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BLACK PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF OPEN SCHOOLS

Ntombifuthi Umlaw

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Johannesburg, 1993

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.



Ntombifuthi Umlaw

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate and describe black parents' understanding and experiences of the private open school system in the Witwatersrand. Using a framework of multipluralism, the intention of the study is two-fold. Firstly, it explores the various factors which enhance or inhibit the open school choice. Secondly, it establishes the role of black parents within the open school community, as well as their role within their own black communities.

The information required to develop the comprehensive survey questionnaire was elicited through a pilot study. The research data was generated using structured interviews from a sample of Belgravia Convent parents.

The results show that the reasons which parents give for the choice of open school education are informed by a number of identities. The study identifies these as: social class, racial, religious and geographic identities. Gender identity was found to have no influence. The motivators for the open school choice are not restricted to the economic discourse, but are also extended beyond the economic boundaries to include aspects which are located within the political, racial, religious and geographic discourses. These multifarious identities are found to articulate with one another in complementary and contradictory ways when motivating the parents' choice of open school education. An example of such a contradictory relationship is when the

motivators for the open school choice - the escape from the inferior standard of township education, and the need for better education, the latter being driven by the middle class aspiration of upward mobility - contradict the need to maintain racial unity within the black communities, as well as with the desire of not losing their cultural heritage. In other words, the low standard of township education together with the social class status of parents stands at a tension with both the political and cultural identities of parents. Hence contradictions should be taken into account when analysing issues of choice.

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CHAPTER 2 - STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF 'SOCIAL CLASS'

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the theoretical premises of the present study. The study is grounded in the approach of Marxist historical materialism. The chapter begins by an analysis of Poulantzas's theories and their application to the question of the socio-economic status of parents. This will then be followed by a theoretical analysis of class consciousness.

2.2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Cross (1986), in his examination of open schools and their relation to notions of social class, argues that the schools are usually attended by the 'privileged elite' who satisfy the entry requirements of these schools and form a 'cohesive social group'. The study seeks to examine the nature of this grouping. In addressing this issue, I will proceed by defining social classes by referring to the conceptions developed by Poulantzas and Wright.

Before providing a theorization of the middle class, it is important to note that one cannot work on the assumption that parents of open schools are the 'privileged elite' since there is the possibility of finding a cross-section of parents who are middle class or working class. On that score, it becomes important to investigate the class composition of parents in these schools.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research is to investigate and describe the views and perceptions that black parents have of open schools. The research further aims to investigate the relationship between parents and the open school community. This will be investigated by looking at the involvement of parents in these communities.

1.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

What do open schools mean to black parents?

1.2.1 Subsidiary questions

What is the socio-economic status of black open school parents?

How does the socio-economic status of the parents relate to their racial and gender identities?

How do open school parents view township schools?

What factors have led parents to choose open school education?

What roles do parents play in black communities and in open school communities?

1.3 DEFINITIONS

1.3.1 Open school

The name 'open' is an indication of the manner in which these schools operate. Their criteria of admission are not restricted in any way by factors of race, religion, or ethnic background. In this study, 'open schools' are taken to be private open schools, government schools only became 'open' (Model B, Model C, etc.) after the period covered by this research, i.e. in January 1992.

1.3.2 Black

This denotes people of African descent, including in this instance all the groups other than white.

1.3.3 Township

This term refers to a black residential area.

1.4 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The past few years have seen a tremendous increase of interest in open school education by the government, educationists and the media. The private open schools are acknowledged as one of the major contributors to the education system of this country, and have played a vital role in the South African context (Christie and Butler, 1986; Cross, 1986; Christie, 1989, 1990). The political, social and economic factors peculiar to the South African situation have contributed to the growth of these schools. As a result, the role that the open schools could play in the future has been raised.

1.4.1 The size and growth of the open school system

The size, rapid growth and dynamic nature of the private open schools are sufficient to evoke the interests and expectations of educationists. Estimates of their contribution to the education systems of this country have been extensively researched (Christie, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1992; Freer, 1992; Muller, 1992; Randall, 1980; Gaganakis 1990). Accurate estimation of the actual numbers of people involved in this type of education is as difficult as gauging its educational contribution, and is further complicated by its fluid nature. When measured against state education, open schools are characterised by their high fees and difficulty of entry (Cross, 1986). In South Africa, this type of schooling is further characterised by its multicultural, multi-ethnic and multiracial composition (Gaganakis, 1990). Within the black population group,

while some parents use open schools as an interim alternative, given the conditions of the education system designed for them, others remain in black schools in the townships. It then becomes questionable as to whether these alternatives in educational provision create divisions within the black population.

The increase in the number of blacks who attend these schools is due not only to the state of township education, but also to other reasons. For instance, the easing up of government regulations is cited as one of the factors that have led to the expansion of these schools (Christie, 1990; Cross, 1987). One of the questions which this research asks is 'which parents choose open school education and what are their motivations for this choice of education?'.

1.4.2 Open school clientele

In his examination of open schools and their relation to notions of social class, Cross (1986) feels that the schools are usually attended by the 'privileged elite' who satisfy the entry requirements of these schools, and thus form a particular class. However, estimates of the growth of these schools, and the disparities in their fee structures (Christie and Butler, 1986) lead one to question Cross' arguments. Similarly, the study by Christie and Butler (1986) tends to reinforce the optimism felt about the expansion of these schools to reach a broader cross-section of the black population. It is within this framework that an empirical evaluation of the clientele of these schools

became necessary. Definitions of this clientele will include an examination of their socio-economic position, as well as the investigation of their perceived social identity.

1.4.3 Acknowledgement of blacks by open schools

The constraints on curriculum change that are found in open schools, as well as the impact that the presence of black students has had on the curriculum of open schools, are seen as key factors which influence the degree of acceptance and satisfaction with these schools (Christie, 1989). This is seen against the fact that these schools were initially white schools, and that their geographic location is not always supportive of change (Christie, 1990).

Christie 1989 challenged the Catholic Department of schools (1977) which had called for the 'introduction of African languages, and African studies'. She found that open schools had the tendency of 'assimilating' black students into existing white school processes. At that time, open schools had not modified their practices to acknowledge the presence of black students. From the documented increasing number of black people that are drawn into these schools (Muller, 1990; Gaganakis, 1990), it is assumed that their presence will be acknowledged by these schools, and will influence the way these schools are run.

1.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Christie (1990) discussed the emergence, growth and practices of open schools in their historical contexts. She focused on the structural context, particularly on the educational and legal structures within which the schools operate; and on the resources such as teachers, finances and students. The community of parents is both a resource and a support structure, particularly for effective learning to take place. The community within which open schools are embedded and dependent is an equally important supporting resource. Little cognisance is however taken of the relationship with and the support afforded by the parent community.

Because the parents live within their own black community which is different from that of the school, their contribution to how the school operates should be much more than just sending the child to the school. In order for the relationship to be meaningful, it is important for the school to know about the needs, beliefs, values and expectations of the parent community.

There is a paucity of information regarding these issues within the open schools. In general, open schools in South Africa know very little about the social dynamics of this community, despite the fact that it is one of their clientele. Any insight or new knowledge about black parents is important from both a strategic and operational point of view.

1.6 THE TOPICS IDENTIFIED FOR INVESTIGATION IN THE LITERATURE

The current research investigates parental understanding and experiences of the open school system. As a starting point, therefore, it is necessary to examine the definition of social classes in order to understand the class position of black parents in open schools. One feature was deemed important in this connection, namely, whether definitions of class position are affected by other social factors which influence parental experiences.

Examination of the consciousness of parents with regard to workplace issues is required to explain the social context of their perceptions. It is not expected that their perceptions would be limited to class issues due to the mingling of other subjectivities with the parents class subjectivity. This indicates a further need to investigate the effects of race and gender on consciousness.

The above areas will provide insight into the consciousness of parents when it comes to the question of open schools. The first question to be investigated is whether their perceptions of open schools can be reduced to their class position.

The research, being South African based and focused on black parents, needs to take into account the peculiar circumstances of this situation. Firstly, an examination of the state of black education and the state of the black communities is required. Secondly, it is important to seek out indicators of black open school parents' attitudes towards their communities. At the same time, attitudes towards open school communities are sought.

1.6.1 Breakdown of chapters

The chapters in this study will be divided as follows.

Chapter one is the introductory chapter.

A survey of literature on social class status will be dealt with in chapter two. In this chapter, the positions of Poulantzas and Wright on classes will be examined in order to determine whether their arguments are economistic or not.

In chapter three, literature on individual consciousness will be examined in the light of both economistic and non-economistic positions. The emphasis in this chapter will, however, be on the latter position, since an attempt will be made to link it with a pluralist understanding of consciousness as opposed to an economistic one.

Literature on the relationship between open schools and the open school community, as well as between the open schools and the black community, will be examined in chapter four.

Details of the research methodology of the study will be explained in chapter five. The empirical findings of the study will be presented in chapters six and seven.

Chapter eight is the concluding chapter.

1.7 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

The research will tend towards a sociological description of the perceptions of parents of open schools. The applicability of these perceptions will be essential to educational issues, i.e. assisting in interventions for the further development of open schools.

1.8 THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

As a consequence of limited resources, the research was confined to surveying parents at Belgravia school only. This calls for caution in applying the results to parents of children at other open schools, who may live in a community of a different social and geographic setting.

2.3 STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMATIC OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

Poulantzas and Wright suggest that the way to understand the social class status of middle class agents is through an analysis of their structural class determination. Such a structural analysis focuses on the objective conditions of the economic sphere and on the social relations which necessarily result from these objective conditions. Social classes are seen as objectively determined by the structural relationships of exploitation and domination: economically by the ownership of the means of production and by the division between productive and unproductive labour; politically and ideologically by the division between domination and subordination. This section will address these aspects in more detail.

Marxist structural theory defines social class primarily in terms of its location in the economic sphere, i.e. in terms of property relations. According to Poulantzas, although this sphere constitutes the necessary determinant of social classes, it does not provide a sufficient basis for this purpose (1975: 14). Political and ideological determinants that are a constituent part of the economic sphere also have an important role to play in this regard. This means that a series of social practices within the economic sphere contribute towards defining social classes.

the middle class and working class are unified by the phenomenon of wage labour, where can the line of demarcation be drawn between these two classes? The solution to this lies in Poulantzas's use of the productive and unproductive aspects of the economic sphere. Productive labour is defined as 'labour that creates surplus value' (Marx, *Capital*, vol. I: 1039). It gives rise to the relation of exploitation (through the creation of surplus value) within economic relations.

Following on Marx's definition of productive labour, Poulantzas argues that agents who are engaged in the process of material production as well as in the creation of surplus value are productive (Poulantzas, 1975: 221). For Poulantzas, however, there can be no departure from this productive labour definition except in the case of engineers and technicians. He uses the concept of socialized labour to explain the class location of technicians and engineers (Poulantzas, 1975 : 232).

In a socialized labour process, labour assumes a cooperative character and combines different labour powers within production into a collective labour. Workers such as engineers and technicians are also involved in productive labour. As part of a socialised labour process, they are also involved in material production. Their labour power falls under the category of productive labour, which is equivalent to saying that their labour produces surplus value.

In this sense, the economic boundaries of the working class are extended to

own, some social positions may be located in more than one class (of the two basic classes of capitalist relations) simultaneously. The class character of such social positions is formed by the fundamental classes in relation to which they are polarized. He refers to such social positions as 'contradictory locations within class relations' (1978: 30).

Wright, following on Poulantzas, distinguishes between:

* economic ownership, and
* possession.

Wright refers to possession as the control over plant and equipment together with corresponding supervisory powers over labour, whereas economic ownership refers to the capacity to make long-term strategic decisions especially over investments and the allocation of resources (1978: 46).

Unlike Poulantzas, who articulates the concept of exploitation with the phenomenon of ownership of the means of production, Wright focuses on the organization of the process of production. He looks at domination relations that control the social division of labour an ive rise to various forms of domination relations within production.

Wright's social classes are defined by polarizations along the three criteria of control over investments; over the physical means of production; and over labour. The location of workers and capitalists with regard to the criteria of

If taken in this sense, social classes are defined by their place in the economic structure which constitutes economic, political and ideological relations and practices. This place is what Poulantzas refers to as the structural determination of class (1975: 16). Poulantzas however argues that even though social classes are determined within the economic sphere, their definition is not limited to this sphere (1975: 28). He shows that in their constitution as social classes, the superstructure does have an effect on their formation. This determination by instances of the superstructure is organized through the state apparatuses:

> The structural determination of classes is of course not restricted to places in the production process alone (to an economic situation of 'classes-in-themselves'), but extends to all levels of the social division of labour, so that the state apparatuses enter into the process of determining classes as the embodiment and materialization of ideological and political relations. It is in this way, through their role of reproducing political and ideological relations, that these apparatuses, and particularly the ideological state apparatuses, enter into the reproduction of the places which define social classes. (1975: 29)

One can use the state apparatuses to explain why, in the South African case, one finds racism (which is an instance of the superstructure) exerting its influences on economic activities. The implications of these political and ideological conditions on the structural location of the middle class will be shown in section 2.6.

The question that can be posed at this stage is: what qualifies the economic sphere? Both Poulantzas and Wright define the economic sphere with reference to the process of production, and the distribution of agents into social classes on the basis of the relations of production (1975: 17-18; 1978: 47).

By the process of production, Poulantzas refers to the transformation of nature into a commodity (1975: 18). Marx explains the 'process of production' as:

> a process between man and nature, a process by which man, through his own actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism between himself and nature. (Marx, *Capital*, vol. I: 283)

This process involves productive and unproductive labour and it is constituted by the relations of production (Marx, *Capital*, vol. I: 1038).

The relations that constitute the production process are two-fold:

* the relationship between the agents of production and the means of production (property relation); and
* the relationship between the agents of production (social relation).

Poulantzas, (1975: 18) and Wright, (1978: 46-53) use both property and social relations to explain the nature of the relations that take place within production. They believe that the process of production and the distribution of agents into social classes is insufficiently explained by the property relations, in that not all agents who do not own the means of production belong to the working

class position. Some agents do not own the means of production, yet do not belong to the working class but to the middle class. This is why they resort to using political and ideological relations in conjuction with the economic relations to locate social class agents structurally in the economic sphere. To provide better explanations of the relations that exist within property relations, they introduce the distinction between economic ownership and possession of the means of production.

2.4 PROPERTY RELATIONS

Poulantzas uses the distinction between economic ownership and possession to explain the nature of relations that exist within the process of production. Unlike the capitalist who owns the means of production and exploits the direct producers (non-owners) by extorting surplus labour from them, the worker does not own any means of production and must sell his labour power for a wage.

In order to distinguish finely between all the agents who do not own any means of production, Poulantzas introduces the dimension of 'possession'. By possession, Poulantzas and Wright (1975: 18; 1985: 46) refer to the control over the actual operation of the means of production, or the capacity to put the means of production into operation. They subdivide such control into the control over the operation of the physical means of production (plant and equipment), and control over labour within production.

Poulantzas argues that not all non-owners of the means of production have the power to control the operation of the means of production. The division which one finds within this group of non-owners will become significant when the question of the middle classes is addressed in subsequent sections.

2.5 SOCIAL RELATIONS

According to Abercrombie and Urry (1983), the location of agents within the process of production (what they refer to as 'occupations') does not sufficiently explain the concept of social class. The technical division of labour refers primarily to 'job tasks' or to 'occupational designations', which is not synonymous with places of social classes (1983: 109).

They argue that the concept of 'social class', or the concept of 'place', is best understood when a reference is made to the social relations at work:

> Classes [are] constituted by places and places [are] constituted by social relations of the labour process, not by the technical division of labour. (1983: 110)

Like Abercrombie and Urry, Poulantzas also shows that the places of social classes are not only limited to the technical division of labour. He argues that social classes are defined by the places created by political and ideological relations in the process of production:

> In the place of the social classes within the relations of production themselves, it is the social division of labour, in the form that this is given by the presence of political and ideological relations actually within the production process, which dominates the technical division of labour. (1975: 21)

The labour process requires political and ideological practices of control, which are constituted by the relation of domination. The position of those agents who do not exercise political and ideological domination falls outside the boundaries of the capitalist class (1975: 16).

The social formation, which is constructed of historically specific combinations of modes of production and relations of production (Wright, 1985: 11) (e.g. capitalist modes and relations of production), distinguishes the two basic classes with reference to their objective location in the economic sphere. Economic ownership and possession, and political and ideological domination define the dominant class. If exclusion from economic ownership and possession define the dominated class, then what class would be defined by exclusion from economic ownership, while reserving the power of possession? Poulantzas argues that this class can be defined within the context of a 'combined social process' (1975: 226). In *Capital*, vol. I, Marx defines the socialization of labour:

> In considering the labour process, we began by treating it in the abstract, independently of its historical forms, as a process between

> man and Nature. In so far as the labour process is purely individual, the same worker unites in himself all the functions that later on become separated. When an individual appropriates natural objects for his own livelihood, he alone supervises his own activities. Later on he is supervised by others. The solitary man cannot operate upon nature without calling his own muscles into play under the control of his own brain. Just as head and hand belong together in the system of nature, so in the labour process mental and physical labour are united. Later on they become separate; and this separation develops into a hostile antagonism. The product is transformed from the direct product of the individual into a social product, the joint product of a collective labourer, i.e. a combination of workers. In order to work productively, it is no longer necessary for the individual to put his hand to the object, it is sufficient for him to be an organ of the collective labourer and to perform any one of its subordinate functions. (*Capital*, vol. I: 643-644)

Labour ceases to be the 'isolated labour of independent producers', but incorporates the cooperation between agents. Effective cooperation has to be directed, controlled and overseen by agents, who possess the means of production. This then introduces the concept of the middle classes, who play a prominent role in directing, controlling and overseeing socialized labour (Poulantzas, 1975: 227-228). The operation of political and ideological conditions is contained in Marx's analysis of the work done by middle class agents:

> The labour of control is naturally required wherever the direct process of production assumes the form of a combined social process, and not of the isolated labour of independent producers. All labour in which many individuals co-operate necessarily requires a commanding will to co-ordinate and unify the process, and functions which apply not to partial operations but to the total activity of the workshop. (*Capital*, vol. II: 376)

One has then to define the structural determination of these classes, which have not been defined by the foregoing objective conditions.

2.6 STRUCTURAL LOCATION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

Theorists such as Carchedi, Poulantzas and Wright provide theoretical analysis of the structural location of the middle class within the process of production. These writers define the middle class by establishing economic, ideological and political criteria that distinguish working class from non-working class locations.

2.6.1 Poulantzas' theorization of the middle class

According to Poulantzas, the middle class does not belong to the bourgeoisie since they do not have economic ownership. They do, however, exercise control over the labour process. They are a part of wage labour since their labour power is exchanged for a wage (refer back to section 2.3). Seeing that

include the wage-earning positions of engineers and technicians. Poulantzas however cannot allow that. He addresses this problem by refuting an economistic conception of the production process:

> Technicians and engineers tend to form part of the capitalist productive labour because they directly valorize capital in the production of surplus value. If they do not as a group belong to the working class, this is because in their place within the division of labour they maintain political and ideological relations of subordination of the working class to capital (the division of mental and manual labour), and because this aspect of their class determination is the dominant one. (1975: 242)

Their activities centre around ideological control which is sanctioned by and related to their monopolization and secrecy of knowledge (1975: 237). It is from monopolized knowledge that the working class is excluded. Thus, for Poulantzas, this ideological relation of domination and subordination within a socialized labour process is used for demarcating the working class from the middle class.

In order to locate the middle class within the economic sphere, I argued that the process of production has to be clarified. In the first section of this chapter, production was explained as consisting of the technical and social division of labour. I further showed that the existence of political and ideological preconditions within the social division of labour, and the dominance of these over the technical division of labour, have implications for the places of social agents.

With the development of a socialized labour process, the middle class controls and coordinates the labour process. Taken in this sense, they are seen as performing a capitalist function, but the actual place they occupy in the economic relations does not warrant them the bourgeois status. Since the place of capital is characterized by the fact that it combines both economic ownership and possession of the means of production, the middle class is excluded from this place because they lack economic ownership.

2.6.2 Wright's theorization of the middle class

Wright has reservations on the way in which Poulantzas analyses the position of the working class and the bourgeoisie. According to Wright, Poulantzas regards economic ownership and possession as 'all-or-nothing' categories for defining the two classes (1975: 229). The problem arises when an agent occupies a position characterized by possession but not by economic ownership.

Wright argues that there are positions in the social division of labour which are 'objectively contradictory'. Agents who are excluded from any economic ownership, but yet have possession of the means of production, would constitute such a 'contradictory' category (Wright, 1978: 30).

He argues that instead of conceiving social positions as located within distinct and particular classes, and thus having a coherent class character of their

control takes the form of a clear polarization. Full control in respect of all three dimensions locates an agent in the bourgeoisie, while total lack of control locates him/her in the proletariat. Attenuated control in respect of any of the three criteria leads, according to Wright, to a contradictory location (1978: 53).

