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UNEMPLOYMENT AND 'INFORMAL' INCOME-EARNING ACTIVITY IN SOWETO

by

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PART II: REPRODUCTION

Preamble

In Part I of this collective work, we attempted to conceptualise in a rigorous fashion the nature and distinguishing characteristics of certain of the economic activities conventionally subsumed under the banner of the 'informal sector'. The analytical sterility of this term has now been widely recognized.(1) In reaction to the uncritical acceptance of the dualism inherent in the 'informal'/ 'formal' dichotomy and its translation into a series of policy proposals(2) by orthodox development theorists, a growing body of literature has focussed attention on the complex linkages and asymmetrically dependent relationships of the continuum of activities which cut across this division.

The basic hypothesis of this approach is that ".... the level of capital accumulation possible is constrained by structural factors in the total socio-economic system such that small-scale activities in the urban sectors of countries with external oriented economics can only participate in economic growth in a dependent subordinate way."(3) The more self-consciously Marxist writers of this 'structuralist' school(4) have attempted to theorize such activities in terms of certain concepts developed from the categories of the classical Marxist works, notably the concept of 'petty commodity production' (PCP). Their purpose has been to locate the subordinate and dependent nature of small-scale economic activity squarely within the relations of capitalist production.

The importance of this work in countering the orthodox tendency towards dualist models and the lack of precision in much of the 'structural dependency' theory is unquestioned. However, the thrust of analysis using the concept of PCP has generally remained broadly 'economistic', that is, its focus has been essentially on the economic relations - the supply of raw materials and the means of labour, the mechanisms of surplus value transfer, etc - which subordinate PCP to the specifically capitalist process of production. As a result, theoretical formulations in this vein have, to a greater or lesser degree, tended towards functionalist modes of explanation - the structural determinants of the observed phenomena are reduced unproblematically to the functional requirements of capital accumulation. The dynamic interaction of the capitalist mode of production (CMP) and its concrete conditions of existence in a specific social formation is thus rendered opaque to this type of analysis and it becomes impossible to

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comprehend the nature of PCP in its full complexity.

Moser has suggested in her review of the 'informal sector' - PCP debate that the question of whether the 'instability' of PCP relations means that these relations can only be reproduced by the dominant mode of production "is a matter of considerable dialectical debate."(5) It is the central premise of the papers presented here that the relations which pertain to such activity are reproduced as one aspect of the overall reproduction of the social totality. The real nature and significance of PCP and other 'peripheral' economic activities can be understood only when located within the complex web of political and ideological relations which interact with the specifically economic relations of material production and reproduction to transform the particular structure of class forces constituting a social formation. The ultimate purpose of these contributions is to begin to situate the specificity of this process of social change within certain areas of the terrain on which the struggles that underlie and condition the dynamics of reproduction take place.

Reproduction of the labour force: 'informal' income-earning activity and the working class household in Soweto

In this paper, our attempt to conceptualise 'informal' economic activity within the broad perspective of the overall reproduction of capitalist social relations will be developed around the central problem of the reproduction of capital's labour force. The particular focus of the paper will be on the relationship between certain aspects of the struggles of capital and labour over the way in which this process unfolds and the concept of the family a household unit as the primary site of the process in capitalist society.

'Reproduction', the continued existence of the CMP, will in general be perceived from different perspectives by individual members of the classes located on either side of the fundamental divide. For capitalists, it represents the maintenance of their domination of the processes of material production as a class. Conflicts between particular capitals and between fractions of capital over the distribution of surplus value are always ultimately subordinate to their class interest in ensuring that surplus value continues to be produced, in order that it might be appropriated by capitalists in general. For workers, on the other hand, 'reproduction' is immediately perceived as the process by which their continued physical survival as individuals or as members of a family or household unit is, in the last instance, only assured by access to the wages that purchase the means of subsistence. This fragmentation of the working class into isolated units is the material basis of the ideology of 'individualism' which flourishes under the social relations of capitalism. However, the very nature of the working class mode of existence precludes the possibility that its members will always remain the merely passive recipients of the process of their reproduction as an 'individualised' labour force, it is with some of the various and often ambivalent forms that their resistance might take that we are concerned here.

Conceptually, reproduction of the labour force occurs at a number of levels, each representing a possible site on which the fundamental contradiction between capital and labour may emerge in a mediated or displaced form. The specific form that the struggle or conflict takes will depend on the concrete historical conditions under which it develops, but it is possible to postulate, in general terms, what the essential object of certain struggles will be.

Two primary aspects of the reproduction of the labour force may be distinguished(1): the daily reproductive cycle of workers as such (the reproduction of labour power), and the reproduction of the working class as a whole (the production of future generations of workers). In turn, the latter concept subsumes two further ideas: human, or biological reproduction - the production of children, and their allocation as 'agents' to positions within the social division of labour - the

practice conventionally referred to as 'socialisation'.

Conflicts at the level of daily reproduction will revolve basically around the nature and limits of levels of individual consumption - around working class 'standards of living' in other words. The object of struggle at the level of reproduction of the working class as a whole, on the other hand, is ultimately the delineation of limits to working class access to knowledge and skills - that is the precise location of the necessary barriers to the aspirations of individual workers and their families to 'upward mobility' which can coalesce, under particular conditions, into a mass questioning of the structure of class places. The sexual parameters of human reproduction introduce a different set of protagonists and a structure of relations of dependency and oppression which is to be examined elsewhere.(2) This paper will, for the most part, abstract from the problems of 'gender construction' and the oppression of women and children, and from the nature of their class specificity. The concept of the family or household as a particular set of 'interpersonal' relations constituted within, and mediated by the broader structure of social relations will, nevertheless, underlie many of the ideas advanced here.

The struggle to achieve or maintain a particular standard of living is, to a large extent, focussed on the level of real wages since, for workers, this represents the major component of the bundle of use values - goods and services - of a specific quality and quantity - on which their concrete daily existence is based. Under capitalism, however, the 'level of necessity' experienced by workers is a category neither given nor static, and its tendency to rise strengthens capital's domination of labour:

> Each new need becomes a link in the golden chain which secures workers to capital. Rather than expressing wealth, new needs appear as deprivation and dependence. The creation of new needs is thus an "essential civilizing moment .... on which the historic justification, but <u>also the contemporary power of capital rests</u>."(3)

The interests of capital-in-general, or rather the capitalist class as a whole, in maintaining the system of exploitation of the working class are not necessarily incompatible with an increase in real wages to match the rising expectations of workers, <u>provided</u> that the rate at which real wages increase is less than the rate at which the value of subsistence commodities declines, that is, the rate at which productivity in the production of wage goods rises. Such a situation would permit the continued appropriation of surplus value at an undiminished rate.(4) To the individual capitalist, on the other hand, enmeshed in anarchic competition with his fellows, the validity of this longer-term calculus will not present itself immediately or obviously (and it is thus one of the functions of organized capital to undertake this task of enlightenment at appropriate times). The effect, then, of rising expectations among the working class is to tend to deepen the immediate concrete struggle over the level of real wages. The individual capitalist's response - which, beyond directly repressive measures, is to reorganize production so that men are effectively replaced by machines - serves to reinforce the tendency of the 'general law of capitalist accumulation' to produce a relative surplus population.(5)

The conflict over real wages is mediated in a number of ways which relate essentially to the other categories which immediately affect working class living standards. The latter are never entirely reducible to those commodities that a household can purchase with its real wage income. In the first place, the very concept of a household implies the existence of domestic labour - under capitalism, the housework which supports individual daily consumption and the longer-term process of child-rearing. Despite its complete, or nearly complete disappearance as a unit of subsistence production with the expansion of the CMP, elements of the institution of the family persist in its form as the basic unit of consumption and reproduction(6) and domestic labour is an integral and necessary part of

these processes. It is not, however, to be directly counterposed to money wages as a function of capital's drive to lower the value of labour power:

> .....domestic labour, by working on the means of subsistence in a useful way, transfers their value to the replenished labour power but does not add to that value. This reconciles the necessity of domestic labour in the reproduction of labour power with the purely private and individual character of that labour.... it does not form part of the capitalist mode of production of commodities, but is rather one of its external conditions of existence which it continually reproduces.(7)

Essentially, domestic labour is a resource which enables working class families to improve or maintain their particular standards of living. But its expenditure, and the implications of the sexual division of labour within which it occurs, must be weighed against the total amount of labour power, and hence the income-earning capacity that the household has at its disposal. It is not, therefore, a ' free good' and has definite, if still relatively elastic limits placed on it by the composition and internal relations of the household or family unit. The struggle over living standards is here mediated by the structure of objectively antagonistic relations between men and women sometimes referred to as 'patriarchy'.(8)

Secondly, the appearance, most obviously in the advanced capitalist countries but elsewhere as well, of the so-called 'social wage' (in the form of state provision of social services and the 'means of collective consumption') has undoubtedly affected working class living standards although it, too, cannot be considered a category qualitatively, and therefore quantitatively, assimilable to the money wage. The intervention of the state, furthermore, displaces the essentially economic struggle over real wages at least partially to the level of political struggle.(9) In South Africa, the minimal provision of social security benefits to the black population and the repressive social control exercised by the state though the systems of housing and education provision tend to obscure the nature of such intervention as a form of 'social wage'. It has, nevertheless, had a material, if somewhat ambivalent effect on the urban black population's standards of living. Clearly, current popular demands and the concern of organized capital and certain branches of the state apparatus with the 'quality of life' in the townships can be seen to embody this perception.

Lastly, the conflict over real wages is subject to the contradictory results of tendencies within the system of capitalist accumulation. The fundamental dynamic of this process, the necessity that drives the agents of capital to concentrate the means of production in their own hands, ultimately requires that ".... the tendency for all products to be commodities and all labour to be wage labour, becomes absolute."(10) The subsumption of all economic activity under capitalist relations of production and the divorce of the immediate producers from direct access to the means of production is, however, inextricably locked with the tendency of the developing CMP to which reference has already been made - the extrusion of labour from the production process and its replacement with machinery as the organic composition of capital rises under the pressure of competition. The consequent formation of a relative surplus population has, under particular historical conditions, manifested itself in the phenomenon variously described as a 'marginalised labour force'(11) or 'structural underemployment'.(12) The effect is to create a double-bind situation in which the class of direct producers, increasingly dependent on the need to secure wage employment in order to subsist, is faced with the decreasing likelihood that such employment will be available to them all.

