TOWARDS A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE "INFORMAL SECTOR" : MARGINALISATION AND DIFFERENTIATION AMONGST STREET TRADERS IN CAPE TOWN

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ABSTRACT

The object of this thesis is four-fold :

(1) to bring into focus a wide range of factors that supports or contradicts the numerous theories that are associated with the "informal sector" ;

(2) to place emphasis on aspects of those areas - such as employment, education, housing and the commercial sector - which are peculiar to the South African social formation, and which serve as the driving force behind the ongoing process of marginalisation ;

(3) to demonstrate the peculiarities of the organisation and trading pattern of street traders within each of the areas of Athlone, Wynberg and Claremont, in which research was carried out; and

(4) to demonstrate the diversity with respect to scales of operation, personal wage earning and job seeking experiences of informants who were the target group for this thesis.

The theory of marginalisation is applied to the empirical evidence that was gathered during the period of research. Its usefulness lies in the relative ease with which it incorporates the diverse features that are peculiar to the target group.

The suggestion here is that it is senseless to locate groups such as street traders within paradigms that assume homogeneity. The wide-ranging capital outlays of the street traders and their diverse backgrounds reveal that single tracked concepts such as "casual poor" or "marginal" are of limited use. The ethnographic evidence supports this contention.

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

The approach to the problem in this thesis is two-fold. First it attempts to understand and analyse the features that make street trading in Cape Town more diverse than it is often thought to be. And second, it will attempt to contextualise the data within the holistic framework that is advocated in Chapter One, i.e. the dynamic ongoing process of marginalisation within the context of capitalist reproduction. It is hoped that such an analysis will illuminate and transcend the constrictive tendencies of the narrowly defined paradigms that are discussed in Chapter One. This should contribute towards a broader and deeper understanding of the diversity that is intrinsic to "informal sector"/"petty production" activities such as street trading.

In the light of these intentions, this chapter will address itself to the following :

(i) those features within dualist paradigms that produce homogeneous implications ;

(ii) the basis of my criticisms ;

(iii) the evidence for my contentions ; and

(iv) the problem of overcoming "odd job" classifications in order to present within an integrated framework the diverse and dynamic features that are characteristic of street trading in Cape Town.

"A WAY OUT"

By placing the ethnography firmly in its social context, this thesis will seek to present street trading as an ongoing process of dynamic political-economic interaction. It will set the scene by illustrating the constraints of the dualist paradigms discussed in Chapter One, and then stress the significance of two issues that are often neglected, or mentioned but not examined :

1. timing of appearances amongst street traders and their significance; and

2. scale of operation - whether diverse or not.

Examination of these issues serves as a basis for deeper investigation of the domestic backgrounds of different street traders who were observed and then interviewed. The evidence brought out here brings into focus a range of issues that both expands on the existing information about the "informal sector" as well as contradicting its numerous assumptions and assertions. I therefore take issue with the conventional standpoint of the "informal sector" paradigm, as well as those that emerged from the subsequent paradigms, and I advocate a reformulation of the concept.

THE DEFINITION

In simple terms the "informal sector" concept - in its conventional framework - could be described as a functionalist oriented paradigm, predicated on the theory of economic dualism.

Since its inception by Keith Hart (1971), analysts have produced mainly descriptive accounts of income-generating activities outside of the familiar wage labour system. Street trading, production of petty domestic items and backyard mechanical work among other things were the types of activities that were subsumed within the "informal sector".

As an integral part of the economically disadvantaged masses, the participants and activities within this sector were often described by analysts in very generalised terms. The mistake in these highly descriptive approaches and the treatment of the sector as homogeneous was due largely, as Long and Richardson put it " ... to their similarities in scale, which led them to being treated as essentially undifferentiated in nature" (1979:179). Much of this non-differentiation was to be found in family labour inputs, low capital inputs and the labour intensive nature of the activities. In turn this was attributed to unemployment in general, and to minimal household resources.

Starting from Hart's pioneering study of the "informal sector" in Accra, Ghana (1971), the impression gained is that an activity such as street trading was mainly the job of unemployed migrants who had left their rural areas in search of wage employment. Weeks' (1975) account of the "unenumerated sector" likewise suggested that "informal activities" such as street trading were characterized by self-employment, and were taken on by individuals who hailed from the ranks of the unemployed only. In similar fashion the presentations by Mcgee (1970; 1973) and the studies that derived their inspiration from them (see Bromley, 1979 : 1163) saw street trading as a result of unemployment and as being characterized mainly by self-employment.

Whilst the point about unemployment was not seen as contentious, other trends followed by the writers gave rise to a mass of literature that turned the "informal sector" concept and related concepts into a controversy. Hart, McGee, Bromley et al were widely criticized for not focussing adequately on the political-economic forces that produced this "sector", and for maintaining a dualist standpoint (Moses, 1979; Gerry, 1979; Rogerson and Beavon, 1980).

It is in the light of these criticisms that I approach this thesis, and move towards a reformulation of the concept within the framework of marginalisation theory.

THE SCOPE

This thesis will be of both theoretical and practical importance. In short, theory and empirical evidence brings to light a whole range of issues that are directly related to the high unemployment rate, housing shortage and low educational levels in South Africa (see Chapter Two). On a narrower scale the empirical evidence will contribute towards our knowledge of street trading in particular, and the problems that are reminiscent of the disadvantaged, marginalised masses at large. This opens the way for a more comprehensive analysis into household sizes, varying subsistence efforts, individuals' reasons for taking to street trading and their varying capital outlays, i.e. scales of operation. These are the factors that we ought to know more about, and this thesis presents some data on these issues.

In its entirety thus, this project will contribute to our understanding of street traders/street trading in particular, especially in the South African context, and of the "informal sector" in general.

FOCUS ON TARGET AREAS

As a prelude to the ethnographic data in Chapters Three, Four and Five there needs to be some justification for the selection of the three suburbs - Athlone, Wynberg and Claremont - in which fieldwork was carried out. Two of these three suburbs, Wynberg and Claremont were initially independent municipalities. Due to financial difficulties the administrations of these suburbs merged with central Cape Town through a consolidation process that started in 1913. The 1977 census records Claremont's population as 23 618. Wynberg's population, according to the 1977 census, was 23 618. Athlone was always under the administration of central Cape Town. Its latest population census (1977) revealed a figure of 34 955.

In interviews with numerous informants, however, these population figures appeared rather controversial. According to local estimates in Athlone for instance the population of the entire suburb is supposed to exceed 100 000! During interviews individuals tended to label these official population figures as "lies" and "nonsense", and associated them with alleged attempts by the authorities to continuously hide the truth of conditions in lower-income Group Areas occupied by those classified "Coloured".

Disgust with such issues often led street traders to recall the past - when they were not constrained by the Group Areas Act, when produce was abundantly available and accessible to them, and when they could trade

with relative ease from door to door or from fixed trading spots. But these were the days gone by. Presently their position as street traders and the status of each suburb in which they trade has changed radically. The varying patterns of the organisation of street trader stalls within and on the outskirts of the central business districts (CBD's) of each suburb, and the varying items that were retailed, partly reflects the class structure character of the South African social formation. It was for these peculiarities that the three suburbs were chosen for investigation.

Athlone, which was sub-divided into at least six districts, was a proclaimed Coloured Area, with the vast majority of the housing units belonging to the Cape Town City Council (C.T.C.C.). Most of the individuals resident in the C.T.C.C. housing units were victims of "relocation" after being affected by the Group Areas Act. Most of the street traders who were interviewed in the C.B.D. that was chosen for survey, came from the lower income housing units. Wynberg, on the other hand, was a middle class area that had part of its White and Coloured population ousted from different sections, and then sub-divided by the Group Areas Act for the separate existence of the two communities. Most of the street traders however did not hail from the suburb of Wynberg, but from the surrounding C.T.C.C. housing areas. And finally, Claremont was proclaimed for White residents and businessmen only, after a sizeable area was appropriated from the Coloured population of several thousand.

FOCUS ON TARGET GROUP : ESTABLISHING A "REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE" :

In all three suburbs that were surveyed, roughly 150 stalls appeared on fixed trading spots on an average weekly basis. The most economically

viable trading spots for the street traders lay within and on the immediate outskirts of each C.B.D. It is within the confines of these areas that an examination of street trading took place. In addition, at least 18 itinerant street traders who operated from vehicles, horses and carts and on foot were observed in one suburb. The life situations of a limited number of these itinerant vendors were intensively examined (See Chapter Five).

For reasons which will be discussed later the possibility of selecting and establishing a "representative sample" became an unrealistic venture. The counts that I made of the stalls yielded only approximations as to the average or maximum number that appeared in the target areas during the period of research. As a first step I observed the appearances of the stalls in the three suburbs over several weeks. The lowest number of stalls appeared on every Sunday of the week, and thereafter led to a progressive build-up until Saturday after midday, when the number reached a maximum. I examined stall appearances on an hourly basis for each suburb on different days, and on a day to day basis in different weeks. Subsequently, extensive interviews on the life histories and domestic backgrounds of individuals from numerous stalls were carried out.

The significance of examining the stalls in this manner is that it provides an arbitrary baseline for further investigation into the backgrounds of those observed and subsequently interviewed. For instance, an extensive examination of a selected number of stalls pointed out two things which do not coincide with the view espoused by the paradigms that are criticized in Chapter One. First, not all those who worked in stalls depended on street trading alone for their and

their households' survival; and second, not all those who owned stalls were necessarily non-wage earners. For these reasons those individuals who were stall owners did not necessarily appear on a daily basis. I have, therefore, divided those street traders who were stall holders into :

(i) those who depended mainly on street trading for their household survival, and appeared on a daily basis between 5 to 7 days per week ;

(ii) those who also depended largely on street trading, but mainly for their personal subsistence needs only, and appeared on a part time basis only, i.e. between 1 and 3 days per week; and

(iii) those who traded to supplement their individual and household incomes, and appeared on a part time basis.

The next point of importance was that not all stalls which were extensively examined were managed by their self-employed stall holders or household members only. For instance, there were a number of stalls that were managed by the relatively cheap labour of employees from deprived socio-economic backgrounds, for a cheaper and wider distribution of the products they retailed. However, the pattern of remuneration of employees differed widely. A number of employees depended on their employers for food, shelter and a basic wage, whilst others obtained only one or two of these basic necessities from their employers.

TABLE I : ILLUSTRATING NO OF STALLS ON PARTICULAR DAYS :

ATHLONE	(22/08/81)	:	65
WYNBERG	(05/09/81)	:	45
CLAREMONT	(03/10/81)	:	39

The last point of importance, was that mentioned earlier, i.e. the widely varying stocks and capital outlays, which presents problems in making any general assertions. Most stalls depended largely on regular clients who wished to support them. A degree of trust existed between the street traders - especially the fresh produce dealers and their clientele. To this extent the street traders were assured of earning a minimum regular income.

Amongst the stalls that appeared at highly varying times, those who appeared on a daily basis enjoyed the "best" consumer support. They were mainly the fresh produce traders who retailed fruit, vegetables, fish and flowers. However, the number of days that they traded in the week and the consumer support that they enjoyed still does not warrant any generalization on the socio-economic statuses of those who owned the retail produce.

Most fresh produce stall holders based their expenditure on two related risk calculations :

(i) the volume of trade they expected to carry during the days they set up their stalls. For this purpose, the stall holders usually set aside a weekly float, which they used on a budgetary basis; and

(ii) how much surplus they could afford to store if their sales did not meet their expected targets. Most stalls were fully stocked by Friday midday and ended their weekly activities after Saturday midday. Thus, stalls did most of their business between Friday and Saturday midday.

Other stalls, on the other hand, which retailed non-perishables such as shoes, clothing, and crockery, likewise ended their activities on Saturdays after midday. But their expenditure patterns were more irregular than their fresh produce counterparts although they calculated their income and expenditure on a weekly basis. In addition their appearance days were less frequent, in that they appeared mainly at weekly intervals, most commonly on Saturdays.

There appeared to be great diversity in both the times at which the stalls appeared and in the expenditures/capital outlays the stallholders incurred in stocking them. These highly varying figures, which could be regarded as extreme, illustrate the difficulties in typologising and placing the street traders within a particular social context.

One way of amplifying the point about the widely differing capital outlays is by looking at the variations proportionately through a "sample", and comparing each division/proportion to one another. In this way we avoid any stereotyping or pre-suppositions with regard to scale of operation or domestic backgrounds of street traders.

Table 3.2 presents figures drawn from information about street traders from all three target areas. On the basis of arbitrary distinctions made between the capital outlays of 78 stalls, I would regard the first 25 in category (i) as "big" - seen in relation to their counterparts in categories (ii) and (iii). Thus those in (ii) would be regarded as a category of middle traders; and those in (iii) as a category of small traders.

TABLE II : OUTLINING ESTIMATES OF WEEKLY CAPITAL OUTLAYS OF 78 STALLS

CATEGORY	NUMBER	CAPITAL OUTLAYS
1 "BIG"	25	R1 000 - R6 000
2 "MIDDLE"	27	R 350 - R 999
3 "SMALL"	26	R 20 - R 349

My emphasis on "stall" however should not be misunderstood as an entity that is synonymous with "enterprise". The problem with the concept "enterprise" is that it has often played an instrumental role in creating the pre-conceptions mentioned earlier, i.e. labour force characteristics, scale of operation and type of employment. For lack of a better concept however, the word "enterprise" continues to appear in this thesis. But it should be understood within the context of the criticism that appears above, thus avoiding any misunderstanding. "Enterprise" equals the total of sources generating a household income.

GIVING SOCIOLOGICAL CONTENT TO THE TARGET GROUP

In line with the central organising concept that is espoused in Chapter One, how then am I to give sociological content to the household backgrounds of the stallholders who were extensively interviewed? A brief discussion of writers who have addressed themselves to such questions is presented in Chapter One, but some reference must be made to this topic here, in terms of the choice of a "sample".

With respect to the point on domestic background above, the protagonists of the functionalist and radical paradigms have reached theoretical dead

ends for two reasons. First, the functionalist paradigms have been widely criticized for their highly descriptive tendencies in their presentations of household structures. They do not pay attention to the political-economic forces that play a significant role in influencing household composition, and educational standards of household members. And secondly, whilst radical paradigms stress the significance of the household as the basic unit of production, within the framework of capitalist reproduction, and recommend that it be the basic unit of analysis, they fail to elaborate on, or investigate this issue.

In this respect, whilst I recognize that I oversimplify to the point of broad generalisation, my aim is to emphasise the lack of sociological content given to the background and household structure of individuals within the "informal sector". Following the political-economic presentations of household patterns and economic relationships within households in Lesotho by writers such as Spiegel (1979) and Murray (1981), I endeavour to illustrate the significant peculiarities that characterize the households of stallholders and their employees (where applicable) in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Thus, returning to the fluidity of the appearance patterns of street traders, the "sample" chosen for extensive examination could not be made through random selection. From the total of 149 stalls that appeared on the different days in the three target areas, the capital outlays of 78 stallholders were sought (see Table II). Here again, the highly fluctuating appearance patterns of the stalls, the varying places of residence of the stallholders, and their widely differing capital outlays presented difficulties in establishing a "representative sample". The value of my sample, however, lies in its presentation of a broad cross section of

street traders whose economic statuses within their trading environments cut across significant economic boundaries. I overcome the problem of diversity by dealing with the households of the stallholders within the three-fold framework of Table II. In addition, each of the three target areas is dealt with in a separate chapter. In this way I am able to outline the peculiarities that characterize street trading in the respective target areas, which are in essence Group Areas, and thereafter elucidate the similarities and differences that characterize the numerous stallholders. Additionally, in the different chapters the domestic backgrounds of street traders who were employees are discussed. Through this combined effort a deeper insight is gained into the web of economic relationships that characterize the kinship relations, social relations and social networks of the target group.

THE THESIS IN SUMMARY

In Chapter One of this thesis I focus on the "informal sector" concept and the numerous paradigms that have derived its inspiration from it. A range of supportive statements and criticisms are made in relation to these concepts. It is in the light of this approach that I move towards a reformulation of the "informal sector" concept. The arguments here take issue mainly with the analyses by South African writers.

The theory of marginalisation is the basis on which this reformulation rests. It is within this context that I discuss briefly the South African political-economy of housing, education, employment and the commercial sector, in Chapter Two. I identify them as the main pillars on which the ongoing process of marginalisation rests.

The ethnographic data in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six provides evidence for this contention. In the illustrations it becomes apparent

that no generalised conclusion could be made about the target group discussed here - especially because of their widely varying capital outlays, economic histories and domestic situations. An attempt is made in the conclusion to analyse and give more sociological content to these broad variations.

CHAPTER ONE

THE "INFORMAL SECTOR" : TOWARDS A HISTORY AND REFORMULATION

The problem this Chapter will try to confront can be stated quite simply : within what context are we to locate the socio-economic position of the street traders? Should we restrict the study to a functionalist paradigm that merely espouses a closed micro-level inter-actionist perspective? Or should we insist on a more holistic interpretive approach that illustrates both the micro-level inter-actionist characteristics and the features of the macro situation that produce and determine the nature and level of the street trader's existence?

Discussion of this widespread economic formation initially revolved around the conventional functionalist paradigm of inter-actionist issues. Its persistence in examining the formation on a localised basis failed to uncover several of the vital issues that were and are being highlighted in the more recent marxist analyses.

This approach, i.e. the neo-marxist paradigm, confronted the widespread functionalist notion of homogeneity, and contradicted it - through empirical evidence - by illustrating the diversity within the "informal sector". The evidence associated with this standpoint questions the formal/informal dichotomy with which functionalists tend to dissociate relatively "small scale" activities, especially retail distribution, from those that are larger and more capital intensive. The dualist approach thus failed to examine the inter-connections between "small scale" and capital-intensive patterns of retail distribution.

It further lacked the tools to illustrate the collective macro-level processes that produce the "informal sector", as well as those which

dictate to them what they should produce, what they should retail, and how and where they should carry out this activity.

The more radical theorists thus approached the topic by highlighting the shortcomings of dualist analyses. Initial attempts involved an extension of Marx's notion of petty commodity production. Its aim was to illustrate the subordinate and exploited position of the petty producers as an integral economic force within the capitalist formations. More recently, analysts have extended this approach by devising a framework to illustrate how the subordinate and exploited economic formations are reproduced and perpetuated to assure the maintenance of the capitalist status quo.

The discussion below therefore aims at highlighting the historical basis of the "informal sector", and the consequent interests and theoretical trends that emerged from it. Emphasis here is placed on the value of the radical "capitalist reproduction" paradigm, and is supported by the material in the ensuing chapters.

THE DUALIST DICHOTOMY : A BRIEF ANALYSIS

Anthropologist Keith Hart (1970) was responsible for setting the scene for the widespread and aggressive debates concerning the "informal sector". The argument stemmed however from the already existing notion of economic dualism. For this reason a brief background to the literature that preceded Hart's "informal sector" discussions deserves mention.

The dualist approach to the study of society has a long history. It dates back to the distinctions made by Durkheim (1960) (mechanical-organic), Tönnies (1955)(gemeinschaft-gesellschaft), and Maine (1912)(status contract) to characterise the differences between "traditional" and "modern" societies.

These generalised accounts of society had an influence on writers like Redfield (1930) and Lewis (1968), who saw the tribal to modern transition as an ongoing process. Both Redfield's and Lewis's standpoints however still remained dualist in that they saw the traditional society as being analytically distinct from the modern society. It was in the light of these approaches that the classical dual economy perspective based on a "two-sector" approach was born (Lewis, 1954; Fei and Renis, 1964).

The widespread belief of the classical dualists hinged on the view that in the "traditional sector" low technology and low economic outputs existed before, and continue to exist in the face of, western capitalist penetration and expansion. "Modern sector" activities on the other hand embraced quite the opposite - largely through "foreign influence and investment, the application of advanced technologies, and the advent of sophisticated professional and governmental activities" (Bromley, 1979 : 1033).

This persistent dualist approach placed emphasis on the near total independence of one sector from the other. The notion was reaffirmed in the 1950s by Arthur Lewis's work "Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour" (1954). In this presentation Lewis ignored the destabilising and constrictive devices of capitalist penetration that transformed the indigenous modes of production into an entirely subservient and dependent relationship. The approach, however, received an additional boost from neo-dual economists Fei and Renis (1964) when they, in a similar vein to Lewis, discussed the "Development of the Labour Surplus Economy".

This two-sector analysis has since become "the theoretical basis for an extensive literature and has become almost institutionalized in liberal and neo-classical analysis of Third World Economies" (Bromley, 1979 : 1033).

A wide range of alternative concepts have been produced by analysts of the 1960s to replace the "traditional" and "modern" sector terminology. Concepts from the neo-dualists (Geertz, 1963; Hart, 1971; McGee, 1973) "segments", "upper" and "lower limits", and "formal" and "informal sectors" - were forms that were introduced and became widely applied, with the effect of perpetuating the notion of economic dualism.

The most influential of this broad terminology was Hart's analysis of patterns of urban employment in Ghana. His use of the "formal"/"informal sector" dichotomy was more or less analogous to "modern" and "traditional sectors". Hart's initial functionalist approach (1970) deals with two related dimensions :

(1) the nature of retail enterprises; and

(2) the social relationships that characterize the informal sector in Accra - which is comprised mainly of FraFra migrants.

Subsequent studies by Hart of "informal entrepreneurship" resulted in typically dualist expositions such as "Migration and the Opportunity Structure ..." and "Informal Income Opportunities ..." (1971; 1973). In the former (1970) publication, migration and self-employment subsumed within the "opportunity structure" - is treated with a casualness that clouds any understanding of Ghana's chronic unemployment situation. Hart's use of the word opportunity is misleading in two ways. First, it gives too much credit to an urban social formation that in fact offers little social and economic security for a large number of its indigenous residents and migrants; and second, it neglects emphasis on the contributory role of the indigenous support systems offered by the communal institutions in rural Ghana. Through this inadequacy, Hart's use of the word "opportunity" has the tendency to draw distinct divisions between

the rural and urban settings, thus dragging his approach into the ranks of the dualist school. In the latter publication Hart presents the "informal sector" as one that is rich with potential as an income generating avenue. And he suggests that there is ample self-employment opportunity for those wanting to avoid either their rural communal obligations or wage employment.

These papers, particularly in their titles, tend to suggest that "informal/ self employment" in urban settings is a mere point of transition from the communally-oriented rural settings to the urban formal sector. An additional fallacy in Hart's presentation is the implication that urbanites/ migrants have a choice between self or wage employment - an option which is non-existent for sizeable numbers of the active labour forces in capitalist formations. The "informal entrepreneurs" are in fact a manifestation of an economic system that precludes easy access to wage labour/salary employment (see for example Moser, 1979; Gerry, 1979; Tolosa, 1979).

A later attempt by Hart (1975) to rectify his approach to the "informal sector" in Accra aimed at locating the unit of study within the broader political-economic framework. His recognition of Ghana's increasing reliance on mechanized farming equipment, and contradictory state policies that served to strengthen its capitalist direction, helped him to shift his emphasis slightly away from his earlier, more conventional functionalist standpoint. Hart returned however to the inherently static confines of his earlier approach when he suggested that the FraFra migrants were undergoing a process of mere adaptation from their rural to urban economic settings. Despite the shift in emphasis, he failed to encapsulate and connect the collective forces of exclusion that displace and "marginalise" the communal ruralites and the urban self-employed.

Recognition of this deficiency emphasised the need for a more holistic interpretive analysis by development planners, policy makers and academics. The manner in which individuals, amongst them either liberal or radical, approached the topic, depended largely on their ideological standpoints. The overwhelming majority of analysts shifted their emphasis away from the conventional functionalist standpoint. Emphasis on the "informal sector" was given a new direction that placed it within a broader structural framework by stressing in particular the role of the state. Within this perspective studies, as Long and Richardson point out, generally dealt with three related dimensions :

(1) labour force characteristics, including the nature of jobs and associated socio-demographic characteristics ;

(2) the characteristics of the enterprises; and

(3) the structural determinants (1980 : 178).

