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Power and beliefs in South Africa

Economic potency structures in South Africa and their interaction with patterns of conviction in the light of a Christian ethic

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Abstract

South African society is characterised by a marked centre-periphery structure of economic power distribution. It is, at the same time, a prime example of a society divided by a plurality of religious, cultural and economic convictions. It is, furthermore, the target of intense moral challenges. As such it is an ideal 'laboratory' for social-ethical research concerning the impact of structures on convictions and vice versa. This study is the attempt to develop a systems-analytical paradigm for the investigation of (a) economic power structures, (b) patterns of conviction, (c) the relation between the two and (d) a theological-ethical critique.

Part I is devoted to economic power structures. The proposed model includes the relation of potency to geographical space (chapter 2), population (chapter 3), and need (chapter 4). A model of causation and a few relevant causal systems close this part (chapter 5). Part II is devoted to convictions and their relation to societal power structures. It begins with a basic model of such relations (chapter 6). Then follow a historical survey of the emergence of structure-related mental predispositions or attitudes (chapter 7), an inventory of convictions relevant to the South African situation (chapter 8) and an analysis of the interaction between structure-related interests and convictions (chapter 9). Part III subjects the findings to a theological-ethical critique (chapter 10), and discusses the positive contribution a theological ethic could make to the solution of the problems concerned (chapter 11).

Vital interests crystallise as the pivotal entity which mediates between structures and convictions. Being interpreted and prioritised needs they are derived from structural position, yet contain an element of meaning and normativeness. My main hypothesis is that vital interests manipulate convictions and thus obstruct structural change. This presents us with a challenge which reaches beyond the realm of conventional theological ethics and it calls for a dynamic new approach.

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The Standard Bank Investment Corporation: Diagrams depicting Black and Coloured employment per square mile in SA (pages 109, 110).

Introduction

In 1981 the South African Human Sciences Research Council launched a comprehensive Investigation into Intergroup Relations. The program was subdivided into thirteen fields, and religion was one of them. Research tenders invited under this heading included various aspects of the relation between social structures, ideology and religion.

The present study was tendered, written and submitted to the Human Sciences Research Council as Research Report No. 04/PO17 in August 1984. The main report of the Investigation into Intergroup Relations was published in 1985 under the title The South African Society: Realities and Future Prospects. The volume on religion was published under the title Religion, Intergroup Relations and Social Change in South Africa. The chapter on economics (4.2) in this report was largely structured around the finding of the present study.

Empirical data used in this study has largely been taken from the 1980 census and from social research conducted round about that time, including the Human Sciences Research Council's own 'multipurpose survey'. It was not deemed wise to update the data for the present publication. In the first place dependable new census statistics are not available while in other fields social research has continued. To incorporate the latter would lead to diachronical distortions between different sets of data. In the second place the aim was to draw up a model for research, not to present final results — which are difficult to obtain in a situation of flux. In the third place the author considers it safe to assume that the years between 1980 and 1983 represent something like a watershed in South African social history and thus merit investigation for their own sake. The watershed referred to is the turn of the social system from apartheid to a post-apartheid era which has since gathered momentum.

The failure of traditional Verwoerdian policies could no longer be overlooked. The National Party was engaged in the difficult manoeuvre of setting the unwieldy apparatus of the state on a more realistic course. A new labour system became operative. The government tried to woo big business into cooperation. Free enterprise became the watchword for economic policy. New decentralisation and regionalisation policies took the place of the old homelands- and border areas approach. The new constitution which gave Indians and Coloureds limited participation in the central decision-making processes of the country, was still in the pre-referendum phase. Influx control had not yet been abolished.

The Soweto uprising had been quelled and the current unrest sparked off by the exclusion of Blacks from the new constitution had not yet erupted. Violence was still sporadic. The most powerful and versatile internal opposition party in the country's history, the United Democratic

Front, was only launched in 1983. The comeback of the African National Congress could not yet be foreseen. The massive disinvestment campaigns and other international economic pressures had not taken shape. South Africa looks much different now than it looked in 1980.

The present study represents something like a photo of a ball shot into the air at the highest point of its course. For a second it does not seem to move and then it descends with accelarating speed. Developments during the last two years have taken place at a breathtaking pace. To capture this movement would imply conducting a new study which would in its turn be obsolete only a few months later. The basic insights gained by the present study on the theme of the relation between social structures and patterns of convictions would, however, only be elaborated, not altered.

I hope that the publication of the study will achieve three aims. In the first place it should further insight into the structure of South African society both on the level of economic power and of social consciousness. As such it should dispel long standing myths and misconceptions, particularly among South African Whites. In the second place it should provide further evidence concerning the perennial problem of the relation between social structures, interests and patterns of conviction in the social sciences. I also hope that it will contribute to theory formation on this vital issue. In the third place it should demonstrate the necessity of interdisciplinary research for the development of theological ethics as an academic discipline. The days of naive assumptions and dogmatic postulates are over.

Thus it should be seen as a pilot study on empirical foundations for future work in the ethics of economic life.

CHAPTER 1

The aim and method of this study

1.1 THE AIM DEFINED

The theme of the present study naturally falls into the following components:

(a) The *interaction* between
(b) economic *power structures* and
(c) patterns of *conviction*
(d) seen in the light of a Christian *ethic*.

A study of this nature is problem- rather than discipline-oriented and can, therefore, only be undertaken on an interdisciplinary basis. Interdisciplinary work can only be meaningful if various aspects are not simply adjoined to each other but placed into a systems-analytical model or paradigm in which the relation between all relevant factors is clearly indicated.

Against the background of the massive use and abuse of research findings by policy-makers and businessmen, research has become aware of its social responsibility and moved beyond the ideal of value-free analysis. Evaluation of findings and

recommendations have become part and parcel of the work of the Human Sciences Research Council itself. Ethical evaluation, however, implies retraction from "objectivity" into commitment concerning the normative system of a particular conviction or world-view.

On this basis we were able to formulate the basic aims of this study as follows:

(a) Analytical: The interaction between social structures and patterns of conviction was investigated.

(b) Constructive: A versatile paradigm for interdisciplinary work covering both quantifiable and unquantifiable aspects was drawn up.

(c) Evaluative: The outcome of the study was subject to ethical criteria derived from a particular conviction, viz. the Christian faith, and certain recommendations were made on this basis.

1.2 THE PROBLEM ANALYSED

1.2.1 Economic power structures (Chapters 2-5)

I assume that the basic ingredient of societary structures is the relative distribution of power or potential between different sections of the population. I further assume that power is mainly derived from four sources in a modern society (cf. Nattrass 1983:283ff):

(a) Political leverage, i.e. the effective range of influence on decision-making processes in matters of public policy, including legislative, administrative, judiciary, security and military powers.

(b) Economic leverage, i.e. the effective control over factors of production in relation to their importance in the productive

process, the relative ability to determine patterns of distribution and purchasing power on the consumer side of the market.

(c) Command over technological expertise and apparatus, which is actually a factor of production as mentioned under (b).

(d) Social prestige.

This study concentrates on economic power structures for three reasons. First, the economic dimension of social processes is crucial, if not fundamental, to all others. Second, this dimension has been less in the limelight than political affairs in studies on South African society. Third, I had to keep this study to manageable proportions. This does not mean, however, that I am not aware of the close interrelation between all four sources of power as the study itself will clearly reveal.

The distribution of economic power or potential have been analysed under four headings:-

(a) The spread of economic potency over *geographical space* (chapter 2).

(b) The distribution of economic potency between different sections of the *population* (chapter 3).

(c) The differential relation between economic potency of different groups and their economic *needs* (chapter 4).

(d) *Causes* of the unequal distribution of potency in the population (chapter 5).

The well-known centre-periphery model of potency distribution was used throughout this study. It was made dynamic by the introduction of the dimension of *historical time*. The discussion revealed that this model possesses exceptional explanatory powers in the South African case. We include, under (b), a

crude location of identifiable social groupings within the overall power structure.

1.2.2 Patterns of conviction (Chapters 6-8)

The relation between social structure and consciousness is a perennial problem, dating back to ancient Greek philosophy. Its nineteenth century version of idealism vs. materialism is outdated. The modern task is to find a sophisticated paradigm of all the factors involved and the complex relations between them. We begin this part, therefore, with a brief description of the theory which underlies our study in this regard (chapter 6).

The effect of structures on consciousness is most immediate on the psychological level. I assume that the location of groups in the overall power structure rise to certain basic mental predispositions or attitudes. I therefore offer a hypothetical reconstruction of the evolution of such mental predispositions over historical time. It takes account of the polarity between dominant and dominated groups in society, which is a variation on the centre-periphery motif on the level of consciousness (chapter 7).

Working from the other side of the structure-conviction dialectic, I then drew up a typology of convictions operative in the South African situation. Here I distinguish between the following types:

(a) religious or methaphysical convictions,
(b) convictions related to group identity,
(c) convictions related to the distribution of economic potential,
(d) collective interests.

My hypothesis is that affinity to structural location becomes more marked as we move down this list (chapter 8).

1.2.3 The interaction between structures and convictions (chapter 9)

In the dialectical relationship between social structures and patterns of conviction collective interests play a pivotal role. I defined interests as interpreted and prioritised needs. On the one hand needs are a function of a group's location in the potency structure. On the other hand their interpretation and prioritisation depends on certain perceptions, values, norms and goals derived from convictions. There is a continuity between mental predispositions and interests, the latter concept denoting, in contrast with the former, concrete and specific conceptualisations.

The interaction between structures and convictions can then be seen to be operating in two stages (between structures and interests and between interests and convictions) and in two directions (from structures over interests to convictions and the other way round).

The relation between location in the social structure and interests is fairly obvious. I concentrate, therefore, on the more complicated relation between interests and convictions. Convictions entail a normative system, against which the pursuit of interests has to be justified. This process is variably called rationalisation, legitimation or ideology (in the critical sense of the term as used in radical sociology).

The conflict between convictions and interests (the latter representing structure-related needs and desires) moves along three

channels: perception (guided by values), justification (guided by norms) and motivation (guided by goals). We concentrate on justification - showing how interests are justified in terms of the normative system of a conviction. In this process convictions and their normative systems are manipulated in characteristic ways.

On the other hand convictions also determine and screen the interpretation and the pursuit of interests and challenge the ideological self-justification of interest groups in society.

Three further aspects need to be considered -

(a) The relative power or potential at the disposal of a group, which is, of course, directly related to its position in the power system. Power obviously determines the degree to which groups are able to realise their ideas and ideals in the structural sphere.

(b) The "horizon" and general awareness of a group, which are partly determined by its location in the power grid and partly by its convictions. They determine how far a group is conscious of the possibilities at its disposal to make an impact on the structural sphere - without which it will not even try.

(c) The historical dimension. On the level of convictions we speak of traditions in this regard; on the level of structures we speak of chain-reactions of cause and effect, or more precisely, of evolving networks of causality.

1.2.4 Ethical evaluation (Chapters 10 and 11)

I assume that there is no way in which an ethical evaluation can be conducted on the basis of a "neutral", non-committal, purely

rational or analytical stance. The choice of a particular conviction, viz. the Christian faith, can be justified in two ways. The most obvious is that the author is a Christian theologian. The second is that the majority of the South African population, and notably its most powerful decision-makers, claim allegiance to the Christian faith in some form or other. On this basis I offer a critique (chapter 10) and a positive contribution of theological ethics (chapter 11).

From the discussion so far three kinds of interaction or conflict of theological-ethical relevance emerge:

(a) Conflicts between different convictions. From a theological point of view this is the area of missionary dialogue or evangelisation.

(b) Conflicts between the collective interests of various groups in society. This is the area of social justice. Obviously it has a direct bearing on the demands for structural change.

(c) The conflict between convictions and collective interests, or more precisely, between normative systems and ideological self-justifications. In theological terms this is the area of justification and sanctification.

I assume that the first two kinds of conflict are relatively lucid. They are also receiving much attention in missiological and ethical literature. The third kind of conflict is largely a *terra incognita* in theological circles, at least in its social-structural application. It is also the most crucial because ideological self-justification effectively prevents a normative system from becoming operative in the structural sphere. If that were not the case, Christians (and maybe others) would long have changed the system.

My basic contention is that the theological-ethical task is to facilitate rather than prevent or avoid these confrontations, and to channel them, at the same time, into a process of creative reconstruction - concerning convictions on level (a), social power relations on level (b) and human integrity on level (c).

1.3 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.3.1 South Africa treated as a microcosm

South African society can be described, as most other societies, as a system of differentiated and institutionalised distributions of political, economic and social potentials with a high level of built-in discrepancies. Determinants include: (a) geographical location, (b) racial and ethnic affiliation, (c) class affiliation, (d) rural-urban gradient, etc. In this respect South Africa can be considered to be a microcosm of the global situation of inequality.

At the same time South African society is characterised by a marked pluriformity of patterns of collective convictions and mentality. Determinants include: (a) religious traditions, (b) cultural backgrounds, (c) perceptions of collective interests and social justice, (d) exposure to, or isolation from, other groups and their alternative mindsets, (e) the flow of information and its deliberate manipulation by powerful groups, etc. Again South Africa can be considered to be a microcosm of what obtains in the world as a whole.

Although the thesis that South Africa represents a microcosm of global problems in a concentrated form should not be pressed at the expense of local peculiarities, I assume that the South African case is illumined by the world situation as a whole and

vice versa. I give methodological expression to this expectation in that I place the South African peculiarities into a broader, more generalising framework as I proceed from step to step.

1.3.2(a) A systems-analytical approach

As mentioned earlier, a study of this nature can only be done appropriately on an interdisciplinary basis. Interdisciplinary work seems to be profitable only if the different approaches and dimensions are not arbitrarily joined to each other but integrated in a comprehensive systems-theoretical model or paradigm which defines the complex relationships between all relevant factors. The fundamental aim of this study is to contribute to the development of such a paradigm (Checkland 1981).

The particular methodological difficulty in this case is that a paradigm has to be devised which is versatile enough to combine both "hard" (= quantifiable) and "soft" (non-quantifiable) components of the system. Economic structures are an example of the former; patterns of conviction are an example of the latter. We proceeded as follows:

(a) Concerning "hard" components, viz. economic structures, we constructed graphic models which we attempt to substantiate with empirical (mainly statistical) data.
(b) Concerning "soft" components, viz. convictions, we drew up a series of hypotheses which we attempted to clarify by means of examples. We thus used the phenomenological method in a particular way.
(c) The ethical evaluation was conducted on the basis of theological-ethical postulates.

Obviously the methods utilised in (b) and (c) are not entirely satisfactory because they can only lead to preliminary results which need extensive further investigation and may prove to be contentious on every level of operation. To achieve exhaustive documentation in (b) and full theological accountability in (c) would demand, however, at least two further volumes and much more time than I had at my disposal. The emphasis of this contribution, therefore, does not lie in the presentation of empirical research but in the development of a workable paradigm for such research.

Since the model is the outcome of a decade of work on socio-structural and ideological issues in theological-ethical perspective, the author is confident that it will prove to be a useful point of departure for further in-depth investigations.

1.3.3 Sources

Sources consulted have been mainly literary although I also did a substantial amount of original work in the statistical field. All direct sources have been listed but it is quite impossible to give account of all the reading over the years which has contributed to the present stage in the evolution of my thinking on the issues concerned.

Concerning representativeness and reliability of the sources, I assumed that critical (and particularly self-critical) literature is, in general, more apt to reveal unbiased truth than its apologetic and self-justificatory counterpart.

1.3.4 The emphasis on the structural dimension

It will occur to the reader that the first part on economic power structures is much more elaborate than subsequent parts dealing with convictions and their relationship with structures. Various considerations led to this emphasis. In the first place disciplines investigating the spiritual and personal sides of human existence, including theology, tend to underestimate the importance of societal structures - even for their own specific field of interest. Secondly, social sciences which deal with group relations, often do not take sufficient cognizance of the crucial difference between relations between equals (horizontal relationships) and those between more powerful and less powerful partners (vertical relationships). That is why the key concept in our study is the distribution of power or potential in the population. In the third place, economics as a science has not spent a great deal of its energies on the development of a comprehensive picture of economic power structures in South Africa. A problem which is not seen in its overall dimensions, is unlikely to be tackled with particular vigour. By suggesting a systems-analytical approach to the whole issue, we try to blaze a trail in this regard.

In contrast, various ideological and religious convictions found in South Africa have been extensively described and documented. In a study which is supposed to be brief, a duplication of this work would be out of place.

1.3.5 Level of sophistication

No complicated mathematical and statistical methods have been employed. My aim was to make my contribution accessible to any

person who enjoyed higher education, irrespective of his particular professional qualifications. For the greater part it claims to be based on plain common sense.

1.4 SUMMARY

I defined the aim of the study as follows: the interaction between economic power structures and patterns of conviction in South Africa was investigated, a systems-analytical model was to be developed for interdisciplinary studies of this interaction and the results of the investigation subjected to a theological-ethical critique (1.1).

Each of the four components of the problem, viz. structures, convictions, interaction and ethical critique, were briefly circumscribed and all assumptions were made explicit (1.2).

Finally methodological aspects were briefly discussed: South Africa is taken as a microcosm, a systems-analytical approach is employed, the nature of the sources used, the emphasis on the structural dimension of the problem and the level of sophistication were accounted for (1.3).

PART I

Economic power structures in South Africa

CHAPTER 2

Space-potency relations

2.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

Part I as a whole is an attempt to develop a model of economic power structures in South Africa. Chapter 2 deals with the first dimension of this task, viz. an analysis of the spread of economic potential over geographical space.

We begin with a few general characteristics of the so-called centre-periphery phenomenon in geographical terms. After that we turn to the South African example. In each case we give some indications of the reasons for the development of the discrepancy in the development of economic potency between geographical regions.

2.2 THE CENTRE-PERIPHERY PHENOMENON DESCRIBED

The link between economic potential and geographical space has been investigated for quite some time by economic geography. Here the basic insight is that economic activity and potential tend to gravitate towards certain urban commercial and industrial

centres. Their respective environments are rendered peripheral in terms of economic potential and activity. This insight is expressed in the so-called centre-periphery (or core-periphery) model.

> Heinrich von Thünen's work (1826) seems to have been seminal. It was followed by Alfred Weber (1922) and Walter Christaller (1933) and then by many others. The model drew the attention of radical rather than liberal economics, where it is widely used today (e.g. Senghaas 1974). But it is also utilised by Western mainline sociology (e.g. Behrendt 1965) and various other disciplines.
> (Refer to Smith 1977, Smit 1981, Anzuck 1982).

The discrepancy between core and periphery is a universal phenomenon. It can be studied on the basis of:

(a) The world as a whole: the USA constitutes the economic centre in global dimensions with Western Europe and Japan the main subcentres. The Soviet Union and its satellites constitute a smaller system which is partly dependent on and partly in competition with the Western system.

(b) A whole continent such as Europe: the economic centre of Europe stretches from southern Scandinavia to northern Italy and from eastern France to western Poland. All around this complex we find less developed areas; northern Scandinavia, Scotland, Ireland, Portugal, southern Italy, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, etc. The industrial core stretches from Birmingham along the Rhine valley to Milan with major subcentres in Paris, Hamburg, Berlin, etc.

(c) A large country such as Brazil: the economic centre of Brazil is located in the triangle Sao Paulo-Rio de Janeiro-Belo Horizonte with Recife and Porto Allegre as the main subcentres.

(d) A small country such as Swaziland; the economic centre is situated in the area comprising Mbabane and Manzini.

(e) An urban complex such as the Witwatersrand where the economic centre is the Johannesburg CBD with a series of subcentres scattered further afield (see figure 8a).

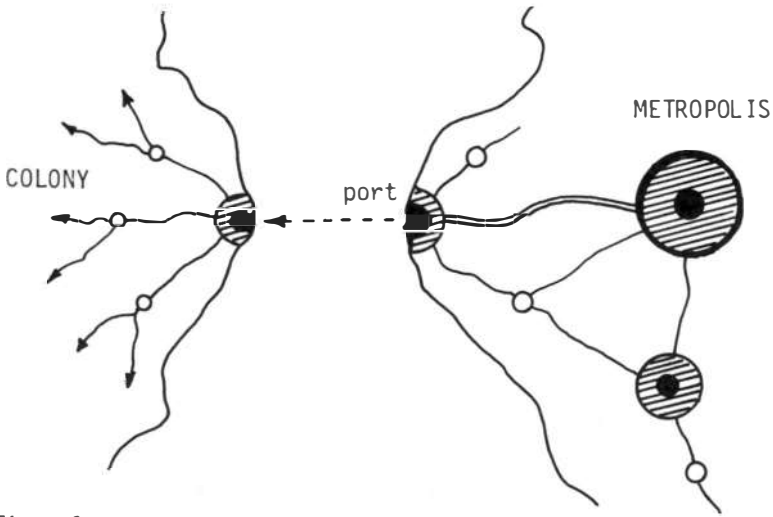


Figure 1

A colonial empire constitutes a system of a dominant and a number of dependent centres and their respective peripheries. The interaction network (communications, transport) is geared to the dominant centre. "All roads lead to Rome!" That is the reason why colonial centres (New York, Rio de Janeiro, Lagos, Cape Town) tended to develop on the coast nearest to the main harbour of the colonial power (figure 1). Basically they were administrative and trading centres and the inland was "opened" in a radial fashion from these points.

There is a strong primary correlation between the economic potential and activity of certain groups and their geographical

distance to the core: the nearer a group is situated to the core, the higher its productivity and income.

A secondary development is able to reverse this trend: impoverished peripheral population groups move to inner city areas which rapidly deteriorate while the affluent centre population moves into the surrounding suburbs. The latter may even acquire abandoned or neglected rural areas and develop them with superior technology and a high level of capital investment into viable, sometimes lucrative undertakings.

The socio-economic discrepancy between centre and periphery is an all-inclusive phenomenon and has multi-dimensional characteristics.

Economically centres are characterised by a concentration of indicators of economic potency such as:

(a) A highly differentiated and integrated economy with strong linkages between a large variety of specialised and complementary industries.
(b) Capital accumulation and resultant labour productivity.
(c) A developed infrastructure, such as communications and transport networks, water and energy supplies etc.
(d) A high level of technological sophistication, expertise, training and entrepreneurial initiative.
(e) Fiercely competitive markets for skills, labour, goods and services.
(f) A high velocity of all socio-economic processes.
(g) Strong population concentrations leading to flourishing consumer markets.
(h) A high material standard of living.

Peripheral economies, in contrast, are characterised by a thin spread of indicators of economic potential:

(a) Subsistence agricultural production, or concentration on one industry, even one product.
(b) A low level of capital investment and low labour productivity.
(c) A poorly developed infrastructure.
(d) Little sophistication, expertise, training and risk-taking initiative.
(e) Little competition.
(f) A relaxed pace in all socio-economic processes.
(g) Low material standards of living.
(h) Populations spread over vast areas with only rudimentary local market formation.

The difference can be observed equally well, however, in other dimensions of life. In the centre, social organization materialises on a larger and more sophisticated scale; cultural activities are more varied and reach higher standards; political activity is more progressive; families are reduced to the basic unit of parent and children; intergroup relations are segmentary and versatile; the grown relationships of tribal society have made way for superficial and casual voluntary associations; status and role are achieved rather than ascribed; relations tend to be impersonal and functional rather than holistic and existential; time is experienced as a scarce resource; systems of meaning, values, norms, religious convictions, etc. tend to be more secular, pluralistic and relative, etc.

Causes of this phenomenon include, *inter alia* (Anzuck 1982):

(a) Historical advantages of some localities over others, e.g. mineral deposits, trade route intersections, coastal outlets, administrative capitals, rich soils, etc.

(b) Economies of space and distance, e.g. proximity to abundant supplies of the main factors of production, complementary industries, services, markets and a well-developed infrastructure.

(c) The subsequent generation of a cumulative socio-economic dynamic, sometimes called the agglomeration effect, which sucks the potential of its environment into its vortex and prevents the formation of competing centres in the vicinity, even at places which would otherwise possess a potential for centre formation.

(d) The use of economic, political and military power by centre elites to strengthen their competitive or dominant position at the expense of weaker groups and areas.

Thus the interaction between larger and smaller centres, as well as between centres and their respective peripheries, tends to operate to the greater advantage of the strong and the lesser advantage (or the disadvantage) of the weak. Potential does not balance out; it gravitates towards places where it is already

concentrated. The physical model to be applied here is not that of communicating tubes, but of the parallelogram of forces (Myrdal 1957).

Centres of comparable strength compete with each other; yet they also tend to become integrated in an ever more complicated network of interaction, interdependence and division of labour. Weaker centres, in contrast, tend to become satellites of stronger centres. The outcome is a hierarchy of centres of declining importance which stretches its tentacles into the remotest villages of the periphery. Thus the density of economic interaction decreases down the following list:

(a) intra-core
(b) inter-core
(c) core-periphery
(d) periphery-periphery.

The network of communication, transport and trade therefore follows a radial pattern with strong links between the commanding centre and its dependencies but very little interaction between the latter (figure 2). All intercourse runs via the commanding centre (Galtung 1971: 89ff):

This does not mean, however, that such concentrations of economic activity and potential cannot shift in geographical space over historical time. In the early phases of commercial capitalism the centre of gravity shifted from North Italy (Venice, Milan, Genoa, Florence) to the Low Countries (Antwerp and Amsterdam). The Industrial Revolution and the Empire made England the economic centre of the world until World War II brought its rapid decline in favour of central Europe. Europe as a whole lost its leading position in the world to the USA (Wilson 1974).

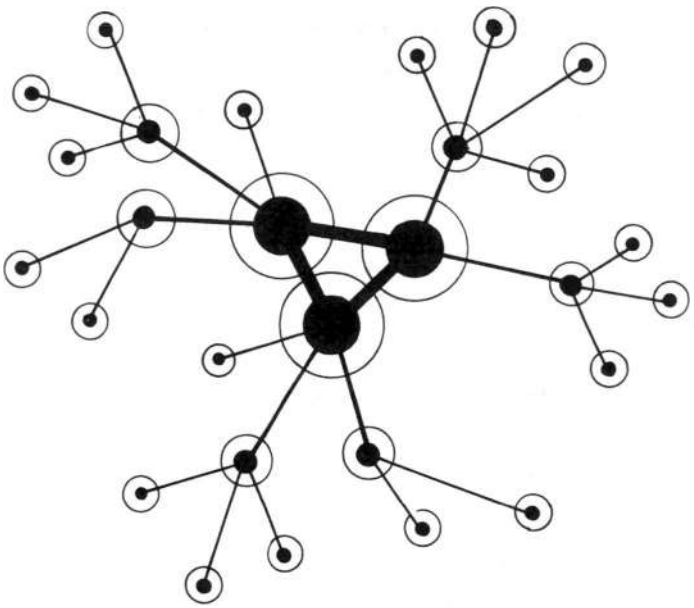


Figure 2

Dependent centres are particularly prone to rapid growth, decline and possible collapse. In Brazil a thriving centre on the north-eastern coast (Recife, Salvador) collapsed together with the world sugar market in the 1650s leaving an area of extreme poverty ever after. Sao Paulo and vicinity emerged as the new centre of the country during the last century on the basis of coffee, and later, secondary industry.

2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CASE

2.3.1 The overall centre-periphery structure

In South Africa the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging complex (PWV), with Johannesburg as its core, forms the commanding centre with the Cape Peninsula and Durban-Pinetown two major subcentres (figure 3). Port Elizabeth, East London, Bloemfontein, Kimberley and the OFS gold fields are lesser subcentres. The system stretches down to the small rural villages of the periphery.

In passing we may mention that the South African centre is a subcentre of the world economic system dominated by the metropoles in the USA, Europe and Japan, though it is less dependent on external capital and control than in comparable semi-industrialised countries such as Brazil. We cannot go into these international connections (cf. Ehrensaft 1976).

> Cape Town developed as colonial harbour and administrative capital of the Cape Colony. It was overshadowed by Johannesburg because of the rich mineral deposits there, particularly gold. Pretoria contributed to the development of the PWV complex as administrative capital of united South Africa. The development of commerce and secondary industry followed suit - particularly during and after World War II. Durban began as colonial harbour and administrative capital of Natal, then became the main coastal outlet for the PWV complex and subsequently attracted considerable commercial interests and secondary industries (See figure 4)

It is remarkable that the gold fields of the Orange Free State did not develop into another Witwatersrand. One reason must be

the vicinity of the virulent metropolis of Johannesburg. Another may be the application of influx control which prevented the establishment of a permanent Black urban population in this region. The phenomenon that a potential centre cannot easily establish itself against the competition of a strong existing centre leaves little hope for new centres in 'Black States' to grow to real economic significance.

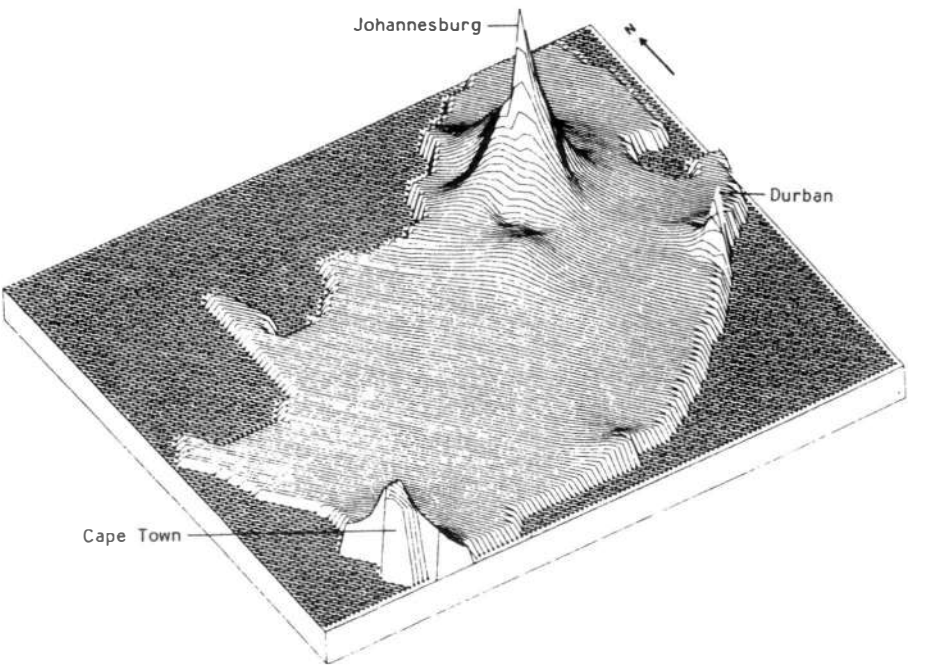


Figure 3
Gross domestic product per square mile in South Africa
(Compiled by J Browett. Source: Smith 1977:20.)

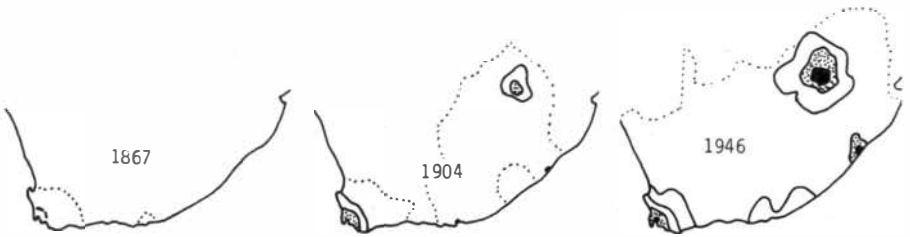


Figure 4
White population density as indicator of the shift of the SA centre from the Cape to the Witwatersrand.
Source: Adapted from Browett and Fair 1974: 115.

Economic activity spreads in a radial fashion from the great centres into their respective peripheries. A definite radial hierarchy of centres of varying degrees of dependency developed over the decades. Most prominent is the development along the main lines of communication and transport, particularly between the greater centres. While the latter are highly integrated, communications between the various peripheries are either absent or they run via their respective centres. The further one moves into the periphery, the more isolated towns, villages and communities become. The "National Physical Development Plan" of 1975 (figure 5) does not seem to counteract the general pattern of radial development, nor does the "Good Hope Plan" of 1981 (figure 9)(South Africa 1975; De Villiers 1981).

2.3.2 Areas reserved for Blacks

The rural periphery is split into two unequal sets of regions, the White farming area which spreads across the whole country and the pockets of land reserved for Black occupation which form "black specks on the white background". Smaller patches of land traditionally owned by Blacks have been dissolved and their occupants have been resettled on land adjacent to greater blocs of land occupied by Blacks. This policy of "Black spot

removal" and "consolidation" is still in progress (Cooper 1984: 298-315).

Large numbers of "redundant" Blacks in White urban areas and "squatters" on White-owned farms have been resettled in the rural areas reserved for Blacks. The population density in the latter has increased dramatically as a result of these policies as well as natural population growth over the last 25 years (Simkins 1979: 20). The following statistics demonstrate these shifts in the black population:

Domestic Africans in various areas in South Africa according to Simkins (1983: 58):

	1950	1980
Metropolitan areas	25,4%	26,7%
White rural areas	35,1%	20,6%
Black areas	40,9%	53,1%

The radial lines of communications and development neatly avoid the geographical areas reserved for Blacks except where the latter are in fact part of the metropolital regions (e.g. north of Durban and north of Pretoria). Where these lines do not circumvent Black areas, they form "corridors" of White-owned land through them (see figure 9 for the country as a whole and figures 6 and 7 for a more detailed example). In terms of socio-economic potential the areas reserved for Blacks, therefore, form the outer periphery in the total spatial structure. This pattern is only rendered inconsistent by the semi-arid conditions in the western parts of the country.

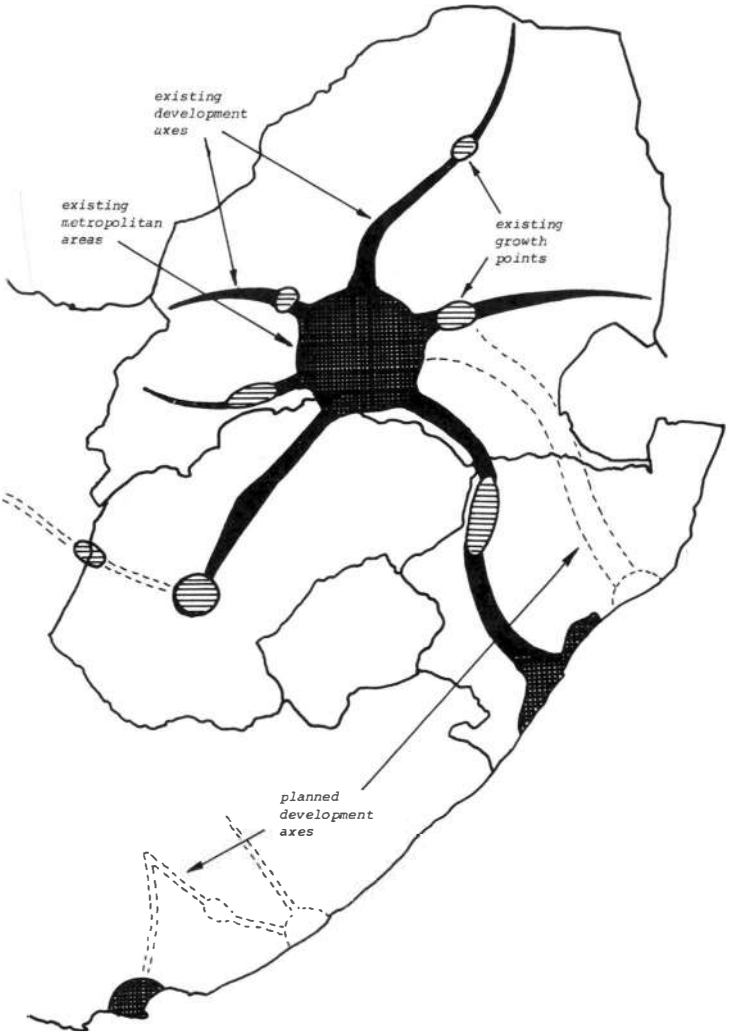


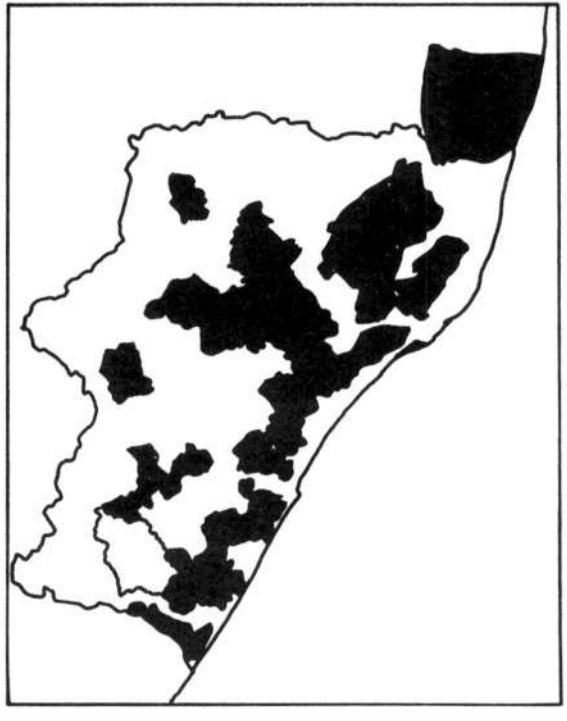
Figure 5

National Physical Development Plan 1975 of the Department of Planning and Environment - Republic of South Africa

Figure 6
Natal and Kwazulu: Areas accessible to roads, railways and electricity.
(Source: Buthelezi Commission, Vol. I, p.167)

Figure 7
Natal and Kwazulu (1975 Consolidation Proposals).

(Source: Buthelezi Commission, Vol. I, p.162)



The rural land area reserved for Blacks has long ceased to supply the local Black population with a means of livelihood on the basis of traditional subsistence agriculture (Möller 1982). The carrying capacity of these lands has actually deteriorated rapidly as a result of population pressure, soil erosion, overgrazing and obsolete farming methods.

> Food production hovered around 45% of subsistence needs in the nineteen-twenties and remained there until resettlement began in earnest in 1955. From then it dropped to under 20% in 1970 as population density increased (Simkins 1979:12).

Efforts by the Government to arrest this deterioration and enhance productivity are unable to keep pace with population growth. Newcomers are being concentrated in "closer settlements" and rural villages (Smit 1981:4). In the absence of agricultural or industrial employment opportunities these groups are entirely dependent on migrant labour in the White rural and urban areas.

> The Black areas consistently contribute only 2-3% to the South African gross domestic product (BENBO 1976:69, table B.7.1). Black 'national governments' controlled 8% of expenditure on public services and received 2.7% of revenue from own sources in 1978/9 (Lombard 1980b: fig.9).

Small, dependent subcentres in Black areas (Ulundi, Mmabatho, Lebowakgomo etc.) are artificial creations which are totally dependent on grants from Pretoria. If the policy of creating "Black States" was to be abolished, they would probably collapse. Many of the urban concentrations and rural villages established in Black areas in recent years would probably develop into ghost towns in such an eventuality because they lack an economic base.

2.3.3 The urban centres

Due to the "push" of increasing population pressure in Black areas and the "pull" of accelerating industrial development in the White urban centres during the past half century or so, there has been a growing influx of Blacks into the latter (Nattrass 1983b: 5ff; Smit 1981: 17f; Wilson 1972: 144ff).

Black townships were soon severely overcrowded and informal settlements sprung up on the outskirts of towns all over the country (Smit 1981: 21ff).

With the expansion of White towns and the promulgation of "group areas" policies, the Black urban population was moved to high density townships at a convenient distance from White urban areas (Smit 1981: 73ff; Beavon 1982).

These townships are peripheral in relation to the economic activity of the urban centres concerned, pure 'dormitory towns' with inadequate infrastructure, services, commercial outlets and taxable income. This has to be taken into account when thinking of the devolution of power to local authorities which has now become government policy.

In a similar move Indian traders who had settled in inner city areas as well as persons of mixed race were resettled out of town (Maasdorp 1977).

The Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 (as amended and consolidated) defines areas for occupation in proclaimed urban areas by the four major race groups. The area reserved for White occupation invariably includes the economically potent centres of economic activity as well as lavish suburban sprawls while other

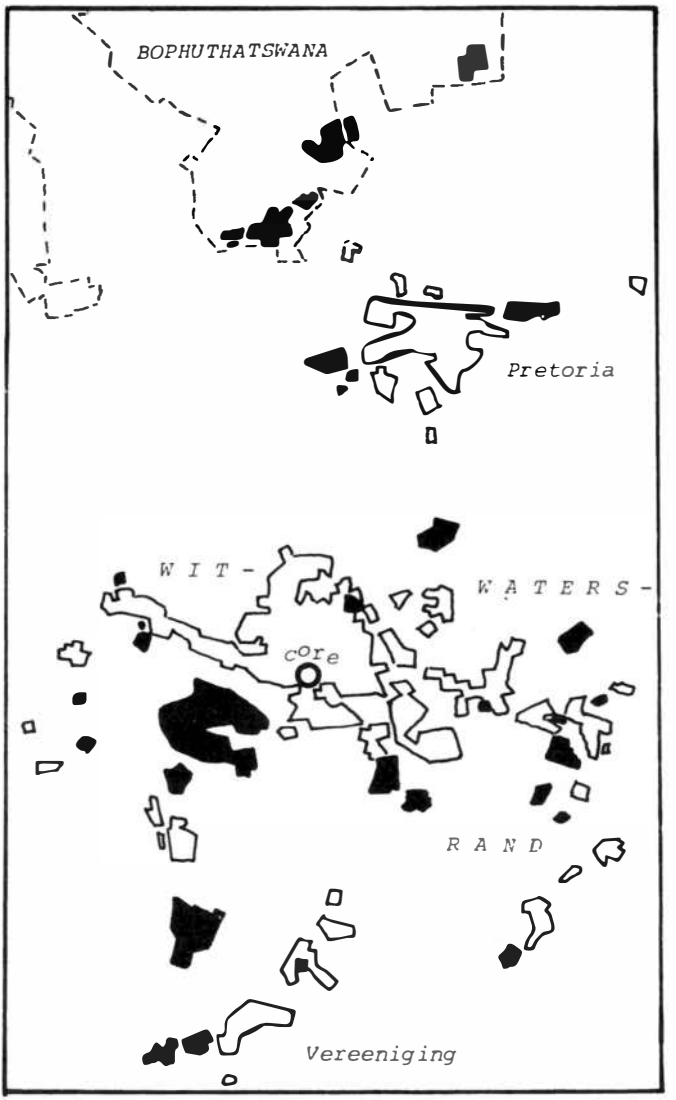
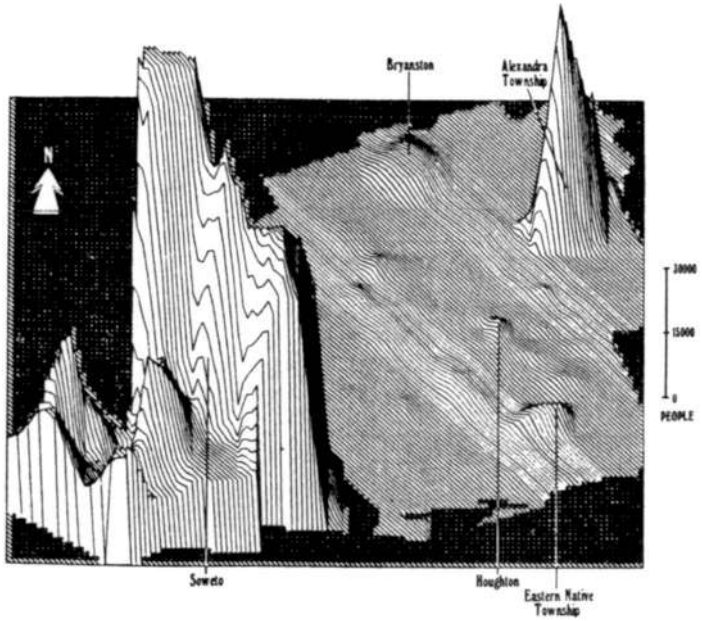
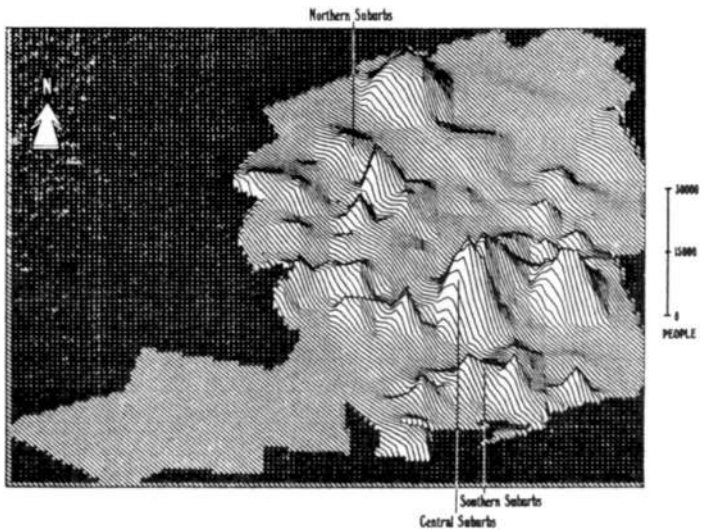


Figure 8a

Black, Coloured and Asian Townships in the PWV Area.

(adapted from Smit 1981: 76)





Figures 8b and 8c

Distribution of Blacks (top) and Whites (Bottom) in greater Johannesburg in 1970.

(taken from P.H. Pirie in Smith 1976b:89-90)

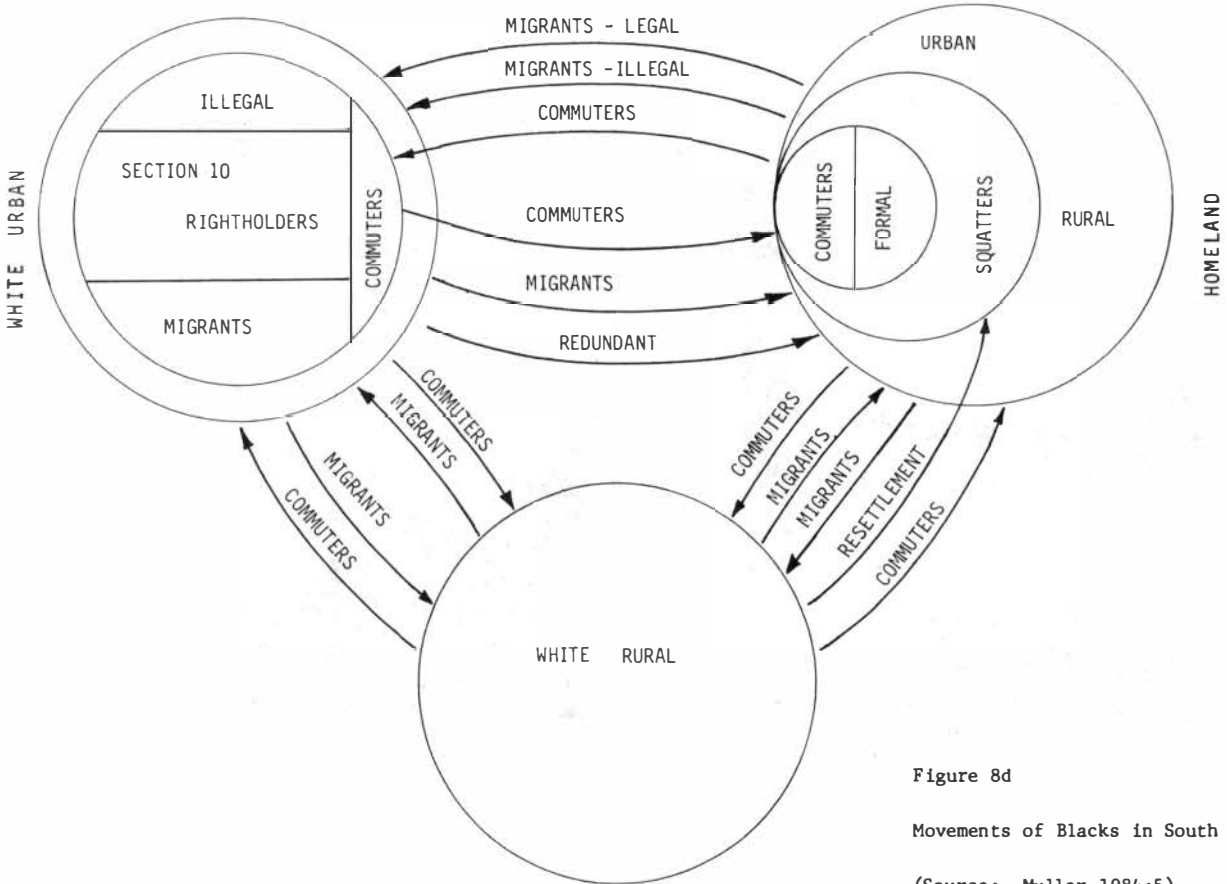


Figure 8d

Movements of Blacks in South Africa.

(Source: Muller 1984:5)

race groups are settled in narrowly delineated and restricted "ghettos" (See figure 8a for the PWV-area and figures 8b and 8c for a visual impression of the different locations and densities of the two main race groups in Johannesburg.).

At the same time the influx of Blacks into White urban areas has been subjected to draconic controls. Labour needs of the centres were increasingly met by migrant labourers residing in hostels adjacent to Black townships while their families remained either in their rural homes or were resettled in quasi-urban concentrations in the rural areas reserved for Black occupation.

These population groups are economically part of the urban centres but socially they are strangers isolated from the rest of the urban population (Erasmus 1977a: 29ff).

In the vicinity of White urban centres but inside the rural areas reserved for Blacks large concentrations of Black informal settlements (slums) came into being. While legally they form part of the "Black States" they are economically integral parts of the urban-industrial centres. Their inhabitants are commuting to and from town on a daily or weekly basis.

> The de facto population of Bophuthatswana, for instance, is concentrated on the borders of the Black areas adjoining the Pretoria-Brits-Rustenburg development axis and almost 50% live within a radius of 50 km from Pretoria (Smit 1981:85-86). Similar concentrations can be found in Kwa-Ndebele near Pretoria, in Umlazi and Kwa Mashu near Durban and in Mdantsane near East London.

Figure 8d, taken from Muller (1984: 5) gives a good indication of state controlled settlement, immigration and commuting patterns of Blacks in South Africa.

Due to the "push" of economic pressures in Black rural areas and the "pull" of the urban-industrial centres the influx of Blacks into the cities is accelerating in spite of ever tightening bureaucratic and police controls. It is estimated that, by the year 2000, 23 million Blacks will have been urbanised in some way or another (Cooper 1984: 261). Various avenues present themselves:

(a) Dormitory towns in Black rural areas which depend on migrant labour.
(b) Site and service schemes for Blacks with urban rights in White towns.
(c) Informal settlements (slums) in Black rural areas nearest to the urban centres.
(d) Illegal infiltration into White urban areas and the concomitant formation of slums and high density living in existing houses in Black townships.

All these avenues and many more - will be followed.

2.3.4 Decentralisation

For quite some time decentralisation policies of the South African Government were based on ideological considerations. Blacks were to be drawn back or pushed back from White areas to Black areas. White private initiative was not to be allowed within the Black areas. Government agencies conducted rural stabilisation and development schemes as well as small scale commercial and industrial projects. White entrepreneurs were encouraged to move close to the borders of Black areas to take advantage of an abundance of Black commuter labour. Black labour supply in White rural areas was drastically reduced through the abolition of the squatter system and strictly controlled in White urban areas through influx control.

This policy led to a relative reduction of the Black population in White rural areas and a greater concentration of Blacks in Black areas (cf 5.4.2 below). Black areas and border industrial areas did not develop in any meaningful way, except where the latter were natural extensions of existing urban concentrations such as Rosslyn near Pretoria. By the end of the seventies it became clear to Afrikaner academics and policy-makers that the ideological objectives were unrealistic and a more pragmatic approach was adopted (Smit 1981: 29-35).

Urban Blacks were now considered to be permanent residents in White areas and a more liberal policy towards them emerged (the right to build and own houses, trade union rights, better training facilities etc.). Influx control was tightened, apparently with the aim of freezing the number of urban Blacks as far as possible. The "Good Hope Plan" subdivided the entire country into development regions which include Black and White areas and even cut across existing "international" boundaries. Thus the Transkei's northern part was grouped together with Natal, the southern part with the Eastern Cape. A number of "deconcentration points" and "industrial development points" have been demarcated both inside and outside the Black areas. Strong incentives for industrialists to move to these growth points have been instituted. A development bank has been established. Cooperation between White and Black capital and initiative has been made possible. It is clear that economically speaking the old idea of separate development has been abandoned in favour of the doctrine of "interdependence" (See figure 9). (See Tomlinson 1983:546-550 for the development of policy).

2.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter we analysed spatial (geographical) aspects of economic power differentials in South Africa.

The universal phenomenon of the concentration of economic activity and potential in certain geographical centres and the concomitant relative underdevelopment of their respective peripheries was briefly described and a few causes were indicated (2.2)

We then turned to the South African case. Here a particularly marked centre-periphery pattern evolved over the last century. The so-called PWV area is in a commanding position while the Cape Peninsula and Durban-Pinetown area form smaller subcentres (2.3.1).

The peripheral position of the areas reserved for Blacks and the resultant total dependence of their populations on the economic centres were discussed (2.3.2).

We then highlighted a few aspects of the situation in the urban centres and the effects of spatial race policies on the urbanisation of Blacks (2.3.3). We closed with a brief consideration of decentralisation in a spatial perspective (2.3.4).

The overall picture which emerged is a polarisation between economically powerful urban-industrial centres firmly under White control and small, scattered and economically insignificant peripheral areas to which half of the Black population has been restricted.

Figure 9 The Good Hope Plan (1981)

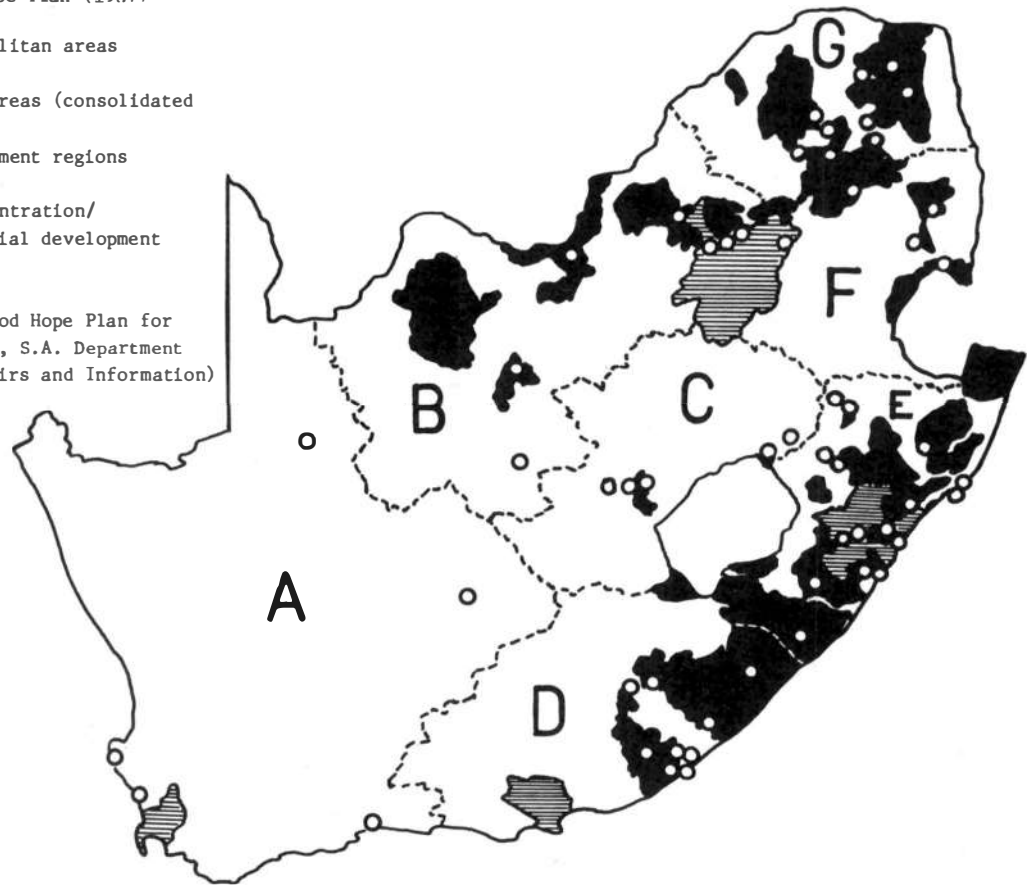
metropolitan areas

Black areas (consolidated

development regions

deconcentration/ industrial development points.