Confronted with this contradiction, people, as always, refuse to simply disappear. They resolve the problem of their continued survival by gathering together whatever skills they have acquired and whatever means of production capital has either bypassed or produced as commodities in the expansion of its market, in order to

fashion some object or provide some service with an exchange value which will yield some sort of income. Or they establish themselves as the 'outworkers' of commercial capital, distributing its commodities to those corners of the market that remain inaccessible to the conventional outlets. Or, in Engels' words, ".... he among the 'surplus' who has courage and passion enough openly to resist society, to reply with declared war upon the bourgeoisie to the disguised war which the bourgeoisie wages upon him, goes forth to rob, plunder, murder and burn!"(13)

It is here, in this response to the crisis of marginality, in what is essentially a reflection of the struggles over the reproduction of capital's labour force, that we would argue that the irreducible core of so-called 'informal' activity is to be located. The essential premise of this conceptualisation is that the income derived from such activity would necessarily tend to be directed towards consumption, either as a replacement for or a supplement to an unavailable or inadequate wage income, in order to maintain or achieve an expected standard of living. Thus, the inchoate 'entrepreneurship' that orthodox theory discerns in 'informal' economic activity becomes, ultimately, contingent upon the latter's social conditions of existence and it is to an examination of the concrete and particular that our attention must now be turned.(14)

An exploratory investigation of a specific and probably rather atypical case of PCP in Soweto has been presented elsewhere in this work.(15) Here, the analysis, equally tentative, remains at the more general level of the social and economic conditions that characterize at least one area within the sprawling and apparently amorphous entity that is Soweto.(16)

The survey questionnaire on which the analysis is based attempted to elicit information primarily in three areas: household composition, the nature of the income-earning and other activities of the individual household members, and the total household income. Secondary questions were directed at determining the allocation of domestic labour between household members and the patterns of participation in social organizations such as stokvels, mutual aid societies, rotating credit associations, and so on. Given the acknowledged level of overcrowding in Soweto and the prevalence of often illegal lodging and sub-tenancies, it was accepted that a precise definition of the household as ".... a decision group that ensures its maintenance and continued reproduction by generating and disposing of a collective income fund "(17) would be difficult, if not impossible to sustain in this type of study. Hence, unless very clear indications of more than one such 'decision group' existing within the same house were received and their interrelationship adequately explained, it was assumed that everyone in the house was a fully participating member of a single household unit.

The sample indicates 268 people living in 37 households and the age/sex structure of this population is given in Table 1. The basic demographic indicator of interest here is household size - its distribution in the sample is given in Figure 1. The range is from 2 to 14 people per household with a mean of 7,2 and a median of 7,3. The number of variables involved in household composition makes it difficult to provide a meaningful statistical indicator of the 'average' household's age/sex structure and familial relationships. However, inspection of the returns suggests that there is some tendency in the sample towards households headed by relatively old people, often women presumably widowed or separated from their husbands, with the remaining members ranging from middle-aged adults, single or married and still living in their parents' homes, to small children who might be either their younger siblings or their offspring, often, it seems, illegitimate. An extended family structure of this sort, and evidence that most of the older people, if not born in the Reef area have been living there since at least the late 1940's while their children have predominantly been born in Soweto itself, would be consistent with the genesis of Orlando in the mid 30's, and its subsequent development as part of what was to become Soweto after the Second World War.(18)

Originally, it was intended that the survey should establish the pattern of household expenditure, or at least its total amount, but the experience of the pilot survey indicated that this would be extremely difficult given the almost hand to mouth daily consumption patterns of many households. It was then decided to construct a household subsistence level (HSL) distribution for the sample using the system developed by the Institute for Planning Research at the University of Port Elizabeth.(19)

The use of 'poverty datum' measures - of which the HSL is essentially a systematic elaboration - is, despite the humane intentions of their proponents, almost invariably perceived by capital to be a means to fix the minimum wage level to ensure reproduction of the labour force. It is inherent in their construction as 'average' or 'hypothetical' measures that they do not take account of variations in household composition, and it is arguable that the hypothetical family structure employed(20) serves to reinforce the dominant stereotype of a nuclear family headed by a male breadwinner which underlies the wage differentials of men and women workers.(21)

Further, the costing of the major components of the Institute's primary HSL - food, clothing, and a component consisting of fuel, lighting, washing and cleaning materials - is based on the prices obtaining at retail outlets of a type not generally located within the townships: supermarkets or chain stores.(22) There is evidence indicating that the prices which obtain at those outlets which are in fact most immediately accessible to township residents are considerably higher than supermarket prices in the 'white' areas.(23) The argument that the lower prices could be procured by better organization of expenditure and by shopping trips involving the use of supermarket facilities is difficult to sustain in the face of, firstly, the HSL transport cost component, which reflects only the bread-winnter's commuting costs(24) and, secondly, the obviously less manipulable expenditure patterns occasioned by a weekly wage income which is often at or near the minimum level.

With all these qualifications in mind, however, the HSL and its equivalents remain the only feasible way of systematically constructing a distribution of the necessary household expenditure levels for each household in the sample. Figure 2 represents this distribution calculated on the basis of the HSL. Again, there is a considerable range, from an actual figure as low as R91 to a maximum of R349, with the mean and the median both equal to R201.

Since it is possible, in the light of the above, that the actual minimum necessary expenditures for each household are in excess of these figures, a second computation was undertaken to determine the household effective level (HEL) distribution. In the Institute's formulation:

> .....(the HEL is) calcualted at 150% of the HSL, to take account of both other 'essentials' and non-essentials and this, obviously, is more influenced by social patterns and needs than the HSL as strictly defined. The point is that, with an income lower than this, essential (HSL) components are sacrificed to a greater or lesser extent to provide for other items.(25)

This distribution, which has not been shown here, is of exactly the same basic shape as the HSL distribution, since there is only a constant scale factor of 1,5 involved in the calculation; the mean and the median are again equal, in this case to a figure of R301.

These average figures for the HSL and the HEL thus establish a bracket within which the 'average' household's necessary subsistence expenditure should lie. This immediately raises the question of how likely it is that the 'average'

household's total income will meet the necessary expenditure, and in order to answer it, the employment pattern and income distribution of the sample must be examined.

Of the total sample population of 268, 74 people were in 'formal' employment, which was taken to mean wage or salaried employment in (or ownership of) an established firm or business with premises other than an occupied dwelling. The sectoral employment and occupational class distributions are given in Tables 2 & 3. In the event, only 9 people (one of whom was supplementing the income derived from his wage employment) reported being engaged in income-earning activities other than 'formal' wage employment: 3 as 'independent' producers with their own means of production, 3 as vendors of foodstuffs (including one using a bakkie), 2 as providers of maintenance or repair services, and 1 as a part-time liquor seller.(26)

Calculations of the unemployment rate on the basis of both the 'formal' employment rate and the total reported employment rate (i.e. including the 8 people engaged soley in 'informal' activity) are shown in Table 4. It can be seen that there is a large variation in the rate - from 12% to 32% in relation to 'formal' employment - which depends on the labour force participation rate (LFPR) used in the calculation. (Ideally, a study in which the unemployment rate was an important consideration would attempt to derive the LFPR specific to the area in which it was undertaken. Experience in the pilot survey, however, in which such an attempt was made, indicated that a full-scale effort would overextend the available resources and the idea was abandoned.)

No household in the sample had less than one person in 'formal' employment, while at least three had as many as four of their members so employed. The distribution of household dependency ratios, measured in terms of the number of dependents in each household per person in 'formal' employment, is given in Figure 3. The range is from 1,0 to 9,0, with a mean of 4,4 and a median of 4,7. If the relatively low LFPRs, particularly for women, indicated in Table 4 do in fact apply to Soweto, then this dependency ratio would suggest that 'formal' wage employment remains the predominant mode of employment there. Petty production and small-scale distributive activities appear to be, at best, 'fall back' or supplementary sources of income for the majority of households.

To what degree, though, is there pressure on the 'average' household to undertake such activities because of the inadequacy of the wage income that it does secure? If it is accepted that the 'formal' wage incomes declared by respondents were generally correct(27), the distribution shown in Figure 4 represents the spread of individual incomes among those in this sort of employment. The actual range is again extensive, with monthly wages from as low as R35 (a domestic servant) to as 'high' as R300 (a laboratory technician) and an estimated R335 (a machine operator working a 12-hour shift); the mean was R143 and the median R139.

By combining the mean and median measures of 'average' household size, the dependency ratio and the HSL and HEL, respectively, it is possible to compute the values of the average wages per person employed which correspond to the latter. The calculation is set out in Table 5. It can be seen that, neither in the case of the mean figures, nor in that of the median figures, does the actual average wage level approach the HEL figure, while it barely exceeds the HSL figure.

Even if we accept Marx's dictum that "... no animal is able to restrict his needs to the same unbelievable degree and to reduce the conditions of his life to the absolute minimum (as man)"(28), it seems unlikely that people would accept standards of living as depressed as this 'average' situation would seem to suggest. The reasonable conclusion to be drawn, then, is that, for the 'average' household in this sample at least, there is a real, and indeed pressing need to combine this 'formal' wage income with income from some other

source.

However, the use of aggregate calculations of this nature can, obviously, provide only a crude indication of the poverty or deprivation experienced by the sample population as a whole, while it conceals the very real and important differences between its individual units. What, for instance, can it tell us of the different conditions under which a household of 4 with a total declared income of R319 based on the 'formal' wage employment of three of its members, and a household of 9 with a total declared income of R174 based on a single 'formal' wage income, must live? It would clearly be differences of this magnitude which would distinguish between households forced to allocate some of their labour power to 'informal' income-earning activities in order to maintain a level of bare subsistence, and households able either to ignore this necessity altogether or to merely supplement their income in order to achieve a desired standard of living.

The significance of such distinctions within an area at least nominally 'working class', in relation to the potential of struggles over the reproduction of the labour force to take on a class dimension, is self-evident. What is less obvious, however, are the precise nature and limits of their effects, and it is perhaps at this point that empirical investigation confined to the type of variables that have so far been considered reaches the bounds of its explanatory effectiveness. The area that is now being entered is that occupied by the concepts of class 'position' and class 'consciousness' and it is no longer possible to abstract from the political and ideological relations within which all economic and social activity occurs.

