families in the way in which parents attempt to socialise their children. Each of these points is now discussed in turn.

A. Competing socialising institutions:

Competing agencies of socialisation include the peer group, popular community youth organisations, and ironically even the influence of the state-run schools. They are referred to as 'competing' socialising institutions because each of them has the potential to provide young people with frames of reference that contradict the messages many parents would seek to transmit to their children.

Virtually every respondent, young or old, referred to the influence of the peer group on young people. They said young people were more concerned to please their peers than their parents, and that peer approval was more valued than parental approval.

In our particular sample of families - each of which had at least one highly politicised member, in every case in the younger generation - the most prominent example of a competing socialising agent was the politicised peer group. It is to this group that we turn to illustrate various points.

The politicised peer group

According to the families we interviewed, it would seem that more politicised children often congregate in peer groups that form around a common allegiance to UDF-type principles, or through membership of their neighbourhood UDF-affiliated youth leagues.

Speaking very broadly, such 'politicised' youth peer groups of which the interviewees spoke included two broad categories of membership: the comrades - divided into the leaders, and the rank and file membership - and the comtsotsi's.

1. The comrades:

The comrades consist of a loose alliance of young people who share a broad commitment to political change, and to the upliftment of the community.

Within this very broad category there appeared to be differing levels of political sophistication and discipline. Very generally speaking, comrades appeared to fall into two broad groupings. The first grouping included those who demonstrated the greatest coherence and sophistication in their views on strategies for political change. They often held leadership roles within youth organisations.

The second broad grouping consisted of rank and file members. This grouping was often equally dedicated to working for social change. However members of this grouping often had less clearly formulated notions of how such change would come about. As a result such young people often initiated or took part in resistance-motivated activities in a more random and less carefully considered way.

Members of the first grouping appear to be an awesomely disciplined and committed collection of bright young men. Women are dramatically under-represented in these groupings (Campbell, forthcoming). These young men have a strong desire to finish their education. They are intense and serious, with a well thought-through political line, and good sense of history.

More often that not these young men are the ones that become leaders of local political organisations, and become the obvious targets for political detention. This usually disrupts their schooling for one of two reasons, either their parents cannot afford to send them back to school after their release, or else their school principals - often Inkatha supporters - will not readmit them to school.

Many of the rank-and-file comrades appear to be equally committed and serious, but often with a less clearly thought through political agenda. Thus while they also strive to be highly disciplined, they do this on their own terms.

In certain sections of the township for example, these youngsters are quite 'boy scoutly' in their commitment to improvement of the community, their exhortations to other youth to respect their elders and so on. However in strong contradiction to this 'scoutliness' is the fact that their principles of acceptable behaviour are highly idiosyncratic. These will also be the children who find it quite acceptable to take part in political violence, often resulting in loss of life.

These youngsters commented for example that it is quite acceptable for small children to witness the murders of police informers. This they regarded as the best way of teaching them at a young age the dangers of being a 'sell-out'.

Thus even when the politicised peer group serves to give these children some rules and structure in their lives, these rules and structures develop in a way that sometimes reflects a disregard for human cost which is not always matched by political gains or guided by a clearly thought-through political line.

2. The comtsotsi's:

The second grouping are what the comrades often refer to as the 'comtsotsi's' (tsotsi being a Zulu word for a 'bad lot' or a criminal). This group are unemployed. They are often school drop-outs - due to factors such as financial problems in the family, early involvement in drugs or alcohol, or inability to cope with schoolwork. Obviously it is inaccurate to imply that they are inherently 'bad' - there are often coherent economic or social reasons for their predicament, and many of them are very unhappy and frightened of the future.

Many of these young men climb onto the political bandwagon. They use resistance-motivated activities as an opportunity to 'let off steam' and cause trouble. It is this grouping that is often involved in various forms of township violence. As one respondent said, the comtsotsi's use the name of the comrades as a shield rather than out of any sense of political purpose or dedication. Many of the more disciplined comrades claim that it is this grouping that has turned the adults in the township against the youth.

These comtsotsi's are characterised by many dubious practices, amongst them their 'recruitment methods' of those who don't willingly take part in political unrest, as well as their general rowdiness and violence, all of which are carried out in the name of 'the struggle'.

The influence of politically motivated peer groups on township children is a strong one. These groupings are able to enlist the support of large numbers of young men in popular struggles - an involvement which more conservative or fearful parental influence would condemn or discourage.

The tsotsi elements often serve to force even the most timid and conservative children to support activities such as school boycotts, out of the fear that they will be harmed if they do not comply. Their power is recognised even by the older generation in the community - who will often encourage their children to support boycotts rather than risk 'punishment' by the youth for failing to take part. Parents often do this even though involvement in boycotts may result in children failing to write exams and having to repeat years at school - demanding great sacrifice on their (parents') part.

For example Cilla A, a mother in her thirties, was ambivalent about the value of school boycotts. She doubted whether any parent did not find it painful to see their children's schooling disrupted by boycotts. She emphasised the enormous sacrifices made by working class families to pay cripplingly expensive fees, books, uniforms and so on. However she said few parents would encourage their children to defy calls for boycotts because their lives would be endangered as a result.

Cilla reported that she had instructed her 15-year-old daughter Gugu that she must always "go with the crowd" in tense situations. She stated that individuals that defied the crowd would be endangering their lives:

> "I always warn my children because I fear that lives are not safe - at school they must behave like any other children - they must just go with the crowd and do what the crowd wants them to do."

The optimism of many of the more politicised youth stood in sharp contrast to the fearful pessimism of their parents. The reality of township life is such that despite the youth's

optimistic sense of the potential power of popular community struggles to change the face of apartheid and capitalism, at the time the interviews were conducted in early 1988, such struggles had yielded few tangible results to offset the enormous suffering and repression that they had wrought upon community activists and their families. The interviews reflected a tendency among certain young people to interpret current social conditions in a way that involved an exaggeration of their power to shape current events.

Certain township youth appear to dramatically over-estimate their power to change the world. Many young respondents spoke as if the revolution was just around the corner. At the time of the interviews when severe restrictions had just been placed on the UDF and Cosatu, (early 1988) one 20-year-old respondent said that it would only take three months for youth to regroup into another more powerful organisation, and that 'the revolution' would have occurred within five years (Cyril C). And Zenzele D - one of the most experienced and serious of the politically active youth in the pilot study - predicted that 'the revolution' would happen in two years' time. (Zenzele D)

There was also evidence of a tendency amongst youth to vastly exaggerate the political achievements of the youth. They spoke of the success of a series of school boycotts (which pressurised the state into giving them free stationery and schoolbooks) as a formidable achievement. They cited this success as conclusive proof that the new society was just around the corner.

Thus, within some families there appears to be a radical tension between a pessimistic sense of powerlessness on the part of parents and the childrens' optimistic triumphalism.[4] To a certain extent, these extreme views seem to perpetuate each other. Many parents fearfully warn their children that they have no power to change the world, and that the state will simply crush any attempts to do so. The youth angrily insist that their parents are wrong, and persist in their political activities. These political activities often result in trouble for the young person and/or his family - which reinforces the parents' belief in the inefficacy of community struggles against the state.

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4   This point will be developed further in a later section.

In turn, the parents' anxious or angry 'I told you so' responses may often simply serve as one factor in hardening of their defiant offspring's determination to continue with their struggle.

Other socialising agencies

Other social guides that were alluded to in the interviews included:

i)   School: Zenzele D commented that although township schooling was vastly inferior to that available to other race groups, it had nevertheless enabled young people to move away from the more conservative attitudes of many of their parents. He commented that even this inferior education had given young people the conceptual tools with which to formulate a critique of current social relations, and to begin to debate alternative social forms.

ii)   Religion: there was evidence that although the church seems to operate as a potentially conservative force on the one hand (particularly in terms of husband-wife relations for example) it may also operate as a force for social criticism. Several of the respondents interpreted and justified the black South Africans' struggle as an oppressed group with the use of biblical parallels. Thus for example one respondent drew parallels between their own struggle, and that of the 'children of Israel'.

Other socialising agencies that appeared to exercise influence on individual family members included trade union structures in the workplace, womens' groupings, various peer groupings held together by a common interest in parties and nightclubs and so one.

The author is presently engaged in a more extensive study of township youth designed to elicit in more detail the variety of both formal and informal social groupings that serve as socialising structures which serve to complement or compete with the family's role in the socialisation of youth. These are hypothesised to include non-political influences - for example church groupings, sports groupings, groupings of teenage girls that 'hang around' together - bound by a common interest in boys, clothes and pop stars, as well as groupings of teenagers that simply 'have a good time' together.

B. Contradictions in the socialisation process within families:

The interviews yielded some evidence of a contradiction in the way in which parents responded to their childrens' more 'modern' outlook. There was often a degree of ambivalence in their disapproval of their childrens' bold and independent ways. Thus in spite of their overt complaints about their childrens' independent ways, there was often a covert note of pride in their complaining voices.

On this basis it is suggested that parents are giving their children 'double messages' about their offspring's growing political conscientisation. It appears that many parents' disapproval is tempered by a secret and tentative admiration for their children.

The interview data yielded hints of this ambivalence. It appears that some parents did identify with their children's resistance and approved of the gains that the youth had made in their political struggles. They were also awed and envious of the childrens' rejection of their parents' coping style of passive acceptance of oppression. Yet despite this they had learned - many of them from bitter personal experience among their own families or neighbours - that political activity meant detentions, police harrassment, the possibility of petrol bombed homes, the mysterious disappearance of activist family members. It meant long jail sentences, and never knowing whether one's child was alive or dead when s/he did not return home on time at the end of the day.

Mrs A (whose son Tom had been jailed for several years for his political activities, and whose family had suffered on-going threats and harrassment in this connection) expressed this conflict:

> "We do not entirely blame our children for their involvement, but it is bad for any parent to encourage that and show signs of approval. This would be perpetuating something that could cause the loss of their lives."

Mrs D said that she was sympathetic to her son's political views, but had to oppose his political activities because she believed that they would only bring his and the family's life into danger. 20-year-old Zenzele had been detained for a year, during which period he had spent some months in solitary confinement, and been badly assaulted on numerous

occasions. She told us that while she was proud of his astute political mind and his commitment and dedication on the one hand, she was terrified for his life on the other hand, and for this reason was reluctant to show him any approval or support for his activities:

> "The things Zenzele says are very true - but I cannot tell him face to face that I understand what he is saying because I fear that he will involve himself deeply in these activities, spurred on by the hope that even his mother agrees with him."

Since his detention she has had a heart attack as well as developing high blood pressure, and lives in constant fear for his life:

> "I hardly sleep at night - we live close to the main road where there are many vehicles, so I usually think it is the police coming to fetch my son. Or else I think it is his enemies, private people who are against him that will come and kill him. I am never relaxed. I have seen so many houses burnt, I always think that one day it will be this house of mine."

The overwhelming anxiety which had damaged her health, and dogged her day and night showed a marked contrast to Zenzele's relaxed and dedicated confidence in the cause of political change, and his belief that (i) his cause was worth dying for, and (ii) that it would inevitably succeed, no matter how many individuals the state and its allies needed to terrorise, detain or murder.

Speaking of his experiences in detention, as well as threats by vigilantes that they would kill him or burn down his house, Zenzele said:

> "I am not frightened, what I know is that they can come here anytime and if they want to kill me they can kill me. They can do whatever they like, but they can't stop what I am fighting for."

There was a sense that certain members of the older generation who had tolerated oppression for so long gained a vicarious satisfaction from what they regarded as their childrens' proud and dogged determination to 'change the world'.

3.1.3 FAMILY AS A MATERIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

Not unexpectedly, there was a great deal of evidence that the family serves as the major material support system in the life of most township people - in terms of providing support for children, for unemployed adults, for employed members in times of crisis.

The family also serves as a repository for the sick, disabled and unemployable. Given the virtual absence of old age homes, institutions for the mentally and physically disabled, orphanages and other such welfare establishments, there is usually nowhere else for such people to go other than to their family for support and assistance.

Furthermore, as we have already mentioned, parents often took over and cared for their grandchildren, particularly if the mothers of these children did not have husbands and homes of their own. Respondents referred to the common practise where a young woman married a man who did not want to take in her children from previous relationships. These children would often remain in their grandparents' house when their mother left the home to take up residence with her new husband. In some cases such children would be taken in by other members of their mother's families (perhaps grown-up sisters or brothers who had set up their own homes).

All the households in the pilot interview sample had a group of non-labouring family members attached to the household. Thus for example, the B household (where the only regularly employed member was Mr B, a labourer) provided material support for 10 non-earning family members: three unemployed sons aged 19, 34 and 36; a 15-year-old scholar son; a 21-year-old unemployed daughter and her six-year-old child; two grandsons aged 13 and 16 whose mother died some years ago; an eight-year-old grandchild whose mother left home some years ago to live with a lover; and an unemployable mentally ill son.

Respondents spoke at length of the the crippling effects of unemployment, as well as the problem of low wages paid to workers in the families. One interesting aspect of the discussions concerning financial support of families was the implicit assumption made by many respondents that responsibility for a family's upkeep was a man's responsibility,

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despite evidence of the fact that many families do not have male heads.[1], and in those families that do have male heads, many of these men are unemployed, and are thus prevented from contributing to the material support of their families in any sgnificant way. Furthermore, even those men who are employed often earn too little to meet the family's demands. Thus these men no longer play their traditional role in the community in relation to the material subsisdence of their families. These days women play a major role in the material struggle for survival of many families.

The belief that families should have male heads, and that these men should take responsibility for family support and decision-making, is consistent with both the historical roots of the township family in a set of social relations where men held the reigns both with regard to community resources and decision-making (Guy, 1987), as well as the male-dominated bias of current capitalist social relations in South Africa.

The process of drawing rural black people from a pre-capitalist social formation into an urban, industrial capitalist environment to take their place as workers has been accompanied by a continual decrease in the ability of adult males to exert any control over the community's resources. However the expectation still remains that male family heads should maintain control over the family's resources and also that he should ensure that all the family's physical and material needs are met.

With growing unemployment, and the low wages paid to employed men, it is impossible for many fathers to meet all their families' material needs. Despite these structurally imposed limitations, however, community ideology still decrees that this is a father's duty, and that a father who is unable to fulfil this duty is in some way a 'bad father'.