Wright argues that the performance of different capitalist functions is carried out at different levels in industries. At these levels, control ranges from a scale of full, through partial, to minimal (1978: 53). Hence the levels of control possessed by an agent at a particular level within the hierarchy, combined with the economic relation of ownership, determines the contradictory class location of an agent.

The class location of agents who occupy professional positions such as teachers or doctors is characterized as contradictory because, on the one hand, they are proletarian in the sense that they are separated from their means of production. They have to sell their labour power and are controlled by capital. On the other hand, they are petty-bourgeoisie because they have real control over what they produce and how they produce it. The dominant relation that defines their position does not include control over the operation of the physical means of production, nor does it include the control over labour. It rather incorporates the real control over one's own immediate labour process (1985: 50). For instance, in the teaching profession, the content of a structured syllabus is constituted through principles and rules that are not controlled by teachers themselves. Rather, they are in control of activities in

their classrooms. In other words, this is what Shalem (1992) refers to as "claims of possession - 'your classroom', 'my area'" (1992: 316). These 'claims of possession' are equivalent to the control that teachers have over their immediate labour process as opposed to the lack of control of physical means of production. Wright refers to these positions as semi-autonomous class locations. They involve 'self-direction', which is 'the ability to put one's own ideas into practice within work' (1985: 51), and this depends on the monopolisation of knowledge.

2.7 SUMMARY

To define social classes within the process of production, one has to consider the economic, ideological and political relations of this process. For middle class definitions, Poulantzas and Wright lay emphasis on the social relations that are found within production. These relations become significant when the process of production assumes a socialized form i.e., a collective form. It is within a socialized labour process that political and ideological relations of domination demarcate middle class positions from working class positions. Following from Wright and Poulantzas, the consciousness of agents who are structurally located within the middle class position will be examined in the next chapter. Considerations of consciousness will however be examined in a non-reductionist way. The social identity of middle class agents will be mapped against the arguments of Laclau, Mouffe and Wolpe, which will also be outlined in the next chapter.

treating ideology in terms of the class belonging of its elements. This is clearly evident in the formation of the middle class ideological sub-ensemble through a fusion of bourgeois and working class ideological elements. The weakness of this formulation is the neglect of non-class ideological elements such as the racial and gender elements. The combination of these non-class elements with the ideological elements of the dominant classes has been marginalized to such an extent that the explanation of the ideological structure is done only in class terms. (Jessop, 1985: 209-210)

3.3.2 Wright's Approach to Consciousness

In his recent work (1985), Wright applies fixed statistical procedures to the study of the relation between structure and consciousness (1985: 161). He conceptualizes the relation between structures and consciousness in a deterministic way. To him, consciousness specifically refers to 'those aspects of consciousness with a distinctive class content' (ibid: 246). By class content he refers to:

> those aspects of consciousness which are implicated in intentions, choices and practices which have 'class pertinent effects' in the world, effects on how individuals operate within a given structure of class relations. (ibid: 246)

According to Poulantzas, only the class ideologies of the bourgeoisie and the working class provide ideologies with a coherent, comprehensive structure (1975: 287).

Therefore, in order to understand Poulantzas' definition of consciousness, one has to start by establishing the class ideologies of these classes (i.e. the bourgeoisie and the working class). One then is led to question the ideology of the middle classes. Poulantzas concedes that their intermediary class situation results in incoherent ideological elements which cannot be developed into a systematic ideological structure (ibid: 287). He, however, argues that such classes can develop 'ideological sub-ensembles' which would be constructed from a fusion of ideological elements drawn from the two dominant classes but adapted to their specific class aspirations. Poulantzas explains middle class ideology in terms of its class belonging, and does not incorporate the effects of non-class factors:

> Afraid of proletarianization below, attracted to the bourgeoisie above, the middle class often aspires to promotion, to a career, to upward social mobility, that is, to becoming bourgeois by way of transfer of the best and more capable.(1975: 291)

Poulantzas' work is a sincere effort to understand the relationship that exists between the economic relations (particularly at the level of political and ideological relations within the economic sphere), and the ideological level of a social formation. He does not, however, retreat from the problematic of

In reviewing *Classes*, Carcherdi (1986) argues that Wright's analysis of consciousness does not explain consciousness in terms of the effects of the concrete context of individuals:

> consciousness should thus be seen as something in which it is the character of the whole which gives meaning to the parts. (1986: 206)

Consciousness which is derived from the 'whole', (i.e., the context in which individuals are a part), is shared by a number of individuals. Carchedi's alternative explains shared consciousness, which is opposed to Wright's acontextual and individual consciousness as:

> searching the dominant forms of consciousness in a specific situation, those forms which are shared, in a variety of individual ways, by a number of individuals sufficient to make of those consciousnesses social phenomena, social forces. (Carchedi, 1986: 206)

The 'specific situation' or 'concrete historical context' from which Wright searches consciousness is the social class position of individuals. According to Carchedi, positions within the economic sphere determine consciousness, any changes in class consciousness have to relate to changes in class positions (Carchedi, 1986: 205). If it can be argued that changes in social class positions are not reflected in changes in consciousness, then Wright would have to resort to using non-class factors to explain such an inconsistency.

3.4.1 Laclau on ideology

In Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, (1977), Laclau contests Poulantzas' structuring of ideology, i.e. explaining ideology in terms of a direct correspondence between ideological elements and class belonging (1977: 99). This, according to Laclau, leads Poulantzas to postulate 'paradigmatic ideologies peculiar to each class', which are the bourgeoisie and the working classes, and not the petty bourgeoisie:

> As for the petty bourgeoisie, since it is not one of the basic classes in social formations dominated by the capitalist mode of production, its ideology can comprise 'elements' incorporated into the ideological discourse of the dominant class. We can see that the discrimination of 'elements' in terms of their class belonging, and the abstract postulation of pure ideologies, are mutually dependent aspects. (1977: 94)

The ideology of the petty bourgeoisie emanates from the class elements of the dominant classes. It has no paradigmatic ideology perculiar to its class *per se*:

> The only real class ideologies in a capitalist social formation are those of the two basic classes in irreconcilable opposition: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. (Poulantzas, 1975: 287)

Laclau further contests Poulantzas' proposition that particular ideas and concepts belong exclusively to one particular class.

CHAPTER 3 - CONSCIOUSNESS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present section will establish whether an understanding of individual consciousness can be explained by the activities of the economic sphere, or by a combination of these with a multiplicity of practices such as political, religious, cultural, etc., of a historically specific social formation. If understood within the former context, then our understanding of consciousness can be said to be economistic. The problem is whether an economistic model alone serves to explain consciousness formation. If not, can a pluralist explanation be used to establish individual consciousness? An understanding of the relationship that exists between the various levels of a social formation will be required for a pluralist explanation of consciousness.

Within the base/superstructure problematic, the economistic debate has moved from Marx's earlier conceptualization of the spheres of production and reproduction as operating within the framework of 'expressive totality' (Hall: 48) (which reduces the explanation social phenomena to economic activities), to the recognition of the specificity and 'autonomy' of each level within a social formation (p.49).

3.2 BACKGROUND TO THE BASE/SUPERSTRUCTURE PROBLEMATIC

An understanding of the structure of a capitalist social formation is located within the base/superstructure debate. This debate examines the role of the economic base as the determining force of social activities, which neglects the influence other levels of a social formation. These will be investigated below.

3.2.1 Marx's understanding of the base/superstructure problematic

Marx's formulations in both the German Ideology and the Preface to a Critique of Political Economy exhibit what would be identified as the traces of historicism, defined as the determining primacy being given to the economic base, whereby the other levels of a social formation are seen to develop in close correspondence to it (Hall: 48). The term 'expressive totality' has been used by Hall to define the relationship between the economic structure and the different levels which form part of the superstructures. 'Expressive totality' explains how the economic base reflects the practices that take place in the superstructural level of a social formation. In both texts, Marx argues that there is a direct correspondence between the economic base and the levels of the superstructure:

> The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the

> contrary, their social being determines their consciousness. (Preface to a critique of Political Economy: 84)

Marx sees the interaction between the levels of a social formation as determined by the economic structure, and this leads to an economistic understanding of a social formation.

It was against this expressive nature of a social formation that Althusser elaborated on the theory of base/superstructure. He conceives of a social formation as composed of different practices - the economic, political and ideological - each of which has its inner constitution, its own specificity and its own dynamic and relative autonomy from the others (cited in Hall: 68).

The starting point at which the relative autonomy and effectivity of the superstructures can be unravelled is an understanding of the 'necessary complexity of the social formations of advancing capitalism and of the relations between its different levels' (Hall: 56). In reviewing *Capital*, Hall shows that the relations that appear in the sphere of exchange are, on the one hand, the 'real' social relations found in capitalism. These relations are 'real' in the sense that there exists a labour market where labour power is bought and sold, where commodities exchange against money (Hall: 62). On the other hand, they actually 'mask' the exploitative relations of capitalist production:

> The sphere of exchange masks what founds it and makes it possible; the generation and extraction of the surplus in the sphere of capitalist production. (Hall: 62)

The sphere of exchange 'appears' to be the level where individuals gain their perceptions and experiences of capitalism. Since individuals gain their eve day 'common sense' awareness of capitalist social relations in this sphere of exchange, can one argue that this awareness forms the basis within which their consciousness can be established?

The ideological and political notions of freedom and equality are affected in the sphere of exchange by the exploitative relation. In other words, the free will exercised by individuals upon entering the exchange relations can be understood as an expression of their political and ideological thinking (or common sense notions) which form a part of the superstructures. Hall, however, argues that the effectivity of the ideological and political superstructures is experienced in the way that social relations of exchange are organized in the market. From the exploitative relation of production, the terrain of the superstructures affects beliefs in bourgeois ideology. The superstructures can then be said to have their own influence and 'relative autonomy'. For instance, by taking into account the example of political and ideological practices in a specific social formation, one finds the influence of racism in apartheid capitalism. It is then through their free will (informed by the political and ideological contexts which also impact on their consciousness) that individuals enter into contracts within the economic sphere.

3.3 CLASS STRUCTURE AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

For the purpose of this study, individual consciousness can be taken to refer to the perceptions, thoughts, beliefs and values which people hold. In other words, consciousness refers to an awareness of one's immediate surroundings. A niche, which consists not only of economic relations, but also of a multiplicity of social relations, has to be established wherein individual consciousness can be located. This will be examined through the investigation of Poulantzas and Wright's arguments on consciousness. I will also attempt to establish what position they take in the light of economic determinism.

3.3.1 Poulantzas' approach to consciousness

Before outlining economism, it would be instructive to begin this section by defining this concept according to the way Mouffe (1979) understands its flaws:

* all subjects are class subjects;
* social classes have their own paradigmatic ideologies;
* all ideological elements have a necessary class belonging. (1979: 189)

The problem then - for Mouffe - is that of reducing individual consciousness to the economic structure. Her views will, however, be discussed in section 3.5.

In her work, Christie highlights Wright's use of contextual attitudinal data as indicators of class consciousness (1988: 48). One of the aims of her study was to explore individual students' commonsense consciousness. To achieve this, responses given by the students to interview/survey questions on issues of race are explained with reference to a 'broader hegemonic context'. This context gives meaning to individual responses, rather than being treated as acontextualised 'personal individual utterances' (1989: 45-46). In this sense, she shows the possibility of using Wright's categories in a historical context.

In his attempt to avoid economism, Wright emphasises that other factors, which he refers to as 'non-class mechanisms', affect the concrete form taken by consciousness:

> The claim that structure limits class consciousness and class formation is not equivalent to the claim that it alone determines them. Other mechanisms (race, ethnicity, gender, legal institutions etc.) operate within the limits established by the class structure. (1985: 29)

By arguing that these non-class mechanisms operate within the limits established by the class structure, Wright weakens their importance in the constitution of consciousness. He argues that these contingent factors can explain deviations in consciousness (ibid: 186).

Carchedi highlights Wright's secondary treatment of non-class mechanisms:

> Other factors, the so-called 'non-class mechanisms', affect the concrete form taken by consciousness, but they fall outside the explanatory power of the model; they only account for the deviations of these concrete forms from what should be the consciousness of respondents as indicated by their positions and in a form independent of the historically specific conjuncture. (1986: 208)

Secondly, while the personal attributes of individuals may affect the strength of the association between class structure and class consciousness, the linkage between class and consciousness will not be an artifact of personal attributes; it is based on the objective properties of the class structure itself (ibid: 251). Positions thus account for 'true' (p.249) form of consciousness while the actual form taken by consciousness is the result of both class determination and of the non-class mechanisms (which account for the changes in consciousness).

3.4 NON-REDUCTIONIST CONCEPTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Poulantzas, and to a lesser extent Wright, have based their positions on consciousness on economism. The positions of Laclau and Mouffe, however, show a shift from economism to incorporate a non-reductionist understanding of consciousness. Wolpe also uses the non-reductionist approach to explain consciousness formation in the South African case. Their views will be presented below.

He shows that ideas and concepts cannot be understood as 'isolated' entities that are fixed to particular class positions. Rather, the meaning of ideological elements is established within the framework of 'ideological discourse':

> The precondition for analysing the class nature of an ideology is to conduct the inquiry through that which constitutes the discursive unity of an ideological discourse. (1977: 99)

Laclau (1977) and Laclau and Mouffe (1985) propose an alternative understanding in terms of articulation, which they define as a practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice (1985: 105). The result of an articulatory practice is a structured totality which they call 'discourse' (1985: 105). Similarly, Hall (p.53) shows that the economic cannot always give particular modes of reasoning to particular classes according to their place within its system. He attributes this inability to the fact that ideological elements are non-fixed entities but are always changing and developing.

Laclau asks how an individual's identity is constituted around a multiplicity of ideological elements. In other words, how do the ideological elements initially articulate with another as separate entities, so as to form the product of a unified ideological discourse? If, for instance, one's political position evokes racial, class, cultural, religious or gender ideological elements, how will the ideological discourse be presented in a unified way? In response to this, Laclau (1977: 103-105) argues that the co-existence of various elements in an

ideological discourse develops into an ideological structure wherein one element becomes the main organizer of all the others. In the above question, if one were to consider that the unity of the ideological discourse is held by the class identity of the individual, i.e. if the phrase 'one's social class position evokes' were to be used, then the ideological discourse would be presented in an economistic way. The unity of the ideological discourse depends, however, on the historical circumstances of a social formation as a whole.

It then becomes clear from this why Nzimande (1986: 48) explains the class consciousness of the African middle class in racial terms:

> Racial domination is more crucial in understanding the class consciousness of the new African middle class, rather than the creation of class structures. (1986: 48)

Nzimande gives priority to racial discrimination in South Africa over other ideological elements when examining the unity of the ideological discourse. He further shows that:

> members of the African middle class have been, together with the working class, victims of forced removals, influx control, tight autocratic control of their lives. (1986: 49)

Nzimande considers the activities in the political sphere as having obscured or blurred class differences. His account takes racial discrimination as the main organizer of ideological elements during the 1986 riotous period.

> background. Only this privileged elite have the social and economic conditions required by the 'open' schools. (1986: 122)

Cross defines open school parents in terms of their ability to pay the 'relatively expensive fees' imposed by these schools. Constructing the identity of parents on the basis of the fees policy raises two objections: Firstly, following from Christie and Butler (1988),

> fees are not a good indicator of the social class accessibility of the open schools, since they vary enormously from school to school. Whereas some open schools could only be supported by the wealthy, others in their fee structures are more accessible to the less wealthy. (1988: 152)

The variation in fees (Christie and Butler, 1988: 26) between different open schools raises doubts with regard to Cross' notion of the privileged class status of parents.

Secondly, parents' perceptions of open schools are not limited to workplace influences but also draw upon experiences in their families, neighbourhoods and communities:

> Men and women are not shaped by their work experiences alone, but by the ways in which they survive and interact at home in the family or during leisure hours. Economic class position may determine whether you are a worker, but how you behave as a worker is not explicable only by the type of labour you undertake. (Bozzoli, 1987:8)

captures the formation of such communities as:

> Whether expressed as shared subjectivity or common consciousness, on the one hand, or as relations of mutuality and reciprocity, the ideal of community denies, devalues, or represses the ontological difference of subjects, and seeks to dissolve social inexhaustibility into the comfort of a self-enclosed whole. (1990: 230)

Coleman and Hoffer's study shows that a functional community contains what they call 'social capital'. Social capital, as it impinges on education, is the degree of interest and active involvement of adults and parents in the learning environment of children (1987: 223). This social capital resides in the functional community, the site where actual social relationships exist among parents, and wherein parents relate to the institutions of the community. Part of the social capital which Coleman and Hoffer describe is the intangible norms which shape and constrain children's actions within a functional community (1987: 226). The intangible norms refer to non-material factors such as trust and obedience.

Coleman and Hoffer highlight the importance of social capital to the child's educational growth by contrasting it with the physical presence of parents (what the authors refer to as 'human capital', 1987: 222). They define human capital as being embodied in skills, knowledge and capabilities of individuals (1987: 221). Such skills, knowledge and capabilities can be useful for the child if the adults (who possess them) transmit them to the child. Once the

implication of this question will be explored further in section 4.4 which describes the context in which open schools have been created, and the possibility of Belgravia operating as a functional community.

4.4 THE DESTRUCTION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN COMMUNITIES

Coleman and Hoffer's study shows the importance of the 'embeddedness' of young persons in the enclaves of adults nearest to them, first and most prominently in the family and secondly in a surrounding community of adults. Muller (1992) examines this conclusion in the South African context. He argues that capitalism and its form of labour organization has resulted in the destruction of the social capital in functional communities:

> Patterns of work separated the home from the place of work. The migrant labour system did this in a particularly drastic and attenuated way. Urbanization most oftenly split the nuclear family geographically from its traditional support base in the extended family and surrounding community. (1992: 79)

The destruction also comes from two directions in black communities:

* the decreased strength of the school - for instance the 'authority system of the school which is an indespensable basis upon which any school-based social capital must depend' (1990: 80);

3.4.2 Mouffe's non-reductionist conception of consciousness

> Marx and I are ourselves to blame for the fact that younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side that is due to it. (Engels, 1890: 683)

Poulantzas and to a lesser extent Wright have argued that consciousness formation is a process that is determined by a given structure of class relations, whereby structure is understood as 'a terrain of social relations that determine objective material interests of actors' (Wright, 1985: 246). Mouffe questions the economistic approach which places emphasis on the economic structure and consequently accords secondary importance to the effects of the superstructural sphere on consciousness.

Mouffe understands by ideology a practice which 'creates subjects and makes them act'. She maintains that social agents possess several principles of ideological determination, not just one (that is determined by the relations of production). One needs to take other subjectivities such as gender, race, and religion into account when examining individual consciousness (1979: 171). The reason for this is that individuals are hailed or 'interpellated' (Althusser 1971: 47) as members of either sex, family, social class, or race, and they live these different subjectivities by which they are constituted as subjects.

These different subjectivities constitute the different individual identities, which, in the South African case, are invariably unified by the racial subjectivity, i.e.,

following from Laclau, 'one element [subjectivity N.U.] becomes the main organizer of all the others'. In such instances (due to apartheid racism), the main organizer of an individual's identity is his racial classification, which articulates with other subjectivities. In this sense, ideology is not treated as an epiphenomenon of the economic sphere (Mouffe, 1979: 171) since it is in the realm of ideology that people become conscious of themselves.

3.4.3 Wolpe and consciousness

Work done by Wolpe (1988) in South Africa captures the nuances of Wright and Poulantzas's problematic of economic determination. Wolpe's analysis explains how both economic and non-economic factors affect consciousness formation.

His critical approach to social classes rejects the Marxist standpoint c conceptualizing social classes as groupings which gain their cohesiveness from the concept of economic ownership/non-ownership and the relation of exploitation.

Wolpe argues against a unitary conception of class. In reality, he says, classes are divided on a variety of bases:

> In the economy itself, classes exist in forms which are fragmented and fractured in numerous ways, not only by the division of labour, and, indeed, the concrete organization of the entire system of production and

> distribution through which classes are necessarily formed, but by politics, culture and ideology within the division of labour. (1988: 51)

If we accept Wolpe's argument that classes are concretely formed in the sphere of production simultaneously through politics, economics and ideology (ibid: 52), then one can begin to understand how consciousness is similarly formed by the effect of both non-economic and economic factors.

3.5 SUMMARY

To sum up, Wright and Poulantzas's expositions do not suggest adequately ways in which to understand the complexities in consciousness which arise when social class cleavages, such as race and gender divisions, exist within homogeneous or cohesive classes. They do not give accounts of the historical nature of, for instance, the effects of racial and gender discrimination on consciousness, which is significant to this study.

This chapter has however shown how a pluralist understanding of consciousness, as opposed to an economistic one, can be arrived at by taking into account the discursive environments in which individuals are constituted as subjects. These discourses, when combined with the economic structure, were seen to exert their own impact on consciousness. The impact of the non-economistic conception of consciousness on education will be developed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 - OPEN SCHOOLS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 has shown that due to the constraints imposed by class reductionism, the explanation of parents' identities in terms of their socio-economic status would be too limited. Chapter 3 emphasises the plurality of factors which come into play when identities are constructed. This argument is based on the work of Wright, Laclau, Mouffe, and Wolpe, which explains the role of non-economistic factors in the construction of individual identities. Taking into account the plurality of factors which construct parents' identity, this chapter will discuss its impact on the degree and extent of their involvement in open schools.