International aid institutions, regional planners and academics who scrutinized the "informal sector" from this three point mode of analysis, often differed in their policy recommendations. Their major concern was twofold :

(1) understanding the structural determinants that produced this economic formation; and

(2) suggesting feasible measures to improve the phenomenally high rates of unemployment in Third World countries.

Analysts from institutions like the I.L.O. and P.R.E.A.L.C. (Programma Regional del Empleo para America Latina yel Carib) suggested ways of improving the chronic unemployment situation by advocating changes within the existing political-economic frameworks. The more radical approaches however suggested improvements to the employment situation by restructuring

the political-economic frameworks - even to the extent of replacing existing regimes.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNERS AND THE "INFORMAL SECTOR"

Analysts of the I.L.O.'s W.E.P. (World Employment Programme) adopted the formal/informal dichotomy as the basis for their analysis and policy recommendations. In their crudest form the analysis adopted by the I.L.O. missions produced distinctive socio-economic features that distinguished the "informal" from the "formal" sector. At the risk of reproducing a possibly over-quoted summary, the differences that appeared in the Kenya report are as follows :

"Informal activities are a way of doing things characterised by :

(a) ease of entry ;

(b) reliance on indigenous resources ;

(c) family ownership of enterprises ;

(d) small scale operation ;

(e) labour intensive and adapted technology ;

(f) skills acquired outside the formal school system ; and

(g) unregulated and competitive markets.

Informal sector activities are largely ignored, rarely supported, often regulated and sometimes discouraged by the government.

The characteristics of formal sector activities are the obverse of these, namely :

(a) difficult entry ;

(b) frequent reliance on overseas resources ;

(c) corporate ownership ;

(d) large scale of operation ;

(e) capital intensive and often imported technology ;

(f) formally acquired skills, often expatriate ; and

(g) protected markets (through tariffs, quotas and trade licences)" (I.L.O., 1972 : 6).

Whilst the I.L.O. mission recognized the inter-dependencies between informal and formal sectors, the boundary between the two sectors was essentially arbitrary.

The recommendations that emerged from this exercise however were considered by more radical analysts as inadequate to deal responsibly with the problem of unemployment and poverty. The radical argument is that a fuller and more interpretive perspective is necessary. The standpoint of the I.L.O. analysts toward the informal sector after the three major missions to Columbia (1970) Sri Lanka (1971) and Kenya (1972) hardly improved over the years. Sethuraman (1976 : 80) for instance, still adopted a two sector approach, and persisted with the notion of "traditional" as a guideline for his research. His view that entrepreneurs of the informal sector lack managerial and technical skills, as well as the incentive to seek information on better technology and marketing possibilities places the entire theoretical perspective and the motivation of the I.L.O. in jeopardy.

It is a well known fact that the I.L.O.'s recommendations are in line with principles that are compatible with a social democratic framework. In essence they are not meant to alter the bondage that ties the masses to minority regimes which in turn are supported by the major 'core' countries. To this extent the I.L.O.'s recommendations inevitably become one-sided, to the extent of adopting as fact, value judgements such as that reflected in Sethuraman (1976).

A similar approach to the informal sector was produced in a number of Latin American studies conducted under the auspices of P.R.E.A.L.C. The conclusions drawn from the analyses in the Dominican Republic and San Salvador stressed that informal activities were complementary to large formal enterprises. For this reason they considered the informal sector central to the economy and not peripheral to it. Policy implications in this connection were thus in favour of the recognition, containment, and perpetuation of the informal sector. The line of analysis followed closely Week's suggestion (1975) that development policy should recognize and legalize the informal sector because of its ability to create employment.

The striking similarities in the Latin American approach to those of the I.L.O. reflect the similar ideological standpoints of the analysts. Thus, the Latin American analysts also failed to place adequately the "informal sector" within a more holistic and interpretive background. Inadequacies of both the I.L.O. and P.R.E.A.L.C.'s approaches to the "informal sector" lay in their application of the dualist scheme.

The numerous deficiencies that characterised this approach were time and again pointed out by various analysts. Bromley (1979 : 1033) aptly collated these deficiencies into nine points, which I further summarize below :

1. First the simple and crude dual classification fails to include the essential intermediate categories that provide a more complete picture of ongoing economic processes ;

2. Second, the informal/formal division is logically inconsistent in that it fails to deal with the diversities that characterise and overlap both sectors ;

3. Third, the use of the two sector approach has an inherent tendency to disregard the links that connect both sectors and the continuously fluctuating state of interactions ;

4. Fourth, it is often quite mistaken to think that a single policy is universally applicable. This view disregards the heterogeneity of the informal sector, which requires a wide range of policies for successful implementation ;

5. Fifth, there is a tendency to view the informal sector as an exclusively urban formation. The rural informal sector requires equal recognition ;

6. Sixth, most of the writings which define and use a "formal/informal" classification fail to clarify what the other components of the total systems actually are. Nothing is said for instance on the state sector, the executive/professional sector, and the rural sector ;

7. Seventh, the approach neglects the complex and subordinate relationships of and within the informal sector. It says nothing of the strategies employed by monopoly capitalism to suppress the informal sector ;

8. Eighth, there is the tendency to confuse neighbourhoods, households, people and activities, with enterprises. For instance the inclusion of employment like bricklaying and bus driving, frequently leads not only to confusion but error as well ; and

9. Ninth, there is often the tendency to consider the informal sector and urban poor as synonymous. Not all involved in informal sector activities are poor, and not all of the formal sector are rich.

The distinction does not allow for this widespread overlap.

Thus, the application of this dualist dichotomy not only led to confusion, but also to error in the understanding of economic formations, and a consequent misdirection in policy recommendations. The major shortcomings in the I.L.O.'s and P.R.E.A.L.C.'s analyses were largely due to constraints on their independence. Individual missions of both institutions

"operated within specific guidelines laid down by the National Government concerned, identified different characteristic dimensions and complexities of the employment problem, and recommended related employment strategies"

(Moser, 1979 : 1043).

Given these specific guidelines for carrying out analysis and forwarding economic recommendations, all the missions were able to suggest were changes that could occur within the existing political frameworks, without jeopardising the position of existing regimes and bureaucracies. Central to the different missions' recommendations and suggestions were land reform and redistributive policies that were, ironically, rejected by the very governments that prescribed the guidelines for their research.

The very first mission of the I.L.O. in Colombia had its wide-ranging *"politically utopian recommendations"* (Chenery, 1974) rejected. Similar recommendations in other countries hardly experienced a warmer reception. Analysts could hardly have expected better, knowing the constraints of their guidelines.

In essence, the constraints which they accepted precluded the possibility of analysis being carried out within a more holistic interpretive framework. This is why the propositions of the Latin American and I.L.O. analysts revolved essentially around the theme of "structural imbalances", and suggested ways of achieving a closer articulation between the two

sectors. Souza and Tokman, for instance, advocated a policy aimed at enlarging the market of the informal sector, which in turn would reinforce its links with the formal sector. Their view is that :

"*In order to strengthen these links more cross sector sub-contracting should be promoted. This could be achieved by establishing sub-contracting 'pools' in the private sector by using the State's purchasing power to buy goods in whose production the informal sector plays a major part*" (Souza and Tokman, 1976 : 364).

In similar fashion the I.L.O.'s mission to Kenya produced this suggestion :

"*Measures are recommended to induce firms in the formal sector to sub-contract labour-intensive processes, particularly transport, construction, repair and marketing. Firms could receive tax relief for the training of Kenyan entrepreneurs who would provide these and other productive services on a contract basis .... large firms could be approached to designate processes which they would be willing to have applied by entrepreneurs operating on the estates*" (I.L.O. 1972 : 230).

Nonetheless, within the framework of these recommendations the mission was able to identify key issues within the realm of employment and unemployment, and relate them to the existing inadequacies of the broader economic formations. In this way they evolved a more comprehensive approach to the problems of employment and poverty. The most significant feature to emerge from the I.L.O. studies for instance, was the conceptualisation of "*structural imbalances*", which were considered the crucial factors that contributed towards, and even aggravated the levels of unemployment and poverty. Suggestions that arose from the identification of these macro-level structural imbalances were however limited to merely corrective policies.

This corrective standpoint arose from the mission's hope that the economic imbalances could be rectified by a catalogue of reformist measures. It was for this reason that Leys, in his analysis of Kenya's political economy, raised his argument on a political platform and located it within the context of development planning. He rejected corrective policies

aimed at restructuring the *"structural imbalances"*, and argued that the approach misrepresented the modes of production and their mutual articulation in Kenya. In essence the structural imbalance approach fell short of recognizing the class character of Kenya and the political economic struggle that characterized its capitalist political economic formation. Leys therefore pointed out that the mission in Kenya did not see the country's political economy as

"contradictory reality, but only as an 'imbalance', not a struggle of oppressing and oppressed classes, but more a series of particular 'conflicts' of interests which the leadership would resolve if only from enlightened self interest in favour of the common good" (1975 : 260).

Leys' rejection of the notion of correcting *"structural imbalances"* led the way for Marxists to incorporate in their analyses the important issue of politics whose importance in producing and shaping the activities of the informal sector they recognized.

PETTY COMMODITY PRODUCTION

Whilst recognizing the significance of considering structural imbalances, Marxist approaches have criticized the protagonists of the dualist dichotomy for not adequately presenting the heterogeneous complexities of Third World economies.

Moser, in her argument for Petty Commodity Production as a legitimate alternative basis of analysis to the dualist dichotomy, argues for an identification of

"a continuum of productive activities ... of complex linkages and dependent relationships between production and distribution systems ..." (1979 : 1055).

This alternative suggestion, as Long and Richardson put it, is based on

"a mode of production type of analysis which looks at the forces and social relations of production, the interrelationships between co-existing modes .." (1979 : 182).

Central to this approach was the significant feature of a continuum of productive activities based

> *"upon a model of co-existing modes and forms of production, inextricably connected within an unequal exploitative relationship of domination and subordination"* (Bromley and Gerry, 1979 : 4).

Inspiration for such an analysis was received from Bienefeld's discussion of the urban sector where he proposes a perspective that

> *"entails the identification of different modes of production in the Marxist sense, and concerns itself with the articulation of these modes of production ... in which various modes adapt to each other, each becoming dependent on the other, and each losing its identity and independence to some degree"* (Moser 1979 : 1057).

In summary, the Petty Commodity Production approach contained two essential components. One was the reference to the dominant forces of production that principally defined the political economic relations of ownership and control of the means of production. The second was the subordinated economic formation where activities were essentially dictated and tailored by the dominant forces. Unlike the conventional interlinkage of the political economies of rural areas however, the linkage emphasized in the petty commodity production approach was not characterized by appropriation of surplus product.

The approach was based on a redefinition of Marx's thesis of petty commodity production which had become necessary in the light of the widespread changes that characterized developing countries. Within the confines of this theoretical perspective an attempt was made to illustrate the numerous and diverse linkages that connected "small scale" petty commodity production to the dominant capitalist sector.

What emerged as significant from the petty commodity approach was the essential features of dependence and subordination. Basic to this framework was the exposition of the exploitative modes of production and socio-

economic existence which gave the capitalist political economies a privileged tilt that maintains and perpetuates the status quo. Limitations to this argument however lie in the inherently static and homogeneous picture that it produced. It does not take into consideration the ongoing historical processes that produce a range of economic strategies that are peculiar to particular periods in time and place. It is for this reason that Gerry for instance (1978 : 1980) rejected the petty commodity production approach as residual. He argued that petty commodity production as an economic activity is in a state of constant change. This fluctuating ongoing process Gerry describes as a two-featured transition - which he supports with data from his fieldwork in Dakar. The transition to proletarianisation is the major feature, and movement in the opposite direction, i.e. the transition towards entrepreneurship, the minor feature.

Gerry's data suggests that there are limitations on the petty producers' chances of evolving material and productive bases that are commensurate with the accumulation of capital. Gerry's conclusion thus spelt out that petty producers are

> *"trapped in an involutionary impasse, able only to reproduce their conditions of existence, often at the expense of their own standard of living and labour remuneration"* (R.A.P.E., 1975 : 16).

The significance of Gerry's contribution lies in his important shift away from the numerous attempts to overcome conceptual difficulties in informal sector analysis. He provides a new approach that illustrates the dynamics of petty production within a dialectical framework of capitalist processes. Most significant within his theoretical paradigm is the appropriate location of the fluctuating processes of petty production, its processual subordinate links to the broader political-economic formation, and the significant move towards analysis and policy implications that emerged from it.

In this way the ongoing processes that produce, maintain and perpetuate the marginalised masses are more clearly discernible and understood.

APPROACHES TO THE "INFORMAL SECTOR" BY SOUTH AFRICAN ANALYSTS

A recent attempt by local (South African) analysts Rogerson and Beavon (1980) to reformulate the "informal sector" approach through the combined use of existing information on this concept and that of petty commodity production bases its initial proposition on the concept of *"casual poor"*. Their contention that the *"casual poor"* approach will result in *"the prospect of a new focus on poverty in development studies"* (p.177) hardly rests on a foundation that could be considered either contributory, or an extension to the already existing paradigms. Lack of a more comprehensive outline for the *"casual poor"* produces an inevitable regression to the stagnant framework of the dualist dichotomy. Application of this concept, however, in its present formulation - based essentially on the absence of a moderate degree of security - will reproduce the misleading homogeneous characteristics of the marginalised masses, a feature that petty commodity production and the marginalisation approaches are attempting to avoid.

What is needed is therefore a move towards an integrated interpretive approach that illustrates the ambiguous dynamic characteristics of the informal sector and its stagnant position within the ongoing processes of capitalist accumulation, production and reproduction.

THE MARGINALISATION - CAPITALIST REPRODUCTION APPROACH

As a theoretical extension to the marginal and marginality concepts, Gerry (1979 : 1148) wrote of the marginalisation concept as one which

"describes and brings together a multiplicity of mechanisms and phenomena, each concretely linked to and operating as a clear manifestation of the

global relationship between the dominant capitalist mode of production and the mass of the population in each country in which it holds sway. Consequently, it would be more appropriate to examine the current situation of urban petty commodity producers, artisans, traders and casual workers NOT in terms of marginality itself, the incidence of individual or collective deprivation (i.e. the process of marginalisation) but rather to make the crucial connections between the life situations of these urban workers and the mechanisms (necessarily linked to the ongoing process of capitalist accumulation), through which they are exploited, partially proletarianized, impoverished and, if you will, marginalised".

It is in the spirit of this definition that I adopt the use of the marginalisation concept, and expand on it in two ways. First I focus briefly on those aspects which I consider to be the main pillars of the marginalisation process within the South African social formation (see Chapter Two). And second, I make the "*crucial connections*" between these "*mechanisms*" and the life situations by discussing case studies in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six.

The major tendency of Gerry's marginalisation - capitalist reproduction approach serves to relate the co-existence and inter-action of the petty and capitalist producers, and simultaneously to bridge the gap that assumes their empirically observable and heuristic separateness. Significant features to emerge from his argument were the effective forces of economic exclusion that kept the marginalised masses at a level of stagnation, and further precluded the possibilities of improving their socio-economic position.

Whilst Gerry's approach leads to sensible policy recommendations, it neglects analysis of the most basic unit of production, the household unit. It should however be stated in opposition to Long and Richardson that it is Gerry's neglect and not a theoretical limitation in the Marxist framework that produced this shortfall (Long and Richardson, 1979 : 186).

A recent attempt within the capitalist reproduction perspective aimed at incorporating the household as an integral feature of investigation within its broader framework (Wilkinson and Webster, 1981 : 6-12). This thrust towards contextualising the household

" ... *within the web of kinship relations, social networks, voluntary associations and community and class relations which condition its role as the basic unit of individual consumption and reproduction in capitalist society*" (1980 : 6)

serves as a legitimate "*extension*" to the capitalist reproduction approach that preceded it. The advantage of the specific inclusion of the household unit lies in its capacity to produce a more extensive analysis of the relations of production characteristic of the South African social processes.

In its entirety however, the basis on which the extension to the capitalist approach was formulated neglected several vital issues that are central to the understanding of informal activities as strategies for survival within the South African social formation. Most significant is the issue of structural unemployment, which appeared to have no influence on the formulation process. Neglect of the central role played by the low cost of wage labour led to neglect of an equally important feature that contributes towards the increasing number of participants in the "*informal sector*". Failure to incorporate structural unemployment, and the heterogeneous features that characterise household units will inevitably reproduce the static homogeneous implications of the "*casual poor*" concept. Restriction of the analysis to household units "*where consumption falls below the minimum subsistence levels ...*" (p.12) illustrates the inevitable line of argument. In addition a lack of empirical evidence to support their formulation further jeopardises its applicability to the South African formation. Their repudiation of Gerry and Birkbeck's use of "*small scale enterprises*" was restricted to a mere criticism of the concept. It did not suggest an alternative that could be adapted and made applicable to local conditions within the South African formation.

APPLICATION OF THE CAPITALIST REPRODUCTION APPROACH TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN FORMATION

In attempting to evolve a conceptual paradigm that at least approximates a solution to the problems of informal sector analysis within the context of the South African political economy, we need to address the peculiar attributes that constitute its formation.

But first, it needs to be emphasized that whilst the awakening of the informal sector studies in Southern Africa had generated widespread interest, it often misrepresented the kind of analysis that was needed. by economists Truu and Black (1980), there appeared no attempt to contextualize this "*vital*" urban economic formation, i.e. the "*informal sector*" within the political economic boundaries that produced it. Their approach was essentially descriptive and rendered no implications that could be of importance to policy planners.

Quite the opposite approach however is represented by Dewar and Watson (1981) who made a significant contribution to the understanding of the essential features that characterize the informal entrepreneurs of the Cape Peninsula. Their recognition of structural unemployment, and of the restrictive legislative devices that constrain the informal sector's levels of operation illuminates an area that often receives little or no emphasis. Clear illustration of these constrictive devices provides an accurate picture of the forces of exclusion, as opposed to the often generalized and less specific presentations of informal sector analysis.

The policy recommendations that emerged from the analysis by Dewar and Watson however represented no improvement on the catalogue of corrective devices which the I.L.O. missions had made in their respective target areas. Worse still, their approach paid scant attention to the deplorable

domestic existence of their target groups.

Its suggestions of simply removing certain constrictive legislative devices, and creating more employment opportunities to ameliorate chronic unemployment is in fact a step backwards from the I.L.O. mission's emphasis on R.w.G. (Redistribution with Growth).

Fundamental to an analysis of an exploitative formation such as that of South Africa is the identification of the multiple factors that produce the formation, dictate and shape economic interactions and which keep them in a state of perpetual marginality. The approach therefore needs to be based on the collection of super-structural and institutional devices that constitute a complex set of mechanisms that influence the ongoing process of marginalisation. Analysis must refer not only to the restrictive legislation related to retail distribution, but also to the forces which, together with legislation, dislocate the masses, maintain a low-wage labour force, and provide inadequate educational facilities to ensure a continuous dependendancy relationship.

The marginalisation concept as it is applied here follows Gerry's refutation of the "*marginal*" and "*marginality*" concept, because of its

> "*inherent and imminent danger of dragging its protaganists into sterile and counterproductive dualism (viz. marginalized versus integrated, etc) without permitting them to discover the crucial dialectic which connect the twin poles of urban production and drives the system onwards*" (1979 : 1148).

The "*system*" within the South African political economic context is a peculiar situation of White domination, which is actively supported by several of the core nations. It is against this background - i.e. of White domination, contextualised within the "*global system*" - that the processes of marginalisation should be understood.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY OF EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, HOUSING AND SMALL BUSINESS

"The political factor remains the unchallengeable, unalterable control of the South African society in general and the South African economy in particular by its White people" (Horwitz, 1969 : 3).

How is this possible? Within a world whose countries are supposedly committed to the eradication of racial dominance and prejudice, and which rests on economic inter-dependence for its survival, can any region perpetuate racial discrimination and yet survive amidst widespread revulsion? Can South Africa for that matter espouse an exploitative ideology against all humanitarian sentiments and operate as an ostracized island from the international community? Is the South African political economy so supported by member countries of the international community that her exploitative formation is of no real interest to those who collaborate with its regime?

Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to indulge in elaborate answers to the questions above, it is worth commenting on features that are of significance to them. Considering South Africa's economic alliance with the major core countries, viz. Britain, U.S.A., France, West Germany and Japan, the answer to the last question above would appear to be in the affirmative. However, whilst the major core countries articulate abhorrence to South Africa's internal policies, they frequently and openly also express approval for the existence of its exploitative formation. Fortune Magazine, for instance, spelt it out :

"The Republic of South Africa has always been regarded by foreign investors as a gold mine, one of those rare and refreshing places where profits are great and problems small. Capital is not threatened by political instability or nationalisation. Labour is cheap, the market is booming, the currency hard and convertible" (Ann and Neva Seidman, 1977 : 76).

In essence this statement emphasises the basis on which core countries are connected to the South African political economy. Characterized by a system of inequality, based on racial subordination and repression, the South African formation rests essentially on its relative political/ military strength, which is heavily supported by the core countries. Such are the characteristics, as Bergeson (1982 : 26), and Cohen (1982 : 62-70) for instance, point out, of the capitalist core areas and their "regional sub-centres". The broader implications of this are that a regional sub-centre such as South Africa, depends largely on external forces to help maintain, perpetuate and reproduce its exploitative social formation (Seidman and Maketgla, 1981).

On a more academic level, scrutinizing national social formations within a broader global network serves as a useful extension to the marxist/neo-marxist paradigm. The conventional Marxist view of the ownership and control of the means of production by private and state capitalists has proved too restrictive for an adequate assessment of wide scale exploitation.

An important limitation is its neglect of the integral position that the national social formation, or "*regional sub-centre*", occupies within the global context. Similarly, as Bergeson (1982) has argued, the neo-marxist paradigm, especially in the trend of Wallerstein (1977), Frank (1979) and Amin (1974) concentrates on the issues of the socio-economic relations between and amongst the dominant and subordinate groups, but within a national context only.

Thus in confronting the co-existence of core countries and regional sub-centres, especially within an anthropological context, we need to place emphasis on the processes of articulation that connect the twin poles of

capitalist reproduction. More importantly, however, we need to narrow our focus to concentrate on issues that are peculiar to the national formation and the micro level unit of investigation in question. This approach, of simultaneously confronting the macro and micro situations, helps to establish a legitimate connection to both "sub-formations".

In the case of South Africa we thus need to address ourselves to key issues in the ongoing process of marginalisation and the dependency relationships that are central to the peculiarities of its capitalist reproduction. On a national level, the issues of employment, education, housing and monopolistic/oligopolistic capitalism are considered to be most significant, and are discussed in this Chapter. On the micro-level, the focus narrows to that very widespread economic activity which I consider to be functional to capitalist reproduction : street trading.

EMPLOYMENT

South Africa's exploitative employment policies date back to the successive processes of peasantisation, depeasantisation and proletarianisation during the colonial period. In the period of peasantisation the indigenous population showed evidence of agricultural competence. The resultant European concern, plus the need for cheap labour led to a series of constrictive legislative devices over the decades that saw to the entrenchment of "White"* dominance. Hence, the 1852-53 Native Affairs Commission made the very revealing statement that :

"The Kaffers are now much more insubordinate and impatient of control, they are rapidly becoming rich and independent" (Bundy, 1979 : 171).

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* *The terms "White", "Indian", "Coloured" and "African" are not used descriptively. They are used strictly as legal categories - see Population Registration Act (No 30, 1950).*

Vast labour shortages on "White" farms and in growing industries, the refusal of the indigenous populations to leave the communal settings for wage labour, and the established peasantry that was not prepared to relinquish their position to become labourers, urged the Colonists to embark on a strategy that led to an inhuman and radical disruption of the relatively harmonious co-existence between the indigenous structures and the growing market economy. The idea was to restrict the mobility of the indigenous people to "locations" that were economically unproductive The Locations Commission of 1846 initiated this move when they stated that they should

"so crowd the kaffirs as to compel them to leave their location and seek work" (Bundy, 1979 : 169).