Fathers who are unable to support their families adequately are apparently looked down on, not only by the community at large, but also by their wives and families. Several parents suggested that this situation was a key cause of the erosion of respect for adults and of

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1   The following section on the composition of township families will focus on the growing number of female-headed families - despite the common belief that a 'proper' family is one that is headed and supported by a male.

family instability. Mr A observed for example that: "It is a struggle to make a strong and stable family, given poor financial circumstances."

Tom A offered the case of an acquaintance, Mr G, a labourer at a local factory who has ten children, and a wife who is unable to work due to demands of child care. This worker's earnings are well below what would be required to adequately support a family of 12 people. Every Friday evening he returns from work with his pay packet, with his children expecting that this week he will bring them "some refreshments or something nice", and his wife hopeful that he has received his long-awaited salary increase.

Every Friday night the family are disappointed. Arguments result, culminating in the father storming out of the house to a local shabeen. His drinking problem has become increasingly severe and he frequently spends weekends with his girlfriend in town.

It appears that neither Mr G nor his wife have any understanding of the structural causes of their predicament. The wife makes endless demands on her husband which he is unable to fulfil:

> "She just knows that he is the house owner, and that since the old days the father does everything in the family. In the old days the mother of the house was seen as one of the children. Until people reach that understanding that it is the system that does this, the father will always be seen as a failure." (Tom A)

Situations like this trap families in unbreakable vicious circles with dire consequences for individual family members, and the family as a whole. Fathers are victims of expectations they are structurally incapable of fulfilling. Their families make demands on the basis of very real needs, then attribute his inability to meet them to personal inadequacy on the father's part. The father feels humiliated and emmasculated (given that the notions of provider, household headship and masculinity seem to be closely inter-linked in the township frame of reference). He will often turn to drink and other women for consolation - squandering a portion of his meagre salary on these indulgences, and further embittering his family who take these bad habits as further proof of his lack of worth as a father.

Mr A spoke of the humiliation produced by his inability to support his family:

> "It is a very sad situation because one even loses the respect of one's own family when one is not capable of managing the family affairs - to the extent that you get embarrassed whenever you are approached for

help which you cannot offer. At the same time you feel humiliated because your family make comparisons, saying: our neighbour so-and-so has everything, why can't we have the same as him - as if the situation were of your own making ... nobody wishes to fail to satisfy his family demands, but it happens when you have a big family at a small salary."

Mr B spoke of the tensions that arose in his family where there were constant clashes over food, and where children continually complained because he was not able to provide for them as well as the neighbours, and of the family's constant criticisms of his failure to provide adequately for them, and their unwillingness to understand the structural nature of his predicament:

"I always feel like a father who is a failure, who is not commanding dignity and respect in his family - because I cannot afford to satisfy them in everything they ask. And the reason is simply that the money I get is not enough for all my children. Employers are very unsympathetic in this situation."

Both Mr A and Mr B made a close link between their ability to provide for their families, and the respect accorded to them by their families.

Economic problems appear to be a constant source of conflict within families. Parents will clash over money, children will clash over clothing or food. Several families referred to constant strife over the maintenance of the teenage daughters' children. Thus for example the father of the house might say that the child should be taken to its biological father's home. On the other hand his wife and the teenage mother will want to keep the child in their own home. The father of the house might continually complain that the teenage father should contribute to the child's maintenance, continually berate the teenage mother when her lover fails to pay, and so on.

Economic hardship is almost invariably interpreted as a sign of individual failure, of personal laziness or inadequacy. Families tend to blame individual breadwinners/household heads for such problems rather than attributing such problems to social causes.[2] As Jabu C put it:

"People are not supportive because they think the unemployed do this purposely. They don't put themselves in that position (empathise) that one day their factory might close, and they might find themselves out of a job. They tend to be very individualistic in their thinking."

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2   Leonard (1984) cites this tendency to 'individualise' economic problems as a widespread feature in capitalist economies.

Families tend to lay important emphasis on income-generating ability in their assessment of adult males. A woman who loses her job can fall back on the role of housewife or mother. An unemployed man can do neither, and may often suffer from chronic "loss of identity" (Breakwell, 1986).

The psychological effects of unemployment are often severe. Several respondents spoke of the anguish and disillusionment of the futile search for work, and the way in which the resulting poverty undermined the morale of the family:

> "Our family has had two main problems - the first is poverty - which drove our sister Princess to leave home - not only to find a job so she could send us money, but also to get away from facing this poverty. The second stress was to see ourselves inferior compared to other families around us. We were looked down on by so many people and felt humiliated to be like that. Such a situation creates lots of hatred for things which should not reach that level of hate. You get bitter and become distracted, failing to listen attentively to other people because you always think these people are talking of issues that don't give you food, and they are well fed. And you don't see why you should listen to such people.

> "You develop anger against anybody, even someone talking of something that is meant to create laughter - you don't laugh at that - you always bleed in your heart every moment - your mind is never stable. You feel like hitting young ones when they worry you about things. Even if you greet an unemployed person they give you a cold answer or look, and if you talk to them they tell you directly not to worry them. I know this because I have been unemployed myself and I see my brothers sitting alone behind the house. At such a time you know you must not disturb such a brother because he has been somewhere for a job with no luck." (Jabu C)

Mr B referred to his sense of anguish and helplessness during a six-week strike period, where he was unable to provide money for his family. He cited this period as the most stressful period in his life. He reported that his wife took over the role of breadwinner in the family during this period, going off in the morning and coming back each evening with a packet of mealie meal:

> "I was caught in a situation where I could not feed my family. I became like a child where I did not take any decision. She had to suggest things, and I just agreed because she was the one who was providing for the children. I became a helpless person not working - very weak and sorry." (Mr B)

Mrs A spoke of the way in which the community stigmatises unemployed people - seeing the problem as the result of individual inadequacy rather than systematic breakdown. She made an interesting distinction between family and community responses to what she

termed 'political problems' (by which she meant issues such as harrassment of family members by police and the detention of children) 'economic problems'. She said that political problems tended to unite families, and often also inspired community support:

> "We as adults always become very concerned to see somebody taken away because of his real beliefs. We become very sympathetic, and remain united. His aspriations are like ours though we do not express ours openly."

Economic problems however tended to cause family conflict, and fragment families rather than unite them. Families often split as individual members were forced to go off on their own to make a living. Futhermore Mrs A said that individuals from poverty stricken families were often trapped into doing 'evil' acts because they were starving. Their main concern was survival rather than the distinction between right and wrong.

Tom A also spoke of the suspicion with which the community regarded an unemployed family:

> "The community does not take the unemployed family as a good family. They are always suspicious for example that the children may be doing bad things. Even the father walking up and down the streets is regarded with suspicion - the community does not trust the unemployed family at all."

Case study: C family

Mrs C is a widowed mother struggling to maintain her household of five unemployed adults and five small grandchildren, without any regular source of income. Since the murder of her husband by a gang of robbers ten years ago, her life has been an on-going and increasingly desperate battle against starvation and ill-health. Of her seven children, the two with jobs have left home, whle another, an activist, has gone into hiding, and they seldom see him. A fourth child, a typist in Johannesburg, sends money to her mother on an irregular basis to support her two small children who are in Mrs C's care. She left home because she could not tolerate the family's poverty and misery any longer. (Mrs C spoke quaveringly of this daughter "who was reluctant to say openly that this is my parent".) All of the five children who are still at home are unemployed - four sons, and one daughter, aged between 20 and 37. These include a 25-year-old daughter who has three children of her own.

For the first five years after her husband's death Mrs C supported the family by selling meat (illegally) at a railway station - until the railway police began a concerted campaign to stamp out illegal hawking. She had to operate in an increasingly cloak-and-dagger fashion, until one day she was spotted by the police who chased her. She fell and injured her leg, and has not been able to walk properly or work since then. Since that time, the stress of supporting her family with no regular source of income has taken a severe toll on her health - like many of the parents we spoke to she reported heart problems and high blood pressure in addition to her leg injuries.

Mrs C spoke at length about the physical and emotional results of a continual shortage of food, of knowing that her small grandchildren were always hungry, the indignity of being known in the neighbourhood as a poor and useless family, the humiliation of knowing that her older children were ashamed of her and of their decrepit home. Their poverty is a never-ending source of taunts by a drunken neighbour. He stands at the fence dividing their plots, shouting insults at them.

Mrs C is still regarded as the head of the family, despite the fact that there are several adult children in the home (the eldest being a son of about 38 years old) and notwithstanding her poor health, which prevents her from walking without difficulty. It appears that since these children have never been employed, they have never attained the status of adults. Becoming economically self-sufficient serves as an important rite of passage between childhood and adulthood, particularly for a young man. Having a child often fulfils this function for a young woman.

Mrs C spoke of the way in which unemployment affected a young man's life. It was very unlikely that he would be able to marry - firstly because virtually no young woman would be prepared to consider a young man who would be unable to support his family, and secondly because the system of lobola (the payment made by a young man to his wife's family upon marrying her - traditionally paid in cows, but in the townships often replaced with cash) is still an important part of township courtship. Thus such young men often remain in their parents' houses - still with the status of children. Both Colin and Cedric C, aged 38 and 21

respectively, said that their mother was responsible for financial matters in the household, and that it was she who was expected to make any decisions regarding the family finances, and to take the intitiative in their fight against poverty.

Township youngsters are deeply influenced by socially mediated needs relating to the consumption of commodities, even though their poverty-stricken status makes the fulfilment of these needs impossible. There is a clear link between consumption, and self-identity and social status. Jack C explained that:

> "Poverty is always difficult for us youngsters, because we have a tendency to compete with each other in terms of clothing. One who cannot afford these feels he is not accepted among his friends. This causes pain and sadness - not to be able to afford a pair of trousers with a label that is acceptable for example."

This section has examined the role of the township family as a material support system, as well as some of the structural impediments that handicap the family in performing this role. The next section turns to another important function of the family as outlined by the respondents, viz: the family as emotional support system.

3.1.4 FAMILY AS AN EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM[1]

In all the families interviewed there appeared to be strong ties of loyalty and affection between mothers and their children. All the children interviewed expressed extremely strong affection and respect for their mothers:

> "I can simply sum up my relationship with my mother by saying that all that I am is through my mum. She is always tolerant of the things that I say or request. There is great understanding between us, as well as co-operation." (Zenzele D)

> "We are very united here because of our mother who lives here alone as an adult. We place our hopes in her, and she is a very quiet person. Everything is invested on her shoulders - she is in control of all of us." (Cedric C)

Every mother interviewed expressed unconditional love and support for her children. Each woman's life story was one of endless struggles and sacrifices made on behalf of her children. Each child interviewed demonstrated an awareness and appreciation of this.

In the B family, for example, domestic life centres around the figure of Mrs B - who seems to co-ordinate the resources of the family, help family members make decisions, and give moral and if possible material support whenever it is needed. She finds this role a fulfilling and rewarding one in many respects: "I get the most joy through my children and grandchildren - I am happiest when I am spending time with them."

Mrs B's greatest sources of unhappiness arise when she feels she is failing in her supportive role. Thus, for example, her deepest grief arose from the disappearance of her son Dennis (the political activist who vanished without trace, and is believed to have left the country). She became so agitated when speaking of this that she was barely able to speak. She is haunted by her fear that "his reason for leaving the family was our failure to provide him with what he needed".

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1   Gottlieb (1978) includes the following behaviours in his definition of emotional support: talking and listening; providing reassurance and encouragement; showing understanding, respect, concern, trust and intimacy; providing companionship; providing accompaniment in a stressful situation; and maintaining a supportive relationship over an extended period of time.

Her happiest moments appear to derive from her perception that she is successfully filling what she sees as the role of a good parent - one who "guides her children" and supports them both in the moral and the material sense. She keeps a firm hold on family in an easy and usually humorous way and is a great believer in maintaining 'high standards':

> "Everyone in the family, especially the unemployed boys help with the housework. They are very diligent, and we have no problems in this regard. The always remind me: 'Ma, we are boys, and we cannot do housework all the time', but in this case I just harrass them and beat them.... They all know I am capable of beating them, and in fact it is seldom necessary to do this. A threat is usually enough."

Despite the firm hold she keeps on her children within the household, she, unlike her husband, is a great admirer of the youth and their political activities, and does not feel at all threatened by their new ideas:

> "In general children are very respectful. The fact that they do their own things (ie political activities) is not a sign of defiance towards adults .... Through children we have all got ideas.... They are telling us we left things unchanged, and they are changing things. Adults are dishonest compared to children. Children are honest because they want to correct the wrongs - then adults turn around and say that children are not respecting."

Her support for such activities is strong, so much so that in answer to the question regarding her heroes, the persons she mentioned were her two politicised children, Lindi and Dennis: "My heroes are those ones who have suffered a lot in our family - my son that went away, and my jailed daughter."

She argues that just as it is important for adults to guide their children if they are wrong, so it is important to praise them for their achievements:

> "If a child has cooked for me and cleaned the house I must thank them for that - as I must also thank them if outside the house they are making it so we do not have to pay school fees."

Mrs B's happy and easy relationship with her children (which they themselves also referred to in the interviews) contrasted sharply with the more complex position of her husband in relation to the family. Family comments about Mr B centred around the extra-marital affairs that kept him away from the home several nights a week, his inability to generate enough income to meet the family's needs, and the family's belief that it was inappropriate that he spent money on his extra-marital pursuits.

Mrs B referred to these issues obliquely and reluctantly while speaking of marital problems in the community in general:

> "There is a private life in marriage - we suffer a lot that other people are not aware of - there is no way of leaking that information to outsiders."

She is a great believer in tolerance in marriage - and says that divorce is a luxury affordable only by women with "financial muscle.... those who have money and good jobs so that children will not suffer financially".

She said that it was only due to her belief in tolerance that her marriage had survived: "Or else I would be divorced by now, because my husband is the same (as those men who sleep around and waste money elsewhere) - but I must keep my marriage intact so he brings home some money." Marriages should not only be preserved for financial security, but also for the psychological well-being of children, who would suffer "mental disorder in their minds" if their parents were no longer together.