On the basis of the research that has been carried out, and within the confines of this paper, the exploration of these issues will necessarily be restricted to a brief examination of previous work in the area and some tentative theoretical signposting of what seems to be the way forward. As a consequence, the exposition will revert to a more abstract mode, but attempts will be made to draw theoretical implications and certain extensions of the concrete analysis together where possible.

Arguably, the most ambitious work undertaken on the theoretical terrain with which we are now concerned has been Gerry & Birkbeck's investigation of the class location of 'petty producers' in 'Third World' cities.(29) The approach they adopt is derived initially from Wright's concept of 'contradictory class locations', in which various groups of workers are positioned between the three classes of capitalist society - the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat - on the basis of the degree of control that the 'agents' in each category exercise over investments and resources ('economic ownership'), over the physical means of production and the labour power of others ('possession'), and on the basis of juridical categories in the legal ownership of property, legal status as an employer and the legal sale of labour power.(30) The essential point in this analysis, Gerry & Birkbeck argue, is that "there are many jobs which combine elements of both the bourgeois and the proletarian", but they question whether Wright's conclusions "go far enough, particularly in the maintenance of the term petite (= petty) bourgeoisie", for two reasons:

> Firstly, because.... the concept of self employment embodied in Wright's term 'petite bourgeoisie' may be found far less frequently than is apparently the case.... there may be many 'self employed' who in reality are little more than semi-autonomous employees. Secondly.... class analysis must rest not only on economic criteria, but also on political and ideological criteria.(31)

They proceed to an analysis of these issues in the context of empirical material drawn from Gerry's research on petty production in Dakar and Birkbeck's study of garbage pickers in Cali, Colombia. The basic argument that

emerges appears to be essentially a reworking of an earlier paper by Lebrun & Gerry(32): within PCP, there exist two poles of a 'contradictory process' of 'dissolution-conservation' whose dynamic is determined by the pattern of development of the dominant CMP; the process manifests itself in the transition of a minority of petty producers to small capitalist production and, at the opposite pole, the transition,on an intermittent, partial or permanent basis,of the mass of other petty producers towards proletarianisation. The effect, in terms of synchronic analysis, is that within the range of activities subsumed under PCP, there will exist individuals who occupy very different positions in the relations of production although they might, formally, all be classified as 'self-employed'.

It is precisely this point which is taken up and developed in the paper by Gerry & Birkbeck. They argue that:

> The complexity.... (of petty production activities).... implies that a comprehensive analysis of the relations of production of a worker should involve at least the following three strategic variables: the self-employed worker, for example, is defined as the owner of his means of production, as having control over the productive process, and as being the sole appropriator of the surplus generated by the enterprise. In contrast, the wage labourer exhibits exactly the opposite characteristics. There are many workers, however, who work under apparently different and intermediate relations of production.(33)

They proceed to sketch out the elements of an analysis of their case study material in these terms and go on to propose, in relation to the role of ideology in class formation, that: "When class location is objectively contradictory, it becomes increasingly prone to varying ideological currents".(34) The 'illusion of independence' (formal self-employment) and the myth of 'upward social mobility' (success in 'business' merely requires dedication and hard work) combine to obscure the objective reality of the position of the 'petty producer' and its relationship to the development of the CMP. Gerry and Birkbeck conclude:

> ... petty commodity production was and remains intimately linked to the development of capitalism .... we have disaggregated petty producers into three types: direct wage labourers, disguised wage workers and the truly self-employed. Most petty producers are not therefore petit bourgeois. Nevertheless in our considerations of the politico-ideological factors in class formation, we argued for the existence of powerful factors at work which tend to make many of these people supportive of capitalism. But one can 'support' capitalism in many ways - deliberately, unwittingly, unwillingly. To class as one all those who do so, we feel, is not only a theoretical error, but also an oversimplification of an exceedingly complex reality.(35)

It is neither intended nor possible to develop a comprehensive critique of Gerry & Birkbeck's work on the basis of such a brief exposition. What is necessary, though, and largely because it does represent an innovative attempt to unravel the class relations of petty production and its associated activities, is to identify what I consider to be its major inadequacies.

The most important of these is unquestionably their failure to develop a convincing account of the nature of ideology in their "considerations of politico-ideological factors in class formation" which constitute the concluding section of the paper. In brief, they have not succeeded in breaking with what

Hirst terms a 'sociologistic' concept of ideology, which reduces it "to an effect of the social position of the subject who expounds it" and conceives of "knowledge.... as experience and.... society as a system of places conditioning that experience into 'class outlooks'."(36) The result is that they are unable to perceive of ideology as "... a structure of social relations no less 'real' than the economic and the political and articulated with them."(37)

The failure to accord a 'relative autonomy' to ideological relations is compounded by the reduction of those ideological 'factors' that are considered to what Frank has labelled 'stratification consciousness'(38), which 'corresponds' to divisions within the labour force rather than to the broader social relations of production. Thus, as we have seen, it is the 'illusion of independence' in self-employment and the myth of 'upward social mobility' that conceal the objective subordination of petty producers to capital. The importance of such elements in the ideology of 'individualism' and their potential to fragment the working class is not denied, but they cannot be considered in isolation from ".... different interpellations (political, religious, familial, etc) which coexist whilst being articulated in an ideological discourse in a relative unity."(39)

In any concrete capitalist social formation, it is certain that the dominant ideological discourse will be vastly more complex, both in its structure and in its effects, than that which Gerry & Birkbeck apparently construct from a "strong attachment to the maintenance of private property, the concept of individualism, and the ethic of work."(40) In South Africa, for instance, 'interpellations' such as racism (or ethnicity), nationalism, militarism, religion, 'anti-communism' and populism would all have to be considered in the analysis of ideological struggle(41) and its effects on people occupying the 'contradictory class locations' of petty producers. The simple 'reading off' of ideological positions proposed by Gerry & Birkbeck could be of little assistance in such a task.

The second major inadequacy in their analysis, which will be posed here by way of concluding this paper, is their failure to consistently locate petty production within the context of the social conditions of its existence. In particular, this paper has argued that the household or family unit is the site of a certain structure of relations which mediates struggles over the reproduction of the labour force. By ignoring the existence of this structure and its effects on the people who occupy positions within it, Gerry & Birkbeck have isolated the object of their investigation within a vacuum largely exhausted of its social content.

In concrete terms, their categorisation of petty producers - into direct wage labourers, disguised wage labourers, and the 'truly self-employed' - must cope with situations such as those observed in Soweto in which a 'petty producer' turns out to be a white collar worker supplementing his 'formal' wage income over the weekends. Or a 'self employed' producer of clothing turns out to be a woman with a sewing machine who is attempting to raise her family's standard of living above the level of bare subsistence afforded by her husband's employment as an unskilled labourer. And so on.

The problem is not, of course, confined to households containing 'petty producers'. If the distribution of occupational class categories derived from our Orlando sample and shown in Table 3 bears any relationship to the range of social class categories, then what can be said of the class position of people falling into different categories, but sharing the same house, pooling their incomes, and possibly situated within the asymmetrical relations of a marriage? And what of the school children who fall into no class category derived immediately from occupation at all, and yet who, in South Africa after 1976, can hardly be described as without 'pertinent effects'

at the level of political and ideological relations .

There certainly do not appear to be any ready-made answers to these questions and to the fundamental question underpinning them: how to achieve "a synthesis of the troublesome macro-micro dichotomy (which) poses a central challenge to the social sciences in general" (42) That the family is probably the key site in the intersection of 'macro' and 'micro' relations is a proposition long held by orthodox sociologists(43), but it has until relatively recently remained a remarkably underdeveloped area of Marxist theory.(44) This paper and those following it are presented as modest contributions towards the filling of this particular breach.

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TOWARDS A CONCEPTUALISATION OF WOMEN AND THE 'INFORMAL SECTOR'

When one confronts the issue of women in a materialist analysis, one is in a sense forced to work within a paradigm that is inherently paradoxical. For one cannot accept 'women' as an adequate category. The concept 'women' has to be mediated through a whole variety of other analytical concepts - class, and race being the most central ones in the case of South Africa. In this way one has the possibility of looking at women, but in a manner that is not inherently a radical feminist one. (1)

To understand the structural position of women in South Africa, it is essential to understand (a) the structural position of women within capitalism on a general level of abstraction and (b) the specific forms that this assumes in the South African social formation, the reasons for and the implications of it.

a) In capitalist society, the nuclear family - the family form that is most common, is a convenient economic unit - both for the reproduction of labour power and the existing social relations of production as well as being a unit of consumption.(2)It is the family as a whole then, that is a reproductive unit, rather than women as a category. However, within this unit women tend to have a greater concern with reproductive labour than do men because of the way that the sexual division of labour has developed within capitalism.

Because the burden of physical reproduction is largely assigned to women, they tend to enter capitalist production on different terms to men and to be involved in very specific sectors of the economy. It is assumed that the labour of women is temporary, or less permanent than that of men; that they are generally dependent on men; and need not earn a 'family wage' themselves; they are often introduced into production during a process of deskilling, they are concentrated in the most labour intensive, lowest paid sectors; women predominate in the service sectors because of all the above features, women in capitalist society are a major element of the industrial reserve army. In South Africa the above broad distinguishing features of the structural position of women has assumed a specific form.

In the South African social formation one of the most important distinguishing features is that historically labour power has been exploited through the institution of migrant-labour. This has meant (a) that wages have been paid below the value of labour power, because it is assumed that it is only the single migrant worker who need have his/her reproduction secured; (b) 'The single migrant has tended to be male (except in the case of domestic service). This means that for women in the reserves who are in effect proletarian women - (they depend on wage-labour to reproduce themselves) they have experienced the capitalist sexual division of labour in a particularly intense form.(3)Here the tendency for women to be dominantly involved with reproductive labour becomes absolute. The extension of passes to women and the rigid application of the 1964(4) embargo on the entry of women into urban areas means that rural black women are confined to arduous reproductive labour,

as well as intensely heavy, insecure and low-paid wage labour. They are also responsible for all the tasks performed by men in an earlier division of labour. The fact that migrant's wages, already really low, have to cover the costs of reproduction of the migrant as well as the family, means that family incomes become extremely low. Women who cannot obtain wage labour - and for many women the fact that they have young children, prevents them from doing casual labour on farms, means they have to enter the informal sector. This is at the lowest level - not with the intention of accumulating at any significant level, but to try and make ends meet.