This set in motion the process of depeasantisation and the formation of a proletariat. It assured the expanding capitalist economy, particularly after the late 19th century mineral discoveries, of an abundant cheap labour supply. As the growing needs of the process of capitalist expansion in South Africa demanded more cheap labour, the indigenous peoples were confined to ever smaller and more overcrowded fragments of territory (nGubane, 1976).

Over the years, however, the incapacity of the capitalist economy to absorb the growing labour force led to embarrassing labour surpluses. Mass exoduses from the unproductive rural "locations" and the growing numbers of unemployed "Coloureds" and "Indians" added to the ranks of the "structurally unemployed" (Leggasick, 1977; Maree, 1978; Simkins, 1981).

The privileged position of the "White" labour force was entrenched as early as 1922. Although the strike by "White" tradesmen to bar "African" workers from skilled labour was initially suppressed by the government of the time,

it was immediately and successfully used as a tool by the right wing opposition party to muster support from the "White" electorate to replace the existing government. The industrial colour bar that emerged thereafter was applied not only to the indigenous people but to those classified "Coloured" and "Indian" as well. As Maree aptly summarized the peculiarity of the South African employment situation :

> *"The industrial colour bar generates further unemployment by creating settlements of skilled labour in the economy and gives it a twist so that the burden of unemployment falls mainly on Africans, Coloured and Indians"* (1978 : 1).

TABLE 2.1 : UNEMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES

	BLACKS	ALL RACES
1. Government		
(a) Census	1946: 134 000 (4,6%) 1951: 118 000 (3,8%) 1960: 328 000 (8,4%) 1970: 284 000 (5,1%)	
(b) C.P.S.	1979: 495 000 (9,2%)	
(c) E.D.P.		1977: 900 000 (10,6%)
2. Sadie	1976: Males: 170 000 4 - 8% : 338 000 Underemployed: 1970 : 21% 1975 : 25,5%	
3. van der Merwe	1976: 528 000 - 924 000 (7,7 - 13,5%)	L H 1970: 269 000 301 000 1973: 482 000 740 000 1976: 74 600 1 142 000
4. Simkins		1960: 1 236 000 (18,3%) 1970: 1 758 000 (20,4%) 1977: 2 301 000 (22,4%)
5. Loots		V HIGH HIGH 1970: 1 019 000 448 000 MEDIUM LOW 251 000 58 000 V HIGH HIGH 1976: 1 856 000 1 414 000 MEDIUM LOW 1 174 000 1 021 000 VH = 18,6% H = 14,2% M = 11,8% L = 10,2% 1977: over 100 000 (10,15%)
6. Spandau, A		1977: 1 500 000
7. Jacobs, G	1978: 2 000 000	
8. De Lange, R	1978: 2 000 000 (25%)	

SOURCE : DEWAR AND WATSON, 1981 : 11

TABLE 2.2 : PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL LABOUR FORCE BY CATEGORY : NON-AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

	1960			1975		
	WHITE	NON WHITE	TOTAL	WHITE	NON WHITE	TOTAL
WHITE COLLAR WORKERS :						
HIGHLY SKILLED	30,4	5,3	15,0	36,3	10,2	20,1
SEMI-SKILLED	67,6	15,3	35,5	62,3	21,6	37,0
UNSKILLED	2,0	79,4	49,5	1,4	68,2	42,9
BLUE COLLAR EMPLOYEES :						
SKILLED	42,6	1,3	9,2	45,5	2,1	8,2
SEMI-SKILLED	50,7	51,5	51,4	52,1	52,9	52,8
UNSKILLED	6,7	47,2	39,4	2,4	45,0	39,0

TABLE 2.3 : PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LABOUR FORCE IN NON-AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

	1960		1975			
	WHITE	NON WHITE	TOTAL	WHITE	NON WHITE	TOTAL
WHITE COLLAR WORKERS	60,3	36,5	43,0	69,4	37,9	45,8
BLUE COLLAR WORKERS	39,7	63,5	57,0	30,6	62,1	54,2

SOURCE : DE VRIES, 1979 : 11

In Table 2.1 the low estimates of unemployment furnished by the government need to be questioned in the face of the widely differing figures produced in Tables 2.2 and 2.3. The suspicious and inevitably questioning attitude towards the government census on employment statistics is unavoidable, especially since the Department of Statistics' evasive attitude in the 1970 census. Officials were instructed to record members of the active labour force in the "African" community as employed, even if they were not. For instance, those who were unemployed, but had previously occupied positions as domestic workers or labourers were to be recorded as being employed in such occupations (W.I.P. 1980). It was for this reason that Professor J. Keenan said :

> *"Official statistics on unemployment were 'unrealistically' low. They excluded the under-employed, the chronically unemployed and people ruled out because they were too young or too old, they were in fact looking for work"* (R.D.M. Nov 4 1982).

Tables 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate the vast discrepancies between "White" and "Non-White" in the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour categories. The revision of the 1924 Industrial Conciliation Act in 1956, and the simultaneous introduction of the Work Reservation Act safeguarded the "White" labour force against unemployment; and at the same time left employers free to discriminate against "Non-Whites" without fear of being penalized. Between 1956 and 1975 at least 28 work reservation orders were introduced to protect against "White" unemployment, and to ensure *"by virtue of the Industrial Colour Bar"* as Maree argued, that "Whites" retain "... *a near monopoly on skilled jobs* ..." (1978 : 3).

Continuous and widespread revulsion against these forms of persistent and blatant exploitation is reflected in the recent country-wide strikes, involving thousands of workers. A concerted effort by a government appointed Commission of Inquiry in 1977 to "improve" the labour situation

was considered by both liberal and radical academics, as well as the progressive labour unions, as an exercise in futility.

The Commission's advocacy of management-appointed liaison committees in preference to popularly elected representatives from labour unions was regarded by the workers as unacceptable and uncompromising. A S.A.L.D.R.U. critique thus rightly commented that the 1977 Commission's recommendation was merely a concessionary device that was hardly meant to improve the exploitative "labour situation". The management-appointed committees are to ensure a minimum amount of work disruption due to strikes. They, i.e. the workers, are to use these nominated committees as a platform to air their grievances. It is these very proposals that gave rise to widespread dissatisfaction amongst workers and consequent strikes. In 1982 more than 141 000 workers (none of them 'White") took part in 298 strikes and stoppages. The number, i.e. 141 000, showed an increase of 50 000 workers involved in strikes and stoppages (Varsity, 42 : 4 : 27 April 1983 : p.10). But most, if not all, of these protests were declared illegal by the amended Riotous Assemblies Act (No 30, 1974), and the popular representatives were often singled out and prosecuted under the Intimidation Act (No 72, 1982). The continuous use of such oppressive legislative devices, carried out by a well-armed police force, is indicative of the South African regime's intention not to relieve the lot of the "Non-White" labour force, and to keep them at a subservient level.

EDUCATION

Like the constrictive and exploitative employment situation, education in South Africa is part of

"*an overall, well conceived doctrinaire policy of systematically maintaining white hegemony over the blacks so that the former may perpetually exploit the latter*" (Nyaggah, 1970 : 59).

In a survey conducted in 1977 in Durban by the Department of Economics it was found that employees' low productive levels, especially amongst "Africans", were largely attributable to their low educational levels. More than 50% of the male "African" employees had received no formal eduation, whilst 30% had received only primary education (Dewar and Watson, 1981 : 17).

As early as 1922 "African" education was "encouraged" by the Union government when it imposed a £1 tax on all "Africans" to establish the Native Development Account. It was the Union government's hope that it would fund *"maintenance, extension and improvement of educational facilities amongst natives"* (Nyaggah, 1980 : 61). This did not, however, mean a secure place for "educated" "Africans" in a changing political environment.

Policy planners right up to the time of National Party entrenchment in 1948, adopted the paradoxical role of "keeping the Africans in their places", i.e. geographically and socially, as well as allowing them some economic mobility, and broader scope for educational "advancements".

Attitudes towards "African" education become more clearly defined when the fascist sentiments of the Boers were entrenched in the National Party - whose founder, J.B. Hertzog, stressed that his party *"represented Boer interests first and those of other Whites second"*. No mention was made of people who were not "White".

An even more right wing stand emerged when the Nationalist "puritans" expelled Hertzog from the party for his frequent consultation with his British counterparts. Through their secret society, the Broederbond, the Boers formed the Purified Nationalist Party and thereafter successfully recaptured control of South Africa's political, economic and social institutions.

This saw the start of institutionalized segregation in South African education, as well as a gradual erosion in its quality, funds and "African" students enrolment. The discrepancies were summarized by Muriel Horrell in the South African Dialogue :

"There has been very large growth in school enrolment; but for every 100 White children in secondary classes there are still only 73 Indians; 34 Coloured children, and 13 Africans".

The discrepancies in provision are very stark as figures on expenditure demonstrate :

"For every R100 spent annually on the education of White pupils roughly R28 is spent on Indians; R26 on Coloured pupils and R6 on Africans" (Nyaggah, 1980 : 75).

The South African government is able to administer the complex educational pattern it created, through separate departments, for its four classified communities - administering children, teachers, curricula, buildings and all other subsidiary activities related to educational administration. This figure does not include the "independent homelands" of Ciskei, Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda (see van der Horst, 1981 : 66). In this way the government is able to implement more effectively its policy of unequal consideration for the different population groups.

Disparities in the educational system stemmed initially from the Eiselen Commission Report and the Bantu Education Act of 1953 that aimed to legitimize the sectarian policy by constructing "Africans" as

"an independent race requiring an education system in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitude, and their needs under the ever changing social conditions are taken into consideration" (Eiselen Report, 1951; Nyaggah, 1980 : 64).

This sectionalist policy is applied just as much to those classified "Coloured" and "Indian". The disparities in the enrolments and expenditure on the education of the different "communities", as seen in the table below, expresses the government's lack of concern for those not classified 'White".

TABLE 2.4 : SCHOOL ENROLMENTS, 1950 - 78 (THOUSANDS)

YEAR	WHITE	INDIAN	COLOURED	AFRICAN	TOTAL	% WHITE
1950	506	55	214	780	1 555	32,5
1960	692	128	305	1 502	2 627	26,3
1970	864	163	515	2 741	4 283	20,2
1978	956	208	722	4 447	6 333	15,1

TABLE 2.5 : EDUCATION EXPENDITURE, 1950 - 78 (MILLIONS)

YEAR	WHITE	INDIAN	COLOURED	AFRICAN	TOTAL	% WHITE
	R	R	R	R	R	
1950	55,8	1,8	7,2	11,6	76,4	73,0
1960	141,0	5,5	16,5	19,6	182,6	77,2
1970	384,6	18,5	52,3	58,4	513,8	74,9
1978	623,5	60,8	144,2	241,4	69,9	58,2

TABLE 2.6 : EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL, 1953 - 77

YEAR	WHITE		INDIAN		COLOURED		AFRICAN	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
1953	128	100	40	31	40+	31	18	14
1960	145	100	?		59++	41	12,5	8,6
1968	228	100	70	31	?		14,5	6,4
1975	644	100	190	28	150	22	42	6,5
1977	654	100	220	34	157,6	24	48,5	7,4

SOURCE : VAN DER HORST (TABLE 2.4) 1981 : 77
(TABLE 2.5) 1981 : 78
(TABLE 2.6) 1981 : 79

KEY : + FIGURE FOR COLOURED AND INDIAN COMBINED
++ FIGURE FOR CAPE PROVINCE ONLY
? NO FIGURE AVAILABLE

Frustration over the exploitative education system reached its climax in 1976 when the students of Soweto protested, and when Indian and Coloured students throughout the country joined in solidarity with them. The situation repeated itself in 1980 on a national scale, when Coloured pupils in the Cape Peninsula protested that the content of their syllabi was designed to keep them as labourers, and not to prepare them for rewarding employment positions.

In both nation-wide protests of 1976 and 1980 the riot squad, specially trained to deal with urban unrest, often violently thwarted the attempts by students to politicize and mobilize members of their communities. The fascist sentiments of the White bureaucracy was repeated in these protests when the riot squad freely "*behaved and spoke in a manner that suggested Coloureds and Blacks were inferior and uncivilized*" (Cape Times, 27/11/1976). During August and September of that year, riot police came to be viewed with particular fear, and were labelled as "*die terroriste*" (the terrorists) for their unruly behaviour (van Heynigen, Phillips and Killick, n.d. p.41).

The subsequent government-appointed Commission of Inquiry into Education recognized the discrepancies in South Africa's educational system. But the reformist/corrective measures that emerged hardly approached the drastic alterations so urgently needed to integrate and equalize educational standards.

HOUSING

Equally relevant to the enforcement of a dependency relationship in the ongoing process of marginalisation is the vital issue of state-funded housing.

The estimate that less than 20% of the country's population receive as much as 75% of its national income is illustrative of an issue such as home ownership (van der Horst, 1981 : 90). Over the next two decades, i.e. 1980s and 1990s, it is estimated that the housing backlog in South Africa would reach at least 4 million (Nusas, 1982 : 18).

The South African bureaucracy successfully articulates this dependency relationship through its restrictive allocation of land and housing. For the "Africans" - who constitute at least 70% of South Africa's total population, the cumulative Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 allocated only 13% of the country (broken up into ethnic homelands) for their occupation. Overcrowding and a minimum amount of agricultural land within these homelands led to a steady deterioration in productive capabilities, consequently making them less economically viable.

In 1923 the Native (Urban Areas) Act placed responsibility for urban "African" accommodation in the hands of public authorities. The Act was later amended in 1945 as the Black (Urban Areas) Consolidated Act - to extend the state's provision of sub-economic housing to those legally employed in the urban areas. The workings of this Act were investigated by the government-appointed Riekert Commission in 1977. A major recommendation to emerge two years later, i.e. in 1979, from this investigation was that the entry of "Africans" into the urban areas should in future be dictated by the availability of employment and housing. The most significant of the recommendations is the 99 year leasehold for "Africans" who wish to build their own homes. But such a "privilege" is only to be granted within specified urban "locations".

On a more localised level however, "Africans" in the Western Cape, particularly in Cape Town, are subject to even more restrictive devices

to ensure that their numbers do not swell to equal the "Coloureds" or "Whites". The Coloured Labour Preference Policy and the stringent implementation of Influx Control Regulations effectively led to a freeze on the erection of "African" family housing in the Western Cape (West, 1982 : 464).

With the help of such segregative policies the government was and is able to marginalize the bulk - ± 70% - of its population. This in turn assured its local and trans-national investors of vast supplies of cheap unskilled and semi-skilled labour.

In similar fashion the government instituted equally constrictive legislative devices aimed at containing the "Indian" and "Coloured" populations. The amended Slum Acts of 1934 and 1937, the Housing Acts of 1952 and the Group Areas Act were the chief means implemented by the bureaucracy to impose its authority and keep the majority of the "Coloureds" and "Indians" at a marginalized level.

TABLE 2.7 : FAMILIES MOVED IN TERMS OF THE GROUP AREAS ACT BY THE END OF 1979

	TOTAL	CAPE	TRANSVAAL	NATAL	OFS
WHITE FAMILIES	2 234	732	688	814	-
COLOURED FAMILIES	74 909	58 366	10 930	3 313	2 300
INDIAN FAMILIES	35 113	2 581	10 242	22 290	-

TABLE 2.8 : FAMILIES STILL TO BE MOVED IN TERMS OF PROCLAMATIONS UNDER THE GROUP AREAS ACT - END OF 1979

	TOTAL	CAPE	TRANSVAAL	NATAL	OFS
WHITES	195	114	6	75	-
COLOUREDS	11 744	7 166	2 252	2 262	64
INDIANS	11 115	1 038	2 221	7 856	-

SOURCE : VAN DER HORST, 1981 : 98

Whilst both the "Coloured" and "Indian" communities have been equally affected by the Group Areas Act, the "Coloured" community appears to experience the worst effects of this law.

The findings of S.P. Cilliers (Dewar and Ellis, 1979) pointed out that at least 47% of the lower income groups within the "Coloured" community could not afford the conventional sub-economic housing. M.L. Fouche of the Department of Community Development boasted that the average production of 12 018 housing units per annum prior to 1977 increased to an average of 13 800 over the following three years. This figure, however, fell far short of the desperately needed target suggested by the Theron Commission, i.e. 33 000, to catch up with the massive backlog in the area most densely populated by "Coloureds", the Western Cape. This figure is vastly in excess of Cilliers' estimate that 5 000 units were required to cater for the yearly increase in population, apart from the 56 300 household units needed to bridge the gap. This phenomenal discrepancy leaves a huge "gap" unfilled.

In two of the biggest Group Areas occupied by the "Indian" community, Lenasia (Transvaal) and Chatsworth (Durban, Natal), the waiting lists for Council housing accommodation in 1979 were $\pm$ 42 000 and $\pm$ 24 000, respectively. Applicants had to wait for up to 10 years before they could qualify for houses (van der Horst, 1978).

More generally, the number of "Whites" to be moved under the Group Areas Act as shown in Table 2.8 compared with other groups demonstrates the one-sided and prejudiced actions of the South African regime.

THE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (S.B.D.C.) AND CAPITAL-INTENSIVE RETAIL

The very severe shortcomings and inadequacies of South Africa's employment, educational and housing policy measures is in part an effect of integrated attempts to subjugate, reproduce and perpetuate the bureaucracy's grand design of "White" supremacy.

The regime's supposed intentions of ameliorating the exceedingly high unemployment rate are being implemented through the creation of a finance corporation designed to encourage the development of small businesses. The Small Business Development Corporation (S.B.D.C.) has, since its creation in 1979, been blessed with R63 million from at least 82 companies, including the trans-nationals (Argus, 18/2/1981). Its target of R138 million over the following five years, was welcomed by the protagonists of the present political-economic order with strong supportive statements. The editor of the Argus Finance argued that :

"It costs between R20 000 and R50 000 to create one job in the capital intensive sector of the economy. But by lending this money to small businesses it should be possible to create anything between 20 and 50 jobs and provide support for between 100 and 150 people" (Finance Argus, 29/11/1980).

At an economic conference the Prime Minister, P W Botha, associated the S.B.D.C. with his "total strategy" framework when he said that it is

"part of economic co-operation in the constellation of Southern African States" (Argus, 27/11/1981).

The most strikingly truthful statement that conforms to the "capitalist reproduction" paradigm, and affirms the regime's intention was made by the man who started off the S.B.D.C., Anton Rupert,

"that encouraging small capitalist enterprises is a safe way of ensuring stability and survival of the larger capitalist entrepreneurs" (W.I.P., 1980).

The obvious intention of favouritism towards capital-intensive production and distribution centres is glaringly reflected in Rupert's statement.

By way of comparison, similar attempts to establish and strengthen capitalism were made explicit when Eugene Ruyle's work in Japan revealed that

"*feudal status distinctions have been made by the Japanese ruling class in establishing and strengthening capitalism, and in the process the feudal outcasts have been perpetuated as a disadvantaged minority group within the Japanese proletariat*" (1979 : 217).

Similar features characterize South Africa, and, like the Japanese feudal outcasts, a similar fate awaits the newcomers to the small business formation. Recent disputes between small and capital-intensive enterprises reveal some of the problems. Phillip Krawitz illustrates how small traders are threatened by a three-way squeeze :

1. they have no bargaining power over prices from manufacturers who are aware of their precarious position and therefore refuse to entertain price reductions ;
2. small traders cannot compete with chain stores because of their inability to get exclusive merchandise ; and
3. they are perpetually faced with non-deliveries and insufficient supplies.

Krawitz points out the dominant position of capital-intensive distribution centres over their suppliers, saying that :

"*No manufacturer in his right mind would mess around a giant like the Woolworths-Truworths organization. The result is a strengthening of the chains and a weakening of the independent retailers - an alarming situation*" (Argus, 9/11/1981).

These statements were a response to complaints that chain stores were bullying their suppliers into price concessions for their bulk-buys.

An attempt by the Board of Trade and Industries to launch an investigation into their accusation resulted in conflict at a meeting when representatives of the chain stores reacted sharply. They attempted to block the Board of Trade probe by insisting that there was no case for an investigation, and suggested :

1. that an enquiry be made into the supplies pipeline ;
2. that their negotiations with manufacturers to win so-called "confidential discounts" does not mean a squeeze on prices to below cost or the exercise of awesome powers. "It means hard bargaining - tough but clean" ; and
3. that the more discounts the chain stores can get from the manufacturers, the more they can pass on to the consumer.

Those in favour of the probe argued for an enquiry on the following grounds : First, their view was that the clubbing together of chain stores to fix prices by collusive agreements would cause prices to spiral and squeeze out the small trader. Second, chain stores are forcing the profit margins of the manufacturers too low, thus threatening the viability of production centres; and thirdly, small manufacturers are finding it increasingly difficult to match the discounts given by larger manufacturers, placing them in an even more precarious position (Report by Michael Chester, Argus Finance, 10/3/1979).

In response to this a statement from the Secretary of Commerce pledged to investigate the large discounts given to big bulk-buyers - because of the adverse effects on smaller dealers. The investigation was to be carried out under the provisions of the Monopolies Act (Argus 28/8/1979).

In reaction to this threatened probe the Competition Board defended the larger chain stores' monopoly in the market, and claimed that the accusations were unfounded (Argus, 3/10/1981).

STREET TRADERS AND THE COVERT PENETRATION OF CHAIN STORES

Whilst "small" business traders, i.e. those operating from enclosed premises, are being "squeezed" in an exploitative market of unequal exchange, those operating in the open, namely street traders, particularly those retailing fruit and vegetables, clearly exhibit the mechanisms of marginalisation at work. The history of the distribution of fruit and vegetables suggests that an overwhelming majority of street traders have been progressively denied access to the produce to which they once had relatively easy access. Estimates and documented evidence has shown that traders in fruit and vegetables have by now fallen victims to :

1. the process of proletarianisation ;

2. the process of structural unemployment ; and

3. a "converted" mode of employment that is now even more labour intensive.

For example, in 1969 when the Group Areas Act was implemented in District Six, 2 000 hawkers were affected. Not only were they given eviction notices, but they also suffered from a lack of alternative housing sites. They were virtually doomed to extinction since "the chances of getting property in other Non-White areas would dwindle as the exodus increased" (Argus, 16/1/1969). The report thus complained that when, like others, the 2 000 hawkers had to move, "it would probably be the end of them". However, it is not certain how many of the 2 000 hawkers of District Six

were licensed*. If the majority were, then the contention that the hawkers are forced into the proletariat, or into the ranks of the structurally unemployed holds true. The number of licensed hawkers in Cape Town's Trade Licences Department for October 1981 - for all suburbs under the Municipality of Cape Town - was 2 310, out of a total of 2 628 applications. Not all, however, were dealers in fruit and vegetables, but were hawkers/street traders in one of five "grades" that stipulated what hawkers were allowed to retail.

Thus the Group Areas Act evicted people without providing suitable accommodation and means of trading, leaving the sale of fruit and vegetables open to the encroachment of the chain stores.

The first signs of chain stores encroaching into fresh produce retailing appeared early in 1970, when for no apparent and justifiable reason there was a sudden shortage of fresh produce in the Cape Town Municipal market. Prices escalated in this shortage, which marked the beginning of chain store penetration into fresh produce trading.

The Chairman of Cape Town's Hawkers and Buyers Association said :

"Prices at the Cape Town Municipal market this morning were the highest he had known in 30 years of buying there. The vegetable shortage has become so serious that price is no longer the important factor - it is simply a question of buying whatever is available" (Argus, 5/2/1970).