The B children made frequent references to their father's frequent absences from the home, and the fact that in his absence Mrs B often had to take over his traditionally defined role as family head. On the whole she was regarded as a more potent force in the family than Mr B:

> "To me mother is the head of this family though father is against her ideas of taking the initiative, but she is forced to take it because father sometimes does not come home. That has caused us to report everything to mum, the person with whom we always stay." [Siza B]

> "Father struggles to give us what we need, but mother organises second hand clothes .... we get from her money to go to school .... Even if she doesn't have money she organises with the neighbours. But father is most problematic because he doesn't have enough money for us all, although he tries." [Purpose B]

They also referred to his 'fierce' disposition and his tendency to shout. Family members were clearly in awe of him, and took pains not to make him angry. As a result, there appeared to be a very strict censorship rule regarding what father should, and should not be told. Purpose referred to this censorship when he mentioned that the family never talked to him about the circumstances of Dennis' disappearance: "Nobody tells me about the

things that are taking place in this family because I sometimes talk to my father to whom I am not supposed to expose information."

Mr B himself referred to his wife in a fairly distant but respectful fashion. and praised her skills in disciplining the children, and in contributing to the family finances. They appear to interact in a business-like rather than an affectionate manner. When asked about his relationship with her he answered:

> "We stay here just to assist each other to make a living, to bring up these children. She has helped me a lot, with cooking, buying and selling second hand clothing for profit ..."

However, he clearly seeks enjoyment and relief from family tensions outside the home. He named his girlfriend as the person in whom he confided in when his heart was heavy. As he mentioned her his face was transformed from that of a stern patriarch into a bashful, giggling youngster, and he appeared relaxed and light-hearted for one of the few occasions during the interview.

In summary however Mr B was regarded with some bitterness by his family. They complained that he failed to support them adequately. They also commented that he spent, at their expense, too much time and money with his girlfriend in town. Mr B in turn said that his children did not respect him adequately. His (often vain) attempts to discipline them, or to make them see his point of view on a variety of issues, left him feeling angry and marginalised in the family circle. His children in turn tended not to feel particularly strong ties of loyalty or affection for him.

Relationships with fathers seem often to be much more complex than relationships with mothers. The A family were an exception - here Mr A was regarded with an uncomplicated affection and appreciation. Similarly, Mr C - who had been murdered by robbers ten years previously - was remembered with affection and respect by his family.

Mrs E had divorced her husband twenty years previously due to his failure to maintain the family.[2] His children regarded him with some bitterness and anger. His daughter Angela E articulated this:

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[2] De Haas, 1986 cites maintenance issues as one of the major causes of marital breakdown among black people in the Durban area.

"Father is just like other fathers - he doesn't do things for his family. Even if I were to get work I would never worry myself to please him by buying him clothes and other things he might need."

Similarly there was no love wasted on Mr D in the D household. Mr D had left the home, and refused to maintain the family since his son Zenzele had become involved in UDF-style politics against his Inkatha father's express instructions. On the rare occasion that Mr D visited the D home, family members refused to speak to him, or to sit in the same room as he did.

Respondents referred to problems between fathers and their families as a common occurrence in the township. Such conflicts often focussed on the issue of maintenance of children, or ideological differences between conservative fathers and their progressive offspring.

Another bone of contention within families was the issue of extra-marital affairs by fathers. Some wives were prepared to tolerate such behaviour on the part of their husbands. Their only conditions were that these affairs should be conducted completely secretly - other family members should if possible have no knowledge of the existence of extra-marital lovers. Furthermore such extra-marital affairs should not cause the father to neglect his family.

Many women appear to base their acceptance of this state of affairs on the fact that (i) polygamy was an accepted part of traditional rural life, and (ii) that it is in the biological nature of men to want to have sexual relations with more than one woman.

Both Mrs B and Mrs D expressed bitterness about their husband's infidelities - their objections relating to the financial implications. They complained that their husbands squandered money on entertaining these women while their families often went hungry.

While it was generally accepted that it was man's nature to desire multiple sexual partners, respondents were emphatic that behaviour of this kind was not acceptable on a woman's part. A woman who slept with more than one man was considered "dirty" (Cilla A).

Respondents did not engage in debate on this issue. "This is simply our way," said Mrs C, explaining that she would never have considered engaging in extra-marital sexual activity as her husband had.

Younger men also often expressed concern and resentment at their fathers' behaviour:

> "Father still believes in the traditional method of having more than one wife, and I have always tried to make him understand the dangers of that - especially as we have all suffered here because of his outside affairs." (Zenzele D)

Zenzele's brother, Vela D, emphasised that he would never make his family suffer in the same way as the D's had at the hands of their "irresponsible" father:

> "As an adult I will be totally different from my father who has simply left his home, and sleeps everywhere. I won't rush into marriage - will stay at home and just enjoy myself until I am about 28. Once I am married, my wife will always be with me wherever I go because I don't see the reason of leaving her alone. This will stop me from being tempted by other girls - I will do away with girlfriends as soon as I marry."

On the basis of the interview data, it is suggested that while the family serves as the central emotional support system for its members, these supportive ties are most strong between mothers and children with fathers playing a more variable role in this regard. This point will be taken further in following sections. The next section turns from the functions of the family to consider the closely related issues of family composition and power relations - important themes in the interviewees' indigenous theory of the family.

3.2 CHANGING FAMILY COMPOSITION AND POWER RELATIONS

Aside from the brief details outlined in the third section of this chapter, the interview data on family composition was limited largely to the changing role of fathers within the family constellation. Fathers seem to be playing an increasingly variable and often more marginal or even non-existent role in many family constellations. This was closely linked to the issue of power relations within the family - in particular changing power relations both on the gender, and the inter-generational front. Because these issues are so closely linked, this section will examine changing family composition and power relations simultaneously.

3.2.1 Gender power relations.

The questions of (a) the presence or absence of fathers in the township family, and (b) the role played by older married men in family life with regard to family power relations, point towards an issue which will be followed up in much more detail in the concluding section of the thesis, viz: what is referred to as the contradiction between township family **ideology** on the one hand, and the **reality** of township family life on the other.

Consistent with the literature on changing household composition in township families (Burman and Reynolds, 1986), three of the five families interviewed had female family heads. It appears however that township family ideology has not kept pace with the reality of township family composition. Despite ample evidence for the pivotal role played by women in township families, township ideology still decrees that the ideal family is one with a decision-making and bread-winning male at its helm.

Tom A commented that the old-fashioned traditional views of family gender relations are still dominant in township households.

> "It is tribalistic that the man is the head of the family because he is the one that gives food to the family, who must defend the family. Everything depends on him ... since the old days the mother of the house was seen as one of the children - she just knows that the father is the house owner, and that since the old days the father should provide for the family."

In this view of the family, although the wife is seen as having a fair amount of discretionary power with regard to certain clearly defined issues such as nurturing and feeding, this power falls well within the parameters of male authority.

This view of the family is strongly reinforced by Inkatha, where "the good family is characterised as one with a strong male head, with subordinate wife or wives and respectful and obedient children" (Hassim and Metelerkamp, 1988, p.18). The government's Proposed National Family Programme (a policy document released in 1985) is based on similar assumptions about the African family (Hassim and Meterlerkamp, 1987).

This view of the family is also evident in the media. The dominant television image of the family, in both advertising as well as other programmes, is an African duplicate of the western bourgeois family. Television continually conjures up images of an upwardly mobile working father who wears a tie, and sits drinking beer in pubs with his colleagues, a housewife mother who happily washes, cooks and nurtures her hard-working husband, their little boy (often about eight years old), and their little daughter (often about six).

The persistence of this view of the family flies in the face of the reality of current township life. More and more families do not have male heads (Burman and Reynolds, 1986). Many working class township families are not composed of an adult male breadwinner, a female housewife and so on, to fill the slots in the currently available role models for family members. And even in those families that do have male heads, often these fathers do not play the dominant role in family support and decision-making that their socialisation prepared them for.

As a consequence, many fathers feel deprived of what they regard as their rightful role within their families. This has a range of results. Some of them doggedly try to assert what they believe are their rights within the family. Others withdraw from the family in a variety of ways - some may leave their families altogether, others might invest energies outside the family - perhaps with other women.

The long and the short of it is that it is mothers who are the pivot of family life. As a result of the absence or withdrawal of fathers in families, mothers carry most of the family burdens. As Siza B (17) told us:

> "To me mother is the head of this family although father is against her ideas of taking the initiative. However she is forced to take it because father sometimes does not come home. As a result we have to refer everything to our mum - the person who is always there with us." (Siza B)

It is mothers who often take the major responsibility for managing the scarce resources available to most working class families. It is mothers who take care of family members in times of crisis - such as sickness, unemployment, detention and so on, and in old age. They often take responsibility for their teenage daughters' babies. It is mothers that form the emotional nexus of the family. They advise, console, and comfort family members. They mediate ties of loyalty that exist between family members. It is mothers who coordinate family decision-making - and mediate between family members in the day-to-day business of living. They set up wider emotional and material support networks with other women in the community - neighbours, friends, relatives - and in times of crisis the survival of the family will often hinge on these networks.

Young people often speak with feeling about the central role their mothers have played in their lives. As one informant said:

> "I can simply sum up my relationship with my mother by saying that all that I am is through her. She is always tolerant of my opinions, and of the things I request. There is great understanding and tolerance between us." (Interview with Zenzele N, 19 years old)

The pivotal role played by township mothers, and evidence of their strength and courage in the face of huge social constraints facing their families is sometimes interpreted by overly optimistic feminists as heralding the dawn of a new era for women - and pointing the way towards the transformation of womens' roles in the wider society. (see Campbell, forthcoming, for a detailed criticism of this view). Some feminists speak in glowing terms of how township women are meeting the challenges of changing social conditions and carving out a new role for themselves in female-headed families. The empirical data was filled with warning signals against what is argued to be simplistic optimism of this nature.

It is true that more and more women are being forced into the role of family head. It is even true that increasing numbers of younger women are choosing not to marry. They prefer to set up home on their own than to lay themselves open to the problems of drinking, violence and non-support that are characteristic features of many working class township marriages.[1]

However such women do not have an easy task. A range of factors hamper them in the day-to-day struggles of caring for their families. In female-headed households patriarchal ideals often dominate. In a community where the ideology of a dominant male still holds sway, a woman is unlikely to be accorded the respect and authority that a male would receive in this role.

Many female family heads still subscribe to the old-fashioned view that a house without a father (both as head of family and as chief breadwinner) is at a distinct disadvantage. According to this view, without male protection both the woman and her children are vulnerable to all manner of evils.

Traditional views continue to exert strong negative influences on the ability of female family heads to perform all the tasks necessary for the 'proper' running of a household. Mrs D for example, spoke of the impossibility of trying to discipline her "tsotsi" 17-year-old son

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1   Thus for example 26-year-old Angela E (unemployed with one six-year-old child - both supported by her family) was not optimistic about her chances of finding happiness in marriage:
     "I have seen so many marriages where people are not happy because of their husbands .... most men are not good at all - very few are mature, and unfortunately we don't find these often."
     Marriage was not automatically built in to her life expectations:
     "My goals in life are that I wish to study further, get myself a job, buy myself a house and stay with my child, clothe her and send her to school, get married if it happens, and if not just live my independent way of life."

     Mrs E, who had divorced her husband after he refused to support her and their children, had refused to take him back some years later when he asked for a reconciliation. Having achieved independence at great cost - arriving in the city from the rural area with no income and three children after he had deserted them, and struggling against great odds to ensure their survival - she felt that her husband would serve as an autocratic and conservative force in the family:
     "Mother refused father when he said he would like to rejoin us. She was aware that he would be jealous of seeing her selling things and getting money for us as she does. She was also aware that he would try and impose strict rules that would not work in the family - like hindering a child from furthering their education, and saying that there was no money for this. He would also insist that we did all the things that he thought were correct - and yet he always failed to support us in the past." (Angela E)

Themba without the support of a male authority figure. Themba refused to attend school, and spent his time smoking dagga in discotheques and hanging around the taxi ranks.

> "In the old days whenever a child wanted to do his own thing he would be threatened by his father ... the father would say the last word which would be the deadline ... without a father a child will boastfully attend any party he likes because he knows very well that his father does not stay at home, and he doesn't take any notice of his mother."

In the absence of the husband who had abandoned the family, she had sometimes been helped by other male figures. Her eldest daughter's boyfriend had helped her to discipline Themba - until the boyfriend was jailed. She now sometimes turned to another daughter's husband to try and take the problem son in hand. At no stage however did she, or any member of her social circle, consider the possibility that she as a mother should have the power to discipline Themba.

The same applies to the notion that she could have any power to offer her family the same protection that a father would. Her daughter Nomusa D (24) echoed her mother's sense of defencelessness:

> "I could be attacked by someone who knew I was a fatherless person - someone could do whatever they liked with me, knowing that I had no protection.

The E family was also a female-headed household - the father had abandoned the family when the children were infants. Mrs E had been forced to rear them single-handedly, supporting them by selling vegetables on the pavement outside a local railway station. Despite the fact that she had succeeded in rearing her family, and was still making a substantial financial contribution to the household, her son had taken over the role of 'household head' as soon as he had become economically active.

It seems that many women take the role of household head if they are forced to do so - but as soon as a suitable man is available to fill this role, they stand back graciously and allow him to take over.

Thus despite the fact that the reality of township life is such that many households often do not have male heads, township ideology still decrees that this ought to be the case. Absence

of a male head is frequently regarded as a disadvantage, and often such families will have to call in male relatives to discipline teenagers for example.[2]

It appears also that in the absence of a father, brothers usually step in, playing an extremely conservative and patriarchal role in what they refer to as 'guarding' or policing their sisters. This is most conspicuous in controlling or monitoring their sexual relationships, however this policing also spills over into other spheres of their sisters' lives.

The rate of transformation of township reality and township ideology is an uneven process - with the latter lagging behind the former in this case. Rapid and dramatic changes in the *status quo* of family structures are not automatically accompanied by changes in expectations and beliefs about families. Old habits and expectations die hard, lingering on to hamper problem-solving abilities in families. A great deal of energy is wasted in trying to approximate the old-fashioned blueprint of male head and breadwinner, subordinate mother and so on.

Township female family heads are thus faced with all the stresses that accompany such responsibilities but receive little of the support and respect needed to carry out this role. There are also other limitations on womens' power within the family. This power is exercised strictly within the traditional patriarchal structures. These locate womens' functions within the areas of nurturing and protecting others, and do not generalise from women in the home to women in the world. This power is limited to older women - younger women have relatively little power.