(Source: The Good Hope Plan for Southern Africa, S.A. Department of Foreign Affairs and Information)



CHAPTER 3

Population-potency relations

3.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

So far we have dealt with the dispersion of economic potential over geographical space. This gave us a crude indication of the distribution of economic potential between different groups of the population occupying that space. But the two variables do not overlap completely. Obviously there are also very poor people in geographical centres and very rich people in geographical peripheries. Our new model seeks to retain the insight of the geographical model, viz. that potency tends to gravitate towards certain centres of power. It applies this insight, however, not to spatial distance but to relative rank in terms of command over economic potency among different groups of the population. We shall first develop the general model and then apply it to the South African situation.

3.2 THE POPULATION-POTENCY MODEL EXPLAINED

3.2.1 Potency distribution in the population

If we plot economic potential (e.g. income) against population according to rank in terms of command over economic potential we shall normally obtain a potency distribution curve as depicted in figure 1.

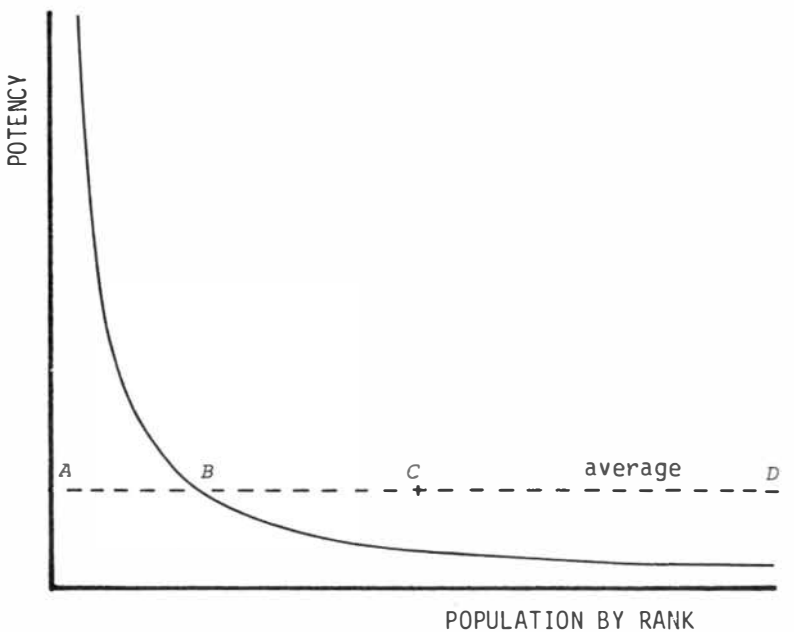


Figure 1

Stylised potency distribution curve

One of the indicators of economic potential is income. Income distribution is normally depicted by means of the Lorentz curve and measured with the Gini-coefficient. While this is a useful instrument the cumulative presentation of the two variables conceals rather than reveals the concentration of economic potential in certain minority groups to the untrained eye. For this reason we do not use the cumulative principle in our model.

The curve reveals that:

(a) the greater part of the population has very little potential to its credit while a small elite is in command of considerable economic potential.

(b) Between the extremes the curve does not follow a linear but a geometrical or exponential pattern: as we move from right to left the increments in economic potential rapidly increase in size.

(c) Point B, where the average line cuts the distribution curve, is situated considerably to the left of point C which divides the population into two equal sections. This means that in purely structural terms greater equity in the distribution of potential would be in the interest of a large majority (B-D) and against the interests of a minority (A-B) of the population. We may hypothesise that the former will tend towards socialist, the latter towards liberal attitudes on these grounds (see chapter 9, section 9.2).

To utilise the explanatory capacity of the centre-periphery model gleaned from our geographical observations we now shift the potency peak to the middle of our graphical presentation with positive values on both sides of the Y-axis. Each side represents half of the total population (figure 2).

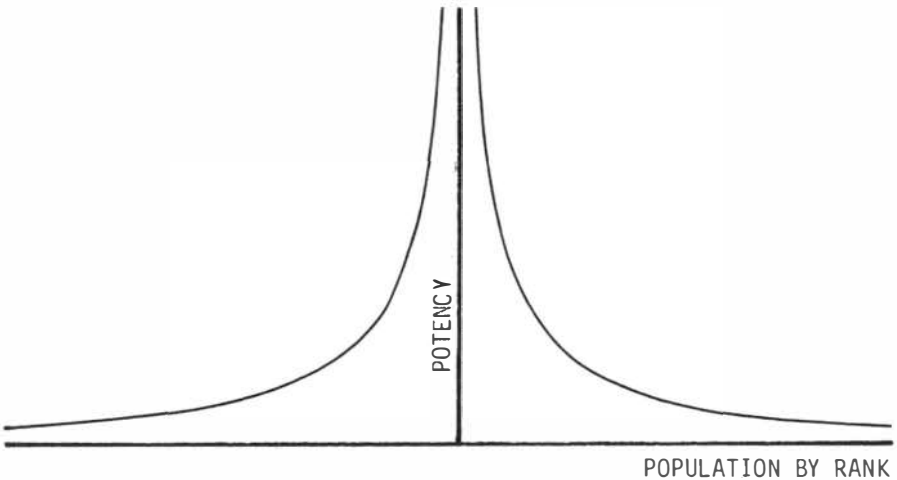


Figure 2
Population-potency centre-periphery model

This new version of the centre-periphery model thus substitutes geographical distance from a geographical centre of economic potential with distance from the peak of economic power in terms of rank. Rank is, of course, a function of population numbers: the greater the population the lower the rank of those who command the least potential.

3.2.2 The time factor added

The relation between potency and population numbers in terms of rank is not static, however, but develops in time. Subject to a number of variables this development shows two basic tendencies:

(a) In the centre population numbers tend to remain static or even decline, while in the periphery they increase exponentially. This can be depicted as follows (figure 3):

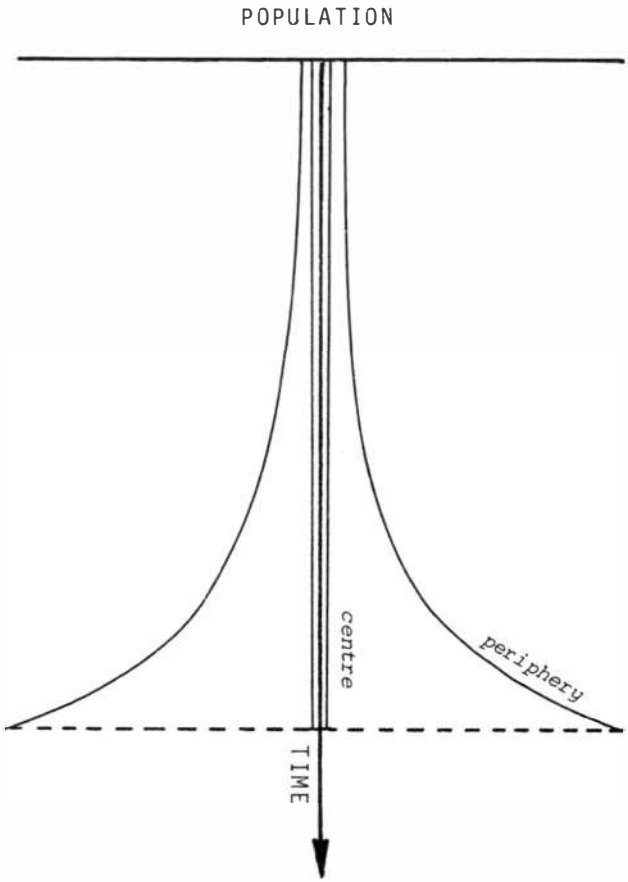


Figure 3
Differential population growth in centre and periphery

(b) In the centre economic potential grows exponentially while in the periphery the economy remains relatively stagnant and may even decline. This can be depicted as follows (figure 4):

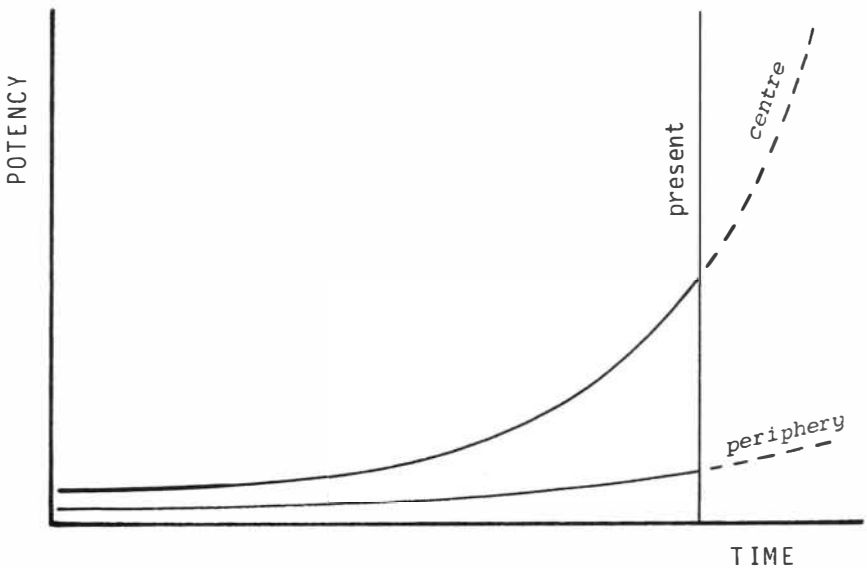


Figure 4
Differential potency growth in centre and periphery

The basic problem can, therefore, be summarised as follows: In the centre population numbers remain relatively static while economic potential grows exponentially; in the periphery economic potential remains relatively stagnant while population numbers grow exponentially. If we wanted to combine the three variables into a three-dimensional model it would look more or less like this (figure 5):

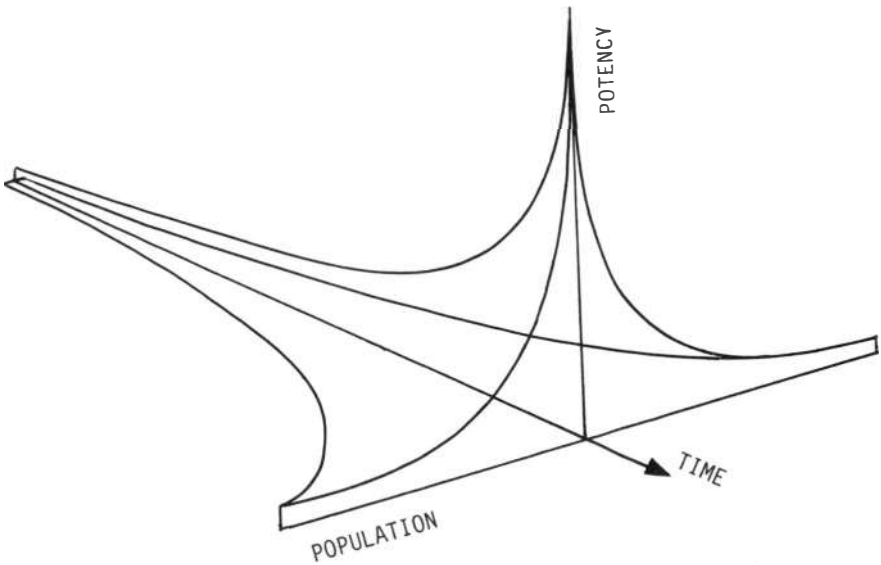


Figure 5
A three-dimensional growth model

3.2.3 Irregularities

The graphical presentation used so far has been characterised by smooth, exponential curves in all three dimensions. In the real world we find a number of characteristic irregularities:-

(a) The increase of the population over time in the periphery is, perhaps, the most regular of the three. It is, however, at least subject to variations due to wars, diseases, famines, etc. Many demographers assume, in addition, a certain cycle in which a period of rapid growth is followed by a period of stabilisation.

The theory is based on observations in the behaviour of the populations of those countries which today belong to the industrialised world. There is no guarantee that the growth process of the population of the Third World will follow a similar pattern.

That population growth subsided in industrialised countries is most probably due to a rising standard of living or, to use the terminology of our model, to the fact that such countries developed into the global economic centre. This way does not seem to be open to the entire Third World, if not because it cannot in its turn build up empires - the source of riches according to the radical school - then certainly because of the limits to industrial growth - which is the source of riches according to the liberal school. Finally, the option of large scale emigration which helped to cushion the European population explosion is not open to Third World Countries.

(b) The increase of potency over time in the centre is subject to the business cycle in which periods of boom and recession follow each other in irregular short-term cycles and long-term waves (Kontratieff-waves). If they have no subsistence agriculture to fall back on, peripheral populations are hurt most by periods of contraction because their income may be depressed below subsistence level (figure 6).

(c) The curve depicting the relation between population numbers and potency is irregular due to social barriers which impede vertical mobility such as discrimination on the basis of race, religion, caste, citizenship, etc. A social barrier leads to a "damming up" of the potency level on the side of the more privileged and a corresponding fall of the potency level on the side of the underprivileged relative to the position which would have prevailed if there had been no such barrier (figure 7). This artificial discrepancy seems to be the rationale of social barriers in the first place.

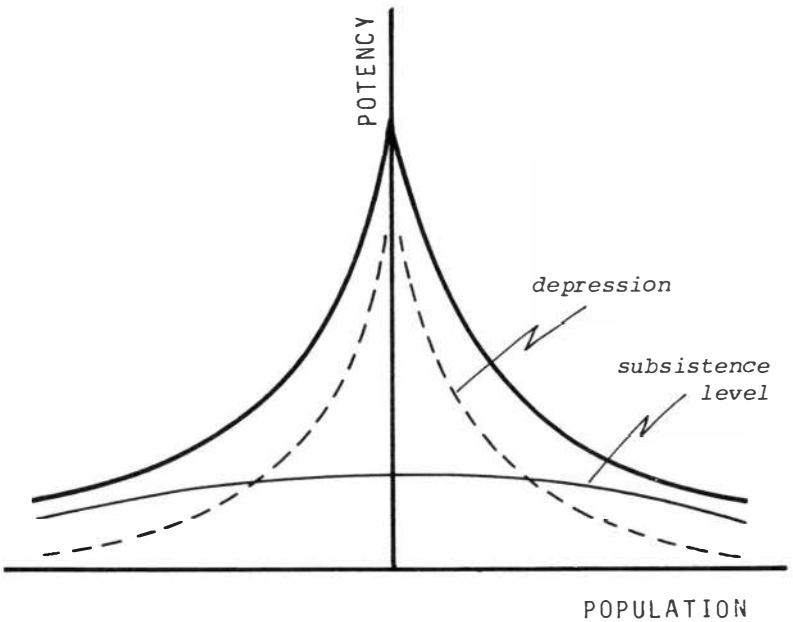


Figure 6
The effect of a depression on poorer sections of the population

(d) Finally we have to repeat in the context of our new model what we said earlier in connection with the geographical model, viz. that there is a hierarchical system of dependencies between successive levels of subcentres and their respective peripheries (figure 3 in chapter 2, section 2.2). Although the dominant centres compete with each other they are highly integrated in a system of interlocking elites. From this complex the system is organised radially into the remotest parts of the periphery with little direct interaction between subcentres on the same level. All lines of communication pass through the next higher centre.

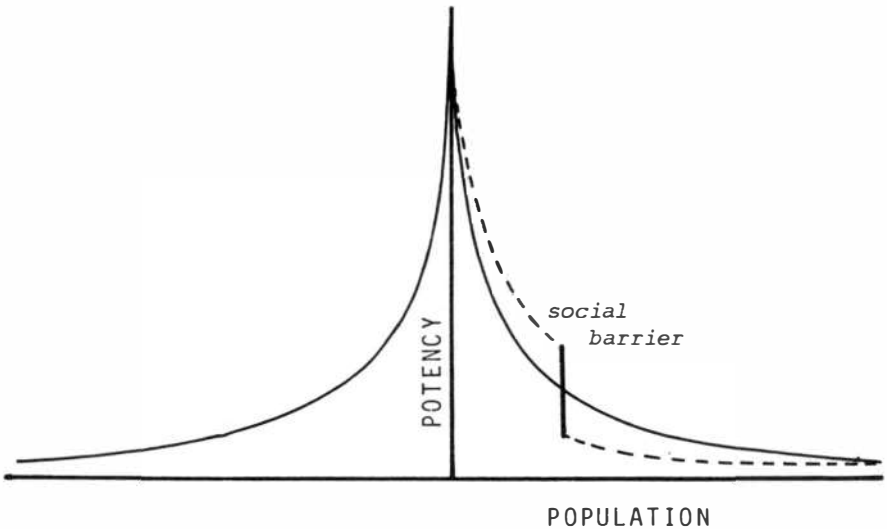


Figure 7
The effects of social barriers on potency distribution

3.3 THE POPULATION-POTENCY MODEL APPLIED TO SOUTH AFRICA

3.3.1 The three-dimensional model applied

Various indicators can be used to determine the distribution of economic potency in the population:

(a) Command over factors of production.
Mental factors: initiative (percentage entrepreneurs); technological sophistication (level of education and training, distribution of occupations and professions); organisation and management (percentage managers, etc.). Material

factors: raw materials (access to land, mines, etc.); labour (percentage economically active, distribution of skills); capital (capital ownership, credit facilities, access to control of state capital). Infrastructure; transport facilities, communications, energy, water, etc.

(b) Influence on distribution.
Access to markets, monopolies, oligopolies, monopsonies, access to state controls of distribution patterns (lobbies), etc.

(c) Consumption: purchasing power, availability of goods, etc.

For our present purposes it is sufficient to take account of one basic indicator, viz. income. Figure 8 gives an indication of the distribution of income in South Africa in 1980 among all race groups.

NOTES

1. Figure 8 depicts income earners only. When the total population is taken into account the picture becomes less favourable for the lower income groups because the latter tend to have more dependents per income earner. The following table suggests that while there is only one dependent per income earner in the White group, there are two in the Black group (South Africa 1982a: 271f):

	GROUP TOTALS	NO INCOME	PERCENTAGE WITHOUT INCOME
WHITES	4 528 100	2 248 980	49,7
ASIANS	821 320	540 120	65,8
COLOUREDS	2 612 780	1 627 240	62,3
BLACKS	16 923 760	11 608 380	68,6

2. The figures also exclude the de facto population of the TBVC areas (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei) which belongs primarily to the lowest income group and has the highest number of dependents. If it were to be added, the picture would become even less favourable for the Black group.

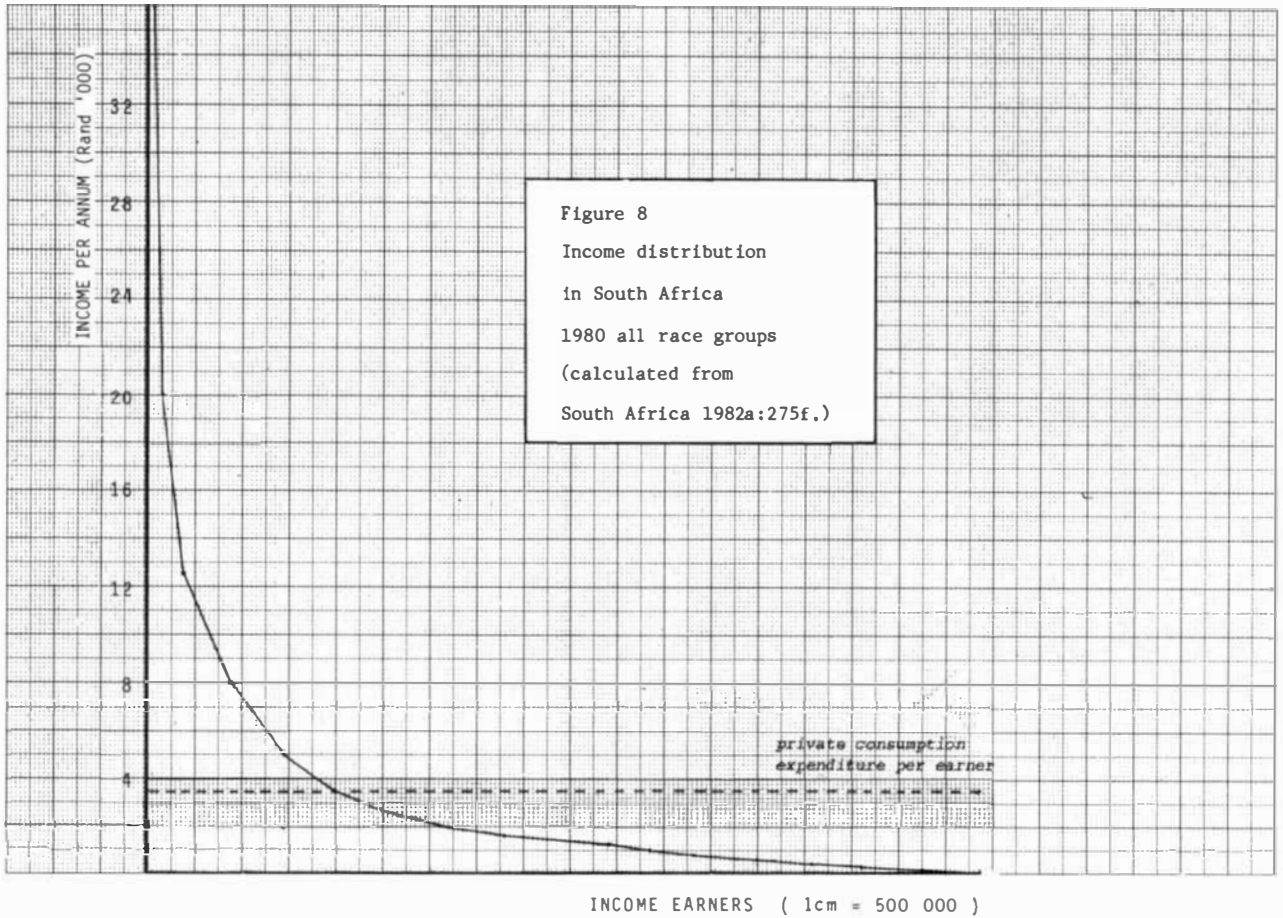


Figure 8
Income distribution
in South Africa
1980 all race groups
(calculated from
South Africa 1982a:275f.)

3. Figure 12 shows that income distribution within racial groups is as unequal as between racial groups.

According to McGrath (1983:328) inequalities within racial groups account for 57% of total inequality and inequality within the White group cause over one half of this within-the-group component, because of the high share of income by Whites.

The Gini-coefficient for Whites was 0,36, for Asians 0,45, for Coloureds 0,51 and for metropolitan Blacks between 0,29 and 0,33 in 1975. The latter has been rising from 0,25 - 0,30 in 1961 to 0,30 - 0,35 in 1980 (McGrath 1983: 318, 339).

According to Fényes (1984: 3) 20% of the White farmers produce 80% of the output.

4. It also seems as if income distribution becomes more skew over time.

Nel reports for the Johannesburg area that between 1975 and 1980 the lower Black income group became poorer and the higher group richer: in 1975 13% belonged to the R0 - R2 000 income group, in 1980 20,7%; while it had fallen dramatically from 42% in 1962 to 13% in 1975 (1983: 21-22).

The same trend was found among Indians in Durban: The unskilled group lost over 25% of their income, the semi-skilled group less than 7%, the skilled and professional group gained more than 10%. The gap between earnings in skilled and unskilled occupations widened from 31,03% in 1975 to 63,18% in 1980. The gap between semi-skilled and skilled rose from 32,02% to 56,50% and between skilled and professional groups from 36,18% to 45,11% between 1975 and 1980 (Loubser 1982b: 11-14). There is also some evidence that the income gap widened between urban and rural Black population groups (McGrath 1983:398).

Simkins (1984: 12-14) finds that in the 'Black States' (i) below the 5th percentile, households were destitute throughout the period 1960-1980, (ii) from the 5th to the 15th percentile households have suffered a deterioration in absolute terms since 1960 due to increasing landlessness and unemployment, (iii) from the 15th to the 30th percentile, households have experienced an improvement in absolute terms but their position has deteriorated relative to the median household, (iv) above the 30th percentile, households have experienced just over a doubling of their per

capita incomes; most of this improvement took place after 1970. The poorest probably belonged mostly to those moved from the White rural areas, the richest to those living in Black urban areas which have been included in the 'Black States'.

Devereux finds that the much quoted Black wage-gains between 1970 and 1975 the fortunate at the expense of those who were excluded in the process, i.e. the unemployed in the Black areas (1983: 62).

All these findings point in the same direction: The discrepancies become polarised. Potency gravitates towards the privileged; the underprivileged mark time or lose out. We shall come to some of the reasons for this phenomenon in chapter 5.

Figures 8 and 12 do not include the income elite, thus the bearers of the most significant concentration of economic potential, simply because we would need a few more pages to add on if the present scale was maintained.

NOTES

1. There are various possible ways of depicting the income elite:

   (a) One could arbitrarily assume that persons earning above R20 000 or R40 000 (which is the upper limit of the tax-tables) or R100 000 (which is the upper limit of the census) per annum belong to this elite. The sample survey of the 1980 census suggests that the following number of earners fell into these brackets in that year (calculated from South Africa 1982a: 271,276f.)

	TOTAL	WHITES	ASIANS	COLOUREDS	BLACKS
R 20 000+	121 440	117 500	1 720	640	1 580
% OF OWN GROUP	1,37	5,16	0,6	0,06	0,02
R 40 000+	21 940	21 000	240	360	340
% OF OWN GROUP	0,25	0,46	0,03	0,014	0,002
R100 000+	3 180	3 000	20	40	120
% OF OWN GROUP	0,036	0,13	0,007	0,004	0,002

Note that the figures in this income range are not very trustworthy, being projections from sample surveys, because of the small number involved.

(b) Another way is to assume arbitrarily that the top 5% of income earners belong to the income elite. This would give the following numbers of persons and their approximate income bracket in each group for 1980:-

	TOTAL	WHITES	ASIANS	COLOUREDS	BLACKS
NUMBER	443 062	113 956	14 060	49 277	265 769
INCOME ABOVE		R 20 000	R 8 000	R 6 500	R 2 700

2. The concentration of wealth is even higher than the concentration of income. The White share of wealth was 'at least' 94% of the total over against 68% of income in 1975 according to McGrath (1983: 391). The top 5% of wealth owners accounted for 88% of personally owned wealth (Britain 54%, West Germany 34%, USA 44%) (McGrath 1983: 392). The top 20% of Whites owned 82% of white wealth (wealth above R16 312), of Asians 99,4% (over R 375) and of Coloureds 99,9% (over R 78). Those owning more than R5 000 were 38% of the White, 9% of the Asian and 4% of the Coloured popula-

tion groups. (McGrath 1983:382-385). Blacks have been overwhelmingly owned tribally. That is why the Black share is difficult to account for. But it is clear that it is only of marginal significance (McGrath 1983: 385f):

3. Another way of depicting the potency elite is by showing the percentages of people (a) in managerial, executive and administrative and (b) professional and technical positions: (South Africa 1982a: 1-8 and Nattrass 1979: 10)

Managerial etc.	1971	1980	Professional etc.	1971	1980
Whites	96,9%	91,7%	Whites	65,2%	59,7%
Asians	2,0%	3,1%	Asians	3,0%	3,6%
Coloureds	0,5%	2,2%	Coloureds	7,3%	8,2%
Blacks	0,6%	2,9%	Blacks	24,5%	28,5%

The figures show that while Whites are in an absolutely dominating position, the share of other race groups is steadily increas ing. Potency concentration in the crucial categories of scientific and technological sophistication is particularly high: Whites provided 83,7% of all medical doctors, 91% of dentists, 96,7% of architects, 93,5% of physical scientists, 96,3% of civil engineers, 97% of electrical engineers, 95,3% of economists, 92% of lawyers in 1980 (South Africa 1982a: 1-8).

For the relation between time and population numbers a simple population growth curve is sufficient (see figure 9). (It would seem, however, that projections for Whites are over-optimistic. White population growth is probably stagnant at present.)

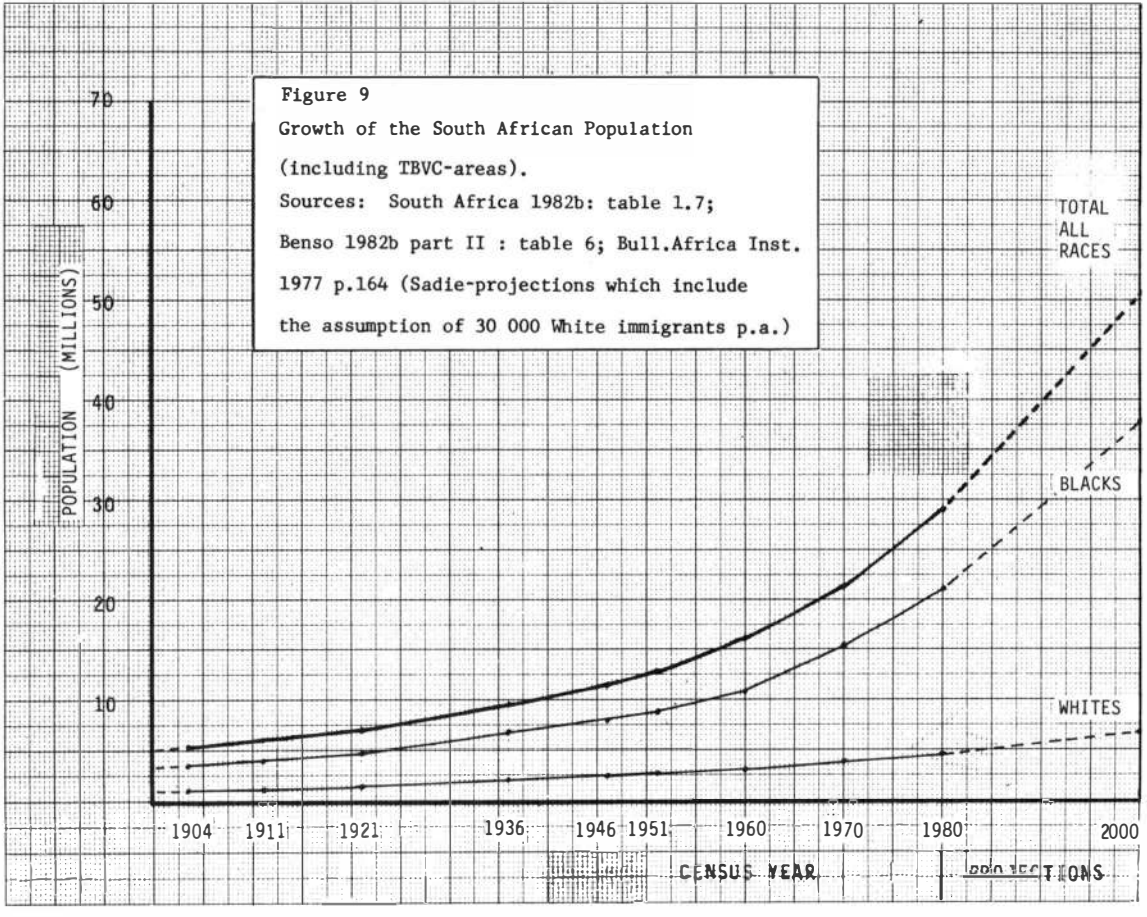


Figure 9
Growth of the South African Population (including TBVC-areas).
Sources: South Africa 1982b: table 1.7; Benso 1982b part II : table 6; Bull.Africa Inst. 1977 p.164 (Sadie-projections which include the assumption of 30 000 White immigrants p.a.)

Note that the Black population with its large proportion of peripheral groups grows much faster than the White population which belongs overwhelmingly to the centre. In 1980 88,4% of the White population was urbanised over against 38,3% of the Black population. (South Africa 1982b: 1.13). Persons under 20 years of age constituted 36,5% of the White population group and 50,9% of the Black population group (ibid. table 1.18). Without immigration the growth of the White population would be much less, possibly even negative in the coming 20 years. The average rate of increase of different population groups since the previous census (percent per year) is given as follows (ibid. table 1.6): Whites 1,86, Asians 2,68, Coloureds 2,48, Blacks 3,27.

For the relation between time and potency, we can utilise the growth of gross domestic product per capita in real terms. Because of the extreme discrepancy in the relative share of centre and periphery population groups in the gross domestic product - one estimate states that the poorest 20% of the population earn 2% and the richest 20% 75% of the income (Gordon 1981: 85) - this is a slightly inflated but close enough reflection of potency growth in the centre.

3.3.2 Irregularities in the basic model

In the absence of sudden crisis situations with a high loss of life (epidemics, wars, serious famines, etc.) over the last three quarters of a century, there are no significant irregularities in the population growth curve as figure 9 shows.

The potency growth curve follows the well-known pattern of the business cycle with its ups and downs. It can be expected, therefore, that figure 10 should depict a sawtooth pattern if analysed more closely. For our purposes at present it is sufficient to have a look at South African industrial share prices which will be a close enough reflection of the business cycle (see figure 11).

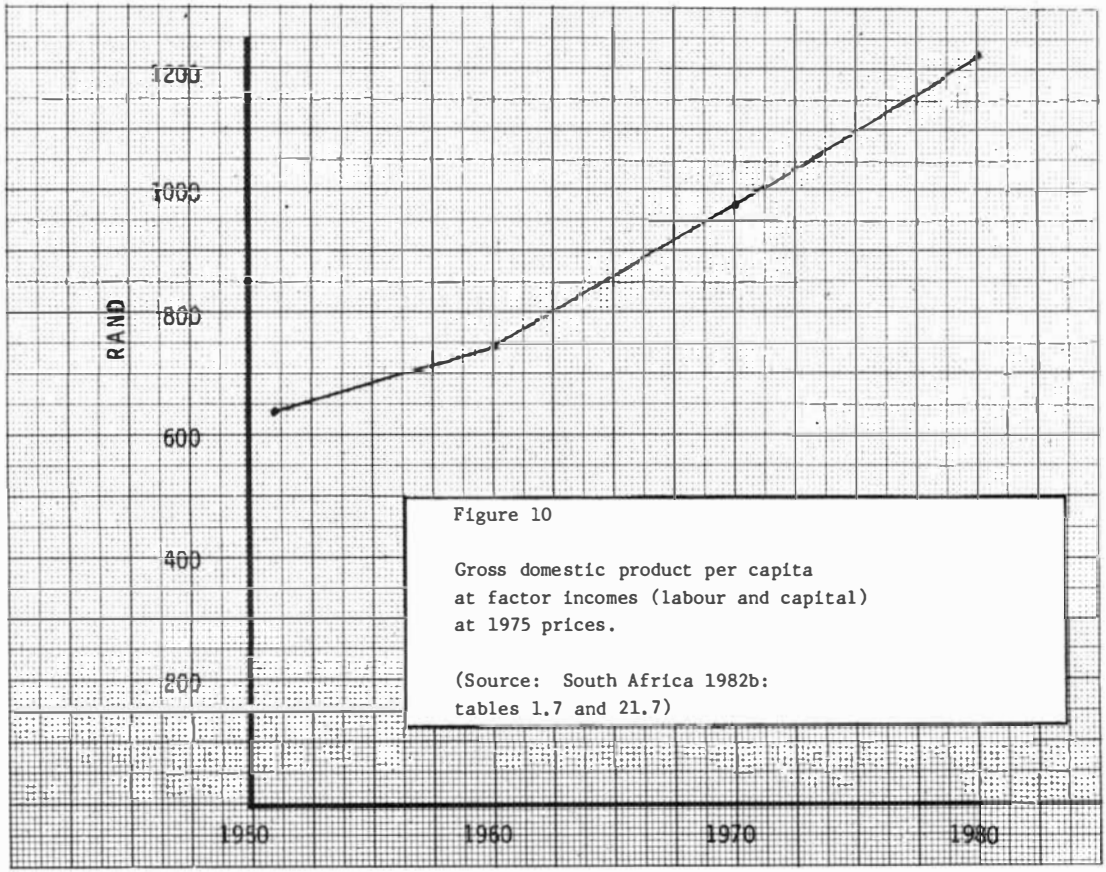


Figure 10

Gross domestic product per capita at factor incomes (labour and capital) at 1975 prices.

(Source: South Africa 1982b: tables 1.7 and 21.7)

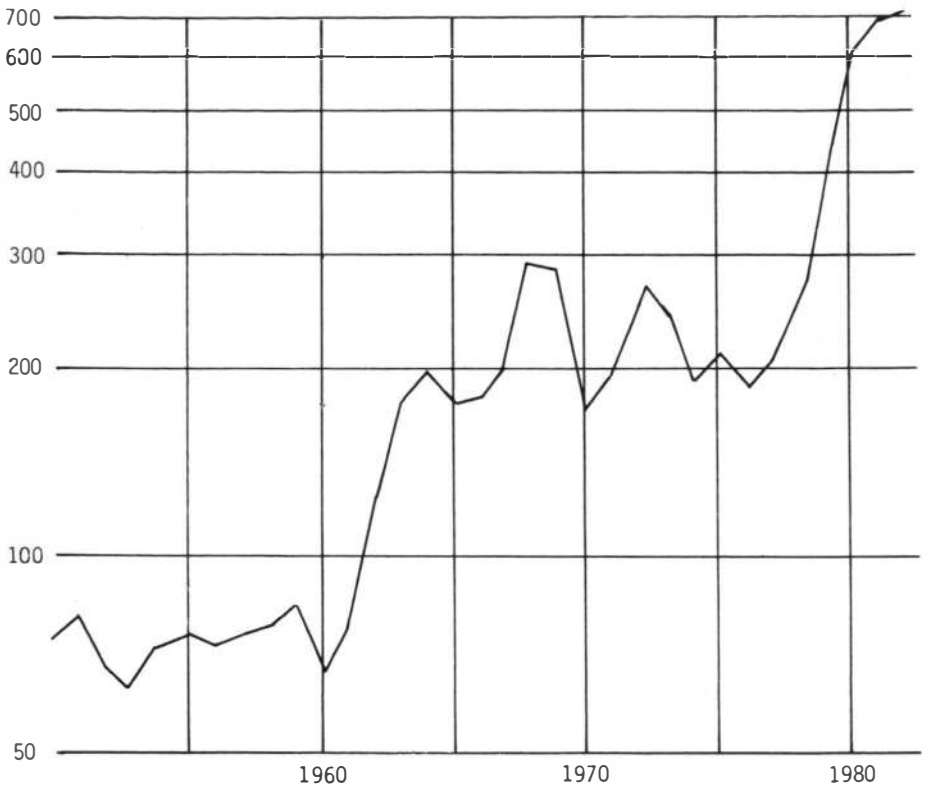


Figure 11
South African industrial share prices 1950-1980
(Source: Chart issued by the Johannesburg Stock Exchange)
Index: JSE Actuaries Industrial Index (from 1978) correlated with R.D.M. 100 (1958-1977) and B.E.R./ Sanlam calculations (1950-1958).

The curve depicting the relation between population numbers and potency is particularly irregular in the South African case due to a plethora of legal barriers to vertical mobility organised on racial, ethnic and geographical lines. Since population groups are physically segregated and socially boxed into categories for

better or for worse we have to depict them as units on the centre-periphery diagram. We can expect this to have a sawtooth pattern (See figure 12).

We have to distinguish at least the following barriers to vertical mobility:

(a) The first institutionalised and legalised socio-economic barrier exists between the White population group as a whole and all the other race groups. The White population group is, for all intents and purposes, a "free society" within its own ranks with not much more than the normal social barriers found for instance in the USA. Discrimination by the English and Jews against the Afrikaner is largely a thing of the past and the smaller minorities (Portuguese, Greeks, etc.) are not very significant in numbers.

(b) Next in line are Asians and Coloureds (people of mixed race). There is a slight but not very significant barrier from Asians to Coloureds, largely brought about by historical, geographical, social and cultural distance and group areas legislation.

(c) Then there is a definite jump towards the Black population which is firmly established in White controlled urban areas, particularly those who possess Section 10 rights. A minority of them managed to attain relatively high standards of living. On the outer fringe we find the marginalised urban group: people with casual employment and insecure housing who are constantly in danger of being found and "endorsed out".

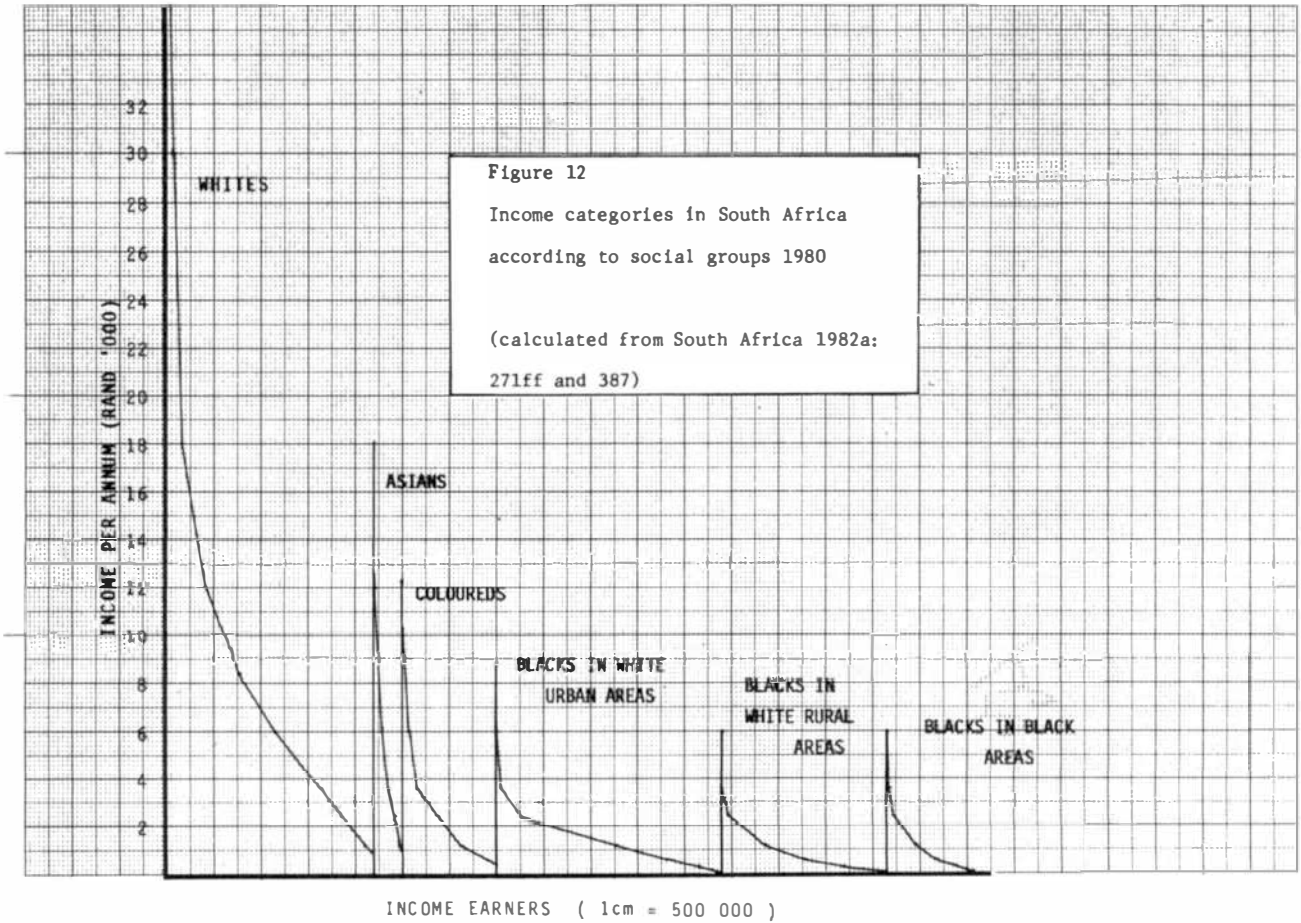


Figure 12

Income categories in South Africa according to social groups 1980

(calculated from South Africa 1982a: 271ff and 387)

(d) Then we have permanent Black labourers on White farms.

(e) They are followed by tribal subsistence peasants in Black areas who are largely dependent on migrant labour in White areas (farms, mines, industry, commerce, services). The economic position of migrant labourers in White areas is precarious but they have at least a rudimentary base in their "homeland" to fall back on in times of emergency.

(f) Finally, we have the rural marginalised population e.g. of the resettlement camps. They are totally dependent on migrant labour - or charity. Obviously boundaries between the last two categories are fluent.

Some of these barriers - e.g. in job opportunities between established urban Blacks, Coloureds, Asians and even Whites - seem to be eroding. This is due to economic pressures, particularly the extreme shortages of skilled labour, and general acculturation. Other barriers are reaffirmed (e.g. the group areas principle in residential dispersion). Several are being made more rigid (e.g. influx control from Black to White areas. Randall 1983: 282, Cooper 1984: 262).

In the case of race groups other than White, there are also a number of economically significant barriers to horizontal mobility - particularly in the geographical sense: the Western Cape is e.g. considered to be "a Coloured preferential area" (figure 13), Indians are not allowed in the OFS (Horrell 1978:5), Black migrant labourers are classified according to work categories (farm labourer, domestic servant, etc.). Their regions of origin are also linked in varying degrees to certain urban or rural labour-demand areas (e.g. Kwa Ndebele to Bronkhorstspruit, etc.). The movement of Black farm workers is restricted by

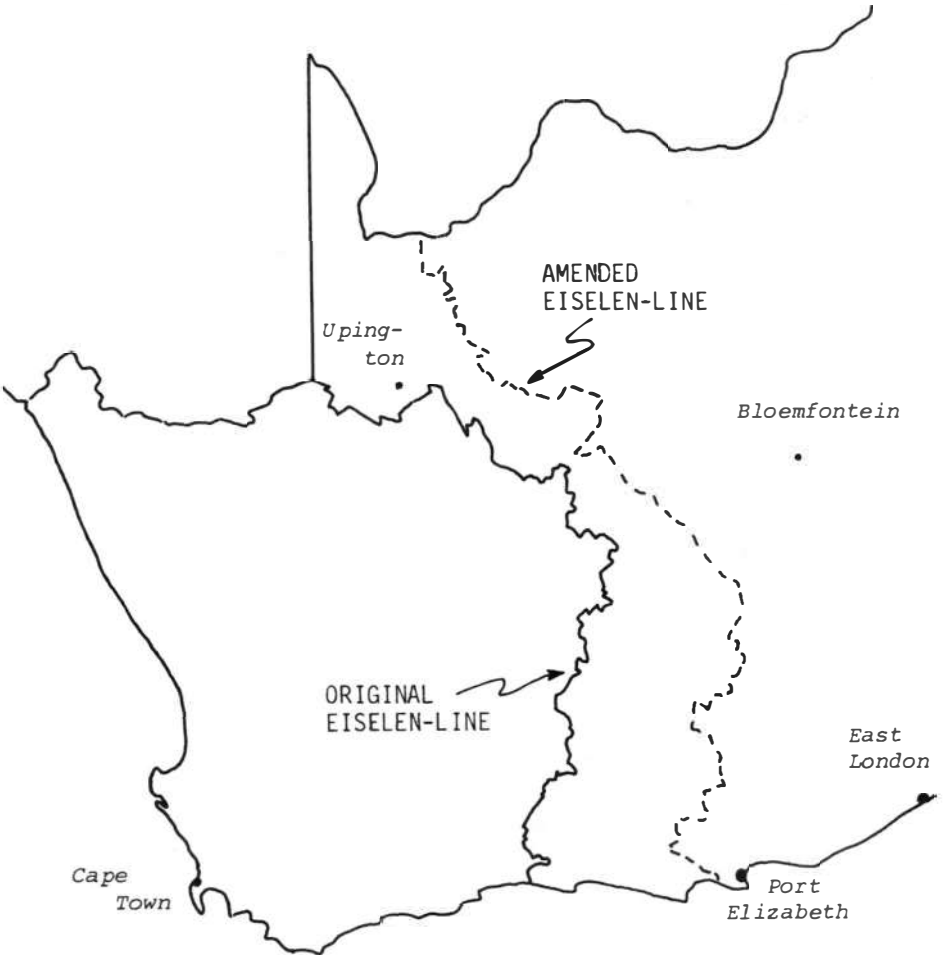


Figure 13

The Eiselen-line denoting Coloured preferential area.

Source: Smit & Booysen 1981:32

legislation between employment sectors and also between areas of jurisdiction of different Administration Boards. Movement can only take place through labour bureaux (Fényes 1984: 12).

The radial nature of hierarchical dependency patterns is obvious on a variety of counts:

(a) There is little interaction between Asians, Coloureds and urban Blacks.

(b) There is little interaction between urban Blacks and rural migrants housed in urban hostels.

(c) There is little interaction between groups settled in Black areas along ethnic lines. Traditional conviviality between different ethnic groups in the same area of settlement has in many instances broken up into hostility in the wake of ethnic homeland allocations (e.g. between Venda and Tsonga, Tswana and Ndebele, etc.).

3.4 GALTUNG'S DEPENDENCY MODEL (MODIFIED)

The relation between a dominant and a dependent centre and their respective peripheries is complex but its main facets can be described by means of a simple model (adapted from Galtung 1971: 81ff).

We assume that there is a centre region such as Great Britain and a peripheral region such as Kenya. In the former we distinguish a centre in the centre region (cC), say the multinational corporations based in London, and a periphery in the centre region (pC), say the work force of those corporations in Britain. In the latter we distinguish a centre in the periphery

region (cP), say the local offshoots of the multinational corporations based in Nairobi, and a periphery in the periphery region (pP), viz. the subsistence peasants in Kenya.

Two variables determine the relationships between these four entities, the direction of dependency and the harmony or disharmony of interest between them:

(a) Between cC and cP there obtains harmony of interest and dependency. As an offshoot of cC, cP shares in the prosperity of cC and is not likely to pursue a policy contrary to the interests of cC.

(b) Between cC and pC there obtains dependency and disharmony of interests, but pC has built up sufficient collective power over against cC by means of the franchise and trade union action to extort a considerable share of the prosperity controlled by cC.

(c) Between cP and pP there obtains dependency and disharmony of interest as well but in contrast to pC, pP has no possibility to exert collective group power in the form of either trade unionism or effective democratic action. pP does not share in the prosperity of cP.

(d) There is no relation between cC and pP except over cP and this relation is marked by dependency and disharmony of interest. If a direct relation existed this would not alter the position.

(e) There exists no relation between pC and pP except over cC and cP. Because of the linkages in the system at least some of the pressure of pC and cC for a greater share can be passed on by the latter over cP to pP. If a direct relationship between pC and pP existed it would not alter the situation since it would be marked by dependency and disharmony of interest. The more pC has come to terms

with cC on the basis of sharing profits, the less solidarity of pC with pP can be expected once real interests are at stake.

This model shows that in a system of dependencies the weakest partner is at the mercy of the stronger partners and the overall loser in the game.

Galtung's model can be made more precise in at least two respects:

(a) In both the centre and periphery regions there are a dependent but relatively powerful and therefore privileged group - the organised and established workforce. This group forms the bulk of pC and a small minority of pP.

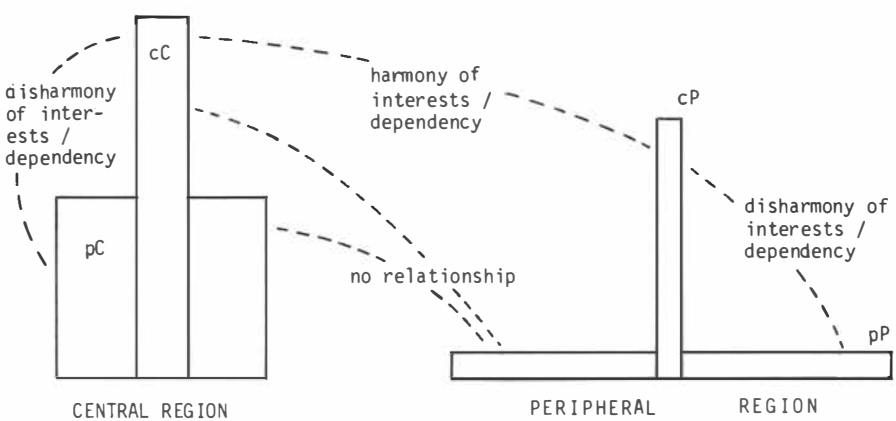


Figure 14
Galtung's dependency model (modified)

The latter is sometimes called a "worker aristocracy". The rest of the periphery consists of relatively independent but impoverished subsistence peasants, tradesmen, etc. In pC they form a tiny minority; in pP the bulk of the rural population belongs to this category.

(b) There is some evidence suggesting that in the vicinity of a centre system a section of the population is forced out of its means of livelihood by some mechanism or other without being integrated into the system at all. We call this process marginalisation. In the central region this group may be negligible, in the peripheral region it can be very substantial (e.g. the slums surrounding Nairobi and every larger African city). The relationship of all other groups to the marginalised is characterised by dependency and disharmony of interests - in as far as it exists at all. The enlarged model then looks like this:

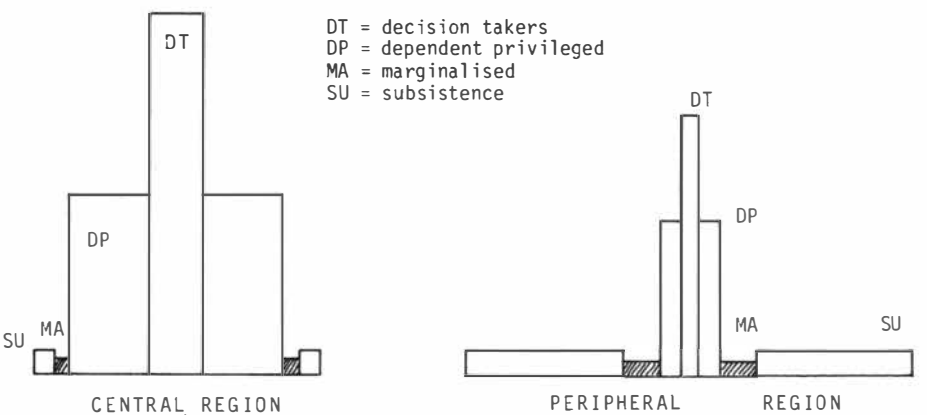


Figure 15
Galtung's dependency model enlarged

Some theorists argue that the whole of pP should be considered to be marginalised. This view is based on the claim of the radical school that the poverty of pP is the direct and exclusive result of exploitation and deformation of its economy by cC, without allowance for possible inherent economic weaknesses in pP. The opposite stance of the liberal school denies any responsibility of cC for the poverty in pP and attributes the latter solely to inherent economic weaknesses. There is an element of truth in both stances, the exact position depending on the specific case as well as on definition and degree. We shall come back to that in chapter 5. Be this as it may, I find it useful to distinguish between the relatively self-sufficient subsistence-agricultural population and the slum-dweller on the fringes of the city with no such base in agriculture. Due to influx control much of the latter group is located in the rural areas in South Africa.

3.5 GALTUNG'S (MODIFIED) DEPENDENCY MODEL APPLIED TO SOUTH AFRICA

If we try to apply our refined version of Galtung's model to South Africa we have to be sensitive to two possible interpretations - the grand Apartheid thesis and the unitary state thesis. Let us treat them one by one:

3.5.1 South Africa as a "commonwealth" or "constellation of states"

Before the National Party came to power in 1948 there were a number of scattered "native reserves" which served both as labour reserves for the White controlled economy and as an abode for those Blacks who were not integrated in the latter - whether on a permanent or a temporary basis. The policy of "separate development" upgraded these areas as "homelands" of separate ethnic groups with the goal of leading them to total independence - a sort of internal decolonisation.

The vision of the architects of the grand Apartheid plan was that these homelands would be developed economically to such an extent that the influx to the White controlled area would be reversed and that ultimately there would be no permanent Black population in White controlled South Africa left. Traditional (tribal) leaders who had suffered from a deterioration of their authority and relevance compared to the new elite of acculturated Blacks, particularly in the cities, could easily be won for the experiment. The promise of renewed status, power and economic privileges as well as various degrees of coercion made them willing to become the spine of a new hierarchy which progressed through different stages of local self-rule to formal independence - a status which to date four of the ethnic "National States" have attained.

To the extent that this plan was successful it is a prototype of Galtung's modified international model (compare figure 16 with figure 15).

A number of impoverished and impotent peripheral "Third World" states is linked to a powerful central "First World" state by means of a loose radial association or "Commonwealth" (See figure 3 in chapter 2). The ethnic governments form a series of centres in the periphery which are totally dependent on, and in harmony of interests with the centre in the centre, in this case mainly the South African government.

Under these circumstances no policy which would endanger the interests of the latter can be expected - which is, of course, at least part of the rationale of the whole system (cf. Nattrass 1983: 214-216 for dependency of Black States).

In these "National States" a substantial group of dependent but privileged people emerged in the form of civil servants, teachers, government sponsored businessmen (through the different development corporations), etc. This group is dependent on, and in harmony with the interests of the centre in the periphery. This group too is not likely to undermine a structure which is to its own benefit.