4.2 CROSS' UNDERSTANDING OF OPEN SCHOOL PARENTS

Cross (1986) identifies the group of open school parents as a 'privileged elite'. He argues that:

> since the 'open' schools were constituted through a desegregation of white private schools imposing relatively expensive fees and strict meritocratic principles in selection of pupils, black children attending these schools come by and large from a black middle class

Bozzoli argues that identities of individuals are not only constructed in terms of their socio-economic status, but by the contingent yet related nature of the discursive environment in which they find themselves:

> To a historical materialist, these [e.g. class and race, N.U.] and all similar concepts are to be understood as historical and social categories rather than reified universals. At some historical moments social groups may appear to be driven by ideological forces, or cultural ones, which have come to gain a certain relative autonomy; and at others, the crude realities of economic necessity and process seem to prevail. And at all times we need to be alert to the interplay between these dimensions rather than regarding them as polar opposites. (1987: 2)

Bozzoli further adds the process which one can follow in establishing the social categories which define individual consciousness:

> In an ideal analysis, we would have to start from the very basic experiential category of the individual, work through the local group and communities in which the individuals forge their world view and tease out the layers of ideology formation which shape that individual in the group or community of which he is a part. All this, moreover, would have to be done against the background of broader social and economic changes. (1987: 2)

It thus becomes imperative to examine how the identity of a group of open school parents is constructed in class terms and in terms of the political and ideological influences. The entire structural context, i.e. the combination of a multiplicity of factors in which parents are located, has to be analysed, and this complex context will define:

* the lived experiences of the group of open school parents;
* their perceptions and involvement in open schools;
* the sense of community development in relation to the school.

Since the aim of this study is to define the involvement of parents in the school in relation to their identity, the next section will discuss the nature of parental involvement.

4.3 THE COLEMAN AND HOFFER MODEL OF 'OPEN SCHOOLS' AND THE COMMUNITY THEY SERVE

Coleman and Hoffer (1987) give an in-depth analysis of the American family and community life. They argue that schools that existed during the pre-industrial revolution provided perfect settings for 'cultural consistency', intergenerational closure wherein norms and values were passed from one generation to the next, and social continuity between family and society. Schools in such traditional societies were characterized by:

* the relation with adults with whom children associate both in and out of school (social consistency),

* the values to which children were exposed at school (value consistency) (1987: 6).

These schools provide:

* a centre for the transmission of commonly held values;
* a social context within which children whose parents hold similar values and know each other can be educated.

The norms that prevail in these schools are in part those dictated by the needs of the youth themselves, and in part those established by the adult community and enforced by intergenerational contact.

One of the effects of this social consistency is the creation of what Coleman and Hoffer refer to as a 'functional community' - a community which embraces a multiplicity of functional spheres and social groups, and which gives meaning to the forms of interaction, joint bonds and common value of its members. Furthermore, apart from the forms of intra-relationships which may exist in the functional parts, it also has its own tangible institutional and organizational structure (1987: 7). The tangible structures are those that are embodied in observable, material form such as churches and schools. Such a definition which emphasises social interaction and common values explains a functional community as a social unit in which individuals co-operate and live their lives together (Muller, 1990: 79). A functional community increases parents' involvement in schooling matters in that the norms and values that prevail in these communities facilitate their parental role. Young (1990)

interaction is forged (wherein the adult uses his skills and knowledge for the benefit of the child), then human capital is converted into social capital. For instance, social capital can be used for cognitive development, or to instill social norms that govern appropriate behaviour in children.

An analysis of the type of school that is found in functional communities shows that the educational goals, values and norms which prevail in these schools are consistent with those of the family and those of the community (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987: 3). Educating a child in these kinds of schools would be advantageous, since the values found in such a community also pervade the school and family. Such schools benefit the child in that they do not become an alienating environment. Children are not insulated from cultural values and norms that permeate the larger society. The orientation of such schools is seen by Coleman and Hoffer as an extension of the family, reinforcing the family's values (1987: 3).

South African open schools, however, are attended by children of different racial and religious groups (Christie and Butler, 1988: 22-23, 27-28), and from multicultural backgrounds (Cross: 121).

On the basis of the point above, can one argue that the orientation of open schools is 'an extension of the family, and reinforcing the family's values' (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987: 3)? If not, what do open school parents perceive the orientation of these schools as, given the above complexities? The full

* the destruction of the family and the local community
  - an example is the declining presence of the father and mother in the household due to economic imperatives, (working in settings which are outside and organizationally distant from the household) (1992: 79)

The upshot of such social change is the destruction of the extended family which was once a resource for parents in raising children. Children are increasingly raised by single parents; or parents who are in full-time jobs away from home and neighbouring communities, devoting their time to activities of the workplace. Not only have parental resources been weakened by this tendency, but many nuclear families have become deficient as well.

In her article "Th. mits of Community", Enslin (1990) similarly points out the destructive effect of apartheid on communities:

> Apartheid has been a destroyer of communities. It has broken up old, established, rural and urban communities by physically uprooting and relocating their members. The impoverishment of rural areas has destroyed community life as families have been broken up by migrancy. (1990: 26)

In this context of social change, Muller argues that the school is considered one of the few remaining institutional resources available to parents (1990: 80), acting as a setting for the replacement of the values and norms which once grew naturally in the community (1987: 19), as well as supplementing the

activities of parents in raising their children. This increased use of schools by parents implies that the function of schools operating in this context will be different from those located in strong functional communities.

Yet, on the other hand, according to Muller, despite all these fragmenting tendencies which have been brought about by the political and economic history of South Africa, there can be found a multiplicity of 'counter-tendencies' that foster social integration in black communities:

> The continued integrative role of religion, for example, and the shared experience of racial oppression which, even if it does not oppress evenly across classes, is still in many ways a cross-class oppression and hence a force unifying black communities in adversity. Combined with the new forms of urban culture, these counter-tendencies have built circuits of solidarity in urban communities. And this is not to mention the integrative power of community politics. (Muller, 1990: 80)

Society has similarly placed great pressure on the 'integrative power' of the school. It has simultaneously to provide formal education and informal socialization, i.e., it has to instil appropriate social norms that govern children's behaviour. Muller argues that the current conditions of black schools prevent them from performing this task adequately. For instance, the authority system in the majority of black schools has been weakened, and, as a result of this tendency, there has been a depletion of the resource capacity of black schools (1990: 80). The implications are that the goals of the schools become

increasingly difficult to attain, as the social base that supports them comes to be less important in the lives of the children.

The destruction of the functional community within which families live and children grow up is a destruction for which the prime mover is urbanization. In addition, families have played an equally important part as well. According to Muller (1990: 81) and Coleman and Hoffer (1987: 233), families take private decisions in response to the deteriorating situation in communities. Parents face the following alternatives whether to:

* leave their children in the local school, and thereby rebuild the run-down black communities, or
* send their children to schools located within functional communities or near extended families in rural areas (boarding schools, open schools) (Muller, 1990: 81).

Muller comments that parents are increasingly exercising the second choice of sending their children to private schools, which are less vulnerable to disruptions. One cannot, however, argue that the open schools to which parents send their children have a high degree of social capital. This is because the mobility into and out of open schools is one of the factors which contribute to the reduction or weakening of social capital of these schools. As a result, the social relations that exist between parents and teachers become weakened by the rate of mobility.

The decision to move out of township schools can be driven by the desire for educational gain, and the specific decision may be a correct one from the point of view of the individual family making the decision. Yet the result of these individual-based decisions is a decline in the value of social capital of the community and in the end may mean that the quality of life is lowered. Coleman and Hoffer explain this as follows:

> The decision to move from a community so that the father, for example, can take a better job, may be entirely correct from the point of view of that family. But because social capital consists of relations between persons, other persons may experience extensive losses by the severence of those relations, a severence over which they had no control. A part of those losses is the weakening of norms and sanctions that aid the school in its task. (1987: 228)

The problem is therefore whether these parents are still a resource (in terms of social capital) to black public schooling or whether they are merely acting in their private interests by completely dissociating themselves from the affairs of their residential communities. Moreover, given that parents are not part of the communities that surround open schools, and the effect this will have on the degree and nature of their involvement in these schools, can they be said to play a role in the construction of social capital in the open schools.

With the increasing number of black parents who send their children to open schools, it is most appropriate to examine the social capital that surrounds these schools. A functional community forms an important basis for the development of common values between people who constitute such communities (see section 4.3). On this basis, can one argue that open schools are not surrounded by a functional community in the sense of a residential community (Coleman and Hoffer: 10)? Muller argues that very few open schools are geographically located in residential communities (1990: 82). The social capital of such open schools does not form a part of a functional community based on residence. Instead, it is constituted of an aggregate of people who uphold similar educational values (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987: 8). In so far as the parents uphold similar educational values, the schools can therefore be said to exhibit a high degree of value consistency. In other words, the school attracts parents from various communities who, in turn, form a collection that exhibits a high degree of value consistency. The differences that can be found within the group of open school parents who do not constitute a functional community (in the sense of a residential community) are masked by the high degree of value consistency concerning educational issues. These parents then constitute 'a community of open school parents'.

These schools draw on what Coleman and Hoffer call an emergent value community, which they describe as 'a collection of people who share similar values about education and childrearing' (1987: 10), notwithstanding subjective differences. The different communities, identities, norms, beliefs and world

views will have an effect on the type of social capital that will emerge from such a heterogeneous group of parents. The 'community of open school parents' can therefore be explained as constituted of an aggregate of individuals who share the same view on education in spite of other important differences.

5.4 SUMMARY

Having compared Coleman and Hoffer's understanding of the roles of schools that operate within functional communities with the role of open schools which operate in the South African context, Muller identifies a number of factors which differentiate the two. With regard to the black communities themselves, Muller shows that they cannot be defined as 'functional' in that urbanization has destroyed their structure.

With the destruction of black functional communities, the norms and values of such communities are seriously weakened. This then places some stress on the schooling system, which has to withstand the burden not only of educating the child, but also of transmitting values and norms. The role of the school is thus not solely educative.

Muller has pointed out that, as a response to this complex situation, parents are increasingly exercising the individual choice of placing their children in the open school system, thereby depleting the black communities of social capital.

Movement into open schools poses two problems: firstly, have these parents thereby dissociated themselves from the activities of the black communities? Secondly, what role do they play in constituting social capital of the open schools? These questions are addressed by this study.

CHAPTER 5 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 OVERVIEW

This study investigates why parents send children to open schools and the nature of their involvement in these schools. The study explains parents' perceptions in relation to the social context in which parents find themselves. Instead of examining their views and beliefs in socio-economic terms only, the study will identify the discursive process by which parents' perceptions are constructed.

Within the framework of the present study, the impact of racial and gender discrimination, together with the influences of economic inequalities, will be investigated in order to understand how these feed into parents' awareness of educational issues.

5.2 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The study is concerned with the understanding of parents' opinions and attitudes on open school educational matters. One way of achieving this is through a questionnaire (Moser and Kalton, 1971: 256). The study employs a structured interview and a self-completed questionnaire.

Two kinds of questions were used in this study:

* fixed-alternative questions, defined as those questions which limit the responses of the subjects to stated alternatives of **yes** or **no** (Selltitz *et al*, 1974: 256). A scale for indicating various degrees of agreement to certain statements was also used.

* open-ended questions, which raised an issue but did not provide any structure for the respondent's reply.
  Respondents were given the opportunity to answer in their own terms and in their own frame of reference.

The other possible data collection tool that could have been used is the method of participant observation. This was considered to be inadequate because it is primarily directed towards describing on-going behaviour as it occurs in natural settings (Cohen and Manion, 1989: 128; Bailey, 1982: 249).

Selltiz *et al* (1974) summarize the inadequacy of the observational method as:

> It is less effective in giving information about a person's perceptions, beliefs, feelings, motivations or future plans and certainly they provide no information about past behaviour or private behaviours ... which are by their nature, either unfeasible or impossible to observe. (1974: 236)

5.3 PILOT STUDY

Pilot studies are conducted for the purpose of pretesting the questionnaire in order to determine whether any changes are necessary for the full-scale study. They are also used to ensure that respondents differing in educational level and opinion will understand the questions and give complete and pertinent answers. In this research, the completion of the pilot study led to the compilation of an edited, comprehensive questionnaire, the content of which is discussed in section 5.4 below.

Selltiz *et al* (1974) explain the importance of a pilot study as

> providing a means of catching and solving unforeseen problems in the administration of the questionnaires such as the phrasing and sequence of questions. (1974: 550)

After analysing the questions used in the pilot study, the following changes were made:

* additional questions were added - e.g. fixed alternative questions that assessed the respondents' degree of approval of the significance of cultural and value consistency;

* some questions were eliminated - e.g. questions that probed the earning capacity of the respondents. These were found not to provide any additional indication of social class status;

* the instructions for filling out answers to questions were spelled out in more detail; and

* the spacing, arrangement and appearance of the material were modified.

To ensure that interest and motivation were not lowered during the second administration (because the respondents would have been familiar with the questionnaire), participants of the pilot study were excluded from the full-scale study.

5.4 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

A comprehensive questionnaire, consisting of fixed-alternative and open-ended questions was compiled (refer to section 5.2 for definitions). The items that were included in the comprehensive questionnaire were selected on the basis of the preliminary review of the literature and on pretesting the provisional questionnaire by the pilot study. It was divided into two parts:

* The first part established the socio-economic status of parents.

* The second part probed their views about township schools and open schools, the role they play in open school communities, and their role in black communities.

The first part was compiled around the following four social categories:

* **Economic role within the workplace**

  The nature of parents' work was assessed in order to determine whether it represented wage labour or not. Also, the responsibilities which parents' work entailed were examined in the light of the productive/unproductive labour distinction.

* **Political relations within the workplace**

  Parents were asked to explain the nature of activities that their jobs entailed. This section was included to assess whether they had access to control functions within their respective places of employment.

* **Ideological aspect of parents' work**

  Parents were asked whether they performed jobs which required specific credentials and knowledge. In this way, their monopolization and secrecy of knowledge of specific mental labour were assessed. Hence this section established whether parents' jobs entailed ideological control or not.

* **The effects of race and gender at work**

  Parents were asked to assess the impact that race and gender issues had on their conditions of employment and promotion prospects; on their relations with other employers and employees; and on the carrying out of their duties and responsibilities.

Questions in the second part of the questionnaire addressed the following areas:

* **Parents' perceptions of open schools**

  This section probed parents' reasons for sending their children to an open school.

* **Involvement of parents in open schools**

  Questions in this area focused on the nature of communities that surround open schools; how these communities come to affect parental involvement; how the school encourages involvement; and the type of involvement.

* **Perceived problems in black education**

  Parents were asked to give their opinions of the problems of township education. This section also probed parents' involvement in black community issues.

5.5 SAMPLE AND QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION

The headmistress of Belgravia Convent granted me permission to conduct research at her school. She introduced me to members of her staff and gave me permission to interrupt their classes for brief periods and hand out the questionnaires to the selected group of students.

All teachers of the classes that were included in the study provided me with a list of black students in their respective classes. These lists were used as a sampling frame from which the selected group of students could be drawn.

5.5.1 Selection criteria of the sample from the population

From the entire population of Belgravia Convent parents, the sample of the study was selected on the basis of the following criteria:

* they had to be black
* their children had to have been students at the school for more than a year.

5.5.2 Classes used for pilot and comprehensive

In the pilot study, 50 provisional questionnaires were distributed to parents of classes starting from grade 1B and 1C right up to standard 3B and standard 3C classes.

The grade 0 classes were excluded on the grounds that the pupils were in their first year at an open school. Similarly, the A classes were excluded since all new students (in the different grades) were placed in these.

The comprehensive questionnaires were distributed to students in all standard 4 classes and the two standard 5 classes. All classes of the senior grades were included in the study because the school does not admit new students in these senior classes.

5.5.3 The sample

The sampling procedure employed was simple random sampling. This procedure was carried out for distributing both the pilot and comprehensive questionnaire. A number was assigned to each student in the sampling frame - between 18 and 20 students per class. Five of these numbers were then drawn from 'a hat'

5.5.4 Distribution method

Students thus chosen were given the questionnaire to give to one of their parents. Completed questionnaires were then collected from the students by the researcher.

This method of distributing the questionnaires to parents through the students proved to be effective because of the high return rates. With regard to the pilot questionnaires, 30 out of a total of 50 questionnaires were returned. Of the 40 comprehensive questionnaires that were distributed, 30 were returned.

Further sampling of the 30 respondents had to be done for the purposes of having a class-stratified subsample. The social categories that were used for stratifying the sample (on the basis of social class data) were contained in questionnaire items 3 - 24 (see Appendix 3).

5.6 THE METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The type of analysis that is used in this study is content analysis. This is a method of analysis which constructs categories of explanation for the classification of respondents' utterences. Cohen and Manion (1989) suggest that a content analysis identifies appropriate categories which will reflect the purpose of the research (1989: 61). Schutte and Van Wyk's study (quoted in Mouton and Marais, 1988: 99) shows that categories of analysis are primarily

derived from the theoretical orientation of the study. Since the categories of analysis are embedded in the theoretical formulation, Mouton and Marais say that the task of the reseachers is to indicate which data fit the different categories (1988: 104). In this way, the categories are used as a point of departure in the analysis of the respondents' utterences.

Cohen and Manion (1989) show that classifying raw data in terms of the constructed categories requires a thorough scrutiny of the responses to elicit the participant's meaning. The purpose of this analysis is to find ways of clustering the respondents' interpretation of categories, and to show how the themes from the data represent the constructed categories. To achieve this, the researcher has to attempt to systematize the narrative by using the constructed categories as the basis. The next step is to determine whether there seem to be some common themes that unite several discrete clusters of meaning (1989: 330-332).

Bailey (1982) argues that for, any given response, it may sometimes be difficult to tell in which category it belongs without considering the context in which it is found (1982: 319). This requires that a cluster theme be chosen, which is a larger unit in which the responses are contextualised. This means that categories, and by extension sub-themes, become significant in specific discursive contexts. Therefore the contexts need a more sensitive analysis. They consequently make it easy to categorise data in precise ways.

Selltiz *et al* (1974) argue that when using the content analysis technique to classify methodically all the relevant material, some quantitative procedure is necessary. This is used in order to provide a measure of the importance and emphasis of the various ideas found, and to permit comparison with other samples of material (1974: 335). Given the limits of the scope of this study, quantification was excluded.

The next section explains the procedure that was used to define the sample socio-economically.

5.7 DEMARCATING THE MIDDLE CLASS FROM THE WORKING CLASS

The first part of the study aimed at demarcating middle class from working class repondents in the areas of the technical and social division of labour. This meant that economic, political and ideological relations within the workplace had to be included under the classification system. The system of categorizing data was aimed at clustering respondents according to their participation in the social categories listed in section 5.4 above. These social categories are based on the theoretical analysis outlined in chapters 2 and 3.

The overall result of this method showed the presence of two groups:

* those whose jobs entail wage labour but do not exhibit political and ideological control (working class); and

* those whose jobs also include social categories - political control or ideological control, or both (middle class), i.e. -
  wage labour, and political and ideological control; or
  - wage labour and political control; or
  - wage labour and ideological control.

For the purposes of translating these social categories into everyday indicators, i.e. operationalizing these categories, the following units of analysis and categories were devised:

* **Unit of analysis:** The place occupied by parents in economic relations
  Category: - labour performed in terms of the wage relationship as well as the productive/unproductive labour distinction.

* **Unit of analysis:** Political control over the co-ordination and integration of the division of labour
  Category: - organization/supervision of labour
  - formulating activities or duties to be performed by lower-level employees
  - organizing machinery for the implementation of required activities

* **Unit of analysis:** Ideological control over the production process

  Category: - conceptual or intellectual control over the labour process due to possession of secrecy of knowledge, which was measured with reference to credentials and occupational designations

  - the monopolisation of knowledge with reference to the planning and training function

* **Unit of analysis:** Establishing middle class consciousness within the workplace

  Category: - career advancement determined by employment history, reasons for changing careers, and whether these reasons are linked to social promotion or not

  Category: - the use of the educational apparatus as a means of attaining promotion at work, measured through the improvement of educational qualifications

Category: - the impact which racial and gender issues have in the workplace

5.8 ANALYSIS OF OPEN SCHOOL DATA

With regard to the treatment of the data from the questions dealing with the reasons for sending children to an open school, the literature outlined in the preceding chapters does not provide any social categories. Recurrent themes only emerged after the data were analysed.

* **Unit of analysis:** Reasons for sending child to an open school

  Themes:
  - educational
  - religious
  - economic
  - political
  - geographic
  - racial

For a proper understanding of parents' opinions of open schools, their responses were analysed against the background of their perceptions of township schools. This also provided a context for the analysis, as parents' thinking could be understood in terms of their position within this contextual setting.