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* *It was not possible to acquire definite figures for the number of licensed hawkers in Cape Town prior to 1979. Records of these numbers were apparently mislaid when the Cape Town Trade Licences Department moved to the Civic Centre.*

TABLE ILLUSTRATING PRICE DIFFERENCES OF ITEMS USUALLY IN ABUNDANCE DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY *

ITEM	TOMATOES	POTATOES	LETTUCE	GRAPES	MANGOES	WATER MELONS
		Per bag	Per crate	Per tray	Per unit	Per unit
QUANTITY	351b/16,1kg	8kg	20-24 units	weight not given		
PRICES PRIOR TO 5/2/1970	R2	70c	R1,50	60c-70c	18c	35c
PRICES AFTER 5/2/1970	R7	R1,30-R1,40	R3	R1,20	35c	85c

* Derived from information appearing in Argus, 5/2/1970.

Whilst no concrete evidence exists for the assertion that supermarkets were responsible for the sudden price escalations, personal interviews, life histories and the concentrated attempt by the Cape Town Traffic Department to reduce the number of street traders lends support to this contention. The rather sinister advent of Hawkers Squads - formed especially to deal with hawkers/street traders - to phase out street traders since the early 1970's, and the consequent virtual monopoly over the sale of fresh produce by the supermarkets illustrates the implication.

STREET TRADING AND THE AMBIGUITY OF ENCOURAGING SMALL BUSINESS

The concerted effort at "phasing out" the street traders is in fact not aimed at totally annihilating them. Street traders' existence is in reality complementary to "big business" and related to the chronic unemployment situation. The concerted "phasing out" is thus more an attempt to reduce numbers, and so restrict the inherent possibility of their swelling to phenomenal numbers - which would inevitably jeopardise the chain stores' privileged access to wholesale produce. In addition,

the multiple restrictive legislative devices supposedly intended as regulatory measures are prohibitive rather than encouraging for small business.

In view of this situation it would be reasonable to confront the contradictory campaign by the S.B.D.C. to encourage the spread of small businesses. Its evasive attitude in precisely defining the limits of "small business" - both in terms of capital input and size of enterprise - leaves much to be questioned. The lack of harmony between the propaganda by the S.B.D.C. and government circles, and the legislation that regulates business enterprises places the "encouragement" of small business in a slot too ambiguous to invite enterprising individuals. This contradiction stands out in two very controlling pieces of legislation.

1. The Factories Act which restricts processing and/or manufacturing to persons with fixed assets and/or capital of not less than R20 000, and with a work force not fewer than 10 ; and

2. the Marketing Act, which reserves the sale of the basic products of wheat and meat to more capital-intensive enterprises.

On the other hand, the type of business more generally understood as small, such as street trading, is controlled through equally constrictive devices. Most hazardous to street traders operations are the rulings that :

(i) they must move one hundred yards every hour ; and

(ii) that they should not display their goods or operate on a permanent basis on municipal property.

A more regular enforcement of these two rulings, especially since the early 1970's, contributed to displacing large numbers of street traders. At the same time, however, a few street traders were legally assigned trading spots by the local authorities, giving them preference over the majority. This move added to the already existing diversity amongst the street traders. It did so by making some traders' operations more secure than others, which consequently earned them bigger consumer support.

However, not all street traders who had legally designated trading spots (see Chapter Six and Seven) became more secure. Being members of the "Non-White" community, the collective prohibitive marginalising forces such as the preferential treatment to capital intensive business, the Group Areas Act and the multiple constrictive legislative devices still affected them. In essence the restriction of legally designated strategic trading spots to a handful of street traders, and continuous harassment by the local authorities - health inspectors, Hawkers Squad - led to a re-ordering and re-shaping of street trader activities.

It is against this background of the forces that regulate the lives and operations of street traders' activities, their distribution, size and manner of operation that the formation must be understood. But it is against the background of the "web of kinship relations, social networks and voluntary associations"(Wilkinson and Webster, 1981 : 12) that they should be analysed. In the next three chapters the characteristics of street traders in each Group Area are treated separately in Chapters Three, Four and Five, whilst an analysis of the case material in these three chapters is contained in Chapter Six and the conclusion.

CHAPTER THREE

STREET TRADERS IN ATHLONE : A PROCLAIMED COLOURED GROUP AREA

In the introduction I discussed how the highly fluctuating numbers of street traders over the different times of the day and week at which they were present in the demarcated areas presented enormous problems in trying to select a "representative sample". Initially, I therefore chose to make counts of the street traders in each suburb on a particular day, and over a full seven day period during a particular week such as the last week in the month when numbers were likely to reach a maximum. I subsequently carried out an intensive examination of various aspects of a selected number of stalls over a six month period. The ethnographic data that follows is concerned with the stalls of one such suburb.

Athlone, a suburb with an official population of approximately 35 000, is sub-divided into six districts : Belgravia Estate, Sunnyside, Crawford, Q-Town, Bridgetown and Silvertown. Stalls that appeared in only one of the business districts in Athlone were surveyed and subsequently examined. This target area, which served the commercial needs of the inhabitants mainly of Q-Town and Belgravia Estate, had an average of 65 - 70 different stalls set up in its vicinity in each week during the period of research. They included stalls that retailed mainly fruit, vegetables, shoes and clothing, and other miscellaneous items such as flowers, spices and second-hand crockery which were sold on a smaller scale. My survey concentrated on those street traders who retailed the items mentioned above. It did not extend to other related occupations such as shoe shining, gambling or taxi services.

Street traders were often found in the residential areas of Athlone as well, but they were mainly mobile traders who operated from their vehicles

and were not included in the study. Only those who operated from fixed trading spots and appeared regularly during my period of research of the target area were observed and interviewed. This limitation was, it should be stressed, merely a matter of convenience, imposed in order to set some limit to the collection of ethnographic data.

Initial surveys and observations of street traders who appeared in this target area were carried out between 15/8/1981 and 22/8/1981. On the 22/8/1981, a Saturday, 65 stalls operating from fixed trading spots were counted. Starting from at least 20m outside the C.B.D., extending into the midst of it, and into the lanes and side-walks, street traders took every opportunity to attract maximum consumer support. Some stalls were set up in spots immediately outside business premises. Whilst some businessmen expressed solidarity with the street traders, others complained that the street traders were a threat to their businesses, which required high capital input for their operation. As one general dealer, whose retail items included fruit and vegetables, claimed : "Not only must you display your stuff outside, but you must also have someone to shout if you want to sell anything!".

At this point it is perhaps worth mentioning the peculiarities of the stalls that were set up on fixed spots in the target area. Most of the 65 stalls that were counted on 22/8/1981 were positioned on spots that were not designated by the local authorities as hawkers' trading sites.

Only 3 of the 65 stalls were licensed to trade from spots that were legally allotted to them. All three were retailers in fruit and vegetables, and were set up adjacent to one another. Near them, however, were a number of smaller stalls positioned so as to form a cluster of street stalls. In similar fashion most other traders in the different

parts of the trading area tended to follow such a pattern wherever the viable trading spaces allowed them to form clusters. The pattern of clustering had a singular advantage to the street traders in that it served to generate a feeling of security amongst them. Street traders often admitted that the spots from which they traded made them illegal operators. But they often alleged that by operating in close proximity to one another, the Hawkers Squad and other traffic officials found it difficult either to carry out mass arrest or to prohibit them from trading in the area.

These attitudes of the street traders were a response to the bureaucratic measures which they understood as a provocative attempt by the local authorities to phase them out of operation. They saw it as a two fold programme, as was summarized in an interview with one of the street traders :

"Before 1970 the City Council tried to get rid of the hawkers by getting rid of their horses and carts. They succeeded in getting rid of the horses and carts by introducing harsh hygienic laws on those who owned them. But they didn't succeed in getting rid of us. We showed our determination by setting up stalls on the road, and at times we fought back with the police when they tried to take our stuff as punishment. When they realized we wouldn't give up they built a market for us 300m away from all the shops where nobody would come to buy. This market lasted only six weeks after it was first occupied. All of us returned to the streets once again. The public outcry and the sympathy shown by some of the shopkeepers on our behalf at least helped us to remain as hawkers".

This statement suggests that the official attitude towards street traders in Athlone is now based more on containment than on removal. This is not to imply however that local officials did not keep a constant check on the manner in which street traders carried out their day to day activities. Indeed, traffic officials and health inspectors were ever-present. But their attitudes were more regulatory than punitive.

Nearly half of the 65 stalls retailed fruit and vegetables, and more than one third retailed shoes and/or clothing, whilst the rest of the stalls retailed other items in smaller quantities.

TABLE 3.1 ILLUSTRATING ITEMS RETAILED ON 22/8/1981

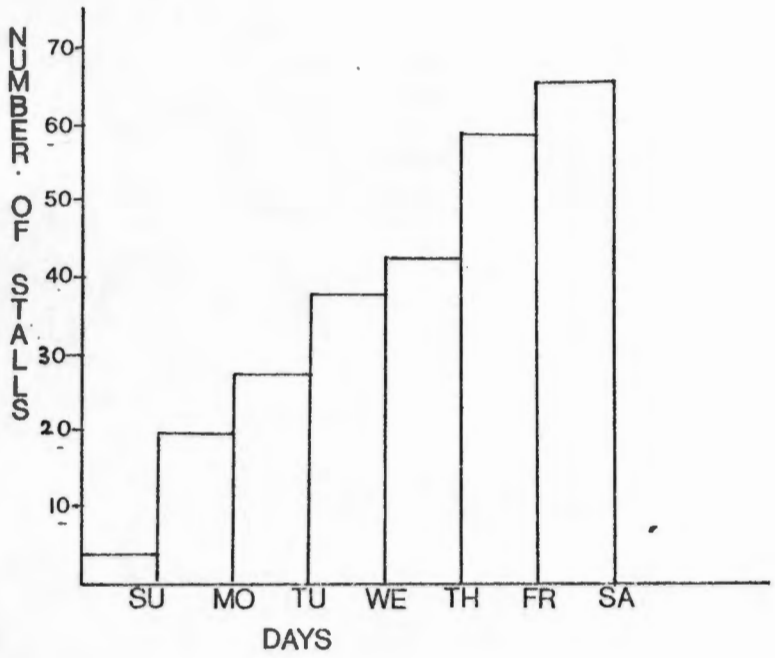
	FRUIT & VEGETABLES	FRESH FISH	SHOES & CLOTHING	OTHER	TOTAL
NO OF STALLS	32	2	25	6	65
PERCENTAGE	49	3	38	9	100

Most of the street traders in Athlone retailed fresh produce items such as fruit and vegetables because they found these to be the fastest selling. In the week that the stalls were surveyed, and the entire six month period of research, those that retailed fruit and vegetables appeared most frequently during the week.

This is not meant to imply however that the stalls which are depicted in the table above had all appeared on a daily basis. Some fruit and vegetable stalls appeared more regularly than others. Shoes and clothing appeared to be the next two items of importance. But the stalls that retailed these items appeared less frequently than their fresh produce counterparts. Together - as illustrated in the histogram below - the stalls that retailed the items mentioned above showed a progressive build-up from the early hours of each day, and early in the week they reached a peak after midday on Saturday. On Sundays, however, most street traders did not appear.

FIGURE 3.1

GRAPH ILLUSTRATING DAY TO DAY APPEARANCES OF STREET TRADER STALLS BETWEEN 1/8/1981 - 22/8/1981



From the 65 stalls that are depicted in the graph above the circumstances surrounding 23 stallholders and their stalls were examined. Within this sample - as pointed out in the previous Chapter - a set of diverse features characterized the different stalls and the personnel who operated them. Firstly, seen in relation to the times in which they appeared, only 13 of these stalls appeared on a full-time basis, i.e. between 5 to 7 days per week, 6 appeared on a regular weekly basis, i.e. between 2 to 3 days per week, and 4 appeared on a monthly basis. People who owned the 23 stalls operated in the streets for two essential reasons :

(i) they either depended on street trading only for their subsistence needs ; or

(ii) they depended on street trading to supplement their household or individual income gained, i.e. through wage earnings or other means.

Secondly, the wide ranging volumes and values of stocks displayed in different stalls, and the number of stalls that stallholders operated suggested that there were significant differences in the capital outlays of the various stallholders.

Five of the 23 stallholders made weekly capital outlays that ranged between R1 200 and R4 000; nine had capital outlays that ranged between R350 and R700; and nine had capital outlays that ranged between R30 and R150. Seventeen stalls retailed fruit and/or vegetables; four retailed shoes and/or clothing; one retailed clothing and second-hand domestic appliances and one retailed fresh fish.

TABLE 3.2 ILLUSTRATING PARTICULARITIES OF 23 STALLS

	FRUIT & VEGETABLES	SHOES AND/ OR CLOTHING	CLOTHING & DOMESTIC APPLIANCES	FISH
No. that appeared daily	12	-	-	1
No. that appeared weekly	5	4	1	-
TOTALS	17	4	1	1

TABLE 3.3 ILLUSTRATING OUTLAYS OF 23 STALLHOLDERS

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF STALLS	AMOUNTS
BIG	5	R 4 000 1 900 1 800 1 200 1 200
MIDDLE	9	700 600 500 500 450 400 400 350 350
SMALL	9	150 120 100 100 100 100 80 70 33

All of the stallholders depicted in the table above expressed confidence - in spite of official harassment - in continuing their occupations as street traders in Athlone. At the end of the six month period of research, in February 1982, the 23 stallholders whose activities were intensively examined still traded in the target area. Most of these stallholders managed their enterprises through their individual and family effort, whilst a few depended extensively on employees for the efficient operation of their enterprises. Where stallholders relied on employees the chores associated with the stalls were enormous, and sometimes involved more than one stall.

In several cases (see diagrams below) employees who worked in different stalls were an integral part of the households of their stallholder employers. They depended for food, shelter and a basic wage on those who employed them. What this point reiterates from the introduction is that the personnel belonging to the various stalls appeared in different capacities. It further points out that households included non-kin members.

STALLHOLDERS : HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND ENTERPRISE

To recall my criticism of the use of the "enterprise" (see Introduction, p. ii) and my attempt to categorise stallholders in accordance with their capital outlays, these would remain problematic if they were not substantiated by appropriate evidence from my field material. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 above serve part of this purpose. The analytical approach that I proposed earlier is designed to transcend the residual analysis of the "informal sector"/"petty production" paradigms.

Using this approach I hope to overcome the inherently static tendencies of these paradigms which suggest uniformity in two things :

(i) the features that make up the enterprise ; and

(ii) the features which supposedly characterise the domestic backgrounds of the individuals within the target group.

There was, as the quotation from Long and Richardson suggested (see p.20) very little need for them to delve into a deeper analysis of the socio-economic circumstances that surround the unit of investigation. But the discussion and case material that follows will establish that the attributes that characterise the stall/"enterprise" and its personnel are rather more complicated than is suggested in the accounts criticized earlier.

Looked at from a broader perspective, stallholders depended largely on additional avenues of income such as wage earning by other household members and additional stalls for both the efficiency of their stalls and the livelihood of their households. However, in cases where stalls were not directly supported through such measures, and were operated by individuals who retailed mainly to meet their personal subsistence needs, the stalls' and stallholders' relative independence was made possible by their dependence on their household members. Thus, analysis of those stalls that were big, middle or small, would be inadequate to the central theme of capitalist reproduction if they are not examined in relation to household composition and involvement.

BIG STALLHOLDERS

What emerged as significant in the circumstances of the stalls and households of the big stallholders was that they were financially bound to street trading as their major source of income. Wage earning, although

evident in one case, was not a significant support of either their stalls or their households. A whole range of socio-economic factors had obviously played an influential role in determining the size and manner of operation of the stalls, and concomitantly, the size of the household. The extent to which these big stallholders were able to expand their ventures was related to the amount of trade they were able to handle, and the household's labour that was at their disposal. To this extent the relationship between the stall and household size seem to be of more particular significance to the big stallholders in Athlone. This is not to imply, however, that the size of the stallholders' households was always necessarily determined by the size of their stalls. But indeed, for this particular group of stallholders the impression was clear.

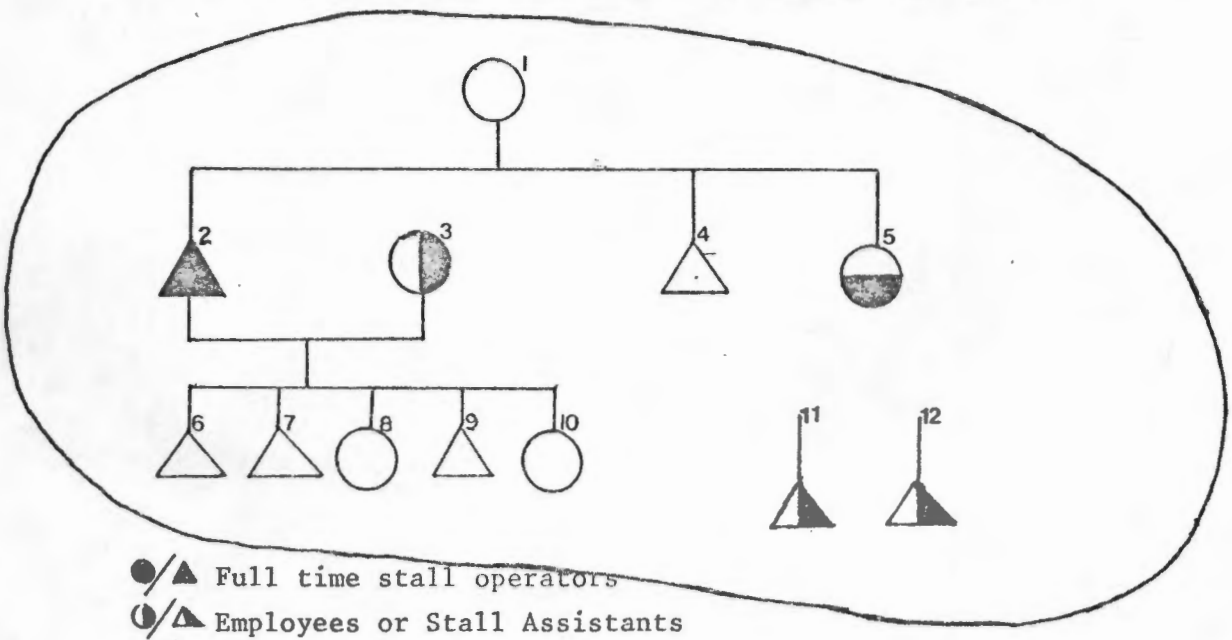
All of the six stallholders depended largely on employees for the efficient operation of their stalls. The employees were often incorporated into the household of the stallholders and played a functional role in this basic unit of production. The enterprise thus, comprising either one stall or several stalls, was efficiently operated by both kin members and employees who were an integral part of the household unit.

But within each of these stalls and household units there was a wide range of features that reflected how stallholders and household members strategised in ways that best suited their circumstances. Thus, as a first step towards understanding this range of features a simple breakdown of the number of stalls owned by the six stallholders provides a more accurate picture of this small sample. Three of the six big stallholders depended on one stall for their household incomes, whilst the remaining stallholders depended on more than one stall.

Amongst the latter, one had split his enterprise into several stalls within the target area; another had only one stall in Athlone, but simultaneously operated three additional stalls in three other districts; whilst the third set up a stall in Athlone during weekends only, but had an additional stall set up in Guguletu on a regular daily basis.

Of the three stallholders who had only one stall each, a set of common features seems to characterise both enterprise and household. The case study below of one stallholder who was household head - though not the most senior member - and chief administrator of the stall, and had several members and employees who depended on him for their survival, is in many ways representative of this category.

CASE 3.1 : O.T. was a 42 year old trader who inherited his enterprise from his father. Originally from District Six, he was moved to Athlone after being affected by the Group Areas Act. A mobile trader for 18 years, O.T. was one of the fortunate few to be allotted a trading spot in Athlone by the Cape Town City Council. His capital outlay had gradually increased since then to reach its peak of R4 000. The income his stall generated was used to support a household of twelve members but not all members helped in running the stall.



●/▲ Full time stall operators
◑/◭ Employees or Stall Assistants
○/△ No assistance rendered in stall
◒/◬ Kin members - contribution to household income from outside

Note : In this diagram and those that follow the household members are indicated as those falling within the line.

1. 65 years - pensioner; no schooling; formerly a street trader.

2. 42 years - stallholder; Form 2; always a street trader.

3. 39 years - housewife; Std V; helps in stall over weekends.

4. 27 years - unemployed; Std VI; formerly a tool setter; makes no contribution to household income.

5. 25 years - caretaker in a school; Std II; makes no/little contribution to household expenditure.

6. to 10. Scholars.

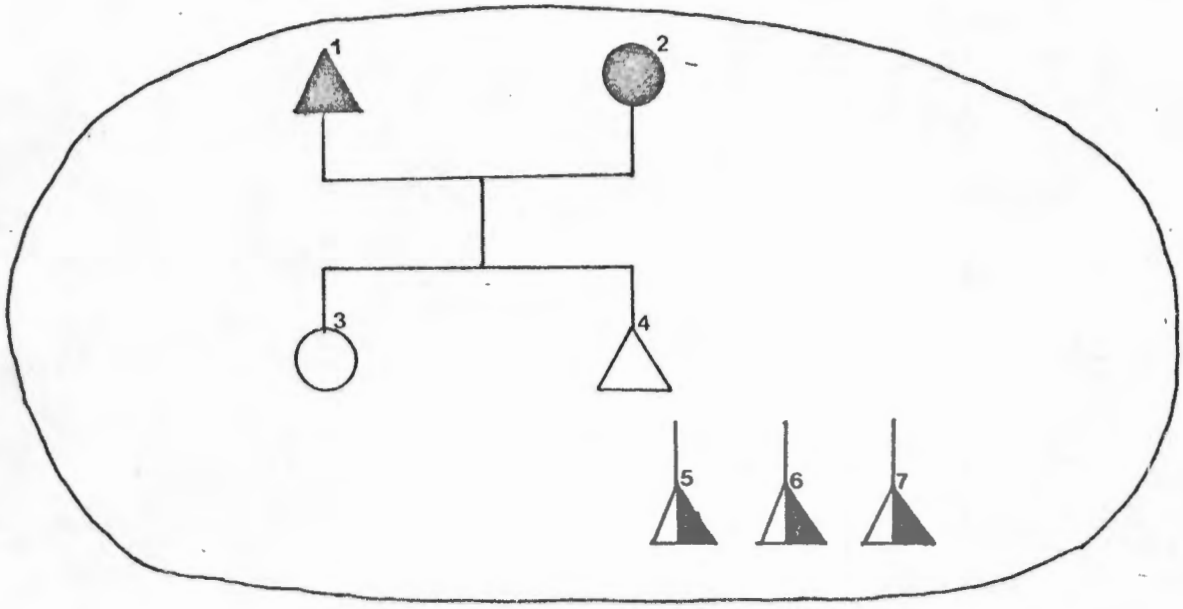
11. 25 years - works for 2; paid R70 p.m.; came from Namaqualand in 1976; Std VI.

12. 22 years - works for 2; paid R70 p.m.; came from Heideveld; Std III.

The stalls and household composition of the three remaining stallholders who had more than one stall provide case material that varies significantly from the one above. In two cases the stallholder concept becomes ambiguous. In one instance the enterprise is actually a joint effort between two spouses who efficiently operate stalls using their own labour and that of three employees.

In the second instance the stallholder was "semi-retired", and had transferred the major responsibilities to his eldest child - a divorcee - who had returned with her children to her parental abode.

CASE 3.2 : C.T. had been previously employed in a printing press as a machine operator, whilst his wife was a housewife. They were then residents of Black River, from where they were removed to Athlone after the locality was proclaimed a "White" residential area. Thereafter, C.T. experienced increasing financial difficulties. Observing other street traders he decided to venture into street trading himself, in order to supplement his wage earning. In 1974 he started his venture on a weekend basis, with a R50 capital outlay, half of which came from his wife's personal savings. Thereafter their venture grew steadily, and in 1976 they purchased a bakkie, which was used to operate a second mobile stall. In 1979 they purchased another vehicle and opened their third stall. At this time C.T. resigned from work and took to street trading on a full-time basis. In May 1981, C.T. and his wife had four stalls in operation, two mobile and two stationary. Their venture supported 7 household members, three of whom were employees.



1. 41 years - stallholder (mobile); Std VIII; previously employed in printing press.