The vast majority of the population belongs to either the subsistence peasantry or to the marginalised group which has neither land rights nor jobs within the "National State" concerned, or to one of the many transitions between the two. These people are in disharmony with the interests of the two privileged groups, but totally powerless and dependent on the latter, particularly through a tight network of bureaucratic controls - and poverty. Because of its impotence in all respects, insurrection among this group is unlikely and, should it occur, too remote to be of any danger to the White centre system.

Blacks in White areas are "temporary sojourners" or "guest workers" in the White state without institutional rights. Obviously these rather homeless groups are a source of unrest and conflict and have to be rigorously controlled. The Coloured and Asian population groups are equally uncatered for. This, more or less, was the situation in the late seventies before the 'new deal' began to take shape (for the latter see Gordon 1980: 1ff and De Villiers 1981).

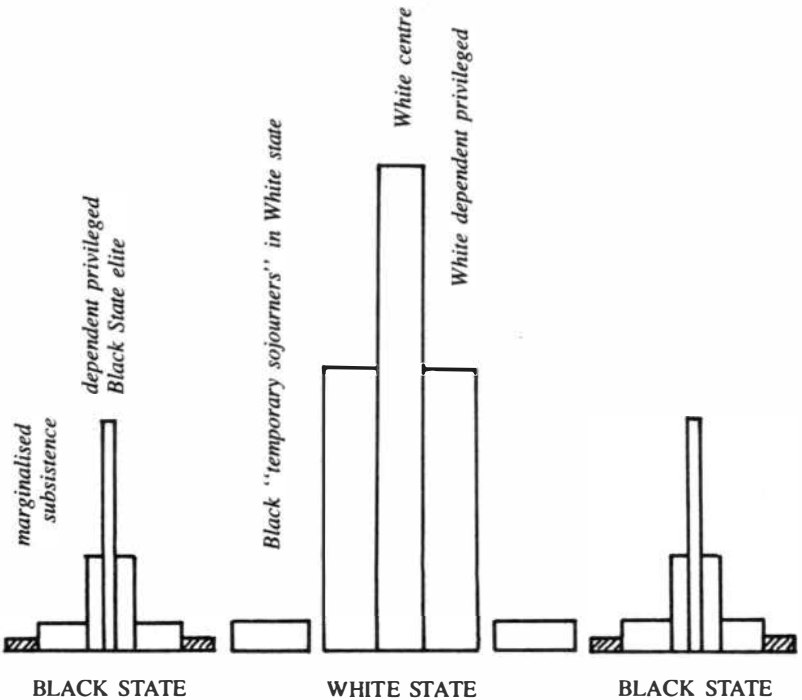


Figure 16
South Africa as a 'Commonwealth'

3.5.2 South Africa as a "unitary state"

The alternative application of the (modified) model of Galtung presupposes that South Africa is a unitary state (figure 17). There is a centre of decision-takers which includes (a) central Government, (b) big business management and (c) a group of professionals and self-employed people, including White farmers.

There are indications that these groups become increasingly integrated in spite of a certain level of disharmony of interests and traditional hostility among them. The government certainly attempts to involve the "private sector" in the execution of its policies (De Villiers 1981: 6ff).

Then there is a group of dependent but privileged people consisting mainly of White civil servants (including employees of parastatal organisations) and "worker aristocracies". Their relation to the centre is ambiguous. On the one hand the normal situation of dependency and disharmony of interests obtains. But democratic and trade union actions have transformed their position into one of privilege, relative power and interdependence with the centre. The Government has to please its voters - who are White - and the business community has understood the lesson of early strikes that the interests of the White professionals and skilled labourers have to be satisfied first, before any other group can be considered (Doxey 1961; Van der Horst 1971; Nattrass 1983: 71-77).

In a non-racial situation the established Black urban community (particularly those with section 10 rights) would be part of the last mentioned group. Racial policies have prevented this merger and led to the formation of a Black group which is dependent on the centre - and indirectly on the White dependent privileged group as well - yet relatively privileged if compared with the groups lower down.

The relation of this group both to the decision-making centre and the White dependent but privileged group is one of dependency and disharmony of interests. In contrast to the latter they have no democratic rights relevant to the centre of power and have also been denied trade union rights for decades. In

addition they were prevented from becoming competitive with their White counterparts through inferior education, job reservation, lack (or prevention) of formal training, less elaborate health and welfare services, crowded housing conditions, long distances from the work place, curbs on entrepreneurial initiatives, etc. In spite of all these restrictions a minority of urban Blacks has reached a considerable standard of living while there is also a substantial marginalised group as we have seen.

It is in this group of urban Blacks that not only the greatest economic potential but also the greatest discontent is concentrated. With the prize of integration constantly before their eyes in the form of the position of their White colleagues, yet beyond their reach because of a multitude of discriminatory laws and practices, the level of their sense of frustration is particularly high (Schlemmer 1983b). The combination of relatively high potential and unsatisfied aspirations makes this group a constant threat to the system and much of the policy is designed to keep this group under control. The rationale of the grand Apartheid idea was, in fact, to degrade this Black urban elite to "temporal sojourners" in White South Africa as long as their services are required there. Recently policy makers have abandoned this untenable definition of a group that could not be wished away, because it is an integral and indispensible part of the system - but the problem as such has not disappeared.

However, their potential of being integrated into the system to such an extent that they have a stake in the *status quo* (considerably modified) and begin to contribute to its stability is great. It seems as if the system is slowly moving into this direction - beginning with the Asians and Coloureds. That seems to be the rationale of the new constitution of 1983. The outcome of this development may well be that Whites, Asians,

Coloureds and minority of Blacks in the "common area" form an integrated and advanced industrial core, while the majority of Blacks are rigidly excluded from the system as redundant - and declared none of its immediate responsibilities through "granting" of independence. The ever tightening influx and labour control system together with a measure of liberalisation for established urban Blacks points in this direction.

We then have the subsistence peasantry and the marginalised people in the Black areas. These serve as labour reservoirs for the centre system which can be regulated according to needs through influx and labour movement control. They also serve as abodes to which Blacks who are "redundant" in terms of the requirements of the centre system (the sick, aged, unemployed, etc.), can be removed. Both groups are dependent and in disharmony with the interests of the other groups mentioned previously - including established urban Blacks.

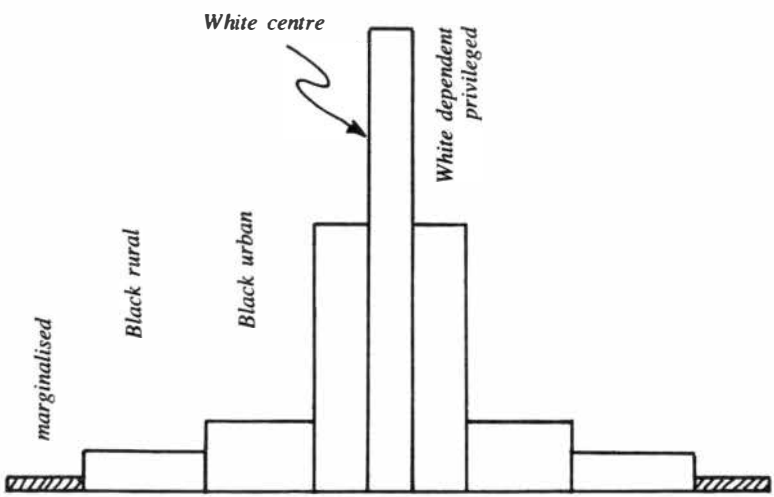


Figure 17
South Africa as a "unitary state"

3.5.3 South Africa : the real position

Which of the two applications of Galtung's model reflect the true situation in South Africa? Both do, but each one only in part. South Africa is essentially a unitary state but policies of the Nationalist Government have created realities over the last 30 years which can no longer be ignored. To get a complete picture we have to merge the two applications into one (figure 18):

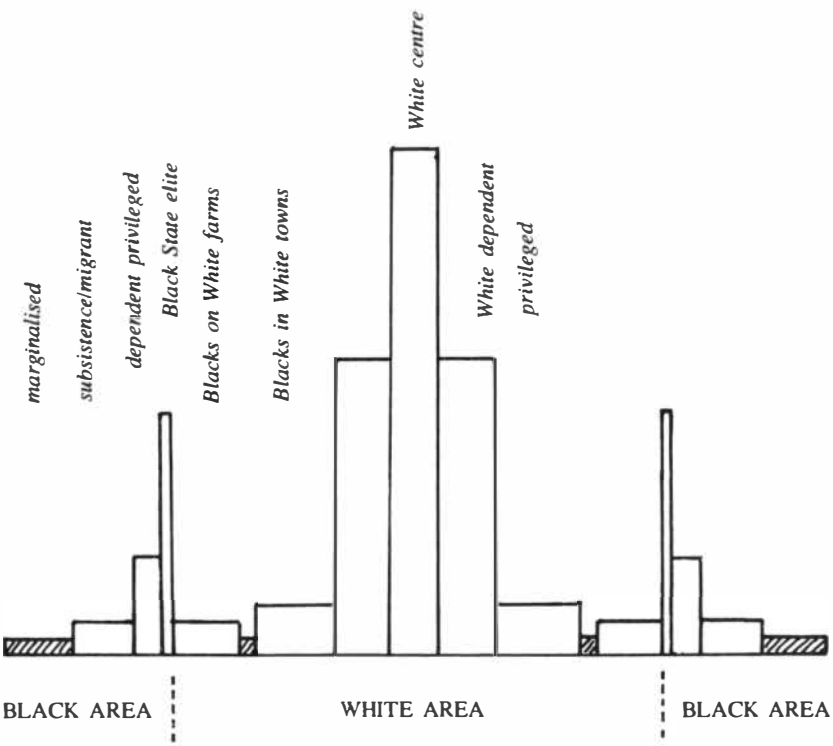


Figure 18
South Africa: the real position

3.6 THE LOCATION OF IDENTIFIABLE GROUPS WITHIN THE SYSTEM

We close this chapter with a crude attempt to locate identifiable social groupings in the power system. Note that the sketch in figure 19 is highly stylised and is not meant to give any numerically correct ratios of potency between the categories concerned. The groupings are also not meant to be exhaustive.

NOTES

1. The decision-making elite in this overall power structure is of particular importance for our theme. We have already discussed the aspects of income and wealth under section 3.3.1. Now we have to consider control. This elite consists of government and big business. Government directly controls only 3,2% of share capital quoted on the Johannesburg stock exchange through the Industrial Development Corporation and, Iscor and the South African Reserve Bank another 5,2%. (Lombard 1984: 3). To this we have to add parastatal corporations (Iscor, Sasol, Nufcor, Armscor, etc.) and infrastructural investments in electricity supply (Escom), water supply, transport (Sats) and other services. Of total capital stock 45% has been in the hands of public authorities, 13% in the hands of public corporations and 42% in the hands of private enterprise in 1979 (Natrass 1983: 83). A significant portion of state owned property such as game and nature reserves, is economically not significant (Lombard 1984: 5). The power of public authorities extends, however, far beyond what these figures seem to indicate because of their legislative and administrative control of the economy as a whole.

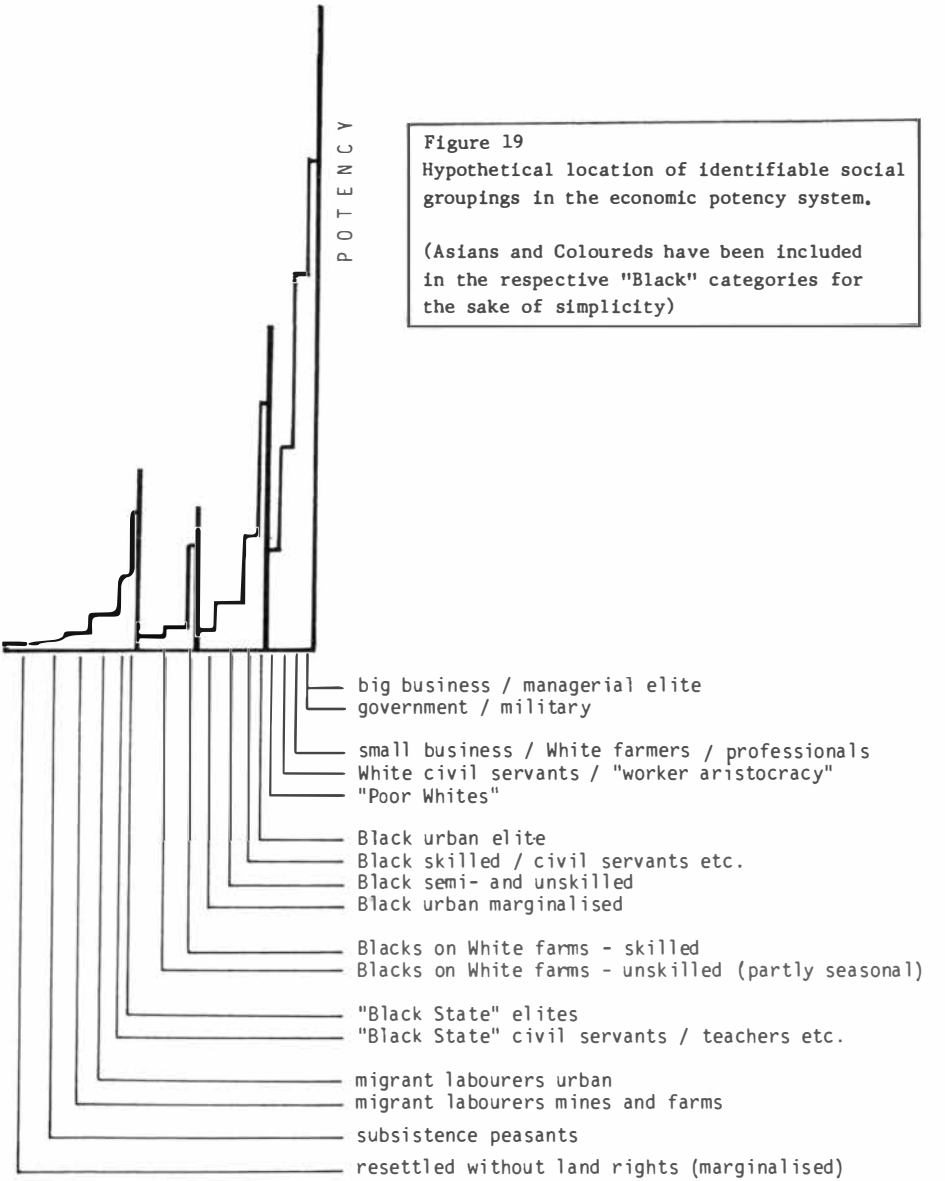


Figure 19
Hypothetical location of identifiable social groupings in the economic potency system.

(Asians and Coloureds have been included in the respective "Black" categories for the sake of simplicity)

2. In the private sector control over share capital quoted on the stock exchange has increasingly become concentrated in a few hands. Anglo American Corporation (worth R30 152 million) is by far the greatest 'empire'. It controls 27,1% of total assets quoted. It is followed by Sanlam (worth R17 872 m), SA Mutual (R10 872 m), Barclays (R10 397 m), Stanbic (R9 471 m), Barlows (R5 823 m) and others (Lombard 1984: 1-2). Considering only quoted industrial companies not taken account of in the balance sheets of other such companies, the share of the top 5 holding companies (Anglo American, Barlows, Federale Mynbou, Amic and SA Breweries) increased from 22% in 1975 to 35% in 1982 - mainly through take-overs and mergers. The top 15 holding companies controlled more than half of the total in 1980. Most of these companies concentrate on specific areas so that they encounter little competition (Lombard 1984: 4). Control of capital by overseas owners decreased from 17,2% in 1962 to 15,6% in 1982. To this we have to add indirect (uncontrolled) capital amounting to 14,3% in 1962 and 20,3% in 1982 (Lombard 1984:6). Lombard *et al.* reckon that due to overseas competition these concentrations have not significantly led to price inflation (1984:7-12) but they did have a significant influence on capital intensity of production thus leading to a reduction in the rate of employment. While the top 20% of firms produced almost 92% of gross yield, they only employed 81% of the work force in manufacturing in 1979 (Lombard 1984: 11-14).

3. We also need to take account of the growing power of trade unions. Before 1981 they were mostly White controlled, after 1981 Black trade unions began to play a significant role (Lombard 1984: 15-16). Finally we need to mention that 85% of agricultural land (Fényes 1984:2) is in the hands of about 80 000 White farmers.

3.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter we discussed the distribution of economic potential between different sections of the South African population.

We first developed a general model in which the growth of the potential of the centre population is related to the growth of the population in the periphery. We also discussed irregularities in the ideal pattern caused, for instance, by the business cycle and social barriers (3.2).

This model was then applied to South Africa. We used income distribution as an indicator of economic potency distribution. Graphs gave an impression of massive income discrepancies, a high growth rate of the peripheral population and a substantial growth of the centre economy (3.3.1). We then depicted irregularities in the potency growth curve due to the business cycle and in the income distribution curve due to racial and spatial barriers typical of the South African socio-political situation (3.3.2).

Then we adapted a model devised by Galtung concerning the relation between a dominant and a dependent centre and their respective peripheries (3.4) and applied its insights to the South African scene. The two basic ways of looking at the South African situation - commonwealth or unitary state - were combined into a complex model (3.5).

We closed our analyses with a crude indication of the location of identifiable groups within the system and added a few particulars on the concentration of power in the centre elites (3.6).

A picture of massive potency discrepancies emerged from our analyses. South Africa is said to have one of the highest levels of inequality in the world. As McGrath puts it: "The economy-wide distribution ... showed a Gini-coefficient of 0,68 which is higher than any Gini-coefficient appearing in cross-country comparisons" (1983: 249). The structure of the system is such that it seems unlikely that the situation will improve significantly until drastic changes in policy are implemented. At present the most likely scenario seems to be the further development of a highly industrialised First World enclave - including Whites, Coloureds, Asians and a minority of Blacks - dominating a devastatingly impotent, impoverished and scattered Third World environment.

CHAPTER 4

Need-potency relations

4.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

So far we have worked with potency functions. Economic potency can be expressed in terms of income. The income curve in itself does not reveal the problem of economic discrepancies, however, because it only represents one of the two decisive variables, the other being need. Affluence and poverty, economic potency and economic impotence are indicated by the respective differences between need and income.

Normally economic theory does not work with the concept of need but with the concept of demand. These two are not the same. The most desperate need will not be translated into market demand unless need is matched with purchasing power. Purchasing power is a function of income, not of need. Because the higher income groups have most of the purchasing power, they are able to satisfy even needs which are more apparent than real. Of course, affluent people also have objective needs, but they are largely satisfied. In contrast, the objective needs of poverty-stricken people remain largely unfulfilled.

Because of the operation of the market mechanism, a skew demand has repercussions for supply as well. Production is geared not to need but to market demand. In a situation of severe income discrepancies, therefore, production gravitates towards the luxuries of those who possess the money rather than to the essentials of those who have the need.

Our next task is, therefore, to devise a model which is capable of depicting the relation between need and income as an indicator of potency. After a description of the general model we shall try to apply it to the South African case. Unfortunately empirical evidence is more difficult to find here than in the cases of space-potency and population-potency relationships and we have to rely on conjecture to a greater extent than we would wish to.

4.2 THE NEED-POTENCY MODEL EXPLAINED

Theoretically there are three types of need: basic essentials, social expectations and personal wishes. Only *basic essentials* can be measured with some accuracy. A formula is set up which includes all expenses that a normal family of given size at a particular time and in a particular location has to incur to remain in good health, physically, psychologically and socially: a balanced ration, transport costs, rent, simple clothing, tax, school fees, etc. No luxuries are allowed and it is assumed that the family budgets and purchases judiciously under all circumstances. Some researchers feel that this "poverty datum line" is unrealistic because there are always unforeseen expenses such as funerals, understandable cravings for a little indulgence here and there and ignorance concerning family budgeting and purchases. So they add a certain percentage to reach the "effective minimum level".

The terminology and methodology differ between researchers. J F Potgieter of the Institute of Planning Research at the University of Port Elizabeth calls the lower entity 'Household Subsistence Level' (HSL) and the higher entity 'Household Effective Level' (HEL). When rent and transport is not taken into consideration the HSL becomes the 'Primary Household Subsistence Level' (PHSL) (Potgieter 1980). PA Nel of the Bureau of Market Research at Unisa called the lower entity 'Minimum Subsistence Level' (MSL) and the higher one 'Humane Standard of Living' (HSL), but more recently the Bureau used the terms 'Minimum Living Level' (MLL) and 'Supplemented Living Level' (SLL). (Loubser 1984: 1). For the early debate in South Africa see Ellision *et al.* 1975.

Let us assume that the 'basic essentials' need curve has the following shape (figure 1):

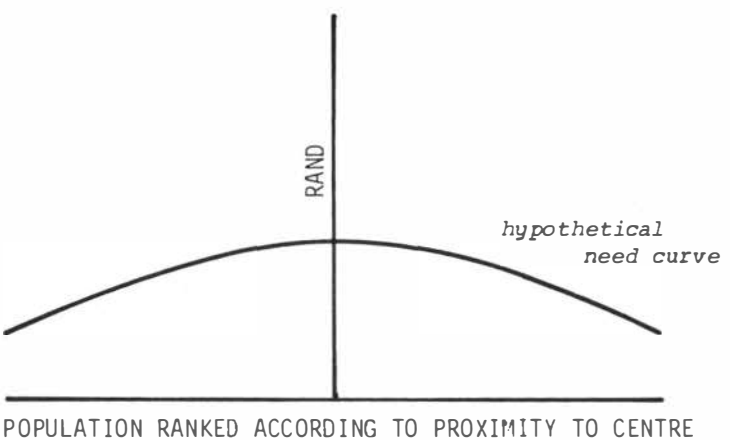


Figure 1
Hypothetical 'basic essentials' need curve

The hypothetical need curve has the following characteristics:

(a) Objective need is higher in the centre than in the periphery. There are many reasons for this: transport costs, housing, food, etc. are all more expensive in the urban setting than in the rural context.

(b) As it approaches the centre the need curve flattens out. The main reason for this assumption is the law of declining marginal utility which will be discussed later.

Basic essentials to survive and remain healthy are not the only type of need. The second type is *social expectations*. A person occupying a certain status and playing a certain role in society is expected to adhere to a particular life-style and expenditure pattern. A managing director cannot come to his office in a torn overall nor can he meet his partner in a street corner café arriving in a battered 'beetle'. He will lose the contract. Social expectations differ enormously from culture to culture, from social class to social class and from group to group. Nevertheless, it should not be entirely impossible to find a formula by which social expectations can be measured statistically.

> Social expectations are normally called 'standard of living'. The latter is not what people actually spend but what they are supposed to spend if they fulfilled social expectations. One indication of social expectations is average spending within a social group or section of the population. However, social expectations are normally much higher than average spending. The reason for this phenomenon is that the 'reference group' or 'significant others' are normally not the group's own income category, nor those below, but the income category just above it. The reference group for urban Blacks, for instance, is the group of lower or intermediate class Whites (Broom 1979:250).

While basic essentials have become an established area of social research and social expectations are at least recognised by sociology as an important variable, *personal wishes* have not attracted much attention from social sciences. What is more, in economic theory it is usually explicitly denied that personal wishes can be measured. The assumption that wishes and wants are unlimited and only kept in check by the scarcity of resources is, in most cases, taken as axiomatic. I believe that it is quite wrong.

Fact is, that even the richest of millionaires have circumscribed and quantifiable consumption patterns. They do not spend all the income they earn but only a tiny fraction of it. The rest is invested. The classical explanation for saving, viz. that people defer consumption now with the hope of being able to consume more in the future, is not very convincing in these cases because there are no material wishes left which can be satisfied at any given time.

> Reasons for limited consumption patterns in cases where resources are not the limiting factor are not difficult to find. Man is subject to the limits of time, space and energy. Wishes which could theoretically all be fulfilled have to compete for a place in this circumscribed area.
>
> Economic theory itself contradicts the assumption of unlimited wants with its law of diminishing marginal utility. The tenth luxury car is a bother rather than a boon. Sooner or later saturation must be reached. On the basis of this evidence it is inconceivable how the myth has survived for such a long time and prevented essential research on the upper limits of need (which include basic essentials, social expectations and personal wishes) and the factors which influence it.
>
> The category of personal wishes includes all reasonable wants of all family members - with the proviso that it is the wishers themselves who determine what is reasonable. By the same token it is the people directly concerned who have

to determine which consumption patterns are socially required. If these two categories are defined in this way it is possible to measure total need (including basic essentials, social expectations and personal wishes) statistically for certain groups in particular situations and at given times. One only needs to determine the income bracket where people begin to save and invest in considerable proportions and not as a means to satisfy deferred needs and wants later, or as a safety precaution for the future.

In the absence of detailed studies concerning social expectations and personal wishes I have to work with a hypothesis. It says that on the grounds of the law of diminishing marginal utility both the curve of social expectations and the curve of personal wishes follow the same pattern as that of basic essentials, only added on to the latter. We thus obtain the following picture (figure 2):

We are now able to determine the nature of the discrepancy between income and need, i.e. affluence and poverty, by superimposing the three need curves onto the income curve as established in the previous chapter (figure 3):

On the basis of this hypothetical model we are able to arrive at four precise definitions:

(a) *Absolute poverty* is a situation in which income does not meet the level of basic essentials, thus below A on the graph.

(b) *Relative deprivation* is a situation in which income meets basic essentials but not the level of social expectations, thus between A and B on the graph.

(c) *Relative privilege* is a situation in which income meets basic essentials and social expectations but not all personal wishes, thus between B and C on the graph.

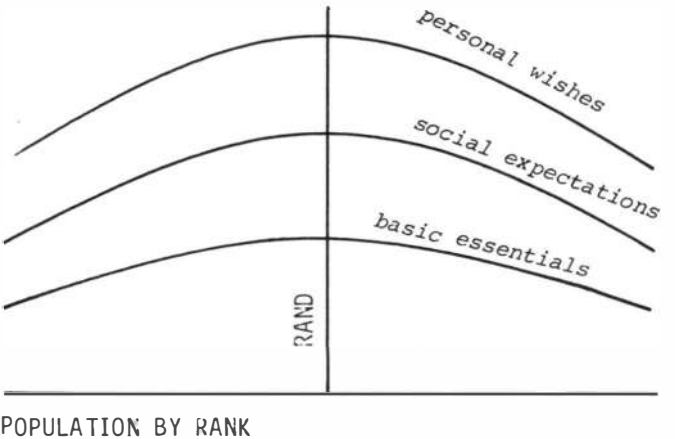
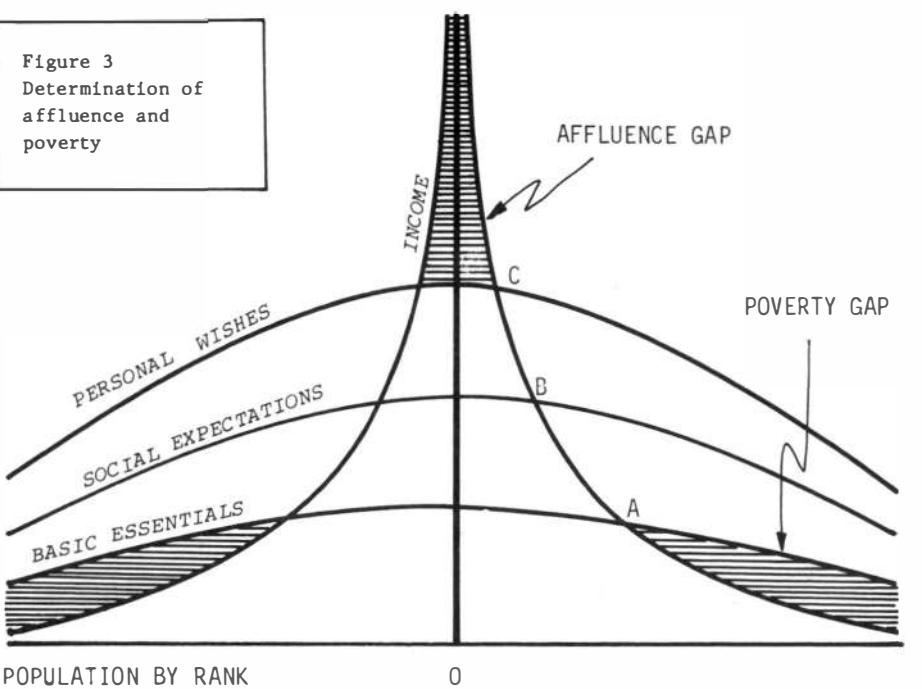


FIGURE 2
THREE TYPES OF NEED

Figure 3
Determination of affluence and poverty



(d) *Absolute affluence* is a situation in which income covers basic essentials, social expectations and all reasonable personal wishes (reasonable in the person's own judgment) and the surplus can be saved and invested, thus beyond C on the graph.

4.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

In the South African case, as in many other countries, the need curve is not convex, as figure 1 suggests, but concave. That means, it rises faster as we approach the centre. The reason for this phenomenon lies in progressive taxation. If we excluded income tax from the concept of basic essentials, we would get a convex curve. The following table gives an indication of the quantities involved (South Africa 1980a):

BRUTO INCOME (RAND)	INCOME TAX RAND	TAX AS PERCENTAGE BRUTO INCOME
1 000	78	7,8
10 000	996	10
50 000	17 087	34
100 000	41 787	42

Graphically the situation can be presented as in figure 4.

NOTES

1. While income tax pushes up the basic essentials curve towards the centre, general sales tax has the opposite effect. I was not able to gather empirical data on the precise effect of general sales tax so far.

   (A further complication is the exemption of basic food stuffs from general sales tax, but this has not been operative in 1980 which is the year on which most figures in this study are based.)

2. On the other side of the spectrum, income from investment is deductable from taxable income at certain rates depending on total income of the earner and up to a minimum of 33.3 % in the highest income bracket. This measure, which is doubtlessly aimed at the encouragement of capital formation, benefits the higher income groups. In the same vein capital gains made on the stock exchange are not taxable.

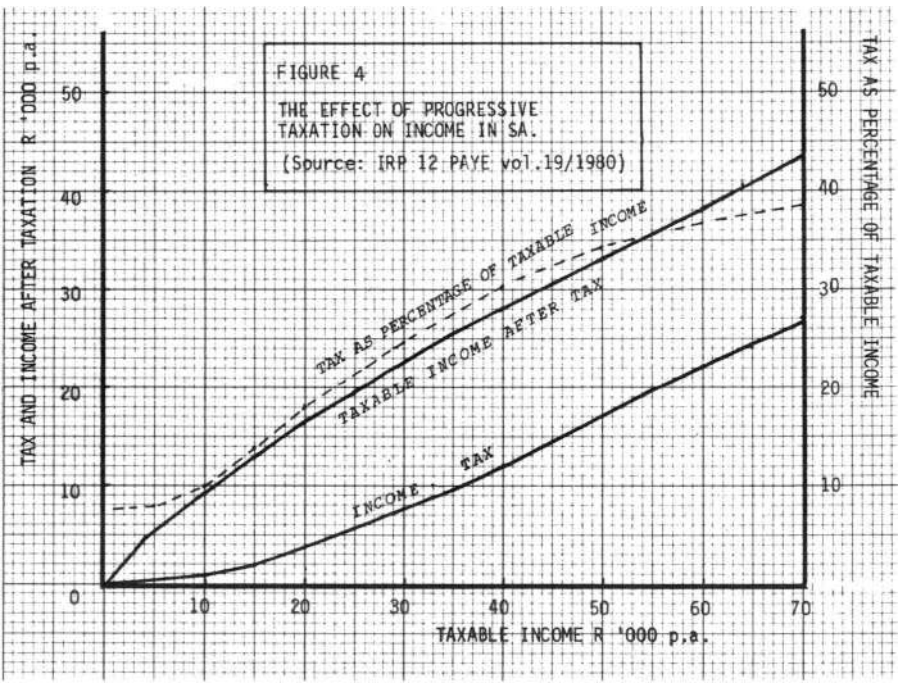


Figure 4

3. Another factor to be taken into consideration is that while almost 30% of the White population was gainfully employed in 1980, less than 16% of the Black population was (South Africa 1982b : 1.18 and 7.6). The high rate of dependency obviously raises the basic essentials line amongst the poorer sections of the population.

The need curve displays "jumps" similar to those of the income curve which we found in the last chapter. These are due to discontinuities between the social environments of the respective groups.

Expenditure on housing may serve as an example. From the real cost of a Black homestead in rural Black areas and on White farms (for which I have found no estimates so far) to the average cost of housing in Black townships we can expect a considerable jump. Here rents have ranged from R13 (Durban) to R18 (Cape Town, Johannesburg) and R24 (Pretoria, including lighting) for Blacks and up to R32 (Durban) for Coloureds in 1980 (Potgieter 1980). In the same year the cheaper type of flats in a Pretoria White suburb cost about R120 - R150 p.m. Houses cost between R40 000 and R60 000, the cheapest probably going at R30 000. In the latter case this would work out to R244 p.m. at the building societies' bond interest rate of 9,75% during 1980. (State housing subsidy on a R25 000 bond repayment was, however, about R72 p.m. in that year).

BASIC ESSENTIALS

The basic essentials curve can be located at given points in the spectrum. Here are indications for population groups in three different categories:

1. According to Potgieter's figures (1980) the 'household subsistence level' oscillated around R180 p.m. or R2 160 p.a. for Black and Coloured households of six in the cosmopolitan areas in 1980 depending on the urban centre concerned. Assuming 1,5 earners per household this would imply an income of R1440 per earner p.a. According to the same source the 'household effective level' of these two groups oscillated around R270 p.m. or R3 240 p.a. which amounts to R2 160 per earner p.a.

2. For a rough calculation of the basic essentials curve of other population groups Potgieter's 'primary household level' (which excludes rent and transport) can be taken as a point of departure. It amounted to about R153 p.m. (R1 836 p.a.) for Coloureds in 1980. Add tax, accommodation expenses and transport needs and give some allowance for cheaper food-stuffs in rural areas.

   A rough estimate would then bring the household subsistence level of *Black peasants* to R2 000 p.a. or R1 330 per earner (1,5 earners/household). Basing his figures on research done by the Bureau of Market Research at Unisa, McGrath (1983:316) reports that the 'minimum living level' was about R1 134 p.a. in Durban and about R880 in White rural areas and Black areas in 1975. If one took this ratio as a basis and the figure of R2 160 p.a. for metropolitan areas in 1980, then the MLL for Blacks in White rural, and Black areas would amount to R1 676 p.a. All these are rough indications which call for more precise investigations, but they suffice for our purposes.

3. Let us take the example of a White family with one earner earning R30 000 in Pretoria in 1980. The Coloured minimum effective level was R3 267 p.a. (Potgieter 1980). To this the following involuntary expenditures have to be added. Rent (value of the house R40 000 at 9,75% bond interest rate = R3 900, minus housing subsidy of R864 = about R3 000), income tax (R5 300), bus transport to work and school (R300), obligatory social securities (R2 000). This would give us a White minimum effective level in that income bracket and in that city of about R14 000 p.a. This estimate is based on a real case study I conducted. Note how the figure rises dramatically with rising incomes:

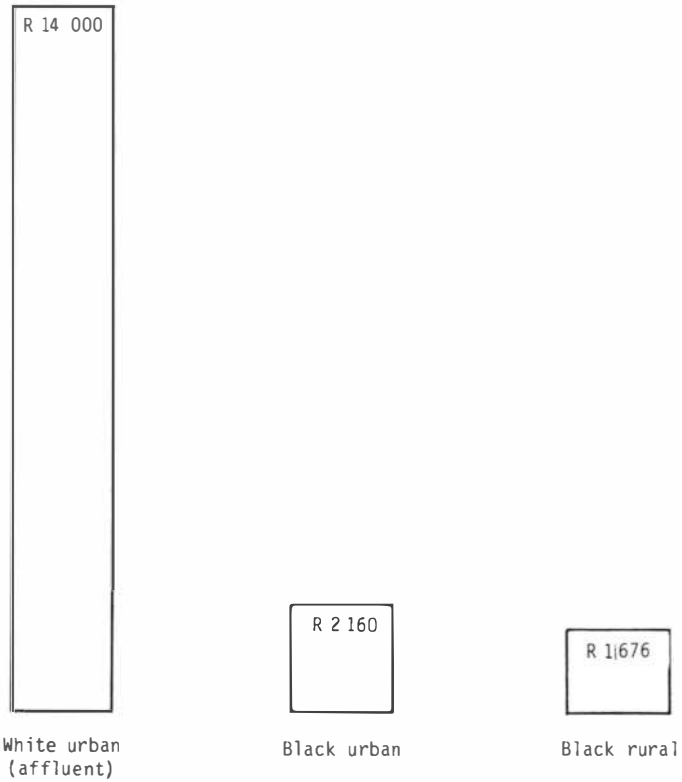


Figure 5 : Minimum living levels of certain groups

How many people in South Africa live in absolute poverty? Here are the results of various studies:

1. Nel (1982:23-25) reports for Blacks in Johannesburg that 28,6% of all households fell below the Minimum Living Level and 41,4% below the Supplemented Living Level. Households with female heads were particularly affected (44,4% below MLL and 57% below SLL); so were bigger families (50% of households with 8 and more members below MLL and 71,2% below SLL); so were those with low educational standards (49,4% of those without schooling below MLL).

2. McGrath (1983:316f, 348) calculates that approximately 30% of Black households in metropolitan areas, 62% of Black households in Black areas and 74% of Black households in White rural areas were in poverty in 1975. The data of

Black areas include incomes in urban areas outside the metropolitan centres, otherwise poverty would be higher there as well. Excluding commuter incomes, 35% of incomes in Black areas are generated by migrant labour.

3. Simkins (1984:12) finds that in the 'homelands' 81% of the households received an income below the Minimum Living Level in 1980. In 1960 the figure was 99% and in 1970 98%. The improvement may be mainly due to (a) incomes of the growing 'Black State' bureaucracy and (b) incomes of Blacks in urban areas which were added to the 'Black States'.

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

The need curve for social expectations is not easy to determine. One way would be to work out average consumption expenditure for different groups in different situations and add a certain percentage to allow for the fact that people are oriented towards a reference group with higher expenditure patterns than their own. Since there is hardly any saving until we come to the income elite, average incomes after tax can be used for average consumption expenditure if we added up to 50% to that on the highest point of discrepancy between income and social expectations with declining figures both ways one could construct a hypothetical curve for social expectations. Some empirical evidence would be needed, however, to be able to determine the percentage to be added. Here is a preliminary suggestion:

In 1983 Möller and colleagues (1984) analysed a sample of (a) destitute poor, (b) typical low income earners and (c) relatively well-off Blacks in three kinds of situations: (i) rural areas, (ii) peri-urban shacks and (iii) urban townships.

The following income margins, expressed in per capita household income per month, were used. To make the figures comparable with our own we have added a corresponding figure in brackets for income per earner per year at 1980 prices, for which we assume 1,5 earners for an

average family of six and a consumer price index of 187,8 for 1980 and 271,4 for 1983.

(i)	Destitute:	rural:	up to R 15	(R 498)
		shack:	up to R 25	(R 830)
		urban:	up to R 40	(R1 328)
(ii)	Average poor:	rural:	R 16 - 30	(R 530 - 996)
		shack:	R 26 - 50	(R 860 - 1 660)
		urban:	R 41 - 80	(R1 360 - 2 656)
(iii)	Better off:	rural:	R 61 plus	(R2 025 +)
		shack:	R 101 plus	(R3 350 +)
		urban:	R 161 plus	(R5 345 +)

On this basis we can make the following observations:

(a) Among the destitute and the typical poor their own dissatisfaction with life was consistently higher than their assessment of the dissatisfaction of all Blacks - most markedly in the case of destitute shack dwellers : 70% vs 37% (p 8). This is a clear indication of absolute poverty or relative deprivation. Among the better-off Blacks the relation was reversed in the case of rural and urban Blacks - an indication of relative privilege. The social expectations curve may therefore, lie in the vicinity of R 1 500 - R 1 800 for rural and R 4 000 - R 4 500 for urban Black earners. Better-off shack-dwellers had a higher percentage for own dissatisfaction than for general Black dissatisfaction - though much reduced. So they perceived themselves to be relatively deprived. Social expectations may lie, therefore, in the vicinity of R 4 000 - R 4 500 as in the case of urban Blacks. With a continuous series of income brackets the figure could be determined more precisely.

(b) There was a consistent drop in dissatisfaction with higher incomes (p 8)

urban	:	43% (destitute)	11% (well-off)
shacks	:	70% (destitute)	29% (well-off)
rural	:	41% (destitute)	20% (well-off).

(c) However, typical low-income earners were found to have an equal or even higher level of discontent than the destitute. This corroborates our theory that the need curve rises faster than, or as fast as, the potency curve at the far end of the periphery (p 11f).

(d) Peri-urban shack-dwellers were on the whole most discontented and of low morale and mood (p 15). Obviously they developed enough initiative to break out of the rural setting

with its cushioning community effect, yet failed to reach their goal of a full urban life.

(e) The authors were surprised to find a reasonable amount of consumer-durables even amongst the destitute (p 16). This is an obvious indication, however, that basic essentials are sacrificed for items deemed to be important in terms of social expectations or personal wishes. Typical items were: radios (75-80%), bedroom suites (85-90%) and lounge suites (52% shacks, 55% rural, 77% urban). Further items out of reach for the shack or rural Black played a role among the urban destitute: electric/gas stove/oven (43%), television (33%), telephone (20%)(pp 32-34).

TOTAL NEEDS

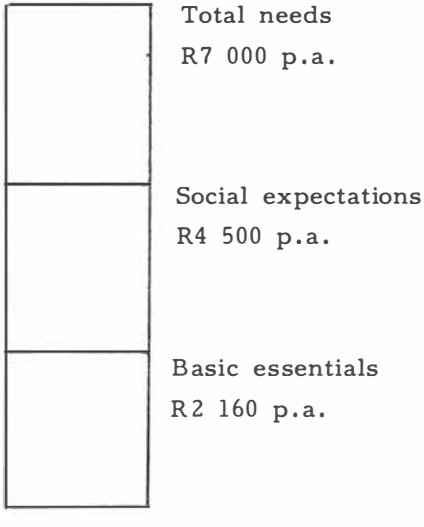
It is probably possible, to indicate the position of the total need curve for certain groups in certain situations, at least at the point where it intersects with the income curve. This point is reached at an income level where families begin to save and invest a considerable proportion of their incomes.

Nel (1982:121) found that in the case of Black multiple households in Johannesburg in 1980 the rate of savings is negative up to an income of R7 000 p.a. From R 7 000 to R 8 000 p.a. average savings amounted to R110 p.a. Above R 8 000 the average jumped to R 982. Further research is necessary to determine whether this in fact indicates the upper limit of 'total needs' for that population group during that time - which seems to be unlikely - or whether people save for the later satisfaction of deferred needs and social security. One also needs to find similar intersection points between income and expenditure for other groups, environments and times.

If we took the income of R 7 000 p.a. mentioned above in connection with the Johannesburg case as an indication of the total need curve for Blacks in South Africa, we could give a rough indication of how many Blacks enjoyed 'absolute affluence' as defined by us earlier. According to CSS sample estimates (South Africa 1982a:276) there were 16 700 Blacks (0,3% of all Black earners) who earned incomes above that figure. Allowing for an average of 1,5 earners per household, the figure per earner would be just above R 4 500 p.a. which would then give 52 840 Black earners (1% of all Black earners) who would qualify for this category. This is just a rough indication.

I was unable to trace comparable figures for other groups. It can be expected, however, that the intersection between income and total needs is considerably higher in the case of Whites, if only because of a substantial increase in desired housing and recreation expenditure. If we arbitrarily took the figure of R 20 000 p.a. per family there would be 117 500 earners (5,15% of all White earners) who qualified. Assuming 1,9 earners per household we would get an income of R 10 500 p.a. per earner. Then 585 640 earners (25,7% of all White earners) qualified (calculated on the basis of South Africa 1982a:276ff).

Indications are, then, that in the case of urban Blacks the different need levels may have been something like the following in 1980:



4.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter we developed a model which plots available income against need. The resultant definitions of affluence and poverty are a better indication of potency distribution than income alone.

In developing the model we distinguished three types of need: basic essentials, social expectations and personal wishes. The intersections of these three need curves with the income curve divides the field into four categories: absolute poverty, relative deprivation, relative privilege and absolute affluence (4.2).

We then tried to apply the model to South African conditions. Unfortunately the figures which I was able to trace, were not very precise or consistent. Contrary to expectations the need curve has a concave rather than a convex shape. This is mainly due to progressive taxation. Indications are, furthermore, that the need curves display the same sort of 'jumps' due to racial and spatial barriers which we found in the case of the income curve (4.3).

The overall picture suggests that up to sixty percent of the total Black and Coloured populations may suffer from absolute poverty while a very small, overwhelmingly White minority enjoys absolute affluence. Apart from poverty datum line studies very little research seems to have been conducted in the whole area demarcated in this chapter and a lot needs to be done before a clear picture emerges concerning the relation between need and potency in the different population groups.

CHAPTER 5

Causes of economic potency discrepancies

5.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

In the previous three chapters we developed models of potency distribution and tried to substantiate them empirically as far as possible within the South African context. A full understanding of the phenomenon, however, can only ensue when insight into its causes and thus its historical dynamic is gained. Moreover, it is impossible to deal creatively with an undesirable situation unless the main contributing factors are known. While we touched upon causal relationships here and there in our discussion so far, we need to investigate this area more systematically. In view of our general systems-analytical objective we have again developed a model. To discuss all aspects involved in this model, however, is quite impossible within a short chapter. For this reason we concentrate on three of the more important factors which make up the syndrome as a whole: asymmetrical interaction on the market place, the role of differential technological advance, and volition.

5.2 A MODEL OF CAUSATION (based on Nürnberger 1983:10ff)

The debate in the social sciences concerning economic discrepancies is conducted within the framework of two conflicting paradigms. The liberal school of thought maintains that the cause of poverty in the periphery is backwardness and its cure is modernisation. Modernisation aims at a rise in initiative, productivity, efficiency and organisational sophistication. There is an implicit tendency towards an idealist interpretation which concentrates on consciousness factors. In contrast, the radical school maintains that poverty is the result of oppression and exploitation and that the cure is liberation. There is an implicit tendency towards materialist interpretation which concentrates on structural change.

In spite of the enmity and bitterness with which the modernisation and the liberation schools attack and ridicule each other their findings are not mutually exclusive. At this juncture of the evolution of scientific insight I believe the most pressing task to be the development of a systems-analytical model in which the different causal factors are seen in their relative contribution to a complex and integrated whole.

The modernisation school emphasises potency factors inherent in the centre and impotence factors inherent in the periphery. The liberation school emphasises the effects of an asymmetrical interaction, i.e. the interaction between a strong and a weak partner. Our model has to take all three factors into account.

The idealist school of thought emphasises the importance of consciousness and volition; the materialist school of thought emphasises the importance of structural mechanisms. Our model

has to cater for both dimensions in respect of all three the factors mentioned above.

Concerning impotence factors inherent in the periphery, structural mechanisms are often called 'vicious circles of poverty'. Correspondingly I coined the concept 'golden spirals of affluence' concerning structural mechanisms which make up potency factors in the centre in my earlier writings on the theme.

The best known example of potency factors inherent in the centre is the cumulative growth of productive capital. While in the periphery a hundred workers build a stretch of road with shovels, in the centre one man can build the same stretch of road more efficiently with a bulldozer. While the hundred workers need their income to feed their families, the man with the bulldozer may soon be able to afford a second, then four, then eight bulldozers. Productively invested capital snowballs, while manual labour does not. The same is true for technical sophistication. The vicious circle in this case consists in the following: lack of capital leads to a lack of productivity which in turn leads to a lack of capital. All proceeds are needed for consumption; no saving for capital investment takes place.

These factors of potency and impotence in the centre and in the periphery respectively have received extensive treatment in the literature of the modernisation school and we do not need to pursue them any further. What needs to be emphasised, however, is the interrelation between factors of potency in the centre and factors of impotence in the periphery. Gunnar Myrdal (1957) perceived the phenomenon of 'cumulative and circular causation' more than a quarter of a century ago but few took much notice.

The 'circular' aspect brings us to the asymmetrical interaction between centre and periphery. Here we can distinguish three aspects:

(a) The centre sucks resources out of the periphery and leaves the latter depleted.

In South Africa there was, since the early years of centre formation, a brain-drain, a capital drain, a muscle-drain. Those with the healthiest bodies, the best education, the most enterprising spirit, have moved to the cities for close on a century. The initial suction, caused both by the 'push' of declining economic opportunities in the periphery and the 'pull' of rising economic opportunities in the centre, continues today in the form of the migrant labour system. A great proportion of the work force of the Black areas is absent. Economically less active sections of the population - the children, the aged, the sick, the less educated, the conservative - remain behind and must be looked after by the peripheral economy or, rather, by their more enterprising relatives in town. The centre utilises the greatest productive asset of the periphery, viz. labour, while the cost of maintaining the population from which it is drawn, is largely carried by the periphery.

But the labour which the centre borrows temporarily from the periphery, is not allowed to develop its full potential while in the centre either. Much of it remains unskilled and receives low wages. Skills which are picked up in the centre economy cannot be utilized in the peripheral economy. The remittances of migrant labourers to the periphery barely keeps their numerous dependents alive. They do not lead to the development of productive capacities. These incomes are, moreover, largely spent on goods produced by the centre economy. The benefit of this system to the periphery in terms of the growth of economic potential is virtually nil.

(b) The dominating power of the centre leads to the dependency of the periphery on the centre.

The peripheral economy has long ceased to sustain its population - even on the level of bare subsistence. The latter depends on

the centre for its physical survival - and therefore it is dependent in most other respects as well. Dependency means that most crucial decisions are taken by outsiders. Outsiders normally look after their own interests first, even if they designate their contribution as "development aid" or claim moral credit for offering jobs to the poor. If they do have the interests of the periphery at heart, it is by grace, not by obligation.

It needs to be mentioned in this regard that the dependence of the periphery on the centre is normally mediated by a peripheral elite (cf. chapter 3, section 3.4 and 3.5). This elite has the power to take decisions for the periphery. But its power is derived from the centre - at least in part. It will therefore not normally take any decisions which are contrary to the interests of the centre.

The overwhelming dependence of the governments of the 'self-governing' and the 'independent Black States' on financial grants by the White ruled central government is well-known. Thus the 'independent Black States' received the following 'development aid' from the Republic of South Africa in 1981/82 (Benso 1982a: 103 and 1982b:66):

	Own sources R	RSA grant R	Ratio
Transkei	172 347	210 156	1 : 1,2
Bophuthatswana	285 258	53 400	1 : 0,2
Venda	22 500	71 500	1 : 3,2
Ciskei	21 095	116 689	1 : 5,5

Note: Bophuthatswana is better off than the rest because it is in the fortunate position of having some lucrative mines on its territory which contributed 53% of its total revenue in 1980 (Benso 1982b:19).

(c) Both suction and domination by the centre lead to the deformation of the economy of the periphery. We deal with this aspect in greater detail in 5.3 and 5.4 below.

Structural mechanisms are only the one side of the coin, however, the other being volitional factors. Wherever power is generated it can be used (or abused) to strengthen the competitive position of its bearers at the expense of their competitors. In this way a further cumulative effect is created. Whether this is in fact done or not depends on 'consciousness' factors, i.e. the overall system of meaning and norms as well as the legitimation of one's pursuit of self-interest. This can have either an inhibiting or an enhancing effect on inherent structural mechanisms, and either a countervailing or reinforcing effect on structural mechanisms of interaction. We give a few indications of this dimension in 5.5 below.

The complete model of causation then looks like this (figure 1):

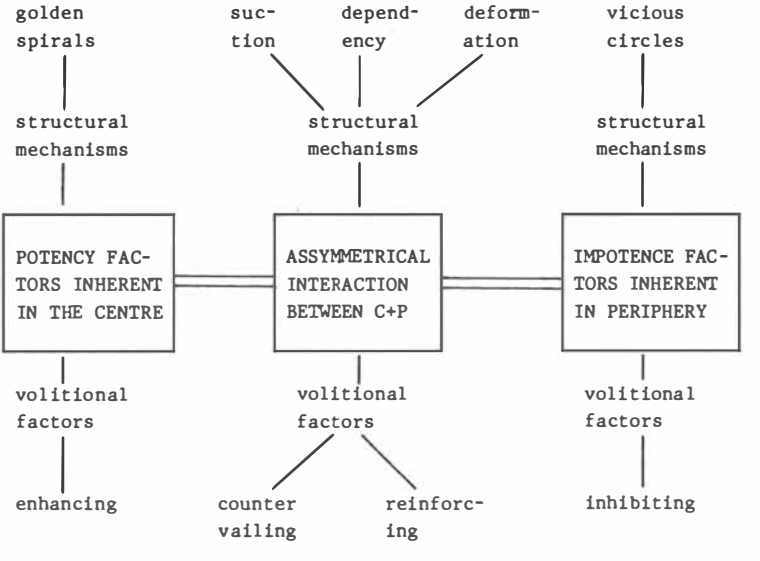


Figure 1
Model of causation of discrepancies in economic potential between centre and periphery

Finally, it needs to be emphasised that all the above-mentioned factors must be seen in relation to historical time. These are not only 'powers of influence' but dynamic processes which combine and reinforce each other to increase the discrepancy between the potentials of the centre and the periphery respectively.

We shall now discuss two examples of structural mechanisms relevant to the South African situation and then make a few observations on 'consciousness' factors which will be picked up in greater detail in Part II.

5.3 ASYMMETRICAL MARKET INTERACTION

5.3.1 The basic model explained

The negative difference between basic essentials and income we call a poverty gap. The positive difference between all needs including personal wishes and income we call an affluence gap. The mere existence of these two gaps has a reinforcing effect on the discrepancy between rich and poor:

(a) Absolute poverty has an adverse effect on health, education, motivation, etc. Any increase in income is swallowed up by unfulfilled needs - or by accumulated debts. The absolutely poor are trapped in a situation from which only the most determined, gifted or fortunate escape.

(b) Absolute affluence not only means that all potentials of the person concerned can be fully developed and utilised but also that there is a surplus which can be profitably invested and which pushes up the income even further.

On the basis of these two mechanisms alone it can be expected that the discrepancies between centre and periphery become larger continuously unless some powerful countervailing processes can be institutionalised. Interaction between centre and periphery, however, exacerbates this phenomenon considerably. Let us see why this should be the case. We look at the need curve first:

(a) In the centre income (or economic potency) is considerably higher than objective need. This means that surpluses are produced (affluence gap).

(b) In the periphery need is considerably higher than income (or economic potency). This means that there is a shortfall of goods and services (poverty gap).

(c) The surplus produced in the centre where it is not needed cannot be transferred to the periphery where it is needed because there is no corresponding market demand in the periphery. The reason for the absence of market demand in the periphery is, as we have seen, not the absence of need but the absence of a purchasing power corresponding to that need (see chapter 4).

(d) Purchasing power is concentrated in the centre. So the surplus produced in the centre can only be sold in the centre. But for this to happen the need of the centre population must be raised. Products satisfying basic essentials become more sophisticated, luxurious, wrapped up. Social expectations are manipulated by rapidly changing fashions, new models, etc. Personal wishes are pushed up by sophisticated advertising and aggressive marketing techniques. Products are preplanned to have a short life time (planned obsolescence). The whole economy is transformed into a system geared to a high 'throughput' and great wastage.

(e) These techniques are able to raise the need level in the centre to some extent but not half as much as in the periphery. In the centre most objective needs have been satisfied and people have become immune to the constant bombardments of shrewd salesmanship.

(f) Not so in the periphery. The rich are always the reference group of the poor. Advertising and marketing spill over into the periphery where they find a deep trench of unfulfilled need, an eager longing to participate in the grand world of the cities, a fascination with every gadget that brings unheard-of miracles and prestige into the home: the transistor radio, the ice-chest, the TV-set, the car, the cola beverage, the electric stove.

(g) So great is the spell of these new products and their marketing that peripheral populations indulge in them although they cannot afford them. This means that they build up huge debts and divert their meagre income from basic essentials to prestige objects (social expectations) and personal wishes, even if that implies an imbalanced ration, hunger, a premature termination of education, unhealthy living conditions, frequent retrieval of unpaid goods by hire-purchase firms, etc. - all of which again boomerang back onto their capacity to produce or raise an income sufficiently high to satisfy their need.

Figure 2 depicts the process (for simplicity's sake we merge the three need curves into one in the ensuing discussion). The graph shows that the need level rises by a greater margin in the periphery than in the centre, viz. from A to B.