An intensive analysis of the reasons for sending children to open schools was performed. The intention here was to test the hypothesis which states that social class status is an indicator of parents' perceptions of open schools (refer to Cross in chapter 4, section 4.2). On the basis of this hypothesis, parents with different educational and occupational levels were not expected to hold the same beliefs and opinions about open school education. Testing this hypothesis required further analysis of the actual reasons given by both working and middle class parents. A comparative analysis of the responses of parents with different educational levels and of different employment/ occupational status was then made.

* **Unit of analysis:** Parental involvement in open school activities

  Category: - negative responses that show non-involvement

The following **themes** which express non-involvement were extracted from the responses:

- busy work schedule
- distance between home and school
- transport
- time constraints
- social reasons - violence and high crime rate in the township which prevent participation.

Category: - positive responses that show involvement

Subcategory: - indirect involvement, shown through the attendance of meetings, and through financial contributions

Subcategory: - direct involvement revealed through the themes of support, participation and control

The responses that express the **theme** of 'support' are the following:

- fund-raising in cake sales, fêtes, carnivals
- providing reading facilities and materials
- assisting with extra-mural activities of school
- reading and signing of child's diary, supervising child's homework

The responses that express the **theme** of 'participation' are the following:

- contributing towards starting a Maths Computer Centre
- joint consultation with teachers on the progress of the child

The response that expresses the **theme** of 'control' is the following:

- member of the PTA, which determines and implements decisions

* **Unit of analysis:** Factors that determine involvement in open schools

  Category: the favourable attitude shown by the school which encourages parental involvement

Themes from the data which express the favourable attitude are:

- parents being invited to attend meetings and functions;
- setting up of communication channels through the use of a suggestion box, circulars and student diaries; and
- the existence of a PTA in the school.

Category: The unfavourable attitude shown by the school towards parental involvement

No **themes** were elicited from the data that show the unfavourable attitude by the school towards parental involvement.

When analysing data on community involvement, I asked the following question: Since parents in the study took individual solutions to the crisis in black communities by sending their children to open schools, have they completely dissociated themselves from these communities? If not, what role do they play in reconstructing these communities?

* **Unit of analysis:** Factors that determine involvement in black communities

Category: affiliation with community organisations.

The **themes** which emerged from the data reflect the aim of reconstructing the black community.

Category: non-affiliation with community organizations.

5.9 MAJOR THEMES AND SUBTHEMES OF THE STUDY

Initially, the study proceeded without categories for classifying data on the reasons for sending children to an open school. Themes only emerged later when responses were analysed. To begin with, a variety of sub-themes were identified in the data. Examples of these were the following: religious background of the family; upward mobility; better education; creating a literate nation; improved economic standing; political and criminal violence in the township; the breakdown of schooling in the township; the religious orientation of the open school.

The sub-themes were then clustered and contextualised into themes in an effort to explain their origin. In other words, the sub-themes were united into themes on the basis of locating them into larger discursive environments. For instance, while the sub-themes of upward mobility and improvement of economic standing were categorised within the socio-economic cluster theme, that of political and criminal violence in the township was located within the geographic cluster theme. The sub-theme of religious orientation of the open

school and the religious background of the family were collectively clustered under the theme of religion. These socio-economic, geographic and religious cluster themes are the discursive contexts in which the perceptions and the multiple identities of parents were situated.

In certain instances, however, there was an overlap of the cluster themes. A sub-theme such as 'creating a literate nation' could easily fit into either of two cluster themes, namely educational and political. The location of such a sub-theme into a particular theme therefore depended on the sense in which the sub-theme was expressed.

5.10 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In discussing reliability of measurements, Selltiz *et al* (1974) say the reliability of any measurement procedure depends on how much of the variation of responses in scores among individuals is due to inconsistencies in measurement (1974: 166). This research tested the reliability of the questionnaire by pretesting it. The results of the two questionnaires were compared to confirm that accurate measurement was carried out.

Bailey (1982) defines reliability of a measure simply as its consistency (1982: 73). For a consistency check of responses, the study repeated some open-ended questions at different points in the questionnaire.

Cohen and Manion (1989) describe external validity as a measure of generalisability (1989: 200). This is the extent to which explanations can be applied to other contexts.

The small sample of parents used in this study, and the fact that the sample was drawn from only one school, limits the generalisability of the findings. These are only generalisable to black parents of Belgravia Convent, and cannot be extended to open school education as a whole.

To ensure generalisability within the Belgravia Convent population (i.e., beyond the specific sample of respondents used in the study), extensive sampling procedures were adopted (section 5.5). Unrepresentative data were thus avoided through thorough sampling.

Key to analysing responses

The following symbols have been used to quote the respondents' narrative:

[ ] word(s) added by writer for clarity,

‘ ' word or words cited by respondent,

P1 - for anonymity, the letter P (for 'parent') is used to refer to the respondents. This letter is followed by a number which is arbitrarily assigned to the respondents for purposes of identifying them,

 - symbolises a tension between parental identities.

CHAPTER 6 - ANALYSIS OF DATA ON SOCIAL CLASS POSITION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The following broad units of analysis serve the purpose of identifying the social class status and the ideology of the sample:

* experiences of economic, political and ideological relations of domination and subordination within the workplace
* factors indicating middle class position within the sphere of production
* perceptions regarding race and gender influences within the workplace.

6.2 RESPONDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF POLITICAL RELATIONS

The category of 'organization' (or supervision) is used as an indication of a political relationship within the workplace. Political relationship was defined in the literature survey as the control over the co-ordination and integration of productive labour. Organization is defined as controlling productive labour and the physical means of production. In other words, organizing productive labour entails political control. Hence the category of organisation embraces all utterances which refer to the various dimensions of political control.

The signifying words which the respondents use to express this control function are: correct, motivate, develop, network, delegate, decide, offer guidance, help co-ordinate, monitor, administer. It is worth remarking that

these words are active verbs, which is another indication of having power to control.

These terms explain the function of directing and overseeing the activities of subordinates as well as their use of equipment:

> I organize and supervise all nursing activities of junior nursing staff in wards. As a senior nurse in charge of a ward, I have to make sure that junior nursing personnel working in my wards use correct clinical methods as well as use clinical equipment appropriately. I also motivate them to be dedicated nurses, which is what is required of them in the profession. (P1)

P4 expresses this function as follows:

> I have two people reporting to me in our Project team whom I supervise on how to design, construct and write computer programmes, develop systems to be used by our division and networked with those [systems] of other departments.

In the above, one notices the persistent appearance of this control function. This therefore leads us to realize the two dimensions of control, that is, the control of the activities of lower level employees, and the control of the effective utilization of organizational resources such as equipment.

Data from other respondents confirm this. Consider for example P10, who supervises junior personnel on how to use plant equipment:

> I ensure that the designed methods of treating chemicals are executed by technicians. I also delegate to junior personnel on the use of equipment and ensure the proper handling of equipment. I monitor the performance of equipment by estimating their life-time. Lastly, I decide on the frequency of maintenance on the basis of the intensity of the working machines.

And also, according to P8:

> I offer guidance and help co-ordinate and monitor student and Senior Health Officers' daily patient care and the use of hospital equipment.

Other areas of control that appeared in the data were tied closely with the allocation of time. The execution of a task is supervised so as to meet set deadlines. P2 shows that he organizes the activities of subordinates in such a way that the completion of a task falls within a specified time limit:

> I make sure that all the delivery orders are procured properly. I administer all export orders by making sure that the drivers leave at a set time. I also sketch the route to be taken for deliveries to be on time.

The ultimate function of supervising and organizing equipment and the activities of subordinates is perceived by respondent P4 as having an influence on the efficient running of a department, which in turn impacts on the entire organization:

> I ... develop systems to be used by our division and networked with those of other departments.

Furthermore, supervision is done by respondents to ensure that the activities of subordinates adhere to policy guidelines and procedures. This means that supervisory powers are pre-determined and structured by existing company policy. Respondent P11 shows that he functions within a line of management control structures:

> One has to see to it that the already existing stipulated orders which are formed by a higher body are carried out. These orders guide the way I discipline [and] regul..te the placement and movement of employees within the branch I manage. In order to ensure the maintenance of sound customer-bank relationships, I monitor the activities of employees. For instance I authorise certain bank employees to grant customers loans and I am responsible for promotions within a branch.

Lastly, a common theme running through the responses in this category is the presence of a span of control. Respondents refer to a certain number of employees whose activities they supervise. This is shown by P5 as:

> Managing a company of twenty-one persons, I have to see that they perform well and meet targets.

And, according to P6:

> Management of schools in the circuit. I have to evaluate the teachers'

work and supervise principals' work in about fifteen schools according to specified expectations set by the DET. These include an assessment of the number of essays and tests that have been administered by teachers.

The areas where political control is exercised require the presence of a span of control. These areas are divided into two, the first being the control over productive labour, the second being the control over the operation of organizational resources. The absence of political control, according to the literature survey, does not necessarily entail the absence of ideological control as well. Data that relates to ideological control will be analysed in the next section.

6.3 RESPONDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF IDEOLOGICAL RELATIONS

An ideological relationship was defined in the literature survey as the monopolisation of knowledge. The categories that show the ideological aspects of the respondents' work are planning, training, and the matching of credentials with occupational designations.

6.3.1 Planning

The planning category indicates some measure of intellectual control over the production process. This category was defined in the literature survey as

preparing or arranging the course of some future activity. From the data, one distinguishes between strategies, equipment, finances and subordinates' tasks as aspects that are planned. The planning function of P10 shows a combination of financial and equipment planning:

> [I] authenticate and develop ... conceived methods of treating chemicals in a production plant; plan the usage of equipment by designing performance tests on the machine and supervise the implementation of these designs. I also carry out financial planning of my department, in that top management allocates a monthly running budget that I have to monitor by planning its usage on maintaining equipment and overheads and planning overtime manpower to fit within this budget.

The above expresses a combination of the planning function with the supervisory function. One would argue that the aim of supervising is to ensure that the planned designs are executed appropriately.

Another theme that emerges from the data is that the activities of other employees are planned so as to ensure that certain objectives are met. P11 shows that he works out the activities that need to be done in order to accomplish the purpose set for the enterprise he works for:

> Financial targets set by head office can only be reached by careful planning of branch activities and strategies, which are done by me and subordinate supervisors.

See also:

> I plan effective marketing strategies to be used in order to increase sales. I plan marketing strategies simultaneously with annual departmental activities. I also plan promotion. (P12)

In certain responses, planning is done as a joint effort:

> I am a manager in a school where I hold the position of a deputy. What goes on in the school where I am is the planning of all the staff members being led by managers principal, deputy and heads of departments. We plan the drawing and implementation of the school curriculum - i.e. subject arrangement and choice. (P7)

6.3.2 Training

The training category was used as an indicator of conceptual control or the monopolisation of knowledge related to certain occupations.

The data relating to this category indicated that there are two kinds of training. The first is instruction in practical skills:

> I train research assistants and technicians on the use of laboratory equipment. (P9)

and

> [I] train users - meaning company clients - on systems we develop. I also train my two subordinates on how to design and construct computer programmes. (P4)

The second is theoretical training which involves intellectual development and a basic understanding of processes:

> This [training] is in the form of theoretical transfer of knowledge on the operation of machines which could either be instructional - lecture type - or practical instruction on the use of equipment given to other employees. (P13)

An emphasis on theoretical training is shown by P11 as:

> On-the-job training in areas such as proper customer care, how to market effectively services which are offered by the banking institution, and theoretical training at our Staff College.

For some respondents, the execution of this training task is determined by a needs analysis. This means that the need to train is assessed through performance appraisal. The following respondent provides ongoing training within his place of employment:

> The continual teaching of junior staff-interns, Senior Health Officers and medical students in inpatient and outpatient clinics. (P8)

The temporary nature of the trainees who stay in the medical clinics for short periods, and the continual influx of medical students, results in continuous and ongoing training. Interns and medical students are not permanently employed personnel of the inpatient and outpatient clinics.

Some tasks involve the monopolisation of knowledge in designated areas of specialisation. An interesting example is that of P9 who offers theoretical and practical training to university students, technicians and research assistants on an ongoing basis in a specialized field. He describes some of his tasks as:

> supervisory function during teaching aspect - lectures, tutorials, and practical laboratory work;

and

> Lecturing, [training of] research assistants and technicians on the use of laboratory equipment.

An alternative to this continual training activity is shown as:

> [Training] in the areas of hands-on practical instruction - based on training needs as identified through Performance Appraisal. (P15)

The last theme to emerge from the data is that training is goal - oriented for the benefit of the enterprise and the individuals within the organization. P12 expresses this in the following way:

> On-the-job training of my subordinates which involves practical marketing instructions for the purposes of maximising sales targets.

Undoubtedly, the training task requires a certain level of education to ensure its success. Some degree of knowledge is essential. This immediately precludes totally uneducated individuals from entry into this sector. Some respondents were not educated further than high school, which is not a reasonable level to enable them to undertake training. Most of those who perform training had higher levels of education.

6.3.3 Distinguishing credentials and occupational designations

Possession of the secrecy of knowledge is equivalent to conceptual or intellectual control over the labour process. This was used as an additional criterion for defining the boundary that distinguishes the working class from the middle class (refer to section 2.6.1). To elaborate further on this distinction, occupational titles and job characteristics were matched with credentials. This helped further define the class status of respondents on the basis of the credentials required for their jobs.

The results of the analysis show that working class occupations require no specific credentials. The respondents classified as working class do not possess formal educational qualifications beyond standard 9. Their highest qualifications are, respectively:

*	Domestic Servant	-	Standard 9
*	Housekeeper	-	Standard 6 plus dressmaking course
*	Traffic Controller	-	Standard 8
*	Cleaner	-	Standard 7
*	Taxi Driver	-	Standard 6.

Their work is highly routine and efficiency in execution of their tasks depends on experience they receive in their various places of employment. For example, the analysis of data relating to the nature of their tasks reveals the following:

*	Housekeeper:	-	'planning of cooking
		-	and housekeeping'
*	Traffic Controller:	-	'regulating traffic at Wits'
			'give tickets when usage of parking space is illegal'
*	Cleaner:	-	'cleans offices at night'
*	Domestic Servant:	-	'prepare meals, running of family, organization of family and daily routine the way I was taught by my employer'
*	Taxi Driver:	-	'driving people between the township and town every day'

In contrast, the respondents that are categorised as middle class show that their occupations are tied to certain credentials which are mandatory. These are listed in Appendix 1. For instance:

* Deputy Principal - [BA; UED; B ED];
* Medical Doctor - [MB ChB];
* Senior Process Chemical Engineer - [B Sc (Hons); B Sc (Chemical Engineering)].

These occupations directly correlate to possession of a University degree or diploma. Management credentials are varied, but most respondents in management positions possess either a University Commercial degree, or a diploma, or have attended certified management programmes at institutions such as the Wits Business School, for example, Advisory Systems Engineer (BA; MDP; MAP).

6.4 RESPONDENTS' IDEOLOGICAL PERCEPTIONS

Apart from the data relating to the occupational status of the sample, several trends in perceptions of upward mobility were identified. These will be discussed in full under the following headings:

- general perceptions regarding career improvements
- the perceived importance attached to the educational apparatus as a means of attaining promotion at work.

6.4.1 Occupational experience

Table 1 in Appendix 2 shows a summary of the occupational experience of the respondents. All the respondents started off in low-level jobs. As can be determined from the second column, several respondents qualified themselves in preparation for new fields and were able to take on responsibility when they moved into these fields. Many have sought and completed extra courses. This has given them the opportunity to improve themselves and build a reputation of 'being able to succeed in their jobs'.

Analysis further shows that respondents who occupy company management positions have advanced to higher levels of management only after they improved their educational qualifications. For instance, P12 moved from being an 'Educational Officer' to 'Marketing Manager' after attaining certification in Marketing and Advanced Management.

6.4.2 Improvement of educational qualifications

The perceptions of the respondents regarding the usefulness of improving their educational qualifications are clustered into two extreme positions. Some respondents do not attach any importance to improving qualifications in order to occupy better positions. Instead, they perceive 'job training and experience' as the most effective way of moving up the occupational hierarchy. Two examples that illustrate this are:

'I don't need high academic qualifications to self-actualize or earn a good income'. (P5)

and:

'I feel that no higher education could be a substitute for the skills that I acquire through practice and experience'. (P13)

This small proportion of respondents aspires towards improving their employment status without improving their educational qualifications.

By contrast, the other extreme shows a heavy dependence on educational qualifications. Respondents were asked to comment on why they need to improve their educational qualifications. The reasons they give support this dependency: 'because education is a key to a better future'. Respondents give reasons which are related to their own personal development. These are clustered as:

* **improvement of efficiency in their respective careers, i.e. becoming more professional**

  An example that shows this professionalism is that of P11: 'in order to give sound customer care', and P16: 'to be more professional in dealing with my students'.

* **keeping in line with changes in market conditions**

  P12 explains the need to improve his education as: 'the market changes time and again and I have to keep in line with new developments in the market'.

* **to get promoted**

  P11 expresses promotion as:

  'to progress more quickly towards senior management'.

  P7 perceives education as inducing aspirations to enter a profession: 'to take up a career as a lecturer in the next two years'.

* **improvement of financial and social wellbeing**

  'to have a better salary so as to improve my standard of living and qualification' (P16), and 'the better qualified you are, the better the prospects of better pay and promotion'. (P22)

P20 is the one exception who would improve his educational qualifications for the benefit of others, rather than his own personal development. The respondent expresses this as: 'to improve teaching and learning in DET schools'. This may be considered as a service to the community.

6.5 EFFECTS OF RACE AND GENDER IN THE ECONOMY

Analysis of data shows that the experiences of economic relations such as promotions, salaries, duties and responsibilities are not understood only in economic terms, but that racial and gender influences affect the respondents' perceived reality in the workplace.

When asked to assess the effects of race and gender in the workplace, most respondents concluded that access into these economic relations was not only in terms of merit and efficiency. Instead, the influences of race and gender practices were seen to impede advancement. P22 shows some disenchantment with what she considers racial and gender barriers blocking her success:

> women earn less, blacks are kept in the lowest level of management. Promotion is too dependent on your immediate manager, who is almost always white and biased.

Some of the workplace issues which tend to remind the respondents of an intense relationship between politics and the economy are expressed in terms of pay equity, progress and the allocation of duties.

Respondents see themselves as unable to act against the discrimination they experience with regard to these. They claim that there is a step beyond which it is not practical to think they will go. One female respondent showed this acceptance as:

> most of the time men are preferred to women in positions above principal. Although there are more women teachers, there are only two women inspectors in the Johannesburg Region; not much can be done to change this. (P6)

One respondent, however, expresses his experiences of gender discrimination differently. He claims that despite the fact that it does exist, this cannot be generalized throughout his place of employment. He reiterates the word 'partly' to express this:

> partly in case of gender - some privileges are not accorded married women. Partly - fewer women become deans or heads of departments since positions mentioned carry enormous responsibility. (P9)

Despite the fact that most respondents in the sample have the power to control workplace activities, the respondents experience racial and gender discrimination in the execution of their responsibilities. For instance, P13 mentions that the allocation of tasks depends on race:

> In the company I work for, all decision-making powers lie with white management. Although I am in a management position, I do not make decisions.

Lack of full control of workplace activities was similarly expressed by P25:

> black teachers do not have the power and autonomy to control. They have little say in how they perform as the educational institution is controlled from above - i.e. D.E.T.

P25 shows that he experiences this lack of 'autonomy to control' due to being a 'black teacher'.

P12 describes the effects which racial discrimination have had on his career path as:

> I could have occupied the position of Director a long time ago but these positions were reserved for whites.

Other interesting themes that directly relate to the relationship between politics and economics were noted in the pilot study. One of them is job security. One respondent realised that he belongs to the management group and it would be useless to expect support from his fellow blacks when he is fired:

> white management has the power to hire and fire me. It would be counter-productive to expect support from fellow black subordinates if I am fired since I belong to management.

One respondent shows that while some companies reject discrimination in their policies, this is only in name, for it is not reflected in practice:

> I do not think the company discriminates in terms of gender and race as a matter of policy. But yes, various white people in management positions discriminate because of fears and attitudes that they have. Discrimination from such quarters is also based on the 'old boys' type of philosophy whereby various groups of people will be favoured over others that do not belong to certain 'cliques'. Also, the fact that managers' commissions are determined by the performance of their employees, the manager will send white people that he thinks he can

> rely on to certain lucrative areas as this also ensures that his short term financial goal will not be jeopardised. (P13)

It is important to note the perceptions of one manager in the sample. When asked what obstacles hinder his progression up the occupational hierarchy, he mentioned that at times he may not be able to work due to socio-political pressures such as stay-aways:

> going to work against these socio-political pressures may endanger my life and that of my family. When I return to work when the socio-political pressure is off, I may find that my services are curtailed. Being a member of the management group I may not be expected to identify with the grievances of the black masses at the workplace.

It would be interesting to determine whether he would be frowned upon by his white colleagues if he sympathised with the masses, or he would be branded as a sell-out by the masses if he did not sympathise.