Township ideology locates womens' power strictly within traditional patriarchal stuctures - which restrict womens' roles to the areas of nurturing and protecting others. The ideology does not generalise from womens' power in the home to womens' power in the world. It appears that the respect and authority a woman is accorded comes to her by virtue of her role as a mother - and falls strictly within the sphere of the household. Men speak

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2   Women are disadvantaged both at the ideological and at the economic levels. In all capitalist economies, men earn more than women. Some very substantial proportion of township households living in poverty are headed by women.

admiringly of the role their mothers play in their lives, but the praises of their mothers are confined within the boundaries of traditionally defined womens' roles.

These men appear to be prepared to acknowledge the power of women in a restricted situational and locational sense: women are powerful within the home, and in situations involving the nurturing or protection of other people. There is general agreement that within the domestic sphere women are pillars of strength - but there is often little respect for womens' powers outside of this sphere.

Like many younger informants, 20-year-old Cyril C speaks admiringly and with deep respect and gratitude of his mother's single-handed fight to rear eight children after her husband's early death. However his praise of his mother is couched in terms of traditional images of womanhood:

> "We are very united here because of our mother - who is the only adult in this household. We place our hopes in her. **She is a very quiet person.** All of our well-being is invested on her shoulders - she is in control of us." (my emphasis)

He lists as his mothers' virtues the fact that she spends all her free time at home (or at church), and does not 'waste time' visiting other people in the township or 'gossiping'. He admires her for the fact that all her needs are met within her home and family circle.

Similarly a good daughter is seen as one who spends her time at home doing homework or housework - and does not loiter on the streets with her brother. Males, on the other hand, are expected to be out and about in the world, earning money, having a good time, leading the struggle and so on.

Despite recognition of the daily demonstrations of the strength and courage of their mothers, and their forbearance under stress, young men still persist in speaking of women in stereotyped terms as silly, over-emotional, shallow and unreliable in times of crisis. An activist, Jack C (21), a deeply committed comrade who spoke with energy and fervour of his dedication to the fight for more democratic social relations had the following to say:

> "I would argue that men can lead us better than women. The reason for this is that I have seen in various meetings when women talk, and then get 'corrected' by sensitive questions they tend to be frustrated and

answer angrily and feel it is a personal attack. Men on the other hand handle such questions with laughter, and come out with a convincing answer."

Another young comrade, Jabu C (19), had this to say:

"Its difficult for women to lead serious issues like the struggle. In times of crisis, the boys who are leaders deal easily with the police. If a woman was in charge in such a situation she might panic and get us all into trouble."

Another youthful activist said that his organisation had tried to set up a womens' group to draw women into the struggle. He said they had soon discovered that all the women discussed were hairstyles and babies, and eventually two male comrades were co-opted onto the womens' group "to show them the way forward".

Beall *et al* (1987) analyse the role of UDF mothers in the Chesterville and Lamontville struggles in the mid-eighties, where many women showed remarkable strength and courage in support of their activist children in the face of harrassment by oppressive vigilante forces. These authors conclude that these womens' involvement in the struggle falls within the boundaries of their traditional roles as mothers - supporting and protecting their children. As such this involvement cannot necessarily be seen as an advance for the women's struggle. Beall *et al* (1987) caution that this type of brave involvement does not necessarily open up the possibility of a redefinition of womens' roles:

"Belief that their personal oppression is unimportant means that women do not take up struggle for themselves, even if they do so for their children ... women's hard-won gains in other struggles have often been lost when 'home and hearth' are restored." (p102)

Another way in which women's power falls within traditional patriarchal limits is that it seems that the most powerful women in the family are usually older mothers (in their 40's or older, and often with grandchildren in the household). Younger women tend to play much less of a role in family leadership (although they often play a major 'behind-the-scenes' role in family maintenance through their major contribution in feeding, clothing, child-care and so on).

This authority of the older woman is hardly a new phenomenon. Historically, older African women have always been accorded authority and respect in their families. If this is the

space which older women have used to carve out their increasingly powerful role in the family, this power cannot be said to be a radical new gain for women.

Traditionally older women have derived their social status and power by virtue of being their sons' mothers rather than in their own right. "She derives power out of successfully installing him on a throne as man, husband and ultimately father." (Ramphele, 1989, p11) Ramphele goes so far as to say that the social power of older women is derived through their co-optation by patriarchal family structures, and says that this co-optation plays a key role in the perpetuation of patriarchy. She refers to a divide-and-rule policy whereby older women are given power in families, with younger women falling strictly within their authority.

> "These senior women are given a stake in the control of other women ... (in a divide-and-rule strategy) used successfully by oppressive governments throughout the world in different historical periods." (1989, p15)

The deep commitment by men to the maintenance of patriarchal structures is a complex issue. The wider social dynamics of male domination in the family is rooted in the structural location of working class African families in the present context of racism and poverty. The task of future research is to understand precisely what mechanisms operate to reinforce or undermine this domination.

Working class black men are oppressed both in race and in class terms. Their socially sanctioned power over women (and minor children) is often the only arena in which they are able to exercise any dominance.

Men's experience of racism and economic deprivation often causes a reactionary backlash within the family - to the detriment of women - rather than opening up space for resistance to race and class oppression.

The process of drawing African people into a capitalist workforce in an urbanised, industrialised setting over a number of decades has been an uneven and fractured one. It has often resulted in individuals being called upon to play a number of contradictory social

roles in their everyday lives. People often have to shuttle between a number of different social situations - each one making contradictory demands on them. The effects of these contradictions overflow into the area of gender relations in families.

In the next chapter[3] examines the contradictions in Mr B's roles as oppressed black worker and doggedly traditionalist husband/father, and the way in which he tries to use his role as husband/father to force his family to accord him the respect and dignity that he lacks in the workplace.

The commitment of working class township fathers to the traditional role of father as ultimate authority in the family must be seen within the context of the contradiction between their position in the workplace and their childhood socialisation within a patriarchal social order. This socialisation was saturated with the old-fashioned values of a man as commanding unquestioning obedience from his family and as a proud, fearless and respected force within the wider community.

The final chapter of this report will also point to the discontinuities between political conscientisation and personal life. Often even the most dedicated and highly politicised male comrades show a conspicuous failure to integrate their political ideals with their personal lives. Many 'heroes of the struggle' are guilty of undemocratic and sexist attitudes to women.

Not only do men resist a more powerful redefinition of womens' roles. Women too are well-socialised into patriarchal structures. There was evidence that many township women believe it is appropriate that men take leadership roles in the family and the community, that women are 'second class citizens' in relation to men.

Such women accept that women should remain faithful to one man, but that male promiscuity is acceptable (often referring to the 'traditional' practice of polygamy for men as justification for this viewpoint). Many women accept violence as an unavoidable part of a woman's lot. Thus for example when 22-year-old Neli B's boyfriend came to visit her one

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3   See chapter 3.2.

day he found that she had gone to town with some girlfriends without asking his permission. On her return he beat her severely. She broke her leg trying to run away from him. She does not think that this behaviour was unacceptable, laughingly telling us that she had "deserved her punishment". Her family called upon the boyfriend in to ask the reason for his behaviour, and was satisfied with his explanation.

Many women go to great lengths to hide whatever power they do have from men. Nene (1987) refers to "the games of powerlessness" that many African women play. Mr B told us that his wife agreed with him on all issues. However the interview with Mrs B revealed that her opinions were very different from her husbands - but that she would not consider disagreeing with him to his face.

The notion of tradition is often drawn on by both men and women to justify patriarchal gender relations. This section began with Tom A's outline of the 'traditional' view of fathers. Spiegel and Boonzaier (1988) dispute the accuracy of notions of 'tradition'. They say that what is referred to as 'tradition' is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the past. They argue that appeals to 'traditional' life-styles to justify particular social practices are often simply a reinvention of the past which serves to justify the exploitation of one social grouping (in this case women) by another (in this case men).

Bozzoli (1983) also sounds a warning about the so-called 'traditional' way of life. She quotes studies that argue that the subordination of women in so-called traditional (pre-capitalist) societies was tempered by the fact that women had more status and rights than traditionalists would be prepared to concede.

Walker (1989) points out that the traditional African ideology of female deference is reinforced by white capitalist gender ideology. Both belief systems share similar assumptions of female inferiority and domesticity. Christianity is often drawn on to reinforce the traditional ideology of female deference. (Ramphele, 1989) The next chapter of this thesis will outline a model which situates the township family at the intersection of a number of different social influences, these influences interacting in varying degrees of conflict or consistency.

Bookman and Morgan (1989) have tried to capture the complexity of the simultaneous powerlessness and power of working class women in the contradictory observation that: "Women don't lead, but they do lead." The complex role of women in township families is a rich area for research - and one that cannot be ignored by those who are struggling to draw more women into the political arena. (Campbell, forthcoming)

3.2.2 POWER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GENERATIONS

The issue of changing power relations within the family, both in terms of changing power relations of gender and of age, has been alluded to repeatedly in the preceding pages of this report.[1] The interview data amply bore out Guy's (1987) claim that the transition from pre-capitalism to capitalism is characterised by the declining power of older married men in African social relations. The interviews repeatedly alluded to this declining power: fathers no longer play their traditionally dominant role in the material support of the family, neither are they necessarily the dominant force in family decision-making.

The previous section focussed on the increasingly important role mothers are playing in both family decision-making and resource management. It commented too on the dysjunction between this reality and township family ideology - the latter lagging behind the former. This section focusses on respondents' accounts of changing power relations between township youth and adults. The inter-generational issue was featured prominently in all the interviews. Respondents claimed that as the community became increasingly politicised, deep and enduring divisions were developing within various sectors of the community, and most concern was expressed in the area of social relations between the generations.

For older male respondents an important and threatening aspect of this change was the growing involvement of the youth in shaping community affairs and opinion. Fathers were neither automatically at the forefront of community decision-making nor in shaping the changing face of community life. They experienced this as a blurring of what were previously very clearly defined adult and child behaviours - the old traditional definitions of childhood and adulthood were seen to be dissolving, with no clear alternative definitions to replace them.

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1   Many of the changing social processes mentioned in this chapter, such as inter-generational conflict for example, would be characteristic of a broad range of social formations, and are certainly not unique to working class township families in the 1980's. This relates to this report's more general point that all social formations are in an on-going state of transformation. However social stresses are more highly visible under conditions of rapid transformation (Miller, 1984). This point will be taken up in a later section.

Inter-generational problems are part and parcel of any society at any point in time - and in that sense hold no particular intrinsic interest. As Tom A said: "From the primitive days, there have been changes between elderly people and the young. Youth take over from the adults, and the adults don't like this."

All the respondents agreed however that this problem had become particularly acute in decade prior to the interviews in 1988. Most respondents linked this to the growing involvement of children in the political struggle. Others linked it to increasing levels of education among the youth who are outstripping their elders at an unprecedented rate.

Mr B provided an interesting example of a father struggling to maintain what he saw was his rightful hold on the family. He was very much a man of the old traditional school, his conversation peppered by scathing dismissals of contemporary society, and wistful memories of the glorious past. He spoke bitterly of the problems of urban life, and longed for what he described as the relative ease and comfort of rural life.[2]

This section will begin by focussing on Mr B as a case study of a township father struggling partly to resist, and partly to come to terms with changing social relations - inter-generational relations in particular.

Case study: Mr B

Implicit in Mr B's world view was the premise that the best possible society is one that is rigidly ordered and hierarchical. In his view, young people obeyed their elders unquestioningly in such a society. Traditional norms of social interaction were strictly adhered to, such norms being informed by the old traditions of rural tribal society. He was uncompromising in his adherence to this frame of reference, seeing any departure from it as a violation of what was right and desirable. He felt morally bound to oppose any such departures with all his might, and seemed both unwilling and unable to exercise any flexibility in his attitude to his children.

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2   Segalen (1986) warns of the tendency to mystify 'the good old days' when the family embodied the harmony that human societies have since lost. Spiegel and Boonzaier (1988) point out that such appeals to a glorious past are often inaccurate reconstructions of the past, used by those in power (in this case older men) to justify the maintenance of a system of unequal power relations (in this case their claims to superordinacy over women and youth). This point will be taken up in chapter 3.

He found the growing independence of the younger generation profoundly threatening - using words such as 'bitterness', 'anger' and 'fear' to describe his response to the changing role of the younger generation in township society. He had made it his mission to fight these changes in his own household at least, since events in the wider community were beyond his control. "I always believe I cannot help sort out this situation in the world, but in my house I am still in control of the situation." He saw his home as his castle in the sea of bewildering social changes happening all around him: "In my family I do not have fear, I just instil discipline in the way I see fit. My problem is the outside world. It is too big for me to sort out.

In clinging so rigidly and defiantly to what is an unworkable frame of reference in a rapidly changing township society, he is fighting a losing battle. Even in his own home he cannot stop the march of time. As a result he has become marginalised in the family. His children certainly fear him and his angry outbursts and humour him superficially. However once he is out of sight, they go their own way. The family appears to have decided to appease his wrath by going through the motions of taking him seriously.

Although he is obviously unwilling to face up to it, one gained the impression that he was not totally unaware of his impotence in the household. Beneath his veneer of bravado, he is depressed and demoralised.

He also appears to be caught up in a conflict regarding his need to show his disapproval of his children and their modern ways, and his need to be liked by his family. From his own account, he takes up an issue with them, and explosively loses his temper - vents his anger by shouting at everyone - and thereafter feels deflated.

"I always get very angry towards my children. The reason for that is that I always want to show them clearly that I disagree with what happens outside, so whenever one of them is involved with that I will always disagree. My facial expression is often enough to show them that something is wrong that day, and they just run away out of sight and sit in the bedroom. They know I always disagree with their attitudes towards things. But I always try to bring them back by opening the TV and talking to them nicely."

Mr B spoke at length about the growing involvement of children in political issues. At the outset it must be stressed that Mr B is in agreement with the politicised youth's critique of South African society, and the humiliations a and injustices built into it:

> "Some things the children say are correct .... Before the Europeans did not think we were human like them .... Before you could mix with Europeans in one way only - they would look at your eyes, and say: 'This boy is cheeky'. Then they would call the police without finding out what is wrong, punish you for looking at them with a cheeky face. They did not even say: 'Why are you cheeking me?'."

He is also adamant that the problem of economic exploitation of black people is "the blunder of this government", and is a staunch trade union member.

Despite these beliefs, Mr B feels the children's involvement in politics is naive and short-sighted. "Though the children are correct, I have fear as a parent ... They cannot rule the world - they do not have any idea how to do this." He argues that they have neither the necessary economic power nor the experience, but only expose themselves to needless dangers in their political activities.