2. 38 years - mobile stallholder; Std VII; previously housewife.

3. 35 years - works for 1 and 2; came from De Aar in 1977; R50 p.m.

4. 23 years - works for 1 and 2; came from Kimberley in 1980; R50 p.m.

5. ± 13 years - works for 1 and 2; from East London; R30 p.m.

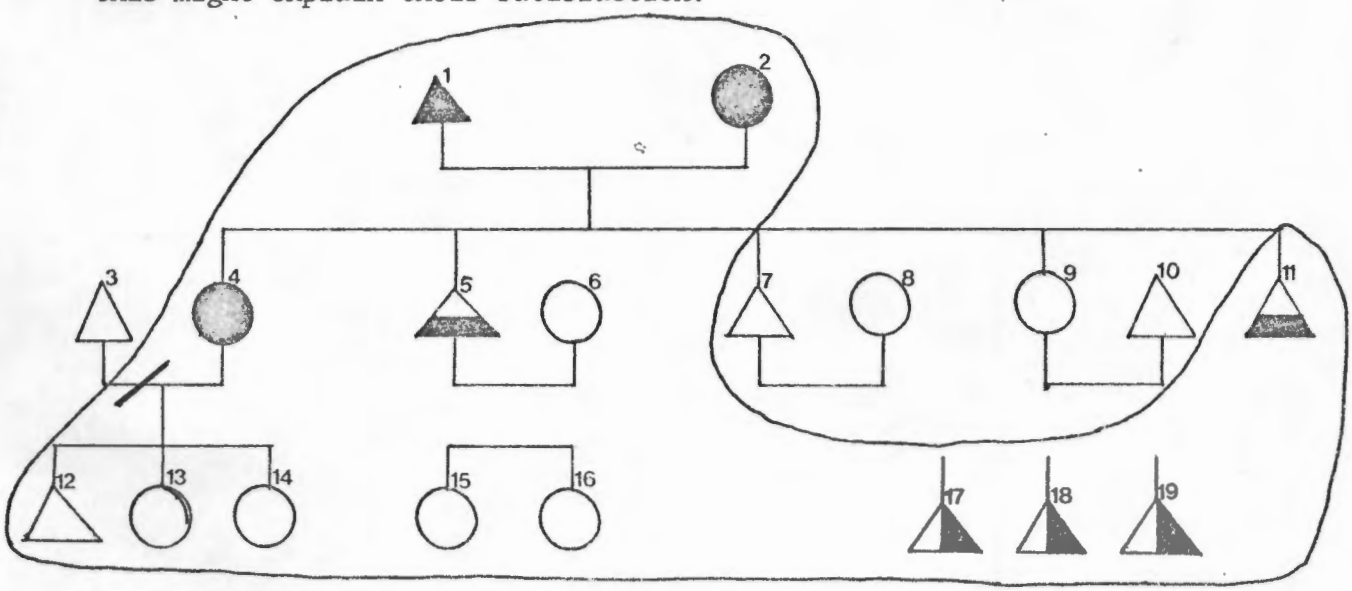
CASE 3.3 : S.M. was a 59 year old stallholder who had always been a resident of Athlone. He learnt street trading in early childhood and became independent at the age of 23 years after he had married and received a portion of his father's household enterprise in 1947. Thereafter he expanded his enterprise gradually until 1981 when his capital outlay reached ± R1 800 per week. S.M. had all his senior household members involved in his enterprise in one way or another. They helped pre-packing fruit and vegetables at home, retailing in the street whenever time permitted and helped transport the produce from their places of purchase. The survival of S.M.'s household, however, depended on the earnings from his enterprise as well as contributions from his two sons, who were employed outside.

These cases bring into focus the notion of the household head. In terms of decision making, major responsibilities, and co-ordination of household and enterprise there appeared to be no single individual with any clearly defined role. Even the most senior household members did not enjoy any apparent position of seniority. Daily chores revolved around the common theme of co-responsibility.

Both C.T. and his wife (Case 3.2), for instance, saw each other's usefulness in equal terms. They claimed that neither took the liberty of making any major decision without due respect for the other's opinions. Within their household, C.T. and his wife accommodated three of their employees. It was these latter who had clearly defined tasks to perform, and whose freedom within the household and enterprise was related to their economic status. Although their two-bedroomed house was obviously overcrowded by the inclusion of the employees, they did not regard it as such. In fact, they saw it as relatively large in comparison with other smaller houses with more people. C.T. defended the size of his household by referring to the shortage of housing in the Peninsula, and the employment of individuals as an act that was born more out of the goodness of his heart than out of necessity. He argued that he took to street trading to avoid exploitative wage-labour situations. Together, C.T. and his wife represented

those individuals who were making a determined effort to overcome the dilemma of being victims of the Group Areas Act and underpaid wage earners. Within these constraints they endeavoured to maximise gain through their entrepreneurial skills by employing three people and operating four stalls.

A similar set of circumstances characterises the household and stall of S.M. (Case 3.3). Whilst S.M. and his daughter were the major decision makers of both household and enterprise, the opinions of S.M.'s wife and his sons were equally respected. All household members, apart from those who were school-going, contributed towards the maintenance of household and enterprise. Within his household, S.M. had accommodated three employees. They shared one bedroom, were given three meals per day and worked at the beck and call of their employers. The duties of the employees in fact stretched beyond the chores associated with the enterprise to gardening and general maintenance. This is not to imply that the employees were being grossly exploited in terms of work, food and shelter. At least they themselves did not perceive it as such. They were alcoholics and this might explain their satisfaction.



1. S.M.; 59 years - stallholder; Form II; always a street trader.

2. 55 years - operates one stall; attended 5 years at a Malay school.

4. 39 years - divorced; three children; Std VI; previously housewife;

manages enterprise of S.M. and operates one stall.

5. 36 years - taxi driver; Std VI; previously assisted 1 in stall.

6. 32 years - housewife.

11. 24 years - teacher in Athlone.

12. 16 years - Std IX; Athlone.

13. 11 years - Std III; Athlone.

14. 8 years - Form 2; Athlone.

15. 6 years - Form 1; Athlone.

16. 4 years - creche.

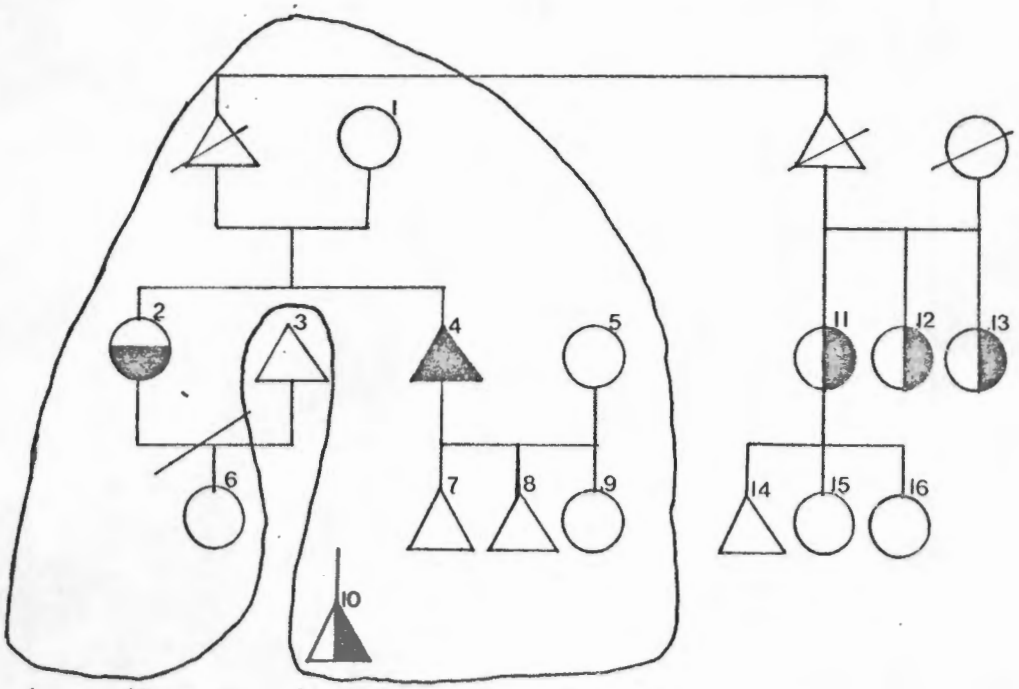
17. 54 years - from Cape Town; assists in stall; previously a barman; alcoholic; no wages.

18. 43 years - from Cape Town; assists 3 in stall; worked for Cape Town Municipality; alcoholic; no wages.

19. 31 years - from Athlone; operates one stall; earns R55 per month; alcoholic.

Under similar circumstances to the case studies above, the third stallholder who had more than one stall presents complications as well. Although not the most senior person within his household, he assumed the responsibilities of employer, household head, administrator of his stalls, as well as benefactor to a divorced sister and her child, and three paternal cousins, one being a mother of three children.

CASE 3.4 : T.S. was previously a resident of central Cape Town, from where he was moved to Athlone after his place of residence was declared for business purposes only. He practised street trading with his father after he was put on short time at his place of work. In 1971 he inherited the enterprise comprising two stalls when his father died. Since then, T.S. gradually increased his capital outlay from R250 to R1 200. The earnings from the two stalls helped to support 9 members within his household; and six members of another household - three of whom operated one of his stalls. The African member of T.S.'s household operated the second stall in the African township of Guguletu.



1. 62 years - housewife; no education.

2. 37 years - divorced; previously housewife; sews curtains for personal expenses.

3. Unknown.

4. 35 years - stallholder; 2 stalls; operates one; Std IX; previously worked as a clothing designer; 1962-69.

5. 33 years - housewife.

6. to 9. Scholars.

10. 36 years - works for 3; came from Transkei 1978; R65 p.m.; lives

with 2.

11.
to Not part of household - see Case 3.17.
12.

The income earning histories of all four stallholders differ widely. The stallholder who was previously a wage employee experienced a fortunate progressive build up of his capital outlay in his enterprise, thus affording him the privilege of completely breaking away from wage employment (Case 3.2). His position as a stallholder placed him on a par with each of his counterparts who inherited their stalls. In the light of this particular stallholder's progressive rise to the capacity of a "big" trader, street trading would appear to be a rewarding financial exercise, and perhaps more importantly, a feasible alternative to wage employment. But if looked at against the background of limited employment opportunities, inevitable reduction of staff during depressive economic periods, and exploitative work situations, street trading as an alternative directs our attention rather to the realities that often confront the economically subordinate masses. It is in this context that Davies argued that

"the informal sector often provides possibilities which are preferable to wage employment (see Gerry, 1978 : 1151).

More broadly, this case study exemplifies the occupational mobility so dear to social scientists which characterises artisans who change their subsistence efforts during boom and recession periods. Faced with income generating alternatives, as Case 3.2 suggests, individuals choose the path likely to earn them a secure place over time. As Baran pointed out :

"The problem is and always has been to discover what determines the nature of the alternatives that are available to man and what accounts for the nature of the goals which they set themselves in different periods of historical development" (Baran, 1969 : 65).

Although superficially quite different, similarities in the stalls and households of these two cases illustrate the basis on which the big stallholders efficiently operate the two interdependent units. To this extent they serve to present three points of general interest more clearly.

First, the enterprise is essentially dependent on household labour for its efficiency. As the kinship diagrams indicate, households were comprised of fairly large numbers, including non-kin members who served as employees. One of the major attractions to the employees was the fact that they were incorporated into the households of their employers and offered a place to sleep, three meals per day, and a basic wage. Together with their employers they made maximum use of the domestic resources and helped to maximise attempts to make street trading a profitable exercise. In a sense, these large households are analogous to those cited by Murray (1981) in Lesotho in terms of household size and composition. The significance of such households, when seen in relation to the capitalist mode of production lies in the collective effort and concomitant productive capacities that are so often characteristic of marginalised households.

Second, the stalls were the major source of income within the range of household activities, and as such reduced the units' dependence on outside avenues of income. In this sense the stallholders' positions as street traders appeared deceptively secure. Information on the stallholders' financial position could possibly be reflected in the outlay of capital to set up their stalls. But since it was not possible to establish what profits the stalls earned for the stallholders, it was impossible to estimate the extent of their financial progress. In all the cases, however, it was abundantly clear that the earnings from the stalls were adequate to meet the reproduction needs of the respective household units and also to warrant the payment of a basic wage to employees who, in some

cases, remitted to their kin elsewhere.

It is clear, therefore, that street trading has in its own small way created a redistributive network elaborate enough to supplement the reproductive efforts of people in distant outlying areas (see Cases 3.15 and 3.16). It was entrepreneurs such as these who were relatively more successful in their commercial ventures than their counterparts whom Yvan Breton regarded as *"more than subsistence agriculturalists"* (1976 : 143), and whom Spiegel regarded as *"a nascent petty bourgeosie"* (1979 : 173).

Third, the households were open to kin members when they were in need of shelter. A severe shortage of housing and official discriminatory practices have had serious adverse effects on household sizes. One of the factors associated with such a chronic problem is the feeling of social responsibility for kin members, even when this causes overcrowding. The root of the divorcee's misfortune (Case 3.3 : 3) was, for instance, the fact that she had no source of income, and together with her three children, was forcibly removed by the C.T.C.C. because her Council flat was apparently too big for a single person to occupy. Because of this difficulty, the divorcee saw no way out but to seek shelter in her father's abode, which aggravated an already overcrowded situation.

MIDDLE TRADERS

In some respects features that characterize the stalls and households of the "middle" stallholders appear similar to those of their "big" counterparts. A distinct similarity was the fact that the earnings from the stalls played a major role in the upkeep and survival of the stallholders' households. On the other hand, differences in the circumstances of these

middle traders were quite significant.

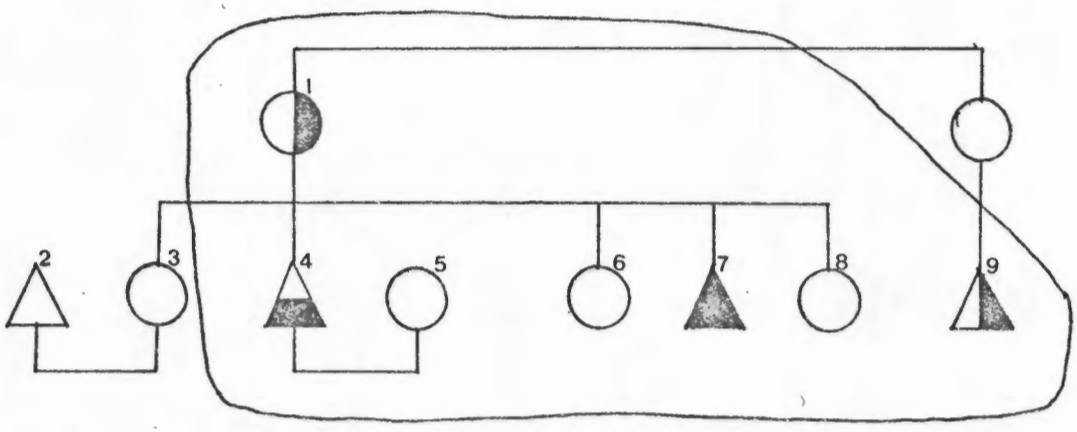
At this point it is perhaps worth mentioning that although these significant differences were not taken into account in the categorisation of the street traders, they did exist amongst these particular street traders, and were quite distinct. First, all of the eight middle traders who were intensively interviewed depended on avenues of income other than that from street trading. Wage earning, pension and, in one case, sub-letting of a house, served as additional avenues of income. Secondly, stallholders depended more on their own personal efforts and on family assistance for the efficient operation of their stalls. Employees were not a regular feature amongst these middle stallholders. All claimed that they could manage the work incurred in running their stalls, and that their profits were too small to afford them the luxury of employees.

These calculations appeared to have an effect on household size. Although not necessarily small, household sizes did tend to be compatible with the earning potential of the major contributors to the household. The incorporation of employees and/or unproductive kin within the household could be ill afforded and as such rarely appeared.

Tangible information on the economic lives of the stallholders illustrates how their assessments of wage employment determined their roles as street traders.

The two case studies below reflect such circumstances, one of which (Case 3.5) directs our attention to the inadequate and exploitative schooling facilities allotted to those not classified "White", and the narrow range of employment alternatives open to them if blacklisted as "political agitators".

CASE 3.5 : I.S. was an eighteen year old youth who claims to have been victimised for taking a leading role in the 1980 school boycotts. After leaving school at the end of an unsuccessful attempt at his Std IX examination, he told his family that he would not seek employment "under any White man". I.S. claims to have left school after several interrogation sessions with the principal and inspector, and his subsequent failure. His ageing mother saw this as a chance to transfer responsibility for her stalls in Athlone to I.S., which she did. Her elder son, who had always assisted her also withdrew after he married and returned to the building trade. I.S. then became a stall-holder in Athlone, and operated the enterprise as two stalls. One was operated by himself and another by a household member.



1. 58 years - widow, housewife and street trader.

2.
3. Unknown.

4. 27 years - tiling sub-contractor in partnership; Std VII; started apprenticeship in 1972; worked until 1978 full-time street trading; returned to building in 1981.

5. 23 years - shop assistant; Std VIII; previously unemployed.

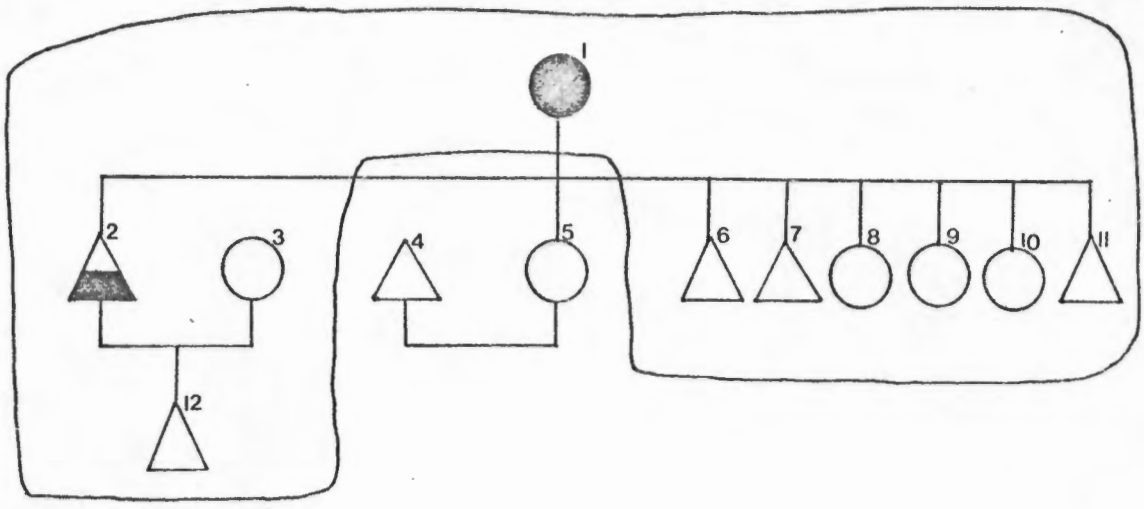
6. 23 years - unemployed; to be married; Std IX - incomplete.

7. 18 years - Std IX - incomplete; stallholder - 2 stalls; operates one.

8. 15 years - Std VIII; Athlone.

9. 19 years - Std III; comes from a destitute home; previously unemployed; works for 7; resides in the household.

CASE 3.6 : Mrs L.A. was previously a shop assistant in central Cape Town. She and her family were residents of District Six, until the Group Areas Act forced them to find a new home in Wynberg. After 3 years of applying, Mrs L.A. and her family qualified for a house in Athlone in 1974. Thereafter her husband, who was a fresh produce stallholder, died. Mrs L.A. weighed the earning potential of her job as a shop assistant, and her late spouse's stall. She saw the latter as having greater earning potential and thus resigned from her shop assistant job to take to street trading. Her household income was fortunately supplemented by her eldest son who, after initially working as a delivery hand, took to bus driving for a better income.



1. 43 years - stallholder; Std VIII; shop assistant between 1965-1974.

2. 26 years - bus driver; matric; R400 p.m.

3. 25 years - housewife.

4. Not part of household.

5. 25 years - married.

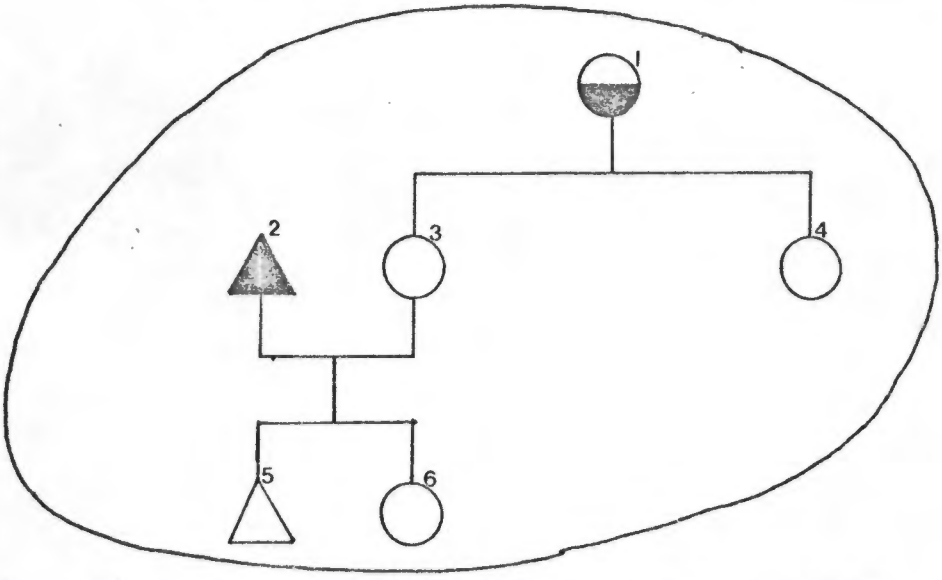
6. to 11. Scholars.

12. 18 months.

In contrast to the two case studies above, in the two case studies that follow, the importance lies in the arrangements that both stallholders and household members made regarding accommodation, due to lack of space within their parental household.

Both stallholders were brothers who hailed from a household that once depended entirely on street trading for their subsistence needs. Over the years, however, their pattern of subsistence efforts changed from being dependent on wage earnings only to being dependent on street trading once again, plus wage earnings from kin members.

CASE 3.7 : S.I. was the son of a street trader. Since childhood he had assisted his father in the stall after school hours and on weekends. In 1970 he withdrew from school to assist his ailing father in his enterprise. In 1971 his father died, and all responsibilities were thereafter transferred to him. But during 1971-72, police harassment made street trading unbearable, thus forcing S.I. to abandon the enterprise. Between September 1972 and December 1974 he was employed as a semi-skilled panel-beater in three different places. He considered all places of employment unbearable, because of the dictatorial attitudes of his employers. In 1975 he returned to street trading in an attempt to regain his "self dignity". He married in 1977 and left his mother's household in 1979 because it was overcrowded and joined the household of his wife's mother, who was in desperate need of additional income.



1. 50 years - unemployed; Std I; always a housewife; income of R55 per month through sub-letting part of her home.

2. 29 years - stallholder - 1 stall; Std VIII; contributes between R30-R40 per week for upkeep of household; worked between 1972-74; returned to street trading in 1975; capital outlay R500-R600.