To some extent this goes to show that respondents in managerial positions are on the margin of two contrasting worlds. The marginality issues which impact on their ideology are the objective class structural determinants which exist in close articulation with their socio-political background. They are in an ambiguous situation. In the workplace, they may well be expected to function as equals with their colleagues. At the end of the working day, however, they leave the office and are once again classified in racial terms as blacks in an

apartheid society and again confront the gross inequalities of that society:

> During the day my employee status is on an equal footing with white management. At night when I return to the township I re-enter the 'non-white' society and depend on black people for friendship and leisure.

In other words, having supervised his black subordinates, and having, for all practical purposes, been regarded as middle class during working hours, at the end of the working day he has to show allegience with his black subordinates. What can thus be said about the ideology of the middle class in this study is that it is derived from the socio-political discourse in which they are constituted as subjects as well as from the place they occupy in the relations of production

6.6 SUMMARY

From the sample of 30 respondents, five are working classes and the remaining 25 are the middle classes. Their economic activities were used to enhance the distinction between the two classes. Responses show that not all middle class parents have both political and ideological control of workplace activities. Their economic role is combined either with political control or with ideological control. The data, however, shows that despite being middle class, parents in this social class position experience racial and gender discrimination. Such discrimination interferes with their economic freedom, and tends to affect their consciousness.

CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS OF DATA ON THE REASONS FOR SENDING CHILDREN TO OPEN SCHOOLS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the social class status of parents was identified, with the aim of stratifying the sample so as to determine the social identity of open school parents. The perceptions of and attitudes towards open schools of the stratified sample will be identified and compared in this chapter. These will be discussed under the following headings:

* reasons for sending children to open schools
* perceptions of township education
* the impact of religion on choice of school
* the impact of gender on choice of school
* the relationship between parents' racial and socio-political identities
* opinions about restructured education
* opinions on the importance of African values, culture and being raised in one's community
* perceptions of the importance of the community
* attitudes towards involvement in township communities, in open schools and in the Belgravia community.

7.2 THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CLASS AND OF RACIAL IDENTITY ON THE REASONS FOR SENDING CHILDREN TO OPEN SCHOOLS

This study seeks to answer the question, 'Why do parents send their children to open schools?' The data collected in response to this question yield the following criteria:

* quality of education,
* economic implication of open schools.

The quality of education seems to be a principal reason why the parents send their children to open schools. Responses classified under this category are predominant and they come from both middle class and working class parents. Irrespective of their class affiliation, all parents respond in a similar way with respect to educational reasons. At the same time, the working class parents go a step further to include reasons that one may cluster as being purely economic:

* I want my child to have a good education that will make him get a better job (this response comes from a taxi driver), and
* My child should not end up working like me. He needs a good education that will make him get more money and a stable job (this response comes from a domestic servant).

A comparison of the middle class and working class responses shows that the emphasis of the economic factor is more explicit amongst the working class. No responses that reflect this economic factor come from the middle class. A characteristic example of a response that comes from a middle class parent is the following:

> Irrespective of the exhorbitantly high fees associated with these schools, I am prepared to sacrifice a few things for my child to get a good education. The reason why I sent my child to Belgravia school is that the school provides good education. I want my child to get the best education.

It is easy to see from the data that one of the strong motivating factors for the working class respondents is economic upliftment. Working class parents see access to what they perceive as better education as a route to escape from poverty, and as an escape from their class location.

Under the category of 'quality of education' with respect to open schools, both middle class and working class responses showed the common theme of 'good education'. Due to the similarity of middle class and working class responses, all respondents will be referred to as 'parents' for the rest of this chapter.

The theme of quality of education is associated with the middle class value of 'upward mobility'. With respect to the working class, one can argue that they aspire towards achieving this middle class value.

The concern with 'good education' was repeatedly expressed by such responses as 'high standard of education' and 'good results'. The achievement of these standards and results was through what parents perceive as the concerted effort of 'dedicated teachers', as well as the school providing 'better teaching facilities'. The 'high standard of education' is further associated with the individual-based teaching that takes place in these schools, which is made possible by the low student/teacher ratio. The combination of these two factors appears in the following response: 'individual attention is given to students because of the small number in class'.

Parents' experiences with inferior black education explain the discrimination they have experienced. These experiences of lower standards in black education are also racially defined. Lastly, parents show an appreciation of teachers in open schools who 'understand the different racial and cultural backgrounds of the children'. This understanding has certain implications with regard to the racial and cultural identities of the parents. This will be examined in section 7.9 which looks at the importance which parents place on having their children raised in their own communities.

7.3 PERCEPTIONS OF TOWNSHIP EDUCATION

The responses of the sample on black education conveyed the common theme of 'dissatisfaction'. This was framed in educational, social and political terms. From this, an inverse relationship became apparent between the

respondents' perceptions of open schools and their opinions about black education.

The respondents perceptions of black education were clustered as follows:

* educational factors that lead to dissatisfaction
* socio-political factors that lead to dissatisfaction.

7.3.1 Educational factors that lead to 'dissatisfaction'

Whereas with open schools 'individual attention is given to students because of the small number in class', the opposite was found in township schools, explained in terms of 'overcrowding in classes'. Similarly, parents tended to associate open school education with 'dedicated teachers', while when referring to black schools they tended to adopt the view that there was a 'lack of dedicated/motivated teachers'. They also associated these black schools with 'inadequate teaching facilities', whilst open schools were seen to have 'better teaching facilities'. Furthermore, parents remarked on the 'good results' associated with open schools. One such response which clearly typified this was 'poor and bad results'. Finally, dissatisfaction with black education was couched in terms of the 'inferior standard of education' that prevailed in these schools. The inverse relation was apparent here, in that open school education was seen as having an exceptionally 'high standard of education'.

Open school education was seen to take place in stable environments, whereas respondents showed that there was 'disruption in schools by teachers and pupils (i.e. boycotts and chalkdowns) in township schools'.

An unfavourable attitude towards black education and a favourable attitude towards open schools became apparent. Open schools were seen as a necessity, given the bad schooling conditions within the black community. This was shown through the following analogy:

> normally if you want a tree, you may not have an appropriate kind of tool in the vicinity. That means you have to find the appropriate tool to use elsewhere and then you bring that tool back. There is a problem with discipline which has broken down in black schools ... when discipline has broken down you cannot hope that you are going to get good schools.

The above parent shows that he is driven out of the township by the problems associated with schooling, and is not compelled by his individually based motivations. He shows that he would rather harness good educational resources from outside, and utilise them where there are deficiencies. As a discriminated against black person he fully identifies with the problems that face the township, and ultimately hopes to use open school education for the benefit of the black community. Following from the pluralist perspective that was discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4, one can say that his racial identity,

together with his community identity, explains why he chose open school education (i.e. for the purpose of uplifting the educational standards within the black community).

7.3.2 Socio-political factors that lead to 'dissatisfaction'

Parents' dissatisfaction with black education was not limited to educational issues, but included factors that were located in the social and political milieu of these schools. Some parents explained the move to open schools as being motivated by the lack of safety in township schools and their surrounding communities. They expressed the lack of safety in terms of 'general unrest in the surrounding communities' and 'high crime rate in both the schools and their surroundings'.

For other parents, dissatisfaction emanates from township students' lack of interest in schooling matters, their bad attitudes towards schooling and their concerns with political issues. Whereas the social aspect within black education was expressed in negative terms, the opposite was found in social processes in open schools. An example which expresses the former is the 'lack of discipline', 'breakdown of discipline both at home and at school'. The latter is expressed as: 'good behaviour of children in open schools' and 'social and political stability'. This confirms the inverse relationship stated earlier.

It is worth noting that in addition to themes relating to educational and social factors, themes relating to political factors also emerged in the responses on black education. Political factors raised the question of whether open schools were politically stable.

With regard to black education, the parents saw the school as constituting part of a wider **socio-political environment**, which adversely affected the quality of education. For instance, responses showed a negative perception with regard to the political structures within which black education operated:

> control by white authorities who are just there for the sake of getting a bigger slice of cake, (P5)

and,

> political motives of the present government to create unequal education systems within the same country, (P6)

and,

> It is in the government statutes that the education of a white child should not be like a black child. The education received by the black child is of an inferior quality, and this is due to these government statutes which have operated for a long time in this country. For instance, this explains why parents made their children leave the country in the '60's. They went to Swaziland, Botswana to get the best education ... Parents had to do something about the education of their children. Fortunately, nowadays we have schools which have opened for black children. (P10)

The above response signifies that the parent is discriminated upon. The 'discriminated identity' (i.e. the identity of a person who has been discriminated against) of parents explains why some black parents had, in the 60's, to seek better education outside the Republic. In much the same way today's black parents are opting for open school education, rather than township education.

A negative attitude was similarly expressed with respect to the allocation of resources such as finances: 'different fund allocation by the government to black and white education'. This negative attitude was caused by feelings of dissatisfaction with the type of education that is specifically designed for the black population.

Although the socio-political environment was not mentioned in terms of open schools, we may deduce from the inverse relationship observed in responses that there is no dissatisfaction along political lines with open schools.

7.4 THE IMPACT OF RELIGION ON CHOICE OF SCHOOL

A further addition to responses on open schools was the inclusion of themes relating to the religious dimensions. For some respondents, these tended to influence greatly the preference of open schools to black education. The reasons that relate to religion are:

'I like my child to have a Catholic education';

'Christian background of the school'; and

'Strong religious background'.

Parents are responding in their capacity as Catholics because they see religion as an important component of a child's education. Furthermore, from the interviews, one gathers that the choice of school was based on the parents' previous schooling experiences, which were Catholic in orientation:

> much as I've been to Catholic schools, I go to a Catholic church. So, our family we are Catholic. I think my daughter is happy with this choice of Catholic background at school. It then becomes a matter of similarity in the two situations, that is, the fact that I went to a Catholic school, we as a family attend a Catholic church and my daughter goes to a Catholic school.

Some parents associate good education and religion. The following parent constantly refers to her own learning experiences, and the structuring of the school against the teachings of her church, as the factors that motivated her to choose this particular school:

> The religious aspect of the school has contributed greatly to my choice of school. As an individual, I have learnt a lot from religion and I have been given a good background at school. On observing my daughter, I am convinced she's had a good background in not only education, but in the way she behaves. She's had a second home, reinforcement of

> the things we teach in the house she's learnt them at school as well. The firm hand of the nuns - they look at the whole being - body, soul and mind. They put that as one thing. This definitely is a principle to be looking at the whole being - body, soul and mind. The two Catholic schools I have been to had the same principles as my child's school.

The advantages of religious continuity between the school, church, family and the parents' own childhood experiences seemed to come out strongly and played a prominent role in influencing the choice of school.

7.5 THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON CHOICE OF SCHOOL

When asked whether gender issues had any effect on their choice of school, most parents stated they have no impact at all. They expressed their main concern as:

> the most important thing at the moment is the type of education we are faced with as blacks. I think that is the general uppermost concern. If schools were operating properly, maybe gender would influence my choice of school. But at the moment it does not.

Another negative response on the question of the impact of gender on the choice of school was couched as:

> to me I don't really consider one's gender as having any bearing on choice of school - it has no bearing at all. Maybe if you ask me the question 'do I consider the performance of the school?', the answer would be yes. Taking gender reasons only, the answer would be no.

Unlike with religion, parents do not form any association between one's gender and good education. Their choice of school is devoid of any gender influences, despite the fact that their constitution is also determined by gender issues. This leads one to conclude that, they understand 'good education' in predominantly racial, - 'the type of education we are faced with as blacks' - and class terms. Their racial and class subjectivities become dominant in instances that pertain to their children's education, and their gender subjectivity is subordinate.

7.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS' RACIAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL IDENTITIES, AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE OPEN SCHOOL CHOICE

Other data that showed a favourable attitude towards open schools referred to the bad schooling conditions within the township.

> I think they [community] understand the need for them [open schools] and most parents think they are ideal schools since schooling has almost come to a standstill in black communities.

In the following response one is able to pick up the 'high standard of education' mentioned in section 7.2 above. This can be associated with the middle class position, which emphasises 'upward mobility':

> [open schools] are associated with a higher standard of education and an escape from disastrous education in the township. Because of this the community sees them as good.

The 'escape from disastrous education in the township' is another expression of parents' experiences of discrimination along racial lines.

Responses also indicated long term educational benefits that are said to acrue from open school education:

> others may fully understand the problems associated with deprived education as regards the future of the children themselves and consequently an illiterate nation. So it just depends on the educational and socio-economic level of the community.

The concern with an 'illiterate nation' marks the operation of the political identity of the above parent. As a member of a racially defined community, the parent shows that he is committed to upgrading the educational worth of the black nation. This, however, he does by patronising open school education.

An awareness of the 'inferior standards' of township education as well as a commitment to the community as a whole is expressed in the following response:

> most people want their children to get a good education if they can afford and I think the black community would like to see more of their children getting a good education in open schools.

The respondent appears to refer to the black community irrespective of class position.

From this, one gets the idea that the results of 'good education' will alleviate problems associated with an 'illiterate nation' and 'inferior standards' of township education. This response similarly shows the need to upgrade the level of education of the black child. These respondents are drawn from communities that have been discriminated upon, i.e., the respondents have experienced lower quality of township education.

While most respondents felt that open school education was the solution for their children, some expressed a contradiction between the middle class values associated with open school education and belonging to the black community. The follow[illegible]spondent felt that open schools created divisions within black communities:

> [open school education] is too elitist and will create an elite that will cause unacceptable inequalities in our society.

The respondent further emphasised the high fees as creating a barrier for entry into these schools as well as dividing the black social fabric:

> some may see it as a mark of difference between those who can afford and those who cannot afford.

It was gathered from interview material that parents are aware of the disadvantages of fragmenting the black social fabric:

> I was quite conscious of the problem I was creating by moving into open school education. I was also aware that I was breaking down the

> unity that once existed in the black townships. What I am not sure of is whether my presence in the township would sort out the educational problems of the country.

This parent justifies the consequences of his actions on the issue of breaking the 'unity that once existed in the black townships' by stating that:

> Even if you were to look at any community, not the black community, they are not that cohesive, there must still be some kind of classification in terms of material things or in terms of the educational standing. In that way, one develops an elite which you get in any society. It need not be a black society, even in the white society in South Africa you can see it there. Whether there was a breakdown, the question of an elite would still be there in any society.

One gathers from the above that moving into open schools does not impact negatively on the black community in terms of its cohesiveness, given that '[communities] are not that cohesive'. However, the dimensions which the parent uses to define the cohesiveness of a society are not based on race, but on one's acquisitions, which are 'material things or educational standing'. According to the parent, it is material and educational inequalities that create disunity and divisions within the black community. One is then led to question the importance of the racial factor, which according to Muller also acts as a unifying force within black communities (refer Chapter 4, section 4.4). According to the respondent, racial experiences do not explain community cohesion. This means that his perception of the black community is devoid of

the phenomenon of racial unity, which accounts for why he sees the lack of impact which the movement into open school education has on the black community. In short, the above quote indicates the existence of some tension between the middle class identity, with its emphasis of individualism, and the political identity, with its emphasis on communalism. political unity and racial integration.

7.7 OPINIONS ABOUT RESTRUCTURED TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

The responses to the question 'If township schools were to be restructured and improved, would you send your child to them?', a reversal of attitudes towards black education became apparent. The reasons given were motivated by factors such as the following:

* **geographic location of open schools** - 'children would not have to travel so far'; and 'children will be nearer home, transport will not be a problem'.

* **education** - 'because there will be quality education and no disruptions'; '[it] depends whether education is upgraded and run along open school lines'; 'if the school provides good education I will definitely take my child there'.

* **importance of being in own community** - 'they will be in their own community who understand them'.

At the same time, some respondents retained certain reservations about 'restructured black education'. One respondent mentioned that township communities in which schools are located are not conducive to proper learning taking place. The communities themselves contribute to the breakdown of schools in the township:

> I think that what has happened is that the conditions outside the school have much to do with the breakdown of the school... let me give you an example: you pay fees to the school and then you come across a situation where some children will not pay fees and we get called to the school as parents only to learn that the parent says that I gave fees to my child and the child has chowed the money. You get another parent saying that 'my child told me that we don't have to pay fees'. Both of them lack parental control. Despite the fact that a circular has been given by the school so where is the breakdown, is it in the school or is it in the community?.

Other reservations appeared in responses such as:

- 'I do not wish to change my child from school to school';
- 'my children would not fit in these schools any more'.

Some of the responses showed a complete dissatisfaction with township schools. Consider for example the following responses:

- 'system in township schools will take a long time to be on par with open schools';
- 'they will still be racially segregated';
- 'the environment is not conducive to learning and discipline';
- 'overcrowding is a problem that will never be overcome';
- 'I still believe in integration, I then opt for open schools';
- 'It will take years to get back the type of dedicated and disciplined teachers we had in the early seventies';
- 'the question of black education goes beyond restructuring and improving schools only in a physical sense. It involves political restructuring'.

One respondent gave a response that encompasses different parental identities, which become operational in different encounters, rather than the single encounter of the geographic location of the school:

> I answer yes and no as there are going to be very specific reasons which schools I choose. Whether or not they are in a township is not going to be a prime deciding factor. What I am saying here is that it is going to be a personal choice and the reasons for the choice are going to be different all the time.

The emphasis of 'personal choice' signifies the conception of middle class

individuality. It also, in a very subtle way, signifies the operation of different identities.

7.8 OPINIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF AFRICAN VALUES, CULTURE AND BEING RAISED IN ONE'S COMMUNITY

Overall parents showed an attitude which downplayed the importance of being raised in one's community. Measurement of this attitude was included in the study, because no open schools operate in the black community, where African values and cultures would be easily transmitted. The attitude towards culture and value consistency was measured through the importance they place on these, and the importance of having their children educated in their own communities. The response below highlights the existence of some tension between the advantage of open school education and fears of being assimilated into the open school system:

> I always stressed to my child that I took her to a private school so that she can get a good education, and not come out with all the white ways of doing things.

However not all parents experience the tension:

> going to a private mixed school and 'growing up' are two different things, in that a child can go to a private school (mine do) and still grow up in a black neighbourhood (mine do), and end up learning more in a private school than in his black neighbourhood which lacks good values.

Another parent cites that the conditions in black communities no longer transmit black values as adequately as they use to, i.e. before the townships were ridden with violence:

> the violence in our townships has destroyed the black cultural and value system. So, it makes no difference whether my child studies in these communities or not.

Open school education simply becomes a solution in the light of the particular historical context of political violence.

Both responses show that nowadays children need to study in open schools to learn good values which are no longer found in black communities. The perception which parents have about black communities is that they are no longer conducive to transmitting black culture.

Data in section 7.9.1 will show that it then becomes the responsibility of the parents to transmit their culture as parents also feel that open schools do not sufficiently represent the black culture. Parents fear that their children will be completely assimilated into open schools and, as a consequence, will lose their African heritage. The response below is one instance of the cultural identity of the parents standing at some tension with the middle class identity which stresses better education:

> what happens in open schools is that you will get all of these concerts and you would get all of the cultures. You are lucky if you get one which will give you aspects of African culture. The concerts at school

> tend to give the overall picture of the thinking around. Then you would be lucky to find a school, while it gives you aspects of Greek culture, Japanese, Taiwanese and so on, you'll then find that they have no African cultures. That is when I say that parents have to grasp the consciousness of being black and instill this in their children.

Another respondent showed the insufficient representation of black culture and values as follows:

> In these schools they try to boost their own values, forgetting that they have got children there of different backgrounds. Even if they try to cater for that, it is white culture that is catered for and not ours. The result is that the kids end up knowing more about other people's culture and nothing about his. Most of the time he is at school in town. He does not interact with the black community, so he looses touch with what is going on in his own community, because even at school he does not come across anything related to that.

In both quotations, one sees the tension between 'them' and 'us'. The 'us' speaking is the African, while the 'them' refers to the non-African group. The discursive identity being articulated here is the cultural identity with its emphasis of Africanism.

The effects of underepresentation of black culture in open schools, and the state of disarray in black communities, further reinforces the parents' role of inculcating the black culture.

While striving for better education for their children, parents have to sacrifice the benefits of being educated in their own community. The fact that children do not school in their own communities, which would serve to transmit African values and culture; together with the underepresentation of black thinking in open schools, shows the tensions and inconsistencies which construct the parents' identities and the extent to which they are historically constructed.

7.9 PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMUNITY

This section assesses the importance which parents place on their children being part of the black community. This relates to issues of culture, heritage and community values.

Responses to the question of open school children being cut off from their communities varied from the persistence of a strong identification with their communities, to alienation. Related to the former, one picked up such themes as:

* parental attitudes which reinforce identification with the black community;
* the effect of changing residential regions on identification, and
* the socialising patterns of open school children.

These will be discussed in detail in the sub-sections that follow.

7.9.1 Parental attitudes which reinforce identification with the black community

> It is in the way parents handle this aspect. If you indoctrinate your child not to associate with neighbour's children, he could be cut off. If you don't, he cannot be cut off. It is the bad influences parents have to take care of.

The above response shows that open school children are most likely not to be cut off from their own communities if parents teach their children about their African origins. The respondents believe that parents have to remind their children about their roots. The following response explains this as:

> If [open school children] know who they are, where they come from, it will be easier for them to adjust themselves, with of course the help of the parents.