He feels that the only way that change in this country would come through peaceful negotiation, though he comments wryly that this is unlikely: "The government won't change through talking - they keep on making promises which they will not fulfil." He is pessimistic about the possibility of change: "As a parent I have a fear of the situation in the country .... and forsee a dark future."

His response to his simultaneous dissatisfaction with the *status quo*, and his sense that the state is too strong to be taken on by township people, is a feeling of stalemate, and a sense of passivity being the best strategy for survival:

> "I just feel that as long as I am neither dead or arrested, that is enough for the time being. The rest will see for themselves what happens. Whenever I raise my head the government will knock it down. That is my fear, and that is why I do not want my children to behave like this (ie be politically active)".

He also saw the children as impulsive and short-sighted, reacting on the spur of the moment rather than thinking through the long-term implications of their actions: "They do

not take things seriously. They think of today and not tomorrow - there are serious dangers in this kind of thinking that they are not aware of - and we adults try to warn them of these dangers."

In his view, their lack of concern for long-term planning was also evidenced in their tendency to boycott school as a form of political protest:

> "It is like walking on a path that leads to a dark forest where you will be lost. It is like sitting in this house in the dark and not using the electricity and hoping to see everything that is happening inside. Schools are helping children to have better lives and to have a better understanding of the future."

Mr B's disillusionment with the youth was situated against the backdrop of his dismay at the increasing disregard of the traditional rural tribal ways of life in the townships of today. He had fashioned his very identity around these traditions, and it frightened and angered him to see them disregarded. As far as he in concerned these traditions have more to offer than any alternative way of life, and he is mystified as to why the younger generation would want to abandon them: "My mind comes to a standstill when I think about this. I always become more hopeless about the future. I am always confused." For him these traditions were a source of dignity and strength:

> "Previous ways are disappearing in our places but I feel very sorry to see that happening because each and every nation is identified with its traditions. The result of leaving ours is that we are nowhere, we lose our dignity .... As a respectful and powerful nation we are eroded altogether ... What is left is that we are a nation with no identity. We are like a bird which does not feed among the birds and does not feed with mice either .... What is going to replace our image or tradition is a mixed group where we will have a lot of coloureds - coloureds in the sense that they belong to the side of the whites sometimes and sometimes to the Africans .... having no identity of their own."

He spoke angrily of the childrens' desire to "mix with other races in whatever we do, and eat with them, and sit with them together". Whenever he attempts to dissuade them from what he regards as this bizarre ambition, he is dismissed and labelled *umhlobo* (a slang term meaning someone who is conservative and belongs to the past).

> "As adults we also love other racial groups, but this does not mean phasing out or losing our culture and traditions. Other racial groups do not compromise with their culture and traditions either."

He ascribed the childrens' disrespect to their belief that because they had education they knew better than their parents. Although he certainly made an outward show of scoffing at this claim, one got a sense that at some level he felt slightly uneasy about it.

"Children of today as they look at us grown ups - they just think : 'Look at them - the situation is like this because they didn't take steps. The situation would not exist if they were just like us.'"

"I cannot find the right words to talk about this. It is not like our days when we respected grown up people. These days children just go their own way - I don't know where they get it from. We respected every grown up person as our own parent. These children are not like us ... These days every youngster tries to prove his or her cleverness - to show they are better then old people who were sleeping .... who just accepted everything that came from the Europeans ... They think they are a better generation and that they are educated. They even think - it is all disobedience and contempt towards the elders.

Not only does he feel put down by the children - but also excluded from their world and from their life. They organise their own meetings and make decisions that affect older people as well, regardless of the older generation's advice. Adults are simply disregarded, left out on a limb. Having excluded adults from their lives according to the old ways, they leave them no new place to relate to them from: "They isolate adults who try and join their groups. They always say you are causing problems for them if you try and join them as an adult."

Mr B often referred to the younger generation's use of alcohol and dagga. He also referred to their 'animal-like' physical strength. He spoke as if as if the children unchecked by adults constituted a dangerous force that had been unleashed on society. "They march down to the station and those that are criminals pickpocket people without the police arresting them - they always do this successfully ..."

"Adults feel threatened by the kids who can mobilise themselves in groups and attack elders that disagree with them .... with the physical exercises that the youth of today are involved in ,they have strength, animal strength, unlike us. We even see whenever they argue that they demonstrate such might, and we feel threatened because we are aware that they could easily overpower us."

"The way they respond to adults looks to us as if they are possessed, and I have a fear that there is nothing to be done to stop this. We never told our parents that we were busy when they asked us to do jobs for them. Now we are faced with a situation where we are not treated the way we expect."

These issues made him angry and bad-tempered, but also depressed and impotent. "Hai. They call me a father but I am a half father." He said he found it ironic that when it suited

his children to call on him to fulfil certain aspects of the old-fashioned father's role they had not qualms in doing so:

> "I understand the word father as meaning he is the only head of the house with the final word and decision-making power, but with us this is no longer the case. We are only reminded of our status as father when somebody needs help. Other than that we are just like anybody .... I always get angry but being angry does not help. I finally get depressed and hopeless. I always feel like punishing them by not giving food to them but I know the implications of that. The neighbours and the community at large will wake up when I do that, but when the children treat me badly, there is no one on my side ... I end up shouting randomly at all of them. I always hope that one of them will understand my shouting and change his image. That is the only way I can release the pressure that I always feel."

In line with his authoritarian structuring of the world, his instinct was to call on some higher authority to back him up:

> "Sometimes I wish I could ask the government to send officials to come to my house and pick up all these children and beat them heavily, and after having got that lesson bring them back. I always think that this will be the solution to their behaviour."

But even the authority of the government had broken down in the townships, Mr B commented. He referred scathingly to the KwaZulu government under which his township falls as "the afternoon government who are not doing anything". Like many of the other respondents, he commented that the KwaZulu police only seemed prepared to come out in situations where someone had been killed. If there was no corpse, they would either fail to come at all, or else arrive the next day.

> "If you tell them the situation is resolved they say: 'You were just wasting our time when you phoned last night'.' I wonder what kind of law enforcement is .... so insensitive to the community it is supposed to serve."

Case study: Mr A

Mr A's position and reaction to these issues was remarkably similar. As far as he was concerned the community failed to accord him the respect he deserved as an adult male - and he had no notion of an alternative role. For him, respect between generations was part of his very humanity:

"The most important thing is to know each other well, without fears, and to respect each other. These are the cornerstones of our life. Losing these we don't need to regard ourselves as human beings."

These concerns were linked with his concern at the youth's rejection of traditional ways of life as "outdated".

"There is nothing to replace our traditional structures because they remain good and all that they need is to be reformed, and not to be destroyed and thrown away ... by simply throwing them away we have got no base."

He felt frightened at what he saw as a complete lack of continuity between the old ways of his childhood and the new ways of the younger generation. He saw the main facet of the 'youth problem' as the breakdown of the clearly defined age-determined social hierarchy which had determined his own upbringing. According to this hierarchy, interactions and relationships amongst people were unambiguously defined in terms of an unbreakable code of what respect should be given and received between people standing in differing relationships of seniority. He did not see this breakdown as a gradual process, but as a radical discontinuity from one generation to the next.

"There is a great difference between our life style and theirs, in the sense that we grew up knowing the cornerstone of our life was to respect older people and always uphold the rules given to us by senior boys. But what is happening here is that they don't know these distinctions."

Youth had developed the habit of mixing freely with older people - "an enormous freedom, which they misuse". Thus for example they would show no respect for older people, simply sitting around with them, without asking for their permission to do so, in a way that was totally unheard of a generation ago. The distinction of clearly defined periods of childhood, an intitiating period into adulthood, and then adulthood seemed to be disintegrating.

The result of this, he says, is a complete breakdown in the distinction between parents and children to the extent that the notions of "parent" and "child", and the norms of respect implied in these notions, have lost their meaning altogether. "They don't know whether we are their parents or we are like them. When we try and stress the distinction to them it doesn't really matter, because they believe we are not capable of being respected."

Case study: Mr D[3]

A third father, Mr D, was reported by his family to be a staunch supporter of Inkatha, and an advocate of a return to traditional "tribal" and rural social relations. He was so infuriated by his son Zenzele's refusal to obey his command that he stop his political work, that when Zenzele was detained (for his role in local UDF youth structures) Mr D demanded that his wife and children disown Zenzele, and refuse to allow him readmission to the family circle on his release.

When Mrs D refused to disown Zenzele on his release from prison, Mr D packed his belongings, left the home, and cut off all financial support to his family of eight unemployed offspring and one grandchild. He now lives with a number of different lovers in succession. He is seen around the township in the company of women younger than his daughters, to his childrens' shame and horror. His family describe him as "the laughing stock of the neighbourhood". The family now survives on the disability grant of an epileptic daughter. Mrs D is reluctant to report the case to the KwaZulu-run maintenance court in the area, as Mr D has threatened to tell the court all about his son's UDF-related activities if she does so.

According to respondents this example of conflict between traditionalist Inkatha fathers and UDF-supporting children is not atypical. Mrs A said it was not unheard of for such fathers to be members of the very vigilante groups that would harrass their own children. It is hypothesised here that one important impetus for older men's membership of vigilante groupings[4] might be the fact that these groupings provide a means for fathers to express their anger at (i) the waning of the authority that they grew up to believe was their right and (ii) at the impertinence of the younger generation who ignored such claims to authority.[5]

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3   The project was not able to interview Mr D, so this account comes second-hand from his wife and three of his children.

4   These groupings are reputedly backed by Inkatha and their aim is to smash popular township resistance.

5   Not all children inform their parents about their political activities. This secrecy may also be potentially divisive of family relations. Mrs E is completely apolitical, as are her daughters. They do not understand the difference between Inkatha and the UDF. Mrs E acknowledged that she is aware that the country has 'some problems', but looked slightly embarrassed as she told us that she had never had enough interest in these matters to find out about them.

This does not mean that she has been unaffected by township resistance. She spoke of her terror in the previous year (during a period of intense conflict between police, Inkatha and youth in the township) she had stumbled on the body of a murdered policeman while crossing a grassy area near her home. She said she lived in a state of terror for days after that she might have been seen walking there and be implicated

Comment on the youth's view of the older generation

The youth's opinion of the older generation has already been touched in section x of this chapter on socialisation (their rejection of what they regard as the older generation's passive acceptance of oppression). We now turn briefly to two of the many complexities in the youth's attitude to the older generation.

There appears to be some contradiction between the more radical youth's disrespect for the abstract category of the 'older generation' on the one hand, yet relative respect for their own parents on the other.

It is hypothesised that some of the more radical youth have constructed a 'straw generation' out of the (vaguely defined) category of 'parents' - which has become as a symbol for their frustrations, for their anger, and for their feeling of impotence at their inability to effect change more rapidly. A wide range of social problems were blamed on the older generation. They were the ones that had tolerated oppression, and in so doing bequeathed their children a corrupt world. Some spoke as if the older generation was personally responsible for the current situation - their failure to resist oppression being due to their individual stupidity and passivity. Yet while they expressed contempt for 'parents' in general, many of them appear to be deeply fond of and respectful to their own parents.

Another of the issues that the situation raises is the irony that one of the most radical sections of an oppressed community falls so easily into the trap of providing simplistic interpretations of complex social phenomena. To vent their anger with 'the system' on their parents - who themselves are victims of this very system - smacks of naive and inaccurate analysis of the situation, and is politically divisive as well.

(continued)

in the killing.

She still has little idea why her son, Mandla E, who is her pride and joy, was jailed in Pollsmoor prison for some years. She lacks this knowledge despite the fact that she had taken food to the prison every day during his long period as an awaiting-trial prisoner. She had also attended each day of his lengthy court case, of which she said she had understood very little. She said he had always refused to discuss his political activities with his family, even after his release. During the interview she showed traces of bitterness that the family had had to suffer such hardships during his period of incarceration without even being told the reason for the hardship. However she had not pressed her son for details when he had appeared reluctant to speak about the issue.

The small interview sample on which this report is based points to the area of inter-generational relationships and social change as an important area for research as well as political education. The 'generation gap' - a feature of any rapidly changing society - has become the focal point for a range of family and community tensions in township social relations.

Tom A, a committed community activist, was particularly concerned about the political implications of inter-generational divisions within families:

> "The struggle cannot go on when families are disunited ... the revolution must own the majority of the people. In order to fight the enemy people must unite - they cannot be united if people are not united in each and every house. Everything begins with the family - political education too. It is the duty of progressive organisations to stop this - to give more politics to families - to make them reunite again."

This section concludes this report's account of its 'indigenous theory of the family'. The next chapter draws on this indigenous theory and the historical materialist theoretical framework sketched in chapter one in its outline of a model of the family against the background of changing social relations.

CHAPTER THREE

TOWARDS A WORKING CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE TOWNSHIP FAMILY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of four sections. In the interests of opening up the area of working class township family research, it will suggest a range of analytical tools that might be useful in unpacking the 'social' dimensions of changing social relations within families.

The first section sketches an outline of the 'working conceptualisation of the family' that is suggested by the empirical data - against the theoretical background outlined in Chapter One. This conceptualisation will locate the family in the context of a range of 'social institutions' or 'social guides' situated at the intersection of a range of cultural influences/resources.

The second section utilises this framework in pointing towards the contradictory forces at work in family life. It is hypothesised that these contradictions form a useful starting point for an examination of changing social relations within famlies.

The third section examines the applicability of the notion of family 'breakdown' or 'disintegration' to township family life, arguing that the notion of 'transformation' is a more appropriate description for changing family relations. Against this background, the final section looks at the controversial issue of the role of the family as 'slave of racial capital', or 'site of struggle' against oppressive social relations.

Obviously extreme caution is called for in any attempt to generate abstract analytical propositions from a sample of families as small as that on which the present report is based. It is emphasised yet again that this thesis must be seen as a small-scale pilot enterprise, which aims to generate hypotheses that might be useful in guiding further research on township family life.

1. TOWARDS A WORKING CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE TOWNSHIP FAMILY: A PRELIMINARY SKETCH.

The family is one of a variety of social institutions or social guides within which the individual is located. An institution is a structured set of relationships or roles associated with ordered patterns of behaviour (Haralambos, 1984). According to the role the individual plays within the institution, s/he is presented with a set of possibilities and constraints on thoughts, feelings and action. In this sense social institutions may also be referred to as social guides - they present the individual with a menu of appropriate behaviours for particular social situations.