It is a central contention that the identity between women as predominantly reproducers, and women as reserve army, has in the context of the process of capital accumulation in South Africa, and in the context of ever-increasing structural unemployment meant that women, or at least a specific section of women are more and more removed from the possibilities of access to the means of production, or to wage-labour on any level whatsoever. It is for this reason that women form a significant proportion of the people involved in so-called informal sector activities. In the rural situation, the capitalist sexual division of labour appears in an extreme form, with the added element of a geographical separation within the nuclear family that is one sense corresponds to the distinction between reproduction and production. What of the urban situation?

The fact that migrant labour is a central institution within South African capitalism, does not mean that there are no women within urban areas. On the contrary, despite the intention of the state to maintain black women in the reserves, there has been a steady process of proletarianisation and the establishment of a settled urban working class. The extension of passes to women in 1952[5] was the most concerted attempt to control and limit this influx of women and consequently to limit the urbanisation of the black working class (historically the numbers of women in urban areas in South Africa has always been seen as an index of proletarianisation). The 1952 legislation was essentially a control over labour. Prior to this attempts were made to control women indirectly via the family. Black women in South Africa are defined by the state as belonging to the family, as having no status or identity outside of this structure. Since 1930,[6] women have lived in urban areas as the "wife or daughter" of a man who is legally resident in a specific area (now a man with section 10 rights), or else as migrant or contract workers in increasingly rare cases. Women, generally cannot get houses of their own, and so for black women life as a 'single' women, not attached to a family is generally an unrealistic option, although obviously, households that are headed and run soley by women are extremely common.

Paradoxically in rural areas women depend for survival on the absence of a man, while in urban areas, it is the presence of a man that is of utmost importance for women. (Although, obviously single women in a rural area live in utmost misery and poverty).

It is in the context of state strategy to divide the urban and rural populations and to establish a stable black middle-class that the position of women who are not attatched to men is fundamentally threatened. In Soweto the majority of the small-time shebeen operators are single women - women whose only means of survival given the absence of the possibilities of legal employment, is the informal sector. The tentacles of the state and of capital are now reaching into the area that these women have defined for themselves. The recent moves to legalise shebeens[7] that were hailed in so many quarters are in effect designed to crush the majority of women who make their living by selling liquor. For many of these people, even were it financially possible, to register, it is legally out of the question because of their illegal status as single women.

Apart from shebeen operators, women seem to dominate and to play a significant role in other levels of 'informal sector' activities. Again this can be ascribed to the inter-relationship between their function within the capitalist division of labour and their reserve army function that more and more has come to mean permanent unemployment. In a situation where the wages that are paid mean less and less in real terms, (inflation, increases in COL) women are forced to enter the informal sector to make up the shortfall. In rural areas, the 'ideology'of 'the home' means that although unemployment rates for women and certain groups of men (particularly young men) may be high, women often do not see themselves as unemployed. Men wait at the labour bureaux for work - usually in vain - while women sell tomatoes, weave mats, brew beer etc.(8) In urban areas, I do not know whether this holds, but there is definitely a tendency for married women without work not to see themselves as unemployed. There is another reason - and this is an extremely tentative suggestion) as to why women enter the informal sector. The one sector of employment that is available to women who are legal in urban areas is domestic service. Given the low rates of wages, the proportion of the salary that is actually spent on travel and the long hours, informal sector activity may in fact be more worthwhile. (Obviously information on legality/ illegality of women is crucial here).

The following case-study demonstrates how the controls that the state imposes on women,forces them into the informal sector and shows the increasing constraints on the ability of women to continue to survive.

Thandi is 38 years old.(9) She has 3 children. The oldest in Standard 8, the youngest in Std 1. She was born in Soweto, but lost her section 10 rights after she spent two years in the Ciskei looking after her sick grandmother. She was married and divorced and then re-married by customary law. Her second husband deserted her in 1976 and she has never seen him since. He is the registered tenant of the house in which she lives.She thus has no urban rights and no right to be in the house. Thandi could not find any job except domestic work after her husband left her. She rejected it as a viable option because "R40,00 is too little" and "who will look after the children?" She then started to sell liquor on the suggestion of her sister.

She buys beer twice a week, just before and just after the weekend, either from the WRAB bottle-store or from one of the middlemen liquor distributors within Soweto. She was reluctant to state details of her mark-up or profits, but said that she sold beer at 80c a quart. And that on a good week-end she could make up to R30.00. Because hers is a small shebeen, and because she is selective about her customers - "I won't have any rubbish, even if they have money." The establishment has a regular clientele, many of whom buy on credit during the week. Thandi says that she is never without money, but that she often finds it hard to make ends meet. She says that she does not enjoy selling liquor. "I am up from Friday morning to Monday night and what kind of life can that be for the children?" But nevertheless it is her best option.

The recent moves to legalise shebeens have fundamentally threatened Thandi. She has no right in Johannesburg as it is - no control over the house in which she lives. She cannot afford to pay the R600,00 that is being put forward as the licensing fee for shebeens and nor can she afford to make the necessary alterations that would allow her establishement to be defined as 'business premises'.

She sees the 'legalisation initiative' as creating a hierarchy of wealth and power within the ranks of liquor sellers and furthermore as one that can only be to the advantage of those who are already wealthier and more powerful. "They are trying to crush us because we are poor." Thandi says she will continue to operate illegally for as long as she can, but has no idea of how she will make a living if she is forced to close down. Yet, she is already

beginning to adapt to that possibility. She says that maybe closure will be good in that she will be able to provide a better home environment for her children, will have more privacy and be able to lead a more stable life. However, the question still looms large - what will she do?

Given the structural and legal constraints that have been outlined above, women like Thandi seem doomed to a life on the fringes of society and to a life that is increasingly uncertain. For these women the so-called 'informal sector' is a refuge that is more and more insecure and that is constantly shrinking in terms of its ability to absorb them. This is particularly so, in the case of liquor. Although it is premature to make conclusive statements about the dynamics that have been set in motion by the 'legalisation initiative, it is already fairly clear that an important aspect is a drive by the state to recoup and control a large amount of revenue that is at present being redistributed amongst the black population.

On a more general level, measures that have been implemented form an integral part of the state's'total strategy' that is exemplified by Wiehahn and Rieckert. There is no room for "illegals", no section of the population that is to be left uncontrolled. In this context and given the structural position that women have come to occupy within South Africa, their future is increasingly bleak.

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF POVERTY

> "... if the capitalist system does not provide adequately for old age pensions, sick leave and unemployment compensations, they have to rely on another, comprehensive socio-economic organization to fulfil these vital needs.... in the absence of a precapitalist mode of production.... once permanent settlement is allowed in the capitalist sector, these functions are fulfilled by urban mutual-aid associations."(1)

We do not wish to resuscitate any form of 'the culture of poverty' here; the mutual-aid associations referred to above are forms of social organisations which can be seen as forms of resistance, defensive and offensive strategies for embattled people in a hostile social formation. Town dwellers organise around themselves networks of people on whom they can rely: self-help groups or social security networks, phrased in an urban idiom, and aimed at the goal of survival. The culture of poverty, as conceived by Oscar Lewis,(2) appears to be the ideas, beliefs, customs and traditions of people whose poverty "affects participation in the larger national culture and creates a subculture of its own."(3) The outcome of this is that, while some people respond positively to their condition, many lapse into the 'culture of poverty', which has features which are negative, apathetic and defeated. The lifeways of the poor are perpetuated, learnt and passed on from one generation to the next, with the participants seeing little prospect of breaking out and confronting the issues which cause their predicament. The concept has received wide currency, e.g. from such authors as Glazer and Moynihan, who imply that poverty is perpetuated largely because of the cultural practices of the poor.(4)

This brief, and perhaps oversimplified version of Lewis' position, nevertheless raises serious issues. The concept has been roundly criticised, notably by Valentine, who contends that poverty is not the result of a special set of values and behavioural practices of the poor, but rather the result of inequality imposed on them by the wider society.(5) While it is true that there are people in the ghetto of Soweto who have conceded defeat to the impersonal forces so much more powerful than themselves, it is the contention of this section of the paper that, far from being crushed by the weight of the laws, capital, the State, and its mechanisms of control and repression, the working class has constructed a set of cultural and social patterns which constitute what the Hammonds call 'the defences of the poor'.(6) It is these forms of organisation of resistance, and their positive, combative response, that will be illustrated here. Let us turn our attention to a handful of them, by way of illumination. There are many more than those enumerated below, but these will suffice to highlight the issues.

At the core of any social network are those whom one can trust implicitly, those who will give assistance willingly, immediately, and without counting the cost. They are, of course, one's kinsfolk, with whom the idiom of reciprocity is paramount and who share in the crises and pleasures of one's life. Research evidence shows that in major calamities, like losing one's job, or a death in the family, it is kin who rally to support first, and whose support lasts longest. Kin are also the people who help find employment, accommodation, and who bribe or bail one out of the clutches of the law. They are, in short, indispensable.

The migrant coming to town is faced with a further dilemma: frequently his kin are dispersed and few in number, yet a network of sympathetic individuals is ready-made in the form of his amakhaya, or home-people. Drawn from a locality in a rural area, the bonds of territoriality are remarkably strong when called upon to take the pressure of a calamitous event in the life of one of its number. Amakhaya groups also have other uses as well, for, like kin, they aid people in finding employment and lodging, and generally act as a conservative force in

keeping the migrant's allegiance firmly set on his rural ties (cf. Mayer's definitive work on this subject, recorded in this case, in East London(7). The makgotla is a broader, but equally conservative, response to the apparent lack of social control in deep Soweto. It is a sort of do-it-yourself form of justice, with appeal to migrants, though basing its support on populist appeal, it is open to misuse by demagogues.

Rotating credit associations and Stokvels

South Africa, like most Third World countries, pays its workers extremely low wages, which have to be carefully conserved and stretched. The poor respond in typical fashion; they create systems of redistribution, which help meagre incomes extend to the limits of their elasticity. These patterns of redistribution percolate through social networks to finally find their way into the pockets of those who are unable to find wage employment; it is above all a social form of redistribution, operating amongst friends, neighbours, workmates, acquaintances and friends of friends. The most common forms of this blend of economic redistribution with social commitment are the stokvels and mohodisano. Both are forms of rotating credit association, where members pool a portion of their weekly or monthly earnings, taking it in turn to scoop the pool.