The role played by parents is also shown by the following respondent:

> The question of why one sends the kids to school in fact is value-associated. There are certain values we hold as Africans and it is those values which we inculcate to the kids themselves. Even though they are in white schools, they need not come out with the values that are held in white societies. If you are a parent who is not conscious of that, then of course they will come out with those values and not fit in their own communities. So, what I've always said is that anyone who sends kids there should always be careful in this respect. There is the acquisition

> of skills but there is also the question of values and I tend to make a difference between the two.

'The acquisition of skills' and 'the question of values' mentioned above are signifiers of the middle class and the cultural identity respectively. The latter highlights parental fears of being assimilated into white values which might lead to children losing their African heritage. This identity stands at a tension with the middle class and the 'discriminated identity', which emphasize 'better education' and the 'aquisition of skills'. On the one hand, this parent acknowledges the educational worth of open schools. Yet on the other hand, he is quite aware of the importance of African values, as well as the importance of being accepted by the black community, given that the schools represent a mixture of different races.

7.9.2 The effect of changing residential regions within the township on identification

Parents also show that the ease with which the open school child is accepted by his community depends on which part of Soweto he lives in. The forging of identities in the newly developed areas of Soweto is stronger because of the increasing numbers of open school children, as opposed to the 'old township areas' - i.e. the greater part of the township. For example:

> [attending open schools] is not in vogue in the greater part of Soweto. The community of the newly developed area of Soweto will not

> ostracize open school children because the attendence of open schools in these areas is in vogue.

Another parent highlights that attendance of open schools is no longer a rare, unique phenomenon which is frowned upon by the community. The numbers of children attending such schools has increased over the years. The parent also mentions that the migration of people out of the township into new communities reduces the impact of being ostracised:

> Communities themselves are undergoing a change. An example of this is the influx of people out of the townships which in itself is going to create a demand for schools outside the township. Also many people have been going to these schools and very few have been ostracised. It is the people themselves who cut themselves off from their own communities, and not the communities which cut people off.

7.9.3 Socialising patterns of open school children

Some parents are of the opinion that children will remain an integral part of their communities since they spend their weekends and holidays in their communities. The following responses highlight this fact:

> most of the open schools are day schools and children spend a reasonable amount of time in their communities;

and

> if they continue to socialise after school and during weekends they will not be cut off.

However, constraints imposed by the English language and feelings of superiority were mentioned as factors that reinforce alienation. The parent quoted above explains alienation as an 'either/or' process: 'it is the people [i.e. open school children] themselves who cut themselves off from their communities, and not the communities which cut people off'. The tendency towards alienation, whereby the children cut themselves off from their communities, appeared in the data. This was picked up from responses like:

> children are required [by the school] to talk more English than their mother tongue/home language. This makes them behave as if they are superior persons;

and:

> in some cases these children become little Europeans and are therefore alienated from their communities. They will of course be better equipped with skills, e.g. language, numeracy, etc., and they see themselves as better privileged than the others.

These parents feel that because of the language factor and feelings of superiority, children will not be able to forge strong identities with their communities. As a result, they 'cut themselves from their own communities'.

7.10 INVOLVEMENT IN TOWNSHIP COMMUNITIES

With regard to parents' involvement in their own communities, this section will discuss parental involvement in the 'Burial Society' (for the duration of 15 years); and in the 'National Assembly for Women in South Africa' (for the duration of 6 years). Parents gave their reasons for community involvement as:

- 'security of knowing I have close people in the community';
- 'I am part of the community and have to be part of them at all times'.

The activities of the first respondent in the Burial Society include the monthly gathering and saving of funds, the distribution of financial and emotional support to bereaved individuals who are members of the Society as well as to other members of the black community. The perception of belonging to the black community is expressed by the sentiment of 'support', and by the knowledge that there are 'close people in the community'.

The second respondent who is a member of the National Assembly for Women in South Africa explains her activities within this organization as the 'sharing of constructive ideas for the upliftment of life in poverty stricken areas like squatter camps in the township'; providing food and clothes to orphanages and to elderly people.

Thus far, a distinction can be made between the formal involvement of parents in community structures, and the intangible involvement. The latter type of involvement refers to the feelings and perceptions of parents about identification and being alienated by their own communities. The importance of these intangible feelings surfaced in section 7.9 above.

In addition to the two respondents who are involved with social issues in the community, the study found one respondent who concerned himself with educational upliftment of township schools. He is involved in support programmes with high school children and he explained his motivation as follows:

> When I got involved in the support programmes with high school children starting from standard 8, I thought maybe one could expand the programme. I suddenly found that basic skills were lacking at standard 8 and if they are lacking at standard 8, you start asking the question - what these schools claim to be doing. So I came to the conclusion that even in schools, one finds that teachers are demoralised into a situation where they cannot see what their duty is.

His initial involvement included helping students through support programmes. However, having identified the problem of 'demoralised' teachers, the respondent was motivated to be involved with teachers:

> I am now assisting teachers who are at University - who study through UNISA, but are still with the schools. I was looking at results in Soweto.

> One of the schools with the best results was a school which has got 2 Science teachers who happen to be in this [UNISA] programme.

The respondent's involvement is not limited to assisting teachers improve their educational credentials, but also includes motivating teachers:

> From the onset I said to the 2 teachers that one of the things that you will do is not to abandon children because you are studying. Rather, you must use what information you acquired here and the method of acquiring this information and you assist your children. If I compare the results, I found that they produce the best maths and physical science results. I don't want to say that because we are helping them educationally, I want to say that because we make them committed to what they are doing, which is another factor which I suspect is lacking in township schools.

Involvement in issues affecting the community refutes the conception of middle class individuality. The parents become involved for reasons other than those associated with their class position. As members of the black community, they are aware of the plight of their communities, hence their involvement in these. The experiences of being discriminated against (within the racial discourse) drive them towards community upliftment.

7.11 INVOLVEMENT IN OPEN SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

This leads into comments that were extracted from investigations of attitudes of open school communities and also questions the extent to which incorporation into these communities has occurred.

When asked whether they lived within the open school surrounding community, all respondents showed that they did not. Most of them lived in black townships. They perceived the geographic location of the school, transport problems, and lack of time as restricting the extent of their involvement. The responses that showed the impact of these limitations were:

> I live in the township where there is violence and I find it difficult to attend parents' meetings if they happen to be at night.

The geographic location of these schools had financial disadvantages which impacted negatively on their involvement:

> distance means extra expenditure otherwise I have no serious problem, except when my work demands, to attend to all matters when needed.

It was interesting to note that, despite these constraints, parents do show a willingness to attend school activities. One respondent expressed this willingness as:

> for now it [i.e. geographic location of the school] does affect me a great deal. I hope to eliminate this by getting a place around Johannesburg.

Despite the constraints of geographic location, time and lack of transport, responses show that incorporation into the open school community is significant. This can be picked up from the increasing parental involvement in [illegible] communities, and it is reinforced by the favourable attitude of the school towards such involvement (refer to section 7.11.1 below).

7.11.1 The nature of parental involvement in open schools

Data that explains parental involvement has been clustered around two main themes: passive and active involvement.

Passive involvement is described by parents in the following terms:

> 'attending meetings and supporting functions';
>
> 'I am involved as a guest i[illegible]nctions organized by the school';
>
> 'attending general meetings at night'.

Active involvement was expressed as:

> I am a member of the governing board - i.e. chairman of th[illegible] PTA which helps organise funds for school functions.

This active involvement only focuses on organizing functions and fund-raising activities, such as fêtes, twilight discos, raffles and cake sales. Funds raised are used for renovations and maintenance of buildings, and starting a Maths Computer centre. Parental activities within the school do not encroach on the

day-to-day running of the school. The only time when parents participate in classroom activities is when they have to check and sign homework and diaries; or when they consult with teachers on matters pertaining to the child's progress.

Parents perceive the school as supporting their involvement through the following activities:

- 'encouraging parents' open meeting';
- 'the very existence of a Parent-Teacher-Association';
- 'the school provides diaries for each child with all the day-to-day activities of the school';
- 'newsletters-circulars, school magazine';
- 'the school provides a suggestion box'.

These responses show that the open school does provide ways through which parents can contribute to the school. It would be interesting to determine the extent to which the school implements parental suggestions. This aspect, however, falls beyond the scope of this research.

Lastly, the accrual benefit to their children's education that results from their involvement is further reason for parental participation in open school activities. This means that a correlation exists between parental involvement at school and their children's performance.

This is evident in their responses:

> it [i.e. involvement in school] has ensured that I know what is happening at school and therefore I can offer more meaningful support to my children's efforts at learning.

and:

> he is aware that I do communicate with the school so work which is up to standard is expected of him.

also:

> she works harder as she always thinks I will be meeting her teacher at all times for a report.

Data in section 7.2 above has revealed that parents associate open schools with a high quality of education. They in turn as parents have to ensure that they contribute to such high standards by having a keen interest and by involving themselves in their children's schooling. This is in line with the respondent who explained the inferior standard of black education as being caused by 'parents' lack of interest in schooling matters'. It further confirms Muller's arguement on the problems of depleted social capital in black communities that was outlined in Chapter 4.

7.12 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN BELGRAVIA COMMUNITY

The fact that parents' activities are limited to the school and do not extend beyond this is an indication that the parents themselves do not belong to the Belgravia community.

One respondent perceives this limited involvement, i.e. participation in school-related activities, to result from the following factor:

> Belgravia [school] has changed; it is predominantly black. Even the surburb where it is, is fast changing. Because the suburb [is] fast changing, the children going to these [are] bound to change. It is largely attended by children who commute over long distances.

The fact that the school is located in the Belgravia community, but is serving a community which is elsewhere, was expressed by the following parent:

> parents who are involved in the school they themselves do not belong there and in any case the school does not serve Belgravia. It is serving a completely different community from Belgravia. And so you cannot expect the parents to be involved in a community that they do not live in. It is all right that the school is serving their community wherever they are, other than in Belgravia.

This parent is attempting to show that in an ideal situation, maximum participation in both school and community activities is possible if the school is located in the community it serves. The community which surrounds Belgravia partially benefits from the school but not wholly, because the school has since become 'predominantly black'. A large percentage of its clientele live in black townships. The parent goes on to state that:

> if then you were to take Belgravia and take it as a school which is operating properly and put it in a community like Soweto, and then ask

> the question of parental involvement in the school, the answer would be different. What would happen is that, whereas Belgravia invites parents from long distances to be involved in schooling matters, were it Belgravia in Soweto, you would invite parents but parents wouldn't need to drive. They would be part of the organisation of whatever school event.

Furthermore, the relationship between the school and the community would mean that it is not only parents who attend to schooling matters, but other members of the community as well:

> You would have not only parents attending to schooling matters, but you would have members of the community attending. Sometimes, you don't even need to have your child in the school, but because the school is located within your community, then you would have a keen interest in schooling issues.

One parent adds that the above scenario of having Belgravia in Soweto would have its advantages, but the state of the black community would make it impossible:

> The idea of Belgravia in Soweto would be advantageous to children. They wouldn't be up at 06h00 if they must be at school at 08h00, they would be with people who understand their value system. But, I think what has happened is that the conditions outside township schools have contributed to the breakdown of township schools. For instance,

> the value systems of Soweto are cock-eyed. On simple matters of running the school, you find that the breakdown in discipline which I say is in the school, you'll actually come to understand that it is not in the school actually, but in the surrounding community.

One respondent showed the decline of community values in Soweto by using the example of Orlando High School. The school was recently rebuilt through donations from its former students, but has since been deteriorating:

> One would have hoped that the rebuilding of Orlando High school by its *alma mater* would boost people around the school. If these ex-students rebuild the school and its doors get destroyed, then who destroys the school? This destruction obviously has to do with the community surrounding the school.

This again is an indication that the communities have broken down to the extent that they do not even appreciate and value the efforts of the members of the communities.

7.13 SUMMARY

Analysis of the responses has shown that although the clientele of Belgravia Convent come from the middle class and the working class, both social groupings gave similar reasons for their choice of school. However, a further analysis of these reasons reveals that working class parents also laid emphasis on job security.

When compared to open school education, parents' perceptions of township education showed dissatisfaction. This emanated from poor learning conditions within the schools themselves, conditions within the surrounding environment of the schools, and the structuring of the schools. Responses show that these factors contribute to the open school choice.

In addition to the impact of the socio-political climate within and outside township schools, religion also influenced parents' choice of open school education. The impact of gender was, however, not significant to the open school choice.

From the responses, one notices that upon entering the open school system, parents' involvement in these is, however, limited. Firstly, this is due to the negative effects of political and social instability in the townships where they come from. Secondly, parents do not reside within the Belgravia community. As a result, they have to travel long distances from their unstable black communities in order to attend open school events, which are invariably held at night. Furthermore, as members of the open school community, one would expect them to dissociate themselves from involvement in township communities. The opposite was nevertheless found. Parents still consider themselves as members of the black communities, hence their involvement in these.

CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSION

The focus of the study has been geared towards refuting economism and replacing it with a multipluralist perspective. With regard to the perceptions of parents of open school education, economism would have undermined the influence of such dimensions as religion, race, gender and contemporary political climate on consciousness. The contrary was however found, which was in line with the multipluralist perspective, which articulates economic dimensions with other criteria.

8.1 DEFINITION OF THE SAMPLE

The line of demarcation between the middle class and working class was confined within the boundaries of their economic activities (what they do at work), with the inclusion of the effects of non-economic factors such as gender and race on their economic roles. Political and ideological relations within the economic category, which emphasise the subjects' power to control the economic role of others, helped to define more clearly the boundaries between classes. The results confirmed the economic distinction in accordance with Poulantzas' definition of the middle classes.

With regard to the economistic view, the study defined all subjects as wage earners. Occupations were classified as productive or unproductive, the latter being occupations that do not produce physical commodities. Occupations

such as domestic servant and senior advisory systems analyst were defined as service-oriented, and classified under the category of unproductive labour. However, in such instances, the political and ideological roles were used to clarify the distinction between the incumbents of such occupations (c.f. Wright, section 2.6.2 in chapter 2). While the position of the senior advisory systems analyst was found to incorporate both political and ideological relations of domination, that of the domestic servant lacked these.

Class distinctions were further combined with issues relating to racial and gender discrimination. These were found to exert some significant influence on relations of production, particularly within political criteria that organize the relations of production. These, especially racial discrimination, originate outside the workplace, yet they affect the relations of production (refer to section 6.5). For instance, in executing their tasks, even the middle classes were found to have limited control, and were in turn controlled along racial lines. Racial discrimination was found to intrude into the workplace. Similarly, race, gender and socio-political factors were found to impinge on the consciousness of parents.

8.2 MIDDLE CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

Education was seen as the most critical dimension that distinguished the middle class from the working class. In addition to this, education was seen as the most critical factor in the career path of the middle class, in that middle

class parents were found to have the ambition to advance further in their careers. Respondents in this class position are well aware of the necessity to possess the appropriate credentials and to execute effective performance for success within their respective careers. Thus, parents perceived education as a definite means of advancement to the higher echelons of the occupational hierarchy. There was thus a positive outlook and an attitude of self-reliance to initiate success. Gender and racial discrimination were further additions to education in terms of their influence in the workplace of the middle class.

Black/White and Male/Female relations, as experienced by the parents, were also found to influence parents' consciousness. The study found that the major problems confronting the middle class parents in their occupations are racial and gender discrimination, which are experienced as unequal treatment.

Similarly, the racially based system of education creates an artificial shortage by acting as a barrier in the effective carrying out of certain tasks within the workplace. Once these restrictions are removed, then the black middle class is expected to be promoted into more senior positions on the basis of merit, and will perform on an equal footing with their white counterparts. For this to happen, the black middle class must be given equal educational opportunities for exercising full political and ideological control. Racial and gender issues which impact upon their economic activities will have to be addressed.

The findings tended to re-inforce the argument that class does not undermine the importance of one's gender and race. People do not necessarily see themselves as members of a particular social class. When defining their being, other subjectivities come into play. For instance, parents' definitions of their middle class position were not only in terms of economic, political or ideological relations that operate within the workplace, but were combined with race and/or gender, hence the term 'black female middle class'.

From the reasons which parents give for the open school choice, the study has found that parents are constituted within certain discourses. These are listed below as:

* the social class discourse
* the racial discourse
* the geographic discourse
* the religious discourse

It was expected that another discourse which seems to exert a powerful influence on economic activities, would feature in the responses on open schools. This discourse, i.e. gender, was however found not to play any significant role in influencing the open school choice. This shows that parents' perceptions of education are predominantly in racial, class, political, and religious terms.

Table 1 and Figures 1 - 5 below elaborate on the content of the different discourses and section 8.3 details the relationship between these and shows how these relations provide conditions in which the open school choice is made.

TABLE 1. THE CONSTITUTION OF PARENTS' IDENTITIES.

DISCOURSE	*IDENTITY*	*ABBREVIATION*	*EXPRERIENCE WITHIN DISCOURSE*
1. SOCIAL CLASS	a. Working class identity	WI	i) better education ii) job security
	b. Middle class identity	MI	i) better education ii) upward mobility iii) individualism
2. RACIAL	a. Discriminated identity	R(DI)	i) deprived education ii) distinct social integration iii) apartheid racism
	b. Cultural identity	R(CI)	i) dstinct African cultures, values and beliefs ii) fear of assimilation
	c. Parent identity	R(PaI)	i) imparting African cultures ii) child losing African heritage iii) child being alienated from black community
	d. Political identity	R(PI)	*i) RACIAL UNITY* • community buildup • upgrading the worth of the nation • creating a literate nation *ii) RACIAL DISUNITY* • dividing the black social fabric along material and educational lines
3. GEOGRAPHIC	a. Geographic identity	GI	i) social instability ii) political and criminal violence iii) involvement in local community iv) low involvement in open school community
4. RELIGIOUS	a. Religious identity	ReI	i) catholic orientation of this particular open school
5. GENDER	a. Gender identity	GeI	NO RESPONSE THAT SHOWS THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER IDENTITY ON CHOICE OF OPEN SCHOOL EDUCATION.

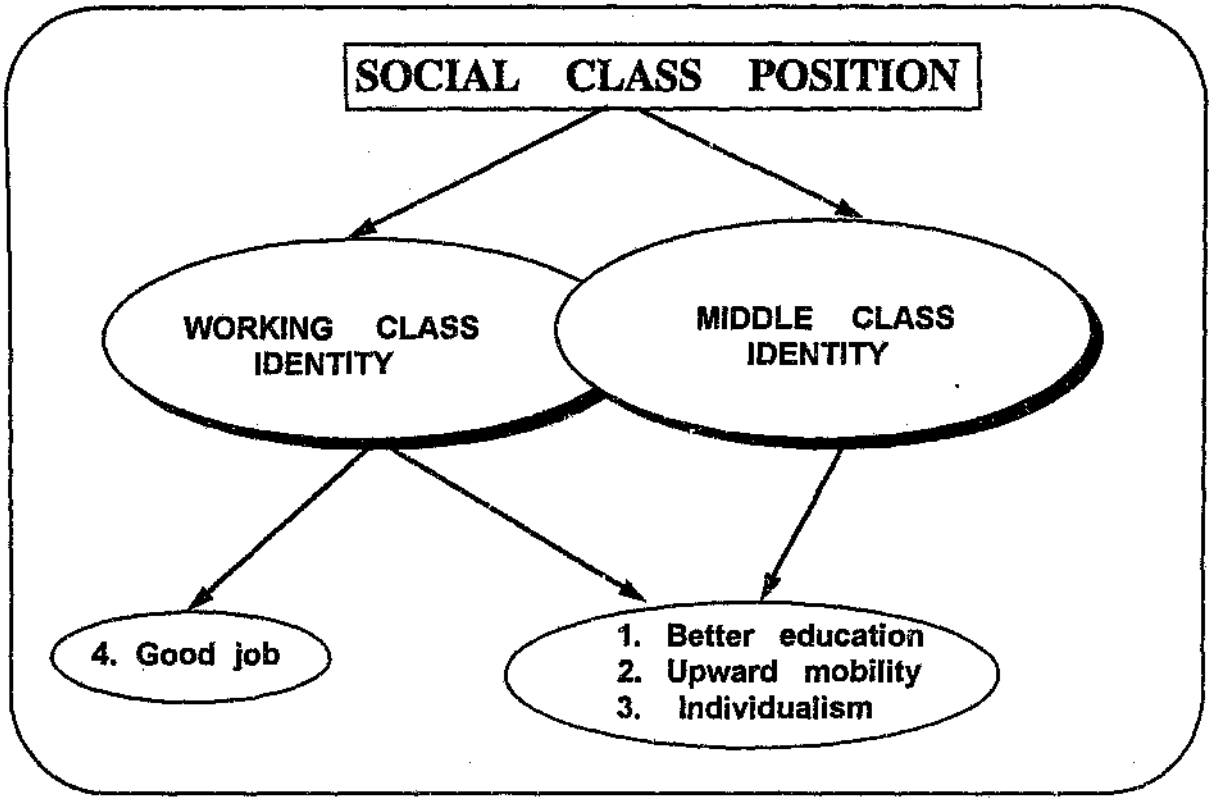


FIGURE 1: A diagramatic representation of the social class identity which shows the content of the middle class and working class subject position.