Craig (1985) refers to the rules specifying what a group regards as appropriate behaviours for particular situations as "recipes for living" or "culture". She defines culture as " ... the totality of a group's power to institute tried and tested guidelines for adaptation." (p.25)

Hall and Jefferson (1975) define culture as: "Culture is the way, the forms, in which groups 'handle' the raw material of their social and material existence." (p10)

Drawing on these two definitions, this study defines culture as the pool of day-to-day behaviours or practices expressive of a group's responses to the social and material conditions of its existence. These coping responses may take the form of **adaptation** or **resistance** to these social and material conditions.

It must be emphasised that 'culture' is not a static or ahistorical phenomenon. On the contrary, since it is a response to constantly changing social and material circumstances, it is permanently in a state of transformation. It is the reflection of a group's on-going engagement with ever-changing life circumstances, continually drawing on recipes that have worked in past circumstances, but continually refashioning these as the group grapples with ever-changing circumstances.[1]

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1   The speed of change is a function of particular historical circumstances. It may be imperceptible at times.

This report has referred repeatedly to ideology, using Hall's definition of this concept as socially constructed belief systems which different social groups use in their interpretation of their day-to-day circumstances. What is the relationship between culture and ideology? Sitas (1989) emphasises the importance of distinguishing between ideologies or belief systems and cultural formations (patterns of behaviour or concrete day-to-day practices in response to concrete material and social circumstances). He cites three reasons for making this distinction:

> "Firstly it is because an era's, a group's or an individual's behaviour does not necessarily correspond to the ideas or justifications enunciated, believed or propagated by them. Secondly, as Laclau has pointed out, ideologies, or elements of ideologies which survive with stubborn obstinacy, shift between modes of production and ways of life. If such 'relative autonomy' is to be afforded them, then it is important to cherish such a separation. But thirdly, living in a social formation where through decree, ways of life are restricted, relocated, destroyed, reconstituted or confined, we cannot avoid sensing the ordinary people hold onto beliefs, values, notions of dignity which do not correspond to the manner in which people carry out their lived relations." (p10)

It is suggested that families are located at the intersection of a range of different sets of social relations, each one making particular demands on groups or individuals. Each demand is associated with a particular range of coping mechanisms or cultural responses. As a result, township families have at their disposal a number of of 'cultural pools' in their adaptation to the concrete material and social challenges of township life. Each cultural pool constitutes a stock of raw materials or recipes from which families draw in their day-to-day struggle for survival.

The interview data suggested that the following cultural pools are amongst those available to township families:

i) **Traditional culture**: this is a range of behavioural guidelines or recipes derived historically from the family's distant (but still influential) historical roots in a rural pre-capitalist lifestyle. Such recipes include for example patterns of responses to important events in the life cycle, such as marriage and death, as well as those relating to correct attitudes and behaviour between different age groups and gender groups. This report has already referred to the point made by Spiegel and Boonzaier (1988) that so-called 'traditional' practices are not necessarily accurate accounts of of the past. They may often

be reinventions used by those in power (eg. men or adults) to legitimate their superordinate social position. However whatever their accuracy, so-called traditional ways of life are still an important cultural resource in aspects of township social relations.

ii) **Workers' culture:** this range of recipes is derived from family members' experiences in the workplace, derived from the ways in which workers deal with the problems and challenges of their day-to-day employment. Such responses span a wide range of adaptive and resistive responses to conditions in the workplace.

iii) **Bourgeois culture:** the recipes associated with the middle classes of a western capitalist way of life - mediated to township families through the variety of institutionalised contacts with a bourgeois lifestyle and ideology including powerful institutions such as the school and the media. This is what Hall and Jefferson (1975) would refer to as the "dominant culture" in the South Africa of the 80's, given that "the dominant class's interpretation of the world carries the greatest influence and legitimacy" in any society (p10).

iv) **Resistance culture:** this is the range of attitudes, values, symbols and practices of those who are opposed to the current social order. Sole (1985) refers to the culture of resistance as expressive of "the solidarity of all those - of whatever class - who are oppressed by apartheid". Such attitudes and practices are embodied in the beliefs and practices of so-called 'progressive' groupings - a wide range that would include informal comrades groups, more structured street committees, youth leagues and civic organisations, trade unions and so on.

Each of these cultures might be broken down into constituent sub-cultures - groupings which stood in particular relations to the 'parent' culture in question, and interpreted it from a range of different viewpoints. Thus for example the category of bourgeois culture might usefully be broken down into different sub-cultures - such as the Christian sub-culture, the left intellectual sub-culture, the upwardly mobile 'yuppie' sub-culture and so on.

It is not suggested that each of these groups have mutually exclusive and discrete boundaries. As Hall (1975) points out: "Groups in the same society share some of the same

material and historical conditions, and to some extent share each others' cultures." There are certain overlaps in the behaviour patterns of different cultural pools - for example, certain aspects of traditional attitudes to women are very similar to those of the Christian middle class. Certain aspects of workers' culture and resistance culture might also be almost identical. Furthermore, these social influences are in constant interaction with one another. They should not be seen as discrete phenomena with clearly definable boundaries, nor should it be expected that there will be consistency within each cultural formation.

The list of cultural formations above is not intended to be exhaustive. What is more, other researchers might prefer to designate cultural pools with other labels or other boundaries. This study is not wedded to the particular way in which it has outlined or designated these pools. What it is committed to however is the notion of the family located at the intersection of a number of different cultural pools - each of these pools representing a particular group's 'tried and tested guidelines for adaptation' to a particular set of life conditions - be they those of the more traditional rural life context, or those of middle class white society, or the complex demands that life in the industrialised workplace places on workers. Together these pools form a reservoir of raw materials - a pre-constituted field of possibilities - on which families can draw in performing their various functions in their day-to-day engagement with their concrete life circumstances.

In trying to understand the way in which each of these cultural pools co-exist as influences on contemporary township life, it must be borne in mind that all of them fall under the broad umbrella of a capitalist social formation - given that South Africa is a capitalist country, and that working class township families form the basis for a pool of cheap labour. However although each cultural pool falls under the broad umbrella of a capitalist social formation each of these are founded on capitalism interpreted/experienced from a variety of different angles, and in varying degrees of articulation with other social formations.

As was emphasised in the preceding chapters, township social relations cannot be understood independently of the distant but still influential historical roots of African township people in a pre-capitalist mode of production - a distorted or romanticised version of which the respondents referred to as 'tradition'. The social and material

conditions of a pre-capitalist social formation would have presented people with a historically specific set of problems and challenges to grapple with in their day-to-day existence, and would thus have been associated with a historically specific set of behaviours, practices and beliefs (embodied in what this chapter has referred to as the 'traditional cultural pool').

Different family members are exposed to the above 'cultures' to varying degrees. It must be remembered that the family is but one of a range of sometimes competing, sometimes complementary social guides/institutions. In addition to the influence of the family, the lives of each family member are also shaped by a range of other social guides/institutions. These include the school, the workplace, the church, the peer group and so on. Each of these draw on to differing extents, and synthesise in their own unique way, resources from the range of cultural pools listed above - and thus embodies its own particular range of recipes for living (or patterned set of possibilities and constraints on behaviour).

The family is thus simultaneously two things:

1.   Firstly, as has been outlined above, it is a social guide/institution that presents its members with a range of recipes for living drawn from a variety of cultural pools. The family is located at the intersection of a wide variety of cultures (rural, working class and so on) all falling under the over-arching umbrella of capitalism, the dominant social formation. Each family will draw on these cultural pools in different ways - and the totality of each family's particular synthesis of these cultural inputs will be the 'family culture'. Each family's culture will present its members with a complex of implicit/explicit range of constraints and possibilities on feeling, thinking and acting on various family members.[2]

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[2]   Leonard (1984) defines "family culture" as follows in illustrating the way in which family culture will initiate family members into their particular position on the social hierarchy of power relations:

"Every family will have its own distinctive culture of practices and meanings through which notions of subordinacy and superordinacy are communicated: gestures, tones of voice, and silences as well as what is actually said. The activities that families engage in together, including family meals and outings, the rituals of bedtime, what stories are read or told to the child, all provide vehicles for communicating understandings of the social world and the place of family members within it." (p132)

The extent to which particular families draw on different cultural pools depends on the access individual family members have to each pool (their individual experience determined by the interaction of their family's class and race, and their unique biography). Individual family members will derive a range of coping responses from their family culture - and in turn they will also contribute to the family culture in terms of their location as individuals at the intersection of a range of other social guides or institutions.

2.   Not only is the family a social guide that teaches its members 'recipes for living. The family in turn is influenced by a range of 'recipes' that members will bring into the common family culture by virtue of their day-to-day experiences outside the family.

The family is therefore simultaneously a social guide as well as a grouping of unique individuals each operating *qua* individuals at the intersection of a variety of cultures. Cultures are mediated to these individuals not only through the family but also through a range of other sometimes competing, sometimes complementary social guides/institutions, such as the school, the workplace and so on.

Family members will be called upon to fill a number of social positions or roles in their lives according to the places they are allocated or assigned to within these social institutions. Thus one family member will simultaneously be a father, a teacher, a political activist and a parish council member. Another person will simultaneously be a daughter, a mother of her own small child, a factory worker, and the girlfriend of a local Inkatha member. Just as one person will simultaneously inhabit and have to reconcile as best as s/he can different roles (with their attendant range of possibilities and constraints on action), so will the same family often have to attempt to reconcile and hold together in a cohesive unit, a range of family members, each member him/herself constituting the intersection of a unique complex of conflicting roles.

Sometimes the way in which different family members participate in a range of cultural formations might be complementary. Inkatha political beliefs, for example, might in some cases not jar too dramatically with so-called traditional rural family beliefs or with a

conservative Christian frame of reference. Sometimes however these cultural formations might embody contradictory beliefs - for example activist notions of 'democratic relations' between age groups might conflict with rural family norms. The next section develops the notion of contradictions in family experience as one possible means of access to changing social relations in families.

2 CONTRADICTIONS AND CHANGING FAMILY RELATIONS.

This section develops the notion of contradictions as one possible means of access to the dynamics of social change within families.

In terms of an interest in the changing nature of family life, a particularly interesting phenomenon suggested by the data was the dramatic disjunction between the indigenous theory of the family on the one hand and the reality of respondents' lives on the other.

This disjunction seemed to be related to three different factors:

1. In some cases social or economic problems or constraints prevented people from conducting their family relations in the way that they might have wanted to.
2. In some cases it appeared that social change had taken place too rapidly for family members to assimilate/accomodate in their world view. This situation was particularly evident in the chaotic township conditions. People often clung to (redundant) old familiar beliefs and attitudes like life-rafts in a storm - long after such beliefs and attitudes were necessarily appropriate to their social conditions.
3. Sometimes, particularly amongst the more radical youth certain respondents' world views were too utopian to find any expression in the lived reality of a deprived and troubled community.

Previous sections have pointed towards several instances of such disjunctions between the indigenous theory of the family on the one hand, and the lived reality of the respondents on the other hand. One such disjunction was that between the idealised view of the father as family breadwinner and the economic constraints on working class township men. Another such disjunction was that between the indigenous theory's view of women as less resourceful and powerful as men, and the reality of the central role played by women in township families on the other.

Contradictions are the driving force of social change. The interview data suggests that the following contradictions may provide useful insights into the nature of changing social relationships and the way in which these impact on family life:

i) contradictions between township peoples' ideology/belief systems on the one hand, and the way in which they actually respond to the concrete day-to-day demands of the material conditions of township life on the other;

ii) contradictions between competing beliefs or practices held by different individuals within a particular social grouping (in this case a particular family); or

iii) between competing roles that one individual (in this case an individual family member) may be called upon to play in the variety of social contexts in which they operate from day to day.

Such conflicts are of interest here for for two interwoven reasons - contradictions in the experience of a family may lead to stresses and hence transformations in family functioning as families develop new strategies to deal with such conflicts. Such contradictions may be the source of resistance[1] to the wider social order that embodies these conflicts - and in this way they might be a important generative mechanisms of social change.

This study suggests that an important area for future research is the investigation of the contradictions that exist within working class township families. It is also suggested that one useful way of conceptualising these contradictions is in terms of the family's location:

i) at the intersection of a variety of cultural pools; and

ii) in competition with other social guides.

Such research might investigate the way in which these contradictions manifest themselves within family cultures and the way in which families manage to accomodate or assimilate these contradictions within a family frame of reference in varying degrees of success or failure.

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1   After Leonard (1984) this study uses the term 'resistance' to refer to the wide range of practices that serve to challenge hierarchical social relations of class, race and gender, rather than simply to perpetuate them.

This section will now point towards more examples of the types of conflicts or inconsistencies in the life experience of the pilot families and their members that such a study might investigate. A theme that presents itself in several of these examples is the way in which township individuals and families draw selectively on the resource of 'traditional culture' in their day-to-day experience. It is suggested that Murray's notion of the "conservation-dissolution" of pre-capitalist social forms may be a useful analytical tool for investigating the persistence of pockets of pre-capitalist culture and ideology in the everyday lives of township people.

A prime example in the present study of a person located at the intersection of at least three conflicting role definitions is Mr B, with the disjuction between his experience of his roles as father/husband, trade union member and oppressed black worker.

It must be emphasised that Mr B was not aware of any inconsistencies in these roles. In fact it will be suggested that he had succeeded in integrating them to the extent that he had used the possibilities of one role (husband/father) to compensate for the disadvantages of another (oppressed worker) in relation to his often violated belief that adult men should be treated with dignity and respect. However this integration was an uneasy one. As noted above, he appeared on the whole he appeared to be a disillusioned, bitter and demoralised man. Furthermore the way in which he had interpreted and acted out his role as husband/father had caused a great deal of family conflict and instability (see section x).

There was evidence of discontinuity in Mr B's experience between his loyal commitment to his trade union, and his commitment to fighting for more democratic representation of workers on the factory floor, and the undemocratic and authoritarian way he treated his family. He is a member of a Cosatu-affiliated trade union, and spoke of his dedication to his union:

> "which is not the reflection of a grand individual who is sitting behind offices dressed in a tie - but of every worker with his wise opinion and experiences of hard work".