The stokvel also has a very clear celebratory and recreational aspects for, when the money is pooled, the person whose turn it is to collect the kitty also throws a party, at which food and alcohol are bought by participants at inflated prices. Thus, the person holding the stokvel (most commonly a woman, as she has cooking and beer brewing skills) not only gets a large lump sum of money, but will also make a profit on the party. An example of one such group has 30 members, each contributing R10 per month, which means one waits the lengthy period of two and a half years to reap the benefits of membership, but when one does, one gets a clear R300, plus about R50 from the party. This relatively large sum of money can then be spent on an item which one might not normally aspire to, like a refrigerator, or more pertinently, can be redistributed again to kin and others who have pressing social needs. Its not uncommon for people to throw a 'party' alone, where its understood that food and beverages will be sold for profit. This is often practiced by single women (especially divorcees and widows) as a means of earning a sporadic income.

Voluntary associations of the kind detailed above have been widely documented in the anthropological literature, from a number of perspectives. Authors such as Mitchell(8) have seen them as part of a brave new urban world, presenting the incoming migrant with a set of uniquely urban institutions, divorced from rural (and tribal) life. Southall(9), on the other hand, saw these as urban surrogates for rural institutions, such as kinship networks, and prefers to see them as a sort of continuum, embodying elements of both urban and rural values, traditions and social organization. Most of the analyses and descriptions in the literature tend to reify these organisations, whether formal or informal, as institutions, thus ossifying them, and presenting a static model. These networks are seen as one of a repertoire of urban institutions, available to migrants and town dwellers.

In this approach, there is little room for the incorporation of process, for the rotating credit associations to be seen as dynamic. These organisations are predominantly found in Third World countries, or among the working classes of older capitalist countries.(10) This major point eludes most anthropological observers, for whom the institution is merely available as a part of urbanization. This myopic view does have its opponents, however, some more perceptive than others. Kurtz(11) explicitly takes up the connection between rotating credit associations and poverty, seeing them as adaptive mechanisms used by the poor to cope with their condition. In a repetitive paper, in which he himself uses the dubious and imprecise concept of "relative deprivation", Kurtz describes slum dwellers of San Ysidro, and how the RCAs have the function of an adaptive mechanism

which provides an alternative to participation in the mainstream of such a society because the national economic institutions cannot absorb or utilize the energies or abilities of the total population. The population which is most excluded from such participation is the poor".(12)

Kurtz uses a tautological definition of poverty: 'poverty refers to a status of inequality based upon unequal access to goods and resources available at large in the society'(13) and he goes on to posit the 'peasants in an original state of under-development' hypothesis: "obviously, peasants and tribal populations exist in a state of poverty". An even less impressive analyst is Clifford Geertz, the more surprising since he is an able anthropologist and one of America's most senior and respected practitioners. He sees RCAs as 'a middle rung' of development, also starting from a kind of 'backward nature' hypothesis, and an explicit dualism where capitalism (money economy, rationality), is counterposed to tradition-bound peasant economy.(14)

In the context of Soweto, it is perhaps helpful to clarify concepts. Rotating credit associations are known by various names, the most common being mohodisano. Often, however, stokvel is used to refer to the same type of organisation, despite the distinction I have drawn above. Various authors have defined these institutions differently which may reflect a changing role of the institution during different periods in the history of the development of a working class subculture in South Africa, or differing local conditions. There is some agreement that the term mohodisano is derived from the Sotho hoda, to pay, in its reciprocal form of "to make pay back to each other",(16) but considerable confusion exists over the derivation of stokvel. Hellman found that a 'stockfair' was held on Mondays by the women who brewed beer in Rooiyard, to get rid of Sunday's surplus stock; the organisation only had woman members.(17) Kuperand Kaplan, on the other hand, believe the stokvel may have derived from the tea party circle, once very fashionable in Western Native Township and Sophiatown.(18) They also report that membership was limited to six, and that a kind of 'coalition' of stokvels would meet, inviting one another by invitation card (while mohodisano groups are generally larger, usually about 30 members .(19)

Soweto is larger, more impersonal, and has much less a sense of community than did Sophiatown and Western Native Township, so that comparisons between them are not very illuminating. It is however, interesting to note that in 1944, Kuper and Kaplan found that 20% of families in the latter locations belonged to stokvels or mohodisano, while from our own survey of the Soweto suburbs of Meadowlands, we found that 63% of families belonged to one or the other; a significantly larger proportion.(20) For our purposes here, it is not very useful to further distinguish between stokvels and mohodisano, for there is wide difference in usage in Soweto. There are also many different practices within these institutions. Apart from the differing amounts of money pooled in various societies, there are some which exchange commodities rather than cash, especially groceries, such as soap and sugar.(21) At the lower levels, rotating credit associations are distinctly for the poor, and are thrift clubs, not dissimilar from those found in early English working class communities.(22) Some perform the function of Christimas Clubs, buying stamps from department stores to this end, or being used as enforced saving for this purpose. Small separatist churches also use these means to raise funds, while other, more successful individuals, such as small entrepreneurs, may pool their resources. Kramer records one such group contributing R51 fortnightly.(23)

The attraction of the rotating credit association to its participants is twofold: firstly it is undoubtedly a means of enforced savings, secondly, and almost as important, it is essentially a sociable, recreational institution in an environment where, due to the cumulative policies of the City Council, and latterly, the State, recreational facilities are scarce, and streets are unsafe to walk in the ghetto night. One of the most important features of the stokvel derives from

its location in a suppressed working class. Because money is in such short supply, people find it difficult to save their money in, say, building societies, for two reasons: they can't find the money to save, and it takes desperately needed funds out of circulation. The rotating credit association overcomes both these drawbacks: the moral and social pressure exerted by one's friends and colleagues forces one to save; and by contributing to a rotating pool, the money is "kept alive" so to speak. It does not disappear into the coffers of a bank; on the contrary, it is put back into circulation immediately, and redistributes the sum of money that might otherwise disappear in small private amounts.

The particularly social nature of these groups is of the essence. A building society or post office savings bank may well give one both interest and speedy access to one's money, but they are impersonal and daunting to an illiterate person. The reciprocity entailed in the pooling of savings enhances the quality of friendship and neighbourliness in the group, which also provides ways for small, increasingly nucleated or matrifocal families to knit themselves into wider communities which carry social obligations, trust, reciprocity and mutual aid in a way that kinship groups are able to do in rural areas. Even in the preparation for the party, work is shared and communalised, which has the effect of socialising what is normally privatised domestic or household labour. Kuper and Kaplan vividly capture the mood of such preparations in Sophiatown:

> "The party social is a very marked feature of stokvel. A great deal of work is involved for each member in the preparation of it. The labour is a pleasant and exciting one. First the coloured cards are printed and two or three sent in good time to each of the secretaries. The entertainment offered is varied. One group proudly invites you to come and be waited on by the "Black Lilies"; another offers you the "soothing charm of the Jazz Rhythm Myths". Whatever the attraction they all promise you a "good" or "thrilling" tea-party - Doors open 1pm. Commence at 2 pm. Some stokvels herald their opening and closing with a parade of women singing and marching through the streets. The women wear brightly coloured blouses and skirts, and, preceded by a car with their "leader", their parade is regarded as an advertisement".(24)

Burial Societies

A number of urban social groupings are explicitly created as a means of coping with crisis in a society denied social welfare. They are known by evocative names, such as masibambane (hold hands) or matsidiso (tiding over) and comprise a set of people who make regular financial contributions to a fund, which is used to tide one of their members over a calamity, and they also provide, both practically and ideologically, a sense of commitment and security. The most pervasive and effective of this form of defensive self-help organisation is the funeral association.(25) There is in Soweto an ideal that one should die well, with dignity, and to be buried well is a major component of the belief, so that the self-respect so systematically denied on a day-to-day basis can, in final irony, be achieved in the grave. But the cost of dying is not cheap. A recent funeral in Soweto cost the widow R240 for a coffin, R120 to hire two buses and R150 for food and beverages for the mourners. The sum of R510 is far beyond the reach of a household whose monthly income was R80. If it were not for the funeral society to which her husband had belonged, which provided R400, the widow would have presided over a pauper's burial. Members of a funeral association meet regularly, contribute to a fund monthly, and are willing helpers in predicaments other than death as well.

In our survey of Meadowlands, we found that 73 per cent of our sampled households were contributors to a burial society fund (cf. Sophiatown in 1944, where 65% belonged to a burial society). There is little reason to expect that the other

suburbs investigated will show much deviation from this figure. When crisis support groups are included with funeral societies, the figure climbs to over 85%; funeral societies are overwhelmingly the most supported of the voluntary associations in Soweto, far surpassing both rotating credit associations and church groups. Being buried with dignity is of prime importance; for some migrants it entails being buried at home, requiring the hiring of buses to make the trip to the homeland. But burial insurance has another important function: it ensures that the widow and family are not left destitute by the costs of burial, a very real threat in a society where savings are almost impossible. The burial fund can take two forms: the first, and now less common one, is to raise a collection among members in the event of a death. The second, which is more highly organised, is for a regular contribution to a fund to be levied, weekly or monthly, until a sum large enough to cover three or four funerals is arrived at. The money is kept in a building society, and requires the signature of three office-bearers for the money to be released. Societies such as those often have an annual celebration, using surplus funds, in order to promote companionship and solidarity in the group.

Early forms of fund raising for burials are recorded by Hellman in her study of Rooiyard(27), where a collection was taken among friends and neighbours of the bereaved. A similar practice was apparently conducted in the old Sophiatown and Western Native Township.(28) The high levels of organisation of some societies appears, however, to be a fairly recent phenomenon, for the comparative literature on South Africa is somewhat thin(29), and the early material refers mostly to the collection in the event of death. While some societies have grown and flourished, such as the Great North Burial Society, formed in 1955 and which boasts over 400 members, and registered as a Friendly Society, many others are small in size and fail. The smaller ones often have a high turnover of membership, and their main problem is a lack of actuarial skills, so that their fund cannot cope with an unusual demand on its resources. We have discovered at least three such societies which collapsed during 1976, that tragic period when so many families lost members; their collapse was attributed to the number of calls on the funds, which could not meet the demands.