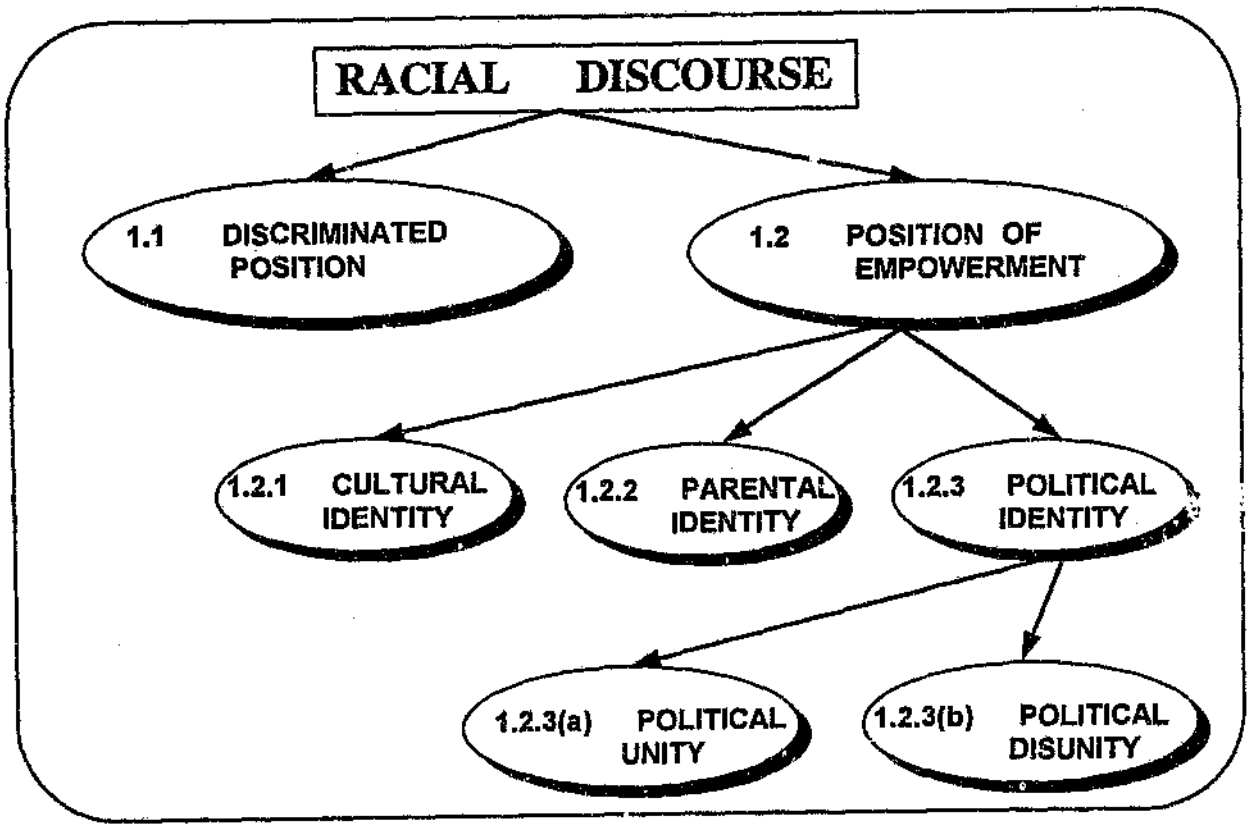


FIGURE 2: A representation of the racial discourse in which parents gain their racial identity. The diagram reflects the content of parents' position of empowerment.

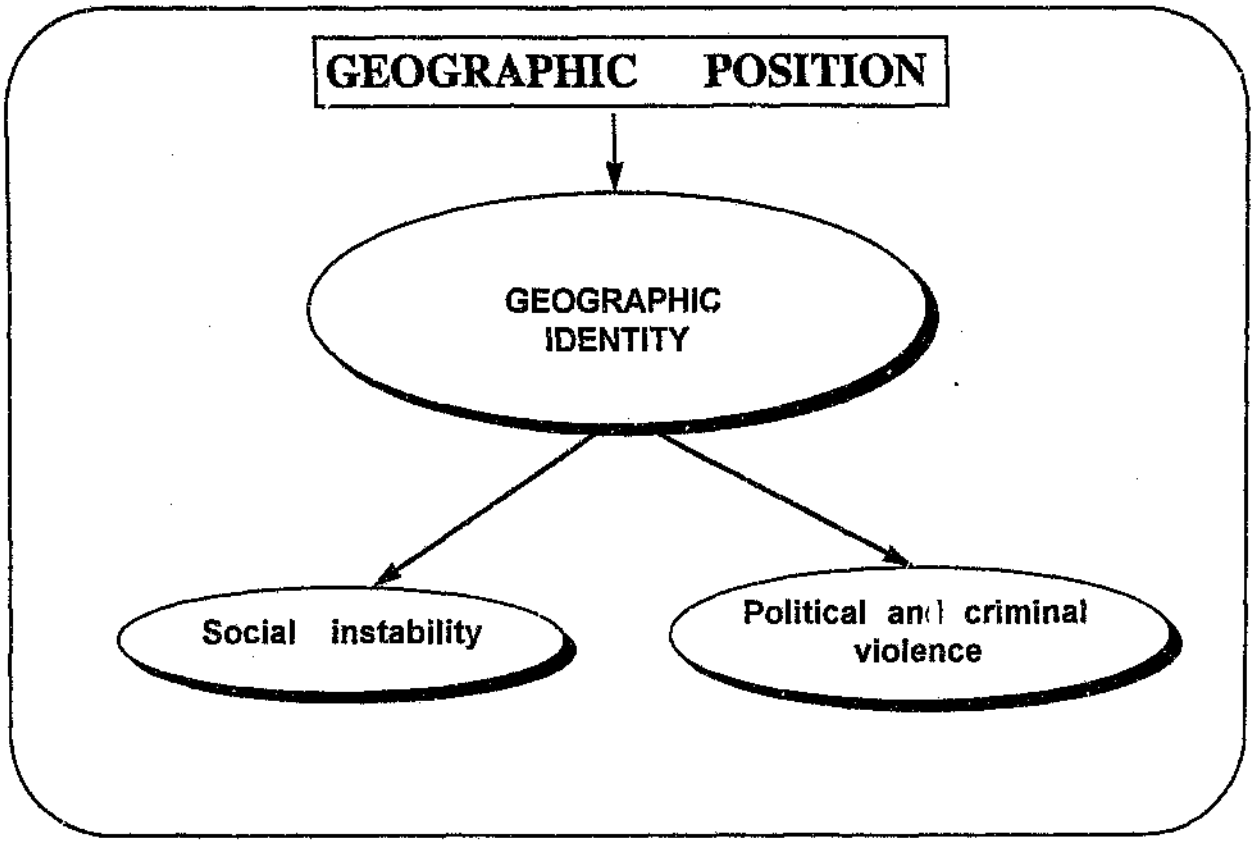


FIGURE 3: A diagram that shows the experiences of social and political instability within the geographic discourse.

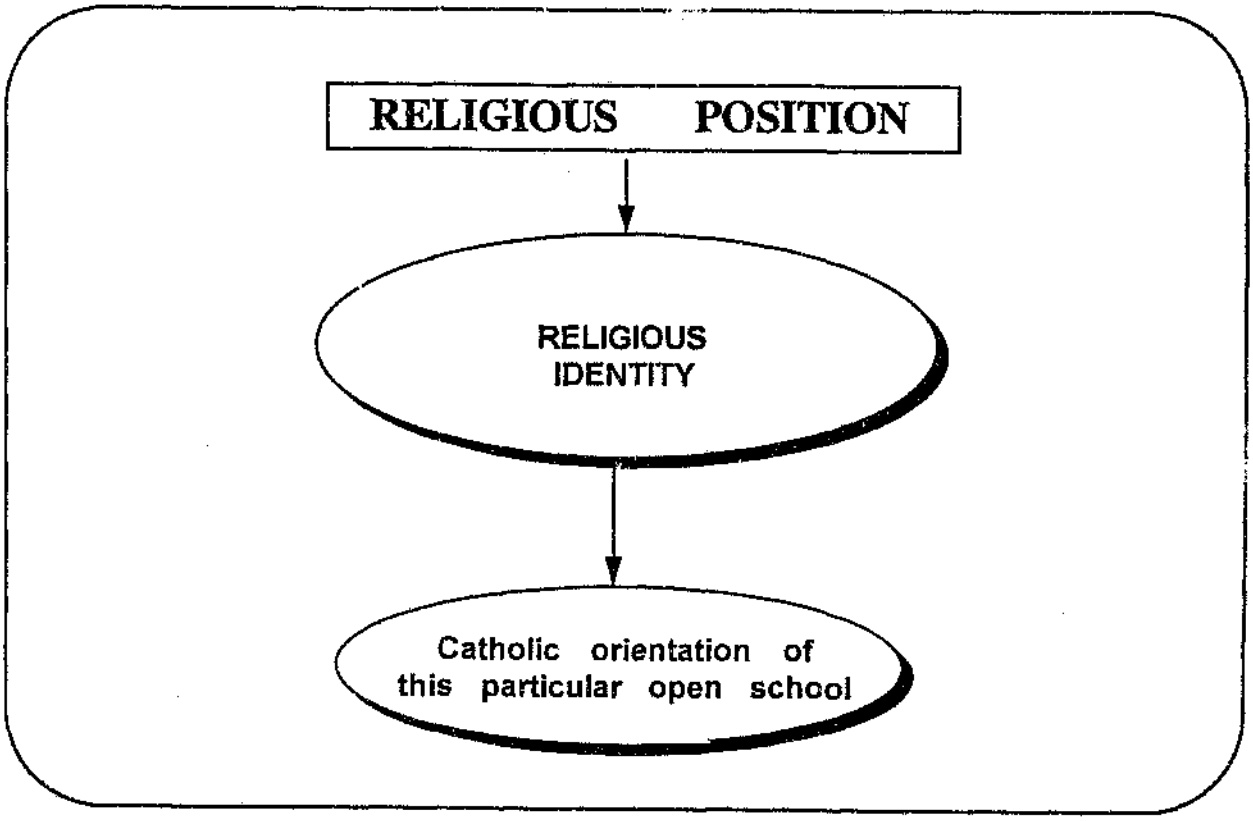


FIGURE 4: The representation of the content of the religious discourse.

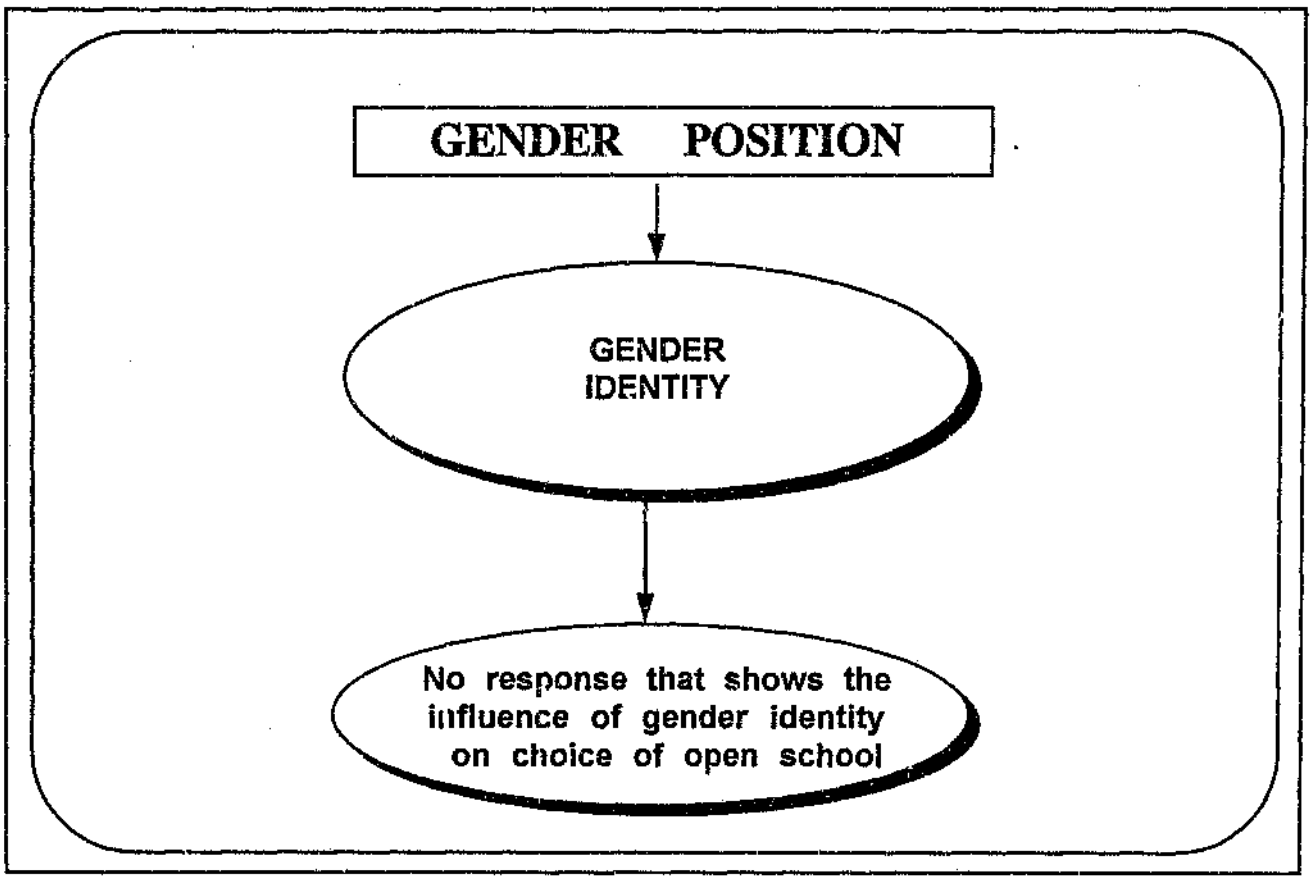


FIGURE 5: A representation of the gender identity and its lack of impact on the open school choice.

8.3 THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC, RACIAL, GEOGRAPHIC AND RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES ON PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF OPEN SCHOOLS

From their responses on 'reasons for sending children to open schools', the study has been able to tease out different discourses in which the views of black parents are constructed, the first is social class position [WI] and [MI] and its inherent ideology of 'upward mobility', which is reflected in the 'high

standard of education' and 'better education' that parents associate with open schools. The second is associated with the inferior black education which is specifically designed along racial lines [R(DI)]. Parents use such terms as 'deprived' and 'disastrous' to describe the state of black education. The third is the religious orientation of the parent [Rel], while the fourth is the geographic or regional discourse [GI], which is characterised by political and social instability. These discourses were found to exert a powerful influence on parents' educational thinking.

One of the contexts through which the 'discriminated subjectivity', is experienced by the sample, is black education. Parents characterise this context as follows:

* 'being founded on segregationist policy by the government';
* 'different fund allocation by the government to black and white education';
* 'control by white authorities who are just there for the sake of getting a bigger slice of cake'.

The above responses highlight parents' experiences of apartheid racism, which are located within the context of the racial discourse [R(DI)]. These listed features relegate the black education system to lower standards. This is further reflected in their responses directly about black education, which they frame in terms of 'overcrowding in classes', 'inadequate teaching

facilities', and 'inferior standard of education'. Because of their middle class status [MI], they aspire to certain middle class values such as 'high standard of education', which represents the phenomenon of 'upward mobility', which they desire their children to achieve through education. Similarly, because of their 'discriminated subjectivity' [R(DI)], as reflected in 'disastrous' education in the township, they opt for better education. Some overlap is then created between their racial identity, and therefore being subjected to inferior black education [R(DI)], and the desire to maintain their middle class aspirations [MI]. They attempt to fulfill the middle class desire, and to escape from inferior black education through the adoption of the one alternative, i.e. open schools, which they perceive as having 'high standard of education', 'better teaching facilities', 'dedicated teachers'. By resorting to open schools, they have managed to overcome the problems associated with black education which they perceive as discriminated black parents [R(DI)], and also satisfy their middle class aspirations [MI]; at the same time, however, this contradicts the need to maintain racial unity [R(PI)i]. On the one hand, they perceive open schools as imparting and maintaining middle class values, with the expected results of success and upward mobility, while on the other hand, their racial identity, which strongly manifests itself in terms of racial unity, creates some tension between MI and R[PI(I)]. The tension is diagramatically represented in Figure 6 below:

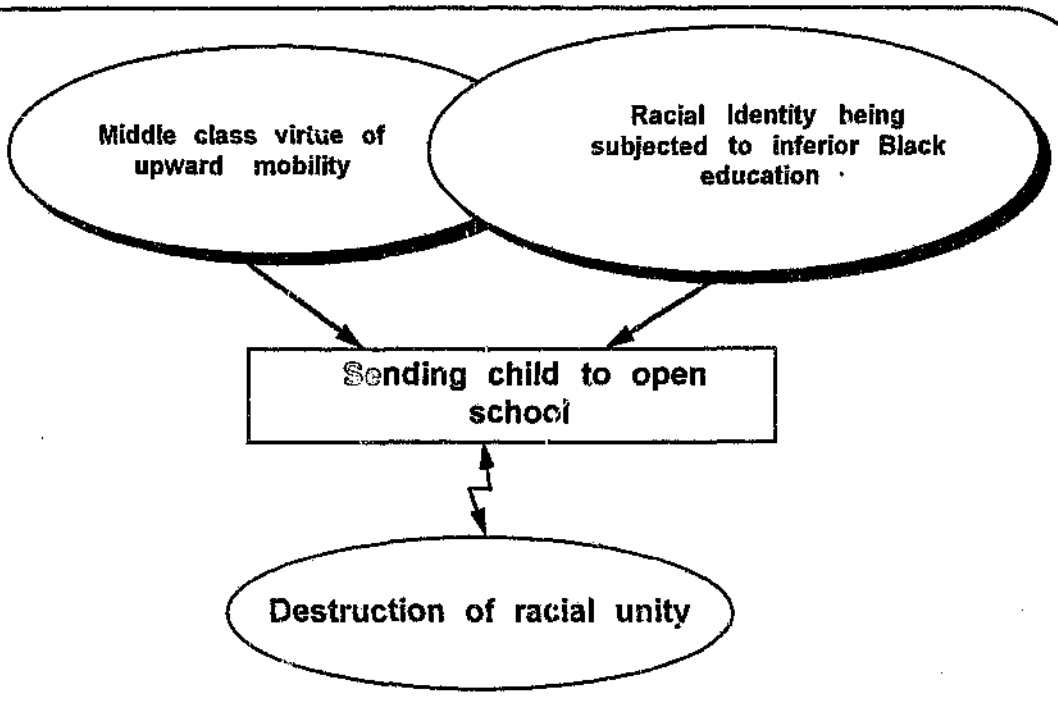


Figure 6 :The overlap between M1 and D1 and the tension between these and P1(i)

The religious motives for which open schools were chosen do not oppose the social class, racial or geographic identities of the parents. Rather, the reasons which stress the religious continuity between the school and the church (refer to section 7.4) complement 'better education', the latter typified as being a purely middle class motive. Choosing open schools for religious reasons, however, contradicts the political identity of parents. The movement into open schools which is motivated by religious reasons divides the black social fabric along educational lines [R(PI)ii].

Although one finds religiously-oriented schools in the township, such as St Peter Clavier, which have a predominantly Catholic outlook, these parents

have still chosen the open school. One then proceeds to ask, 'why the open school choice?' The study has shown that the criteria for the choice of open school education are not only explicable within a religious context. Instead, the escalating political and social instability in the townships [GI], the above spilling into black education, prompted parents [R(Pal)] to leave these communities by sending their children to alternative educational institutions such as open schools. For instance, one of the findings of this study has confirmed that the state of disarray within the wider black community: 'conditions outside the school have much to do with the breakdown of the school', and within the schools in particular, prompted parents to leave township schools. This constituted one of the reasons why parents moved into open schools. Parents saw this movement as an individual solution [MI] to the crisis situation facing the black township communities [R(DI, Pal)]. In other words, the regions [GI], together with their inherent political instability [R(PI)], supplement the religious reasons [Rel] for which open schools were chosen.

Having decided on open school education (due to GI), it becomes paradoxical to find political instability [GI(ii)] acting as one of the inhibiting factors to open school involvement [R(Pal)]. In this sense, the residential status of the parent within the township stands at some tension with his/her involvement in the open school community:

> 'I live in the township where there is violence and I find it difficult to attend parents' meetings if they happen to be at night'.

This tension is represented diagramatically in figure 7 below.