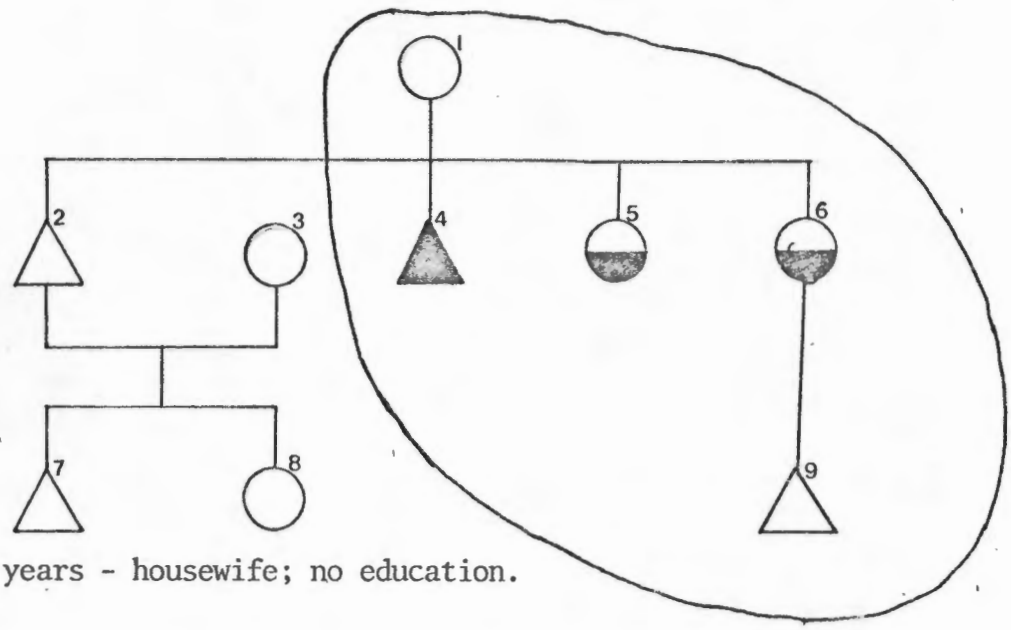
3. 26 years - housewife; Std V; always unemployed.

4. 22 years - unemployed; retrenched in May 1981; Std VII.

5. 5 years.

6. 3 years.

CASE 3.8 : M.E. left school in 1970 to assist his brother S.I. (above) in their household enterprise. When his brother abandoned street trading, he likewise set out to find employment, preferably in some trade as an apprentice. But two years passed and he had no success in finding employment. He thus decided to return to street trading. He was resigned to the activity as his future source of income and vowed never to seek employment again. The income he earned from street trading made a substantial contribution to the survival of his household, but his situation as main supporter was greatly relieved by the wage earnings of his two sisters.



1. 52 years - housewife; no education.

2.
3. See case study above.

4. 25 years - stallholder; 1 stall; Std VII; previously unemployed; capital outlay : R350-R400 p.w.

5. 23 years - Std II; cleaning services.

6. 20 years - Std VIII; receptionist.

7.
8. See case study above.

9. 20 months.

The household backgrounds of the four stallholders differ quite considerably. But nonetheless they serve to present a distinctive similarity : that the stallholder's decision to take to street trading is essentially born out of circumstances. For two of the stallholders, wage employment proved not to be a financially rewarding exercise, whilst for the remaining two, wage employment appeared to be beyond their reach. One of the worst stumbling blocks in the stallholder's attempt to acquire employment, in Case 3.5, for instance, was the fact that he had played a leading role in the 1980 school boycotts. The possibility of obtaining a reasonable testimonial, without being stamped as a political agitator, was virtually nil, thus reducing his chances of acquiring employment. In contrast, the stallholder in Case 3.8 presented a different but significant situation : every one of his applications for employment was a dismal failure.

Another common factor that brought all four stallholders together was their familiarity with street trading, which appeared to be a time-honoured practice in their families. Thus we may conclude that the stalls were essentially household concerns, and as such they provided individuals with a degree of selfhood by avoiding wage employment (Cases 4.5 and 4.7); and inspiration and a starting point for those who found difficulty in successfully supporting themselves and their households through wage employment (Case 4.6).

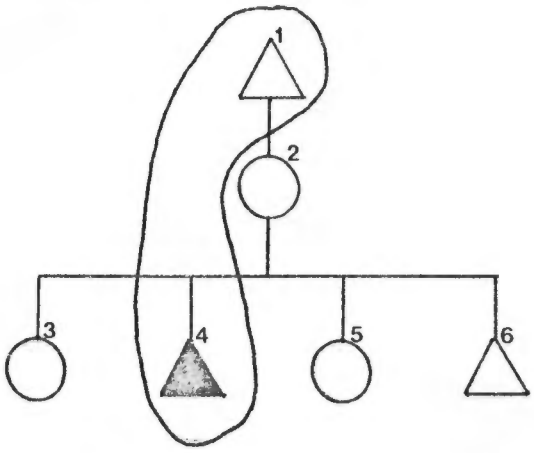
SMALL STALLHOLDERS

What emerged as significant amongst the small stallholders in Athlone was the diverse features of their stall operations, and equally so, of their social responsibilities. One significant point is that not all stallholders were hard pressed economically, or bound to street trading alone to meet their personal subsistence needs. Street trading, in other words, played a supplementary role to either wage earning, or other sources of income

such as pensions; or as a substitute for wage employment.

In comparison to the circumstances that shaped the operations of the big stallholders, a different range of factors influenced the size and shape of small operations. However, the significant features were numerous and diverse, and no simple generalisations can be made.

CASE 3.9 : S.P. was a 23 year old youth who withdrew from school in 1970 after completing Std V. Thereafter, he sought employment with an itinerant street trader, and earned between R7 and R10 per week. In 1977 he decided to venture out on his own. After an initial capital outlay of R15 per week, it gradually increased to ± R120 by August 1981. S.P. pledged not to seek employment anywhere, especially under "a White man", because such employment deprived him of his independence. He found it defiling, and not as financially rewarding as street trading. He claimed to have sufficient for his personal expenses from the earnings of his enterprise, and to be able to contribute to both his mother's household, and that of his maternal grandfather, in whose home he lived. After the death of his grandmother, the Cape Town City Council asked S.P.'s grandfather to vacate the premises because he could not occupy the flat by himself. It took a court appeal and at least R300 in legal fees to have the decision rescinded.



1. 67 years - pensioner.

2. No information.

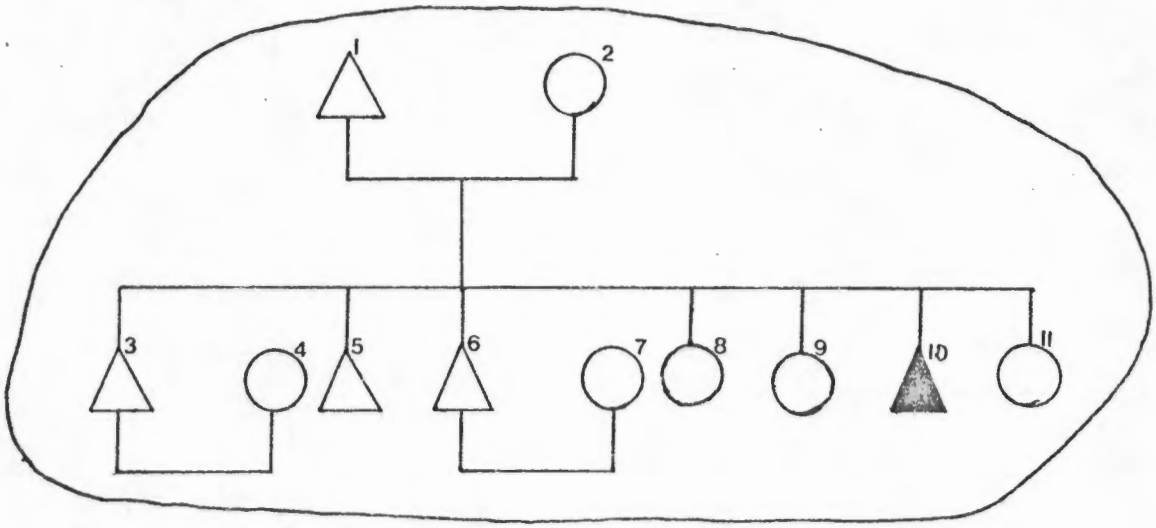
3. No information.

4. 23 years - stallholder; left school in 1970; previously employed by street trader.

5. No information.

6. No information.

CASE 3.10 : A.D. was a 21 year old stallholder who had always been unemployed, undertaking weekend jobs for other street traders when he needed money. In February 1981, he joined S.P. (see Case 3.9) in his stall. His initial weekly outlay of R30 was gradually increased to ± R100. He contributed R10 per week to his household of 11 members, and claimed to feel fairly secure since he had no domestic responsibilities.



1. 62 years - unemployed; no pension; Std II.

2. 55 years - housewife; Form II.

3. 37 years - Std IX; building sub-contractor; major contributor to household income.

4. 31 years - housewife.

5. 32 years - works for 3; bricklayer; Std VIII.

6. 28 years - works for S.A.R.; ticket collector.

7. 21 years - Std VI; stallholder; previously unemployed.

8. 17 years - matric; Athlone.

Again, the household situations of the cases above present stark contrasts. However, some of their circumstances are similar :

(i) that they had weighed the pros and cons of attending school and saw little value in going any further ;

(ii) that they had surveyed the earning potential of wage employees who attended high school, and what they deduced did not appeal to their personal pursuits ;

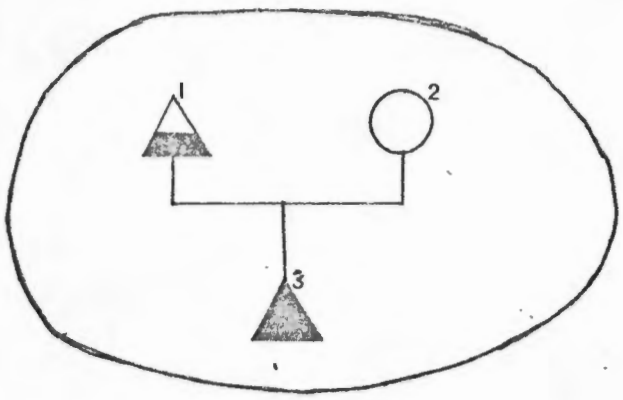
(iii) that their domestic responsibilities were, in contrast to other stallholders, comparatively low ; and

(iv) that they worked as part of a team trading during weekends only, to meet mainly their personal subsistence needs.

In contrast, the circumstances of two other fruit and vegetable stallholders appeared to be significantly different. One feature was similar however : they belonged to teams characterized by close co-operation. In co-operatives of this kind solidarity was often expressed. As small traders, these stallholders recognised their limitations, and the value of inter-dependence.

In the two case studies below the two stallholders took to street trading because of the commitments they felt towards their households. One was a despondent wage earner and bachelor who resigned from wage employment to take to street trading on a full-time basis whilst the other was a wage employee who was married, and took up street trading on a part-time basis.

CASE 3.11 : S.T. was a 27 year old stallholder who resigned from his previous employment in 1980. His father, who had been a street trader, advised S.T. on setting up an enterprise. With an initial weekly outlay of R150, S.T.'s capital gradually increased to ± R300 by July 1981. He vowed not to return to wage employment again.

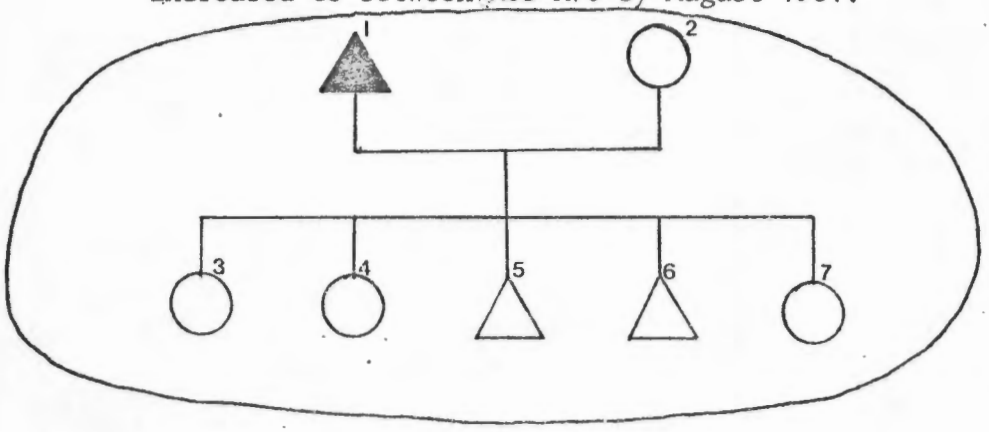


1. 67 years - pensioner; formerly a street trader.

2. 59 years - housewife; worked in a factory between 1972 and 1975.

3. 27 years - Std VIII; stallholder; previously worked in printing press, 1970-1979; major contributor to household income; amount unknown.

CASE 3.12 : A.L. was a 37 year old painter who said that the wage he earned barely met his family's subsistence needs. However, his attempt to earn additional money through doing private work during weekends was hampered by two factors. First, he was bound by an Industrial Council ruling that forbids painters (like other artisans) to work privately during weekends - because of high unemployment in the industry. Secondly, private contractors, as he alleged, hardly ever paid him for the work he did. Thus, out of desperation, A.L. decided to set up a fruit and vegetable stall in Athlone in January 1981. He said that this venture had at least partially relieved him of his financial problems. His initial capital outlay of R45 per week had apparently increased to between R65-R70 by August 1981.



1. 37 years - stallholder; Std V; painter since 1965; worked for 8 firms.

2. 30 years - housewife; Std VII; never employed previously.

3. 15 years - Std VIII; Bonteheuwel.

4. 13 years - Std VI; Bonteheuwel.

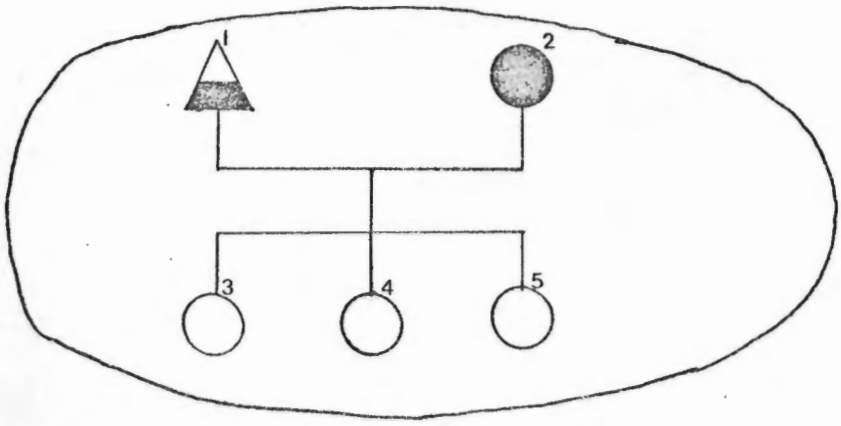
5. 11 years - Std III; Bonteheuwel.

6. 7 years - Form II.

7. 4 years - at home.

In contrast to the case studies presented earlier, which were all of male stallholders, those that appear below are of women stallholders. The domestic circumstances and stalls of these women stallholders presented tangible sociological evidence of marginalised individuals. Like their make counterparts, a broad spectrum of contingent factors had influenced their decisions to become garment makers and street traders.

CASE 3.13 : A.G. was a 34 year old woman who was a resident of Wynberg, until she was removed from the suburb in 1960 under the Group Areas Act. At that time she was a machine operator in a clothing factory. In 1965, she was made redundant. A.G. did not return to work. She married in 1966, when she fell pregnant, and had remained at home since then. She started retailing home-made clothes in 1974. The profits from her enterprise plus her husband's earnings only barely enabled them to subsist.



1. 36 years - Std V; shop assistant, 1959-1963; caretaker at a school, 1964-1968; unemployed, 1970; ticket collector at a cinema 1971-1981.

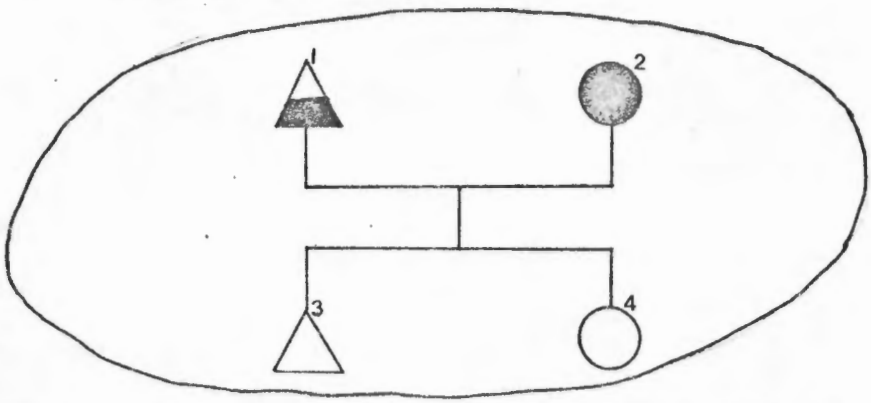
2. 34 years - stallholder; Std V; factory worker 1961-1965.

3. 15 years - Std VII; Athlone.

4. 12 years - Std V; Athlone.

5. 10 years - Std II; Athlone.

CASE 3.14 : E.X. was a 29 year old woman who was moved from Black River in 1972 to Bonteheuwel. She left the household of her spouse's kin at this time to live with her husband and children alone. E.X. took to street trading after learning to sew on a machine in 1978. In late 1979 she became acquainted with A.G. and two other women and joined their business. The profits E.X. made contributed "substantially" to her husband's earnings.



1. 31 years - Std VII; works for Pick 'n Pay; wages R45 p.w.

2. 29 years - stallholder; Std VIII; previously unemployed.

3. 11 years - Std III; Bonteheuwel.

4. 6 years - Form II; Bonteheuwel.

The domestic circumstances of these two stallholders are similar. Together with two other women stallholders, they operated in close proximity to one another, forming a foursome. For the major part of the month they divided their time between producing women's and children's clothing at home and setting up their stalls at the Guguletu train station. Low wage earnings and restricted access to wage employment were the motivating factors in the women's decision to take to street trading. A.G.'s employment career

(Case 3.13) came to an end when she was made redundant without compensation or unemployment benefit. The financial difficulties of her parental household had prompted her to find a way out of her plight, and marriage had apparently eased the lot of her natal domestic group.

Information about the financial situation of the households of the women stallholders suggested that they occupied a rather marginal position. Although neither the actual figures of their spouses' earnings, nor of the stalls were divulged, even in intensive interviews, my impression was that their combined incomes, i.e. through wage earnings and street trading still barely met their subsistence needs.

In sum, evidence from small stallholders shows wide variation in their reasons for taking to street trading, their household responsibilities, and the extent to which their households relied on their additional income for their survival. It was clear that the earnings from the stalls were not sufficient to meet the entire reproduction needs of their households. The survival and reproduction of such households thus depend on individuals being able to diversify their activities (see also the households of the middle traders above) in order to maximise their incomes. Wage earning (Case 3.12) or access to other resources such as a pension (Case 3.11) reduces the pressure on certain stallholders to work excessively long hours. Significant in the cases of S.P. and A.D. was the firm conviction lying behind their activities. They rejected schooling because they considered it futile for unrewarding employment; and they rejected employment because they were obsessed with and repelled by the notion of employers being "Whites" only.

On the other hand, those individuals who depended entirely on their stall earnings for their household subsistence presented street trading as being

a far from leisurely activity (Cases 3.13 and 3.14). Their commitments as parents and housewives and their long hours of work in production and retail reflect the labour intensive nature of their inter-dependent economic activities. But their marginalised existence demanded high labour inputs to transcend even in a minor way their chronic poverty.

EMPLOYEES OF STALLHOLDERS

Emphasis so far has been placed on variety in the size of stalls and the size and composition of households. The diverse subsistence contributions of household members outside of street trading, their ability to co-exist in croded conditions, and the relative ease with which the stallholders traded in the face of legal restrictions added to the peculiarities that characterize their situation.

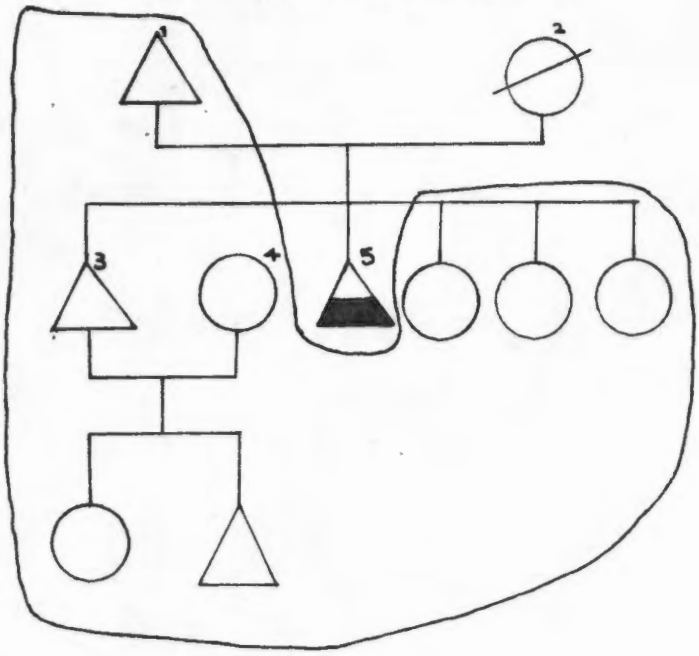
In this sub-section emphasis moves to the wage earning and job seeking experiences and household composition of people employed by stallholders traded in the face of legal restrictions added to the peculiarities that characterize their situation.

In this sub-section emphasis moves to the wage earning and job seeking experiences and household composition of people employed by stallholders. Their situation in Athlone was rather different from that of employees in Wynberg and Claremont. In particular, two Athlone employees had weighed up the advantages of employment in Cape Town over that of their natal districts.

CASE 3.15 : A.N. and N.G. were 16 and 19 year old youths from Ceres and Kimberley respectively. After withdrawing from school before completing Std. VIII and having worked in a Ceres farm for two years, A.N. decided to leave home for Cape Town in search of employment. In Ceres only unskilled employment could be offered to A.N. - at low wage rates. His only escape he believed was to leave Ceres for Cape Town where he thought he would earn higher wages.

See Case 6.8 and Case 6.9

Likewise N.G. left Kimberley for similar reasons. After noticing the poor and low paid working conditions for Africans in Kimberley he dicided to travel to Cape Town. At the time N.G.'s optimism in acquiring better paid employment lay in his experience as a painter. Difficulty in finding suitable employment however forced N.G. into accepting a job as a domestic servant. But he continued to remain in Cape Town in the hope of acquiring more financially rewarding employment.



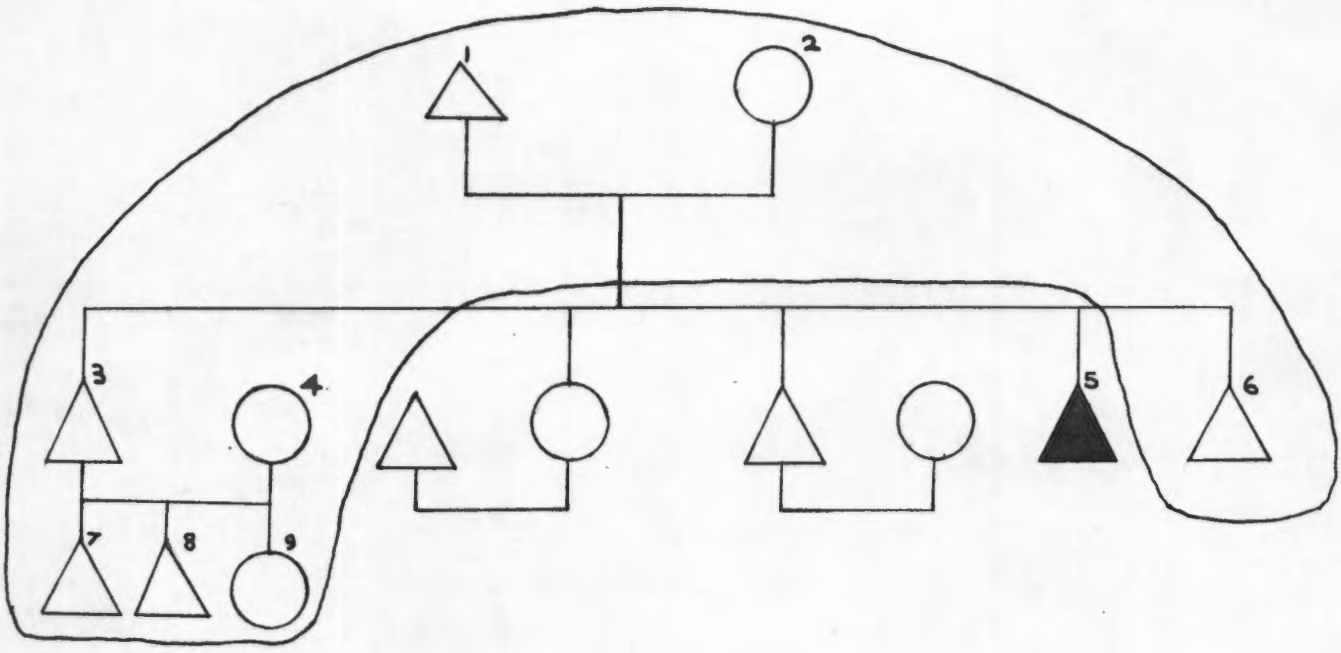
1. 46 years - farmhand; R35 per week.