However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, his wife and family described him as a tyrant. They spoke of his determination to impose his will on every member of the

household, and his fury when he felt they were not immediately responding to his commands, or taking his opinions seriously. Ironically this so-called disjunction could be regarded as two sides of the same coin. Yawitch (1983) has commented on the process whereby the family bears the burden of working class oppression and frustration:

> "The family functions as a soakpit to absorb expressions of anger that are not allowed elsewhere. Often men have had a hard day at work .... and take it out on their wives and children."

Mr B has tried to set up his home as his castle - a place where he is a powerful force in his role as father - in contrast to his working role as a member of the oppressed black working class (for example he quoted an incident where he had been referred to as a "cheeky boy" by a young white foreman). His attempt to establish himself as revered and respected father figure also stands in constrast to his role as frightened observer of the violent political conflicts in township life (where according to his opinion, political activists faced certain punishment, and possibly death). He articulated this thus:

> "In my family I do not have fear, I just instil discipline in the way I see fit. My problem is the outside world. It is too big for me to sort out.

It is suggested that one factor in township working class fathers' commitment to the traditionally defined role of father as ultimate authority in the family may be related to the fact that the alienation of working class labour in a captalist workplace is dramatically contradictory to their childhood socialisation. This socialisation process would have reinforced the 'traditional' patriarchal values of a father as a proud, fearless and respected authority within the community, commanding unquestioning obedience from his family.

Mr D chose to leave home rather than stay in the same house as a son who had defied him (by holding UDF political views which his Inkatha father found unacceptable and continuing his political involvement despite his fathers' orders to the contrary). He withdrew from the family completely, both in terms of his presence and his financial support, rather than tolerate the conflict between his view of the appropriate relationship between father and son, and the reality of his son's refusal to obey his instructions. Mr D regarded this as a traumatic disruption of the 'natural order' of inter-generational relations.

Tom A (32) a former political prisoner spoke of conflicts in synthesising his role as a loving and caring father, son and stable family man on the one hand, and a political activist on the other. He spoke of the anguish of the knowledge that often his political activities had put the lives of his family in danger - as well as the fact that the health of his elderly parents' had been severely undermined following an earlier arrest, detention and then six-year imprisonment, for example.

Another conflict of roles that was apparent in speaking to him (although he did not seem to be aware of this conflict himself) was that between his political understanding of personal relationships and his personal socialisation and lived reality.

He emphasised the need for grassroots political education as a prerequisite for meaningful social change. Such education would involve teaching the community that social relationships should become democratic at every level - including relationships between age and gender groups. He insisted that such democratisation should start within the family. He also spoke of the socialisation of men (to expect obedience from women and children) as a regrettable source of conflict in families, and a factor that hampered families' and ultimately communities' coping flexibility under stress.

However, his wife Cilla A, is clearly moulded in a more old-fashioned tradition where she takes her husband's advice and/or instructions in all important matters. Comments made by Cilla suggest that although Tom is committed to sexual equality at an intellectual level, he himself is not ready to make the necessary changes in his own life. She referred uncomplainingly to occasions on which her initiative had been curbed due to lack of approval by Tom, for example Tom's refusal to allow her to go out to work during hard times, and his insistence that she stay at home with her children. She summed up the situation by saying that: "men believe all their actions are right. And society is very supportive of them".

Tom explained his relationship with his wife by saying that many women were not yet ready for these changes:

"There are still some women that don't feel OK about being equal to their husbands. If I were to go home in the afternoon and take my shirts to wash them, my wife would look at me very badly thinking I was angry. She is used to doing this - I would be taking her job and she would feel I didn't care for her any more."

This is a complex situation which defies hasty analysis. However it suggests that the issue of translating political conscientisation into personal life-styles is not a straightforward process. It is fraught with obstacles, complexities and resistances at many levels.

The rapidity and unevenness of the process of transformation of social relations often throws people into a number of conflicting role definitions - each role based on a different set of assumptions about the world. How do family members attempt to to integrate the discontinuities between the situations they must shuttle from from day to day into a coherent social identity?

The case of Mr B has already suggested one way in which people might deal with their situation at the intersection of different role definitions - using the possibilities of one situation to compensate for the limits of another. The case illustration of Tom A leads us to hypothesise a second coping strategy.

It is suggested that another way of coping with such discontinuities might be to keep each of the cultural frames of reference needed to deal with each situation in different compartments. Thus for example there might be a compartmentalisation of:
i)   the democratic responses that an individual regards as appropriate in a political context;
ii)   the more authoritarian responses deemed appropriate for the family context; and
iii) the more deferent responses deemed appropriate for dealing with a workplace situation.

The attitude of mothers to the political involvement of their offspring provides another further example of a disjunction between the roles that an individual family member might required to fulfil. We have already looked at the way in which several older parents (eg Mrs A and Mrs D) had experienced conflicts in their roles as:

(a)   social observers - where they saw that they were being oppressed;

(b)   working class black people of the older generation - who had internalised a view of themselves as powerless to change the world;

(c)   proud mothers - where they felt motherly pride at their childrens' fearless political activism and outspokenness, and

(d)   protective mothers - where they felt obliged to oppose their childrens' activism in the knowledge that politically active children were often putting their lives in danger.

A final example illustrates the way in which certain young men drew on competing and possibly contradictory cultural resources in constructing their world views. They expressed sympathy with a socialist analysis of society and looked forward to a socialist future, but they professed what seemed to be individualistic and upwardly mobile middle class values and aspirations. Their aspirations included university education for careers in medicine or law or dentistry; they spoke of earning money to enable them to live in big houses and drive cars, wear expensive clothes with designer labels and so on. Ironically they seemed to see a socialist political line as the only available route to attaining middle class consumption patterns.

Although such frames of reference might be considered conflictual by the social analyst, they are rarely perceived as conflictual by the social actors involved. Furthermore individuals and families are often quite creative in their synthesis of recipes for living deriving from a range of sources in unlikely combination. Such superficially unlikely syntheses might often be creative and adaptive.

Thus for example the A family showed evidence of a family frame of reference that combined: a devout commitment to the ultra-conservative Zionist church (where Mr A was a lay preacher, and where not one member of the entire family ever missed a weekly service); an extremely radical ANC-inspired political position (this support being articulated in February 1988 when backing of the ANC was still considered a serious offence); and a traditional rural approach to inter-family relations (as evidenced by the fact that Cilla A had never spoken directly to her father-in-law, or looked him directly in the

face, in many years of co-residence). So successful was the family frame of reference that both Mr and Mrs A stated that the family had never had a problem that was beyond their coping abilities.

Both Mr and Mrs A provided an interesting contrast to the claims of the youth that adherence to traditional customs and Christian beliefs always went hand in hand with political conservatism and passivity. The family, despite its rigid adherence to a blend of Christian and traditional values, was vehemently opposed to both class and racial oppression, and actively supported political organisation against these phenomena.

The family played an active role in community affairs - and took a pride in keeping up with current affairs and constantly debating political issues with each other. "We constantly discuss relevant issues in this family, trying to find answers to these questions". Their lives bore witness to a constant effort to understand and grapple with their current social position. In this way they stood in strong contrast to certain interview respondents who came across as passive, angry victims of apartheid.

All societies are riddled with contradictions, they are an integral aspect of social existence, and certainly not peculiar to working class black South Africans in the late 1980's. This relates to the starting assumptions of this report, viz: that one cannot understand human social relations without taking account of the fact that society is constantly changing, constantly making contradictory demands on individuals and groups - some of which they will simply accomodate, and others that will constitute the motor of change.

This leads to two comments, relating to the more general interest of research of this nature, beyond its more specific agenda to generate hypotheses for township family research:

i) The first point is that made by Miller (1984) that in a rapidly changing society such as ours, these kinds of contradictions will be magnified, and easier to 'catch hold of' and study. Researchers in a rapidly changing society such as ours are historically and socially located in a particularly strong position to do interesting research work on the dynamics of social change.

ii) The second point is related to the nature of South African social relations where a small minority has overtly dominated the majority of the population over a number of decades, thus providing a clear instance of a major contradiction between the laws of the country and the needs and interests of the majority of its members. The process of painful tranformation which is currently taking place is related to the inability of a society to sustain such a contradiction in its social relations. Research into contradictions of this nature may help to throw light on the processes whereby a subordinate social grouping either submits to or resists their subordinate position on the social hierarchy - and the role of social institutions such as the family in this process.

3. BREAKDOWN OR TRANSFORMATION OF FAMILY SOCIAL RELATIONS?

The issue of the 'breakdown' of African family life is a topical one in South Africa today - and one that is bandied about by a wide variety of groupings with an equally wide variety of agendas. Thus for example 'family disintegration' is cited by people on the left to point to the abhorrent effects of apartheid. It is cited equally often by more conservative forces alarmed at the increasing number of militant and 'badly behaved' township youth. Hassim and Meterlerkamp (1987) point out that it sometimes suits such forces to attribute youth unrest rather narrowly to 'family breakdown' as if it were an independent explanatory variable - detached from any wider historical context.

Prior to the conducting of the pilot study of the Natal Family Project, its initial hypothesis was that working class township families were "disintegrating" or "breaking down" in the current context of political, economic and social stresses in South Africa (Hayes and Morris, 1987a, 1987b). This section looks briefly at this hypothesis in the light of the empirical data.

This section looks at the concept of breakdown in the light of the indigenous theory of the family outlined in the previous chapter. In the light of this theory it is suggested that family disintegration must involve a disruption of family composition, functions and power relations.

On the basis of the pilot data this report hypothesises the following:

(a)   although there is evidence for rapid and marked **changes** in the composition, functions and power relations within working class families, particularly in the past 10 years; and

(b)   although these changes are often a source of distress and confusion for family members,

(c)   such changes are evidence for a **transformation** of family relations (albeit a rapid and often difficult transformation) rather than for their **breakdown.**

The word 'transformation' is to be preferred because it appears that the working class township family has proved to be a remarkably elastic social structure. Despite severe and continuous community upheaval, it has adapted to accomodate severe economic and social stresses and pressures both on families as a whole, and on individual family members.

There is no doubt that many families are locked into a desparate day-to-day struggle against disadvantageous social and economic circumstances. There is also no doubt that family composition and power relations are in a state of transformation. Despite this the family continues to fulfil its functions of agent of reproduction, emotional and material support system. It is hypothesised that at this particular historical juncture, the family's claim to the title of 'primary agent of socialisation' of its members has faced an unprecedented challenge from competing social guides. This challenge however must be seen against the rapid increase in education and politicisation of working class black South Africans over the past decade or more in the Durban townships - circumstances which have combined to create a wide gulf between the older and the younger generations.

It is suggested however that this gulf might possibly only be a temporary historical abberation - that could 'iron itself out' over the next decade or so, as the present younger generation come to take their place as parents and grandparents. Such an 'ironing out' process could see the reinstallation of the older generation as the primary transmitters of the appropriate and adaptive recipes for living needed by the younger generation to become competent adults.

Returning to the empirical data, Chapter 2 referred to respondents' accounts of changing family composition and power relations. Older parents communicated their sense that if nothing was done to restore the old ways of life, family life would break down altogether. Some seemed unable to conceive of the possibility of alternative social relationships. However younger people - equipped with a wider range of conceptual tools and with less constrained views of the 'possibilities' in their worlds - viewed changing family relations as part of the wider large-scale social changes that would characterise the decades to come. These changes were viewed with optimism rather than the unease or disapproval of their parents.

The issue of changing power relations within families seemed to be a highly charged issue which preoccupied older men, and some older women. This issue however held less interest for the younger respondents, who had had little contact with or investment in the traditional authority structures that seemed to form an integral part of many of their parents' world views.

Members of the older generation appeared to be far more alarmed at these changes than younger family members. It must be remembered however that in this particular sample (typical of most township families in the 80's in terms of its rural-urban span) the members of the older generation had grown up in rural areas, and moved to the township as adults. Thus it seems that these elders have borne the brunt of a rural-urban transition within one life-span. This would have involved childhood and adolescent socialisation within the context of a more conservative and tradition-based rural lifestyle, followed by an adulthood in the relatively industrialised and westernised urban context.

For some of them this transition had not been an easy process. They felt there was little continuity between the life-style and norms that they had learned as children on the one hand, and the radically different demands of township life - which were difficult to interpret and understand with their old-fashioned conceptual equipment. For these people social relations in general, and family relations in particular, appeaed to be in a state of disintegration (examplified for example by Mr A's musings that the younger generation were no longer even human beings).

For many older township people, life circumstances appear to have altered at a faster pace than their attitudes and expectations. For example, rapid and dramatic changes in the *status quo* of family structures have not automatically been accompanied by changes in expectations and beliefs about families. Old habits and expectations die hard, and remain to hamper problem-solving abilities among certain members of the older generation, who very often still spend time and energy trying and approximate the old traditional blueprints of roles such as of father, breadwinner, and so on when the constraints of their day-to-day social relations prevent them from living up to these roles.

The younger generation however did not experience this problem. It is suggested that many young people have little investment (and often only scanty knowledge) of old-fashioned traditional customs that played such a large part in shaping their parents' reality, and their parents' views on family life. Being better educated and more politicised than their parents, and having grown up in a society where resistance, protest and debate about alternative social forms are taking place on a larger scale than ever before, these young people did not experience family life as problematic - they did not express the sense of some of their parents that family life was in a state of disintegration.

With regard to family composition, although all of the fatherless boys (fathers dead or absent) said their lives would have been richer if their fathers had played a larger role in their lives, and although many unmarried mothers wished that their childrens' fathers were more supportive, there was no sense in which family relations were disintegrating in the absence of these figures. Families were regrouping in new ways - mothers taking over the discipline etc of children, teenagers' babies simply being taken over by their grandparents when their mothers were too young/inexperienced or dependent to play a significant role in their upbringing etc. Furthermore, some young women are now even choosing not to marry rather than face the problems of non-support, drinking and extra-marital affairs that some young women associate with township husbands in the late 80's.

With regard to the functions of the family, the way in which the family performs its role as agent of reproduction appears to be changing. Families are evolving new recipes for dealing with changes - simply developing new practices which are reasonably adaptive to changing social conditions.

It appears that township families still play the key role in the material support of their members despite economic and social pressures on family relations. Given inadequate, inaccessible or non-existent welfare benefits the family provides the only source of material aid for the sick, the elderly and the unemployed - and for the employed in times of crisis.