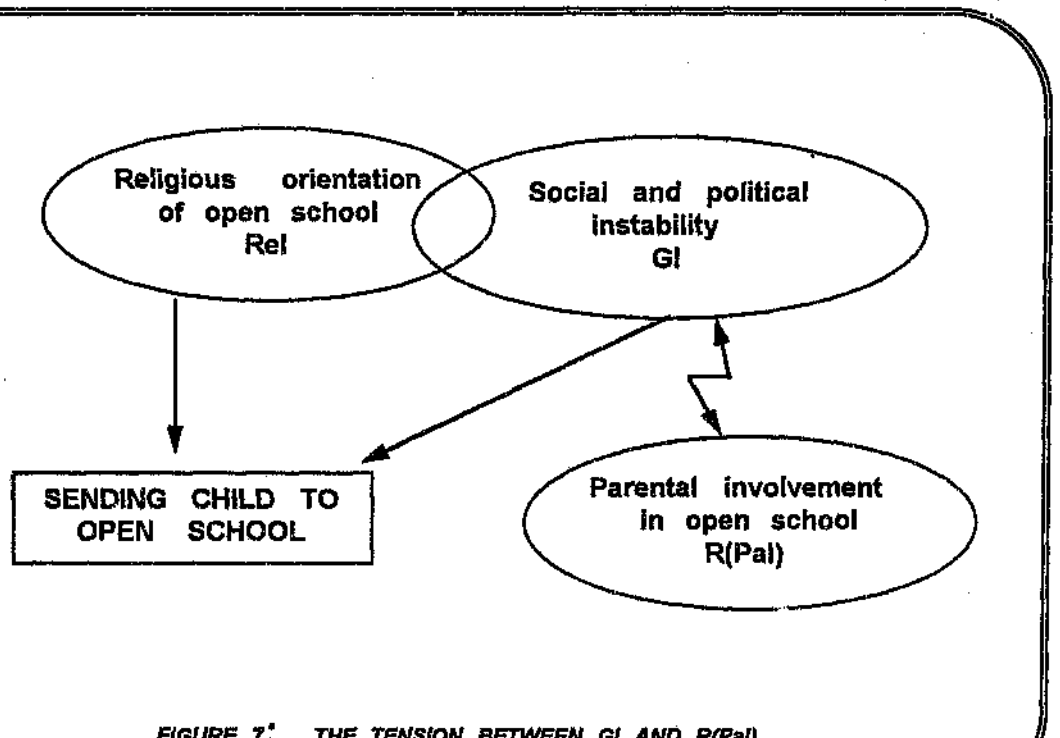


FIGURE 7: THE TENSION BETWEEN GI AND R(Pal)

In spite of the multitude of reasons for sending children to open schools, which came from an articulation of parents' social class position [WI] or [MI], racial [R(DI)], geographic [GI] and religious [ReI] identities, one could trace that parents have fears of children losing their cultural heritage [R(PaI)] and [CI]. They express this as

'white culture is catered for [in open schools], and not ours'.

The 'ours' referred to is African culture, and the identity articulated is the cultural identity [R(CI)].

The fear of being assimilated into open schools and of losing African culture [R(PaI)], [R(CI)] and [R(PI)ii] contradicts the reasons for sending children to

open schools [WI], [MI], [R(DI)], [R(PI)I], [GI], [ReI] because open school communities do not cater for 'our' African culture. The conflict is also evident in the following phrase:

> what happens in open schools is that you will get all of these concerts and you would get all of the cultures. You are lucky if you get one which will give you aspects of African culture. [R(CI)]

The tension that exists between parents' identities, and which further explain this 'fear of assimilation', is found in

> 'the acquisition of skills [MI] and [R(DI)], but there is also the question of values'. [R(PaI, CI)].

One assumes that the values referred to here are African values as opposed to white values. So, on the one level, open schools are used for the 'acquisition of skills', yet on the cultural level, the acquisition of African values from these schools becomes questionable. The importance of skills [MI], [R(DI)] and [R(PI)I] and African values [R(PaI, CI)] is an interesting case of antagonistic and contradictory identities, wherein neither is subordinate.

One way out of the impasse of conflicting identities [between MI, R(DI) and R(CI)] evokes their parental role [R(PaI)] of passing on African values, which are lacking in both the township community and the open school community (refer to section 7.8).

> 'There are certain values we hold as Africans [R(CI and DI)] and it is those values which we [R(PaI)] inculcate to the kids themselves.'

The 'we' above is a collective identification of the African group [R(CI)], together with its accompanying values, beliefs and cultural systems. The collective political experiences of blacks [R(DI)] which lead to racial unity [R(PI)i] - i.e., political empowerment, are supported by the cultural system [CI], which is idiosynchratic to the African group. It is within black communities [R(PI)i] that the prevalence of African cultures bring about racial unity, i.e. the achievement of R(DI), R(PI)i through R(CI). The study has shown that the experiences within the cultural context are significant to the constitution of parental identities. The importance of culture is evident in the following: 'you are lucky if you get ... aspects of African culture.' African culture then becomes one of the discourses within which parental identity is formed.

The political subjectivity of parents is typified by their attempts at upgrading their own communities [R(PI)i], which are racially defined [R(DI)]. Similarly, parents' experiences within the political context are shown at the level of their open school motivations. Expressions such as 'I still believe in integration, I then opt for open schools' reflect their political experience of segregation and having separate education systems [R(DI)]. The desire for 'integration' is an indication of the need to overcome discrimination.

Racial unity [R(PI)i], however, stands at some tension with dividing the black social fabric [R(PI)ii]. The latter is caused by parents who leave their communities for the open school community, and thereby create material and educational inequalities, i.e. 'a mark of difference between those who can

afford and those who cannot afford' (disunity). The irony of the tension that exists within the political discourse is that one of the educational motivators for the open school choice (which results in social disunity) is conceived as a motivator for the empowerment of the black nation. Open school parents are seeking 'the appropriate tool to use elsewhere and then bring that tool back'. They also identify the 'problems associated with deprived education [R(DI)] as regards ... an illiterate nation'. Upgrading the worth of the black nation is nevertheless achieved at the expense of political unity.

The political identity, together with its principles of community commitment [R(PI)i], stands in sharp contrast to the middle class identity [(MI)], with its inherent stress of individuality. In terms of the middle class identity, the movement into open schools for purposes of getting better education (individual achievement) contradicts their political and racial identities which emphasise political unity and racial intergration. In other words, there exists a tension between MI and R[PI(i)]. With regard to their racial identity, parents have shown an allegiance to their communities and a willingness to upgrade these (refer to section 7.10). Yet, the middle class identity, which stresses individual achievement, forces them to leave their communities. This paragraph shows the struggle between the MI, R(PI) and RI subject positions.

Despite the tension between the MI, R(PI) and RI identities, the study has shown that parental understanding of the 'escape from disastrous education in the township' is perceived from a discriminated position [R(DI)]. Therefore,

parents' experiences of 'disastrous and deprived education' complement the middle class experience of sending children to open schools, which, as mentioned above, is antagonistic to their community allegiance [R(PI)i].

A parent who occupies the middle class position and who shows a commitment to uplifting his community, experiences some tension between his social class identity and his political identity. On the one hand, he is individualistic [(MI)], yet on the other hand, his socio-political experiences account for his involvement in his community [R(PI)i] (refer to section 7.10). The tension between the middle class identity [(MI)] and the political identity [R(PI)i] is diagramatically represented in Figure 8 below.

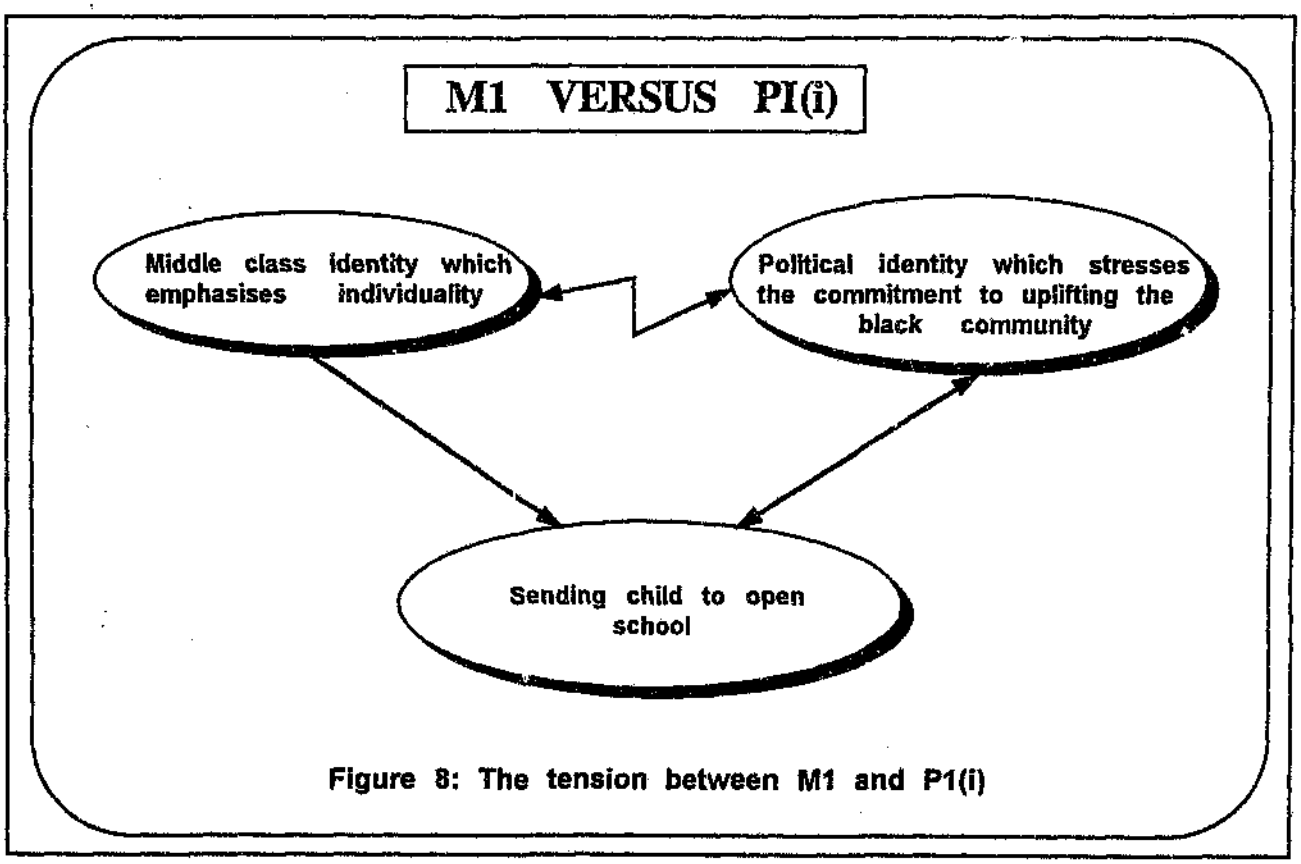


Figure 8: The tension between M1 and P1(i)

The above is an example wherein one notices a struggle between the social class and socio-political identities. When community issues are in the fore, the parents' social class identity assumes a position which is subordinate to their political identity. Likewise, when social class issues are in the fore, the opposite occurs. This means that the contradictory identities all assume some form of an integrated 'I', which operate by foregrounding and backgrounding some identities. The influence of the identities, nevertheless, depends on particular historical conjunctures. For instance, the study found that during the present period of political and social turmoil, the gender identity has assumed a subordinate position with regard to educational issues. The minimal impact of the gender identity, however, does not exclude it from constituting the integrated 'I'.

The following is a hypothetical example of an individual who sends his child to an open school because of:

* better quality of education [(MI)];
* lower standards of education to which blacks are subjected [R(DI)];
* religious orientation of the school [(ReI)];
* the prevailence of political violence in his or her community [GI];
* believes in integration [R(PI)];
* intends to uplift the worth of the nation [R(PI)i.

The hypothetical individual, however, shows some concern about losing African values [R(CI)], and yet shows a commitment to upgrading his/her community [R(PI)i]. The individual thus exhibits the articulation of the middle class, discriminatory, religious, geographic, racial, political, and cultural subjectivities which contrast with and complement each other.

Following from the above interplay between the different identities, Cross' explanation of 'privileged elite' becomes a simplistic identification of open school parents. It was shown in Chapter 4, section 4.2, that he emphasised the social class identity of open school parents: 'black children attending these schools come by and large from a black middle class background'. He particularly defined their identity in terms of their ability to pay the 'relatively expensive fees' imposed by these schools, while at the same time neglecting the influence of other identities which constitute the subject positions of parents. The study found that the motivators for the open school choice were not restricted within the economic discourse (for instance the socio-economic status - 'privileged elite'), but extended beyond the economic boundaries to include aspects which are located within the political, racial, religious and geographic discourses. These, in conjunction with the economic standing of parents, were influenced by the current historical context which is characterised by political and social instability. These discourses were found to exert some impact on the parents' identities, which, therefore, account for the multifarious identities of open school parents, rather than Cross' simplistic 'privileged elite' identity. These multifarious identities were found to articulate

with one another in a complementary or antagonistic way when motivating the parents' choice of open school education. The gender identity was found not to impact on the parents' choice of school.

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS

OCCUPATION	POSITION	EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS
PROFESSIONAL	school inspector	M.Ed.
	systems analyst	B.Sc
	lecturer (university)	Ph.D
	lecturer (college of education)	B.A. (honours)
	deputy principal	M.Ed.
	deputy principal	B.A. (honours)
	deputy head	B.A. (honours)
	headmaster	U.E.D.
	senior nurse	B.Curr.
	lecturer (college of education)	B.A. (honours)
	registrar in paediatrics	MB ChB
	assistant teacher	senior teachers diploma
	senior process chemical engineer	B.Sc. (honours) chem. engineering
MANAGEMENT	recruitment and financial manager	• B.Comm. • PDM
	senior library administrator	B. Comm.
	managing director	B. Admin.
	export manager	diploma in salesmanship
	marketing manager	MAP
	advisory systems analyst	B.A.; MAP; MDP
	bank manager	inhouse training
	quantitative analyst manager	B.Pharm.; B.A. (honours)
	business consultant	B.Comm.
CLERICAL/SERVICE	faculty administrative secretary	• secretarial skills; • wordprocessing
	sports reporter	diploma in basic marketing
	personnel assistant	diploma in basic marketing

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS

OCCUPATION	POSITION	EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS
UNSKILLED	cleaner	standard 7
	traffic controller	standard 8
	taxi driver	standard 6
	housekeeper	• standard 6; • dressmaking
	domestic servant	standard 9

SUMMARY OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE

FIRST POSITION HELD	RESONS FOR GIVING UP	PRESENT JOB TITLE
•	•	senior nurse
stores clerk	better prospect	export manager
computer systems specialist	career prospects	systems analyst
marketing manager	better offer elsewhere	managing director
teacher	further studies	school inspector
medical doctor	specialised	registrar in paediatrics
•	•	lecturer (college of education)
plant metallurgist	economic issues	senior process chemical engineer
senior government clerk	greener pastures	bank manager
educational training officer	low salary	marketing manager
teacher	moved to better position	advisory systems analyst
factory manager	new position	quantitative analyst manager
teacher	study	deputy principal
•	•	senior library administrator
teacher	insufficient salary	personnel assistant
•	•	lecturer (college of education)
buyer	upward mobility	business consultant
management trainee	need for better scope	recruitment and financial manager
advisory assistant	promotion	faculty administrative secretary
teacher	further studies	headmaster
•	•	assistant teacher
•	•	taxi driver
•	•	housekeeper
•	•	domestic servant

Key: • *No data was supplied*

SUMMARY OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE

FIRST POSITION HELD	REASON FOR GIVING UP	PRESENT JOB TITLE
•	•	traffic controller
•	•	cleaner
teacher	promotion	deputy head
	•	deputy principal
sports reporter for *Sowetan*	better post	sports reporter on *The Star*
teacher	study	lecturer (university)

Key: • *No data was supplied*

It is interesting to note that the taxi driver, housekeeper, domestic servant, traffic controller and cleaner do not show what their first occupations were. On the basis of this lack of information, one is led to conclude that the present occupations were their initial ones. Their scope of movement into other occupations is limited by their low standard of education. (refer to Appendix 1 for the educational standards of the sample.)

APPENDIX 3

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

WHAT DO OPEN SCHOOLS MEAN FOR BLACK PARENTS?

1. Title .....

2. Marital Status
   - Never Married .....
   - Married .....
   - Divorced .....
   - Widowed .....
   - Separated .....

CAREER ORIENTATION

3. Which company do you work for? .....

4. What position do you hold at work? .....

5. What position does your spouse hold at work? .....

   .....

6. Is this your first occupation?

   YES ..... NO .....

   If no, provide information on previous employment on the table below:

7. 8. 9. 10.

TYPE OF PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT	LENGTH OF TIME	POSITION HELD	REASONS FOR GIVING UP

11. Describe the tasks that your current job entails. .....

.....

12. Do you feel the need to improve your career?

YES ..... NO .....

13. Why do you feel so? Why do you feel so?

....

....

14. How does your company motivate and encourage you to advance in your career? .....

.....

15. Do you feel the need to improve your educational qualifications?

YES ..... NO .....

16. Why do you need to? Why don't you need to?

....

....

17. In what way are you involved in the planning side of the company you work for?.....

.....

18. Do you organize or control the activities of others?

YES ..... NO .....

19. If yes, how? .....

.....

20. Are you involved in the training of company employees?

YES ..... NO.....

21. If yes, which type of training? .....

.....

22. Give three areas of responsibility that your job requires.

.....

.....

23. Do you see yourself as part of the company management structure?

YES ..... NO.....

24. If yes, how? .....

.....

25. Do you think that your company discriminates (e.g. in terms of gender and race) on the following aspects of your job?

(a) SALARY

YES ..... NO .....

26. Why do you say so? Why do you say so?

....

....

27. (b) PROMOTION

YES ..... NO .....

28. Why do you say so? Why do you say so?

....

....

29. (c) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

YES ..... NO .....

30. Why do you say so? why do you say so?

....

....

PERCEPTIONS OF OPEN SCHOOL

31. Why did you choose to send your child to this school?

(e.g. quality of teaching, quality of students, etc.).

.....

.....

32. What reasons do you have for choosing open school education for your child? .....

.....

33. Is this the only school your child has attended?

YES ..... NO .....

34. If no, indicate the difference between this school and the previous one your child attended. .....

.....

35. Explain why you decided to change the school for your child.

.....

.....

36. How has your child benefitted from this decision?

.....

37. In which way has your school accommodated itself to the presence of black pupils? ....

.....

38. How does the school syllabus address the different cultural backgrounds of students? .....

.....

39. Are you in favour of having open schools operating in black communities?

YES ..... NO .....

40. Why do you say so? Why do you say so?

....

INVOLVEMENT OF PARENT IN OPEN SCHOOL

41. Do you consider yourself an active member of the Belgravia Convent neighbourhood?

    YES ..... NO .....

42. Is your home situated far from your school?

    YES ..... NO .....

43. Explain how the geographic location of the school affects your involvement in school matters, school functions, etc.

    .....

    .....

44. What effect has your involvement had on your child's education?

    .....

    .....

45. In which way are you involved in the running of your school?

    .....

    .....

46. In your opinion, in which way does the parent body of your school contribute to decisions made by the school? Please elaborate.

    .....

    .....

47. How does the school encourage parental involvement?

    .....

    .....

48. Are there any obstacles that affect involvement in this school?

YES ..... NO .....

49. If yes, which obstacles?

.....

.....

PERCEIVED PROBLEMS IN BLACK EDUCATION

50. In your opinion, what do you think are the major problems of the black education system? .....

.....

51. What do you think can be done to help black people improve their education system? .....

.....

52. To what extent do you think that children who go to an open school (as against a township school) will be cut off from their community?

.....

.....

53. What do you think is the opinion of the black community on open schools? .....

.....

The following statements indicate possible reasons of sending children to a *township school*. Please rate the extent to which you support these by ticking the appropriate box.

54. It is important for children to grow up with their own people who understand their culture.

VERY STRONGLY	STRONGLY	VERY LITTLE	NOT AT ALL

55. There has to be continuity between the value system of the school and the value system of the home environment.

VERY STRONGLY	STRONGLY	VERY LITTLE	NOT AT ALL

56. The community in which schools are located plays an important role in school activities.

VERY STRONGLY	STRONGLY	VERY LITTLE	NOT AT ALL

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

57. Are you a member of any community organization (e.g. Y.W.C.A.; Y.M.C.A.; N.C.A.W. etc.)?

YES ..... NO .....

If yes, indicate your affiliation below (list in order of preference).

58. 59. 60.

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	POSITION HELD	LENGTH OF TIME OF MEMBERSHIP

61. Describe your involvement in the organization

.....

62. For what reasons are you involved in your community?

.....

63. Are you involved in township schools?

YES ..... NO .....

64. In what way are you involved? Why are you not involved?

....

....

65. If township schools were to be restructured and improved, would you send your child to these schools?

YES ..... NO .....

66. Why would you? Why would you not?

....

....

CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL AMBITION

67. What are your wishes and hopes for the future education of your child? .....

.....

68. What are your wishes and hopes for your child's future career?

.....

.....

69. What are your fears and concerns for the future of your child's education? .....

.....

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