2. Deceased.

3. 23 years - Std V; farmhand; R35 p.w.; mends shoes during spare time and weekends to supplement earnings.

4. 23 years - Std VI; works for employer of 1 and 3 - when needed; ± R10 p.w.

5. 16 years - Std VI; came to Cape Town in 1978; farm hand, shop assistant, street trader.



1. 61 years - previously a mineworker; gardener; R80 per month.

2. 57 years - housewife; previously a domestic maid; does washing part-time; hearns ± R10 per week.

3. 30 years - Std IX; mineworker; R38 per week; makes major contribution to household income.

4. Unemployed.

5. 19 years - Std VII; street trader; earns R50 per month; lives and eats in employer's household.

6. 11 years - Std III; school in Kimberley

7.
8. } No information
9.

In comparison with these male employees, the position of three women employees were significantly different. All sisters, they were employed by a member of their paternal kin who felt responsible for them.

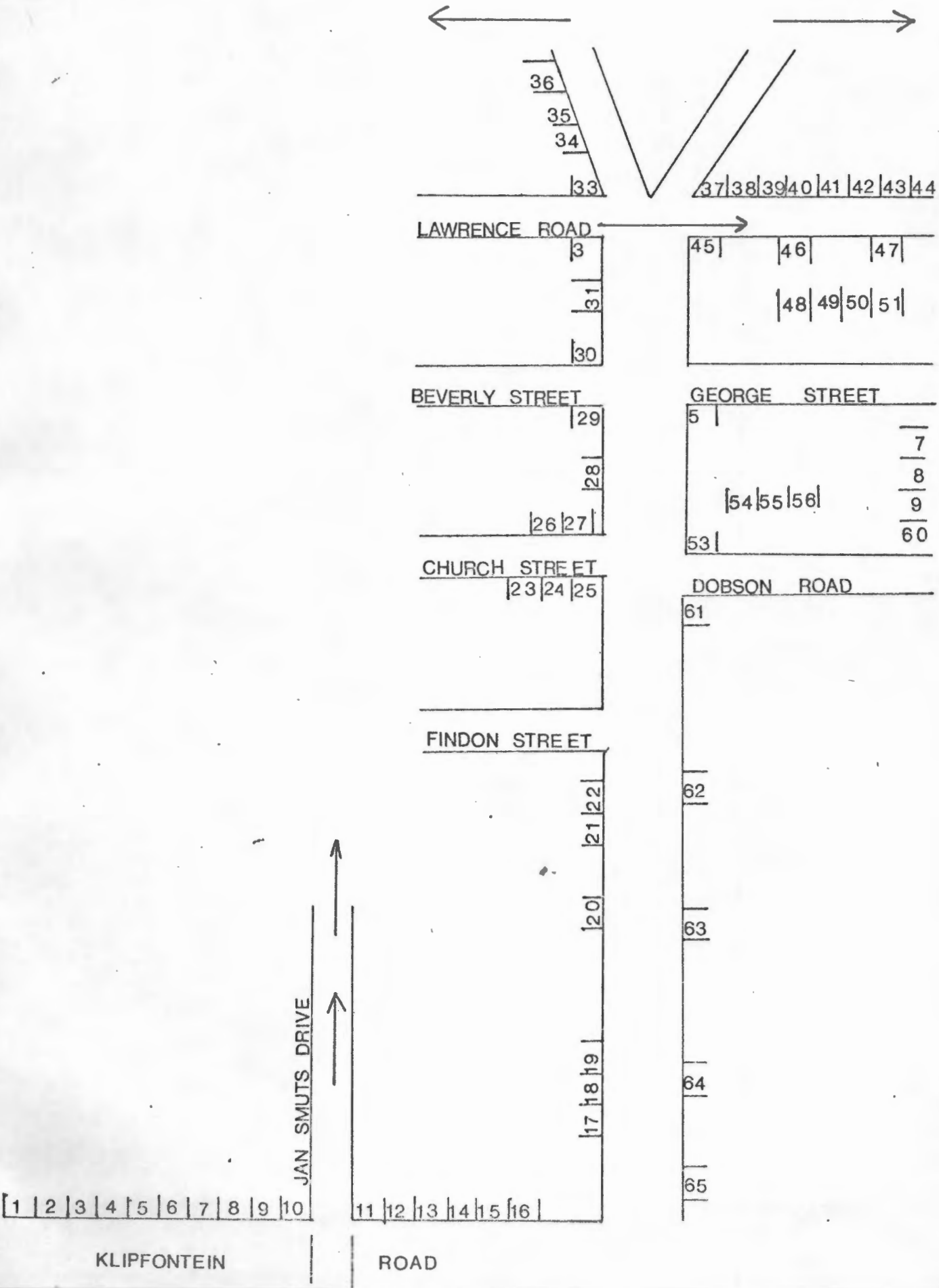
CASE 3.16 : see Case 3.4 for diagram

All three had been assistants in their deceased parents' shop, which went bankrupt in 1978. One was a divorcée with three children, whilst the other two were unmarried. The remuneration for their work was mainly in kind. They received R40 per month towards their rent, a weekly grocery hamper and ± R20 per week for incidental expenses.

The situation of the three women is very different to that of Case 3.15, but they elucidate a common and significant point very clearly : that employees in Athlone worked for stallholders under an elaborate dependancy relationship. They were paid for their services in both cash and kind. A basic wage, and/or shelter was the most widespread package that was offered to the employees.

It is clear that the food and shelter offered to A.N. and N.G. barely allowed them to survive, whilst the wages they were paid were inadequate to meet even the minimum needs for their kin households. Nonetheless, they remitted small but regular amounts. Acquiring employment in the vicinity of their natal districts would apparently have been no better, if not worse. But, above all, it was the myth that big cities such as Cape Town provide ample and rewarding employment for everybody that prompted them to stay on.

1. SKETCH MAP ILLUSTRATING GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF STALLS IN ATHLONE ON 22/8/1981



CHAPTER FOUR

STREET TRADERS IN WYNBERG : A SUB-DIVIDED SUBURB

In the last Chapter we noted that both the C.B.D. and residential areas of Athlone were proclaimed for Coloured occupation only. This feature produced an atmosphere conducive to street traders who wanted to set up stalls. The sympathy and solidarity of a number of the business proprietors in the target area made street traders more acceptable in the C.B.D. Thus, in numerous instances, street traders set up their stalls immediately outside business premises without seeking permission from the proprietors and/or managers, and traded without threat of being reported to City Council officials. Under these circumstances, street traders achieved two things :

(i) they were able to entrench themselves in an environment from which, in theory, they were prohibited ; and

(ii) they appeared to control a sizeable fraction of the retail market in certain areas of Athlone. The high capital inputs of a number of stallholders lends support to this contention.

In Wynberg the characteristics of the residential area and the C.B.D. were significantly different. The C.B.D. in Wynberg fell within a White Group Area, whilst the residential area was sub-divided for White and Coloured occupation. Both these factors influenced the "formal" and "informal" patterns of trading in the suburb. "Formal" trading, which took place mainly within the C.B.D. was characterized by chain stores, supermarkets and small scale retail service outlets which were owned mainly by White entrepreneurs. "Informal" trading took place from both

stationary and mobile stalls. Street trading in Wynberg's C.B.D. did not present the casual and open market atmosphere widely found in Athlone.

Although it was not impossible for street traders to set up stalls within the C.B.D. the environment was less congenial to street trading for several reasons. Most street traders were people classified "Coloured", and were not very acceptable to the White entrepreneurs who preferred a more formalized pattern of retail. On the other hand, whilst the few "White" street traders who appeared as a cluster on a monthly basis had no difficulty in setting up stalls within the C.B.D., most "Coloured" street traders were unable to obtain permission from "White" shopkeepers and managers to trade from stalls outside their premises, for the latter feared that the street trader population would increase and become a more permanent feature of the C.B.D.

In response, most Coloured street traders who operated stationary stalls set up their enterprises on the immediate outskirts of the C.B.D., from the "Coloured" section of the railway platform to the subway that leads into the Coloured Group Area of Wynberg. The distance between the railway platform and the end of the road that joined the Coloured Group Area was barely 100m, but here most stationary stalls were to be found; and it was here that most of the observation and intensive interviewing took place.

SELECTING STALLS FOR CLOSER EXAMINATION

Within the entire target area of Wynberg, a wide range of items were retailed from numerous stalls on different days of the week and month; but, as in Athlone, most stalls retailed fruit and vegetables. Other stalls that retailed items such as shoes and clothing, flowers, cosmetics,

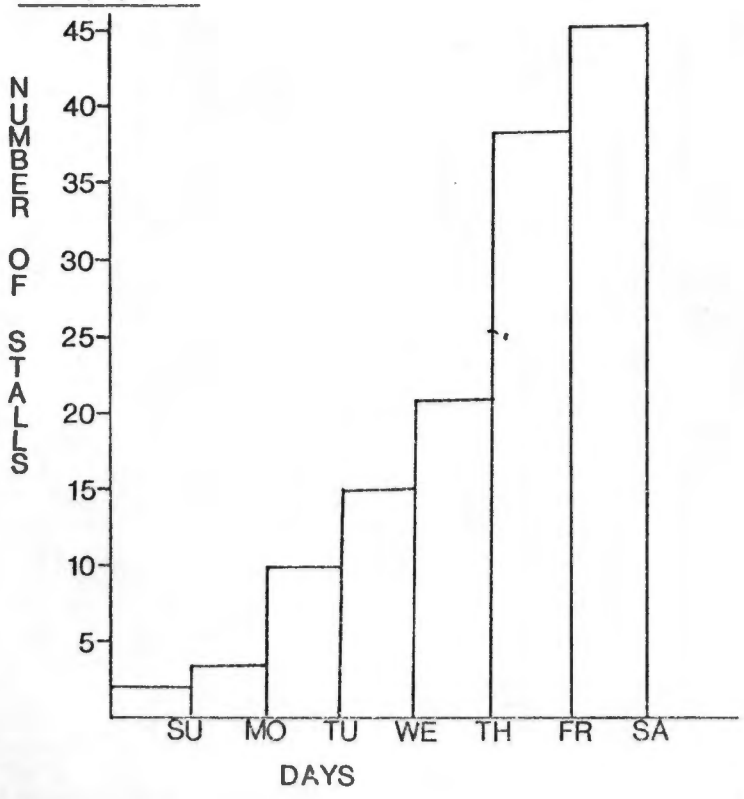
etc., appeared in smaller numbers. On the 29/8/1981 a range of more than 10 items was retailed from 45 stalls.

TABLE 4.1 : ILLUSTRATING RANGE OF ITEMS AND NUMBER OF STALLS

	FRUIT & VEG	FLOWERS	SPICES/ PICKLES	FISH	CLOTHES	COSME-TICS	SHOES	JEWELLERY & TOYS	TOTAL
NO OF STALLS:	18	3	3	2	1	1	3	14	45
PERCENTAGE:	40	7	7	4	2	2	7	31	100

Of the three stalls that retailed flowers (stalls 39 - 41) only one appeared regularly; the stall that retailed cosmetics (stall 10) appeared on three successive Saturdays only; and those stalls that retailed jewellery, leatherwear and toys appeared only monthly, on the first and/or last Saturday of every month. The frequency of appearance of stalls over a representative week is reflected in the graph below :

FIGURE 4.1
GRAPH ILLUSTRATING DAY TO DAY APPEARANCE OF 45 STALLS BETWEEN 23/8/1981 - 29/8/1981



A closer examination of 17 stalls revealed numerous particularities in the manner of operation and the socio-economic circumstances of the stalls and their operators. But before discussion of these differences, some common features need to be mentioned. All 17 stalls appeared between the railway station platform and the end of the side road that linked the station to the Coloured Group Area as two regular clusters. Not all were set up on a daily basis but at the very least they appeared at weekly intervals.

Eleven of the stalls retailed fruit and vegetables, four of them appearing on a regular basis (i.e. 5-6 days per week); two retailed home-packed spices and home-made oriental pickles, and these too appeared on a regular basis; three retailed shoes and appeared on a part-time basis (i.e. Fridays and Saturdays), whilst the remaining stall retailed jerseys and T-shirts, also on a part-time basis.

TABLE 4.2 : ILLUSTRATING PARTICULARITIES OF 17 STALLS

	FRUIT & VEG	SPICES & PICKLES	SHOES	CLOTHES
DAILY STALLS	4	2	-	-
PART-TIME STALLS	7	-	3	1
TOTAL	11	2	3	1

These 17 stallholders were acutely conscious of the relative advantage of the spots from which they traded. Those stalls that were set up on the train station platform were illegally occupying Municipal property and this placed them in a very precarious position. These stallholders were frequent victims of the Hawkers Squad who appropriated their produce

as punishment whenever they raided. Those stalls that were set up away from the railway platform, on the adjoining road, avoided official harrassment by setting up their stalls away from Municipal property, and, being only inches away from the public road, came into direct contact with the constant flow of shoppers and commuters.

The proximity of the stalls produced a highly competitive atmosphere. In spite of this, street traders who worked in these stalls collaborated extensively with one another, especially in recognizing each other's claims to particular trading spaces. To this extent they created a solidarity that generated a feeling of security in their day to day activities.

This was particularly noticeable amongst the street traders who belonged to the eleven fruit and vegetable stalls. First, all of the part-time fruit and vegetable stallholders were dependent on the regular stallholders for the purchase and transport of their produce, for which they paid R4-5 per trip. Second, the regular traders often depended on the part-timers to purchase their surplus produce when they themselves could not retail it during their hours of operation. The produce was sold for either cash or credit to the part-time traders who continued to retail after most regular stalls had ended their activities for the day. Though not a routine feature, it enabled the regular street traders to minimize losses on the items they retailed.

A more intimate understanding of the broad network of the 17 stalls is obtained through the weekly outlays of each stall, and the socio-economic circumstances of the stallholders. Weekly outlays are illustrated in the table below.

TABLE 4.3 : ILLUSTRATING WEEKLY OUTLAYS OF 17 STALLS

CATEGORY	NO OF STALLS	AMOUNTS
BIG	3	R1 000 750 700
MEDIUM	4	R 550 400 350 350
SMALL	10	R 300 250 100 80 80 60 50 50 50

A striking feature of this table is that the largest weekly outlay is R1 000 and there are local reasons why the stallholders could not go beyond this figure. Very simply, the street traders could not compete with the product diversity and prices of the chain stores. Because of this, street traders were able to achieve only limited retail sales. Most of the street traders expressed a desire to expand, but blamed their inability to do so on their powerful competitors in the C.B.D.

The individual characteristics of the stalls were, however, very diverse. Most traders set up their stalls for trade on different days for varying reasons. For instance, there were traders who set up their stalls on a daily basis in Wynberg because the characteristics of the area met their specific requirements, whereas others appeared in Wynberg on weekends

only and set up their stalls elsewhere on weekdays. Lastly, those who traded in Wynberg only during weekends did so to cover their own personal subsistence without contributing to the household.

The broader sociological implications of this diversity can best be understood in relation to the life situations of the various street traders. To begin with, all but one (Case 4.5) of the stalls were operated by the stallholders themselves with the assistance mainly of household members.

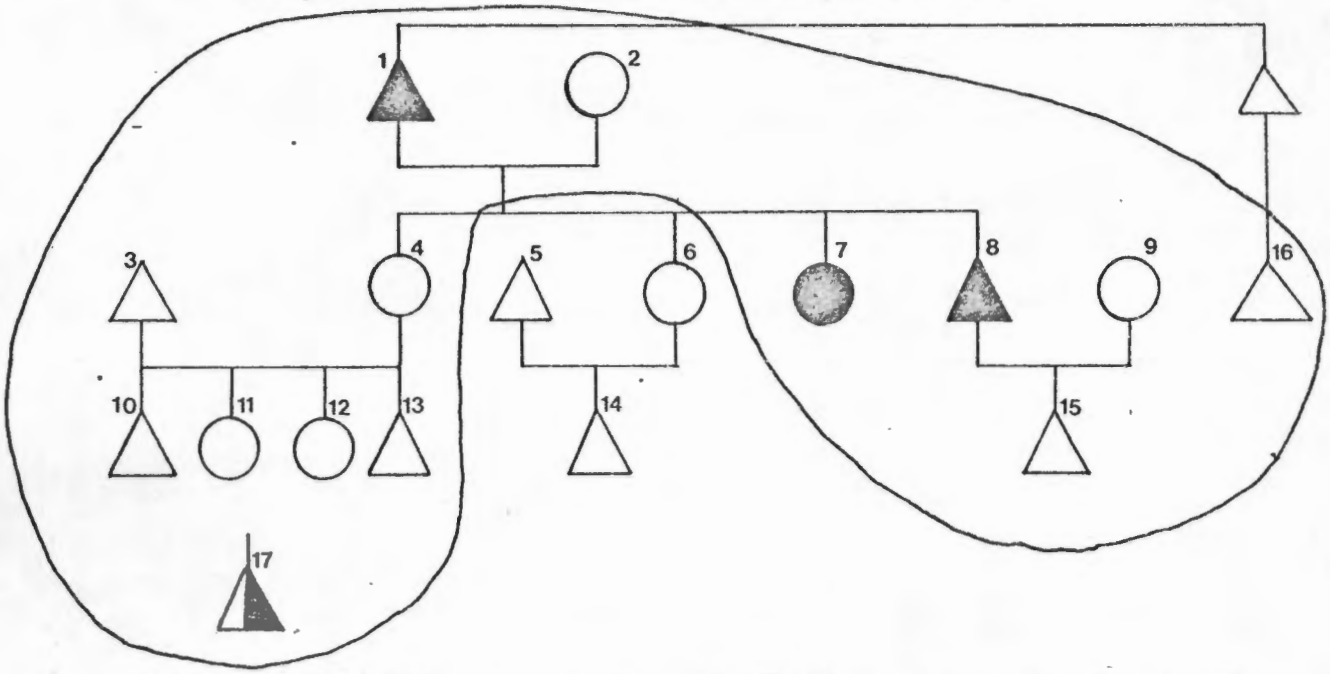
BIG STALLHOLDERS

Two of the stalls (see Table 4.1; p98) in this category were operated by stallholders who were attracted by the compact nature of the trading environment and the immediate contact they could establish with the constant flow of commuters.

One stallholder was a retailer of fruit and vegetables who traded on a regular basis. He depended on his family and one employee for the efficient operation of his stall. The income from this stall provided the sole means of household subsistence. The second stallholder was in partnership with his brother, setting up their stall in Wynberg from Thursday to Saturday. The brothers worked as a team, resided in a single household and supported their household through street trading alone. The economic histories and household structures are presented in the case studies below.

CASE 4.1 : R.O. first traded at the Bixhill Road subway entrance in 1976. over the years he noticed a steady increase in the number of stationary traders setting up stalls within his vicinity. Calculating that the popular space at the entrance to the railway station subway was likely to be usurped by another street trader, he extended his display, establishing a claim

to the entire sub-section. R.O.'s stall was run by his father, sister, an employee, and himself. He had learnt street trading from his parents who had transferred responsibility for the stall to him. Although R.O. was formally the stallholder, his father still remained active as a street trader, although not on a full-time basis. The proceeds from the stall were used to support 14 members within R.O.'s household. One member was a paternal cousin who made no contribution to the household, and showed no real interest in working, whilst six other members had been incorporated into the household out of sympathy and familial responsibility. The double misfortune of "3" (see kinship diagram below) after he was made redundant in May 1979 - without any success in finding employment elsewhere, and the loss of his C.T.C.C. house three months later forced him into a dependancy relationship with his spouse's kin.



1. 58 years - Std III; previously a stallholder; now partly "retired".

2. 51 years - Std V; housewife.

3. 31 years - Std IX; bricklayer - unemployed since 1979.

4. 28 years - Std VIII; housewife.

5. 24 years - Std V; at home; and helps in stall.

6. 22 years - Std V; stallholder; inherited responsibilities in 1980.

7. 22 years - Std VIII; housewife.

8. 13 years - Std VI; school; Wynberg.

9. 10 years - Std II; school; Wynberg.

10. 7 years - Sub B; Wynberg.

11. 2 years.

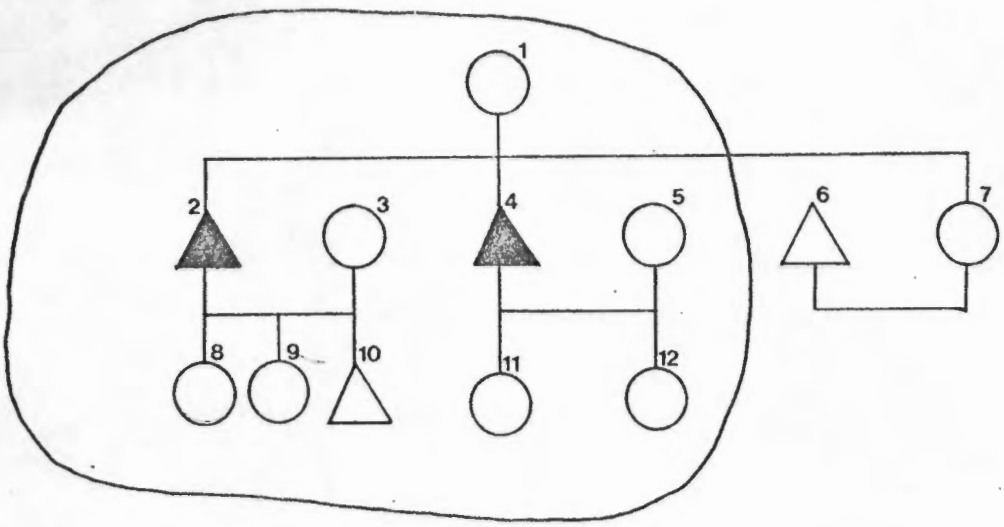
12. 26 years - unemployed; previously a factory storeman; made no contribution to household.

13. 16 years - no schooling; resided with and worked for 1 since 1977; earns R20 per week; stays with 1; came from Nyanga.

CASE 4.2 : H.A. was born and raised in Woodstock and claimed that although the suburb was not directly affected by the Group Areas Act, his family and neighbours were often intimidated by City Council officials attempting to clear the suburb. This was his first contact with the racism that characterized his surroundings. He compared his education and the facilities in his school unfavourably with those of Whites. His school, like all Coloured schools, had cramped and overcrowded classrooms and no sports facilities.

In 1968 H.A.'s interest in school faded, and he withdrew. After 18 months of unemployment he found work as an apprentice plasterer. He claimed that as a Coloured he was often addressed in disrespectful terms at his place of work, and when he became skilled he was often given harder tasks than his White counterparts. Since 1976 unhealthy working conditions and strain of overwork affected his health. In November 1977 he underwent an operation to remove a kidney.