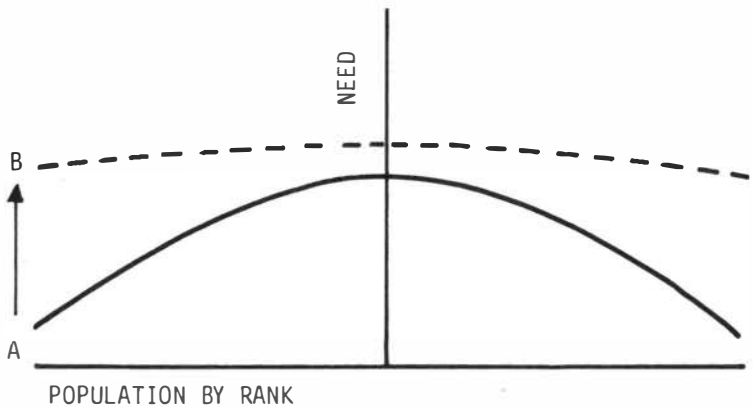


Figure 2
The effect of asymmetrical interaction on the need curve

Let us look at the potency curve:

(a) Because market demand is concentrated in the centre population, production gears itself to what can be sold in the centre. Basic essentials have long been satisfied. What can be sold is luxury. Contrary to common belief the market mechanism does not force production to satisfy the unfulfilled need of the majority of the population, it concentrates instead on the whims of the elite - simply because this is where the purchasing power is concentrated.

(b) The elite is the "reference group" for the lower sections of the population. The artificial demand raised in the periphery by salesmanship and the "demonstration effect" of the elite at the expense of basic essentials is not for

products which the traditional production techniques of the periphery could satisfy but for products which only the sophisticated technology of the centre is able to provide: transistor radios, cars, etc.

(c) This means that traditional producers cannot sell their products any longer. Even the market for basic essentials such as foodstuffs, handmade sandals or mud bricks declines because money is diverted to the products coming from the centre.

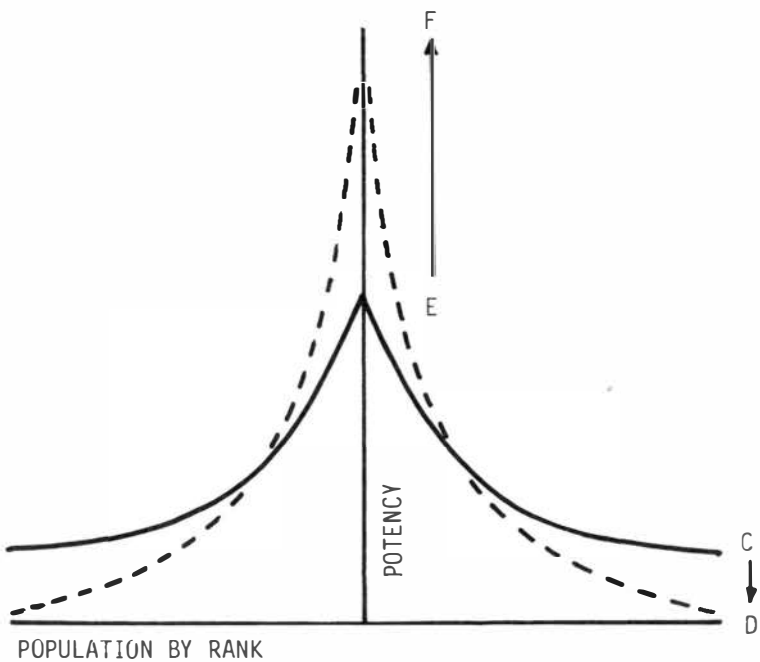


Figure 3

The effect of asymmetrical interaction on the potency curve

The result is that the productive capacity of the periphery declines (viz. from C to D in figure 3). But the goods required by the artificially created demand in the periphery have to be provided by the centre. So the productive capacity of the centre increases, with "multiplier" and all (viz. from E to F).

The movements of the need curve and the income curve reinforce each other: in the periphery greater need and lower productive capacity lead to a widening of the poverty gap while in the centre a higher productive capacity without a corresponding increase in objective need widens the affluence gap (figure 4).

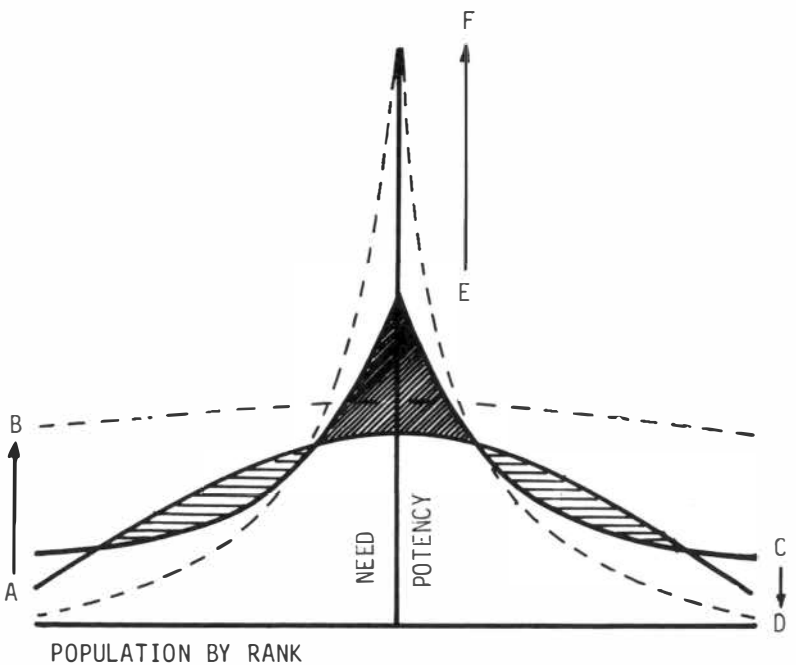


Figure 4
The effect of assymmetrical interaction on affluence and poverty gaps

This leads us to two further definitions:

(a) Underdevelopment is a situation in which production is unable to react positively to rising needs - it could even drop below its former level.

(b) Overdevelopment is a situation in which productive capacity outperforms objective need so that the latter has to be raised artificially by the application of "scientific" marketing techniques.

The crux of this analysis so far has been that underdevelopment in the periphery and overdevelopment in the centre are interrelated to a considerable extent.

There is a further effect: Because the periphery lacks some essential factors of production - capital, technology, sophistication, organised entrepreneurship - it is unable to produce the goods for which there is a market, both in the centre and the periphery. Yet it has to raise some income to be able to satisfy at least some of the needs - whether basic essentials or needs artificially created by salesmanship and demonstration. The only way open to raise such an income is to sell not the produce, but the factors of production it has - labour, raw materials, land - to the centre. These factors of production are in a "raw" stage - unskilled labour, unprocessed raw materials, undeveloped land - and thus fetch a low price. In return the finished products coming from the centre have had value added on by processing, even overprocessing and are, therefore, expensive. Again the periphery suffers.

In South Africa the transfer of periphery controlled land to centre owners has a long history of conquest, expropriation, purchase, etc. It continues within the White community on a significant scale. The transfer of land from

Black owners to White buyers has been curtailed since the Land Act of 1913 and the Native Land and Trust Act of 1936. Since then it only takes place in the context of Black spot removal and consolidation resettlement schemes. Mineral deposits are only significant in the case of Bophuthatswana.

The asset which the Black peripheral population has to offer on a vast scale, however, is labour - both as muscle power and potential brain power. A great proportion of the economically active population, particularly the men, are migrant labourers, quite apart from the fact that many of those with initiative have long moved to the cities on a permanent basis and are continuing to do so wherever they find an opportunity. For the flow of labour and goods in South Africa, see Nattrass 1983a: 8-13.

Figure 5 illustrates this transfer of labour to the geographical centres in the cases of Coloureds and Blacks.

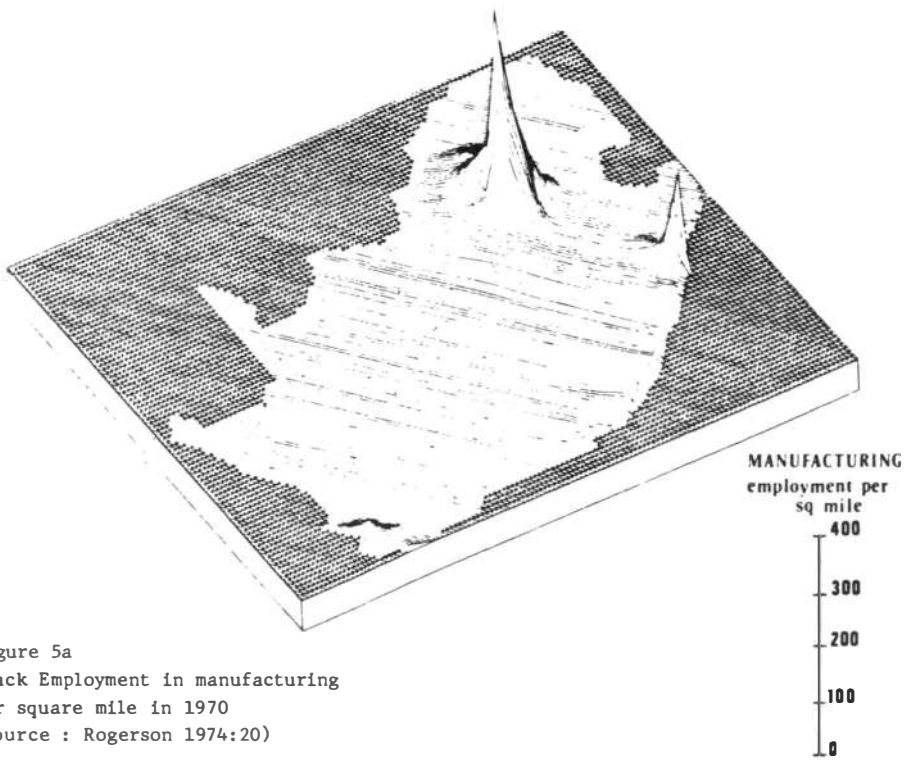


Figure 5a
Black Employment in manufacturing per square mile in 1970
(Source : Rogerson 1974:20)

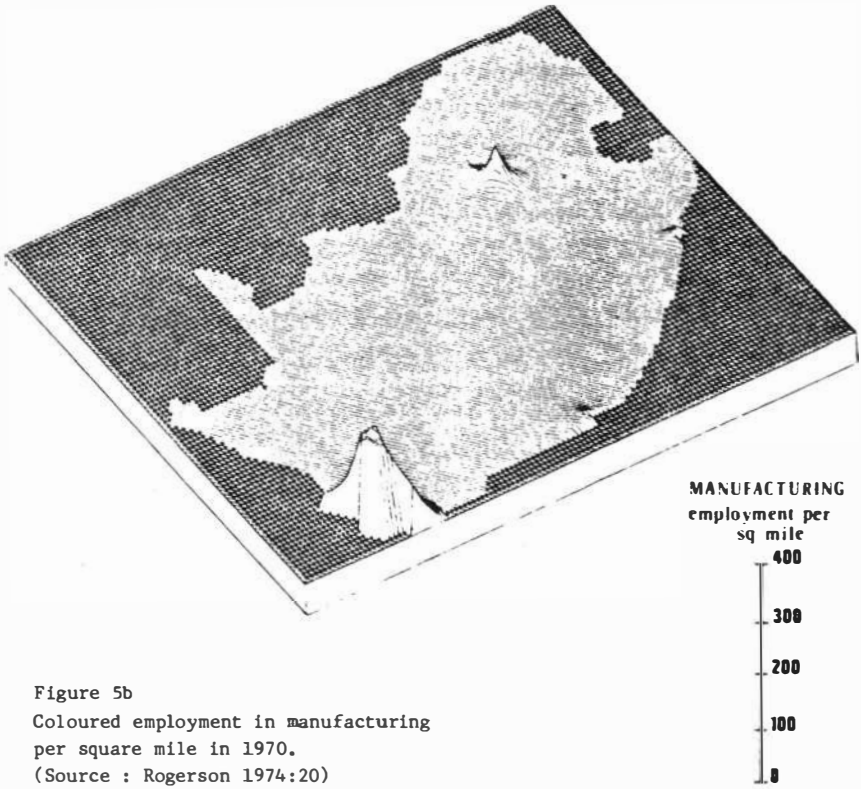


Figure 5b
Coloured employment in manufacturing
per square mile in 1970.
(Source : Rogerson 1974:20)

5.3.2 Galtung's dependency model revisited

If we apply these insights to the relation between a dominant and a dependent centre and their respective peripheries (Galtung's model) we obtain the following picture:

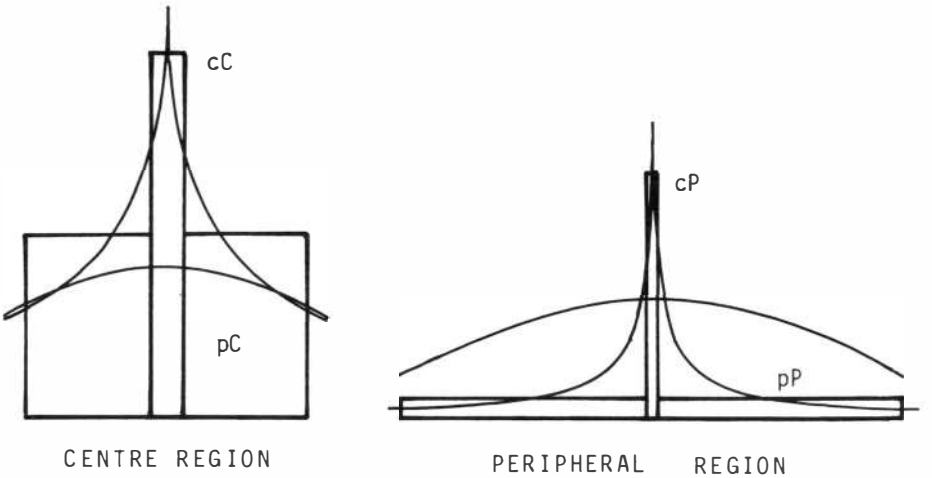


Figure 6
The asymmetrical market interaction model applied to Galtung's dependency model

The following observations can now be made:

(a) Although there is some unfulfilled need in pC it is infinitely greater in pP - and rising with greater interaction.

(b) In as far as cP is unable to produce industrial goods for which there is a market (whether in the central or in the peripheral region) its main function is to import processed goods from cC and to export raw materials from pP. (Land and labour are of limited application in international relations but still significant). Here the "conveyor belt" theory often encountered in Neo-Marxist literature gains some validity.

(c) In as far as cP is able to produce manufactured goods such production will be geared to either of two markets:

(i) cC and pC: This can only happen on condition that it can produce cheaper or more exotic goods than cC - which again depends on the utilisation of cheap labour or resources obtained from pP.

(ii) cP and pP: In this case it will be geared to substitution of luxury goods imported from cC. Strictly speaking, only cP is able to afford these goods. But the population of pP will indulge in them at the expense of basic essentials. This production of import substitution can compete with the imported goods only if it utilises the cheaper labour and resources obtained from pP.

(d) cP will normally not be able to supply the capital, sophistication and management needed for industrial production of manufactured goods and has to obtain it from cC. cC will be willing to invest in cP only if the profit margin in cP is higher than in cC - which again can only be achieved through the utilisation of the cheaper labour and resources obtained from pP. We understand now why cP is almost by necessity a dependent offshoot of cC and has to satisfy the interest of the latter if it wants to survive.

Internationally, further mechanisms compound the problem:

(a) Because imports from cC (manufactured goods) are relatively expensive while exports to cC (raw materials) are relatively cheap for reasons discussed above, cP is soon saddled with a balance of payment problem. To cover the shortfall it will attempt to raise loans (earmarked as "development aid"). Loans have to be repaid with interest. If the underlying weakness of the peripheral system is not

overcome to a substantial degree through such loans - which is unlikely in most cases - the latter only worsen the situation.

(b) In cases where industrial development takes place in cP it takes place on the basis of capital, skills and technology borrowed or bought from cC. This needs to be repaid. If the young industry of cP is unable to outperform its competitors in cC by a substantial margin - which is unlikely in many cases - again the balance of payments problem raises its head. cP will on occasion repay its debts by raising new loans or luring new capital investments by cC into the country. The latter will again only be successful if the profit margin is higher in cP than in cC. Which means that the debt of cP snowballs.

(c) cP has only one means of meeting its debts and that is to gear the output of both cP and pP to the export market - in effect to the needs of cC and pC. To be competitive on that market it must reduce wages and payments for resources to a minimum. cP and cC gain - because they obtain a cheaper product - cP and particularly pP loses out on the deal.

(d) But that is not the only effect. pP is forced to channel its limited productive capacity away from products which would satisfy its own basic essentials (particularly food and clothing) to export products (e.g. coffee, soya beans, timber, sugar, etc.). The supply of these products decreases, with the result that prices go up - not only of protein foods but even of staple foods such as maize. The crazy situation develops that a fertile and huge country such as Brazil has a problem of malnutrition and hunger not only in the cities but even in rural areas because its agriculture has been geared to the export market.

(e) In their desperate situation cP governments often seek a way out in an inflationary policy. State debts are covered by printing money. It is also hoped that inflation will stimulate the local economy and lead to development. Whether this is the case or not - such a policy relocates financial resources in the population. Those who possess foreign values, or fixed properties such as land or factories and those who receive dynamic salaries, are safe. This is the elite - comprising both of cP and the dependent privileged "worker and civil servant aristocracy". The purchasing power of the poorer sections of the population declines rapidly. In as far as that happens it drops out of the

market. Which means that production will further concentrate on the needs and wants of the elite (cf. figure 6 in chapter 3).

5.3.3 A further note on decentralisation

There seems to be a way out. (For the following, see Fröbel 1977). Modern technological advances have greatly improved the capacity, speed and quality of transport facilities. It also led to the subdivision of the productive process into tiny segments, many of which can be simplified to such an extent that unskilled labour is able to handle them. What happens now is that a few such phases in the productive process are transferred from the centre, where labour costs are high, to the periphery where there is an abundance of unskilled, poverty-stricken labourers who are willing to work for any wage. In such a situation labour can, at starvation wage rates, still successfully compete with capital. Third World governments are often eager to open their countries for this type of "decentralisation" because they have a serious unemployment problem on hand. The same is true for centre industries which involve high health and pollution risks against which centre governments have erected a barrage of restrictive laws.

The advantage of such an arrangement to the peripheral economy is negligible. The cream of the work force - often young women in their early twenties - are utilised intensively for a few years after which they are worn out, and replaced by others in the queue. The wages are on near starvation level and barely keep the dependants alive. Capital investment is minimal and all proceeds are repatriated. Products are useless for the peripheral economy because they are components of unfinished centre products such as radios. Such plants are also very unstable. If workers strike or Governments raise taxes, firms pack up and go to another low-wage area of which there are plenty in the Third World. Meanwhile, the little infrastructural and human development generated by its presence collapses.

It is the centre economy which gains. In fact, it is able to obtain a factor of production cheaper than it would be at home. Once labour costs in the periphery rise beyond corresponding capital costs in the centre, the production phase is repatriated to the centre and labour is replaced by machines.

The upshot of these observations is that interaction between an economically weak and an economically strong partner does not balance out the respective unequal levels, but works to the advantage of the stronger partner at the expense of the weaker. Even in cases where interaction holds some advantages for the

periphery the advantages for the centre tend to be greater - unless, of course, some powerful countervailing processes can be institutionalised.

The new decentralisation program of the government has not been in operation long enough to allow judgment on whether any of these insights would be applicable to the South African situation. At present concern is expressed over three issues: (a) the artificial nature of the program which is geared not so much to the utilisation of economic resources for the benefit of the less privileged areas of the country but to the enhancement of the credibility of an outdated political ideology, (b) whether the program can succeed to channel economic activity away from the metropolitan areas and boost the productiveness of peripheral areas at all and (c) whether, if it succeeds, it will not do so at a forbidding price for the economy as a whole because, highly subsidised ventures of this kind have to be paid for. (Tomlinson 1983; Smit 1983: 84-90 (the artificial character of towns in Black areas); Kok 1983; see also the study by P A Wellings on 'core-periphery relations in the SA space-economy' in the context of the Investigation into Inter-group Relations of the HSRC).

5.4 POTENCY DISCREPANCIES IN RELATION TO TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE

5.4.1 Structural mechanisms in general

Technology raises the productivity of labour. By doing so, it replaces labour. A dressmaker with an electric sewing machine may produce as many dresses as fifty women with needles. If market demand for dresses remains constant, forty-nine workers are made redundant, while one dressmaker receives the income formerly earned by fifty minus the cost of the machine. This simplified example shows that

(a) technology demands qualitatively more skilled, but quantitatively less labour,
(b) the income of skilled labour rises dramatically,
(c) the demand for unskilled labour drops, i.e. the machine replaces labour,

(d) the income of unskilled labour drops dramatically.

But why can the other forty-nine dressmakers not also be supplied with machines? If that was done the output of dresses would increase fifty-fold. This would only make sense if the market demand for dresses would also increase fifty-fold, otherwise the dresses could not be sold. The rise in market demand is hampered by two factors:

(a) The affluent have the purchasing power but their basic needs have long been met. The demand they generate is for luxury goods.
(b) The poor have many unfulfilled basic needs but they lack purchasing power.

Up to a certain stage the problem can be solved by channelling the income generated by technology away from the owners of capital and skills (the affluent elite) to the common man - whether by means of state induced social services or by a policy of systematic productivity-oriented wage increases. In this way a mass consumer market is created without leading to inflation. When market demand increases, production can increase. More machines can be put into operation which are run, supervised and serviced by more people. In this way labour redundancy can be avoided up to a certain limit (Fröbel 1981:11). Much could be achieved if South Africa would adopt this type of strategy to make economic growth possible.

Sooner or later the limit is reached, however, because of two factors:

(a) As the masses of the population become more affluent, their more pressing needs are being met. They slowly move into

the situation of the affluent where they have the money but not the need to purchase more goods.

(b) Not all unskilled labourers are suitable to become skilled labourers or experts.

Obviously South Africa is far from having reached this limit.

Again this situation can be avoided in two ways:

(a) Redundant labour can be shifted from mechanised industries to non-mechanised industries, e.g. services. But this is only a temporary measure. Sooner or later technology also penetrates these. Labour is in competition with machines (=capital), but unable to compete effectively. Machines can produce faster, more efficiently, cheaper, more dependably. They do not ask for wage increases, humane working conditions, periods of rest. They do not strike, fall sick, get drunk, become moody or obstinate. The human being can no longer be enslaved - the machine is a perfect slave. Therefore the machine ousts human labour. In plain language, technology is chasing labour through the economy until the latter has no place to go. (Jones 1982: 17ff).

(b) One can produce for export. This presupposes that there is a market demand abroad. Market demand is composed of need and purchasing power. In the periphery there is sufficient unfulfilled need but no purchasing power. This problem can be overcome partially by lowering the price of the offered articles. Manufactured goods from the industrial centre displace local production because they are cheaper, better and more fashionable. The result is that local producers are put out of work. This means that the local population is deprived of its income - and thus of its purchasing power. The problem of labour redundancy and

collapse of income is exported from the industrial centre to the periphery population. The latter is being marginalised by the centre system.

While it marginalises the periphery population the centre system also destroys its own market in the periphery unless it channels increased income into the periphery to build up a mass consumer market. This can be achieved either by the transfer of money for welfare, or by locating parts of the industrial system in the periphery and systematically increase the wages of the workers there.

The first alternative does not occur on a significant scale because it does not make economic sense to centre business. If the latter supplies both the goods and the money to purchase the goods to the periphery, these goods are in fact handed out free of charge. Why should the centre do that!

The second alternative can at best reach a minority of privileged workers who build up, again, a market for luxury goods while the rest of the population is marginalised. Only if the entire Third World population was integrated into the system could this problem of marginalisation be avoided. In the real world the opposite happens: the marginalised section of the population grows faster than the integrated section.

In any case, all these ways out of the dilemma can, at best, shift the problem further in space or postpone it in time. Technological advances continue relentlessly and at an accelerating pace. Sooner or later machines displace labour in most sectors. The higher the level of technology the higher the sophistication required, and the smaller the number of labourers required. In the stage of automation where the whole production

is guided by computer programs and executed by robots, a tiny elite of experts earning high salaries is all that is left of the work force. Once the stage of computerised automation is reached no amount of capital investment is able to create jobs on any significant scale (Merritt 1982).

> The development of this new technology, of course, creates jobs in the economy which is able to develop it. Thus the USA supplies research and development for the whole world and harvests jobs for doing so. The export of the technology thus created displaces labour elsewhere in the world (as much as it does in the USA) without the advantage the USA has in terms of job-creating research and development (Jones 1982:67). Here it needs to be remembered that South African industry is heavily dependent on foreign technology (Nattrass 1977:42ff).

But why not let the mechanical slave go on with the job and human beings enjoy their leisure? Apart from serious psychological and social problems generated by a loss of meaning, purpose and creativity in life, this could only work if the goods thus produced would be of such a nature that they fulfil the needs of the majority of the world population and that they would physically reach the latter. Both prerequisites can only be fulfilled if the wealth generated by the new techniques was translated into the purchasing power of the majority of the population either by internationally organised inter-state welfare grants or by voluntary transfers of the accumulating wealth from the centre economy to the peripheral population.

Within a centre this is not only possible but it has been done with considerable success. Wealth generated by technological progress has spread through the populations of countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Western Germany. The same is true for White South Africa. On world scale this is, at present at least, little more than a utopian dream. It would presuppose

the emergence of the kind of solidarity and responsibility that now exist within centre nations on a world encompassing basis, or to be less idealistic, of a reasonable balance of power between interest groups on a global scale. In South Africa it would presuppose solidarity between Whites and Blacks.

This will hardly happen, at least not within our life-time and not at all if present trends continue. Its prospects are also not very promising within a Third World country such as South Africa. The reason is, again, to be found in Galtung's model. The relative privilege enjoyed by the White pC is due to its superior strength compared to cC - both in terms of bargaining power and democratic rights - and not because of the kind feelings of cC towards pC. Such powers are absent in pP and so there is no motivation to bring about what could, theoretically, be a solution.

> There is only one factor which may force change onto the system: the limits to growth. Exponential industrial growth cannot continue indefinitely in a limited world. As pollution snowballs and resources are depleted the process approaches the wastelands. In similar fashion population growth in the periphery cannot continue indefinitely without mass starvation. At some stage the system must break down in the periphery (Mesarović 1974). Then the point is reached when it will either change or disintegrate. But the peripheral system can only change if the centre system changes as well because the former is an extension of the latter.

5.4.2 South African peculiarities

The South African situation can be summarised as follows:

(a) Traditional policies were designed to secure a sufficient supply of unskilled labour for farming, mining and manufacturing, to restrict the uncontrolled inflow of Blacks from

tribal areas and to protect the White worker from Black competition: limited access to land, taxation, pass laws, influx control and migrant labour recruitment, restrictions on Black training and trade unionism, job reservation, etc. (Van der Horst 1971; Doxey 1961; Horrell 1969).

(b) These policies created severe bottlenecks in the higher skills. The White minority could not cater for all the expertise needed in a young and growing industrial economy. Since the late seventies, therefore, restrictions on Black advancement in the cities have been relaxed considerably and the meeting of training needs has become a priority.

(c) But technological progress does not cater for the less skilled and unskilled. White redundancy was prevented by an extended bureaucracy and expansions to the services sector. To some extent this also happened in the case of Indians, Coloureds and urban Blacks (cf. Lombard 1980, figure 4).

(d) However, the economy could not absorb all redundant or potentially redundant Blacks. These were either "repatriated" into the already overcrowded Black areas or not allowed to leave the latter and look for work in the White area in the first place. As restrictions within the White centre eased, influx control measures were tightened (Gordon 1980:3).

(e) In the meantime mechanisation and automation advanced rapidly in the centre - even on the traditionally labour-intensive mines (Bromberger 1978: 54, 63). Influx control and a restive work force greatly enhanced this development. Even domestic servants are gradually phased out as machines take over domestic and gardening chores (cf figure 7).

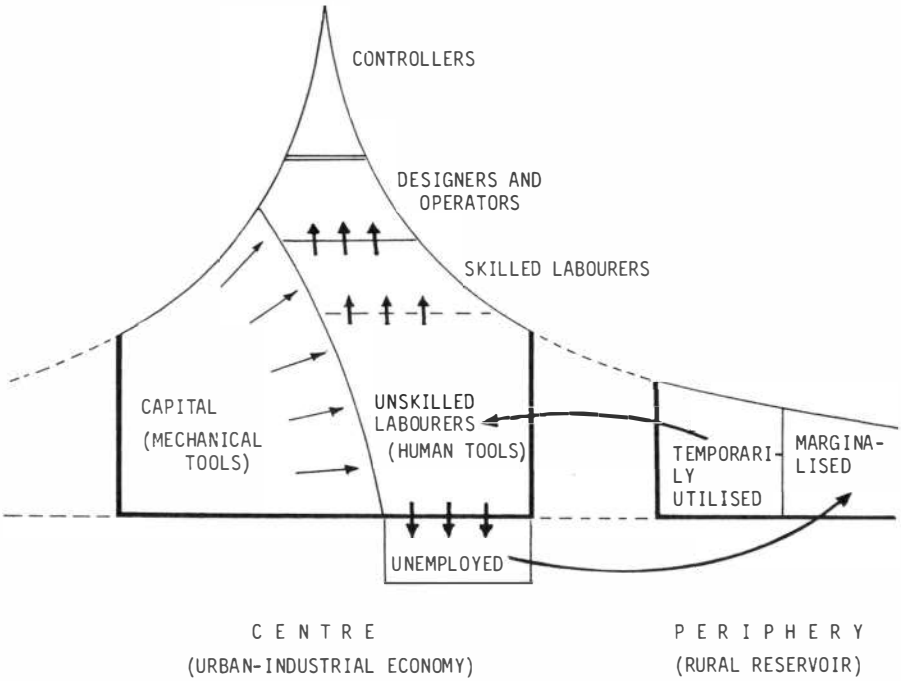


Figure 7: Marginalisation through mechanisation in South Africa

NOTES

1. Baskin (1984:14) gives the following details on changes in the percentage share of employment in different sectors between 1960 and 1980:

	1960	1980
Agriculture	21,3	9,3
Mining	10,7	6,9

In most other sectors the percentage share has remained constant or risen marginally. For "total industrial" the share has dropped from 71,5% to 59,6% between 1960 and 1980.

2. Another indication of this development is the growth of the informal sector (see Pillay 1984:25ff).

3. Simkins registers an unemployment rate of 11,8% for all races in 1970 expressed in full-time job equivalents. It rose consistently every year to reach 20,8% in 1980. Note that this was a gold bonanza year and well before the great drought and the effects of sanctions set in (1982:6).

Various aspects of government policy had their effects on this development

(a) The 'civilised labour policy' embodied in the Wage Act of 1925 already led to the exclusion of Blacks who offered themselves on the labour market for low wages, impeded the free flow of labour from occupation to occupation according to market forces, gave rise to an accumulating wage gap and sowed the seed of unemployment (Van der Horst 1971: 252ff, 256ff).

(b) The large-scale removal of sharecroppers, labour tenants and squatters from White farms led to a concomitant rise in capital-intensive production on White farms. In the main maize producing areas, for instance, labour costs declined from 20,36% in the early seventies to 11,43% in the early eighties. In other agricultural sectors the drop was less dramatic but still significant in wheat and animal production (Fényes 1984:9). In turn, capital intensive technology displaced seasonal workers. While regular workers per 1000 ha dropped from 9,3 to 8,0 between 1968/9 and 1977/8, casual workers dropped from 8,7 to 6,1 in the same period (Fényes 1984:7). Heavy subsidies on capital items in White agriculture actually destroy jobs (p.18). (Cf. also De Klerk 1984 for the Western Transvaal.) Meanwhile these policies have backfired severely onto the farming community. Prolonged drought has rendered the debt-burden due to over-capitalisation unbearable and bankruptcy plagues the industry. More powerful farmers and urban based capital take over the farms and more jobs are lost through capital-intensive agriculture.

Almost 90% of farm labourers are engaged in physical work and only 2,2% in mechanical or managerial work. Almost 90% have less than 5 years of schooling (Fényes 1984:10). Removed from White farms, these people not only lose their jobs with the White farmer but also the possibility to rear cattle and plough fields with the farmer's consent. Both landless and unskilled, they add to the poorest of the poor in the 'Black States' (Simkins 1984:14). It is estimated

that more than 1 100 000 people have been affected so far through these removals (Simkins 1981:3; Surplus People Project 1983, vol. 1 : 6-7).

Another aspect of policy is the severe neglect of Black farm workers concerning the provision of schools, clinics, hospitals, housing, collective bargaining power, legal protection, recreation, etc. compared with Blacks in urban areas or even the 'Black States'. "All Black farm workers (0,9 million) depend largely on the goodwill, honesty and justness of their White employers." (Fényes 1984:12). The point to be made in the context of the present discussion, however, is that they are ill-equipped to cope with the transformation of White agriculture to industrialised modes of production.

(c) The Physical Planning and Utilisation of Resources Act of 1967 (renamed the Environmental Planning Act in 1977) made the establishment or 'extension' of a factory in certain areas subject to control. Since 'extension of a factory' meant any increase in the number of Black employees, this act could very well have contributed to a switch of industrialists to capital-intensive technology (Horrell 1982:93). A distinction was also made in 1971 between relatively White-labour-intensive (and locality-bound) industries which were encouraged in metropolitan areas and Black-labour-intensive industries which were to establish themselves as far as possible on the borders of Black areas (Horrell 1982:94). As industrialists were reluctant indeed to move out of the metropolitan areas for economic reasons they may have switched to capital-intensive production where possible.

Whatever the mix of causes, South Africa's industry has a capital-intensive bias if compared with other semi-industrialised countries (Levy 1981).

(d) Many statutory prescriptions which restrict the mobility of labour, insufficient labour information services, informal and formal job reservation, the wrong allocation of social costs as well as education and training, etc. also have a profound effect on the utilisation of labour compared with capital (Van der Merwe 1975:106).

A situation seems to develop in which a highly developed industrial centre involving all Whites and Asians, most Coloureds and a minority of urban Blacks dominates an impoverished periphery accommodating the majority of Blacks (cf. Zille 1984:51ff). This

periphery is, strictly speaking, increasingly becoming redundant for the centre, and is increasingly sealed off. Black wage gains between 1970 and 1975 have benefitted the privileged at the expense of the excluded (Devereux 1983:62). "The misery to be exploited by capitalists is nothing in comparison to the misery of not being exploited at all." (Joan Robinson, quoted by Fényes 1984:1).

> The decentralisation policy tries to compensate for this trend by luring capital investments into development regions where certain White and Black areas are paired. But such investments can only be economical if the wage structure is kept well below corresponding capital cost, while high technology investments will create less and less jobs and may dislocate more local producers than it can absorb - if there is such a thing at all in the Black areas. This merits further investigation.

Sooner or later, of course, technological progress will also reach the centre population, the pC to be slightly more precise. The micro-chips wave is already busy sweeping counter clerks, secretaries, etc. out of offices. Counter-inflationary measures obviously lead to the retrenchment of Black workers first. But the process already begins to touch the lower ranks of Whites, Coloureds and Asians as well. The argument that the growth of the economy is necessary to absorb the growing work force becomes less and less valid as capital replaces labour and production gears itself for the luxury demand of the privileged elite. The economy can only grow if a mass consumer market is built up and if production is geared to the needs of the majority of the population. And this can only be achieved by channelling wealth from the elite to the underdog as indicated earlier on.

We can summarise the discussion so far by saying that technological progress reduces the numbers and strengthens the potency of the centre population. The reason for this

phenomenon is that technology outperforms labour in terms of productivity to the benefit of its owners and operators. The whole economy orientates itself to this elite.

But this is not the only way in which technology can enhance the power of the centre. Technology can be utilised in various ways to the benefit of its owners who are, by and large, located in the centre:

(a) to supply its owners with information, both technical and intelligence,
(b) to build up a communications network operating both intra-central and inter-central,
(c) to spread selected and interpreted information for propaganda purposes,
(d) to assist in security operations,
(e) to enhance the efficiency of administrative control,
(f) to build up military power, including logistics. Military investments have led to a thriving growth industry in itw own right.

Being a minority, the centre population would not be in a position to defend its highly productive plant against a possible onslaught from the side of the periphery, nor control and manipulate the latter to its own advantage without its technological superiority. In turn its higher productivity supplies the centre with the means to enhance technological progress through research and development. The periphery has no such surpluses to spend. It is a typical example of a 'vicious circle' in the periphery and a 'golden spiral' in the centre. Differential technological advance is thus a key factor in the causation of the growing economic discrepancy between centre and periphery.

5.4.3 The overall capacity of the economy

Before we leave this theme one more element must be added to the puzzle: the declining potency of the South African economy as a whole, relative to its growing population. Even if capital would not replace labour, an increasing percentage of the population would be marginalised because the growth of the economy lags behind population growth at an increasing rate. Apart from that it has often been observed that the productivity of the South African economy is dismally low by world standards. So far gold and other minerals have bailed the country out. But mineral deposits will one day be exhausted. The long term prospects of the country's economy are not bright at all and it is the marginalised who will suffer most.

5.5 VOLITIONAL FACTORS (taken from Nürnberger 1983:18-21)

I have discussed a few examples of structural mechanisms which contribute to the growth of economic discrepancies. These can be expected to operate under normal circumstances but there is nothing deterministic about their existence and nature. Water normally flows down but it can also be forced upwards by means of a pump which exerts enough power to cancel the force of gravity. The presupposition is that somebody *wants* to pump it up. This brings us to the second type of cause, viz. volition. Economic potential can be used by those who control it, either to *enhance* structural mechanisms which lead to inequality or to *neutralise* such forces.

Most fundamental in this regard is the question whether the prevailing system of meaning with its set of definitions, values and norms prevents or encourages the pursuit of one's own vital interests at the expense of others.

Western society has developed a mentality which not only condones but actively promotes the acquisition, development and utilisation of all available resources for private (or particularist) gain. Capitalist liberalism locates self-interest in the individual, nationalism locates it in a particular group. But both view the unrestricted pursuit of self-interest not only as acceptable behaviour but as a positive virtue. From infancy the youth is conditioned to excel, to outperform others, to compete, to consider what he has acquired, his own by right.

In contrast, African culture through the ages has developed a system of meaning in which the equilibrium within the community - stretching backwards to the deceased and forward to the not-yet-born - is absolutely paramount (Nürnberger 1975). The development and use of particular gifts for private purposes was viewed not only with suspicion but considered to be positively dangerous to the life of the community. What I achieve is never my own. Economic potential is a collective, not a private asset. Private gain is taboo in all its forms.

> The most abhorred and dreaded of all social practices, sorcery, was not taken to be vicious because it involved magic. If used by the authorised agents of the community on behalf of, and for the benefit of the community, magic was seen in a very positive light. Sorcery is wicked precisely because it utilised available powers secretly, for private purposes, and thus against the interests of the community or one of its members.

Speaking in more general terms, we can say that while collective or individual selfishness has probably plagued the human race throughout its history, most cultures have devised social means to keep its devastating effects under control. The corollary is that severe restrictions have been placed on the acquisition, development and use of the economic potentials of the individual or the group. Western liberalism and nationalism, in contrast,

have turned this general tendency into its opposite. Cut-throat competition is no longer a vice even if it ends in conflict. An enormous dynamic is the result. It is accompanied by the rapid development of huge discrepancies in economic potential, political power and social prestige - a thing unheard-of, for instance, in traditional African society.

When the Western competitive spirit interacts with the African spirit of equilibrium it is obvious who the winner in the game will be. The minds of Africans were not geared to the tactics of outperforming others economically. They normally preferred to make peace and find their slot in the social hierarchy. By the time Africans learnt to fight back on the terms of the Western value-system Westerners had used their advantage to entrench themselves in an unassailable position of power - fully convinced that they were entitled to it because they outwitted, out-manipulated and outperformed the Blacks.

> With this I do not want to suggest that there was ever a time when Blacks did not resist colonial expansion, imperialist domination and the denial of citizenship rights by Whites. The span of military ventures from the first eastern frontier war in 1779 to the Bambata rebellion in 1906 has, since about two decades ago, been resumed in the form of guerilla warfare. In between there were petitions, passive resistence campaigns, strikes, etc. (Horrell 1971; Adam 1971; Schlemmer 1983a:1-7). Also in economic terms there seems to have been a fairly rapid orientation towards the opportunities of the market economy in a variety of cases (Bromberger 1979: 61-64). On the whole, however, the power of Blacks was no match for the power of their White counterparts - not only in terms of technology, organisation and administration, particularly of a military nature, but also in terms of the resolve to let one's own vital interests rule supreme.

It is mainly this competitive, ruthlessly selfish spirit which Western civilisation brought to Africa in the form of imperialism, capitalist liberalism and nationalism, and not primarily the quite

contrary values of Christianity and humanism. The latter at best mellowed the impact of the former. We should not be surprised, therefore, that Whites in South Africa have used their superior power not to counteract structural imbalances between centre and periphery but to enhance them.

Let us enumerate a few well-known examples. On the side of the peripheral population the development of potentials has been curtailed either neglectfully or deliberately by such measures as severe restrictions to the access of land, neglect of infrastructural development, severe imbalances in education and training opportunities, limitations on the access to higher trades, professions and entrepreneurial activities, the prevention of structural power-formation in the form of trade unions or political parties, strict control of movement and communications, consistent exclusion from the central decision-taking processes, deprivation of the right to be part of the centre as the economic power house of the country. Within a system geared to competition all this boils down to a deliberate and largely successful attempt to break down any would-be competitiveness of the peripheral population - which happens to be Black in our country.

On the other hand equally effective measures have been taken to enhance the competitiveness of Whites: the "civilised labour policy", artificial bottlenecks in skills and professions leading to a high income structure, encouragement of commercial farming, measures to ensure the supply of cheap labour on farms and mines, repatriation to the periphery of redundant labour and "unproductive elements" which would push up social costs for the centre, gradual replacement of unskilled labour by capital-intensive technology which becomes cheaper, more effective and easier to control than labour on farms and mines, in industry

and in the services, etc. (For an overview of these measures see Bromberger 1982).

To summarise: structural mechanisms and volitional factors based on prevalent value systems combine and reinforce each other progressively to increase the gap in potential between the strong and the weak - unless some powerful countervailing forces come into play. As Knight puts it: "The market mechanism, if aided by legal and administrative restrictions on Black labour, acts as a malevolent Invisible Hand to produce increasing racial inequalities of income." (Quoted by Bromberger 1982:191).

A pattern now seems to emerge in which a highly sophisticated industrial economy develops in the White controlled centre. This progressive and wealthy core is surrounded by seriously overcrowded, economically impotent and rigorously sealed-off patches of country, the inhabitants of which may in the long run no longer be exploited by the centre but simply be considered redundant for its mechanised and self-sufficient economic system - serving, at best, as a recipient of 'development aid' and charity.

In this respect South Africa increasingly seems to develop into a replica of the world situation as a whole. Is it impossible that South Africa can - with all eyes fixed on this country - offer the world a different sort of model for the future?

There are basically two ways in which the situation can be retrieved. Either the peripheral population can learn to use Western tactics, muster sufficient collective power, gain allies, gradually force its way upward and eventually strike a balance with, or overpower the existing elite.

The alternative is that the present elite discovers that it is in its own long-term interest to restructure both the economy and the society while it has the power to control the transition. But this would presuppose a change in the whole system of meaning, its definitions, values and norms.

The question is whether the two alternatives are mutually exclusive, whether the problem must not be tackled from both ends if a solution is to be found which brings justice to all, and whether a Biblically oriented ethic has any contribution to make in this regard.

5.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter we developed a model of causation of potency discrepancies and discussed three of the contributing factors in greater detail.

The model of causation distinguishes between potency factors inherent in the centre, factors of impotence inherent in the periphery and the effects of an asymmetrical interaction. In each category we again distinguished between structural mechanisms and volitional factors (5.2).

We then turned to three examples. The first was asymmetrical market interaction. We saw that this phenomenon increases both the affluence gap in the centre and the poverty gap in the periphery. These insights were then applied to Galtung's model. We also added a few remarks on decentralisation (5.3).

The second area was the effect of technological progress. We saw the emergence of a technological elite which possesses secure jobs, receives high incomes and attracts production to its luxury

demand. The rest of the population increasingly falls into redundancy as technological progress pushes it out of the market for factors of production. South African racial and spatial policies enhanced this development (5.4).

The third discussion brought us into the realm of volitional factors. We saw that human beings can either enhance or counteract the structural mechanisms which lead to the gravitation of potency towards the centre. This largely depends on their system of meaning and their normative system. Western civilisation has, over the last three centuries, increasingly placed a premium on the development of personal initiative to maximise private gain. Nationalism has collectivised this trend. Traditional African cultures, in contrast, valued social equilibrium highly and discouraged private initiative. This motivational imbalance seems to have been a strong contributing factor in the emergence of potency discrepancies (5.5).

The overall impression gained from this discussion is that structural mechanisms and volitional factors combine and reinforce each other to progressively widen the gap in potency between the strong and the weak unless some powerful countervailing forces come into play. With this we conclude Part I on economic power structures. We now turn to the realm of human consciousness.

PART II

Patterns of collective consciousness and their relation to societal structures in South Africa

CHAPTER 6

The relation between societal structures and convictions — a theoretical model

6.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

The relation between the material and the cognitive world has occupied the minds of Western thinkers since the times of Greek antiquity, whether in the form of Platonism vs. Aristotelism, 'realism' vs. nominalism, rationalism vs. empiricism, idealism vs. materialism, sociology of knowledge vs. Marxism, or Neo-Marxism vs. positivism. Much of this perennial debate is outdated in terms of modern scientific insight (Morris 1980). What seems to emerge as the task of today is the development of a comprehensive systems-analytical model in which the different components which make up the complex relationship between 'human consciousness' and 'the real world' are depicted in their relation with each other and their relative impact on the whole.

This chapter contains the brief summary of an attempt to devise such a paradigm from the specific perspective of this study. Figure 1 presents the model as a whole in the form of a diagram. In our discussion we shall proceed from one cluster to the other, beginning at the top and the bottom ends respectively and

ending up at the crucial zone of interaction in the middle. Each proposition is meant to be a hypothesis. It is a conflict model rather than a fuctionalist model as will soon become apparent.

6.2 BASIC CONVICTIONS

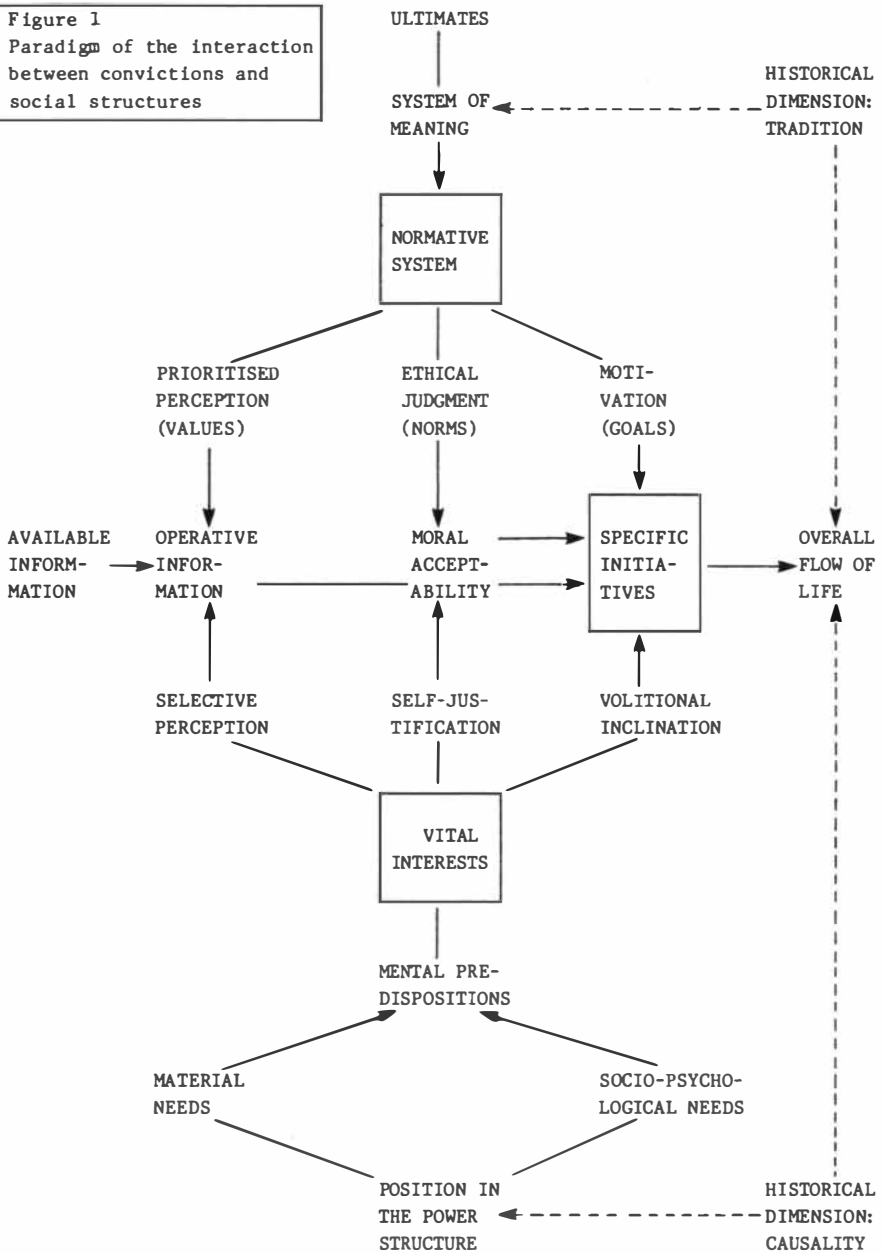
6.2.1 Components of convictions

Human beings are not only guided by natural laws and inbred instincts. They have to make sense of the reality in which they find themselves. That means that they always live, whether consciously or unconsciously, in the context of an overarching *system of meaning*, however fragmented or unified it may be.

The system of meaning derives its relative stability and consistency from a couple of non-negotiables or axioms which human beings do not, or dare not question but which they simply take for granted. We call them *'ultimates'* because they cannot be reduced to something more fundamental: they can only be replaced by other ultimates which prove to have a greater power of conviction. Ultimates can be conceptualised in a variety of ways: dynamistic, animistic, polytheistic, monotheistic, pantheistic, atheistic, idealistic, materialistic, etc.

The power of ultimates lies in two functions: (a) they are able to give meaning to one's universe and (b) they can confirm or withhold one's basic right of existence on the basis of their own criteria. The human being cannot live without either of the two.

Figure 1
Paradigm of the interaction between convictions and social structures



In practical life ultimates are often overshadowed by less absolute, penultimate, intermediate, more proximate authorities, such as the dogmas of a religion, the conventions of a scientific tradition, the interpersonal dynamics of a primary group and the multitude of popular beliefs, customs, habits, fashions, fads, sudden desires, etc. These intermediate authorities are not absolute; they can be transcended to something more fundamental. Yet in practice they are powerful dispensers of meaning and normative demands.

A system of meaning always implies a notion of what reality ought to be. We call that a *normative system*. In practical life a great number of seemingly unrelated, floating demands or clusters of demands receive attention. But a conflict within this whole realm can only be resolved by asking penetrating questions concerning the overall system of meaning.

The system of meaning and the normative system are closely related, yet different. If we disregard the system of meaning the result is confusion and disorientation. If we disregard the normative system the result is guilt, shame and social sanction. The cure for the first is insight, enlightenment, clarification; the cure for the second is confession, restitution, expiation, atonement and social conformity. Nevertheless there is a constant interplay between the normative system and the system of meaning. Without meaning norms lack authority. Without normative consequences meaning lacks relevance.

There are various horizons within the normative system. If we think in global terms, we speak of a vision. It can be the vision of comprehensive well-being called shalom in the Old Testament, the New Testament vision of the eschatological Kingdom of God, the Marxian vision of a classless society or the

pragmatic vision of technological omnipotence. If we think in social-structural terms we speak of the functions of institutions. If we think of human collectives we speak of the identity of a cultural group or the historic mission of a nation, etc. In individual terms we speak of a super-ego, a self-image, a purpose in life, one's authenticity, etc. If we think of the place of the individual in his/her social context we speak of status and role.

6.2.2 Types of conviction

For the purposes of this study we distinguish between three types of conviction:

Type A : Convictions which pertain to *comprehensive systems of meaning* based on religious or metaphysical assumptions: the Christian faith, Islam, etc. Various principles of classification are possible: number of focal points (e.g. monotheism, polytheism, animism, dynamism); deity-centred, man-centred or nature-centred; mystical, speculative or practical; binding or liberating, etc.

Type B : Convictions based on *cultural group identification*. Apart from cultural differences, such convictions vary from narrow particularism (e.g. tribalism) to a humanity-encompassing universalism.

Type C : Convictions which are related to the distribution of *economic potential*: capitalism, socialism, etc. Economic potential always implies social status and political power as well but we do not focus our attention on those. Such convictions range from complete equality to extreme discrepancies, from total individual freedom to absolute control.

To these we can add *vital interests* (type D) which do not readily qualify for the category of convictions but which contain elements of meaning and normativeness and are, for this reason, comparable with convictions (see section 6.4 below).

6.3 MENTAL PREDISPOSITIONS

On the other side of the spectrum we have to take our point of departure from the overall societal power structure, an example of which we analysed in Part I of this study. Here the *location* of a group or a section of the population in the system is crucial. In this connection we may refer back to our discussion of the situations of absolute poverty, relative deprivation, relative privilege and absolute affluence in chapter 4, section 4.2. A closer investigation of these situations reveal that they have not only a material but also a consciousness dimension.

On the one hand it is obvious that one's position in the economic power grid largely determines one's unfulfilled material needs, such as food, clothing and shelter. But there are socio-psychological needs as well: acceptance, belonging, appreciation, a sense of achievement, self-esteem. Regarding 'social expectations' we saw that acceptance by one's peers, one's 'significant others' or one's 'reference group' implies a certain level of material consumption. But the consumption pattern of one's reference group also determines personal wishes to quite some extent because it defines what is desirable in the first place.

The way in which these material and socio-psychological needs are put together leads to what we shall call a *mental predisposition*, e.g. a general mood of acquiescence, ambition, revolt or self-satisfaction. When these mental predispositions become

focused and conceptualised in concrete and specific wants or demands we call them vital interests.

6.4 VITAL INTERESTS

Vital interests are not identical to instincts, needs, cravings or desires. Needs do not have to determine interests, nor do they have to be gratified under all circumstances. Rather, interests are needs and desires already interpreted, evaluated and arranged according to priorities. This means that they contain elements of meaning and norm. In fact, the overall system of meaning and its normative system greatly influence what can become a vital interest in the first place. Interests can be defined in such a way that need or desire gratification is suspended, deferred or excluded. A scientist on the verge of a discovery may crave a holiday spree but her academic career interests preclude the latter. A Buddhist monk may long for sexual gratification and a happy family life but his way to Nirvana may not be jeopardised by such carnal pursuits. It is this affinity between the two that makes interests comparable with convictions.

Vital interests demand attention. An empty stomach, falling in love, the profitability of a firm or the security of a state cannot be ignored. In most cases they seem to be more powerful than convictions with their normative ideals. This also implies that they can be, and usually are, in conflict with the latter. While they may be more powerful, however, they are not necessarily more authoritative. They are not in a position to give meaning to one's universe. Nor are they able to confirm or question one's right of existence in the ultimate sense of the term. And that is where the authority of ultimates lies. The status symbol of a herd of cattle, a powerful car or a TV-set may superficially

function in this way and become a small ultimate (or 'idol'). But in the final resort the pursuit of vital interests needs to be justified or legitimised before the forum of one's convictions.

6.5 THE INTERACTION BETWEEN NORMATIVE SYSTEM AND VITAL INTERESTS

We can distinguish three dimensions in which the normative system and vital interests interact. The first is the whole area of *values*. Conviction-based values determine the way in which reality is perceived, interpreted or defined. Values assign priorities to the impressions we get from the outside world. Thus they emphasise certain aspects of reality and neglect or ignore others. A tree is seen, for instance, as a precious specimen of a threatened species. We could speak of weighted or *prioritised perception* in this regard.

Vital interests introduce counter-values. They lead to what is commonly called *selective perception*. The same tree is seen, for instance, as so many cubic metres of fire-wood. Whether the one or the other interpretation of the tree gets the upper hand probably depends partly on the strength of one's convictions concerning nature conservation and partly on how exposed one is during an icy winter night.

The outcome of the interaction between normative system and vital interests leads to the selection, and interpretation of available information which informs the moral bahaviour of an individual or group. We call that *operative information*.