An interesting analogue is provided in the historical experience of Britain, in the form of the friendly societies which emerged during the nineteenth century:

> "in their typical form of clubs offering both good fellowship and mutual insurance, the friendly societies had rather earlier origins than the other forms of provident association. In essence many of them owed their origins to the need felt by working men to provide themselves with succour against the poverty and destitution resulting from sickness and death at a time when the community offered only resort to the overseer of the poor".(30)

These small societies, meeting in local alehouses, later chrystallised into such well-supported organizations as the Independent Order of Oddfellows and the Ancient Order of Forresters. An intriguing aspect of these early friendly societies was that where local societies had membership drawn from one trade, at times they later developed into trade unions,(31) and indeed, "friendly benefits" became "an integral part of union activity, offering funeral and sickness benefits to their members and dependents".(32) Of course, in Soweto, one major difference is that no society thus far encountered offers either sickness or unemployment benefits on a formal basis to its members.

Finally, the most visible and audible of the mutual-aid associations are the small separatist churches (usually Zionist) that abound in Soweto. There are known to be well over 2000 of them, with an average membership of 30. With an obvious emphasis on spiritual, communal and social rather than material aspects, these small groups (much the same in number as stokvels and funeral societies) provide their members with a sense of belonging and respect through their colourful

and distinctive uniforms and the abundance of status positions within each small church. The spiritual comfort tends to be a negative one, in the sense that the tendency is to preach a message of 'suffer now - and your reward shall be in the kingdom of heaven'. But these religious groups perform other important functions for, if many Soweto dwellers are poor, separatist church members tend to be poorer. A recent study in Kwa Mashu showed that by most indices of poverty, Zionist church members were worse-off - they had lower incomes on average, there were a preponderance of single women, their children had a higher infant mortality rate, etc.(33) In short, spiritual aspects aside it appears that these churches represent the last network of survival for many urban black people.

All the forms of social organization mentioned above help construct a latticework of overlapping ties; they are means of spreading the risk in an environment characterized by scarcity, and they also help build a platform from which the more successful can launch themselves into moderately remunerative enterprises. Let us now turn our attention to a case study which encapsulates three of the issues dealt with above: the burial society, the rotating credit association, and the stokvel/party.

Case Study: The Zenzele (do it yourself) Society

The Zenzele society has 42 members, and is primarily a burial society. It is based around a core of people in Diepkloof, its members are drawn from diverse ethnic groups, and it is a men's society, though four widows of deceased members have taken their husbands' places. Members pay R10 per year, and while membership was initially free, there is now R100 entrance fee. The society meets every Sunday at a different member's house; everyone is expected to attend, to wear the uniform of blazer and tie, and to remember the secret password and handshake. The transactions are recorded by a secretary and money collected is deposited by him in the society's bank account. The present finances of the fund are over R2000, enough to cover four funerals. The society will pay R500 towards the funeral of any member's father, mother, husband, wife, father-in-law mother-in-law and any unmarried children living at home.

Running concurrently with the burial society is a mohodisano, or rotating credit association, which has a weekly contribution of R10. Not every member of the burial society participates in the credit association and some of the widows can only afford a R5 contribution. The mohodisano is a social and convivial event, as well as being a money raiser. The fund rotates on order of having joined the club, and the person whose turn it is to receive the pool must provide a meal, fourteen beers (the original number of members) and a bottle of brandy. These costs are defrayed from the sum received from all those present, usually amounting to R360. This represents 34 members paying R10, and four paying R5, and the fund rotates to each member every 38 weeks, so that every nine months, one receives R360.

After the business of both the burial society and the mohodisano have been completed, the mood of the gathering visibly changes, for it is now that the meeting changes into a stokvel. Beer is produced, and more food is served; this time it is paid for. A plate of food costs 75c., a quart of beer R1, and a nip of brandy R1,50. Friends, who have been waiting patiently outside, are invited in, and a serious attempt is made to consume as much liquor as has been laid in by the host. There is an ethic of conspicuous and voluminous consumption, for it will be remembered and reciprocated in turn. A successful host may earn another R30 on the stokvel part of the proceedings.

This case study brings together three of the institutions mentioned above. The burial society is the most important, and subscriptions will always be paid before any other debts. The mohodisano is optional, but widely supported,

and is a more lighthearted, though no less serious event. Here, a shared meal with drinks symbolises the unity of the group, and its secret passwords and small rituals build defences against the wider world. Finally, the open and sociable stokvel part of proceedings has the appearance of being the main reason for attendance of most the members, and livens up what would otherwise be a very dull Sunday in the ghetto.

Conclusion: Working class culture and resistance in Soweto

The rubric 'social organisation of poverty' has been used to describe the forms of groupings and social networks recounted above. Emphasis has been placed on the social, for these are the actual relationships which have been forged in an attempt to adapt to, and resist, the worst effects of poverty and unemployment in the ghettoes, created by the particular trajectory of capital accumulation in South Africa, abetted by an uncaring State which provides little or no social welfare benefits for the unemployed, the aged and infirm among the black working class. These social networks, which form the bedrock of the defence of the working class to these intrusions, are distinct and historically specific, created in Soweto to confront its particular circumstances. These are the social and material life-experiences of Sowetans, and out of these have developed patterns of life which give expression to the quality of their existence. The inhabitants of Soweto have developed a form of a working class sub-culture, meshing with, and complementing, their social organisations. Clarke et al have argued that:

> "The 'culture' of a group or class is the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of beliefs, in mores and customs, in the uses of objects and material life. Culture is the distinctive shapes in which this material and social organization of life expresses itself. A culture includes the 'maps of meaning' which make things intelligible to its members."(34)

In Soweto, with the massive political repression which has followed the June uprising in 1976, resistance has been increasingly expressed through overtly cultural channels - music, art, drama and literature. What is being suggested here is that the concept of culture runs deeper than these benchmarks of expression; they are largely for the literate petty bourgeoisie. Working class culture is more inchoate, less directed, visible or articulate. As van Onselen has argued for a different arena(35), this form of expression is altogether more difficult for the State, capital or its agents to pin down, isolate, or control. There are, then, more than one culture in play in Soweto (or, to be more accurate, sub-cultures), and a task yet to be pursued is to analyse and locate the specific historical circumstances of their emergence. It is important not to reify the concept of an overarching, timeless and unchanging culture. This fundamentally ahistorical approach, espoused by many anthropologists, does not advance our understanding of the patterns of domination, subordination and resistance in Soweto. Subcultures always stand in relations of subordination to the dominant culture of the ruling class. Clarke et al have argued succinctly:

> "We might want, therefore, to make a distinction between 'culture' and 'ideology'. Dominant and subordinate classes will each have distinctive cultures. But when one culture gains ascendancy over the other, and when the subordinate culture experiences itself in terms prescribed by the dominant culture, then the dominant culture has also become the basis of a dominant ideology."(36)

Resistance to a dominant culture or ideology can take many forms, perhaps most expressively in the rejection of "Bantu education", and the schools boycotts of 1976 and 1980. But the social and cultural practices described above represent the long-suffering, often silent, inarticulate, yet nevertheless genuine attempts at resistance by ghetto communities. The burial societies, rotating credit associations and stokvels indicate that working people are not passively acquiescing to the hegemony of the State and middle class ideological domination. On the contrary, these represent robust attempts to assert independence of that very domination, and their responses are remarkable for their identification of the points of exploitation. The response is pitched at two levels: the creation of a set of oral, visual and cultural practices which are inscrutable to whites and the authorities; secondly, and more importantly, are the manifestly economic networks of mutual aid and self-help, embedded in a web of social relationships. It is here that lies the potential for further development; it is here that lies the potential for co-option.

The reader will have noticed the expressively social and convocational milieu in which the economics of redistribution are cast. This is no coincidence for, in a ghetto where there is only one cinema and few other venues for officially-sanctioned entertainment, the shebeen(37) emerges as the core of many social, economic, cultural and sometimes, criminal enterprises. The stokvels and burial societies are conducted over a meal, and most entail the drinking of alcohol, and a spirit of conviviality is engendered. As Gosden continually stresses for 19th century Britain, "while the working men who joined the societies expected insurance against sickness and death, they sought more than just this. They were also in quest of the convivial activities and the enrichment of their impoverished social lives which the friendly societies were expected to afford and which the very name seemed to imply"(38). So too, for the people of Soweto, do their societies represent more than just meetings to record their financial transactions in a register. They also, like the bible seller who turns to peddling liquor, prefer warm spirits to cold sheets.

To end with a note of caution: much of what is recorded above represents resistance; it is an assertion of the worth and dignity of working people, and it represents a rejection of middle class, or white claims to moral, social and psychological superiority; it is also an attempt to exert some economic independence of the depredations of capitalism and its suppression of living wages. Yet, by so doing, many of the activities have the effect of spreading inadequate wages further, thus helping to lower the costs of reproduction of labour power to the direct benefit of capital and the State. Further, while the arena of struggle is located in the community, and is therefore over issues of reproduction: education, the family unit, the role of women in reproduction, rents, housing, etc., there is a tendency to obfuscate the issue of class. This is partly due to the historical development of housing policy in Soweto, where workers, petty bourgeois and lumpenproletariat live cheek by jowl in one community.

The danger is that leadership is often grasped by the more articulate petty bourgeois, and worker interests are trampled in the pursuit of other goals. Significant victories have been won in this arena, and the State and capital (ie the Urban Foundation) have been forced to respond to community demands, sometimes clumsily, occasionally subtly. Both are attempting to control by chrystallising and dividing class interests in Soweto, by favouring the emergence of a black middle class and disadvantaging migrant workers. The heart of any progressive movement must be the working class, and point of production organisation is, of course, vital. But, due to State repression and control this is still small, and one must not artifically separate different parts of a worker's existence: she must live, in a community, as well as work in a factory. Issues both of production and reproduction are vital to worker's lives, and no

claim to the primacy of the latter is being made here. The worker response is still in the process of chrystallisation. The dilemma is focussed by Marx:

> "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."(39)

o O o

FIGURES AND TABLES.