Families also play a key role in the emotional support of their members - family members look to their families for moral support, advice, love and companionship. There was some

evidence that working individuals looked to family relationships for the respect and non-alienating interaction that were absent from their working lives.

As has been emphasised, perhaps it is in relation to its role as an agent of socialisation that the family's role is changing the most dramatically. However these developments do not constitute evidence for disintegration. Because wider social relations, particularly in the last generation, have changed far too rapidly for certain members to keep pace with, some parents might not always feel confident enough to tutor their children in the skills and expertise they need to enter the world of the 80's as competent adults. Furthermore some young people have diverted some of their anger at current social relations at the parents who have tolerated them for so long - and as a result refuse to grant their parents the respect and obedience that the parents would like to see.

Even so we would argue that the family's role as agent of socialisation is in a process of transformation, rather than disintegration. There is often tacit support, and even covert pride for their 'modern children' by even the most traditionalist parents, as well as sometimes a concealed vicarious identification with their optimistic view of a new society. Furthermore often the younger generations' rhetoric against the older generation is aimed at a 'straw generation' they have set up. It is hypothesised that many of these young people might rant and rave about some abstract 'older generation' - but that in their concrete day-to-day interactions with their parents, and with older people they tend to be far more respectful and obedient than one would conclude from taking their rhetoric at face value.

Furthermore, as township families become increasingly rooted in urban life over a number of generations, and large-scale community resistance becomes an accepted feature of township life, many of what parents regard as the frightening modern views held by their offspring may simply be assimilated into family practices.

This report hypothesises that far from being in a state of disintegration, township families are remarkably strong. They have shown resilience and resourcefulness in the face of

severe and debilitating social conditions. Furthermore, as the final section will suggest, it might even be argued that in certain ways the township family serves as an important site of resistance to these social conditions.

4. THE TOWNSHIP FAMILY: SITE OF STRUGGLE OR SLAVE OF RACIAL CAPITAL?

To what extent does the working class township family function as slave of racial capital - preparing its members to adapt to social conditions that are detrimental to their needs and interests? To what extent is it a site of struggle against current social relations in which black working class people fall far down on the superordinacy-subordinacy social hierarchy? This is another area that merits further research and discussion.

As mentioned in chapter 1 there has been a tendency among many marxist and marxist feminist writers to see the family as a site of oppression, manipulated by apartheid and capital and against the interests of its members. Thus, for example, Hassim and Meterlerkamp (1987) speak of "the manipulation of families as vehicles for social and political control". Certain township youngsters echo this view, seeing the family as the embodiment of values and attitudes oppressive to black working class people in this country.

We have discussed Humphries' (1977) opposition to this type of view, and her arguments that the working class family may sometimes serve as an important site of resistance against capital: she argues that the working class family plays a vital role in the maintenance of class cohesion and the ability to wage class struggle.

There is evidence in the data for both the 'slave of racial capital' and the 'site of struggle' positions - which are are probably not contradictory. Thus for example this thesis has referred to the role the township family undoubtedly plays in maintaining gender oppression. For example, it perpetuates role definitions of women as nurturers and men as decision-makers and providers. Such notions are often at odds with the lived reality of many families. Furthermore they often serve to hamper women in the key role that they play in family survival - thus not only perpetuating gender oppression, but also hampering women in their struggle to keep families going.

This report has pointed to the potential tendency in families to socialise children into a relatively passive acceptance of class and racial oppression - a tendency which is being

challenged increasingly by other social guides. However it is argued that although families are undoubtedly more slow and cautious in their assimilation of new ideas, families will, as time passes, gradually assimilate new ideas and social changes into their relationships and practices.

If however, as Humphries argues, necessary pre-requisites for the struggle against oppressive social relations are a sense of reciprocal obligation between oppressed people as well as community solidarity, then the township family must be seen as playing a key role in this struggle. It is one of the few institutions in township social relations that continues to foster ties of reciprocal solidarity and support during a period of social, economic and political crisis, where so many forces are at work in the promotion of community divisions. It fosters strong ties of loyalty between mothers and children (if not always fathers); it serves as a material and emotional support system to all its members; it offers them the possibility of pooling scarce resources for a better standard of living, and hence a heightened morale; it provides non-alienating care and support both in times of stability and in times of crisis.

Other potential sources of community unity and solidarity might have been a sense of grievance against a common enemy. It is plain however that township opinion is presently torn by radically different views as to who is the enemy, what shape the new society should take, and how social change should come about.

In particular the relationship between mothers and children seems to be a sustaining one. Fathers play a more varied and complex role in terms of the way they fit into this unit. Adult men are having battling to try and reconcile the traditional view of men as potent, powerful, proud and so on in a world where their material reality (as black workers) places them low on the current social hierarchy - with both race and class against them.

The situation is arguably different for women, children and perhaps some of the new generation of young men who grew up in the townships rather than in the rural areas and were thus not as thoroughly schooled for the dominant role in social relations in the way

their fathers were.[1] The historical/traditional social status of these groups as the most exploited members of African society is not so different to their current status as working class black South Africans. For these groupings, social change opens up the possibility of democratisation of their place in the social hierarchy on a variety of levels - including those of class, ethnicity, gender and age - both within the family and the wider community.

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1   Perhaps this comment is overly optimistic. Current research by Campbell into the social identity of young township dwellers (aged 17-23 years) suggests that the new generation of young men - even those who have been active participants in the 'struggle for democracy' of the past decade or so - follow in their father's footsteps in terms of patriarchal and exploitative attitudes to women.

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APPENDIX A

OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW GUIDE

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1. Name
2. Age.
3. Gender.
4. Marital status.
5. Were the subject's parents married when they were born? (customary/court marriage?)
6. Where are the subjects' mother and father at present?
7. Employed? (brief employment history)
8. If unemployed: seeking work? where and how? if not, why not? (are there jobs that you know of? if so why would you not consider applying for these?)
9. Highest standard passed? reasor for leaving school?
10. Place of birth?
11. Where was mother born?
12. Where was father born?
13. Generation in township?
14. What links with rural family?
15. Draw a family genogram.
16. Who lives in the main building? outbuildings? who eats together? who is kin? non-kin? their status? head of household? who contributes what to the finances of the household?
17. Subject's health history.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

18. When people talk about 'the family' what do they mean? Who do they include?
19. Defining 'the household' as everyone on the plot ask about the subject's relationship with each other individual.
20. Subject's role in household wrt domestic work, income, childcare, care of others.
21. Why do people live together? Advantages? Disadvantages? Has the way in which people live together changed in the past 20 or so years? If so how?

RELATIONS BETWEEN GENERATIONS:

22. Quality of relationships: between parent and child? between parent and grandparent? between grandparent and child?
23. What is the general relationship between children and adults in the townships today?
24. What do grandparents think of the youth? What do parents think of the youth? (distinguish teenagers from younger children)
25. What do the youth think of their parents? their grandparents? Do they respect their elders? Do they feel superior to their elders? What do the youth think is wrong with their parents and their generation? How do parents feel about this?
26. The grandparents had a very different life to the youth of today. Can they teach the youth anything from their experiences? If so what? If not, why not? Do the old ever people feel uneasy, unconfident about advising the young? Do they feel they have anthing of relevance to teach them, given that their life experience was so different? Do they feel that the young take thier advice seriously? Do the old people ever fear the young?
27. What is your most important goal in life? What do you want out of life?
How does this differ from other generations? What must happen for you to say your life is going well?
28. To old people: Why did you respect your parents?

AUTHORITY/AUTONOMY:

29.Who is the head of the family? The disciplinarian?
30. What causes conflicts in the household? How are they resolved? Recent example?
31. To what extent are the adults in control of the community, and to what extent are the youth in control of the community? Why is this? Is this the best arrangement?
32. Are the youth more influenced by their parents or peers?
33. Who would they like to please the most - parents or peers? What can you learn better from your peers than your parents? Whose advice do they value the most? How does this make parents feel?
34. Are there splits between the youth, or are they united?

CUSTOMS AND VALUES:

35. Quick question: What do you think of the passing of traditional ways of life?
36. Do the old-fashioned traditional ways of life still hold in your family/ the townships these days? If not, why not? What did these old ways teach people to do? to be? what was the value of these old ways - are they important to you? is it a good thing when these old ways pass? what has come in their place? what guides people in knowing how to behave themselves? what guides people in knowing what is good and bad? which way of life is better - the old or the new way?
37. Focus on sexual morals (cf moral code of the past; influence of strict parents or peers?), teenage pregnancies and illegitimate children - what does subject think about these issues?
38. Family Planning: what are your view on this? Why are family planning clinics poorly supported? Are children primarily a source of joy or of poverty?
39. Focus on the church and its role in the community: do young people go to church? is it a good thing to go to church? benefits?
40. Did people have more contact with their extended families in the past? What were the benefits of this? How does a person's social circle vary now cf. the past?

MARRIAGE

41. Quick question: Biggest cause of marital conflict in the community.
42. Do you have one/many lovers? Are you married? If no: Why have you not married: Choice? Lack of opportunity? If subject raises problems with men: Why are men like this? Are all men like this? What determines whether a man is responsible with regard to family obligations?
43. If married: Where did you meet? Why did you marry? What benefits do you expect from marriage? Are these expectations fulfilled in your marriage? Is it worth being married? What are the disadvantages of being married?
44. Subservience to in-laws? tensions around mother in law?
45. Place to have sex - overcrowding?
46. Emphasis on intimacy/ partnership/ companionship? who makes decisions? shared social life?
47. What is a good husband? wife?
48. How does marriage change a man's/woman's life?
49. What caused marital problems? witchcraft? who would you consult re marital problems? what are the main problems with marriage in your community?

SOCIALISATION

50. What do children need from their family?
51. What should a parent teach a child? What ought a child to know? How should a child behave? How should a parent teach a child all these things? Do you have any problems teaching them these things?
52. Do these troubled times affect your rearing your child as you would like to?
53. Do you feel confident advising your children in a world that changes so quickly? do you ever feel intimidated by your children? do you ever feel you do not know what to advise them?
54. Is this township a good place to rear small children? teenagers? advantages? disadvantages?
55. Are children affected by the conflict-ridden environment? What do you think are the long-term implications of children being exposed to eg killings?

EDUCATION

56. What proportion of the household income is spent on schooling for the children?
57. How many of the children in the household are in school? If only some of them, then why are these in school and not the others?
58. How will your child benefit from education?
59. How will you benefit from your child's education?
60. How do you feel if you child boycotts school?
61. How does it affect different members of the family if a child boycotts?

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

62. Role of women: are women seen as conservative (viz victim and peacemaker) rather than as active subjects? who causes conflict in the community? who restores the community after conflict
63. Respective attitudes to youth boys and girls - are girls treated differently? why? fear of pregnancy? why is it that boys are more involved in what is going on in the communitites these days?
64. Childcare: whose responsibility is a child? working mothers: are your children adequately cared for? do you worry about them while at work?
65. Care of old, sick, mad etc. who would look after you if you got sick? why would they do this?
66. Recreation: where do you spend your free time?

STRESSES

67. What is the most difficult thing in family life? eg: personality clashes adolescents rebelling vs restricted children, young mothers resenting elders' interference, old people resenting being neglected by their children?
68. Ask breadwinner how they feel about the responsibility of family support.
69. Parent-child strains: (a) 5 - 16 years: does your child treat you respectfully? take your advice? help with household chores? obey you? have friends you approve of? work hard enough at school?
(b) 16 +: plan well for the future? have acceptable moral vbeliefs? drink/drugs? sexually promiscuous? achieved as well as you would have liked? (c) adult: achieved what you expected? care for you adequately?
70. Discuss a recent stressful life event, and how it was coped with.
71. Strains in workplace? do you discuss these with your family? if not why not? can you tell when your spouse/ family member is having work problems? how? do they take out their work strains on the family?
72. Do you see your family as providing relief from life stresses or do you see it as an added burden in your life?
73. Unemployment - what is it like for a person to be unemployed? loss of status/poor self-esteem? authority shifts to wife? change relation to family? do family understand what unemployed person is going through? sense of mastery?
74. Differential effect of unemployment on youth, adults etc.?
75. Why do you think so many people are unemployed? What should be done about this problem?

POLITICAL PRESSURES AND FAMILY TENSIONS

76. What is the most stressful thing that has happened to this family?
77. Has anyone in your family been detained? How did this affect the family?
78. Is it common that there are political tensions between the youth and their families? What are the effects of this?
79. Has there been political unrest in your area? Has this affected you?
80. Has the presence of the security forces affected your lives?
81. How is this country going to change? Who will make these changes happen? How long will they take?
82. Are the youth in your area well organised? are they succeeding in their struggle? how could they improve their struggle? why do you think people are killing each other? how do you feel about the killings? part of life/ shocked?
83. Do parents support/ discourage their children's political activities?
who should organise the struggle? youth/adults? how will liberation happen?
84. Who is your hero? Who do you admire very much?
85. How do the township problems affect - small children? youth? adults?

ORGANISATIONAL LINKS

86. What pressures do these impose on the family?
87. How does organisational involvement change your life?

88. Do you feel safe in your own home?

89. Are families united? Are political/economic problems causing families to weaken? Which affect families the worst - political or economic problems?

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

90. Child abuse; battery - why do men beat their wives? rape; crime; drugs; gambling; VD; alcohol - why do people drink?

91. What do you see as the main problems facing your family? township people in general?
92. Who do you/they go to for help with these problems? (Explore informal support networks and organisations) What kind of help do they get in this regard? material aid; help with tasks/chores; moral support ie listening to someone, expressing esteem, caring and understanding; guidance ie advice, information instruction; feedback ie rewards and appoval or punishment and disapproval for particular behaviours; friendly socialising - with whom do they relax, enjoy themselves, feel group solidarity with?
93. How have support systems changed in the townships over the years?
94. Who are non-supportive people in the subject's life? ie people that upset or inconvenience them?
95. Are there resources available to township people that they would choose not to use? What are these? Why not?
96. Explore: family friends church neighbours fellow workers professionals -voluntary associations.

ATTITUDE TO FUTURE

97. What makes you happy/ optimistic/ proud about the future? What worries you most about the future?
98. Sense of agency cf survival mentality?
99. Where will you be in 10 years time? other family members? where will the kids be when they are in their mid-20's?
100. Key to as happy life? what would a happy life be?

FEEDBACK

101. How was it for you to be interviewed? What feelings/opinions do you have about this kind of experience? Are there any questions you particularly liked? did not like?