The second dimension in which normative system and vital interests interact is the area of *norms*. Norms present a screen of acceptable behaviour. Conviction-based norms confirm or

question a group's right of existence, that is its right to be what it is and to do what it does or wants to do. It also confirms or questions the legitimacy of social institutions. We summarise all this in the concept of *ethical judgment*.

When vital interests are in conflict with the system of meaning and its system of norms we have to choose between gratification and right of existence. This is a painful choice. It is avoided as far as possible through a sort of judicial negotiation in the minds of those concerned. Vital interests posit the validity of counter-norms. But since interests cannot arbitrarily invent new norms we should rather speak of counter-arguments. Their function is to justify the pursuit of self-interest. This is necessary because more often than not the pursuit of self-interest is conducted at the expense of other people who may share the overall system of meaning and norms but not, the specific interest of the group concerned. Psychologists refer to such a *system of self-justifications* as rationalisation. Radical sociology calls it ideology. In institutional terms we speak of legitimation.

Rationalisation, ideology and legitimation follow three basic ways to make vital interests seem acceptable:

(a) They interpret the ruling system of meaning and, particularly, its *system of norms* in such a way that it seems to cover the pursuit of vital interests concerned. If there is a choice, for instance, between possible emphases and interpretations within the prevailing conviction, they will unconsciously or consciously fall for those emphases and interpretations which legitimate the pursuit of the interests concerned. But they may also manipulate the truth in more massive ways.

(b) They present the *vital interests* concerned (and the actions and institutions necessary to fulfil them) in such a light that they seem to be covered by the prevailing system of meaning and normative system. Again it is a case of emphases, interpretations and manipulation of truth.

(c) They maintain that the particular area in which the vital interests occur, for instance business or politics, falls outside the jurisdiction of the prevailing system of meaning and normative system. This *autonomy* in fact means that a new conviction is introduced alongside the original one which is more in line with the interests concerned so that a syncretistic or polytheistic situation emerges.

In cases where a group is faced with a choice between competing truths neither of which has impressed itself compellingly on the consciousness of its members, it may consciously or unconsciously fall for the option which is most in line with the vital interests of the group.

Ideological self-justification is, basically, a defensive mechanism of the mind. But the more it succeeds to convince both its perpetrators and its social environment the more assertive it becomes. Having re-interpreted the system of meaning and norms or having proved itself to be acceptable before the forum of the latter, it will now usurp the moral authority vested in the system of meaning and its system of norms. It will not only absolutise its own interpretation of the system of meaning but also confirm or question man's right of existence according to its own interpretation of the normative system. And because there is a basic doubt which has to be overplayed, it will become quite fanatic as a pseudo-metaphysical and a pseudo-moral authority.

This leads to a further strange but common phenomenon: Ideologies develop a life of their own. Obviously there is a constant interplay between vital interests and ideological self-justification. The latter is meant to underpin the former. But because of its self-imposed rigidity an ideology may generate its own logic and dynamic and move away from the vital interests it is meant to cover. It can also stagnate and remain in an obsolete position when vital interests move away from their previous position because of structural change. Although the ideology then becomes disfunctional in terms of its prime purpose it is still invested with the authority of the system of meaning and the normative system and exercises a considerable amount of power over the minds of decision-makers and followers alike. This means that an ideology can lead a group into a direction quite contrary to its own vital interests.

The third dimension in which normative system and vital interests interact is the area of *goals*. Conviction-based goals are the source of motivation. Vital interests introduce what we shall call a *volitional inclination*. It is primarily directed towards need satisfaction and as such provides a strong counter-motivation or drive. The conflict in the motivational sphere is as complex as that in the sphere of justification. Its outcome then is a *specific decision*, behaviour or action. This influences the overall *flow of life* into which such decisions or actions are fed. Depending on their direction and relative power they may then lead to structural change.

Obviously then, there is a lot of tension between convictions and vital interests. But there is a lot of interplay which leads to mutual adjustments as well. An accepted system of meaning and its normative system play a vital role in defining what can become a vital interest in the first place. Obviously they also

provide the normative terms of reference for ideological self-justification. Conversely vital interests and their ideological justifications constantly influence the concrete interpretations of the system of meaning and the normative system. Often they go to the extent of changing their entire contents.

6.6 POWER, AWARENESS AND TIME

When it comes to structural change, three further factors have to be considered:

(a) The relative *power* or potential a group or section of the population is able to muster in relation to the power of other such groups or sections. This is directly dependent on the location of the group in the power system. Power obviously determines the extent to which a group is capable of pushing its demands and letting its ideas and ideals materialise in the structural sphere. This is the area of power politics.

(b) The 'horizon' and general *awareness* of a group or section of the population relative to those of other such groups. These are a result partly of the group's position in the power grid, and partly of its convictions. They determine in how far a group is conscious of the possibilities and potentials at its disposal to make an impact in the sphere of structures. This is the area of 'conscientisation'.

(c) The *historical* dimension. The evolutionary continuity of convictions is called tradition, while structural processes are subject, at least partially, to chain-reactions or networks of causality. We also remember, however, that structural power is utilised by its bearers to enhance their own competitive position at the expense of weaker groups, a process which has a cumulative effect (cf. chapter 5,

section 5.5). The historical dimension reminds us of the fact that it is impossible to restructure the world from scratch and overnight according to one all-inclusive, ideal design. Not even the most radical revolutions do.

6.7 THREE DECISIVE AREAS OF CONFLICT AND INTERACTION

So far we have located the main area of conflict in the interaction between structures and convictions in the relation between vital interests and normative systems. But there are two other areas of conflict which have been implied all along in our discussion and which we have to make explicit: the conflict between one conviction and another, and the conflict between the interests of one group or section of society and another. The latter is the result of the respective location of different groups in the power system.

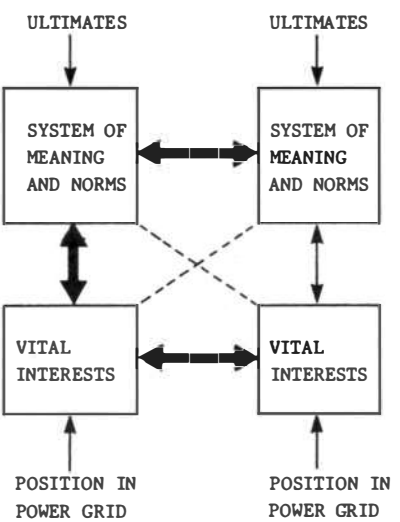


Figure 2
Three levels of interaction and conflict

The three kinds of conflict can be summarised as follows (cf. figure 2).

(a) The conflict (and interaction) between different convictions, for instance between the Christian faith and Islam, or between capitalist liberalism and Marxism. (From the point of view of a Christian theology this would be the area of missionary dialogue or evangelisation.) In this confrontation between the ultimates, the truth of one conviction uproots that of another, they settle on the basis of a syncretistic compromise, or they merge into a synthesis.

(b) The conflict (and interaction) between the vital interests of different groups or sections of society, for instance capital owners and labourers. (In theological-ethical terminology this would be the area of social justice.) In an unredeemed world the best we can probably achieve is a situation in which interest groups place the interests of the whole over the interests of a part, in that they are willing to accept a balance of power and an equal access to the potentials of the society as a whole. Where this is not the case, the power of the morepowerful will inevitably grow at the expense of the less powerful, as seen in Part I of this study.

(c) The conflict (and interaction) between a particular set of convictions such as the Christian faith, and the vital interests of a particular group. We have dealt with this extensively under 6.4 above. (In theological terms this is the area of justification and sanctification.) There is also the possibility that the vital interests of two antagonistic social groups relate to the same set of convictions (for instance both employers and employees appeal to 'human rights' which is the normative system of secular humanism) or that the same interest group refers to two different sets

of convictions (for instance when a revolutionary avant-garde includes adherents both of the Christian faith and of Islam - perhaps on the basis of a Marxian catalyst). We do not need to go into further detail at this stage.

6.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter a paradigm for the interaction between societal structures and convictions was developed.

Convictions entail a system of meaning, based on ultimates, and a normative system. We distinguished between various horizons and types of convictions (6.2).

The location of a group in the societal structure leads to a mental predisposition (6.3). When focused and conceptualised in concrete and specific terms this crystallizes into interests. Interests are interpreted and prioritised needs and desires which contain elements of meaning and normativeness. As such they are comparable with, and in conflict with convictions (6.4).

The interaction between convictions (or, more precisely, their normative systems) and interests takes place along three avenues: perception (guided by values), justification (guided by norms) and motivation (guided by goals). Of particular importance for this study are ideological self-justification mechanisms (6.5).

The translation of the ideas and ideals of convictions into structural terms depends on three further factors: the relative power of a group, its overall awareness and the dimension of historical time (6.6).

In terms of our theme (the interaction between convictions and structures in an ethical perspective) not only the conflict between convictions and interests but also the conflict between alternative sets of convictions, and the conflict between the interests of different groups in society are of relevance (6.7).

The overall impression gained from this chapter is that neither classical idealism nor classical materialism are capable of doing justice to the complex network of interaction between consciousness and societal structures.

CHAPTER 7

Structure-induced mental predispositions

7.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

In section 6.3 of the previous chapter I have argued that the various needs derived from the location of a group in the societal power system combine to form basic mental predispositions which, when focused and conceptualised in specific and concrete demands or wants, form vital interests. We shall now attempt a brief historical survey of the emergence of such mental predispositions both in the dominant (centre) group and the dominated (peripheral) group. We begin with a stylised history of colonial relations and then apply our insights to the specifics of the South African situation. Here we briefly mention some of the ideological systems of thought which grew on the soil of such mental predispositions.

This chapter should, again, be understood as the presentation of a model for research, not as an abstraction from research. Statements made are hypothetical and need to be confirmed or challenged by detailed historical investigation.

7.2 THE RELATION BETWEEN COLONIZERS AND COLONISED

7.2.1 The Western dynamic

Centuries back a new dynamic was born among the civilisations of mankind. It began in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and later shifted to North Western Europe. It combined Greek and Hebrew insights into a unique synthesis. The Greeks discovered that reality is structured according to dependable principles which can be explored by empirical research and rational thought. The Hebrews contributed the vision of a linear goal-directed history and the power of a supreme will. Asian, oriental (e.g. Persian) Latin and Germanic influences also contributed.

Originally the new mentality was embedded in metaphysical and religious thought but it became progressively human-centred and secular. Its view of reality became mechanistic, evolutionary, optimistic, progress-oriented. Correspondingly its ethic was one of active subjugation of reality and world transformation. It had a pioneering and missionary spirit in which idealist zeal to help mankind solve its problems combined with the most ruthless pursuit of self-interest. It released the individual from traditional authorities and hierarchical structures. It placed a premium on the optimum utilisation of all available potentials to obtain maximum private gain and led to a spirit of fierce competition.

Liberalism - the justification of the pursuit of individual self-interest - found a counterpart in *nationalism* - the justification of the pursuit of collective self-interest. But the dominating achievement norm produced its own antithesis in the equality norm, at least in the form of an equality of opportunity. This

is the basis of socialist thought. The legitimation of the acquisition of power was countered at least to some extent by the demand for a balance of power. This is the basis of democratic thought and the demand for human rights.

For a long time the potential dynamic of this new synthesis between Hebrew and Greek thought seems to have been arrested by legal and hierarchical thinking, firmly based in a static metaphysic and a superstitious religion. But gradually it discarded these shackles and picked up speed. In our times it has acquired a breath-taking rate of acceleration which has long become institutionalised and entrenched as the dominant determinant of human life (Toffler 1971).

Viewed in the totality of the history of mankind very divergent phenomena appear to be aspects of the same movement:

(a) The voyages of discovery and conquest which led to the establishment of global empires and the subjugation of virtually the whole of mankind under the rule or hegemony of a handful of European nations: Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Britain, France, Russia, Belgium and - for a short time - Germany (Fieldhouse 1965).

(b) The development of science and technology which - drawing from much older roots in Egypt, Greece, China, India and the Islamic world - came into its own with Copernicus, Kepler, Galilei and Newton and led to the astounding achievements of our century: space travel, genetic manipulation, artificial organs, nuclear power, etc. (Mason 1961).

(c) The emergence of the capitalist system - built first on commerce and colonial exploitation, then on an industrial revolution and finally on information technology - which led to an accumulation and concentration of wealth and power

unheard of in all the prior phases of the history of mankind and which produced its own antithesis in the form of Marxist socialism.

(d) A missionary movement of global proportions followed by similar waves of secular, materialist (liberal and socialist) thought which swept through the elites of the entire world.

In Europe some were more advanced along the way of emancipation, enlightenment and progress than others. They soon outperformed and ousted the old hierarchical leadership, and formed a new elite. But it was a staggered elite whose basic orientation was not upward, but forward. It did not want to be the top of a new pyramid but the engine of a moving train. Behind the leaders came the aspiring leaders and so on. At the end came the masses of people who did not share the vision, the drive, the education, the economic success, the political power of the elite, who resented and resisted the new spirit but were, in spite of themselves, dragged along and forced into the new age. The conservative reaction had no future.

Sooner or later the underdog understood that it could keep its own only by the acquisition of collective counter power in the form of trade union solidarity and democratic party politics.

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7.2.2 The reaction of the South

Through exploration, conquest, colonialism and imperialism this new dynamic poured over the rest of the world. This brought development in the modern sense of the word to the conquered

countries but it was a traumatic experience for their populations. Old patterns of conviction and established social structures were, at first, threatened then thrown into disarray and finally put out of gear. New systems of meaning, new values and norms, new roles and status definitions rendered the old mind-sets and social hierarchies obsolete. People were subjugated, their political sovereignty abolished, their social structures reorganised, their economic potentials exploited, their youth re-educated. Responsible grown-ups who had run the affairs of their communities for ages with self-confidence became minors, primitives, uneducated and unskilled. The breakdown of social structures was paralleled by a breakdown of morale.

We can distinguish a few typical reactions to this traumatic experience of Third World populations (see figure 1). The first one was *resistance* and, when that did not work, *withdrawal* into the old traditions. All cultures are, to a certain extent, in motion. They assimilate new ideas, adjust to new circumstances, face new challenges. Third World populations which managed to remain in control of their own affairs (Japan, Russia, Turkey), were on occasion able to integrate the Western spirit and transform their cultural heritage to such an extent that they were able to compete. But in the case of the colonised, the conqueror was perceived as a tornado leaving disorganisation and destruction of local traditions and structures in its wake. When resistance was of no avail, withdrawal into the fortress of silent encapsulation seemed the only alternative. Traditional cultures always move very slowly. But now they tried not to move at all. Fear of a landslide once they give way, led to stagnation.

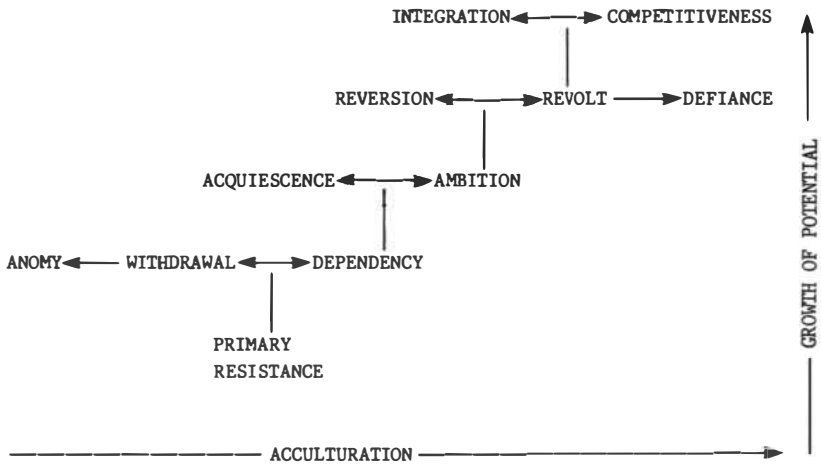

Figure 1
Typical reactions to domination
(read from bottom upwards)

To a certain extent this was a hopeless position. Even in remote areas the impact of the new dynamic slowly but surely eroded the foundations of the old traditions. Since no motivation existed to deal with the problem in a constructive way, people fell into *anomy*, hopelessness and lethargy. Social and moral decay was the result - greatly intensified by the destructive power of material poverty.

The alternative reaction was dependency. *Dependency* is not foreign to traditional cultures. In a hierarchy which extends beyond death to the ancestors, nobody ever comes of age. You find acceptance, belonging and security in your particular, well-defined place in the system. You depend on those above

you as those below you depend on you. In this mindset freedom is not desired but feared, because a dependent personality has not learnt to cope with a situation of individual responsibility. When the new masters came it was not too difficult to transfer one's loyalty and dependence to them (Mannoni 1956).

The new masters, on the other hand, were flattered. They experienced in this faithfulness the legitimation of their leadership and supremacy. Tired of the agony of constant competition at home the colonial Europeans fell back into a static feudal relationship and fed on his patriarchal position. Thus, they dropped out of the accelerating dynamic which continued in the motherland (Mannoni 1956).

From a situation of dependency two types of mentality emerge. On the one hand there are those who are satisfied that they will never play a leading role on a par, and in competition with the dominant group.They do not think that they are meant to, either. They find security, acceptance and belonging in their subordinate position. They know that without their superiors they will be nothing. You can become great by identifying with, and serving a great master. This is *acquiescence*.

The alternative to acquiescence is *ambition* (cf. Schlemmer 1980a for the following). The individual becomes fascinated by the new powers which his masters seem to control. He tries to penetrate into their secrets. Particularly those who did not enjoy high status in the old system, recognised their chance to move up. Their stake in the traditional heritage was small. They eagerly desired to discover the sources of the power which rendered the colonialists supreme in all respects. They imitated and became caricatures in the process. But there was no way back. They used every opportunity to learn and to play a role

in the new system. Colonialists made use of these acculturating natives as handy tools in their further conquests, domination, administration and exploitation. They made sure that they would remain in subordinate, auxilliary functions. But when the age of decolonisation dawned ambition eventually succeeded in bringing this new elite to power .

The goal of becoming equals with their former masters now seemed to have materialised. But that was an illusion. In the new world created by the West it is not formal independence that counts but competitiveness. For a number of reasons, competitiveness was difficult to attain during colonial times:

(a) Conditioned from childhood by the traditional culture, they found it difficult to compete with those who were at home in the new civilisation. The tug-of-war between the unconscious demands of old loyalties, assumptions, values and norms and the new normative system prevented an all-out identification with, and dedication to, the new dynamic - if its inner spiritual works were recognised at all (Schlemmer 1980a:12).

(b) It is difficult to move from one culture to another. It is more difficult to cross over from a relatively static culture to a *moving* alternative. It is most difficult to hold your own in a new culture, the dynamic of which is *accelerating* all the time (Toffler 1971). By the time you know where the gears are, your competitors are far ahead of you. By the time you change from first to second gear they are in fourth. Only the most gifted and the most determined are able to catch up and compete. For the majority it is a frustrating experience.

(c) The ambitious and acculturating group was not easily accepted by the dominant group. During colonial times the

ruling elite tried to maintain exclusivity and social distance towards the ruled majority. They feared that their privileged position might be threatened if diluted by newcomers. They also feared the competition of the latter. Last but not least, they saw a caricature of themselves in the imitating native - an object of ridicule, or pity at best, but certainly not of acceptance on equal level. Meanwhile, the ruling elite had become the reference group for the acculturating group. To be rejected by the group whose judgment matters, although you have done your best to fulfil its norms, is a shattering experience.

Frustration can lead to further possible reactions. In the first place you can fall back on the community you came from. In the eyes of those who had remained behind, you have achieved a lot. Your people are proud of you. They also need your knowledge of the secrets of the dominant group. They will be willing to give you a position of leadership. But their social system is hierarchical and you will have to fall in with their expectations. So you end up in a feudal position and revert to the patriarchal attitude that goes along with it.

The power vacuum existing in such circumstances is a fertile breeding ground for corruption. The position of the new elite seems unassailable. Moreover, release from the agony of competition and the acquisition of the relative status, power and wealth a Third World context can offer to its leaders, soothes one's sense of failure higher up the ladder. After independence this type of *reversion* seems to have occurred on a vast scale.

The second reaction to frustration is revolt. *Revolt* can consist of a wild determination to overcome the obstacles placed in your way, either by increased effort to achieve or by force. The two

possibilities are very close to each other. A reduction of repression can channel the built-up motivation of revolt into achievement. Alternatively, an escalation of repression will turn the achievement motive into a revolutionary spirit.

If the latter finds no outlet it may turn into extreme anger and disgust. A spirit of *defiance* against the whole Western system may emerge. You turn against the group you have adored. You discover that modern civilisation is individualistic, selfish, cruel, inhuman, decadent. You are thoroughly disillusioned. You posit that the heritage of your fathers is superior on all counts as far as human values are concerned. There is communal responsibility, hospitality, mutual aid, human dignity even for the lowly, spiritual depth, peace of mind.

But it is not all that easy. When you turn to the traditions of your ancestors you find that there is no way you could settle down there. You have not left them without reason in the first place. They provide no foundations for the type of life to which you have become accustomed. Apart from that, the dominant culture dictates the rules of the game in all public contexts. It is also impossible to discard your initial fascination with its indisputable powers and achievements. While you have learnt to despise the new civilisation, you also adore it - at least, you cannot detach yourself from it. It is a sort of love-hatred. Defiance is a *cul-de-sac.*

One way out is that you turn to the East. You can be sure that they will receive you with open arms. If you plan to begin a guerilla war you will be supplied with training and arms. You will also be given some re-education which will supply you with sufficient ideological arguments to justify not only your frustration with the West but also your armed struggle. In any case

you can be sure that those who were the cause of your frustration will be perplexed if you turn to their declared enemies.

Many of the Third World elite have followed this line of action. But many have also been disillusioned. Marxism is, after all, an integral part of the Western materialist, secular, technological and oppressive mentality. Marxism-Leninism is as imperialist as capitalist liberalism. Unselfish solidarity with the oppressed is as much a theory in the East as freedom and equality of opportunity is in the West.

As a system it does not necessarily fit African or Asian conditions, nor does it necessarily pull an underdeveloped country out of misery. And again you are told what to do. The relative freedom to which you have become accustomed in the West, is frowned upon. If you do not toe the ideological line you are in trouble. By and large, Marxism-Leninism has not been an obvious answer to frustrated acculturated Africans and Asians. In Latin America's semi-Western underdog population it may be different.

Thus, revolt is not a stable position. One has to continue to live the one way or the other. To overcome the dominant culture is impossible. At best you can give it your own particular stamp. But ultimately you have to re-adapt. This can be done in either of two ways. One way is that you give up your ambition to get to the levers of power. You are satisfied to be one of the coaches in the train which are hurled along by the engines in front. You will be in good company. The majority of Westerners are also in this position. This is the new type of conservatism: You settle down in the moving train and only get upset when it stops. We may call this reaction *integration*.

The alternative is that you muster the willpower and possess the talent for an all-out effort to become fully *competitive*. Because of all the obstacles along the way, only a tiny minority of Third World leaders in science, technology, commerce, industry and politics reaches this point. But that is equally true of Westerners. The elite is staggered and it is difficult to say when you can be counted as one of those who really determine the course of events. This, then, is the ultimate stage of reaction to domination.

7.2.3 The crisis in the West

There was a dialectical oscillation in the Western spirit as well. The first great earthquake was the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. It was followed by a period of restoration. But towards the end of the 19th century social, economic and political forces had built up sufficiently to point to a major crisis. The industrial revolution had created a restive urban proletariat. The big European powers had entered a phase of intense competition. Spiritual certainties began to crumble.

Then came World War I. It shook Europe to its foundations. The aristocracy was finally pushed out of control. The whole value system of the Victorian (or Wilhelmian) era crumbled. The capitalist system went through its worst crisis in history. In the mighty Russian Empire the first communist state came into being. In Central and Western Europe fascist regimes came to power.

Of these, the regime of Adolf Hitler in Germany was the most aggressive and radical. It strove to revenge the humiliation suffered by Germany in the peace of Versailles. Moreover, it strove to conquer Europe - possibly as a first step to greater

things. Its anti-semitism was so extreme that it contrived to eradicate all Jews from the face of the earth.

The combined forces of East and West ultimately smashed this "beast from the abyss". But World War II left a shattered Europe in its wake. The former world powers were exhausted and their empires soon dissolved. The USA and the USSR emerged as the new super-powers and the European nations became their respective satellites. Scores of colonies became politically independent. The selfconfidence of Europe had collapsed.

Not so of the USA. It saw itself in the role of world saviour. It set out to bring economic development, democracy and freedom to the rest of the world and to save it from the communists. But a series of events shattered its self-certainty,too. While the Marshall plan was successful in its attempt to rebuild Europe (particularly Western Germany) and Japan, similar policies had no effect on the poverty of the Third World. The Marxist critique of capitalist "under-development through exploitation" gained credence. The civil rights campaign of the US negroes showed to the world that all was not well within its own borders. While the USSR was seen as a ruthless oppressor in Eastern Europe (Eastern Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan, Poland) the USA was seen to be doing much the same in Chile, Nicaragua and other Latin American countries. More detrimental to its self-image and prestige was the defeat of the USA as a superpower by guerilla forces in Vietnam. The humiliation by Iran and the Watergate scandal were added. Then came the oil crisis. A handful of oil producing Third World countries (OPEC) was able, for a time, to hold its own against the mighty group of industrial countries.

At the same time the Western (and Eastern!) world was shocked by the first revelations concerning the "Limits of Growth": Industrial growth would soon choke the world in pollution and deplete it of its non-regenerable resources. Population growth would outstrip food production and lead to mass famine. Competition for declining resources would lead to armed conflict (Mesarović 1974).

All along the arms race continued. The prospect of a nuclear holocaust which could destroy the entire globe, began to loom large (Albrecht 1983). Capitalism went into another recession coupled with inflation (stagflation). It could no longer secure jobs even for populations of the industrialised countries. The youth in these countries became thoroughly disillusioned. Desperation gained ground. "No future" became a powerful slogan. The peace initiatives of the "Carter-line" failed and produced even greater gloom.

The West is therefore no longer certain of its mission. For centuries one had taken for granted that science and technology would lead mankind into a bright future free from famine, disease, oppression and war. Now one had to realise that the forces that were unleashed, could destroy mankind any minute, and that the enormous wealth accumulated in the industrial nations was gained at least in part at the expense of the rest of mankind. "The world cannot afford another America". But can it then afford the existing America? The demands of a new "steady state" or ecological model are still so foreign to the thinking of decision-makers that they are not heard either (Daly 1974).

The Reagan era tries to restore confidence by returning to the old slogans and recipes of unmitigated capitalism and military

superiority. Whether this can stop the erosion of credibility of the Western world is open to debate.

The Eastern counterpart did not do any better, either. Its failure to catch up with the West economically and to solve its agricultural problems, the conflict between the USSR and China, its obvious oppression in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan, its meddling in domestic affairs of numerous countries, the defection by former Third World allies, particularly Indonesia and Egypt, its setbacks in Latin America and Black Africa, all contributed to the partial demise of its image.

The crisis in the West (and the East) cannot help but also affect the Third World. One should not forget that the West is still the "realised Utopia" for the Third World elite, the ideal to which they aspire, the reference group from which they obtain their norms. They are also economically so dependent on the West that the very idea of shaky foundations in the West is threatening. Alternative Southern models have not been too convincing either - the Tanzanian one, for instance, because of its lack of success and the Chinese one because of its human cost. Those who seem to grow economically (Hongkong, Taiwan, Singapore, etc.) have followed Western ways - and become more and more dependent in the process. There does not seem to be a way out at present.

7.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXAMPLE

7.3.1 The Whites

Dutch settlement at the Cape began when the Netherlands experienced its Golden Age. Amsterdam had become the centre of world trade. The Eighty-Years' War had led to independence

from Spain, the Dutch East India Company was leading the trade with the East. Clearly the half-way station founded at the Cape was a result of one of the earlier peaks of the Western dynamic.

On the other hand the settlement at the Cape was meant to be no more than a supply station and as such remained a backwater of Dutch activity. The early Dutch and German settlers came from the lower strata of society and did not necessarily share the drive of the elite. The subjugated (Khoi-Khoi) (Hottentots) and the slaves imported from the East soon formed an underdog population while the settlers became the master class. The step from a colonising, enterprising spirit to a feudal system and to concomitant patriarchal attitudes was unavoidable (Mannoni 1956). As the settlement expanded, the settlers were cut off from the mainstream of the European dynamic and the feudal-patriarchal pattern was firmly entrenched and never challenged for one and a half centuries.

When the British took over the Cape, the Western dynamic had evolved considerably. The American and the French revolutions had taken place. The Napoleonic Wars had led to an upsurge of nationalism. Liberal thought was becoming dominant. Adam Smith had written the *Wealth of Nations*. Wilberforce led his campaign for the abolition of slavery. For the British too, the Cape was a backwater. But they felt their responsibility to protect the Hottentots against the Dutch settlers, to emancipate the slaves and to be an impartial arbiter between the colonists and the Black tribes on the Eastern frontier. British settlers also acquired the feudal-patriarchal mentality inherent in the situation, but on the basis of a general mindset which had advanced in terms of the Western dynamic if compared to that of the Dutch settlers who had arrived much earlier.

For the Dutch settlers this was a traumatic period which profoundly determined future developments. A triple pincer situation developed (for a more differentiating historical analysis of this period see Giliomee 1983:1-27):

(a) A feudal-patriarchal colonial mentality was confronted with the dynamic liberal spirit of Europe. The political authority of the latter slowly penetrated the settler communities from its centre in Cape Town.
(b) The subservient classes, Khoi-Khoi and slaves, discovered that they had an ally in the British authorities against their feudal masters and began to use this leverage to their own advantage.
(c) On the Eastern frontier they encountered the massive settlements of Black tribes who could not be subjugated. Between 1779 and 1834 a series of clashes occurred on the border. Often enough the authorities at the Cape, both Dutch and British, were seen to take sides with the Blacks.

The half century between 1779 and 1835 may have been the primal mould of the Afrikaner 'laager' mentality which - combined with remnants of the feudal-patriarchal spirit - continues as a strong undercurrent tradition even today. Social distance tests consistently revealed a much lower level of tolerance amongst Afrikaans speaking than amongst English speaking Whites over decades (see e.g. Schlemmer 1982e:11ff).

The settlers in the Cape colony had sufficient knowledge of the occurrences in Europe to cultivate a spirit of revolt against their Dutch and British colonial masters and to begin to long for their own independent republican form of government. But as can be expected from a feudal-patriarchal elite they did not share the emancipatory groundswell which characterised the revolutionary

spirit in Europe. On the contrary, they utilised these ideas selectively to strengthen their claim to a dominant position over the Hottentots, slaves and Blacks. When the pressures became too great to endure, a large number of the settler avant-garde on the Eastern frontier packed up their belongings and moved out of the Cape Colony in search of an area where they could establish republics on their own feudal-patriarchal terms.

However, the Western dynamic soon overtook them. The discovery of diamonds and gold poured secular materialism, ruthless entrepreneurship, chaotic urban development and technological advance into the feudal-patriarchal setup. At the same time Western imperialism reached its peak and the British conquered the whole of Southern Africa, including the Boer republics. Withdrawal was no longer possible and resistance was of no avail. Defeat, impoverishment and humiliation sapped the morale of the Afrikaner as much as that of the Blacks. Dependency and acquiescence became the only option for many.

Yet then a struggle to regain the initiative began. To a large extent it was made possible by the fact that Afrikaners, in contrast to other race groups, were granted full citizenship rights with the English. Fired by an exclusive ethnic nationalism the Afrikaners built their cultural institutions, gained political power and slowly but surely gained economic competitiveness (Adam 1979; de Klerk 1975).

This ethnic-nationalist movement seemed to be consonant with the traditional feudal-patriarchal mentality of the Afrikaner. At least it confirmed their claim to superiority over other race groups. But at the same time nationalism is the collective version of the Western dynamic pursuit of self-interest. Feudal-patriarchal thinking was forcefully transformed into a spirit of

ruthless competition (O'Meara 1983). The aim was to outwit, out-compete and out-manoeuvre the English and to keep any would-be competitiveness of other race groups at bay.

Both goals were achieved but with varying degrees of permanency. The English-speakers lost the initiative politically and are now a spent force in the cultural sphere. A process of integration and assimilation into the Afrikaner-dominated White society is under way. The Coloureds have long been the annexe of the Afrikaner cultural group and the Indians follow the English. But the Black majority is an insurmountable problem for Afrikaner cultural, political and economic hegemony. So far the basic principle of Afrikaner policies has been to enhance the competitiveness first of Afrikaners, then Whites, and curtail the competitiveness of other race groups - a principle which led to outright domination of Whites and direct repression of Blacks on a large scale.

However, Whites are not all on the same social level. Their structural position can be expected to lead to quite differing mental predispositions or 'moods'. Where the feudal-patriarchal system is still largely intact, as on many White farms, *traditional dominance* is still in evidence. No 'cheek' of subordinates is tolerated.

In contrast with this rather static mentality the economic and political elite has an *enterprising* spirit. Its security is derived from the certainty that it will always be able to outwit and out-perform its competitors. Therefore it can afford to be condescendingly liberal in outlook (Adam 1971).

The great number of Whites whom we classified as 'dependent but privileged' above, civil servants and salaried employees in

particular, display a mood of being *protected*. Their political party, their trade union, their social securities, their socio-economic privileges are a bulwark against threats.

Intellectuals feel rather *uncertain*. They know too much to believe a propaganda which suggests that all is well. Some liberals and radicals are aggressively against the system, some are cynical, some 'enlightened', some only troubled, some defensive, some compensate with an aggressive option for the system.

The lower class instinctively realises that it is threatened in the extreme - not only by the prospects of an eventual demolition of White privilege in the wake of a Black take-over but even by the slight shift of the political leadership away from White exclusiveness in commerce, industry, administration and government. Their mental predisposition is one of *compensatory self-assertion:* They have to display conspicuously that they are bosses because they are White.

> A recent experience of mine (which could be multiplied) will highlight this mood better than many quotations from books. On one of the major motor dealers' premises in Pretoria I was looking for a spare part for my car. The sales' counter was manned by three men each handling a micro-fiche apparatus: one Black, one Coloured and one White. The former two went about their business quietly. The White was exceptionally loud, jovial, and 'master of the situation'. From the outset it was clear that he had to compensate for the fact that the two others were doing the same job just as efficiently as he did. While I was still waiting for my turn, a Black man with a badge of the same firm on his overall passed by. The White salesman addressed him with the following words: "Man, jou pa het darem lelike kinders gemaak." (Man, your father really created ugly children!). When the Black man did not understand the first time, the words were repeated with a raised voice. I could not balance my feelings between indignation and pity. Here was a man who is, together with his whole social group, threatened by rapid social decline.

For all these strata of White society the basic interest is to remain in a dominant, or at least a privileged position. The ideological justification of the maintenance of their interests has, however, been rather complicated. As the dynamic competitive spirit ousted the static patriarchal world-view, a number of successive ideological stages ensued - one always slightly more 'liberal' in outlook, yet all geared to the maintenance of White domination. Let us look at this process in greater detail.

The feudal-patriarchal pattern is relatively stable because it is based on its own system of meaning and normative code. The lower class finds acceptance and belonging under the umbrella of the higher class. The Western dynamic pattern is also based on its system of meaning and normative system. As such it is stable in its ongoing movement. But it presupposes a situation of open competition. If the claim to innate superiority by the elite is carried over from the static feudal-patriarchal system into the dynamic competitive system, protective benevolence turns into oppressive domination. Such a situation is inherently unstable because the dominated obviously strive to get rid of the obstacles to their own competitiveness. The result is growing repression by the dominant to keep the revolt at bay.

Repression is not covered by the new system of meaning and its normative code. A barrage of criticism has, therefore, been showered upon the White ruling elite for decades. In order not to lose faith in one's own integrity one had to build up a system of rationalisations to support or disguise the repressive policies. Thus, five types of ideology have emerged:

(a) Baasskap (lordship). Here the other race groups are supposed to be inferior because of their innate racial, cultural and intellectual characteristics and therefore

predestined to be subject to the White master race. The crisis of this rationalisation regularly comes when there is evidence of the potential competitiveness of the other race groups, particularly when through education and training Blacks advance beyond the level of the lower strata of the White community. The baasskap ideology will then invariably call for discriminatory and repressive policies "to keep them in their place" - which is, of course, a logical contradiction to the basic assumption of inherent inferiority.

(b) Guardianship. The other race groups are now supposed to be immature and the Whites have to accept responsibility for their welfare under the circumstances. This rationalisation is akin to the feudal-patriarchal mentality as well as the baasskap ideology. However, it yields to the dynamic spirit in that it theoretically allows for a time when the other race groups will be sufficiently advanced to determine their own destiny. The obstacles placed in the way of such advance (and the determined subjugation of precisely the most advanced) soon made this rationalisation sound hollow.

(c) Separate development. The slogan "separate but equal" seems to cater for two fundamental needs: (i) the preservation of White group identity and (ii) justice in the form of equality of opportunity. Blacks were to be conceded their own territories in which they could develop to the maximum of their own capacity on a par with the Whites, and gain their full economic and political independence. The demands of decolonisation and full competition seem to be met. But it did not take long before this rationalisation had also been unmasked. The Whites were not willing to make the sacrifices which would have been necessary to give the scheme at least some sort of credibility. Influx into the White controlled urban centres continued unabated. The attention of the aspiring Black elite could not be

diverted to the "homelands". Repression became more severe. At least its economic goals had to be abandoned as unrealistic. A new rationalisation had to be found.

(d) State security. The next rationalisation was that of a 'total strategy' necessary to ward off a communist inspired 'total onslaught' directed at the country as a whole. Racial overtones were avoided. Discrimination was recognised as evil. 'Ideology' has become a dirty word. Pragmatism and realism became the new foundations of policy (Posel 1982). Repressive measures, the build-up of considerable security and defence machines and the integration of all the country's resources into a common effort all found their legitimation. The only trouble is that aspiring Blacks cannot be convinced that the buildup of power is not directed against themselves. Neither can the Western friends of White South Africa.

(e) Technocracy. All along another rationalisation has been gaining ground among the White elite: White superiority in the field of science and technology is a fact which cannot be denied and bears a relevance which cannot be questioned. Africa is a 'dying continent'. White South Africa as a 'regional superpower' is the only hope for the subcontinent. Its scientific and technological expertise and its economic power make it the natural leader on the path of development. Its political stability and military might make it the guardian of peace and order in the whole region. Particularly the 'Black nations' and their 'national states' are dependent on its benign leadership. They would soon fall into the chaotic conditions one observes elsewhere in Africa if South Africa would withdraw its aid.

The problem is that leading Blacks within and outside the country do not see it this way. They consider the

presence of White South Africa to be oppressive rather than conducive to development, destabilising rather than stabilising. They do not welcome but resent White technocracy, whether in its administrative, economic, or military form. This is not because they are indifferent to the importance of technological progress, expertise and efficiency but because they want to break the virtual monopoly Whites have built up over decades in this respect.

The original patriarchal mentality and the five successive types of rationalisation overlap to a considerable degree (even within the same individual or group) to create more complex systems of argumentation. Most Whites are convinced that Blacks are not capable of running their own affairs, let alone those of South Africa as a whole. They need the guidance and control of Whites. This patriarchal, baasskap or guardianship attitude can claim that Blacks are given their own areas to show what they are able to do, and then register the failure of the homelands experiment with a kind of relief: "We told you so!"

On the other hand the emphasis on state security does not mean that the ideas of geographical segregation, homeland consolidation and ethnic independence have been abandoned as principles of practical politics. It is not easy to acknowledge the failure of a policy with which one has identified for decades. One will rather adjust it, to give it another lease on life. The incorporation of Black and White areas into development regions, allowing capital investments in the Black areas and the hesitant acknowledgement of the permanency of urban Blacks are such adjustments.

Yet pride and inflexibility are not the only reasons for maintaining a policy. The fact is that all these rationalisations are

still functional as ideological legitimations of White supremacy on various levels. The argument that Blacks are inherently inferior, can be used to explain the poverty and inefficiency of Blacks; the "separate but equal" argument can be used to justify group areas, black spot removals, the withholding of civil rights, influx control and migrant labour; the "total onslaught" idea explains the occurrence of terrorism, civil unrest, even challenging insights of intellectuals, or the exhortations of church leaders. The technocratical argument is particularly appealing since it presents a liberal rationale (thus one which seems to be acceptable in the modern world) in the face of the economic and political predicament of Africa south of the Sahara.

Although the arguments are logically inconsistent with each other, they do have a common root and can, therefore, be used variably without a sense of contradiction. The common root is that White domination cannot be abandoned and cries for some sort of legitimation.

Although the ideological justifications of White domination overlap to quite some extent, certain groups in society seem to have their particular emphases. For obvious reasons farmers are most likely to continue in their feudal-patriarchal frame of mind. White 'workers' (in fact supervisors of Black workers) are more in the baasskap mood and, if they rationalise their privileged position at all, are prone to share the guardianship ideology. 'You cannot trust a kaffir with a spanner.' Public servants, teachers, professionals, etc. are likely to cling to the separate development idea. The political, economic and military elite may be moving towards the abandonment of earlier rationalisations and towards the state security argument. Intellectuals will most easily subscribe to the technocratic view.

Thus there seems to be a definite shift of emphasis, not only in terms of historical time but also in terms of social strata. This may explain the crisis in the political self-understanding of the Afrikaner and the rift in Afrikaner political unity which emerged in the late seventies and early eighties. The extent and consequences of the latter cannot be fully assessed at this stage. What seems certain, however, is that it is at least partially due to a growing stratification within the Afrikaner community (Giliomee 1982:xvi).

There is a relatively small minority of Whites who strive for an open, non-racial and fully democratic society with various degrees of enthusiasm and various types of mental reservations or provisos (Rich 1984). To these belong a number of intellectuals, church leaders and business people. The ideological component of these attitudes lies in the minimisation of the importance of racial, cultural and class differences. The slogan "all men are equal" tends to boil down to the often quite naive (and imperialistic) expectation that all people share, or should share the one world culture - which is, essentially, our own European culture. (For the rare prophetic case of an Afrikaner intellectual who feels that White South Africans should turn African, see Kruger 1984).

Because Whites belonging to the lower classes would find it difficult to maintain their socio-economic position in an open society and have the greatest psychological need to be counted among the privileged, they are not likely to belong to this group of "liberals".

If all this is true, it should be possible to locate the different ideological emphases in the population-potency model. There must be some sort of correlation between the type of ideology

one finds most convincing and the position one happens to occupy in the system. We investigate this in chapters 8 and 9.

It can also be expected that the greatest number of Whites will share some sort of patriarchal, baaskap or guardianship conviction, followed by those who emphasise the "separate but equal" idea, then by the state security and technocracy categories and finally the tiny group of true liberals. In other words, we hypothesise that the pattern of rationalisations roughly corresponds with the population-potency model as far as Whites are concerned.

7.3.2 The underdog population groups

Both the Khoi-Khoi (Hottentot) and the San (Bushman) populations offered resistance to the colonial settlers almost immediately after the arrival of the latter at the Cape. The San were largely eradicated while the Khoi-Khoi were incorporated into colonial rule in various stages and, together with the Malayan slaves, finally became part of the conglomeration of groups today called the "Coloureds".

These groups were assimilated into the Cape Dutch culture to an overwhelming extent and are now part of the Afrikaner cultural group. For a long time their ambition has been to be recognised as such. To the self-understanding of the Afrikaner as part of the European family of nations and of the White ruling elite, this was emotionally impossible and politically not feasible in terms of Afrikaner interests. In fact, Apartheid has been applied to Coloureds with considerable harshness. The result has been the alienation of the latter from the Whites and at least partial solidarity with the Black cause.

The Indians are in a similar position, although their history in the country is much shorter. Some still speak their languages and keep to their cultural traditions at home, but in public life they have become an annexe to the White English language group. An immigrant group themselves, with a higher standard of living and a greater self-esteem in the stratification system of South African society than the Blacks, they are not popular among the latter and have little cause to feel at one with them. Their natural ambition is to be recognised by Whites as a potential part of the elite. Afrikaner reaction to their claim has been even fiercer than in the case of the Coloureds. This drove them into the camp of Black solidarity to some extent almost in spite of themselves.

The separate-development era left a policy vacuum concerning Coloureds and Asians, apart from overall discriminatory principles such as 'group areas', etc. The new constitution seems to indicate a direction in which

(a) these groups are co-opted partially into the White power structure with at least some liberties and privileges, yet
(b) they are not integrated into the White elite but kept subordinate to and separate from the latter.

The rationale seems to be to maintain the White racial identity undiluted and the White power base intact while strengthening the latter by giving to the aspiring elites of the other race groups a stake in the system. The relatively positive response of these groups to the new constitution - at least in its pre-implementation stage - betrayed their true structure-induced mental predisposition. Solidarity with the "Black struggle" embodied in the United Democratic Front, reversed this initial tendency as a matter of practical politics.

Blacks have resisted the impact of White domination from the outset - not only by force of arms but also by fortifying their cultural and social cohesion (Wilson 1969 part I:256ff). When their defences gave way those who could afford it, withdrew into their old traditions. There are groups of considerable strength in the Black areas who have maintained that attitude up to present times. Where this stronghold breaks down, anomy is the result.

For others the most natural way was into dependency. This is the overruling pattern on White farms and in White households. It may also occur in smaller firms where there is a minimum of stable personal relationships. Many of those who belonged to Black communities in White rural areas have been moved out and resettled, many of them without land rights and far from employment opportunities. Under these circumstances a great deal of anomy can be expected to flourish.

Dependency moves either in the direction of acquiescence or of ambition. The latter was the motive of the groups supporting the ANC in its liberal (pre-1960) phase. They wanted to be granted access to the social elite, then composed entirely of Whites, who had become their reference group. The older generation often settles for the former. The efforts of their youth to move beyond acquiescence have been frustrated so often that their spiritual energy is exhausted. The younger generation usually continues to be ambitious. Education and training are prime goals. Those who are unable to attain higher levels because of poverty, lack of opportunity or intelligence fall into anomy. The neglected, unschooled and unemployed youth makes up a large proportion of the marginalised population in Black areas and the townships in White urban areas.

Some of those who are relatively successful are absorbed into the higher class of the segregated Black community, especially the bureaucracy of the "Black States". Here the temptation to revert to a feudal-patriarchal mentality is great. One is placed in a position of status and power with little competition and the population entrusted to your care expects you to be, or at least tolerates you, as a 'little chief'. This is one of the reasons for the occurrence of corruption and lack of efficiency in the Black bureaucracy. Such things regularly seem to occur in cases where a small elite moves into a power vacuum without competition, controls or countervailing powers.

Others would like to push through to full competitiveness with Whites but are frustrated in the process. The result is a spirit of revolt. It is particularly marked among the most advanced on the ladder of acculturation - students and young intellectuals. Their basic aim is to remove obstacles to their own advance and their resources of spiritual energy are still largely untapped. They may leave the country for training in guerilla warfare or anti-apartheid diplomacy when pressures become too great. But many find their way into commerce and industry where they become integrated somewhere in the hierarchy of the existing system. Depending on circumstances, ability and opportunity, a minority may eventually become fully competitive.

Meanwhile the acceleration of social processes has overtaken the sequence of generations. High school and primary school students have taken over the initiative for the struggle of liberation. The Soweto riots were, although eventually quelled, a signal. Youngsters openly accused their elders and teachers of having failed. Increasingly fearless and ruthless, they are determined to bring about the long awaited social transformation. The immediate cause of the new upsurge of violence was the

referendum and the implementation of the new constitution. Here Blacks finally realised that they are to be left out of a new dispensation. Geared to communal values Blacks can endure a lot of hardship and humiliation. But to be cast out is unbearable. One either had to accept being an outcast, or one had to fight for supremacy.

The main interest of Blacks has been to overcome their inferior social, economic and political position. But the ideological legitimation of the "struggle" has moved through a number of stages. From the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 to the beginning of World War II Black movements followed the strategy of petitions. From about 1940 to about 1950 the strategy turned to protest, after that to defiance. The Sharpeville incident and subsequent banning of the major Black political movements, the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress, led to the stragegy of sabotage and finally, since about 1980, to what they consider to be guerilla warfare and what the White authorities consider to be terrorism. The latest stage is the attempt to make Black urban and rural areas "ungovernable". During this time the ideological background of Black movements turned from a basically liberal spirit which sought nothing but a place in the (Western) sun for Blacks, to Black Consciousness where the main pre-occupation was gaining one's own identity and generating one's own power so as to be able to counter White superiority, and ultimately to class analysis rather than race analysis with a marked tendency to accept Marxist presuppositions and explanations. The latter phase corresponds with a massive come-back of the ANC in internal Black politics.

NOTES

1. Sociomonitor (Market Research Africa) found the following typical groups in Black urban areas (reported by The Star, airmail ed. 14-1-84):

   (a) The *motivated* : interested in improving racial harmony; prepared to work hard for better houses, higher standards of living and better jobs; concerned about fitness and health. Stated to cover 31% of literate urban Blacks.

   (b) The *frustrated* : resentful of being exploited as consumers and workers; distancing themselves from materialistic goals; not interested in racial harmony and 'pragmatism' which in their view brought them nowhere. Most are youths with low educational standards, coming from poor and crowded homes.

   (c) The *traditional* : concerned about the security, future and wellbeing of authority, elders, and tribal law; reassured by familiar patterns; increasingly involved in religion. Said to cover 22% in 1982.

   (d) The *swingers* : Youth with frustrated education; very conscious of their image which they display by defiance of authority, use of alcohol, etc. - particularly over against their own set.

   It is clear how these categories fit into our own scheme with the exception of the 'traditional' which display characteristics of dependency, acquiescence and ambition - probably a typical phenomenon.

2. In his work for the Buthelezi Commission, Schlemmer produced some remarkable findings which are relevant to our theme (1982d).

   (a) The level of political dissatisfaction has been rising considerably between 1977 and 1981. Thus men in KwaZulu and the Reef who chose 'angry and impatient' from a continuum ranging from 'very happy' to 'angry and impatient' rose from 39% to 53-56% (p.4).

   The occurrence of the self-rating 'angry and impatient' rose continuously with level of education and was higher on the Witwatersrand than in rural areas: Wits. below Std. 2 : 48% : with degree : 80%. Natal/KwaZulu : below Std. 2 : 29% : with degree : 64%.

On the Witwatersrand those choosing 'angry and impatient' rose consistently with higher incomes: from 47% (R1 - 79 p.m.) to 83% (R500 or more). In Natal/KwaZulu the higher income groups showed a slight drop, the highest occurrence being in the income group R250 - 299 viz. 64% (p.5). This could be an indication of the 'reversion' category amongst higher income groups in KwaZulu. We also remember that cP is privileged but dependent on cC and thus less likely to opt for the enemies of cC. In this regard the social control of Inkatha, a typical cP-party, should not be underestimated (for these abbreviations cf. chapter 3).

A question which asked how many Blacks would help ANC guerillas when requested to do so, was answered as follows: most 19%, many 29%, a few 29%, nobody 8%.

Indications for support for the ANC rose with educational level and urban location (from 5% for Natal/KwaZulu below Std. 2, to 60% for Witwatersrand above Std. 10). However, the support for the ANC dropped slightly among people with degrees - and more so on the Witwatersrand than in Natal (40% vs 50%). Do they have too much to lose?

A question asking what would happen if there was no change in the next 10 years, was answered as follows:

'Blacks will be too frightened of police/army to act' : 9%.
'Many more will leave the country for military training' : 56%.
'Mass strikes by Black workers' : 65%.
'Bloodshed / war / revolution' was spontaneously added by 98% of respondents (p.6).

There was no significant difference between Witwatersrand and KwaZulu respondents.

(b) That equality with the White reference group is of vastly higher priority than mere material progress came out in the following responses (Schlemmer 1982d :9): 'Blacks and Whites receive same salaries for the same jobs with very small increases' : 90% preference.
'Black and White salaries stay unequal for some years but everybody gets quite large regular increases' : 10%.

(Comment: When salaries are as unequal as our analysis in chapter 3 has shown, equality with Whites is perceived to be of much higher *material* benefit than mere increases because it normally does not occur to people that equalisation may mean that salaries of privileged people have to

drop considerably. But there are three further factors: (i) In a competitive society equal opportunity is more important than immediate material benefits. (ii) The self-image of Blacks has been traumatised and equality of dignity is more important than material income. (iii) Traditional African culture has an egalitarian tendency.)

3. The problem of acquiescence of South African Blacks is treated extensively by Petryszak (1967:453ff). More particularly this attitude goes along with what the author terms 'genosuicidal' characteristics: in-group aggression (crime), promiscuity, alcohol and drugs, witchcraft and ritual magic, religious adherence, ethnic solidarity, conformity because of fear etc. (For crime in metropolitan areas see Gentle 1984).

In the underdog population groups there are many religious justifications. The ancestral religion can be used to justify a withdrawal into tribal traditions. Mental dependency, acquiescence, reversion and integration can all be based on the mentality of African religions, but they can also be underpinned by submission to the Biblical God and the authorities he has appointed.

In contrast, African Christians can discover that they have a right to be considered creatures of God, pardoned sinners, accepted children of God with equal dignity and entitled to equal rights with Whites. They will then become loathe to tolerate their underdog position and claim their birthright. Frustrated in their attempt to attain recognition they will begin to revolt in the name of God. Black Theology is one of the major expressions of this revolt with defiant religious undertones. The fact that the same Biblical religion can be used to underpin such divergent motivational levels is a clear indication that justification of respective interests is taking place.

Although Blacks are less secularised than Whites and therefore more inclined towards religious justifications, this does not mean

that secular ideological aspects do not play a prominent role. The Zulu kingdom founded by Shaka, for instance, had a particularly powerful military ideology. Feudal-patriarchal arguments paradoxically also serve the underdog in justifying their subservience. The liberal spirit gleaned from the Whites underpins Black ambition. Idealised tribal customs function as justification for reversion in the Black bureaucratic leadership. Revolt can draw on the liberal spirit with its latent revolutionary fervour, develop into 'Black Power' ideology and assimilate radical socialist (increasingly Marxist) patterns of thought. Those who become integrated or competitive are likely to fall back on liberal capitalist achievement doctrines.

7.4 SUMMARY

This chapter gave a brief review of the emergence of structure-induced mental predispositions, first in general colonial history, then in the South African case.

In Europe a unique spirit of conquest, exploration and control led not only to modern science and technology but also to the massive accumulation of power and the domination of the rest of mankind by a few nations of the northern hemisphere (7.2.1).

A number of typical reactions emerged among the dominated, ranging from primary resistance and withdrawal, through dependence, ambition and revolt, to integration and competitiveness (7.2.2). The crisis in the self-confidence and viability of their Western reference group has serious consequences for the acculturating underdog population groups too (7.2.3).

Recent South African history took place in the context of general colonial history. Of particular importance was the threat to the

first wave of colonists (the emerging Afrikaner) by the second wave of colonisers (British imperialists) and by the Black colonised majority. The need for continuing domination led to a series of ideological self-justifications among the offspring of these various waves of colonisers, viz. South African Whites (7.3.1).

The indigenous population groups reacted to conquest and domination in much the same way as spelt out above, with significant local peculiarities (7.3.2).

The overall picture which emerges in this chapter is that in spite of the complexity of actual attitudes amongst Whites and Blacks in South Africa, a certain degree of predictability exists when one looks at the mental predispositions of social groups, induced by their respective location in the evolving structure of a society characterised by domination and subjugation.

CHAPTER 8

Convictions

8.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

In chapter 7 we worked from the realm of social structures upwards. We argued that the location of a group within the evolving social structure leads to a mental predisposition which is relatively predictable. When mental predispositions become focused and conceptualised in concrete and specific terms we call them interests. The pursuit of interests needs to be legitimised and this leads to ideological justifications. This is, it seems, as far as we can get from this side of the relationship between structures and convictions.

We now have to work from the other side. We distinguish between three types of conviction: those based on religious or metaphysical presuppositions (A-type); those related to cultural group identification (B-type); those related to the distribution of economic resources (C-type). To this we add vital interests, which do not seem to belong to the category of convictions, yet they contain elements of meaning and normativeness and that

makes them, to a certain extent, comparable with convictions (D-type).

We then analyse the relation between these convictions, first on an intra- type, then on an inter-type basis. Here we account for the strange fact that one finds, for instance, Christian capitalists and Christian socialists, Moslem nationalists and Moslem liberals.

Finally we try to determine whether there is a direct correlation between structural location and conviction. Here we observe that although convictions seem to be more structure-related as we move down the list of types quoted above, we find, at least in principle, each conviction on each rung of the structural ladder. The theory we develop in this regard leads us directly to the next chapter where we analyse the conflict-ridden relation between convictions and interests.