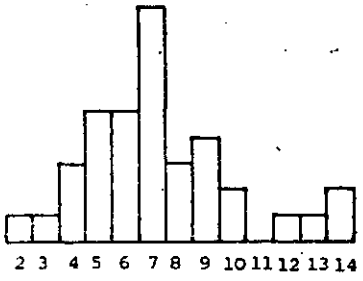


FIGURE 1: Household size distribution (N = 37)

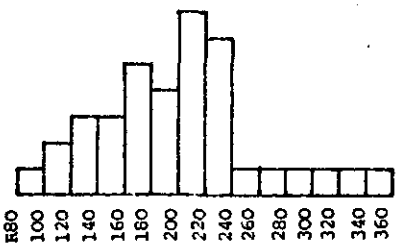


FIGURE 2: HSL distribution (N = 37)

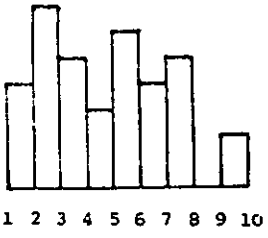


FIGURE 3: Household dependency ratio distribution (N = 36)

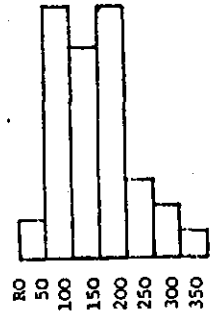


FIGURE 4: Individual income distribution (N = 69)

TABLE 1: Comparison with previous research: Age/sex structure of population.

AGE GROUPS	ASI STUDY				LOOTS[1]		ORLANDO[2] (1970 Census)		SIMKINS[3]	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
< 15	32,3	30,4	49,2	42,0	36,3	31,7	38,4	35,6	53,5	52,1
15-19	16,9	11,6			14,0	14,4	12,0	11,7		
20-24	10,8	13,8	10,8	13,8	11,8	12,3	10,5	10,2	9,9	9,7
25-29	10,0	13,8	16,9	18,9	13,4	13,8	13,3	13,1	13,9	13,7
30-34	6,9	5,1								
35-39	4,6	3,6	23,1	25,3	24,5	27,8	25,8	29,4	22,7	24,5
40-49	5,4	8,7								
50-59	6,2	5,8								
>60	6,9	7,2								
	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
N	130	138	130	138	1456	1594				

NOTES

1. L.J. Loots: A profile of black unemployment in South Africa: two area surveys SALDRU Working Paper No. 19, University of Cape Town, 1978: Table 1, p. 5.
2. Republic of South Africa, Department of Statistics: Population census, 1970: Johannesburg metropolitan area, Report No. 02-05-19, 1977 p. 501.
3. C. Simkins: Measuring and predicting unemployment in South Africa 1960-1977, in C. Simkins & D. Clarke: Structural unemployment in Southern Africa, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1978: Table 3, p. 8

TABLE 2: Comparison with previous research: sectoral employment distribution[3]

SIC SECTOR.	ASI STUDY.	LOOTS[1]	ORLANDO 2 (1970 CENSUS).
1	-	0,4	0,1
2	1,5	0,1	0,3
3	30,9	24,7	37,1
4	2,9	0,3	0,3
5	1,5	4,9	3,9
6	39,7	19,4	23,6
7	-	7,1	2,7
8	2,9	3,9	4,4
9	20,6	39,3	27,6
	100,0	100,1	100,0
N	68	906	

NOTES:

1. Loots: op.cit. : Table 3, p.8
2. RSA, Dept of Statistics: op.cit.: p.601
3. 'Formal' employment only

TABLE 3: Comparison with previous research: distribution into occupational classes.[3]

OCCUPATIONAL CLASS.	ASI STUDY.	SIMKINS & HINDSON[2]
I	1,5	0,46
IIa	4,4	2,53
IIb	22,1	9,17
IIc	-	1,15
II	26,5	12,85
IIIa	-	4,97
IIIb	25,0	19,67
IIIc	47,1	62,04
III	72,1	86,68
	100,1	99,99
N	68	

NOTES:

1. Categories derived from C.Simkins & D. Hindson: The division of labour in South Africa, 1969-1977, Social Dynamics 5(2), 1979: pp. 3-4
2. Simkins & Hindson: op.cit.: Table IV, p. 10.
3. 'Formal' employment only.

FOOTNOTES

PART II: REPRODUCTION

Preamble

1. See, for instance, K. Hart: The 'informal sector' reconsidered, unpublished draft paper, Department of Anthropology, Yale University, New Haven, 1976: pp. 14-18; C. Moser: Informal sector or petty commodity production: dualism or dependence in urban development, World Development 6 (9/10), 1978: p. 1055 et seq.; N. Long & P. Richardson: Informal sector, petty commodity production, and the social relations of small-scale enterprises, in J. Clammer (ed): The new economic anthropology, Macmillan, 1978: pp. 182-183.

2. Of which the ILO Kenya report is perhaps the best known example: International Labour Office: Employment incomes and equality: a strategy for increasing productive employment in Kenya, Geneva, 1972.

3. Moser: op.cit. : p. 1056.

4. For example, O. Lebrun & C. Gerry: Petty producers and capitalism, Review of African Political Economy 3, 1975; C. Birkbeck: Self-employed proletarians in an informal factory: the case of Cali's garbage dump, World Development 6 (9/10), 1978; C Gerry: Petty production & capitalist production in Dakar: the crisis of the 'self-employed', World Development 6 (9/10), 1978; A. MacEwen Scott: Who are the self-employed?, in R. Bromley & C. Gerry (eds): Casual work and poverty in Third World cities, Wiley, 1979.

5. Moser: op.cit. : p. 1057

Reproduction of the labour force: 'informal' income-earning activity and the working class household in Soweto

1. Elements of this analysis have been derived from F. Edholm, O. Harris & K. Young: Conceptualising women, Critique of Anthropology 3 (9/10): Women's Issue, 1977: pp. 103-106.

2. In Yawitch's contribution to this part of our work - see below.

3. M. Lebowitz: Capital and the production of needs, Science and Society 41, 1977: p. 442. The quotation is taken from Marx: Grundrisse, Penguin/NLR, 1973: p. 287

4. Cf. B. Rowthorn: Marx's theory of wages, in Capitalism, Conflict & Inflation: essays in political economy, Lawrence & Wishart, 1980: pp. 217-219; & G. Kay: Development & Underdevelopment: a Marxist Analysis Macmillan, 1975: pp . 50-54.

5. See K. Marx: Capital V.I, Penguin/NLR, 1976: Chapter 25, particularly pp. 772-802.

TABLE 4: Unemployment rate calculations

	SAMPLE POPULATION	SAMPLE POPULATION <15	LOOTS[1] (POPULATION >15 ONLY)		SIMKINS[2]		CPS[3]	
			LFPR	ECONOMIC. ACTIVE	LFPR	ECONOMIC. ACTIVE	LFPR	ECONOMIC. ACTIVE
M	130	42	70,3%	62	49,39%	64	43,17%	56
F	138	42	49,5%	48	26,36%	36	20,41%	28
TOTAL	268	84	-	110	-	100	-	84
FORMAL EMPLOYMENT	74	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 4		32,1%		26,0%		11,9%
TOTAL REPORTED EMPLOYMENT	82	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 5		24,8%		18,0%		2,4%

NOTES:

1. Loots: op.cit. : Table 8, p. 14
2. Simkins: op.cit.: Table 5, p. 11
3. Republic of South Africa, Department of Statistics: Current population survey - Blacks, March 1980 (Statistical News Release 8 July 1980): Table 1, p. 3.
4. Based on 'formal' employment figure
5. Based on total reported employment figure.

TABLE 5: Comparison of 'average' actual individual wage levels with individual wage levels required to meet 'average' HSL & HEL.

	MEAN FIGURES	MEDIAN FIGURES
Household size	7,2	7,3
Household dependency ratio	4,4	4,6
No. employed per household	1,64	1,59
HSL	R201	R201
Individual wage required to meet HSL	R123	R127
HEL	R301	R301
Individual wage required to meet HEL	R184	R190
Actual individual wage	R143	R139

6. The process is an aspect of the tendency of the CMP to take pre-existing structures and institutions, such as the labour process and the state, initially as it finds them, and only gradually, as the sway of capital is deepened and extended, to work their transformation.

7. P. Smith: Domestic labour and Marx's theory of value, in A. Kuhn & A. Wolpe (eds): Feminism & Materialism: Women & Modes of Production RKP, 1978: p. 211

8. See R. McDonough & R. Harrison: Patriarchy & relations of production; & A. Kuhn: Structures of patriarchy and capital in the family, both in A. Kuhn & A. Wolpe (eds): op.cit.

9. Cf. B. Fine & L. Harris: Rereading Capital, Macmillan, 1979: p. 126, The notion of the 'social wage' was proposed by I. Gough: State expenditure in advanced capitalism, New Left Review 92, 1975, particularly p. 75 and p. 91; on the 'means of collective consumption', see M. Castells: City, Class & Power, Macmillan, 1978: pp. 15-36 & pp. 168-170.

10. K. Marx: op.cit. 1976: p. 1041; original emphasis.

11. A. Quijano Obregon: The marginal pole of the economy and the marginalised labour force, Economy & Society 3 (4) 1974, particularly pp. 405-415

12. J. Maree: The dimensions and causes of unemployment and underemployment in South Africa, S.A. Labour Bulletin 4 (4), 1978, particularly pp. 25-43.

13. F. Engels: The condition of the working class in England, Panther, 1969, p. 119. I am not advocating this as the necessary alternative to 'formalisation' of 'informal' activity.

14. This, surely, is what Lenin undertook in 'The development of capitalism in Russia' (Collected Works V III, Lawrence & Wishart, 1972), in response to a specific and current political issue - the Narodniks' programmatic idealisation of an already collapsing 'natural economy'. It would therefore be entirely contrary to the method that supported his analysis to propose a direct appropriation of the categories developed there. 'Petty commodity production' and small-scale distributive activities in Soweto in 1980 can, in no adequate formulation, be considered the unproblematic equivalents of the artisanal, handicraft and 'small commodity' production of late nineteenth century Russia.

15. See Matsetela's paper 'Petty commodity production: a Soweto case study', in Part I.

16. The empirical material presented here is derived from the preliminary analysis of a random sample survey of 70 households conducted in the suburb of Orlando East. Altogether, some 250 households distributed through six suburbs were surveyed between December 1979 and March 1980 and processing of the remaining bulk of the questionnaires is under way. The difficulties associated with this type of extensive study in the ghetto-like conditions which prevail in Soweto have reduced the number of immediately usable returns for the Orlando East sample from 70 to 37 (16 returns were inadequately completed, there were 10 refusals to be interviewed, 4 failures to contact the occupants of a house after repeated visits, and 3 stands were occupied by churches or shops). This large reduction in sample size inevitably reduces the representativeness of the results since an unknown bias may have been introduced by the high proportion of refusals and inadequately completed questionnaires. Relevant results are compared with the results of previous research in Tables 1, 2 & 3.