Most of the specific convictions mentioned in this chapter have been extensively described and documented in the literature. Since this study is supposed to be as brief as possible, we shall not fill pages with a duplication of this work but simply assume a working knowledge of the convictions concerned. This consideration makes this chapter much shorter than it would have been otherwise.

8.2 MAIN CONVICTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

8.2.1 A-type

Convictions relevant to the South African scene which focus on a religious or metaphysical system of meaning include the following (see Kritzinger 1984 for details):

(a) *African traditional religions* and worldviews. There are, of course, many original types, e.g. those of the Zulu, the Nama, the Bolubedu. There are also differences in integrity: Some are still intact, some are adapted and syncretistic, some are in flux, some in dissolution. One quarter of the Black population or more may fall into this category (Kritzinger 1984:22).

(b) *Hinduism* is the majority conviction among Indians (62,4%).

(c) *Islam* occurs among Indians (18,8%) and some Coloured groups (6,3%).

(d) *Judaism*, both in liberal and orthodox forms occurs only in the Jewish community (2,6% of Whites), although statistics also record about 5 800 Blacks, Coloureds and Asians confessing the Jewish faith (South Africa 1982c:122).

(e) *Christianity* is the greatest category but it includes a number of basic types: sectarian, pentecostal, fundamentalist, main line (Afrikaans reformed type, English low and high church types), liberal, syncretistic etc. The following percentages of racial groups claim to adhere to the Christian faith in one form or another according to the 1980 census: Whites 91,8%, Asians 12,5%, Coloureds 87%, Blacks 74,1%).

(f) *Secular humanism* which holds strong convictions concerning the dignity and autonomy of the human being but may remain sceptical or agnostic in the metaphysical realm.

(g) *Scientific-technological pragmatism* - the practical worldview of the secular scientist, technician and professional with a strongly utilitarian stance.

(h) *Individualist materialism* - the world-view of the secularised business elite, but also of great sections of the worker population. (This must be distinguished from the metaphysical materialism of Marxism. See par. 8.2.2 below).

(i) *Indifference*.

The latter three cannot be accounted for statistically because most of their adherents nominally belong to religious communities.

NOTES

1. In the multipurpose survey on intergroup relations conducted by the HSRC the following responses were received (Whites n=635, Indians n=848, Coloured n=759, Blacks n=969):

   79,93% of Whites, 92,22% of Indians, 93,54% of Coloureds and 78,02% of Blacks confessed that religion played an important or very important role in their lives. The 'very important' responses were consistently much higher than the 'important' responses.

   78,98% of Whites, 71,11% of Indians, 75,49% of Coloureds and 62,22% of Blacks believed that religious movements have a very important or important influence on South African society in general. Here the 'important' responses were consistently slightly higher than the 'very important' responses.

2. Outstanding statistical features include the following:

   Whites: 45,6% belong to one of the three Afrikaans Reformed churches, 18,8% to the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, 11,9% to the Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

   Asians: 62,4% belong to Hinduism, 18,8% to Islam, 12,5% to a Christian denomination.

   Coloureds: 26% belong to the Dutch Reformed church, 23,6% to the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

   Blacks: Roughly a quarter belong to African traditional religions (possibly more, because some may claim a church affiliation for status reasons), 29,3% belong to African Independent churches (which are growing rapidly), 44,8% to other Christian churches (9,9% Roman Catholic, 9,2% Methodist, 6,5% Dutch Reformed).

3. With the exception of African traditional religions and African Independent churches there does not seem to be

any clear evidence of a correlation between position in the power structure and religious affiliation.

4. African traditional religions are more prominent in rural (31,2%) than in urban areas (15,7%) suggesting that cultural disorientation, acculturation and a shifting perception of social status play a role, apart from exposure to Christian missionary activity and demonstration. These religions are probably concentrated in the lowest income groups.

5. African Independent churches do not betray a rural bias. They may appeal mainly to the poorer Black sections of the population in the first stages of cultural disorientation and acculturation.

6. The geographical distribution of religious affiliations shows marked patterns: for instance, Dutch Reformed in the Karoo, Methodism in the Ciskei and Transkei, African traditional religion in Gazankulu (Kritzinger 1984). But these patterns seem to be due to historical accident rather than to any correlation with the centre-periphery structure.

8.2.2 B-type

Convictions relevant to the South African scene which focus on cultural group identity include the following (See Leatt *et al* 1986):

(a) *Tribalism* - both original and reinforced Government policy.

(b) *Pan-Africanism* which is a reaction against the colonial experience and a result of the struggle for independence in Africa (Le Roux 1979).

(c) *Ethnic nationalism* among Blacks which is induced by the 'Black nations' and 'national states' policy of the Government.

(d) *Black Consciousness*, which is a reaction against White domination, Black dependency and the ethnic nationalism induced by divisive policies.

(e) *Afrikaner Nationalism* - both of the "verligte" and the

"verkrampte" variety - which is partly a reaction against British domination, partly a spill-over of European nationalism and partly self-assertation in the face of the "Black danger".

(f) *"Whitism"* - a sort of loyalty based on belonging to the privileged White elite as a whole over against other racial groups.

(g) *Broad South-Africanism*, which strives for a common loyalty of all South Africans regardless of their background. The inclusive nationalism of Black-led liberation movements belongs to this category.

(h) *British Imperialism*, which believed in the historic mission of the British people in the world as a whole. It played a great role in Southern Africa during the 19th century but is now largely a thing of the past.

(i) *Universalism* alias individualism alias liberalism. There is no conscious group loyalty but one believes in the equality and dignity of all men regardless of race, nationality, age, sex or creed.

8.2.3. C-type

Convictions relevant to the South African scene which focus on the distribution of economic potential (which also implies social status and political power) include the following (See Leatt *et al* 1986):

(a) *African communalism* - both the traditional type and the idealised forms proposed by Blacks who are disillusioned by Western capitalism. This category also includes some vague notions of African Socialism, particularly of the Tanzanian variety.

(b) The South African version of *patriarchal feudalism* still to

be found in the rural community.

(c) *Free enterprise capitalism* of the radical (Friedmanian) or the political (Keynesian) types (O'Dowd 1984). This is the ideology of the White business elite and has been emphasised recently by Government leaders.

(d) *Social democracy*, a version of which determined Afrikaner economic policies since the early decades of union but limited to the White group (O'Meara 1983).

(e) *Marxism*. Floating Marxist ideas are becoming common among Black population groups. A systematic form of Marxism-Leninism is adhered to by the exiled SA Communist Party and by some leaders of banned Black organisations such as the ANC. Its influence among Black opposition groups and the urban Black youth is increasing rapidly (Vilakazi 1984). Influences of Neo-Marxism, Euro-Communism, Democratic Socialism (Prague spring, Allende's Chile, Yugoslavia), and Maoism may be present among a few intellectuals but are without significance at this stage.

(f) *Western communalism* has spilled over from the USA and Europe to some isolated White youth groups but is without significance.

(g) *Anarchism*. Philosophical anarchism does not seem to play a role. But anomy born from the desperation of marginalised groups, particularly unemployed youths, is probably quite common.

8.2.4 D-type: Vital interests

Needs and desires are roughly correlated with the four positions in the need-potency model: absolute poverty, relative deprivation, relative privilege, absolute affluence (See par. 4.2 above). The combination of material and socio-psychological needs and desires leads to a mental predisposition. When this is

focused on specific and concrete wants or demands we call the outcome interests. Interests are, therefore, interpreted and prioritised needs. As such they contain elements of meaning and normativeness. Interests include income, working conditions, leisure, family cohesion, access to recreational and cultural facilities, freedom of association participation in political decision-making, information, religion, aesthetic and, erotic satisfaction, etc.

8.3 COMBINATIONS AND SYNCRETISMS

8.3.1 Combinations of convictions within types

In principle, convictions within each of the four categories do not form natural combinations. Where they do occur, people operate on various levels, e.g. materialism in business, scientific-technological pragmatism in professional gatherings and Christianity in family life. We call that syncretism. There is also the possibility that two convictions combine into a new synthesis. Then a new conviction emerges. Examples of exclusiveness within each type are the following:

(a) You cannot be an orthodox Jew and an African traditionalist at the same time. The rigid monotheism of the former precludes the religious dependence on ancestors in the latter (A type).

(b) You cannot be an Afrikaner nationalist and a universalist liberal at the same time because the open acceptance of all people as of equal right and dignity in the latter precludes the rigid particularism of the former (B-type).

(c) You cannot believe in capitalist free enterprise and in Marxism-Leninism at the same time because the state planned and operated economy demanded by the latter

contradicts the *laissez-faire* principle of the former (C-type).

(d) The demand of workers to receive a greater share of the proceeds of a company is in conflict with the project of share holders to maximise their profits (D-type).

8.3.2 Combinations of convictions between types

In contrast with intra-type combinations, combinations between the four categories seem to occur quite naturally. Here we are faced with two basic questions:

8.3.2.1 Are there any necessary combinations? My hypothesis is that there are none. The combinations that do exist are mainly due to other factors. Let us look at two examples:

(a) African traditional religion (dependence on ancestors) in type A is historically combined with tribalism in type B, communalism in type C and the socially sanctioned need to satisfy basic essentials in type D. But there is no compelling reason why dependence on ancestors cannot go along with universalist views, why tribalism cannot be combined with free enterprise, why communalists cannot be in a position where they long for the satisfaction of elitist need patterns.

(b) There is a historical affinity between secular humanism (type A), individualist universalism (type B), free enterprise liberalism (type C) and middle-class patterns of socially sanctioned need satisfaction (type D). But there is no compelling

reason why a secular humanist cannot be a follower of the Black Consciousness ideology, why a universalist cannot be a Marxist, why a believer in free enterprise cannot have a need satisfaction pattern typical of absolute poverty. While such combinations are obviously not common, they do occur.

8.3.2.2 Are there any impossible combinations? My hypothesis is that there are none, although for historical reasons some combinations do not occur. Let us again look at two examples:

(a) In South Africa a follower of Judaism (type A) is unlikely to be an Afrikaner Nationalist (type B), the latter is not likely to be a Marxist-Leninist (type C), who in turn is not likely to belong to the financial elite (type D). The point is that all these cases could, theoretically, occur if the circumstances were conducive to the combination concerned. Afrikaner Nationalism is, in fact, often combined with a faith strongly oriented towards the Old Testament, while socialist tendencies were not foreign to Afrikaners when they were in an economic underdog position. In low class circles such tendencies persist, mitigated only by an awareness that the real proletariat in South Africa is Black.

(b) Fundamentalist Christianity (type A) is not very common in the Black Consciousness movement (type B), the latter is not readily combined with feudal-patriarchal attitudes (type C), while these

are not often found among unemployed urban youths who are suffering from absolute poverty (type D). But the point is that all these combinations are possible.

8.4 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CONVICTIONS AND STRUCTURAL POSITIONS

8.4.1 The independence of convictions from structural positions and vice versa

The next question is whether there are any necessary or impossible combinations between certain convictions and positions in the power system. My hypothesis is similar to the above: necessary - none; impossible - none.

In the case of type A this is fairly obvious. There are Moslems, Hindus, Christians humanists and materialists in the economic elite and right through the system up to the marginalised.

In the case of type B it is clear that there will be a concentration of tribal- lists in the underdog population while universalists will be found mainly in the economic (and intellectual) elite. But, again, there is no compelling reason why a universalist must belong to the economic elite while a tribalist cannot.

In the case of type C it seems as if there is a natural affinity between an elitist position and free enterprise liberalism. There also seems to be a natural affinity between an underdog position and socialist convictions. Once again, this is not necessarily the case. Many American workers believe in free enterprise while Marxist revolutionary leadership is actually recruited from the

bourgeois elite (the "avant-garde"). The Buddha and St. Francis of Assisi are other examples of diagonal combinations between privilege and concern for the underprivileged. Such combinations are, in fact, quite common. The affinity observed above is, rather, due to the ideological utilisation of a conviction by the group concerned; it is not an inherent necessity. We shall come back to that.

The most likely set of correlations can be found between position in the power system and the sanctioned urge to satisfy certain types of needs and desires. A millionaire is likely to crave for a yacht in Rio de Janeiro while a subsistence peasant may want a hand tractor to plough his field. But even here the evidence is not entirely conclusive. There are rich people whose consumption patterns are relatively austere while poor people are known to indulge in television sets and cars even at the expense of a healthy diet. The rich have become their reference group and social acceptability is measured against living standards represented by status symbols. Material constraints and limited horizons rather than mentality prevent them from adopting the consumption patterns of the rich.

We conclude that structure-related needs and desires are only one dimension of interests, the other being their interpretation and prioritisation. Consider the following possibilities:

(a) An African traditionalist who reached the level of the economic elite may have been encouraged by dreams in which an ancestor directed him to apply shrewd business tactics, not by *laissez-faire* capitalism.

(b) A believer in free enterprise who ended up at the bottom of the pile may simply conclude that, personally, he is no

good for competition and become fatalistic and lethargic, instead of turning to socialism.

(c) There are said to be Marxists who maximise their profits only to use their proceeds and their status to further the Marxist cause.

(d) A person in absolute poverty who is determined to satisfy the basic essentials of his family may rapidly climb the social ladder while a rich person giving away too much of his earnings because he has a conscience about a high standard of living, may end up being a poor man.

These observations lead to a further important hypothesis: Any person can be convinced, in principle, of any concrete set of propositions in any of the four types of convictions, irrespective of his/her position in the potency grid. Conversely, any person of whatever conviction can, in principle, arrive at any position in the potency grid, depending on circumstances which lie outside the inherent nature of the conviction concerned.

8.4.2 The interaction between convictions and structural locations

In the previous sub-section we argued that convictions are independent in principle from structural location, and vice versa. This double statement maintains that neither is a simple and straight-forward derivative of the other. This also means that we distance ourselves from both the classical materialist and idealist positions. The double statement does not imply, however, that there is no relation between the two entities concerned. They are, rather, independent variables in a complex pattern of interaction which can be summarised in the following hypotheses:

(a) There is a continuum of entities ranging from religious or metaphysical convictions to structural position (for the lower four entities of chapter 6, figure 1):

religious/metaphysical convictions
convictions concerning cultural identity
convictions related to resource distribution
vital interests
structure-induced mental predispositions
material and socio-psychological needs
structural position

(b) As we move down the list, the weight of concrete, specific, structure-related needs and desires increases (and vice versa).

(c) As we move up the list the weight of comprehensive horizons of meaning and normativeness increases (and vice versa).

(d) Vital interests are the pivotal entity between convictions and structural positions because they contain both the element of meaning and normativeness and the element of structure-related needs and desires.

(e) While the relation between structural location and interests is relatively straightforward, the relation between convictions and interests is fraught with conflict.

Chapter 7 analysed the relation between structural position and mental predisposition, extending the discussion up to the justification of interests. In chapter 9 we shall discuss the conflict-ridden interaction between interests and convictions. Before we come to that here is some empirical evidence concerning the present chapter to think about:

A-type convictions

1. In the multipurpose survey on intergroup relations of the HSRC, I compared income with religious affiliation and found no correlation whatsoever in all four race groups.

   Whites (n=682) reached their numerical top frequency in the R10 000- R15 000 income category. Top frequency for all religious groups lay in or around this income category as well, with the exception of 'no religion' which had a slightly higher frequency in the R20 000 - R25 000 category.

   For Indians (n=907) the top frequency was divided between the two income categories R1 000 - R4 000 and R4 000 to R7 000, as was the peak for all religious groups with a slight emphasis on the lower category. Coloureds (n=771) reached their top frequency in the R1 000 - R4 000 category with almost as many in the below R999 category. There was a slight variation of religious affiliation between these two groups, e.g. Roman Catholics and Eastern faiths reached a higher peak in the higher income category with a spill-over to the R4 000 - R7 000 category, while Afrikaans and English churches had their peak in the lower category. It could be that the former two types of conviction are slightly elitist.

   Among Blacks (n=909 PWV only) population frequencies reached their peak in the R1 000 - R4 000 income category and all churches reached their peak there as well, including 'Black churches'. This is rather surprising because I assumed that African Independent churches are concentrated more on the lower income ranks. Perhaps the reason for this finding is that only urban Blacks of the PWV-area have been covered in the HSRC survey.

2. One has to add, however, that denominational affiliation is a very poor indicator of A-type convictions since it only covers the institutional aspect. Without doubt there are vast differences of theological understanding and spiritual commitment within each denominational institution. And such differences cut across denominational boundaries. Liberation theology and the charismatic movement, to quote only two relevant examples, can be found in a great variety of churches and in most cases they are in opposition to other movements within each of those churches. To reach a valid conclusion regarding the interaction of structural position and A-type conviction one should correlate these two entities more directly. It is, for instance, unlikely

that there is much sympathy for liberation theology (including Black theology) amongst privileged Whites, where spiritualising tendencies can be expected to be much more prominent.

3. In the multipurpose survey quoted above the following responses were registered to statements which could be construed to be expressions of withdrawal from social issues and social involvement respectively Clearly, the withdrawal syndrome has a higher frequency among Whites in both cases:

	Whites	Blacks
"A religious movement should not get itself involved in politics."		
all agree	79,28%	54,55%
all disagree	14,75%	28,19%
"Social justice should be the most important item in the work of religious movements."		
all agree	37,37%	64,33%
all disagree	40,40%	12,44%

In spite of these findings, Whites show a remarkable openness towards the social responsibility of the churches; 52,10% thought that religious organisations should bring the different population groups closer together; 54,16% thought that religious movements should cooperate to change South African society; 44,82% thought they should protest peacefully against injustices. On the other hand Blacks (and other underdog population groups) were remarkably undecided on these issues - a phenomenon which we discuss on p. 194f. below.

B-type convictions

1. In the multipurpose survey of the HSRC responses to the statement "If people of all colours can *mix freely*, they will live in peace" were as follows:

Whites	Afrikaans speaking (n=381)	English-speaking (n=259)
agree	11,55%	30,88%
disagree	78,74%	48,65%

Blacks (n=915 PWV only)	
agree	80,40%
disagree	13,04%

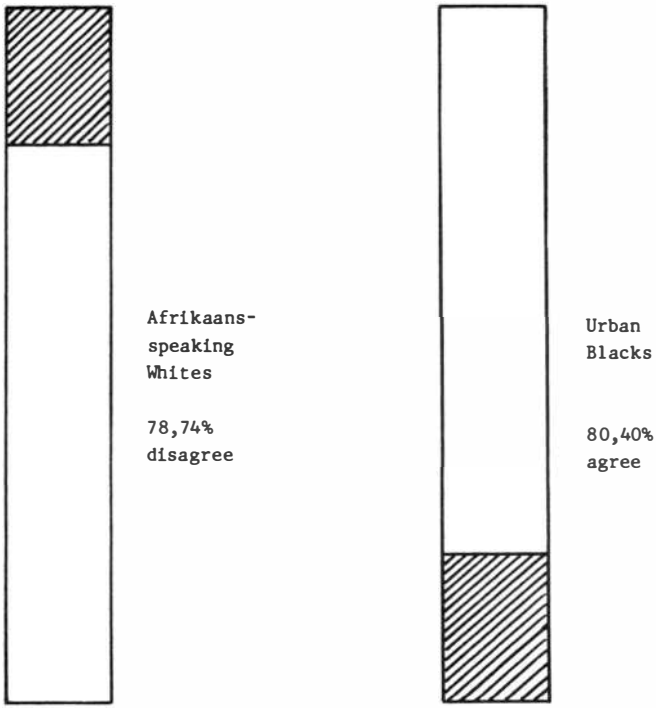

Figure 1: Responses to the statement: "If people of all colours can mix freely, they will live in peace"

Amongst Coloureds 75,75% of the Afrikaans-speakers (n=528) and 83,33% of the English-speakers (n=151) agreed. Among Indians 68,49% agreed (n=730, English-speakers only).

The correlation between structural position and conviction is highly conspicuous in this case. It can be explained as follows: In a situation where racial barrier obstructs vertical mobility this is beneficial to the interests of the White elite and detrimental to the interests of the Black underdog. That the English-speakers are slightly more liberal is due to historical factors (cf. 7.3.1) and also to the fact that Afrikaans-speakers are in a slightly less advantageous position on the labour market on average than English-speakers. Those threatened most by competition from down below have often been shown to be most hostile to integration not only in South Africa but elsewhere as well.

2. Responses to the statement "Separate *residential areas* for different population groups are essential" showed an 85,31% agreement amongst Afrikaans-speaking, and 68,72% agreement amongst English-speaking Whites. The ambiguous position of Indians and Coloureds as well as the cultural affinity of the latter to either Afrikaans- or English-speaking Whites is shown by their response:

	Indians	Coloureds	
		Afrikaans	English
agree	47,81	44,89	29,34
disagree	40,83	42,61	58,67

Surprisingly 40% of urban Blacks agreed, 43,39% disagreed. One would have expected opposition to residential segregation to be higher. (For a possible explanation see p. 247f).

3. Attitudes to *segregated schools* were similar, though there was a slight shift towards greater tolerance through the board. Opposition of Blacks to segregation reached 54,70% in this case - still surprisingly low. It reached almost 80% in the statement "All Blacks must live in *homelands*", not at all surprising for urban Blacks. Here the other population groups also showed more tolerance. Only 37,1% of Afrikaans-speaking Whites agreed, over against a 47,9% disagreement.

4. The most remarkable findings came to light in the question "Who will form the government under which you and your family will live *in 20 years' time*?". Obviously responses to such a question will not only be guided by historical speculation but also by hopes and fears, thus by vital interests. Only 4,84% of Whites and 20,15% of Blacks believed that the Government will be entirely Black. Only 15,25% of Whites and 27,05% of Blacks believed it will be White. Only 19,21% of Whites and 0,66% of Blacks believed that it will be run by the White-Coloured-Indian dispensation of the new constitution. The majority of all race groups, in contrast, believed that it will be run by all races together: Whites 40,18%, Indians 41,88%, Coloureds 42,36% and Blacks 34,61%. So, as far as the *future* dispensation is concerned there seems to be more consensus than could be expected.

5. In a question which asked what the relationship between different population groups *should* be, ranging from complete segregation to complete integration, the majority of Whites (34,16%) opted for partial segregation and partial integration with a strong tendency towards segregation

amongst the remainder. In all other race groups percentages increased consistently towards integration with 'total integration' the highest option (just under 40%) in all three groups.

The impact of structural location on convictions concerning ethnic or racial group identity seems to be absolutely clear from these examples. Of particular importance is the fact that the three underdog population groups represent three totally different cultural heritages: African, Indian and Western. In spite of what White South Africans, in particular, tend to think, cultural background is not the strongest determinant of attitudes and political convictions, Structural locations - thus interests - are stronger.

C-type convictions

Convictions concerned with the distribution of income and wealth can be expected to reflect structural position even more clearly than convictions concerned with race and ethnicity. The crucial factor is, again, interests. Our findings corroborate these expectations.

1. There is a relatively easy way to establish which groups and which proportion of the population would benefit from a more equitable distribution of income and which would suffer loss. One simply has to plot the income curve over against a horizontal line depicting average income. In chapter 3, section 3.3.1 figure 8 we have plotted gross income against average private consumption expenditure for reasons explained in note (b) below. Assuming that taxation and investment remain unchanged the graph shows that approximately 77% of South African earners would gain from a more equitable distribution of income, 23% would suffer loss.

   Notes

   (a) Since the dependency rate among the poorer sections of the population is much higher than among the richer sections, the percentage of those who would gain in terms not of income earners but population as a whole would be even higher.

   (b) It is not very meaningful to utilise a straight average income per earner (this would amount to the GDP per earner at factor prices which was R6 603 in 1980) because the presence of the high income group distorts the picture considerably.

In the first place much of the income of the high income group is reinvested in the productive process and in the second place progressive taxation implies that much of the tax burden is carried by the latter. If we wanted to disregard these two factors, the quantity to work with is private consumption expenditure per earner which amounted to R3 473 in 1980 (calculated from South Africa 1982b: table 21.16 and South Africa 1982a: table 8). This figure is not entirely compatible with the gross income graph but since savings and investments as well as taxation are not very substantial at that income level it is accurate enough for our purposes.

In figure 2 of this chapter we plotted gross income according to race groups in 1980 over against average private consumption expenditure. It would seem that the following proportions of the race groups concerned would gain from a more equitable distribution:

Whites	26%
Asians	58%
Coloureds	72%
Blacks	97%

Mindful of not only the higher dependency rate amongst poorer sections of the population, but also of the fact that a number of earners have been included in the richer groups who are economically not active but earn an income supplementary to that of the main bread-winner (say by means of shares on the stock exchange, rents etc.) the ratios will in fact be more skew than these figures suggest.

Can convictions be shown to be correlated to these ratios? Indeed they can. In the multipurpose survey of the HSRC the responses to the statement "Peace in South Africa can only be ensured by equal redistribution of wealth among all inhabitants" (the most radically socialist statement in the survey) were as follows:

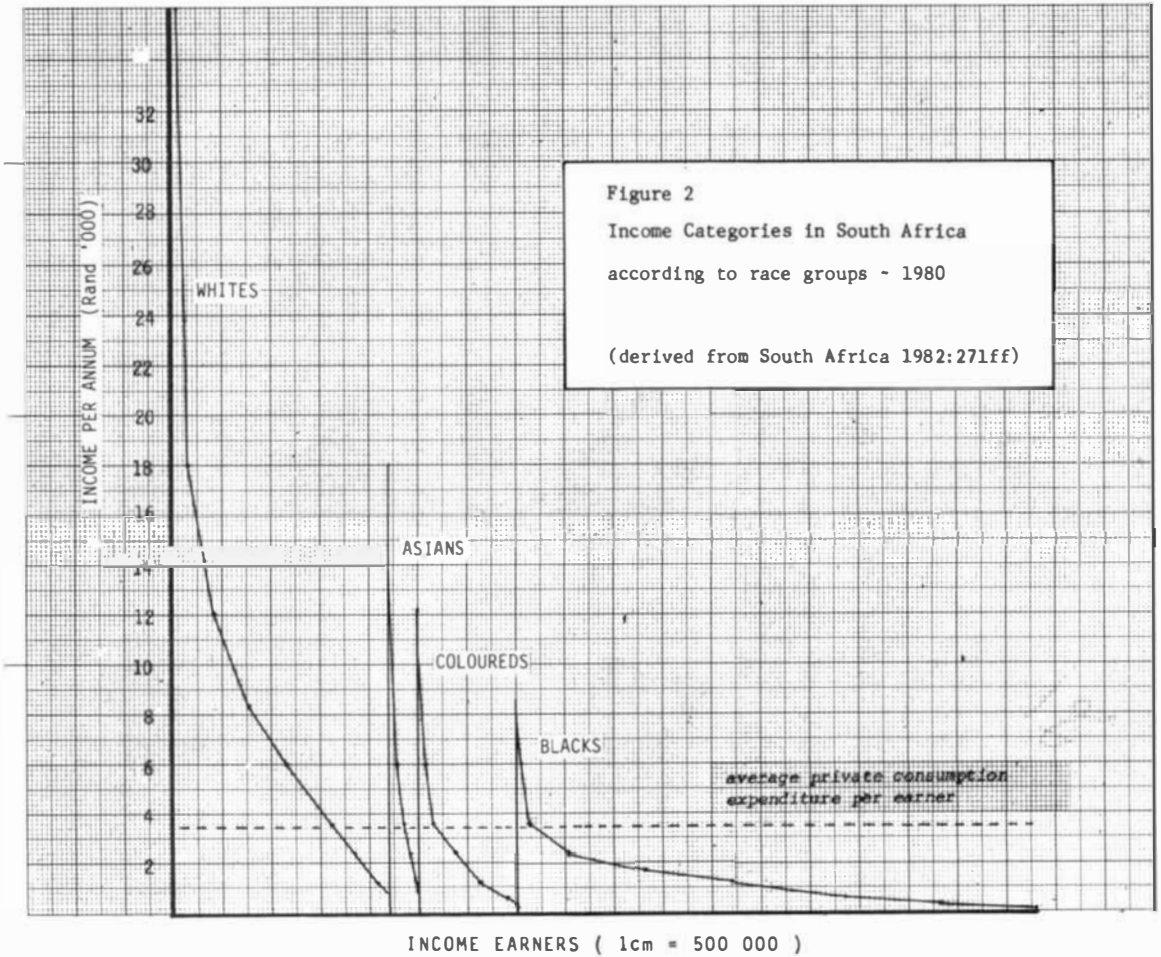

Figure 2

Income Categories in South Africa according to race groups - 1980

(derived from South Africa 1982:271ff)

Whites	Afrikaans-speaking (n=381)	English-speaking (n=259)
total agree	19,42	25,03
total disagree	67,72	57,53
Blacks (n=915 PWV only)		
total agree	82,18	
total disagree	8,52	

More than 70% of Indians and Coloureds also agreed. The structure-conviction correlation seems to be more than obvious here.

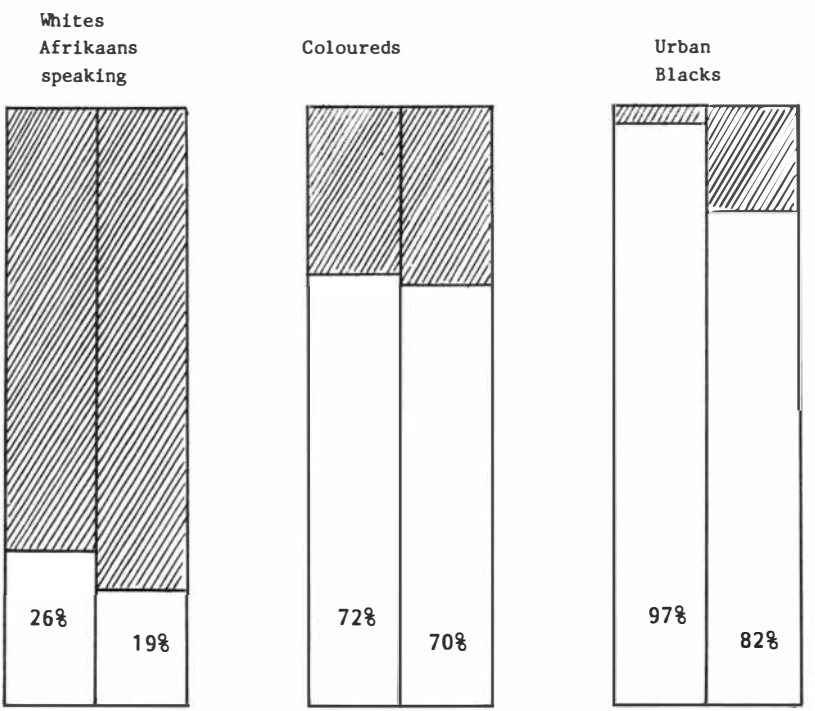

Figure 3: Correlation between percentage of population group which would gain from redistribution of income (left column) and percentage of group with socialist leanings (right hand column).

The point to be made is that there is a structural propensity of those below the line (thus those who would gain from equity) to opt for some kind of socialist redistribution of income while there is a structural propensity of all those above the line (thus those who would suffer loss from greater equity) to opt for free enterprise. In this case the link between structural position, mental predisposition and interests becomes particularly obvious. Blacks and Coloureds would, on this basis, opt overwhelmingly for socialism, Whites overwhelmingly for free enterprise. This corresponds with observations made at mixed conferences devoted to such issues (Nürnberger 1978a: 11ff.; Nürnberger 1979a: 16ff.) as well as with empirical research.

NOTES

(a) It is interesting that the Afrikaans-speakers in the sample were more hostile to equal redistribution than the English-speakers, in spite of the fact that the latter are commonly believed to be less religious and more materialistic than the former. Apparently those who acquired privilege only recently and who are still aware of the abysses of poverty, are also more anxious to defend their position, while the traditionally privileged can afford to be more unaware of the dangers of social decline and, in consequence, more relaxed about the matter.

(b) Afrikaans-speakers who "strongly disagree", increased steadily with incomes from 13 - 25% in lower income groups, to 42,55% in the above R25 000 income group. Those who "agree" are highest in the less than R1 000 income group and drop to 12,72% in the above R25 000 category.

(c) Among the English-speakers the "strongly disagree" respondents steadily climbed with income to reach 14,29% in the above R25 000 category. It is clear that a strong commitment to 'free enterprise' among the English elite prevails: Those who earn more, deserve it and income discrepancies are necessary incentives for economic growth.

(d) In contrast, Whites responded much more positively to the statement "Peace in South Africa can only be ensured by guaranteeing greater wealth for the poor". 56,69% of the Afrikaans-speakers and 43,63% of the English-speakers agreed. This inconsistency seems to indicate that an abstract attitude of goodwill and generosity surpassed the readiness for concrete sacrifices.

(e) Apart from the economic reason, there is also a political reason for the phenomenon that the underdog population groups have socialist tendencies. Because of their social impotence, they can only muster power on a collective basis. A collectivist structure-based mental predisposition is the result. In the case of the Afrikaans-speaking Whites this was activated in the form of ethnic solidarity, in the case of the Black population groups it is activated in the form of low-class solidarity. The reason for this discrepancy is also structure-related: Afrikaans-speakers are a minority and could only find a power base in ethnic exclusivism, while Blacks are a majority for whom ethnicity jeopardises the acquisition of power (see 9.2.2 below).

2. Schlemmer (1983c:5) found that of his sample of migrant labourers 74% opted for 'a government which makes Black people as equal as possible in education, wages and housing' (socialist option), while only 25% were in favour of a 'government which rewards clever, hard-working people, allowing them to be wealthier than others' (free enterprise option). In another study of urban Blacks in Natal and the Transvaal, the percentages were much more polarised: 92% for the former, 7% for the latter alternative.

NOTE:

The study also revealed that there had not as yet emerged a clear commitment to a definite ideological strategy for the achievement of these goals. The attitudes between typically liberal and interventionist policies were still relatively balanced. Indications are that if Blacks were allowed to advance rapidly they might opt for the free enterprise system. If not, radical views will, without doubt, find a very fertile ground indeed. Similar findings are recorded by Van Wyk (1984:19) for Black elites. Workers certainly are more critical of the free enterprise system (Nasser 1984). It is significant in this connection that youth (aged 18-24), skilled and semi-skilled workers, those with education between Std. 3 and 7 and those attracted to the ANC are least supportive of private enterprise according to Schlemmer.

These examples leave no doubt concerning the impact of structural position on convictions concerning the distribution of economic resources.

Of course, structural propensity (or mental predisposition derived from structural location) is only one of the factors; interests are interpreted and prioritised needs and desires, and the system of meaning with its normative system also plays a role. Blacks have a communalist cultural background, Whites have been socialised into an individualistic, competitive world. Moreover, there is no compelling reason why a wealthy White cannot become convinced of the merits of Marxist socialism, or that a poor Black cannot become convinced of the merits of free enterprise liberalism. But since needs and desires are powerful motivators the weight of such a structural propensity should not be underestimated. The fact that Indians who have a cultural background different from Blacks, and Coloureds who share the cultural background of Whites, responded much in the same pattern as urban Blacks did, shows where the weight lies.

8.6 SUMMARY

This chapter gave a brief survey of convictions relevant to the South African situation and hypothesised about their relation among each other and their possible correlation with structural positions.

We distinguished between three types of convictions - religion based, culture based and economy based - and enumerated the main groups under each type. We added interests to complete the picture since the latter contain elements of meaning and normativeness (8.2).

We then considered possible combinations. Within a given type there is a certain degree of antagonism and exclusiveness, although syncretisms and syntheses are possible. In contrast, combinations between types are quite common. Thus you find Christians (type A) who are nationalists and Christians who are universalists (type B), Christians who are capitalist liberals, and Christians who are socialists (type C). (8.4).

We then hypothesised about a possible correlation between structural locations and convictions. Here a dialectical answer seems appropriate. On the one hand convictions appear to be quite independent of structural position, and vice versa (8.4.1).

On the other hand these seemingly independent variables do interact in a significant way. Interaction intensifies as we move from religion based, through culture based to economy based convictions. The strongest correlation obviously obtains between structural positions and interests because interests represent structure-induced material and socio-psychological needs (8.4.2).

The overall impression we gain from this chapter is that interests are the pivotal point between structural positions and convictions, containing both elements of structure related needs and desires and elements of meaning and normativeness. While the affinity between structural position and interests appears to be relatively close (cf. chapter 7), the actual conflict takes place between convictions and vital interests. To this area we shall now turn (chapter 9).

CHAPTER 9

The interaction between convictions and interests

9.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter will deal with the interaction between convictions and interests. We have seen in section 8.5.2 of chapter 8 why this interaction appears to be crucial for our problematic.

We remember that interests (a) represent needs and desires which are related to structural position and (b) interpret and prioritise such needs and desires, thus containing elements of meaning and normativeness. To a certain extent they can be called counter-convictions, but they lack the authority of convictions. Their power is derived, rather, from the needs and desires which they represent and which press for attention.

The interaction between convictions and interests moves along three avenues: perception (guided by values), justification (guided by norms) and motivation (guided by goals). We concentrate on justification, but the other two avenues are understood to be implied all along.

We assume that the interaction between convictions and interests moves in two directions: (a) interests justify themselves against convictions, and (b) convictions control interests.

Interests try to make themselves acceptable in the following ways:

(a) If there is a choice between *convictions* they will tip the balance towards the alternative most amenable to the interests concerned. If there is a choice between emphases and interpretations within a prevailing conviction they will make the group fall for those emphases and interpretations which are more in line with the interests concerned than others. If that is not the case they will try to manipulate the truth of the conviction.

(b) The pursuit of *interests* and its institutional entrenchments can be subjected to selective emphases, interpretations and manipulations of the truth as well.

(c) The area of life in which the interests occur, for instance politics, business or sexual gratification, can be declared to be *autonomous*, i.e. to fall outside the jurisdiction of the prevailing conviction and its representatives. That means that a counter-conviction is established alongside the original, thus forming a syncretistic or polytheistic situation. We remember that classical polytheism provides divinities for erotic satisfaction, alcohol, commerce, war, etc.

Convictions control interests in the following ways:

(a) The prevailing *system of meaning* has an influence on the interpretation and prioritisation of needs and desires, and

thus establishes what can become an interest at all and which priority it may claim.

(b) The *normative system* screens the suggestions, claims and demands of interests according to its values, norms and goals. The authority to do so lies in the ability of ultimates to confirm or question the right of existence of a person, group or institution.

I presented these distinctions to make the reader aware of the possible ways in which interests and convictions influence each other. Examples from real life, however, are very complex and require detailed analyses. Since there is no space and time for such elaborate investigations, I only offer an impressionistic first entry into the whole problematic of this chapter.

9.2 VITAL INTERESTS ARE JUSTIFIED IN TERMS OF CONVICTIONS

The process of justification mediates between vital interests (closely related to position in the power system) on the one hand and the current system of meaning and its system of norms on the other. The former have to be shown to be acceptable in terms of the latter. To give a comprehensive picture numerous examples would be necessary: the number of vital interests multiplied by the number of convictions (or systems of meaning) multiplied by the three ways in which justification is carried out. We give only a few examples representing each of the three types of conviction, each of the three ways of justification, and both elite and underdog interests.

9.2.1 Justification in terms of religious convictions

9.2.1.1 Manipulation of the system of meaning

The Biblical faith is a dominant religious system of meaning and norms in the history of the West. When the Spanish and Portuguese set out on their voyages to conquer Latin America they interpreted their undertakings in terms of a divine mission. While the true motives were power, wealth and glory, these were interpreted in such a way that the Kingdom of God was ostensibly extended beyond the seas. Souls were saved from eternal condemnation by forcing them into the fold of the church. If they were unwilling, God's righteous condemnation was executed there and then by means of the sword.

> The apocalyptic messianism of the early Colonial period actually had its origins in Spain itself ... the South American frontier was a continuation of the campaign against the Moors in the Iberian peninsula. The combination of religious crusading fervour and the systematic establishment of Catholicism which had characterised the Reconquest in the peninsula, was extended directly to the colonies ... The events of the Conquest were given Biblical significance. Hernán Cortés was seen as a new Moses ... Martín Fernández de Enciso compared the Conquest with the entry of the Jews into the Land of Canaan... (Norman 1981:51f.).

The enthusiasm with which the British built their Empire was couched in similar terms. The Anglo-Saxons were the lost Ten Tribes of Israel, elected by God to execute a historic mission to bring the light of Christianity and civilisation to the heathen and

barbarous nations of the world (Stokes 1960; Sandison 1967; Villa-Vicencio 1981).

Similar appeals to the Biblical imagery emerged among the Afrikaner settlers in the early 19th century (Villa-Vicencio 1981:50; Bosch 1984:18). They also saw themselves as the chosen nation. The "Great Trek" out of the area of British jurisdiction was seen in the light of the liberation of Israel from Egypt. The Afrikaners' movement into the interior was seen as a parallel to the conquest of Canaan. And the Blacks were seen as Canaanites who had to be subjugated and placed under the benevolent reign of Christian civilisation and with whom no social contact on equal level was permitted. The true motives of the Great Trek - sovereignty, land and feudal dominance - were thus justified in terms of the acknowledged religious system of meaning.

It is obvious that this is a corrupted version of the Biblical faith. Spaniards, British and Afrikaner are not Jews but Gentiles, on a par with Blacks. Likewise, Blacks are not Canaanites. Moreover, Jewish exclusiveness has been superseded by the universal church of Christ. Acceptance to the People of God is no longer based on biological descent or fulfilment of a religious law, thus conditional, but on acceptance of the unconditional grace of God. The principle of national survival and dominance which indeed played its role in the history of Israel, has been superseded by the impartial justice of Yahweh and the self-giving concern of Christ. Obviously a whole religion has been redesigned here to function as a legitimation of vital interests.

The policy of Apartheid has also been justified in terms of the acknowledged religious system of meaning. The deuteronomic exclusiveness of Israel was taken as justification for the racial

segregation of Whites, the curse of the tower of Babylon was taken as proof for the necessity to carve up the population according to language groups. And the mission of the elect children of God was understood to imply that Whites have been placed into the Southern African situation to defend and extend the Christian civilization.

Again a corruption of the Biblical faith is apparent. Deuteronomic exclusiveness was based on religion, not on race. If applied directly it should have meant that White and Black Christians should keep aloof from Black and White non-believers. Instead, White atheists and agnostics were included in the exclusivist camp while Black believers were pushed out. The Old Testament saw the communicative confusion of Babylon as a curse brought upon mankind because of sin, and redeemed in the miracle of Pentecost - not as a divine command to be enforced by law. If it was a divine command, English- and Afrikaans-speaking Whites should have been separated (with the Coloureds added to the latter) while the Xhosas of the Ciskei and Transkei should not have been separated. And, of course, the church has no mandate to enforce or protect a civilisation by force of arms but spread the Good News by word and deed.

The reinterpretation of the Biblical system of meaning also took on another form: spiritualisation. After the Afrikaners had been liberated and Blacks began to clamour for their liberation, the latter was considered to be a misunderstanding of the Biblical message: A Christian is liberated from sin and condemnation, not from (mere) external oppression. The slaves, liberated in Christ, were told to be subject to their masters in the New Testament. Social justice was superseded by justification by faith. The unity of the church was a spiritual, not an institutional or physical unity. In ethics attitudes mattered, not

structures. In fact, the idea of freedom, equality and fraternity was not Christian but a brain child of the humanists of the French Revolution which has to be opposed as anti-Christian.

These ideas are not easily unmasked, because they draw on traditions which go back as far as the first Hellenistic influences on the Biblical faith. They are particularly popular in pietistic and fundamentalist circles and bear the mark of the "pure Gospel". But the underlying motive is clear. It is a withdrawal from responsibility before God in the spheres of social organisation, economics and politics. Of course, this was never the intention of the Biblical writings. For the Old Testament (Torah, Psalms and Prophets) this is obvious. The New Testament church used the Old Testament as its Bible. The background of its faith was the apocalyptic expectation of a complete renewal of the world by the approaching Kingdom of God. Early Christians ordered their lives on this basis in anticipation of the Kingdom, as far as their sphere of influence as a tiny community stretched. That God should not be interested in social justice is indeed a rash assumption to make.

Anti-apartheid, liberation and Black theologies utilise the Exodus motif as well (Villa-Vicencio 1981), leaving out, for the time being, the motif of the conquest of Canaan which forms one package with the former in the Old Testament creed. The strong Biblical insistence on social justice receives a selective emphasis. The harsh claims of the Law are emphasised at the expense of the suffering acceptance of the sinner by God for the sake of redemption. Modern concepts of human rights, freedom, democracy and socialism and, in particular, the Marxian analysis of society provide a powerful hermeneutical key for the interpretation of Scriptures.

While the 'preferential option for the poor and oppressed' certainly does have a powerful Biblical backing, the Marxian hermeneutical key often leads to the notion that the poor (=proletariat) are, by virtue of their poverty, without sin and without need of (spiritual) redemption. They are, almost by definition, the elected instruments of God's project of liberation. The Kingdom of God is seen to materialise wherever social shackles are removed; it is ultimately interpreted in terms of the classless society. One has to add that Marxism can largely be understood as a secular appropriation of Biblical concerns which have conveniently been neglected by the selectively spiritual piety of bourgeois Christianity (Nürnberger 1979b:46-47). What cannot be denied, however, is the fact that the utilisation of the Marxian hermeneutical key is largely motivated by the justification of the pursuit of collective interests.

9.2.1.2 Acceptable presentation of the pursuit of interests

The second way of justification is the presentation of vital interests in such a light that they seem to be covered by the religious system of meaning. Apartheid policies appeared as an expression of Christian concern and responsibility. Whites saw themselves as guardians who protected their Black foster children from detrimental influences such as liberalism and communism, taught them a sound discipline, developed their language and culture, granted them homelands of their own, invested huge sums of money in agricultural development, health services, education, housing and administrative institutions, gave them all opportunities to develop their own potential to the limits of their capacity and finally granted them their political independence. "Never in world history has so much been done for so many by so few" one of my White friends told me.

This whole line of argument has, for our purposes, been debunked sufficiently in chapters 2-6 and no more need be said. Blacks who have not fallen into despondency, mental dependency or acquiescence, would obviously like to do without such foster parents. They resent being treated as minors for whom things are ostensibly being done and they wish to be recognised as citizens of their own country with all rights and obligations.

Nor is the underdog free from this type of justification. But it can be very subtle. Members of the elite should not be too quick in their effort to debunk the claim of the underdog that it is God who demands freedom, social justice and human dignity for all people and thus also for the underdog. It is also hardly appropriate to deny that a stand against discrimination, oppression and exploitation is required of those who claim to belong to the people of God. Everything said and done, however, one has to admit that the attitude of a "confessing church" is in line with the vital interests of Blacks while it is diametrically opposed to the interests of Whites. Blacks do not need to be Christians to clamour for their rights - their vital interests alone would be quite sufficient to make them do so. In contrast, for Whites the call for social justice is a call to sacrifice and to suffer social demotion.

9.2.1.3 Declaration of autonomy

The third way of justification is to declare the social, economic and political realms out of bounds for the religious system of meaning. While it has become clear to many that racial discrimination, or separate development for that matter, cannot be justified with Biblical or theological arguments, this simply means, they argue, that social organisation, economics and politics are autonomous spheres of life. Segregationist policies

are a practical necessity which does not depend on one's faith. Religious convictions are one's private concern. They only deal with one's relation to the eternal God, at best with one's attitude to one's immediate neighbour. Jesus never bothered about politics but confirmed the legitimacy of the Roman State. So did the Apostles. Religion should never be desecrated and abused for filthy political purposes. In the meantime, policies must be based on realism and pragmatism (rather than on 'ideology'), thus on the "facts" of the situation (Posel 1982).

The practical effect of this subdivision of life into a religious and a secular sphere is, of course, that the former becomes irrelevant for the concrete issues of life, while the latter is guided by new ultimates. In most cases this is individualist or collective materialism: In economics, politics and social organisation the principles of the survival of the fittest and the priority of the powerful prevail. Some idealists may be motivated by humanistic, even romantic leanings: Blacks must be protected from the decadence of Western civilisation. Scientists are inclined to be naturalists: Blacks are on a lower level of biological or cultural evolution. Christian considerations no longer play a role. A new divinity has taken over control. A form of syncretism or polytheism evolves.

9.2.2 Justification in terms of cultural identity

The imperialism of the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and British were all cultural imperialisms as well. As Brazil became a Portuguese cultural colony, as North America became a British cultural colony, the Cape became a Dutch cultural colony. Other European settlers - particularly the French and the Germans - were deliberately absorbed and lost their cultural identity. While the "feudal lords" (the settlers) kept aloof both in Brazil

and in the Cape, other population groups (Red Indians and African slaves in Brazil, Hottentots and Malayan slaves in the Cape) were culturally assimilated at the base of the feudal pyramid.

The outcome in Brazil, in the U.S.A. and in the Cape Colony was essentially a single stratified society. Had this development continued, the Cape could have become a small Brazil. Race and ethnicity would have disappeared as decisive criteria of social organisation. Only class would have remained. The value of cultural identity does not occur to the members of the dominant culture as long as its cultural imperialism is unchallenged.

As we have seen in chapter 7, section 7.3.1, this development was thwarted in the Cape Colony by three interdependent factors:

(a) A new imperialism, more advanced in terms of the Western dynamic, overlay Dutch imperialism and began with its own assimilatory policies. Cape Dutch settlers who formed a substantial cultural block with considerable self-esteem as a feudal elite, got into distress.

(b) The expansion on the Eastern frontier ran into culturally compact, numerically superior, politically and geographically well-established Black population groups beyond the Fish River. Here a clear limit was set for cultural domination and assimilation. The obstacle was made all the more annoying by the policies of the British colonial government which was frequently seen to take sides with the Blacks during the frontier wars.

(c) The liberal-humanitarian policies of the British colonial government undermined the position of the Cape Dutch feudal elite from within the system in that slaves were

emancipated and Hottentots were treated as equals to Whites, at least to some extent.

It is this threefold threat which forced the Cape Dutch population group to change its orientation. Before the British occupation of the Cape its attitude was elitist but not particularist. Its own cultural dominance was not questioned. Now it became beleaguered by cultural groups which endangered not only its superiority but its very survival as a cultural entity. The result was a withdrawal into an ethnic fortress or - to use a South African image - a laager. This attitude was mainly defensive - as was the Great Trek and the establishment of the Boer Republics. It remained that way until the British finally smashed these defensive structures and applied their assimilatory politics over against the Afrikaner with increased vigour.

It is only then that a defensive ethnic and feudal-elitist attitude changed into an aggressive ethnic nationalism, (Bosch 1984: 21ff). The enormous upsurge of nationalism in Europe, particularly in Germany, provided the inspiration while the entrenchment of equality with the British in the constitution of the Union (1909) provided the institutional opportunity for the Afrikaner to build up their cultural identity, their political power base, their economic potential and the rehabilitation of their traditional social status as a feudal elite over against other population groups. Because the other cultural groups, particularly the British and the Blacks, were too powerful to be incorporated in any way, this was only possible through a narrowly defined ethnic cultural solidarity. The feudal-elitist position was maintained, therefore, also over against the Coloureds who belonged to the Afrikaans cultural family.

Once in complete political control of the country, the security and power of the Afrikaner socio-cultural group had to be entrenched to ensure its survival both as a feudal elite and as cultural unit. The English population, which still had considerable influence, had to be outmanoeuvred and cut off from its overseas power base - the British homeland and its world-wide empire. This was symbolically achieved in the declaration of the Republic in 1961. Only then did the English become a subservient local minority which has gradually lost its political drive.

The greatest threat to Afrikaner power and security, however, was posed by the massive Black population, particularly by the acculturating urban elite. Its emerging unity had to be broken up and its strength dissipated. Two interrelated political doctrines emerged:

(a) Blacks were to be granted the right to develop their own cultural identity in their own social, economic and political spheres just as the Afrikaner had developed theirs. Ethnic (periphery) institutions were built up and systematically upgraded.
(b) The cultural melting pot of the Black urban population was considered to be decadent, thus undesirable. The presence of Blacks in White areas was declared to be "temporary", their emerging institutions were dismantled as far as possible and the whole potential power base of the acculturating Black centre population was downgraded, if not destroyed.

Once the English were no longer a problem and the Blacks were firmly under control, the Afrikaner felt more secure and the ethnic nationalist fortress carefully began to open its doors. While those who thought that they had reason to believe that the danger was not over, remained in the "verkrampte" (cramped)

attitude, a substantial portion moved to a "verligte" (enlightened) outlook. The shift from ethnic nationalism to a more inclusive "Whitism" was most significant.

Japanese and, recently, Chinese were given White status. Their numbers do not pose a threat and commercial ties with Japan and Taiwan demand a dignified treatment of these groups. Cultural considerations fell by the board.

But even a careful consideration of a wider South Africanism including Coloureds and Indians came in sight with the new constitution. Blacks are still excluded because they have not ceased to be the major threat. Yet the cooptation of a minority of privileged urban Blacks into the system does not seem to be impossible in the foreseeable future.

All this shows that interests manipulate convictions - in this case convictions concerning cultural identity.

English-speaking Whites have also changed their attitudes. Obviously British imperialism is dead. The consciousness of belonging to a global culture still provides a feeling of superiority over the Afrikaner and all other cultural groups. Cut off from their overseas power base, however, and being a White minority, the English-speakers seem to follow three distinct ways. Some become politically despondent or indifferent. Their spiritual energy has been exhausted by decades of fruitless opposition. They turn to their private pursuits which are well protected by the overall system guaranteed by the Afrikaner. Others realise that their best bet is to throw in their lot with the Afrikaner in a common "Whitism". The Rhodesian experience has greatly strengthened this trend. The third group, a

minority, opts for a broader South Africanism (or even universalism) which is to include Blacks in some sort of danger-free arrangement.

It seems obvious that the first group will become aggressive once their private interests are threatened. While their attitude seems to be benevolent and humane towards Blacks, it remains condescending. Such a frame of mind can flare up into racism any time when danger draws near. The second group will participate in the entrenchment of White security and superiority although it will be more flexible, pragmatic and humane in the process. The last group seems composed mainly of those who are not threatened. Only the truly superior are relaxed sufficiently to be open to the underdog. This superiority may be derived from social status, economic potential or intellectual independence. Again convictions seem to be at the mercy of interests.

While Indians stick to their cultural traditions in private, they adapt completely to the English culture in public. Obviously they want to be counted with the White elite as far as possible and the Afrikaner culture is not accessible to them for historical reasons. Coloureds in turn form an integral part of the Afrikaner cultural family and deeply resent being treated by Whites as being on a par with Blacks. Only the harsh experience of discrimination, manipulation and oppression has led these groups toward a degree of pragmatic identification with Blacks in a common struggle for liberation and recognition.

Blacks display a wide variety of attitudes towards cultural identity:

(a) Those who withdraw into tribal traditions, sometimes maintain a narrow cultural identity which does not even transcend the boundaries of a particular tribe. Thus the Bagananwa in the north-western Transvaal (amongst whom I had the privilege to work for some time) keep aloof from the neighbouring Batlokwa although both speak Northern Sotho dialects.

(b) Those with a mentality of dependency have a casual attitude towards cultural identity. While they stick to their cultural traditions on the whole, they willingly adjust to the dominant culture. In many cases they have been assimilated into the latter (e.g. the so-called Oorlams). The same is true for the acquiescent, though here we may find more silent resistance.

(c) The ambitious obviously try to master the dominant culture. This does not mean that they lose their cultural roots entirely. While there is constant conflict and a lot of synthesis between the former and the latter, the ambitious person will be offended when treated as a member of an African traditional cultural group simply because this implies non-recognition and discrimination.

(d) Those whom we categorised under the concept of "reversion" are prone to develop a new type of ethnic nationalism. In South Africa the "Homeland" or "Black State" elite has largely accepted and developed such an induced attitude to their own cultural identity, since it goes along with social status, economic privilege and at least some political power. It also provides the illusion of being on a par with the White elite while in fact earning the approval, recognition and continued support of the latter.

(e) Revolt and defiance signify the alternative reaction to frustrated ambition. This is the root of the Black Consciousness movement. It tries to sever all ties with Whites,

particularly those closest to acculturating Blacks (White liberals). It attempts to build up a new Black identity and trans-ethnic solidarity based on the Western culture which it has adopted, synthesised with some acceptable features of the Black heritage (e.g. communalism). Its aim is to gain psychological self-respect, social status, economic potential and some political power, and in this way become able to negotiate or compete with Whites from a position of equality and strength. The basic drive is not dissimilar to that of Afrikaner Nationalism. But there are two decisive differences: (i) The new identity is primarily based on the experience of the social, economic and political underdog position of a majority and thus tries to include all cultural groups sharing its ambitions. (ii) The declared intention of Black Consciousness is to abandon the isolationist policy once parity with Whites is achieved. Blacks can afford this because they are in the majority; the Afrikaner cannot because it would deprive them of their power base. To put it differently: Once they are in power Blacks will probably tolerate Whites as a minority just as the Afrikaner, once they were securely in power, opened their doors to the English minority.

(f) Integrated and competitive Blacks normally would have made their home in the dominant culture. Because they have attained recognition in the latter at least up to a point, they are more relaxed in their attitude to the Black cultural heritage. They can move freely among traditional Blacks and show respect for the "old people". In turn they are respected by the latter as "our boys" who "have done it", i.e. who have shown that, given a chance, Blacks are able to achieve as much as anybody else.

(g) Blacks who sense that in theory they could be competitive and integrated but that this status is artificially withheld

from them by the discriminatory policies of the White elite, are probably the most impatient and enraged of all rebellious population groups. They are far less preoccupied with their cultural identity than with the class struggle. The ANC and the UDF may be representative of this category.

The upshot of these observations can be summarised as follows:

(a) Without doubt, cultural identity possesses a certain power of conviction in its own right.

(b) However, this can be blown up or deflated, become imperialist, defensive or aggressive, turn to a narrow exclusivism or be open to compromise, cross-fertilisation and amalgamation with other cultural entities, even be abandoned altogether - depending on the character of the vital interests of the cultural group concerned. This in turn depends, as we have seen, to a large extent on position in the power grid.

(c) That ethnic-cultural identity is used as a justification device is more than obvious: Afrikaans- and English-speaking Whites are not segregated from each other by Apartheid policies while Xhosa speaking Transkeians and Ciskeians are. The culturally totally different Jews (even Japanese and Chinese), are not discriminated against, while the Coloureds, who share the Afrikaans culture, are. Ambitious Blacks may view African cultural traditions with contempt while they are in the process of eager acculturation, and then, when frustrated, glorify the same traditions as being superior to Western civilisation. In all cases a relaxed and objective attitude to the fact of cultural identity and diversity only becomes possible when the

necessity to justify vital interests by means of the latter disappears.

Our examples have shown all three types of justification:

(a) Cultural identity as a conviction is variously defined by the Afrikaner to exclude or to include other language groups such as the English, Dutch or German, to exclude or include other religious groups such as the Jews. Blacks can either attach normative significance to African cultural traditions (the withdrawal group), or deem them to be obsolete (the ambition group), or thirdly, pay lip service to its excellence without seriously adopting it (the group in revolt).

(b) Practical policies can be presented to fit the conviction of cultural identity. The whole separate development scheme has largely been defined by Apartheid idealists as a rescue operation in favour of the cultural identity of all ethnic minorities. Many Whites see this as the basic rationale of the policies of the SA government. Black ethnic nationalism, of course, jumped on the White bandwagon. Black Consciousness, too, has claimed to be motivated by the idea of cultural identity, though with much less conviction and consistency.

(c) To declare certain areas or decisions out of bounds of the conviction of ethnic identity is most obvious as a way of justification in the case of the exclusion of the Afrikaans-speaking Coloureds and the inclusion of Japanese and Chinese as "honorary Whites". The cultural discrepancy between the Afrikaner and the Japanese (or Chinese) can hardly be greater. Black Consciousness again allows militant Coloureds and Indians because they too are oppressed, but excludes what it derisively calls "Non-Whites", i.e.

Blacks who cooperate with the Apartheid system. In all these cases it is clear that the rationale is not cultural identity but vital interests, the former only being used to support the latter where relevant.

9.2.3 Justification in terms of the distribution of economic potential

Western society is governed by two conflicting economic norms: the achievement norm and the equality norm. On these two norms two basic models of interpretation of economic reality are built. Reduced to its essential statement the first says that the poor are poor on account of their failure, while the rich are rich because of their achievement. The second holds that the poor are poor because they are the victims of oppression and exploitation while the rich are rich because of their undeserved privileges and the cruelty with which they abuse their power to oppress and exploit others. Two corresponding policies are then formulated, the liberal, which believes in free enterprise, and the socialist, which believes in state intervention on behalf of the poor and powerless. There are essentially four varieties: *laissez-faire* capitalism, social democracy, democratic socialism and Marxism-Leninism (Wogaman 1977, Leatt *et al*, 1986).

Apart from these two classical Western economic convictions there are two older types which are still relevant in South Africa today: African communalism (which has been developed into African Socialism in Tanzania and other African countries) and the typically South African type of feudalism which has determined economic relationships between Black and White for most of their history. As we have seen earlier on, all these are convictions in their own right which are not necessarily linked to

position in the power grid. They are used, however, as justification for the pursuit of vital interests, the particular character of which is closely related to position in the system.

Both Afrikaans and English settlers believed in feudalism as long as they were in the unchallenged position of feudal lords. These attitudes persist on White farms and were carried over into the urban-industrial situation to regulate the relationship between White supervisors and Black workers. On the whole Black-White relationships are still characterised to a very large extent by feudal attitudes. Their mainspring lies in the White dominant class but many, if not most Blacks, also resign themselves to the facts of the situation either because of limited horizons, necessity or expediency.

The English-speaking commercial and industrial elite has traditionally opted for free enterprise. Obviously a free market is in their best interest, particularly a free labour market. Here it ran into the stiff opposition of the White work force, initially on the mines, but later elsewhere too (Van der Horst 1971; Doxey 1961). In the early phases of S.A. capitalism White workers were predominantly English-speaking. By means of industrial action the latter secured a privileged position on the labour market at the expense of competitors from other races, particularly Blacks. On the whole the White "worker aristocracy" opted for a sort of social market capitalism including job security and social welfare with the proviso that their own interests were served first over against those of Blacks. In other words, feudal attitudes towards Blacks merged with social-democratic attitudes within the White dependent but privileged group.

After their defeat by the British the Afrikaner were in a pitiful economic position. The war had destroyed their agricultural

base. Discrimination against them was rife. Drought and economic recession made things worse. Many left their farms and flocked to the cities in a destitute state. In this situation Afrikaner leadership opted for massive state intervention, including strongly socialist ideas. Again these were restricted to Whites and aimed particularly at the upliftment of the Afrikaner (cf. O'Meara 1983; Giliomee in Adam 1979: 149ff).

These protective strategies led to substantial bottlenecks when the growth of the South African industrial economy picked up speed during and after World War II, particularly in the higher skills, but also in management. For a long time this suited the White dominant class - and the government it had voted into power - well. Incomes and standards of living of Whites rose to heights comparable to those in the most advanced industrial economies. The income gap became one of the highest in the world (McGrath 1983). For a time, also, it was possible to let Blacks enter lower job categories by moving Whites up the ladder. The inviolable principle was that no White should ever work under a Black - evidence of the feudal heritage!

But there came a time when the clamour of the business elite for a scaling down of state intervention in the economy began to make sense to most middle-class Whites and in particular to the nationalist government:

(a) It became clear that the White minority's reserves to provide skills and managerial leadership were rapidly being exhausted and that a growing economy had to tap on the neglected resources of other race groups. A massive training program was launched and labour restrictions in the urban economy relaxed in certain ways.

(b) The government's new "total strategy" concept had to include the cooperation of big business because the financial resources of the latter were needed. A growing economy became a prerequisite of survival and "free enterprise" became the slogan of economic policy. Needless to say, the adoption of this slogan did not imply a weakening of the privileges or the power base of the White population group as a whole. Other race groups are released from their bureaucratic fetters only in as far as their services are needed to build up the economy or to divert tension and discontent.

(c) White South Africa desperately needed the support of major industrial nations, particularly the USA. The latter is quite sensitive on the issue of free enterprise as an economic creed and White South Africa could sell its image abroad much better under this banner.

In the underdog population groups we again have to make a number of distinctions:

(a) Tribal society can only survive on the basis of communalist solidarity. This necessity is exacerbated by the erosion of its subsistence agricultural base. More and more it depends on the loyalty of its migrant labourers. The same is true for the rural and urban marginalised groups, many members of which would simply starve to death were it not for the sense of communal responsibility within their social group (Möller 1983).

(b) I have already mentioned that dependent and acquiescent groups tend to share underdog feudal attitudes. Those whom we categorised under "reversion" obviously will be more inclined towards elitist feudal attitudes.

(c) For those who embark on the path of ambition there seems to be an ambiguous future ahead. At first they long for "free enterprise" in the sense that they desire the removal of the obstacles in the way of their advance. If they hope for a Black take-over they may also hope that some of the preferential treatment now accorded to Whites will fall to them. All steps towards socialism are beneficial to them, however, as long as they battle on the lower rungs of the ladder and provided such steps are not restricted to the White 'worker aristocracy'.

These observations may explain why Schlemmer (1983c:5f) found a 78% option for private business *and* a 71% option for state guaranteed social securities (thus a 'social democracy' option) among urban Blacks in 1981.

(d) In the state of revolt communalist ideas may be toyed with and African Socialism becomes theoretically attractive. But the reality of the South African industrial economy does not allow recipes designed for a subsistence economy such as that of Tanzania. Thus, when it comes to concrete alternatives, the choice is between capitalism and socialism. In the mood of frustration, revolt and defiance directed against what is perceived as "racial capitalism" the option for Marxism-Leninism seems to become the obvious ally or alternative. "Communism" at least does not imbue Blacks with the same kind of hatred and fear as Whites. This mood may be enhanced by the anticommunist propaganda of the state; The enemy of one's enemy seems to be one's friend!

(e) Those who are integrated into the system will probably tend to opt for social market capitalism with trade union rights, social securities, welfare legislation, etc. But this does not mean that they would necessarily mind if the country was turned into a Marxist-Leninist state, in so far as present

restrictions seem scarcely more acceptable than possible future restrictions.

(f) The few who become fully competitive may naturally opt for free enterprise unless a spate of solidarity with their less fortunate fellow citizens makes them abandon their opportunities and become the 'avant garde' of a Marxist revolutionary struggle.

Again the three types of justification of interests can easily be distinguished in the observations made above:

(a) The reinterpretation of the system of meaning can best be seen in the case of free enterprise to which the S.A. government is ostensibly committed and which is strongly advocated by the business elite. Concentration of the control over productive capital under a few major companies has been accelerating (Lombard 1984). Parastatal enterprises have not been dismantled. Price control, especially in the agricultural sector, is widespread. The Black majority of the population is in the grips of a bureaucratic stranglehold which controls both vertical and horizontal mobility, smothers entrepreneurship in the agricultural, commercial and industrial sectors and regulates the labour market. There are state-run development corporations, schemes to encourage small business, etc. It takes some imagination to describe the South African economy as a case of free enterprise. Yet this is what it is given out to be - a clear case of the manipulation of convictions.

(b) Equally obvious is the presentation of the facts of the situation in such a light that they seem to be covered by the conviction concerned. Blacks are ostensibly protected from unfair competition so as to learn to hold their own. Unfortunately, it is argued, they have not been able to

produce much skilled labour, management or entrepreneurship and Whites have to carry that burden alone. Little is made of the obstacles placed in the way of their advancement, of the absence of adequate education and training, etc. Blacks prefer not to be involved in the industrial economy, it is said, and they want to leave their families at home (Zille 1984:30). Why influx control to keep families out should then be necessary, is not mentioned. They are neither used to, nor eager to enter into, the Western-type trade union movement (it has been said until very recently). The government is doing everything possible to assist Blacks in the development of their own economies..., etc. (For a set of examples see Zille 1984: 28-47).

Erasmus (1977a:21) found that 58% (no more!) of his sample of previous migrants were happy to leave their families behind in the Black areas. Schlemmer (1982b:33) found in his sample of migrants that 62% rejected families separation, though fewer than 20% wish to urbanise (1983d:14).

(c) Finally the declaration of certain parts of economic reality as being out of bounds for the overriding conviction: While it is true, it is argued, that market forces are the best guide for the allocation of resources, labour, skills or the establishment of consumer preferences, it would be impractical to allow Blacks to choose for themselves where they wanted to live, to work, to relax, to put up their own enterprises, to train their children, etc. This would lead to chaos. The real position is, of course, that it would lead to some very stiff competition for Whites in the areas of jobs, skills, housing, commerce and industry, agricultural land, farming, training, social status and - ultimately - political power.

Looking back, it seems that religious or metaphysical convictions are the most deep-rooted and stable of the three types. They are not easily exchanged, they are only reinterpreted to cover vital interests. Next in line are convictions based on group identity. There is a core area which is fairly stable and which is probably rooted in early childhood socialisation. Yet cultural identity is more prone to be made more inclusive, to be disregarded or to be abandoned if vital interests so require. Economic convictions seem to be most unstable. While communal and feudal attitudes tend to be rather deep rooted because they belong to a pre-dynamic frame of mind, the alternatives of liberalism and socialism are fairly easily exchanged when vital interests demand it.

9.3 VITAL INTERESTS INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS

Before leaving this theme we need to consider the fact that there are three related avenues through which interests manipulate convictions, viz. perception, justification and motivation. So far we dealt explicitly with justification, though motivation was constantly implied.

Let us briefly look at perceptions. Whites are generally convinced that they live in a free enterprise system comparable to that of the USA. They are hardly in a position to imagine the bureaucratic network in which the lives of Blacks are entangled and which many Blacks perceive as smothering all initiatives on their part (type C).

Whites are also generally convinced that the main differences between Blacks and Whites - differences which make segregation unavoidable - are cultural. Going to Soweto as tourists, for instance, they will make sure to take a photo of the odd tribal

diviner in this most acculturated Black urban area in the country (Unisa News, Vol. II, No. 5, June 1984, p.4). By the same token Black leaders in Soweto will tend to deny the significance of cultural differences - particularly between Blacks because it is not in their best interest to have a divided front (type B).

Whites are also generally convinced that militant opposition against the present system must be inspired by anti-Christian (communist) designs - implying that there is something deeply Christian in condoning the status quo. Many radical Blacks, in contrast, are convinced that only an aggressively militant stance against the racist regime can save the credibility of the Christian faith in this country from total collapse (type A).

These are gut-level feelings (or mental predispositions), not the result of empirical research or rational argument. Yet they lead to sets of rationalisations which do not only determine the behaviour of the man and woman in the street but also the paradigms of academic enquiries and, in consequence, their findings and recommendations to a very large extent.

Biased perceptions are both the cause and the effect of isolation. Interests cause a group not to want their biased perceptions to be challenged and thus they shield themselves against an alternative picture of reality. Politicians utilise this natural tendency for their propaganda and - in South Africa - even take administrative measures to isolate different sections of the population from each other and from outside influences. Isolation again may lead to the unhindered growth of biased perceptions of reality to such an extent that people begin to live in a fool's paradise.

The extent of the problem is quite alarming as empirical research has shown:

1. Investigating perceptions of different elites in South Africa, J.J. van Wyk of the Rand Afrikaans University is reported to have received, for instance, the following responses to his propositions (Deurbraak March 1984:11):

   (a) "The communist threat against South Africa is exaggerated by the Government".

	agree	disagree
White politicians	3,0%	94,1%
Black elites	70,3%	24,3%

   (b) "South Africa's Blacks have good reasons to take up arms against the Government".

	agree	disagree
White politicians	4,4%	92,7%
Black elites	72,9%	24.3%

   White politicians in this case were parliamentarians belonging to the ruling National Party. It is obvious that an almost unbridgeable gap in perceptions exists between the Government and Black leaders. If one takes account of the fact that the latter belonged to the Black 'bourgeoisie' and that workers and, in particular, youth leaders can be expected to be even more radical, prospects for agreement seem remote.

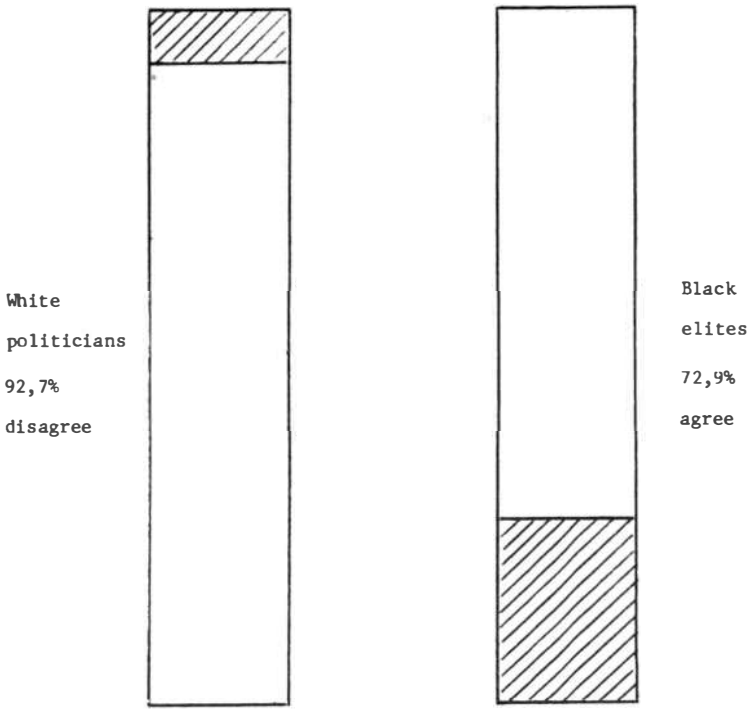

Figure 1: Responses to the proposition: "Blacks have good reasons to take up arms against the Government"

2. Just how dangerous misconceptions, particularly of decision-making elites, could become in real crisis situations is revealed by responses to the following proposition:

(c) "White South Africans cannot depend on the loyalty of Black South Africans in the case of war against South Africa."

	agree	disagree
White politicians	19,1%	78,2%
Black elites	72,9%	24.3%

This seems to suggest that Whites are prone to a selfdelusion which is dangerous even to their own power interests.

(d) "A terrorist war like in SWA/Namibia will in time also develop in South Africa".

	agree	disagree
White politicians	39,7%	57,3%
Black elites	81,0%	16,2%

Similarly White politicians felt most threatened by communist military support to liberation movements and the worldwide spread of Russian military and political influence, while rioting and resistance in Black townships ranked last on the scale of perceived threats. The problem is projected from the internal scene to outside enemies. No wonder that politicians are caught off balance time and again by the outbreak of violence which they do not really seem to expect, and that they attribute such outbreaks to remote controlled instigation rather than to real grievances.

Biased perceptions can lead to vastly inappropriate actions by the prime decision-makers in the country. This is also true for bureaucrats, another very powerful White elite in South Africa, who were shown by Van Wyk's analysis to approximate the perceptions of White politicians most closely.

The inability to comprehend the grievances of Blacks led, amongst many other examples, to the injudicious handling of the student uprising in Soweto in 1976 and the violence on the East Rand which triggered off the current unrest.

3. It seems to be self-evident that discrepancies in perceptions would not have been able to grow to such proportions if the elites would not have been artificially isolated from each other. A lively dialogue always challenges extreme positions, draws attention to overlooked aspects and makes one aware of alternative perspectives to a situation.

   The paternalistic tendency of Nationalist leaders to absolutise their own perception, to shun and even suppress other points of view and to try and indoctrinate the population through propaganda and censorship severely backfires in the sense that Whites have no idea in what type of situation Blacks find themselves, what their perceptions and aspirations are, what to expect from a Black revolution or a Black government. The result is fear of the unknown and further isolationist and repressive tendencies. In this connection it is significant that the most powerful of all media in the country, the S.A. Broadcasting Corporation, was shown By Van Wyk to follow Government perceptions and to support 'separate development' to the rate of 76,9%. In contrast two thirds of English journalists rejected the policy. The majority of Whites, however, do not read English newspapers.

4. According to the multipurpose survey of the HSRC over 60% of the Whites in the sample (n=682) believed that the Government is moving in the direction of increased integration, 19,79 thought that it was moving in the direction of

increased apartheid or that there was no real change. Blacks felt exactly the opposite: almost 60% (n=914) believed it was moving in the direction of increased apartheid (40,15%) or that there was no change (18,92%) while 23,45% believed it was moving towards greater integration.

Since Blacks were left out of the new deal, this is hardly surprising. Indians were nearer to the White point of view though with a reduced percentage (41,50% for integration), Coloureds in-between (29,75% for integration, 15,99% for apartheid, 28,05% for no change).

Generally speaking, Whites are the victims of perceptional manipulations to a greater extent than educated Blacks. White opinion is spread daily through the mass media and Whites do not hesitate to express, and act upon, their opinion in the work situation. The free expression of Black opinion is largely suppressed by the state and even the media which do exist, are not fully utilised by Whites to inform themselves. Being in a dominant position they do not have to be interested in what Blacks really think.

Even greater is the impact of another circumstance. Through generations, Blacks have learnt in their own cultural context that is not always very profitable to speak one's mind. You never know how the other person will use your revelations. Expediency and courtesy dictate that you say what you think the other person wants to hear. The cultural obsession with social harmony combines with the fear generated by a situation of repression where you are at the mercy of the dominant group and have to play it safe. The consequence of this is, however, that most Whites are convinced that they 'know the Blacks'. Have they not been in close contact with Blacks from childhood?

In fact, it takes years of living in a traditional Black community on as equal a level as possible before a White begins to get a feel for what is happening in this cultural context. Whites also have to build up sufficient confidence for Blacks in town to believe that they are safe to express a political opinion. Black elites are, naturally, more self-confident and defiant. And so the impression is gained by Whites that only a few Black extremists - probably the victims of liberal or communist indoctrination - hold radical views, or that moderate Black leaders such as Nthato Motlana, Desmond Tutu, even Gatsha Buthelezi, are isolated individuals who do not have to be taken too seriously except as possible instigators. Since these leaders have been found to have a high rate of popularity (Ciskei 1980: 229) Whites should perhaps listen more to them than to their servants.

In my work on the multipurpose survey of the HSRC I made a disconcerting discovery. In the case of questions relating to the social involvement of religious organisations in public affairs, Black responses showed consistent majorities under the 'agree' categories, quite irrespective of the contents of the question. Here are examples of diametrically opposed questions:

		agree	disagree
(a)	A religious movement should help in limiting changes in society.	66,64%	14,09
	Various religious movements should cooperate to change SA society.	71,23	15,11
(b)	A religious movement can even condone violence when people's rights and people's dignity are restricted.	49,95%	26,25
	Religious movements should oppose any resistance against the present political dispensation.	51,32%	19,69%

		agree	disagree
(c)	Religious movements that continuously keep themselves busy with equal rights for various population groups are not busy with their real task.	43,04%	29,66%
	Social justice should be the most important item in the work of a religious movement.	64,33%	12,44%

The same phenomenon, though less marked, could be observed in the other underdog population groups. It is clear that such findings have to be evaluated with the greatest circumspection. Did respondents resent being made the object of what they consider to be a White, state-sponsored opinion survey? Did they want to mislead the surveyors? Is it part of their cultural tradition to be affirmative rather than negative in social relationships? Is it impolite to negate a point of view one perceives as being the opinion of the questioner? Has one's opinion in public concerns ever mattered at all, so that one feels that it is important? Many questions!

One should, in any case not be surprised if underdog population groups become vastly more radical once they have a chance to express an opinion which really matters, such as the election in Zimbabwe which swept Robert Mugabe to power on a radical ticket and which shocked so many unsuspecting observers.

On the basis of these observations all Black responses of an affirmative nature in the multipurpose survey quoted in this study can be taken to be generally too high.

But big political issues are not the only theatre of such misconceptions. Even where Black and White interact on a daily, practical basis (on the shop floor, in the shop, in the White home) perceptions of the different groups are far removed from each other - and from reality. Misunderstandings which border on the ridiculous are proverbial. But the phenomenon can have serious social implications on a massive scale as the following examples demonstrate:

1. In a country-wide, all-sector survey of perceptions of the free enterprise system involving some 2800 respondents (76% turn-out), Nasser (1984) found some revealing discrepancies between groups in different positions within the power structure. We only quote the extremes on both sides (between which there is a continuum in most cases):

(a)

Running expenses of a firm comprise	Perceptions of workers with education below Std 6	Perceptions of management
managers' salaries	56%	28%
employees' salaries	4%	15%
tax	21%	10%

Comment: Assuming that the managers' assessment is correct, the fact that the tiny managerial elite earns more than half of the pay-packet of the total labour force must lead to discrepancies in life-style conspicuous enough to make the stated impression on non-informed, arithmetically untrained workers seem quite plausible. But the potential for dissatisfaction, unrest and radical politicisation is enormous. This is even more marked in the following table:

(b)

Post-tax company profits are spent on ↓	Perceptions of workers earning less than R200 p.m.	workers with education below Std 6	Black workers	earning above R2 000 p.m.	education post-matric	Whites
Management bonuses and salary increases	85%	76%	69%	8%	19%	27%
Worker bonuses and salary increases	1%	3%	4%	44%	30%	32%
Shareholders	0%	0%	0%	26%	19%	3%

Comments:

The remarkable and consistent shift from workers of all races earning less than R200 to Black workers *and* from earners of all races above R2 000 to Whites shows that:

(i) Blacks with higher salaries have perceptions which move in the direction of White perceptions and
(ii) Whites with lower salaries have perceptions which move in the direction of Black perceptions. In other words, perceptions are a function of income and educational standard rather than race.

Only those who earn incomes high enough to allow for an interest in investment opportunities are aware of the existence of the system of share capital - surely a remarkable case of the impact of interests and location in the system on perceptions!

Even more revealing is the following (simplified) table summarising the perceptions of different groups of participants in the industrial economy on the distribution of post-tax company profits:

Share attributed to	Perception of unskilled workers	skilled workers	middle/senior management
management bonuses and salary increases	72%	48%	17%
worker bonuses and salary increases	3%	12%	30%
shareholders payback	0%	3%	18%

Two impressions stand out: (i) The incredible discrepancy in perceptions between the lowest and the highest rung in the capitalist hierachy and (ii) that skilled workers, irrespective of race, are exactly half-way between unskilled workers and management. There can hardly be a more impressive demonstration of the impact of structural location on perceptions!

(c)

The ongoing financing of a company is derived from:	Perceptions of unskilled workers	management
banks	49%	22%
government	31%	0%
sales/output	3%	43%

Comment: Assuming that the assessment of management is realistic, the vast deviation of unskilled worker perceptions must find an explanation. Mere lack of information (as Nasser assumes) cannot be the reason for a positive statement. Rather the perception may be built on three structure-related myths:

(i) Banks are believed to be unfathomable sources of finance for the rich (ii) government is supporting Whites under all circumstances and (iii) the attempt to increase one's income through effort is futile (maybe even morally wrong?). If this hypothesis should prove to be correct the perception in question is both structure- and culture-related. This would also mean that mere information would probably not be believed.

(d)

Improved productivity can be derived from:	Perceptions of earning less than R200 p.m.	Perceptions of earning above R2 000 pm
better training	42%	28%
improved salaries	39%	21%
staff motivation	3%	21%

Comment: While the unskilled labourer is keenly aware of the fact that his training is inadequate for the level of sophistication encountered in the enterprise, he is not conscious of a lack of motivation. Again pure information may not help; it may even backfire, because the labourer may feel that he is being slave-driven and exploited. An improved salary, on the other hand, would do productivity a world of good in the eyes of the labourer - how perceptive! In this case it may be management which needs to be better informed.

(e)

Funds for improved wages can be derived from the following sources:	Perceptions of unskilled workers	Perceptions of management
pay Whites less	30%	4%
employ fewer people	0%	25%

Comment: Here the impact of structure-related interests is most blatant. Management cannot be interested in receiving less pay, nor is it very concerned about people who might lose their jobs. The unskilled worker, on the other hand, has exactly opposite perceptions. It is in this regard that Nasser may be right when he states: "... the perceptions of the well-educated, high-income, high-status white managerial group, although in some ways more realistic, indicate substantial insensitivity to the plight of black labour" (p. 11).

Nasser blames inappropriate perceptions on a lack of information. In our interpretation a lack of information is due to isolation: the isolation of the worker from the actual running of the company and the isolation of management from the existential reality of the worker. More fundamental to both, however, is the impact of differential vital interests on perceptions. And interests are a function of location in the power structure. If the statistics reveal anything, it is that comprehension grows progressively with higher reward and greater involvement in the actual running of the firm, which again presupposes education and training. In short, the key is a movement towards a greater balance of power.

2. Another indication of how position in the power grid determines perceptions was found by Möller and colleagues (1984). In the study described in Chapter 4 pp.91f above, it was found that the assessment of the level of dissatisfaction amongst Blacks in general dropped with the group's own level of dissatisfaction, which again was a function of the group's average income.

Thus peri-urban destitute shack-dwellers, with a dissatisfaction level of 70%, assessed general Black dissatisfaction at the level of 37%, while better-off urban Blacks with a dissatisfaction level of 11% assessed general Black dissatisfaction at the level of only 17%. It is hardly surprising then, that Whites who are not particularly informed about the Black situation, have the impression that Blacks are, in general, very content with their lot and ascribe outbreaks of violence such as the Soweto riots to instigation or irrational excitability and immaturity. (Cf. the finding of Van Wyk quoted above that 92,7% of White politicians disagreed with the statement that Blacks have good reasons to take up arms against the Government, while 72,9% of Black elites agreed.)

Concerning *goals* the responses of Van Wyk's sample are also very illuminating (1984:20):

(a) Separate development:
White politicians 88,0% positive,
Black elites 71,8% negative.
(b) Joint political control by Whites, Coloureds and Indians (as envisaged by the new constitution):
White politicians 82,4% positive,
Black elites 81,1% negative.

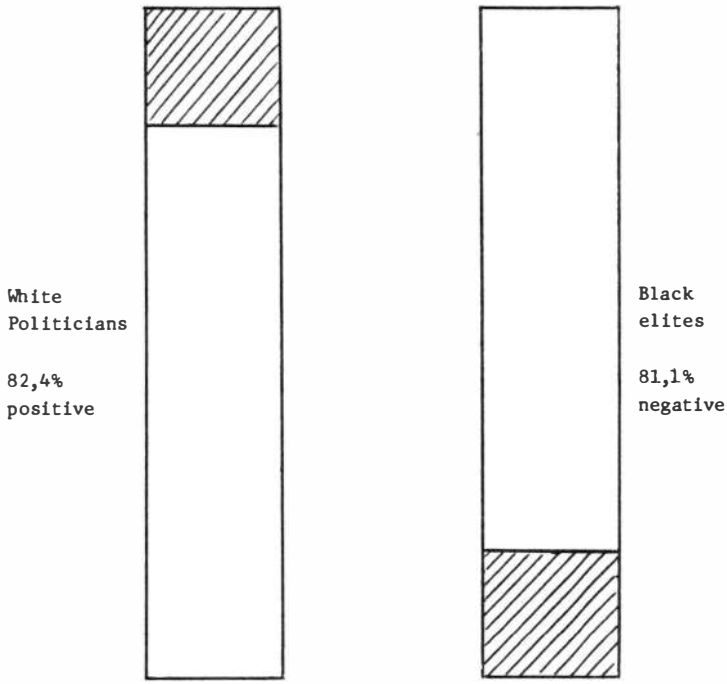

Figure 2: Attitudes towards the new constitution

It is interesting to note that 67,5% of Coloured and Indian elites responded positively, 12,5% negatively. Van Wyk finds a surprising degree of affinity between Coloured and Indian elites to Government positions almost right through the board. This corroborates our hypotheses in chapter 7, par. 7.3.2 on the attitudes of Coloureds and Indians before the campaign of the UDF.

(c) Blacks exercise their political rights in homelands or 'national states':
White politicians 94,1% positive,
Black elites 67,6% negative.

(d) The survival of the Afrikaner nation and culture:
White politicians 98,6% positive,
Black elites 43,2% positive, 43,2% negative.

It is heartening to see that there are at least some abstract demands on which both White politicians and Black elites, in fact all elites investigated, agree to a considerable extent: Economic stability and growth, unimpeded manpower utilisation, the physical safety of all people.

The need for the physical safety of Whites was affirmed by 48,6% of Black respondents, while 32,5% reacted negatively. The latter is probably due to the fact that Whites were singled out as people in need of safety. Blacks, of course, have to contend with insecurity to a far greater extent than Whites at present. In the case of safety for "all people" 86,5% of Blacks responded positively and only 2,7% negatively.

9.4 CONVICTIONS DETERMINE AND CONTROL INTERESTS

So far we discussed ways in which vital interests manipulate convictions. Now we have to consider ways in which convictions have an impact on the formation and pursuit of interests. If there was no such impact, the materialist position that convictions are the product of structural circumstances - whether as legitimations in the case of the dominant, compensations in the case of the dominated, or evasions in the case of the fearful and irresponsible in both groups - would win the day. In that case theological ethics, any ethics for that matter, would be a useless enterprise. In fact, it is not. Let us enumerate just a few examples which is worth investigating.

9.4.1 A-type convictions

African *traditional religion* with its veneration of ancestors is geared to the past. The *Western* faith in progress, in contrast, is geared to the future. African traditional world-views approach nature with circumspection for fear of disturbing the delicate equilibrium of dynamistic forces in the universe. The Western technological mind, in contrast, sees in nature nothing but available material for its designs. African religious culture

is filled with awe towards the sanctity of social relationships and nothing may be done which transgresses the bounds of one's competence and position in the hierarchical structure. Western individualists, in contrast, assert themselves freely against others as far as their power, expertise or personality goes. (For further examples see Turner 1980.)

The *Biblical faith* has always disturbed the conscience of its adherents in view of blatant injustices or human suffering, even if there are few believers who are able to break out of existing structures and ongoing processes. Some of the most powerful attacks against the South African system have come from the ranks of leading Jews and Christians. *Humanists* have raised their voices against unchecked utilitarianism and stood for human rights and personal dignity. Amnesty International is an example of an institutional expression of this concern with worldwide impact. Scientific-technological *pragmatism* has undermined irrational ideological positions even within the ranks of government supporters.

9.4.2 B-type convictions

Tribalism with its relatively limited world of 'significant others' militates against a broader trans-tribal solidarity amongst Blacks. *Pan-Africanism* tends to exclude White sympathisers. *Afrikaner Nationalism* has united a seriously splintered ethnic group and built up a power base of considerable proportions. But its obsession with racial purity has excluded a mass of potential supporters among Coloureds who share the Afrikaner culture. The *ethnic nationalism* of Inkatha and similar ventures seem to simulate this example in typically African cultural fashion. *British Imperialism* managed to divert attention from serious social tensions building up at home, to the historical task of

fulfilling a world-wide mission. The individualist-universalist attitudes of *English liberals* seem to have prevented the establishment of a viable particularist pressure group in opposition to its Afrikaner counterpart.

According to Nel (1982:38) the percentage of Black household expenditure on personal care in Johannesburg spent on *face bleaching cream* fell from 13,2% in 1970 to 5,2% in 1980; for *wigs and hairpieces* it fell from 30,9% to 0,4% during the same period. Without any doubt this is the impact of the *Black Consciousness* movement with its slogan 'Black is beautiful'.

9.4.3 C-type convictions

For African *communalist* traditions the development of individual initiative for private gain is the most feared of all vicious pursuits; for the spirit of *free enterprise* it is the highest virtue. *Feudalistic* convictions strongly militate against equality of opportunity, thus against free competition, thus against the full development of the potential lying dormant in a society. *Liberalism* strongly suppresses the tendency of the state to interfere even in cases where blatant inequalities are seen to develop. *Marxism*, in contrast, concentrates all energies on the overthrow of bourgeois domination even at the expense of efficiency and economic progress. (For an example of direct effects of economic convictions on policy see Hendrie 1984.)

9.4.4 D-Type convictions

Although it would not seem to make much sense to speak of the impact of interests on interests, we have the situation that one set of conviction-determined interests (say racial purity) may militate against another within the same group (say economic

growth). In this case, the respective derivations of such interests, both from structural position and from convictions, have to be investigated in detail. The recent split in Afrikanerdom, for instance, can be seen as a conflict between structure-related interests of low-class Whites combined with conviction-related interests of purist ideologues against structure-related power-interests of technocratic pragmatists who have discovered the importance of capital (Charney 1981).

9.5 SUMMARY

This chapter we discussed the relation between convictions and structure-related interests. It is, in a sense, the culmination of our investigations so far.

We concentrated our deliberations on the justification of interests in terms of prevailing convictions. Examples were given from both the position of the dominant White and the dominated Black social groupings and in the realms of all three types of conviction, viz. those related to religious ultimates, cultural identification and economic resource distribution. In each case we distinguished between the three ways in which interests are justified: manipulation of the truth of the conviction concerned, manipulation of the interpretation of the pursuit of interests and the declaration of autonomy of the sphere in which interests occur (9.2).

We added a reminder that the interaction between convictions and interests is not only a matter of justification but also of perception and motivation. We gave a number of examples (9.3).

Finally we dealt with the way in which the three types of convictions determine both the perception and the pursuit of

interests. This discussion was very concentrated and calls for greater elaboration and detailed investigations (9.4).

The overall impression of this chapter is that structure-related interests have a considerable capacity for manipulating convictions in terms of perception, justification and motivation. This is, of course, of great significance both for the way in which people respond to the challenge of structural change and for the maintenance of their moral integrity. On the other hand convictions do have an impact on the perception and pursuit of interests and thus on the way in which groups work for structural change.

It would seem that greater clarity on the exact nature of this interaction would greatly enhance our chances of rectifying structural imbalances and of redeeming broken group relations endemic in the South African situation. I hope that my rather impressionistic reconnaissance of the whole problem area will prompt more comprehensive and detailed research.

PART III

Our findings in the light of a theological ethic

CHAPTER 10

A theological-ethical critique in outline

10.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

In this part I depart from the distanced, 'objective' stance which at least intentionally characterised my deliberations in Parts I and II, and take a definite stand within the plethora of convictions found in South Africa. This needs some explanation.

I do not share the presumption that convictions are of necessity both irrational and irrelevant for concrete, down-to-earth social processes and concerns, that they should be ignored as far as possible, or at least crowded out of public life into the sphere of private spirituality where they can do no harm.

In the multipurpose survey of the HSRC, 50,88% of White, 54,01% of Indian 61,79% of Coloured and 45,10% of urban Black respondents confessed that religion played a 'very important' role in their lives. If we add those who said that it was 'important' we get very high percentages: 79,93%, 92,22%, 93,54% and 78,02% respectively. Those who thought that religious movements have an 'important' or 'very important' impact on South African

society in general were 78,98%, 71,11%, 75,49% and 62,22% of the respondents in the four race groups respectively.

If these findings are anything to go by, they indicate that South African society is not only very religious, but that it also expects religion to have a profound impact on social processes. If one adds convictions both concerning cultural group identity and income distribution, the propensity of convictions to determine socio-economic and political power structures seems to be great indeed.

On the other hand it is difficult to escape the overall impression of experience and social research that practical decisions are normally taken on the basis of a very shallow sort of utilitarianism and pragmatism. Amongst the poor, one expects issues concerning food, shelter, security, even mere survival, to dominate life and this is indeed the case (Schlemmer 1981). Amongst the affluent and powerful, political control, high incomes and social privilege are certainly the decisive operative motivations in South Africa. Furthermore, the prospects of a 3% rise in GST created a spending spree of unparalleled proportions throughout the country before July 1, 1984. Saving seems to be at a low ebb throughout the population. Such observations cast doubts on the impact of convictions on real behaviour, let alone on social structures.

How is one to account for this contradiction? I believe that, while there is still some considerable potential for the impact of convictions on behaviour, vital interests have been allowed to crowd out, overrule or manipulate convictions to such an extent in practical daily decision-taking, whether private or corporate, that the latter do not in fact realise this potential to any appreciable extent. Convictions of all kinds have become

largely irrelevant in the concrete issues of life. This means that our 'spiritual life' (including cultural and economic ideas and ideals) has become very shallow.

If this impression should be true, it would present us with a formidable ethical problem. Public life is impossible without some sort of overarching system of meaning (including its normative system). Meaning can be either transmitted in the form of a social consensus through socialisation and internalisation, or it can be imposed on the population by its most powerful elites. If naked interests take over, however, a power struggle ensues in which not the meaningfulness of life and ethical acceptability win the day but the accidental distribution of power between groups and sections of society. The result is that humanity loses its unique gifts of collective self-determination and accountability and becomes a helpless victim of social and psychological forces beyond its control.

On a world scale this seems to have lead to the widespread diffidence and helplessness concerning some of the greatest perils mankind has had to face in its long history: the East-West conflict, the North-South conflict, the race conflict, the time bomb of population growth, industrial growth and ecological breakdown, the escalation of regional conflicts with ever more powerful conventional arms and the ultimate danger of a nuclear holocaust. A determined and effective attempt to solve such enormous problems depends on quite definite 'spiritual' presuppositions.

There seem to be good reasons, therefore, why we should make an attempt to rediscover and vitalise the potential power of convictions. Our very survival as a species seems to be at stake. Human beings are not sufficiently guided by natural laws

and instincts. They have to make sense of their world and subject themselves to a set of norms directly derived from what they perceive to be ultimate truth. If they allow themselves to drift into a mood in which the satisfaction of every short-term need or desire receives priority, they lose their bearings and end up in self-destructive pursuits. It is freedom and responsibility, founded in the spiritual dimensions of life, which make us distinctly human if compared with animals and plants.

It has become increasingly obvious in the natural sciences that it is no longer possible to continue with the development of nuclear power, chemical substances or genetic engineering without some sort of ethical accountability because the danger of the collective suicide of the human race is imminent. If that is the case in the natural sciences, social sciences have reason enough to take note. The tensions and conflicts which make these new powers so dangerous arise, after all, in the social, economic and political spheres of life. The ideal of a 'value-free science' is no longer appropriate at the end of the twentieth century. And the ground we have lost in the development of an ethic of adequate relevance for the rapidly evolving 'post-modern' situation is considerable. This is why - apart from my professional interest - I end this study with a brief ethical consideration of some of the issues raised in this study.

We define ethics as a reflection on what ought to be (or to happen) and how human beings can be liberated and motivated to bring it about. This presupposes a normative system, derived from an overarching system of meaning which is, in turn, anchored in a set of non-negotiables or 'ultimates'. Some issues seem to be so obviously 'common sense' in nature that decisions can be taken on purely rational, pragmatic, 'value-free' grounds. But things are obvious only within a given system of

meaning and its normative system. The latter are normally simply taken for granted by unreflective minds who hold their point of view to be self-evident in day-to-day decision making. But this is an illusion; there is no neutral ground on which we could stand.

There is nothing irrational, therefore, in taking one's point of departure in a specific conviction. In fact, it is quite inevitable. The only question is which conviction it shall be. This is not left to our whims. Convictions are not under our control. They impress their truth and validity on our consciousness, or they are not convictions. For the purposes of this study we shall take the Christian faith as our point of departure. Others may be compelled by conscience to opt for an alternative.

Our task is to reflect ethically on three dimensions of social reality in South Africa: economic power structures, patterns of conviction and the relation between the two. I presuppose that things can go wrong in all three of these dimensions and that it is the task of a Christian theological ethic to take an informed and considered, yet committed stance in each case. In this chapter I offer a Christian theological critique of what we have observed in Parts I and II of this study and come up with some suggestions in the next.

In keeping with my systems-theoretical objectives, my prime goal is to design a paradigm for future detailed investigations and propositions. The limitations of this study do not allow me to go much further.

10.2 A THEOLOGICAL-ETHICAL CRITIQUE OF ECONOMIC POWER STRUCTURES

In Part I South African power structures were analysed in various dimensions. We have seen that our society is one of the most unequal in the world. The affluence and power of a small elite co-exists with crippling poverty and impotence of masses of the population. In between there are the more common stages of relative deprivation and relative privilege.

Relative deprivation and relative privilege have their problems which need to be tackled. But these are dwarfed by the problems caused by the extremes of absolute poverty and absolute affluence. Thus it is here where our emphasis should fall. A situation of extreme discrepancies is unacceptable from a Christian ethical perspective - whether in South Africa or in the world as a whole.

There are two overriding concerns in this connection: the dangers of both the extremes of poverty and affluence to human well being and the serious impairment of social relationships caused by the existence of such extremes.

Absolute poverty is unacceptable because of the intense suffering it entails. The Christian faith knows of suffering as a creative and redemptive force in the world. But then it is the suffering which the strong voluntarily take upon themselves for the sake of the weak, or the suffering which becomes an occasion for the weak to develop spiritual powers of hope and determination to regain control over their lives, not the suffering imposed on helpless victims by design, circumstances or fate, nor the suffering which is fatalistically taken for granted. The statement that God's mercy is poured out over

those who are irredeemably stranded, is a protest of faith, not an acceptance of suffering as a value.

(a) *Physical* suffering generated by absolute poverty is the most obvious. Famine can lead to death. Malnutrition causes deficiency diseases, reduced resistance to bacteria and permanent brain damage in children. Poor people lack clothing, soap, water and sanitation. Houses are overcrowded, have leaking roofs and muddy floors if there are houses at all. The pain of hunger can only be appreciated by those who have undergone the ordeal for some length of time. In spite of their reduced energy reserves, poor people normally have to work hardest, whether as unskilled labourers or women walking long distances to fetch water and fuel. They have to stand for hours in overcrowded buses and trains. Their permanent state of exhaustion causes listlessness and carelessness and, as a result, low performance, low salaries, low job security. They are often situated in unsafe social environments, the easy victims of crime and delinquency.

(b) *Psychological* suffering is less obvious but no less severe. Poor people do not get the opportunity to develop their intellectual potential in caring homes and well-equipped schools. Their freedom of choice and the possibilities of exercising their will power are curtailed. The satisfaction of their aesthetic and erotic needs remains at a primitive level if it is developed at all. The higher development of art, literature, music, drama, etc. is beyond their reach.

(c) Psychological suffering has a *social* dimension. Poor people feel that they are outcasts, even if they form the majority of the population. They are not taken quite seriously by those who have become their reference group. Their income seems to be a reflection of what they are worth to society. Nobody seems to care if they are in difficulties. No public outcry is forthcoming if they perish. As a result they lack self-esteem, self-confidence, initiative, hope. Their communication with others is impaired and their sense of participation in the projects of society is lacking. They are 'marginalised'.

(d) Even the *spiritual life* of the poor suffers. They easily fall prey to the idea that they have been rejected by God. "God only loves the Whites" is a saying which can often be heard among poverty-stricken Blacks. A perpetual sense of guilt and inadequacy and a proximity to utter hopelessness prevail. A loss of hope is tantamount to spiritual death.

(e) On the *socio-political* front the sorry picture continues. Poverty-stricken people are, in contrast with the more privileged, not organised in interest groups. They cannot exert group pressure. In the corridors of power they are neglected, forgotten or taken advantage of. They may not qualify as voters. They may offer an oversupply of unskilled labour for which there is no market. They lack the sophistication and the channels of communication to utter their grievances. If they resort to violence, they are treated as criminals and deviant elements of society. They do not even make good revolutionaries, as Karl Marx observed.

(f) But *society* also suffers from the existence of poverty in its ranks. Poverty breeds crime. Poverty may force a rural African to transgress influx control regulations. He is thrown into prison where he makes contact with harder elements. Respect for the law is lost. Hatred for the 'oppressors and exploiters' builds up. Desperation breeds drug-taking, alcoholism, promiscuity, broken families, uncared-for children, irresponsible behaviour on account of a lack of socialisation and integration. Poor people tend to have large families for a variety of reasons, such as old age security, ignorance of family planning methods, absence of alternative values and satisfactions, etc. In the end the state has to spend millions of Rand on police, prisons, rehabilitation schemes, slum clearance, sanitation, control of epidemics, the containment of social unrest, terrorism, etc. Increasingly the state is seen to be the protector of the rich against the floodwaters of the poor who have to be kept at bay. Poverty is immeasurably expensive in terms of social cost.

The enormous extent of absolute poverty among the underdog population groups in South Africa and in the Third World as a whole presents daunting problems which cannot be solved overnight. The least that can be expected, however, is that those on whose side economic potential and political power has accumulated, shall actively *want* to tackle these problems. This means that they shall not use their leverage to place obstacles in the way of the advancement of the poor or allow structures to develop unchecked which are positively poverty-creating (as has been done in South Africa on a massive scale) but that countervailing processes shall be institutionalised which redeem the

situation as far as humanly possible. To be neglectful or cynical in this regard is ethically unacceptable, socially irresponsible and ultimately suicidal - or so it seems.

Gradually, we also become aware of the dangers of *absolute affluence*. The rich have their own typical health problems. Ecologically, the sprees of the affluent lead to incredible wastage and pollution on a world-wide scale. Resources desperately needed by the less fortunate are squandered on luxuries. The greater the availability of luxuries the lower their value. Because of the law of diminishing marginal utility, luxuries are less and less satisfying and you need ever higher inputs to derive some joy from your possessions. High suicide rates betray that all is not well in personal relationships and the fulfilment of life. Endless self-justifications show that the affluent lack the assurance of their right to be what they are - which is the metaphysical foundation of life. Socially the rich live in isolated enclaves separated by walls of cement and status from the rest of humanity and its problems. Their burden of responsibility often overtaxes human capacities and leads to heart-attacks and nervous breakdowns - or the flight into indifference and irresponsibility. Where the poor are plagued by impotence, the rich are plagued by an over-abundance of potency.

The *relationship between the affluent and the poor* is either non-existent or deformed. Here I do not refer to structural mechanisms which operate in the asymmetrical interaction between centre and periphery and which was analysed in some detail in Part I. Here I am concerned, rather, about inter-personal and inter-group relationships. Vertical relations derived from structural position lead to typical attitudes. The superior group is either condescending or dominating, the inferior group is either submissive or rebellious. Either hatred or a wrong type of love

characterises the relationship on both sides. Normal interaction is made impossible. We do not need to be completely equal in all respects to be able to relate naturally with each other, but we need to be visibly of equal dignity before God and humanity.

All this has wider repercussions too. Poverty is, at least to a considerable extent, the cause of the population explosion. Food production may not be able to keep pace and a series of droughts has already caused the death of hundreds of thousands in Africa just beyond our borders. The pressure on the land which reached crisis proportions in the Black rural areas, leads to soil erosion, depletion of grazing and wood, pollution of water resources, etc. Affluence leads to unchecked industrial growth, the depletion of mineral and agricultural resources and pollution. From both the rich and the poor the balance of nature comes under pressure and ecological breakdown is within sight - in South Africa and in the world as a whole.

The disturbed relationship between rich and poor increases the conflict potential in the society. It is further fuelled by competition for dwindling resources. Armed conflict with increasingly powerful and sophisticated weapons has plagued the Third World since World War II on a growing scale. We have our own share of that on the northern border of SWA/Namibia and a low-key civil war is shaping up within our country. The day on which the super-powers begin to fight, will mark the eclipse of our planet as the unique bearer of human life in the cosmos. It is impossible to discuss all these aspects in detail. A summary picture must suffice (see figure 1).

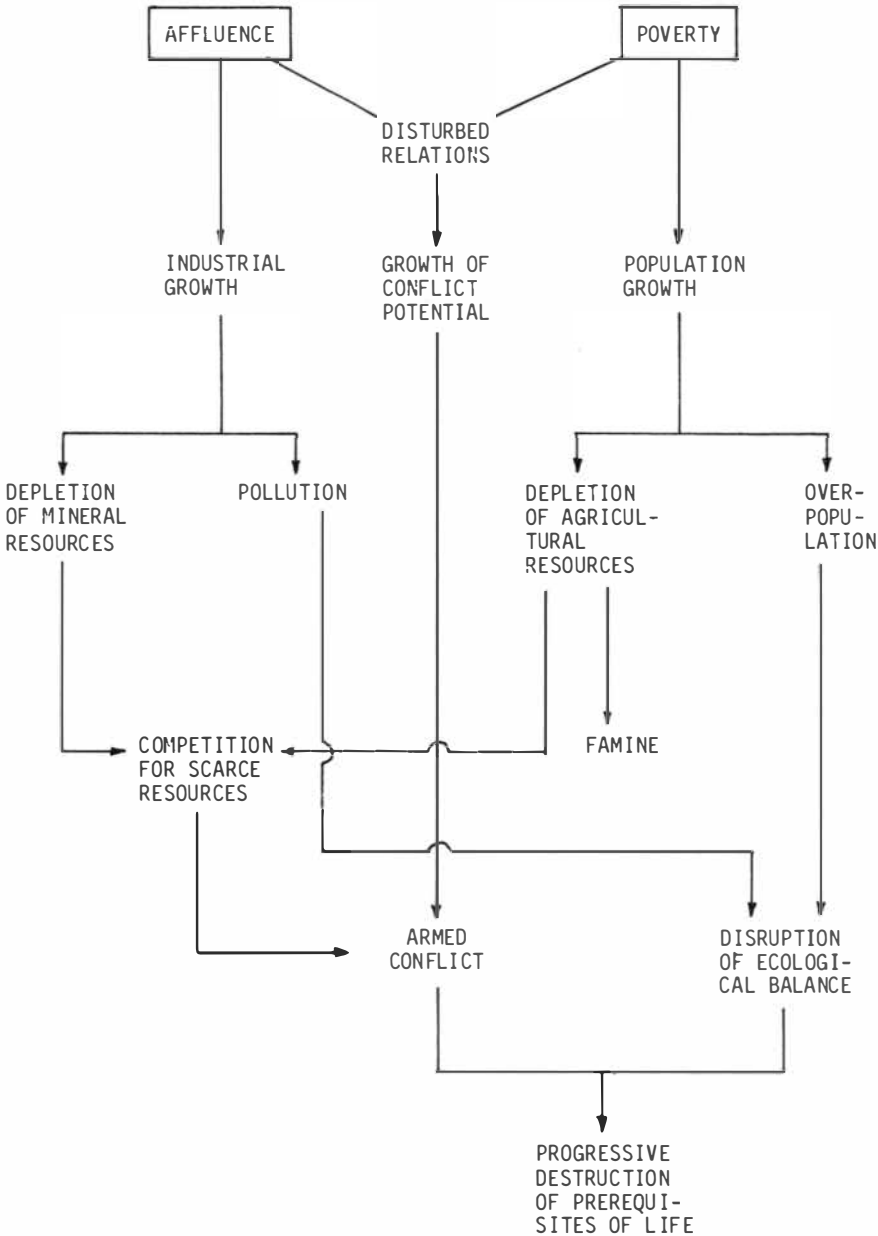

Figure 1

Network of effects of extreme economic discrepancies

This short survey should leave no doubt in anyone's mind that, from a theological-ethical point of view, the existing situation of extreme potency discrepancies in the South African society are highly undesirable. This statement alone is, however, only the beginning of our task. We now have to analyse the causes of their genesis, perpetuation and deepening. Chapter 5 offered a model and a few preliminary observations which could be utilised in this respect. Then we have to devise a program for the institutionalisation of countervailing structures and processes. This can only be done successfully in interdisciplinary cooperation between experts, policy- makers and administrators. The task of the theological ethicist in this working group is to highlight the demands and prerequisites of *social justice* and their foundations in the spiritual sphere. To the latter we have to turn now.

10.3 A THEOLOGICAL-ETHICAL CRITIQUE OF CONVICTIONS

The object of convictions (viz. ultimates and their systems of meaning and normative systems), are not under the control of the human being; they control the human being. We cannot question them; we are being questioned by them. We cannot pick and choose in which ultimates we care to believe; they impress their truth and validity on our consciousness. We cannot be forced to believe in any truth which claims ultimacy, we cannot even force ourselves to believe; ultimates impose themselves upon our conviction. If all that were not the case, they would not be ultimates.

Yet ultimates are not beyond critique. Ultimates can be challenged, deposed and replaced by other ultimates which have a greater power of conviction.

They can also be found wanting if they are unable to cover a vacuum of meaning caused by unprecedented shifts in experienced reality. Thus faith in Yahweh, the God of Israel, was in a crisis when the tribes moved from a nomadic, into a settled agricultural life; again when their political, social and religious institutions were crushed by the Assyrians and Babylonians; and again when the Jewish faith was challenged by Persian and Hellenistic cosmologies. The Christian faith and many other traditional religions are critically challenged in modern times by science, technology and the secular revolution in all spheres of life. Whether ultimates are able to survive this crisis depends on their versatility in rapidly changing circumstances and their capability of undergirding new aspects of experience which constantly emerge in accelerating historical processes. A great number of would-be gods have crashed from their thrones and their places have been filled by a great number of equally short-lived substitutes - one of the reasons why modern men and women have turned agnostic, secular and cynical.

It is not immaterial, therefore, which convictions hold sway over us. Convictions must be subjected to critique. And they can only be subjected to critique from the point of view of an ultimate that claims to be more profound, in fact the ultimate of ultimates. Adherents of the Christian faith have been compelled by conscience to make this claim throughout its history, as have related convictions such as Judaism, Islam, liberal humanism and Marxism.

From the point of view of the Christian faith an ultimate must answer to the following criteria:

(a) It must be *comprehensive* in time, space and power. Any ultimate that covers only part of experienced reality is in

danger of being thrown out of gear by emergent and uncovered factors - and of misleading its adherents into unwholesome directions. This means that as a matter of principle, it must transcend the limitations of experienced reality as a whole.