17. C. Wood: Structural change and household strategies: an integrated approach to rural migration in Latin America, Unpublished paper presented to the annual meeting of the Population Association of America, Denver, Colorado, April 1980: p. 10

18. A broadly sketched account of Soweto's development may be found in P.R.B. Lewis: A 'city' within a city - the creation of Soweto, Address delivered to the University of the Witwatersrand on 6 September 1966; subsequently Published in Witwatersrand: between past and future, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

19. In fact, the figures finally used were the mean of those published in the Institute's reports for October 1979 and April 1980, which bracketed, if not quite symmetrically, the period of the survey; see University of Port Elizabeth, Institute for Planning Research: The household subsistence level in the major urban areas of the Republic of South Africa: October 1977, Fact Paper No. 34; and April 1980, Fact Paper No. 36.

20. The HSL figures as published are based on a hypothetical 'black' (i.e. African) family of six: an adult man and woman, a boy aged 16-21, a girl aged 10-12, and two children of 7-9 years; see U.P.E., Institute for Planning Research: The household subsistence level in the major urban areas of the Republic of South Africa: October 1974, Research Report No. 14: p. 15.

21. On this, see E. Boddington: The participation of women in the South African labour force, Africa Perspective: Special issue on women, July 1979, particularly pp. 12-13.

22. U.P.E. Institute for Planning Research: op.cit. (Research Report no. 14): p. 15.

23. In relation to the Cape Town area, see D. Dewar: Metropolitan planning and income redistribution in Cape Town: the identification of some contextual realities and their implications for metropolitan planning, Occasional Paper No. 1, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Cape Town: p. 9

24. U.P.E. Institute for Planning Research: op.cit. (Research Report No. 14): p. 19.

25. Ibid: p. 82.

26. Despite the framing of the question, 'earnings' indicated by these people are in most cases, apparently the turnover or cost price figure rather than profit. The usefulness of this information in a study of the activities themselves is therefore limited.

27. It appears that, in a considerable number of cases, although people were asked to indicate their net income after deductions, the figures actually recorded were the gross wage or salary amounts. The effect of this would, of course, be to inflate the contribution of the 'formal' wage income to the household's standard of living to a degree consonaut with the general level of deductions. Given the predominantly low wage levels reported, this is unlikely to be substantial.

28. Marx: op.cit., 1976: p. 1068

29. C. Gerry & C Birkbeck: The petty commodity producer in Third World cities: petit bourgeois or disguised proletarian? To be published in B. Elliot & F. Bechhofer (eds): The petite bourgeoisie: comparative studies of the uneasy stratum, Macmillan, 1980(?) I am indebted to Chris Rogerson for access to a copy of the draft of this article.

30. E. Olin Wright: Class boundaries in advanced capitalist countries, New Left Review 98, 1976: p. 27 and p. 33.

31. Gerry & Birkbeck: op.cit. : p. 10

32. O. Lebrun & C. Gerry: Petty producers and capitalism, Review of African Political Economy 3, 1975

33. Gerry & Birkbeck: op.cit. : pp. 27-28; original emphasis.

34. Ibid: p. 39

35. Ibid: p. 56

36. P. Hirst: Althusser & the theory of ideology, Economy and Society 5 (4) 1976: p. 386

37. Ibid: p. 385

38. Quoted in Gerry & Birkbeck: op.cit. : p. 41

39. E.Laclau: Fascism and ideology, in Politics and ideology in Marxist theory, Verso, 1977: p. 102. 'Interpellation' or 'hailing' is a concept derived by Laclau from Althusser:

> If.... the basic function of all ideology is to constitute individuals as subjects, and if through interpellation individuals live their conditions of existence as if they were the autonomous principle of the latter - as if they, the determinate constituted the determinant - it is clear that the unity of the distinct aspects of an ideological system is given by the specific interpellation which forms the axis and organizing principle of all ideology. (Ibid: p. 101;emphasis added).

40. Gerry & Birkbeck: op.cit. : p. 38

41. Cf. G. Maré: Ideology and ideological struggle: hegemony, liberation and revolution, Unpublished paper, Development Studies Group, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1980.

42. Wood: op.cit.:p. 8

43. Cf. W.J. Goode: The family, Prentice-Hall Foundations of Modern Sociology Series, 1964: pp. 2-3

44. It is possible that development in this area was largely pre-empted by the polemical claims of Marx & Engels that the working class family had already ceased to exist in the mid-nineteenth century (through the universal proletarianization of men, women and children), while the bourgeois family merely constituted, in the last analysis, a property relation. As Jane Humphries has pointed out, Marx's relegation of responsibility for "... the maintenance and reproduction of the working class... to the workers' drives for self preservation and propagation " (Marx: op.cit., 1976: p. 718) has the effect that ".... the working class family in Marx is like the firm in neo-classical economics

- a black box whose inner workings are simultaneously neglected and mystified." (Humphries: Class struggle and the persistence of the working class family, Cambridge Journal of Economics 1 (3), 1977: p. 243).

TOWARDS A CONCEPTUALISATION OF WOMEN AND THE 'INFORMAL SECTOR'

FOOTNOTES

1. See the article in WIP 9 Aug. 1979 "Defining the Issues: Towards a Methodology of Women" for a detailed analysis of the problems of radical feminism.

2. Cock, J. 'Disposable Nannies? Some questions on the role of domestic servants in the political economy of South Africa". In forthcoming Africa Perspective

3. Yawitch, J "Black women in South Africa: Capitalism employment and reproduction" Africa Perspective Dissertation no. 2 p. 8

4. Shindler, J "Labour saving appliances and domestic service" in SALB Vol. 6 no. 1 July 1980 p. 24.

5. Through the means of the 1952 Extension of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act.

6. Through the provisions of the Urban Areas Act.

7. Over the past year or so there has been increasing pressure to do so, especially through lobbying by the Soweto Taveners Assocation, led by Lucky Michaels who runs the Pelican Nighclub in Soweto.

8. The division was very rigid in the areas of Lebowa where fieldwork was conducted early in 1980, on issues relating to agricultural production, unemployment, subsistence.

9. The information here has been gathered in the course of a series of conversations with the women described in Soweto over the period from June to July 1980

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF POVERTY

1. Meillassoux, C. 'From reproduction to production' Economy and Society 1, 1, 1972, fn.12.

2. Lewis, Oscar, 'The culture of poverty' Scientific American 215 (4): 1966: 19-25. Also see La Vida, New York, Random House, 1968.

3. Lewis, O 'Reply to Valentine's criticism' Current Anthropology 10, 1969: 189

4. Glazer, M & D.P. Moynihan Beyond the Melting Pot Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1963.

5. Valentine, C.A. 'Culture and poverty: critique and counter-proposals' Current Anthropology 10, 1969: 181-201

6. Hammond, J.L. & B. Hammond. The Town Labourer, 1760-1832: The New Civilization London, Longman, Green & Co. 1920: 247

7. Mayer, P. Townsmen or Tribesmen Cape Town, O.U.P. 1961

8. Mitchell, J.C. in Banton, M (ed) The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies London, Tavistock, 1966

9. Southall, A 'Introductory summary' in Southall, A. (ed) Social Change in Modern Africa London, O.U.P. 1961: 1-66

10. Denis, N. Henriques, F and C. Slaughter Coal is our Life London, Tavistock 1969 fn p. 117: "Serious setbacks have been suffered, by friendly societies since the creation by the Government in 1946 of its own machinery to administer an 'all in' scheme of National Insurance. Membership of friendly societies fell by nearly 2,000,000, i.e. 21% from 1947 to 1952"

11. Kurtz, D.V. 'The rotating credit associations: an adaptation of poverty' Human Organisation 32, 1973: 49-58

12. ibid : 51

13. ibid : 51

14. Geertz, C 'The rotating credit associations; a 'middle rung' in development' Economic Development and Cultural Change 1, 1962: 241-63

15. Ardener, S 'A comparative study of rotating credit associations', Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 1964: 201

16. Kuper, H & S. Kaplan, "Voluntary associations in an urban township" African Studies, 3, 1944: 178

17. Hellman, E Bantu Studies 8, : 50; Phillips n.d.: 293 also uses the term 'stockfair' (Phillips, R The Bantu in the City)

18. Kuper and Kaplan, op.cit: 179

19. ibid : 180

20. Kuper and Kaplan, op.cit.: 178. We have conducted a much wider survey of Soweto, but only the Meadowlands data are thus far complete.

21. Kramer J.Y. Self-Help in Soweto. Mutual Aid Societies in a South African City. Dept. of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, Norway, 1975: 41.

22. vide, e.g. Smiles, S Thrift 1875

23. Kramer, op.cit: 42

24. Kuper & Kaplan op.cit. 181-2

25. Kramer op.cit.

26. Kuper & Kaplan op.cit.: 178

27. Hellman, E Rooiyard, a Sociological Survey of an Urban Native Slum Yard Cape Town, O.U.P. 1948: 96

28. Kramer op.cit. : 64

29. See, e.g. Brandel-Syrier, M. Reeftown Elite (1971), du Toit, B 'Cooperative institutions and culture change in South Africa' Journal of Asian and African Studies, 4, 1969: 275-99; Kuper and Kaplan op.cit. and Pauw, B The Second Generation O.U.P. 1963: 173-4

30. Gosden, P.H. J.H. Self-Help:Voluntary Associations in the 19th Century London, B.T. Batsford Ltd. 1973: 2

31. Gosden op.cit. : 14

32. Webb, S & B. The History of Trade Unionism London, Longmans, Green & Co. 1920: 620-21

33. Kiernan, J.P. 'Poor and puritan; an attempt to view Zionism as a collective response to urban poverty' African Studies vol 36, 1977: 31-42.

34. Clarke, J, S. Hall, T Jefferson, B Roberts. 'Subcultures, cultures and class' Resistance Through Rituals (ed) Hall, S and T. Jefferson, London, Hutchinson, 1976: 10

35. Van Onselen, C Chibaro. African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933 London, Pluto Press 1976: 243-244

36. Clarke et al op.cit: 12

37. An Irish word, meaning a place where illegal liquor is brewed and sold (Informant: Fergus Slattery)

38. Gosden, op.cit : 22

39. Marx, K 'The eighteenth Brumaire' in Marx and Engels Selected Works vol 1 1951 : 225.