(b) An ultimate, therefore, must also be able to *give meaning* to the whole of reality. It must posit a set of values which structures perceptions in a system of priorities. It must posit a set of norms according to which the right of existence of the human being and his world is either confirmed or questioned. It must posit a set of goals which will guide motivation into a definite direction.

(c) An ultimate must also be able to integrate apparently *meaningless* aspects of reality, in particular the annoying problems of human limitations in terms of power, space and time, the existence of evil and the inscrutability of fate.

(d) An ultimate that is to bring the human being into its own must place humanity into the centre of the universe, yet see it in the context of its natural, ecological environment. It must define the human being as a unified bodily, psychological, social and spiritual entity. It must see it as a creature gifted with freedom and responsibility, creativity and redemptive fellowship, dignity and the ability to serve.

(e) It must take account of human *depravity* and provide for mental and social structures which make life as tolerable and prosperous as possible under given circumstances. It must hold out at the same time, the prospects of *ultimate redemption*, because human beings cannot live without the reality-transcending power of hope.

It is impossible to apply these criteria to each and every one of the convictions enumerated in chapter 8. It should be quite

obvious, however, that each one of them - including most of the living forms of the Christian faith - falls short in either one aspect or a whole series of them. African traditional religion, scientific-technological pragmatism, various forms of nationalism and tribalism, free enterprise capitalism, Marxism and others have at least one type of deficiency in common: they fail to cover the wide context on which the wholesomeness of human life depends. Their limited horizons lead to distorted value-priorities, they question or confirm our right to existence on the basis of inappropriate norms, they misguide our motivation to short-sighted and less worthy goals. The traditions of the fathers, the glory of the fatherland, the excellence of one's own culture, the achievements of technological progress, economic growth at all costs, the inevitability of world revolution - all these have inspired many to sacrifice their life and prosperity and to take the life, prosperity and happiness of thousands of their fellow human beings. The victims of such inappropriate convictions in South African history alone are countless. And to emphasise once more: the living forms of the Christian faith have been no better in this respect than other convictions.

All this is sufficiently obvious for us to leave it there at this stage. An ethical reflection which operates on the level of moral indignation alone is not worth our time. We need to begin with a critique of the metaphysical foundations of life or we shall achieve nothing at all. Moreover, if we are serious in our desire to redeem the situation, we cannot but witness to the creative power and the redemptive love of God in Christ as an alternative to less profitable ultimates, and pray that this alternative may reveal sufficient power of conviction to displace its rivals. This is the area of *evangelisation* and our task is to make evangelisation more directly relevant to the issues discussed in this study.

10.4 A THEOLOGICAL-ETHICAL CRITIQUE OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN STRUCTURES AND CONVICTIONS

Our deliberations in Part II have focused on the crucial interaction between vital interests and convictions. Vital interests are the pivotal entity between structures and convictions. On the one hand they represent needs which are derived from structural location. On the other hand vital interests present these needs in an interpreted and prioritised form, thus adding meaning and normativeness to their crude form. Meaning and normativeness are derived at least partially from the system of meaning and its normative system - or they are formulated in conflict with the latter.

Assuming that convictions are acceptable in their own right, there can be little quarrel with them determining the content and pursuit of interests. This is, in fact, how it should be: Human needs and desires are moulded by the source and criterion of reality as a whole. Thus they are taken out of the sphere of petty selfishness and placed into the greater context of a meaningful corporate existence where they receive both their legitimacy and their limitations. Thus the Biblical faith is not oblivious to the prerequisites of human well-being, whether bodily, social, psychological or spiritual. But these needs are interpreted and prioritised in such a way that they do not cause harm to human beings or to their social environment.

It is vital interests emancipated from this benign rule that cause the problem. Pretending to represent the genuine demands of the normative system, they assume a meaning-giving and normative authority of their own. We have seen that this happens in three ways: manipulation of the meaning-giving and normative system, misrepresentation of the true nature of the interests and

their pursuit, and the declaration of autonomy for the realm in which they occur. Thus vital interests practically act as counter-convictions. Since they are not readily recognised as such, their struggle with the prevailing convictions ends up in a sort of syncretism which confuses both the social group pursuing the interests and those at whose expense the interests are being pursued.

This confusion takes place in all three of the avenues along which convictions and interests interact: Counter-values lead to selective perception and a deformed system of priorities; counter-norms lead to a system of self-justifications; counter-goals lead to inclinations which compete with the motivations derived from convictions. In each case the values, norms and goals are argued to be in harmony with, or actually derived from, the prevailing meaning-giving and normative system. This makes their demand seem unassailable. Where this cannot sensibly be maintained, they are declared to lie outside the realm in which the prevailing ultimates claim truth and validity, leading to a sort of free-for-all situation. Free for all means free for those who have the power to pursue their interests at the expense of others.

It is clear that this type of interest-based ideology is ethically unacceptable. Its basic dishonesty is obvious. Its results are, in many cases, quite devastating - both for those who justify the pursuit of their interests and for those who are the victims of such a pursuit. In the first place ideological self-justifications allow a detrimental course to be followed without effective challenge. Perpetrators and victims are fooled by its apparent acceptability. However, since it is a fabricated acceptability, the conscience of those involved has to be pacified all the time with endless arguments and selected facts. Such a process of

rationalisation and repression is psychologically unhealthy. Spiritually it is fatal, because it prevents sin from being confessed, forgiven and overcome.

> In this connection it should be noted that ideological self-justification is neither 'justification by works' (viz. through rectifying the inappropriate situation or course of action) nor 'justification by faith'. Self-justification without works, by mere arguments, is surely its most vicious and self-deceptive form.

Secondly, ideological smoke-screens present a distorted picture of reality. The real nature of both the system of meaning *and* the project that is being pursued (or the institutions which entrench the interests concerned) is being obfuscated. The problematic situation is not analysed at all, or it is misinterpreted.

In the third place rationalised inclinations direct human motivation towards questionable goals. Short-term, selfish needs and desires of one group may be satisfied at the expense of long-term interests of the society as a whole. Symptoms may be dealt with as they present themselves, while the underlying problems are not tackled.

Finally, interest-based ideologies prevent dialogue and cooperation. Ideologised people from opposite camps engage in a dialogue between the deaf, if they talk to each other at all. They do not seek each other's cooperation because they deeply distrust each other's motives. This means that a societal problem which is the problem of all groups in that society and needs corporate attention, is defined and tackled by each group separately according to its own selfish goals, its partial insight and its limited power, if it is tackled at all.

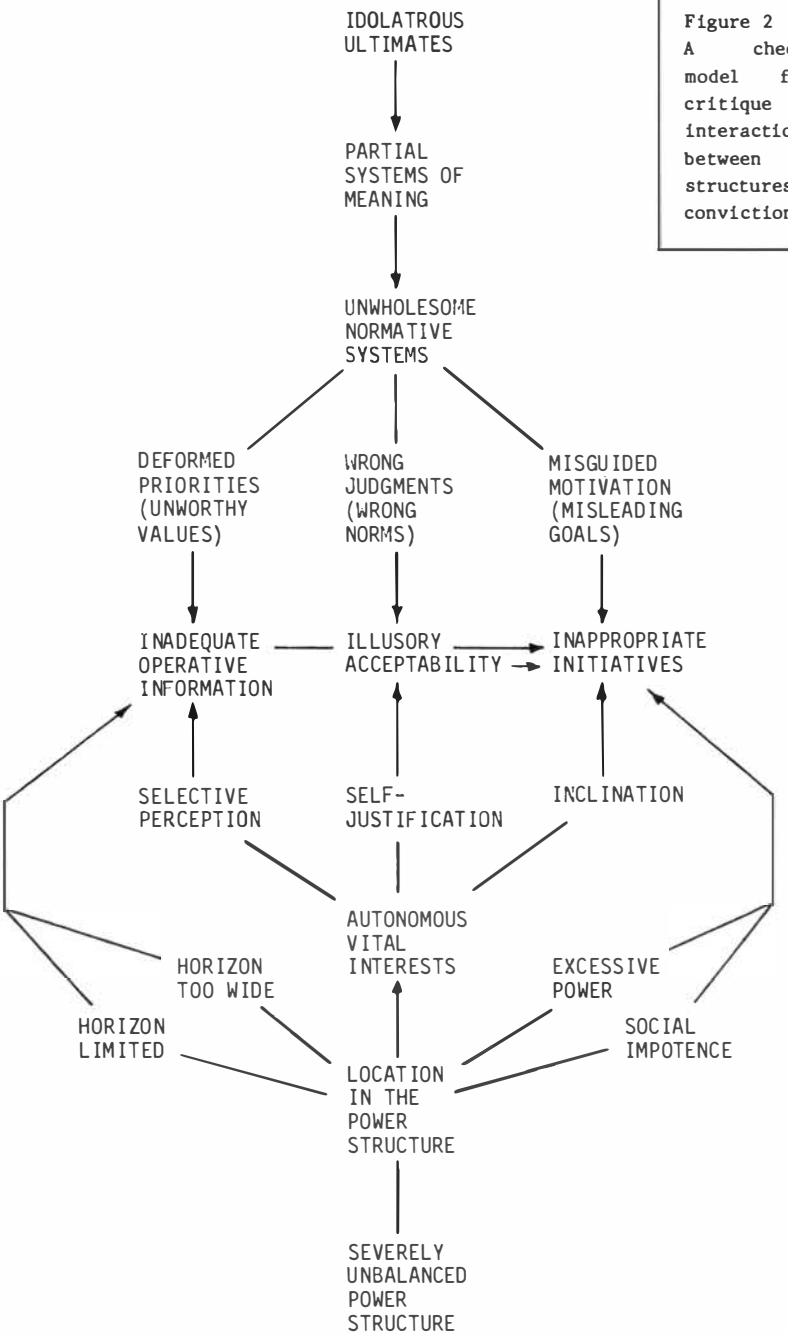

Figure 2
A check-list model for a critique of the interaction between power structures and convictions

We are not in a position to go into further detail. The reader may find ample exemplifying material in Part II of this study. Suffice it to say that the manipulation of convictions by vital interests merits the attention of theological ethics. The problem has traditionally been treated under the heading *'justification and sanctification'*. Our task is to take this discussion out of its narrow individualistic and personalistic frame of reference and show its relevance for the social-structural sphere. We also need to give more attention to the aspects of perception and motivation within this whole problematic.

Apart from their co-determination of vital interests, social power structures have two other effects: they determine the amount of *power* at the disposal of a group with which it is able to pursue its interests, and they partially determine the breadth of *horizon* which influence a group's operative information. Thus we have an excess of power in the centre and a lack of power in the periphery; a horizon in the centre which is so wide that it includes the metropoles of the world and overlooks the plight of its own periphery, a horizon in the periphery which is so narrow that it overlooks its own potential.

All the factors discussed so far have been integrated into the model depicted in figure 2. It can serve as a check-list for a critique of the whole system: convictions, interests, interaction between interests and convictions, distribution of structural power. This model should be compared with figure 1 in chapter 6.

If we wanted to complete the picture of obstacles to the solution of the overall syndrome, we would have to add *technical problems* encountered by specific initiatives. They are caused by the relative rigidity of existing structures and processes.

This rigidity has a historical dimension which we called *tradition* in the case of convictions and *causality* in the case of structural mechanisms (see chapter 6).

10.5 SUMMARY

In this part I leave the 'objective' stance taken in my analyses so far in favour of a commitment to a specific conviction, viz. the Christian faith. This chapter offered the model for a critique of social reality in South Africa from this particular vantage point.

I began with a theological-ethical critique of highly inequitable *power structures* in the South African society. Absolute poverty, absolute affluence and distorted relationships between elite and underdog population groups were the main areas of concern. A model of the network of effects which arise from the discrepancies has been offered.

Then my theological-ethical critique turned to *convictions*. I debunked the idea that ultimates and their meaning-giving and normative systems are beyond critique and offered a set of criteria against which they have to be measured. I ventured the statement that most convictions, including the living forms of the Christian faith, fall short on various counts.

Then the *relationship* between convictions and power structures was subjected to a theological-ethical critique. The pivotal point of this relationship is constituted by vital interests because they are both structure- and conviction-related. Where acceptable convictions determine the content and pursuit of interests, there is no quarrel. The problem begins where interests emancipate themselves from integration into a comprehensive system of

meaning and normativeness, manipulate the meaning-giving and normative system and abuse its authority. We saw that perceptions, justifications and motivations all become distorted in the process and that interest-based ideologies effectively prevent the corporate analysis and active solution of social problems.

I briefly mentioned three other factors which present obstacles to the solution of the whole syndrome: (a) the horizon or awareness of different groups, (b) the social power which groups wield (both of which depend on structural position) and (c) the technical problems caused by the relative rigidity of existing structures and processes.

The overall impression of this chapter is that a moralising critique of inequity is of no avail. Theological ethics has to penetrate to the roots and the mechanics of the processes which underlie its genesis, perpetuation and deepening. The three traditional areas of social justice, evangelisation and 'justification-sanctification' have then to be made relevant. Whereas this chapter has been critical by design, we now have to turn to the positive contribution theological ethics could make to a solution of the syndrome.

CHAPTER 11

The positive contribution of a theological ethic in outline

11.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

Since we have offered a theological critique of the basic dimensions of our problem (power structures, convictions and the relation between them), we now have to consider the positive contribution the Christian faith could make to its solution. We presuppose that where human beings have become fully human, their convictions are the most powerful motivating forces of their personal and collective lives, stronger than their desires to satisfy short-term and selfish interests at the expense of the interest of others.

In what follows we also presuppose two levels relevant to our theme: (a) collective consciousness, which is normally channelled through institutional arrangements such as churches, and (b) the academic penetration, analysis and reconstruction of this consciousness in the form of theology, in this case theological ethics. While the former has its impact directly in the sphere of social structures and processes, the place of the latter is in an interdisciplinary team of social scientists who attempt to analyse

such structures and processes, watch over their possible implications and make recommendations for a more deliberate policy to overcome the problems concerned.

In chapter 6, section 6.7, we came to the conclusion that there are three relevant levels of interaction and conflict in the context of our problem, viz. (a) the conflict between alternative convictions, (b) the conflict between the vital interests of different parties in society and the (c) conflict between a conviction and the vital interests of the party which holds such a conviction. We shall try to give a short introduction to the way in which the Christian faith deals with these three problem areas.

The core of the Christian message is that God, the Source of reality, is about to reconstruct this reality in a form which corresponds to his eternal benevolence, that this 'new age' is anticipated in the Christ-event and that believers are privileged to participate in the new life of Christ, thus in the new age, through faith. An ethic derived from this conviction will aim at the creative reconstruction of convictions on level (a), societal power relations on level (b) and human integrity on level (c).

We shall proceed in three stages. In the first we discuss the missionary dynamic of what theologians call the 'Word of God', i.e. the Christian message proclaimed in the authority of its divine Source. The Word of God penetrates the power sphere of other convictions and ideologies to overcome them from within, compromising itself in the process and leading to a number of polluted and contradictory forms. Secondly, in the ecumenical dynamic of the Word of God, its differing syncretistic and ideologised forms are led into confrontation with each other. Here the Word regains its truth and power and a common analysis and

strategy of those involved in the process become possible. The third stage indicates the criteria of structural change which could result from this common strategy.

11.2 THE MISSIONARY DYNAMIC OF THE WORD OF GOD LEADS TO SYNCRETISMS (taken from Nürnberger 1983a: 51-56).

My point of departure is the "Word of God". The Word of God is God's self-communication to humanity. Note that it is not identical with the Bible, although the Bible is its prime witness. The essential core of the message contained in the Word of God is God's creative and redemptive love in Christ. Love is a dynamic power. It always seeks its object - in this case human beings. That is why the Word of God entered human history. We call this incarnation. This also means that it becomes a dynamic historical power. This dynamic historical force is called "tradition" in theology. Human beings do not have the Word of God in any other form but in such a living tradition.

The tradition is not a fixed body of dogma which is handed from generation to generation as it is. On the contrary, the tradition develops its own historical dynamic. The driving force behind this outgoing, missionary dynamic is, again, the creative and redemptive love of God, which seeks its object. Propelled by this love the Word of God reaches ever new phases of history, ever new cultural contexts, ever new human situations and conditions. It enters them, penetrates them, makes itself relevant in them, incarnates itself in them.

This implies that the tradition branches out into ever new sub-traditions. The greater the discrepancies between the people it reaches, the further the sub-traditions of the Word move away from each other. Thus the essential cause of diversity in the

church is the missionary dynamic of God's Word itself as it encounters the vast variety of human situations and conditions. Put in different terms, the church is the world in its pluriformity as far as it has been reached by the Word.

However, diversity is not necessarily the same as disunity. On the contrary, the very concept of unity only makes sense where there is diversity. I want to go further and say that not even the tensions existing within the "Body of Christ" are a sign of disunity. On the contrary, tensions are a sign of life. A body without tensions is a corpse.

Disunity is caused by syncretism. And syncretism is unavoidable. When the Word enters a human situation it incarnates itself in the patterns of perception and interpretation prevalent in that situation. That is the only way in which it is able to become relevant to that situation. By doing so it inevitably gets mixed up with the hopes and the fears, the religious convictions and ethical rules, the vital interests and their ideological justifications in that situation. And that is just another way of saying that each of the new sub-traditions is bound to be syncretistic in one way or another.

The Word may simply be incorporated into an existing ideology and greatly reinforce it. Alternatively it may displace the ideology but take over its function of justifying the vital interests of the group in question. An underdog population group may, for instance, be eager to identify with Israel in its struggle for liberation from Egypt. When its fortunes turn and it finds itself in a dominant position it may still want to identify with Israel - but now in its conquest of Canaan, in the subjugation of the former owners of the land, in its cultic separation

from those unworthy of acceptance. In short, the Word itself becomes ideological.

But time leaves its mark. In these syncretistic forms the preached Word becomes dogmatised and the lived Word becomes institutionalised in a variety of ways. Sub-traditions may stagnate completely. And in these syncretistic, dogmatised, institutionalised, stagnant forms the Word continues its journey through time and space. If we remember that the Word does not only enter into syncretism with ideologies but also with religions, philosophies, world views and the like, we have all the ingredients for a church splintered into an increasing number of sections at war with each other (Figure 1). In this respect the church is nothing but a replica of the society of which it forms a part.

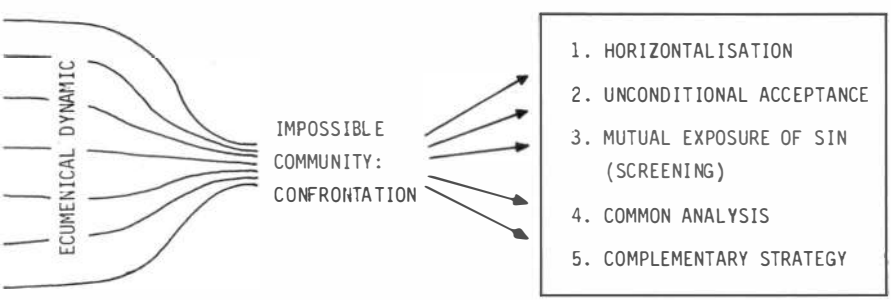

Figure 1

The missionary dynamic of God's word

But let me emphasise again: It is the force of the creative and redemptive love of God which leads the Word into human history, thus into historical ambiguity and human abuse. What happened with Christ - up to the extreme of the cross - repeats itself with the message concerning Christ. There should be nothing inconceivable about this fact unless one has a docetic and idolised conception of God's Word.

11.3 THE ECUMENICAL DYNAMIC OF THE WORD LEADS TO WHOLESOME CONFRONTATIONS.

But now the very power of God's creative and redemptive love can cause the Word of God to rise from the grave. That does not happen without agony and birth pains. But when it happens, people discover that the love which motivates them, leads them first and foremost to their "heretical" brothers and sisters. Divine love is unconditional. It accepts the unacceptable. And so, together with a centrifugal or missionary dynamic, the Word develops a centripetal or ecumenical dynamic. People deeply touched by God's love cannot want to be separate. Reconciled with God they are, of necessity, reconciled with each other on the basis of God's suffering acceptance. And so they congregate.

But the result is an impossible community. Each member is not just a private person. He/she is also a representative of some group and thus an element in the social structure. He/she is Black or White, rich or poor, employer or employee, security policeman or detainee. And so the tensions and agonies of society are reproduced in the Christian community. They are even heightened in this community because the contact is more immediate.

Of course, we try to cover up the sores with politeness as far as possible. And during a short conference this may even succeed. But sooner or later we shall discover each other as opponents in live social conflicts and then the sparks are going to fly. Now brothers and sisters recognise each other as structural enemies. In northern Namibia, for instance, there are Christians who fight against Russian imperialism in the name of God on this side of the border. And there are other Christians who fight against fascist oppression and exploitation in the name of the same God on the other side of the border. And both may be quite sincere in there "Christian" convictions.

It is in such situations of social conflict, in strikes, boycotts, riots or less dramatic clashes, that the real problems surface. And this implies that if we want to be sincere about the mission of the church in the world we have to develop an ecclesiology not of harmony but of confrontation. Otherwise we just cover up the cancer instead of cutting it out. Let me attempt to give a few pointers towards such an ecclesiology of confrontation.

In the first place the Word of God horizontalises vertical relationships. It reminds both the elite and the underdog that they have brought nothing into this world when they were born, and will take nothing out when they die - whether political power, economic resources, social status, technical know how or whatever. Moreover, both are miserable sinners and have lost their right of existence before God. Moreover, both are granted a share in Christ's new life as sons and daughters of God - the highest status possible for any human being. Thus on the level of consciousness (not yet on the level of social structure) they become equal. They are able to communicate from person to person on the same level without being either condescending or submissive.

And this is the prerequisite for the second step, mutual exposure of each other's specific sins. Ideology is a blinding mechanism. I do not easily discover the ideology of my own group. Nor is it very likely that members of my group, who share my vital interests and my ideological justifications, will effectively and ruthlessly reveal my shortcomings. By doing so they would cut too deeply into their own flesh. Just as much as the Word of God has to come from outside my own heart last it be corrupted by my heart's desire, it must also come from outside my own group interests and group ideology. It must be an external Word (*Verbum externum*) as the Reformation called it. It is my natural enemy who will perceive my sin, in this case my ideological bias, most distinctly and who will be most eager to expose it as ruthlessly as he/she can. And so it is in confrontation that the sin-exposing function of the Word (the *usus elenchticus legis* as the Reformation called it) becomes most effective.

But the law does not redeem. It only exposes sins. And if the community attempts to operate on the basis of demands posed by one group to be fulfilled by the other, the ecumenical fellowship may break up in tears and blood. The law can only perform its cleansing and screening function under the umbrella of the gospel. The gospel is the good news of God's unconditional acceptance of the unacceptable (which is my word for justification by grace, not by human achievement).

Acceptance of the unacceptable implies that the accepting group suffers a partner group who is not able to fulfil its norms. This is the suffering of Christ in which we are called to participate. Now structural enemies discover each other as brothers and sisters. To accept members of your own group is relatively easy. By loving them, you confirm your own right of existence.

Even tax collectors love their friends, said Jesus. But if one accepts the unacceptable, if one loves one's group enemy, this is no longer cheap grace because there are costs involved!

So the sin of our disunity does not lie in our differences, not even in the tensions between us, but in our refusal to expose ourselves to the highly uncomfortable, challenging and transforming encounter with our enemy brothers and sisters, refusal to suffer them as Christ has suffered us, the refusal to forgive the unforgivable, to accept the unacceptable. Put very bluntly, Christians who isolate themselves from ecumenical intercourse place themselves outside the realm of Christ's redemptive love. They get stuck on the level of the law where acceptance is conditional. There you have to satisfy certain criteria of acceptability. Setting up conditions of fellowship - whether of a dogmatic, ethical, cultural or any other nature - denies the essence of the Christian gospel, viz. the self-giving, unconditional, suffering love of God in Christ.

But while Christian fellowship has no preconditions it certainly has consequences. Christ does not suffer us to confirm us in our sin but to overcome our sin. The overall effect of an honest ecumenical confrontation is that religious and ideological syncretisms begin to be filtered out. The perception of the Word of God held by each partner group is radically challenged by that of its respective counterpart. That forces them to go back to the sources together and agonise about the true meaning of the Word. The ideological self-justifications of all partners are revealed as what they are, and abandoned in an agonising process, which takes its time but which transforms those who subject themselves to this confrontation. And this transformation is the precondition for impacting their social environment.

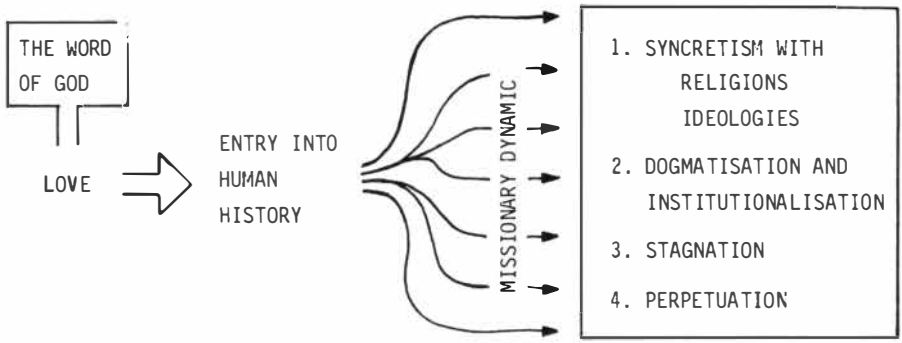

Figure 2

The ecumenical dynamic of God's word

The result will not be a "pure" form of the Word but rather a re-vitalisation of the creative and redemptive power of God's love in Christ. And this will, in turn, not lead to a homogeneous form of the Word - that would only endanger its contextual relevance - but to new incarnations and resultant confrontations. It is an ongoing struggle heading for eschatological fulfilment. But time and again it produces tentative situations in which different forms of the Word do not exclude each other but complement, reinforce and enrich each other. These are the occasions when joy is the reward of painful struggle (Figure 2).

11.4 THE EFFECTS OF ECUMENICAL ENCOUNTER ARE SUBVERSIVE.

Confrontation does not only challenge the perceptions and interpretations of the Word but also the perceptions and interpretations of social reality of each partner. The dialectical nature of human reality is discovered underneath the conflicting evidence. A *common analysis* of the situation, which takes due account of other points of view in their proper relation to each other, comes in sight. Again this does not happen without the agony

of birth pains and growth pains. But where it happens the prerequisite for a *joint strategy* concerning structures is being reached. A new common motivation to tackle the structural problem together is born. Structures can only be changed by collective effort. "Unity gives strength."

This presupposes, however, that what happens in the ecumenical fellowship is carried into society. Every participant is a structural element, a representative of a social group. Going back into one's own social context the painful process of confrontation begins all over again. Having discovered our brothers and sisters in our enemies we shall no longer be able to condone the blanket condemnation of the enemy group by our own group. Having discovered the shortcomings of our own group we shall no longer be able to condone the ideological self-justifications we find at home. We shall not make ourselves particularly popular. Challengers and innovators are always marginals. It may well be that massive group pressure will be exerted to make us toe the line. But in this conflict we are the "salt of the earth", the "leaven in the dough".

Seen in this light, ecumenical encounter is a profoundly subversive exercise. It may be more dangerous to a ruling ideology than communist or fascist propaganda. We should sympathise with those who become anxious when Christians begin seriously to talk to each other. If you knock down the spiritual legitimation of a social structure you let loose the devils of change and the effects may be substantial. We should not be surprised when authorities, for instance, try to shore up spiritual preparedness against an onslaught which allegedly also moves through the avenues of ecumenical encounter. To me it seems that the only valid Christian answer to this problem is to invite those concerned to be participants in this encounter - and thus

potential partners in the ensuing analysis of the problem and the reformulation of goals. Fear is cast out by love.

It should be mentioned, however, that ecumenical conscientisation will lead to frustration and subsequent hopelessness if the structural problem is not tackled with the same amount of seriousness as the ideological one. Ideology and social structure mutually reinforce each other and need to be tackled together. Again, structural change needs to begin in the church. In this relatively fool-proof area experimentation can be conducted and experience gathered which will be of utmost significance when it comes to structural changes in society.

The argument often advanced that what is possible in the church is impossible in the world - because the world lacks regeneration by faith - is invalid. The church is not a redeemed community removed from the depravity of this world. It is nothing but another part of this unredeemed world. But it is that part of the world in which the Word of God has begun its redemptive work and which it uses to reach the rest of the world. That people become willing to suffer each other and look after the vital interests of their fellow men rather than those of their own is as unlikely within the church as outside it. Yet the Word of God is quite capable of performing this miracle within the church and through the church in the world as well. We should beware of pious fatalism - particularly when it proves to be congenial to our vital interest!

The most powerful channel through which the missionary dynamic of the Word of God proceeds is evangelisation. It is usually conducted by revivalist, evangelical and pentecostal groups. Research on a vast scale is needed to find out what exactly happens during and after such evangelisations. In which ways

are *existing convictions* displaced, in which ways are they incorporated and do they continue to exercise their power, in which ways do they arrange themselves with the Christian faith in a series of compromises? In which ways are the typical *perceptions, self-justifications and inclinations,* generated by vital interests overcome, in which ways do they penetrate and determine the new allegiance to Christ, in which ways do they manage to make themselves seem acceptable, or secure for themselves a sphere of life untouched by the new conviction?

Equally desirable is research on the process and outcome of ecumenical confrontations. Where do they take place - only at interracial and ecumenical gatherings and in ecumenical institutions, or also in the secular processes of life? Do such confrontations withdraw into a sphere of spiritual harmony to avoid the pain of structure-related dissent, or do they face the structural conflict bravely and lose their spiritual depth in the process? Are ideological perceptions, justifications and inclinations challenged equally on both sides or has one party a tacit moral advantage over the other? Which type of common perception, interpretation and motivation ensues from such confrontations - is it really factual and strategically appropriate to the problem to be tackled, or is it more the outcome of the parallelogram of forces of personalities and arguments? There are many theories based on dogma or conjecture; what is needed is empirical research to see whether these theories hold water or not.

We have seen that distorted perceptions, ideological self-justifications and inclinations based on the pursuit of interests place serious obstacles in the way of any attempt to solve our problems. A factual, unbiased analysis and a sober assessment of the situation, based on the assumption that the interests of

all population groups are equally important, would be an incredible achievement. Without them, further ethical deliberations are meaningless. Most serious Christians do not err on account of their good intentions but on account of their distorted perception of social reality. At the same time such analyses and assessments are the presupposition of any policy which would go in the direction of a real solution.

If that is true, there could be no greater service the church of Christ could do to the country in the structural sphere than to deliberately and purposefully lead their members and other concerned people into confrontations under the umbrella of unconditional acceptance. We can draw on a lot of experience, for instance that of the 'Evangelical Academies' in Germany or ecumenical bodies in our own country in this regard. The main thing is, however, that such encounters should be programmatically aimed at the challenge of perceptions, self-justifications and interest-led inclinations of different groups in society in the structural sphere, not only at other concerns of a more spiritual nature.

Conversely, the church of Christ can do the country no greater disservice in the structural sphere than by allowing the present large-scale distortions of perceptions, justifications and motivations to continue unchallenged by isolating different ecclesiastical and racial groups from each other. If I were to make recommendations on the basis of this study I would certainly make this my first priority.

11.5 THREE BIBLICAL PARADIGMS ON THE USE OF STRUCTURAL POWER (taken from Nürnberger 1983 b:22ff)

Once Christians are liberated and motivated to analyse a situation factually and to work for structural change, the question of theological-ethical criteria for such change emerges. The Biblical faith has its own distinct approach to that problem. However, it is based not on an eternal set of rules and regulations valid for all situations and all times, but on a personal relationship of mutual faithfulness between God and human beings, and - as a consequence - among human beings. Our prime interest at present is what constitutes the content of this relationship. And here I see three historical variations within the Biblical heritage. I call them survival, justice and concern respectively. Between these variations there seems to be a historical progression which apparently has to be repeated again and again as persons and groups become existentially involved in the transforming power of God's Word.

Survival as a principle features very prominently in the early phases of the history of Israel. The exegesis of a single chapter, Deuteronomy 7, brings out its principle characteristics clearly, although it represents a fairly late stage in Israelite theological development, belonging to the 5th and the 4th century B.C. In the fundamental covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel, Yahweh is expected to supply and protect the basic prerequisites for the collective existence of Israel as a nation: land and livestock, health and fertility, social cohesion and legal system, political leadership and victory over enemies. Israel's part is not to allow any other religion (or social ideology) to interfere in the exclusive rule of Yahweh and to be a witness to his greatness in its national life.

All this adds up to a very powerful legitimating ideology. The highest God is unequivocally on the side of the elect - whether they deserve it or not. He liberates them from Egyptian bondage, leads them through the perils of the desert in spite of their disobedience, empowers them to conquer a country, subdue its inhabitants and appropriate their economic resources. In self-defence or aggression, liberation or domination, God is a defender of the vital interests of his people at the expense of any others who might get in the way. He is Yahweh Zebaoth, the Commander of victorious armies. It is his honour and his glory that are at stake when Israel goes into battle. Religion justifies the pursuit of the vital interests of one group at the expense of others.

This Biblical paradigm neatly fits in with the competitive Western spirit. The principle of the latter is the survival of the fittest. It should be no surprise, therefore, that capitalist liberalism, British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism have all been able to claim Biblical legitimacy. More recently it has been picked up by Black and Liberation Theologies - to the great consternation, I might say, of those who thought they had a monopoly on it, or who restricted the Biblical message to the spiritual sphere so as to be unfettered in the political and economic realm. All this is not necessarily a misunderstanding or abuse of the Biblical heritage since you do find this dimension in the Bible (Villa-Vicencio 1981: 48ft.).

The second approach I call *justice*. Biblical justice is firmly based on equality of opportunity. Concerning the prerequisites of economic performance, every family within the People of God has equal dignity with all others. And that has definite economic repercussions. Nobody is allowed to pick up more manna in the desert than others (Ex. 16:15ff.). The agricultural land

in the country is allocated by lot (Nm 26:55; Jos. 14:2; Ps 16:6). If a family loses its basic means of subsistence through economic mismanagement it must be restored after a fixed time (Rosner in Nürnberger 1978a: 135ff.). The prophets lash out against the accumulation of wealth by some at the expense of others (Wittenberg in Nürnberger 1978a: 141ff.). King Ahab who took the vineyard of Naboth by committing a judicial murder has to pay with his own life: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth (I Kings 21-22). Justice is not to be played with.

It is obvious that the principle of justice, once it comes into its own, overrules the principle of survival. No group can treat another as if it were a noxious weed or an economic resource. What is claimed for oneself has to be granted to others. No discrimination against the weak for the benefit of the powerful is allowed. Even the gods (or ideologies) of the other nations are judged on whether they execute the justice of Yahweh impartially - and not according to some religious conviction or meta-physical speculation (Ps 82). Yahweh is the true God because he defends the cause of the powerless, the foreigner, the widow, the orphan. And if his people or its leaders fail in this one crucial aspect they are taken to task mercilessly - even to the extreme of annihilation.

But there is a third step as well. I call it *concern* (Greek agápē). Justice as a principle guarantees each group the right to its share of the economic potentials of the society. Our right is as important as the right of any other group. Concern as a principle goes beyond that. Concern is the willingness to share one's right with a group who has forfeited its rights. This principle is forcefully demonstrated by the christological formulations of the early church (Phlp. 2:6ff; II Cor. 8:9). Christ's way begins in a situation of power. Being rich, Paul

says, he became poor - not for the sake of being poor but to enrich us who are poor. To enrich us - not for the sake of being rich but to enable us to become poor with Christ and enrich others!

In II Cor. 8 Paul deliberately applies this paradigm to economic discrepancies (Nürnberger 1978a:163ff.). The economically potent are expected to move down and empower the economically impotent. The economically impotent are expected to move up so as to be able to share the way of the potent down to the impotent. A dynamic chain-reaction is set in motion, the purpose of which is to work towards a situation in which groups are able to interact on the basis of equal dignity. Equal dignity is seriously questioned by a situation where misery contrasts with superabundance.

It is clear that the principle of concern overrides the principle of justice, just as the principle of justice overrides the principle of survival. Nevertheless the goal of survival is fulfilled in justice and the goal of justice is fulfilled in concern. Where concern rules supreme neither survival nor justice are in danger. That is why concern as a principle makes more sense in terms of the human project as a whole than the principle of survival.

A person or group geared to justice will rather sacrifice survival than benefit from injustice. Only where justice breaks down do people fall back on the struggle for survival, a struggle of all against all. A group geared to concern will rather sacrifice what is its own by right than look on cheerfully while another group perishes because it has no right to resources necessary for its survival. Only where concern breaks down do people fall back on justice and claim what is theirs by right.

At this stage we need to emphasise that we are here not concerned with conversion to Christ or with a Christian sort of piety. Survival, justice and concern are collective norms which determine social behaviour and which spread through normal processes of socialisation and internalisation. Of course, there must be a mainspring which pulls the norm system of a society away from the principle of survival (which is plain selfishness) over justice to concern. And here Christians should be in the forefront. After all, they are the carriers of the Biblical heritage.

But they have no monopoly in the urge to place society on humane foundations. Often it is precisely the non-Christians who excel in this respect. Here the Declaration of Human Rights merits special attention. Although human rights aim at justice, their implementation presupposes concern. Concern has become a widely accepted principle in modern society without any reference to a particular Christian background. Examples are programs for social security, rehabilitation schemes, aid to drought-stricken or war-torn regions, the suspension of the death sentence, the support of a firm threatened by liquidation, etc.

NOTES

1. There is a theological argument saying that Christian concern cannot determine social reality because it presupposes a society in which everybody has been converted to Christ and reborn in the Spirit - while in reality Christians will always form a tiny minority. I do not believe this argument to be valid. In fact, it may very well be an excuse not to pull your weight as a Christian in this respect. Most certainly one finds self-sacrificing concern among non-Christians - Moslems, Buddhists, humanists, Marxists - and often it surpasses that of Christians by far. Moreover, the Biblical social ethic is not regarded by Biblical authors as the private domain of a particular religious group. It claims universality. It is valid for, and accessible to all human beings, regardless of their creed.

2. The common assumption among Christians that personal conversion to Christ automatically leads to soci-structural responsibility, is blatantly untrue as well. Christian piety can even become an obstacle to social involvement. There are various reasons for this failure. In the first place Christians do remain sinners until they die, in spite of their conversions. Their new life is 'in Christ', not in their 'flesh'. Unconsciously they continue to pursue their group interests and to share the ideological legitimations of this pursuit.

   Secondly, the implications of the renewal of personal relationships for great social structures, which seem to be completely impersonal, are not immediately apparent. Thirdly, a strong spiritual commitment tends to absorb all energies and to relativise the importance of social structures. Fourthly, Christians often develop their own ecclesial group-selfishness and fail to see beyond the fences of their church yards. So they need to be led away from survival over justice to concern as well. Conversion to Christ must be followed by conversion to the world for which Christ died - and that is another big step. Put differently, sin and evil have to be tackled on the whole front simultaneously - in the hearts of human beings and in the structures of society. No breeding ground may be left untouched in either realm.

11.6 APPLICATION IN OUTLINE

Space does not permit any detailed application of our insights concerning survival, justice and concern to the problem of economic power structures in South Africa. A few indications must suffice.

The transition from survival over justice to concern can manifest itself in single measures as well as in an overall systems-approach. Single measures are open to all sections of the population at all times. They include better wages, improvement on existing laws to avoid hardships, welfare, educational and training ventures, investments in housing, eradication of discrimination and isolation, living out a respect for the dignity of a human being in ordinary life, etc.

Concerning a systems approach, the implication of concern as a principle is not necessarily a socialist society of the

Marxist-Leninist type. On the contrary. The latter attempts to equalise economic potential at the base by means of a fearful concentration of power at the top. In modern economic life it is not the possession of the factors of production (particularly capital) which counts, but control over them. Even in the West the shareholders have little say over their possession; it is the managers who are in control. In the East it is a small elite of party functionaries. The corollary of a concentration of power is always a repressive system and - possibly - a decline of motivation and efficiency amongst the masses of the population. Seen in this light there is little to choose between the concentrations of power as found in most Third World countries (including South Africa) and in Marxist-Leninist countries, as the following diagrams show (figures 3 and 4):

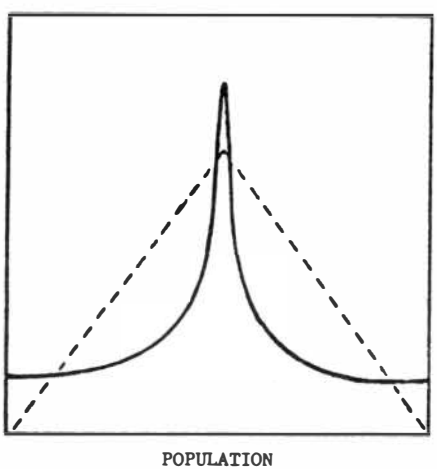

Figure 3
Third world pattern

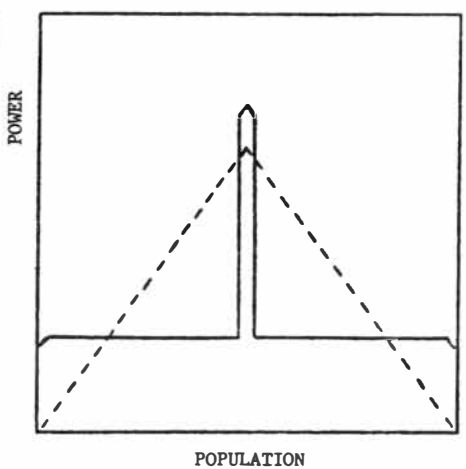

Figure 4
Marxist-Leninist pattern

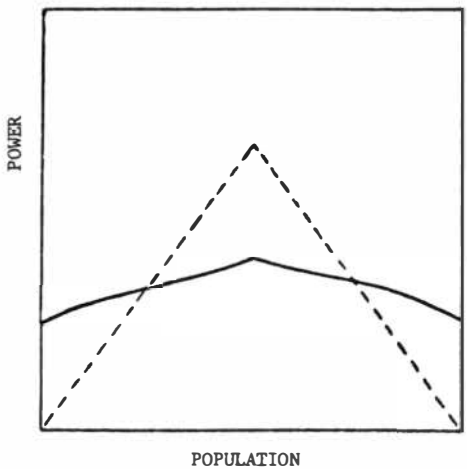

Figure 5
Social democracy pattern

> In contrast, social democracy and perhaps a type of democratic socialism based on autonomous enterprises can do without power concentrations and bureaucratic strangleholds while allowing for maximum of initiative and responsibility of ordinary people (figure 5):

Our task as theological ethicists is not, however, to devise and propagate a particular socio-economic system but rather to indicate the prerequisites of *any* satisfactory system. Our deliberations so far have led us naturally to three main emphases: measures to redirect the economic dynamic of the centre, measures to develop the economic potential of the periphery and measures to neutralise the effects of the asymmetric interaction between the two (figure 6):

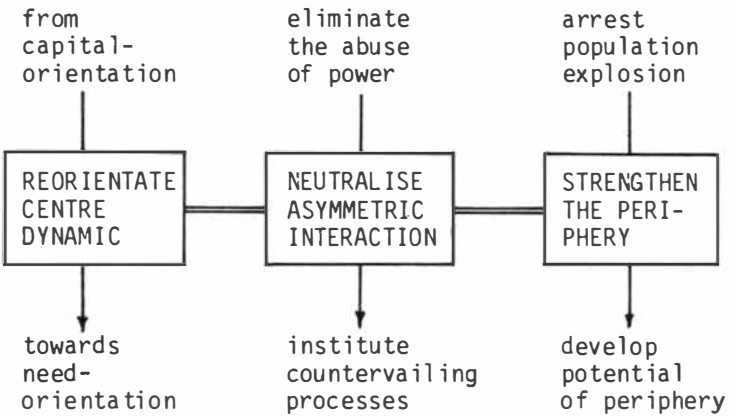

Figure 6
Model for a strategy to overcome structural imbalances

11.6.1 Beginning with the latter one could reasonably expect that a society which believes in the merits of free competition should at least be honest about it and make it possible for all sections of the population to compete equally and effectively on the open market. The freedom to abuse power advantages, to entrench oneself in oligopolistic fortresses and to exploit weaker sections of the population is not worth fighting for from an ethical point of view. Moreover, freedom can only be called a positive value if it is linked with responsibility. Not arbitrariness but concern is the prime characteristic of freedom.

Concretely, there should be, on the negative side, a revision of the legal system so that it excludes any form

of discrimination against economically weaker groups, any protection of stronger groups and all forms of the abuse of power. On the positive side some very powerful countervailing processes need to be institutionalised to offset the "automatic" effects of an asymmetric interaction. The principle of justice demands, not an equality of income but the equality of opportunity to raise such an income. In contrast to the welfare principle - which has its own merits - the concept of equality of opportunity emphasises production, not consumption. In a strongly inegalitarian situation such as our own, the principle of the equality of opportunity may imply compensatory measures. Sections of the population, for instance, who have been left behind in the process of technological development, need an investment in their training which is higher than that of the more advanced, instead of the other way round, as it is at present.

Perhaps the most glaring example of discrimination in South Africa is influx control. I am personally persuaded that it is high time that a realistic assessment of the trade-offs between advantages and disadvantages of this system should be made. The disadvantages of the system include the following:

1. The system implies discrimination on the basis of colour and thus impairs the concept of equal dignity for all men. This creates enmity locally and abroad and - as a consequence - costs more than is currently realised among the defenders of the system. That a denial of equal dignity is ethically unacceptable, is self-evident.

2. The system implies a network of bureaucratic and police controls on a scale unparallelled in the Western, Southern and possibly even the Eastern world. The level of frustration, alienation and sheer anger produced by such measures is politically dangerous and economically demotivating.

3. Liberal economic theory will maintain that interference in the horizontal and vertical mobility of labour leads to an irrational allocation of the available factors of production within a given economy. In the South African case it is obvious that influx control and other discriminatory measures have led to bottle-necks in skills, a higher level of capital-intensity than warranted in a semi-industrialised country and thus to a distorted and costly factor-market.

4. To this the enormous costs of an extended bureaucracy and security apparatus without which the system could not be maintained, has to be added.

5. The high pressure on the land in Black rural areas makes a transformation of subsistence agriculture and the economic utilisation of their agricultural resources virtually impossible. In fact, these areas show all signs of rapid ecological deterioration and may be largely lost to posterity if present trends continue.

6. The periphery bears the social costs of maintaining a labour force which is utilised by the centre. In the centre its full potential is not allowed to develop, and whatever potential is developed, cannot be utilised by the periphery.

7. The extent of the damage done to family life, social cohesion, community morale, upbringing, education, cultural values and moral norms by the migrant labour system is prohibitive and may take generations to repair. In the meantime the society as a whole has to pay the bill in terms of crime, moral disorientation, cynicism and anarchical tendencies.

If influx control was lifted we would have to contend with mainly two problems:

1. Great numbers of poverty-stricken Black people would move from the overcrowded Black rural areas to the metropolitan areas. This prospect conjures up the spectre of vast slums, unemployment, crime, filth and disease. The neat, developed, Western image of our urban areas would be lost and replaced by Latin-American urban situations. A number of comments can be made:

(a) Slum conditions are undesirable. But the question is whether rural social decay is any better. Misery is as unacceptable in rural areas as it is in urban centres. If poverty cannot be avoided in the short term in a semi-industrialised Third World country such as South Africa, then urban misery has the advantage that it is highly visible. One cannot escape the sight of the favelas on the hillside in a luxury apartment in Rio de Janeiro, in Pretoria one can. The illusion that we are a prosperous Western country, artificially created by damming up poverty behind geographical race barriers, can no longer be upheld. A visible problem has more chances of being tackled by policy-makers.

(b) Urban slum-conditions are unacceptable - but for whom? Obviously the rural poor prefer them to their rural misery, otherwise they would not move to the cities. If they saw themselves fooled by wrong expectations, they would soon return to where they came from. If the drift to the city is unacceptable to Whites (and perhaps to some urban Blacks because they would meet greater competition), the question is whether it is ethically right to protect the interests of the privileged at the expense of the poor. Our ethical deliberations so far suggest that it should be the other way round. If there is a burden to be borne by society then that burden should be shared in some way by all groups in that society.

(c) Obviously such a policy would have catastrophic results if the neglect of urban housing for underdog race groups for many decades would be perpetuated. Sharing the burden would imply at least the provision of site and service schemes and the slackening of bureaucratic strangleholds on family initiatives in housing on a large scale. A social infrastructure (schools, clinics etc.) would have to be built up as well. All this is costly, but perhaps less costly than the total direct and indirect cost of the present policy as outlined above.

(d) Unemployment in the cities would increase, but total national unemployment would probably decrease in relative terms: (i) There would be a more rational factor allocation; (ii) the task of slum upgrading would create a huge market for labour and industrial goods such as building materials; (iii) an informal sector would develop in which a great number of people could make a living. An informal sector cannot develop in resettlement camps or a rural subsistence environment because it presupposes the vicinity of a strong formal sector on which it 'preys'.

2. Basic resources of the metropolitan areas will be placed under severe strain. Here the greatest problem seems to be water. A lot of research, experimentation and investment is necessary to solve this impasse. The question is whether the solution of this problem is any more difficult than the problem of providing acceptable living conditions in rural areas and resettlement camps.

It has become clear that Black urbanisation cannot be avoided (Smit 1981). If that is the case, a deliberate and rigorous urbanisation policy is called for. It is unlikely that the urbanisation program envisaged for Blacks inside the Black areas is any less costly in terms of total direct and indirect costs. The disadvantages of the latter are that there is no economic base for such an artificial urbanisation. While decentralisation policies may have their merits it is very unlikely that they will lead to industrialisation sufficient in volume to create such a base. Which means that the economically awkwardly located dormitory towns still have to be financed in some way by the metropolitan centres, while the disadvantages of influx control discussed above are perpetuated.

Pending unbiased, ideology-free research in which the interests of the poor are taken to be as important as those of the rich, I have the impression that the trade-offs of a programmatic abolition of influx control would gravitate towards the greater advantage of the country as a whole and all its people.

This is only one example and more must follow. All I plead for at this stage is that a serious look is taken at the trade-offs between present policies and their

possible alternatives on the basis of a de-ideologised, factual analysis of the situation and a sober assessment which takes the interests of all inhabitants of the country as of equal importance. The academic community should be the first to venture into serious investigations concerning the probable consequences of alternative policies on this basis so that possible initiatives coming from the policy-makers do not find the ground unprepared.

11.6.2 The economic dynamic of the centre needs to be redirected - away from capital-intensive, highly mechanised and automated industry and towards labour-intensive methods; away from inflated remuneration of expertise caused by bottlenecks in skills and towards the building up of purchasing power on the lower levels of the labour force; away from a production of luxury goods for a wealthy elite and towards a production geared to satisfying the needs of the majority of the population; away from the ideal of becoming competitive on the international market and towards establishing a moderately wealthy and contented local population; away from research for the further development of labour saving machinery and towards research into ways of raising the productivity of labour-intensive techniques to competitive levels; away from the motivation to maximise profit for the sake of profit and towards responsibility for the quality of life of living people. This is what moving down according to the principle of concern concretely means for the centre in South Africa and of the world as a whole.

The example of post-war Europe shows that the building up of the purchasing power of the lower sections of the population makes profound sense in economic terms. Instead of trying to raise profits by cutting down labour costs, productivity-oriented salary increases have led to a mass consumer market which greatly contributed to sustained economic

growth for more than two decades (Fröbel 1981: 11ff, 65ff). Why the recipe did not continue to work so well after 1970 is a story too long to be investigated here. Possible reasons include rocketing fuel costs, a certain degree of saturation of the local market, contracting external markets due to the financial plight of the Third World and the displacement of labour by technological progress. The message is, however, that sustained economic growth with a stable internal basis demands the development of a mass consumer market, which in turn implies labour intensive production and a more equitable distribution of rewards, based in turn on a greater spread of expertise. South Africa has a potential market of 30 million people, only a fraction of which is fully developed. However, economic growth can only be condoned in as far as it leads to quality of life for all, thus a greater equity, and does not undermine the ecological base of the economy (see par. 10.2 above).

11.6.3 Correspondingly, the periphery population has to move up. If that is to materialise, two closely interrelated problems have to be tackled. In the first place the exponential growth of the population needs to be arrested - otherwise any progress will continue to be neutralized by higher numbers. I know from experience how emotionally explosive this problem is. The policy-makers of the centre should, for this reason, remain very much in the background. As long as they support immigration from Europe they are not going to convince Blacks anyway. It is the peripheral population itself which has to discover the grave dangers and disadvantages that lie in large families and rising population figures. Power lies in quality, not in quantity.

But the prerequisite of an effective population policy is a rising standard of living accompanied by social securities and improved education. That brings us to the second task, viz. raising the economic potential of the periphery.

Again this is the task of the periphery itself. The centre cannot develop the periphery on behalf of its population. Such paternalism always backfires. The centre can, however, supply the infrastructural requirements for such a development and - far more important - release the stranglehold it exercises over the periphery at present, thus allowing its free evolution.

The two tasks seem to be interrelated to such an extent that it is impossible to solve the one problem without tackling the other. The population explosion is, in part, itself a consequence or symptom of socio-economic impotence, while at the same time it greatly contributes to poverty and stagnation. This also means that by strengthening the economic potential of the periphery the centre can greatly contribute to a falling growth rate of its population - without getting directly involved in population policies.

Of course, a falling growth rate of the peripheral population is in the long term interest of all inhabitants of the country. South Africa's natural endowments are such that it cannot feed exponentially growing masses of people indefinitely without an ecological breakdown. And that is true for the world as a whole.

In closing I wish to suggest that structural change, as envisaged above, is unlikely to come about as long as disadvantaged population groups do not have full representation in the actual decision-making bodies of the country. It was their access to political power which made it possible for the Afrikaners to overcome their economic plight in the first half of this century. In the

absence of economic power, disadvantaged groups can only find redress through the political process. Those who are serious about greater equity in the economic realm, therefore, will have to come to terms with the political implications of such a goal. Moving down means sharing political responsibility. Moving up means assuming political responsibility. A commitment to the democratisation of the South African society is a prerequisite for any meaningful contribution towards greater economic equity. The alternative is violence.

> We may close this study on a theme with which we began: South Africa is a microcosm. This becomes apparent if one compares the country with another semi-peripheral state, viz. Yugoslavia. Both states are plagued by internal tensions due to a very heterogeneous population. Both states are authoritarian. The difference is that in Yugoslavia the leaders acknowledge responsibility for the entire population, thus creating an overarching loyalty to the country as a whole. The reduction of regional inequalities is a matter of policy. In South Africa the centre population has been separated from the peripheral population and made to believe that the periphery is essentially not part of its responsibility. Nor does it belong to the constituency of the leadership. In this sense South Africa is, once again, a replica of the international structure. The centre pursues its own interests and only bothers about the plight of the periphery in the context of those interests. It may graciously grant 'development aid' - not without strings attached - but it is under no obligation to do so. If the country is to have a reasonably peaceful and prosperous future, this whole presuppositional structure has to change. South Africa must be seen as one country with one population demanding common loyalty and solidarity.

11.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter we discussed the possible contribution of a Christian theological ethic towards the solution of the problems analysed in this study.

We first described the process in which the Word of God develops a missionary dynamic and penetrates the power spheres of different convictions and ideologies. We saw how it branches out into a number of sub-traditions which become increasingly syncretistic and ideological.

Then we saw how the inherent character of the Word of God leads to an ecumenical dynamic. Here the bearers of different syncretistic and ideologised branches of the tradition are brought into confrontation with each other under the umbrella of God's unconditional acceptance. In such an 'impossible community' one party reveals the distortions and shortcomings of another. A common, more factual analysis and a sober assessment of the situation, on the assumption that the interests of all parties are of equal importance, becomes possible.

This may lead to the formulation of a joint strategy to overcome the problems concerned. We described three stages in the development of criteria for structural change in the Biblical heritage and suggested that groups which allow themselves to be involved in the dynamics of God's Word, will be led from one to the other. These stages are survival, justice and concern.

Finally we tried to give a few indications of a possible application of these insights. Concerning the asymmetrical interaction between centre and periphery, we suggested that all discriminatory measures and institutionalised abuses of power should be

removed and countervailing processes institutionalised to balance out structural mechanisms. We secondly suggested that the power of the centre needs to be redirected away from its orientation towards capital and profit to an orientation towards needs. Thirdly, we suggested that the impotence of the periphery should be overcome through a serious effort to develop its potential and a reduction in the birth rate, assuming that these two aspects depend on each other. Finally we argued that economic equity presupposes democratisation in the political sphere.

With this we come to the end of the present study. I wish to emphasise once more that the main aim was to develop a systems-analytical model for detailed interdisciplinary research in the area of our theme. The detail mentioned in the text is meant to illuminate the model, not to render such research superfluous.

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