Reflecting on the frustrations and bad conditions of this job, he decided to return to wage employment of any kind. In 1978 he began door-to-door retailing of women's and children's clothing. At the same time, he took a course in watchmaking, hoping to supplement the income from peddling clothes. By the middle of 1979 both proved unprofitable. By chance, at this time, he acquired a quantity of ladies shoes and sandals from a factory at a reasonable price. From a stationary stall in Athlone on three consecutive days, H.A.'s retailing of the shoes flourished. His elder brother was simultaneously made redundant and looking for employment. They decided to combine their incomes to purchase women's shoes for retail and to share their profits and losses. From Mondays to Wednesdays, H.A. and his brother divided their produce equally, going to several districts other than Wynberg, most commonly to the railway station platform at Woodstock and the C.B.D. of Athlone (Q-Town). From Thursday to Saturday they combined their produce on a single stall in Wynberg (Stall 8) because of the favourable trading situation when the weekend consumer flow increased their clientele. Their joint income from the enterprise supported their household of 10 members.



1. 62 years - stays at home - no pension.

2. 38 years - Std VIII; credit control clerk; made redundant in June 1979; joint stallholder with 4.

3. 33 years - Std IX; housewife; previously a shop assistant in Hanover Park; made redundant in March 1981.

4. 31 years - Std IX (halfway through); left school in 1968; worked as a plasterer/tiler between 1971 and 1977; joint stallholder with 2.

5. 27 years - Std VIII; housewife; previously unemployed.

6. to 9. No information.

10. to 12. Children.

The economic circumstances of these medium stallholders are significantly different. R.O.'s (Case 4.1) fortunate position as a "big" stallholder at a relatively early age lay in the fact that he had inherited an established enterprise that was already a familiar sight to hundreds of

daily commuters. Nor did he need to undergo the stresses and strains of being an employee, or even establish himself as a street trader. Involvement in his father's enterprise from childhood had familiarised him with how to operate a fruit and vegetable stall efficiently. He was additionally fortunate in that household members were always available to provide the labour he needed for the smooth operation of his stall.

In constrast, it took H.A. (Case 4.2) at least three years after resigning from wage employment to establish relative financial security through street trading. His experience of wage employment had been exploitative and disastrous for his health. His second attempt to earn a living by street trading also went badly until his good fortune in purchasing a cheap consignment of women's shoes. Through this stroke of luck H.A. not only gained confidence in himself as a street trader, but was able to help his unemployed brother by incorporating him on an equal basis in his venture.

What these cases have in common is that the earnings from their stalls could support fairly large households. Significant in both is that members who made no contribution to the efficiency of the stalls were nonetheless given a home in the stallholders' households. More importantly, they were supported with relative ease from the proceeds of the stalls. In addition, the inclusion of "16" in R.O.'s household reiterates the solidarity and social responsibility assumed by individuals for their economically insecure kindred.

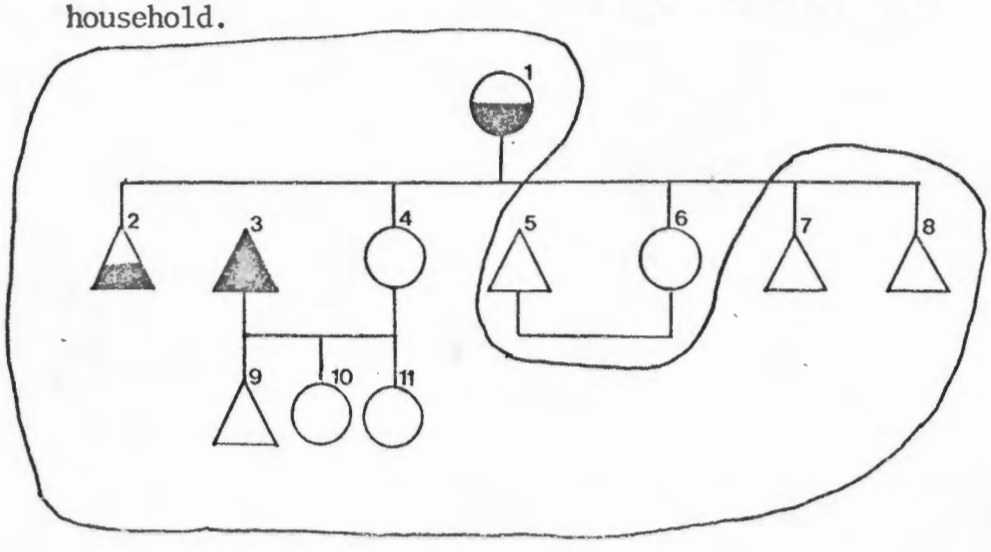
MIDDLE STALLHOLDERS

The circumstances of the stalls and the wage earning and job seeking experiences and households of two stallholders were extensively examined. In each case differences were quite significant. It was obvious that stallholders either chose to remain in street trading in spite of employment alternatives (Case 4.3) or became street traders (Case 4.4) in order to maintain a sense of independence and dignity.

CASE 4.3 : H.M. was one of seven brothers, six of whom were street traders. The six continued as a co-operative when each was given an equal share of the communally-operated family enterprise headed by their parents until 1966. They pooled their resources to purchase their weekly produce since bulk buying earned them significant discounts. H.M. was the chief buyer for the co-operative. Each brother calculated the volume of produce he needed and handed in the estimated amount the day before purchases were made.

The co-operative had been functional for the past fifteen years. Every brother took pride in maintaining good relations within the enterprise, which they claimed had been going since the 1930s. They prided themselves on their long-standing independence : to be employed as a wage earner, "especially for a Boer" would have been an act of betrayal to the family name.

H.M. stayed in his spouse's mother's household in Wynberg for most of the week because of its proximity to his stall, and sub-let his Council house in Grassy Park for R50 per month. Although this was illegal, it earned him the money which enabled him to contribute to his mother-in-law's household.



1. 60 years - 3 years in Malay school; relies on sewing curtains and dresses for her income; no pension.

2. 41 years - works at sea; makes negligible contribution to household income.

3. 37 years - Std VI; stallholder; contributes fruit and vegetables weekly and ± R20 per week for other basics.

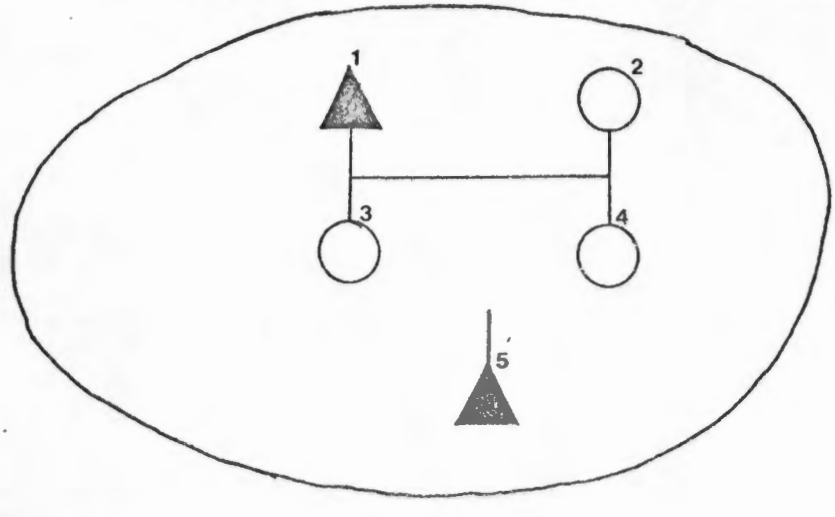
4. 33 years - Std V; shop assistant; earns R35 per week.

5. Not part of the household.
6.

7. 28 years - unemployed; helps 3 in stall.

8. 19 years - matric; Wynberg.

CASE 4.4 : A.M. had been employed by a lock and safe company in central Cape Town. He had resigned in 1976 because he found his situation too exploitative and stagnant to continue. After remaining without work for six months he decided, together with a friend, to venture into street trading retailing fruit and vegetables. They gradually built up an initial capital outlay of R80 to R400 per week by May 1981. In 1976, A.M. left his brother's household on being accused of being workshy. He joined the household of his partner N.M., who was married, with two children. N.M. had been unemployed, eking out a living by selling scrap metal whenever he got hold of it or selling fish whenever it was cheap. At times during the period of research, he still bought and sold fish when it suited him, but A.M. was not a partner in this business.



1. 31 years - stallholder (N.M.); Std VI; moved to Grassy Park after being evicted from Newlands in 1969 - Group Areas Act.

2. 27 years - housewife; Std VIII.

3. 5 years - at home.

4. 2 years.

5. 29 years - stallholder (A.M.); Std VII; worked previously for a lock and safe company in Cape Town - resigned in 1976.

Like the circumstances that characterized the "big" stallholders discussed earlier in this Chapter, the two middle traders focussed on here present an equally diverse picture. In one instance, it was inheritance (Case 4.3) whilst in another it was despondency about wage employment (Case 4.4) that prompted the stallholder to turn to street trading to earn a living. What emerges as a significant similarity in these cases is the extent to which both individuals co-operated with other stallholders in their day-to-day activities.

Although H.M. was an independent stallholder, his involvement with his co-operative provides a good example of a close-knit and multi-faceted kinship network. As a platform for inter-dependence it served kin members in two ways. First, it activated frequent contact amongst the brothers who lived in separate households, thus maintaining a sense of solidarity. And second, perhaps more importantly, it served as a labour pool where various duties, such as purchasing, loading, unloading and transport of stock, were delegated to each member, which reduced the work load of each stallholder.

On the other hand, the team that A.M. and N.M. formed had its own particular significance. Though not related to one another, their shared duties as stallholders, their joint efforts to set up their stall, and a common residence provides an understanding of how individuals in a relatively insecure environment entrench and secure themselves through collaboration. In a situation of exploitative wage employment, difficult access to wage employment and chronic housing shortage, the intimate association between A.M. and N.M. reflects the "voluntary associations" and "social networks" that are often seen to characterize the economically subordinate masses in exploitative social formations.

SMALL STALLHOLDERS

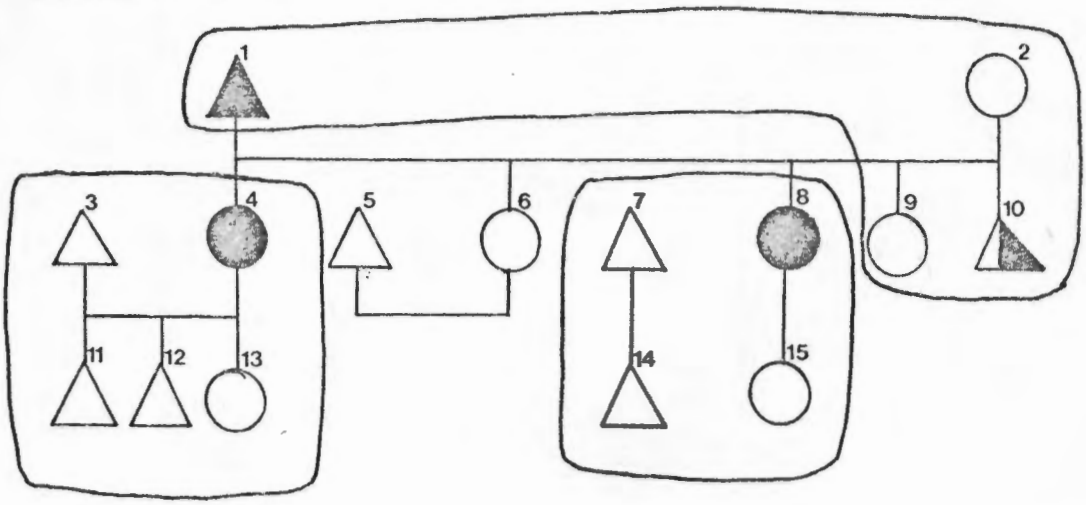
The 10 street traders in Wynberg who operated stalls that belonged to this category likewise presented a wide range of personal and domestic circumstances. Of the four case studies presented below, two operated stalls of home-packed spices and pickles, whilst the others retailed mainly fruit and vegetables.

Of the spice and pickle stalls, one was managed by a woman as an employee of her kinswoman, whilst the other was managed by the stallholder himself, with kin members performing most of the necessary tasks. There were subtle but significant differences in the personnel's relationship to these two stalls. In one (Stall 8) the woman who managed and retailed from the stall was remunerated through a standard wage. In the other (Stall 4) the individual who did most of the retailing was remunerated by being allowed to be a household member. In the case studies which follow, the first focusses on the socio-economic circumstances of the woman who managed the stall, whilst the second concerns the socio-economic circumstances of the stallholder himself. Together they illustrate the

widescale involvement of kin members in varying capacities.

CASE 4.5 : Mrs M.O. was born and educated in Constantia (Cape Town). She left school in 1964 after completing Std VI to supplement her father's low income; she had been employed as a clothing inspector at the Rex Trueform factory, where she worked for ten years. In 1973 her family was evicted from Constantia when it was declared for White occupation only. M.O.'s father purchased a home in Retreat, where she met her husband.

On her marriage in 1974, M.O. resigned her job. However, the need for additional income in her spouse's household became desperate since only two of the 13 members had an income. M.O. thus returned to work to supplement her household's income. At about this time M.O. was granted a Council house in Retreat (seven years after her first application), and her married sister fell pregnant and decided to employ M.O. to operate her stall in Wynberg. Being unemployed at the time, M.O. accepted, since it gave her a chance to supplement her husband's meagre income. More significant, however, were the kinship ties that obliged M.O. to accept the job. M.O.'s sister needed a responsible hand, since the aim of the enterprise was to save money to build her home. This concerted effort brought other kin members into the enterprise. M.O.'s father transported their produce to and from Wynberg, whilst her younger schoolgoing brother operated the stall on Saturdays. These collaborative efforts helped M.O.'s sister, the stall-holder, to nurse her new-born baby and continue with her household chores.



1. 66 years - retired factory machinist; pensioner; transports produce to stall 4; assisted financially by 3 and 8 when in need.

2. 60 years - housewife.

3. 41 years - Std V; works as labourer; wages R40 p.w.

4. 37 years - Std VI; operates stall 4; wages R20 p.w.

5.
6. No information.

7. 33 years - tiler/plasterer; R75-R80 p.w.; takes weekend contracts; earns between R50-R60 when such employment is available.

8. 29 years - stallholder of stall 4; Std VIII; pre-packs for stall 3; takes care of 14, 15 and 13.

9. 24 years - Std IX; receptionist; wages R200 p.m.

10. 18 years - matric; Retreat; operates stall 4 on weekends.

11. 11 years - Std V.

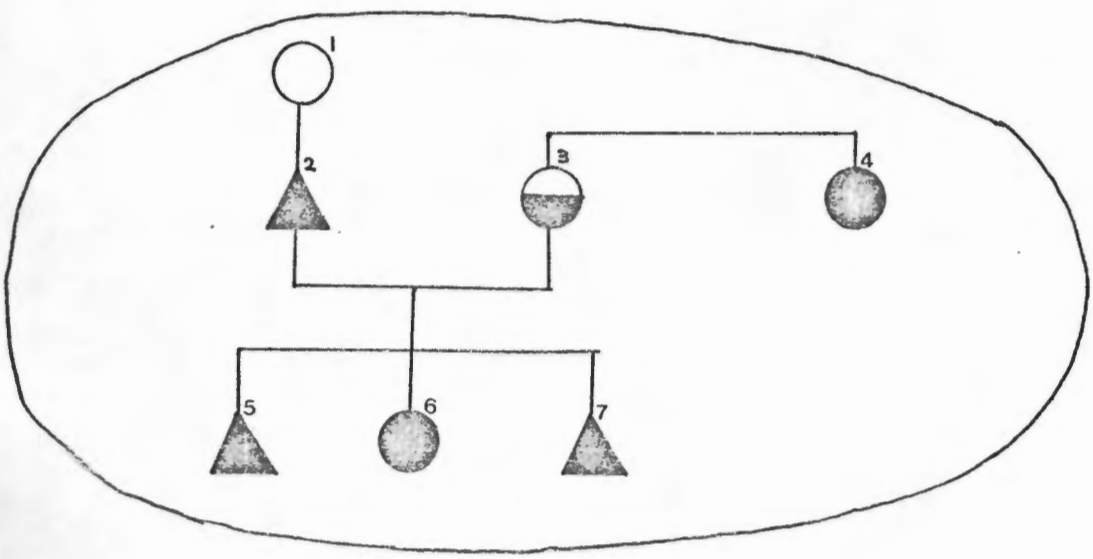
12. 7 years - Sub B.

13. 3 years - either accompanies 4 at stall; or left in the care of 8.

14. 4 years.

15. 2 months.

CASE 4.6 : Y.S., a former resident in the "White" section of Wynberg, moved to Ottery after a Group Area eviction notice was served on him in 1970. He had been employed at a printing press, where he was put on short time on several occasions without compensation. His attempts to find employment at the age of 38 failed every time although he admitted that it was a shortage of jobs rather than his age that led to his situation. Out of desperation and against his religious sentiments, (being a Muslim), Y.S. resorted to illicit liquor and drug trafficking in 1972. He recalled this as a very profitable venture which had allowed him to re-establish his dignity. But by 1977 "the Boere" (a reference to the Narcotics Bureau) caught up with him, "tortured" him and "closed him down". In sum, after being forcibly removed by the Group Areas Act, continually frustrated as a wage employee, and thereafter dealt with by the Drug Squad, Y.S.'s repudiation of the "White man" grew to such an extent that he totally rejected any dealings with "Whites". Thus, as an alternative to wage employment, Y.S. decided to set up a stall in Wynberg. Out of this venture he supported a household of seven members.



1. 63 years - unemployed; no income.

2. 38 years - Std VI; stallholder - stall 5; main contributor to income.

3. 34 years - Std V; shop assistant; wages R30 p.w.

4. 11 years - Std III; school in Wynberg; helps after school hours.

5. 8 years - Sub B; school in Wynberg; helps stall 5 after school hours.

6. 6 years - Sub A; school in Wynberg; helps stall 5 after school hours.

7. 21 years - Std VII; operates stall 5; lives with 2, sister to 3.

Although the situations of Mrs M.O. (Case 4.5) and Y.S. (Case 4.6) differ widely, what emerges as a significant similarity is the support rendered to both by immediate and affinal kin in the operation of the stalls. In one case the expectations of income from the stall were fairly high. But the proceeds did indeed make a three-way contribution in terms of wages for Mrs M.O., transport costs for her father's vehicle, and support towards the household of the stallholder. In addition, the stall was able to relieve and supplement the meagre wage earnings of M.O.'s spouse, provide some activity for her retired father, and also allow the major part of the wage earnings of the stallholder's spouse to be directed towards the construction of their home.

In the second case the earnings from the stall were used for the upkeep of the household alone. Significantly, however, the stall had afforded a member of the stallholder's affinal kin a chance to be employed on the stall, and given a place within the stallholder's household.

Together these cases reiterate the co-existence and collaborative efforts of economically insecure kin members. They illustrate the need for inter-dependence to ensure the mutual benefit of both stallholders and kin members.

Of the remaining two of the four stalls mentioned above, one belonged to one individual only, whilst the second was the joint effort of two individuals. In both cases, three particular factors were common to all three stallholders :

(i) they appeared on a part-time basis only, i.e. at weekends ;

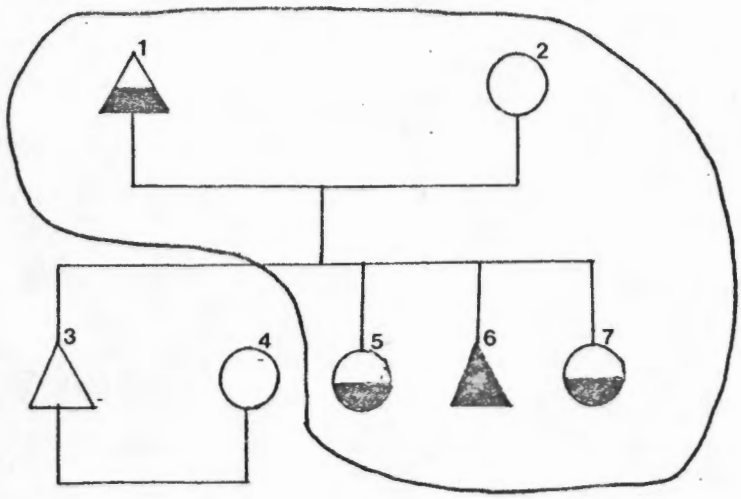
(ii) they depended on the regular traders to purchase and transport their produce ; and

(iii) they traded mainly to meet their personal subsistence needs : their household interests were only a secondary consideration.

Their collaboration and co-existence varied as will be shown in the following cases.

CASE 4.7 : H.E. was born and raised in Heathfield (Cape Town). He went to school in Wynberg until half-way through Std IX. In 1974 he found employment on an I & J fishing trawler, where he worked for three years. After being unemployed for six months in 1977 he found employment in two other companies doing clerical work.

He resigned from both situations for the same reason : too little money for too much work, as he put it. In 1980 he decided to start street trading, and received support from R.O. (see stall 12 - Case 4.1) who was his brother-in-law, and who arranged for the purchase and transport of his produce. H.E. was the only stallholder amongst those of the "small" category who hired labour (a child) at times to cope with his work in busy periods. He resided in his mother's household, but made a minimal contribution towards common subsistence needs. His two wage-earning sisters were the main supports of his household.



1. 59 years - divorced; salesman for auto spares shop.

2. 52 years - Std II; unemployed.

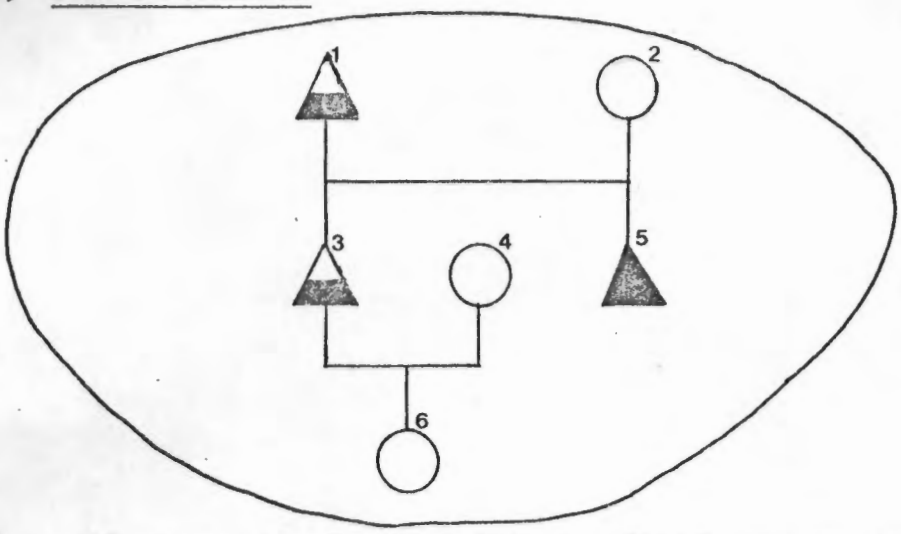
3. 28 years - Std IX; completed; cashier in supermarket; wages R45 p.w.

4. 25 years - Std VIII; stallholder - stall 18; contributes R10 p.w.

5. 22 years - Std VIII; shop assistant; wages R40 p.w.

CASE 4.8 : D.E. and L.E. were two friends who resided in Grassy Park. They set up their stall on Fridays and Saturdays only, and depended on two other stallholders to purchase and transport their produce. They formed part of that network which periodically eased the financial situation of the full-time fruit and vegetable stallholders by purchasing their surplus and selling after regular hours. D.E. (19 years old) had been an unskilled employee of the Cape Town Municipality, resigning after one year's service. L.E. (18 years old) had failed to find employment when he withdrew from school in 1977. They had first combined their incomes in February 1980 and earned enough for their personal expenses by trading in fruit and vegetables. Neither had any incentive to contribute to the expenses of their households whose earnings they considered to be more than adequate.

1) D.E.'s HOUSEHOLD



1. 43 years - matric; bus driver - City Tramways; R400 p.m.

2. 38 years - Std VIII; housewife.

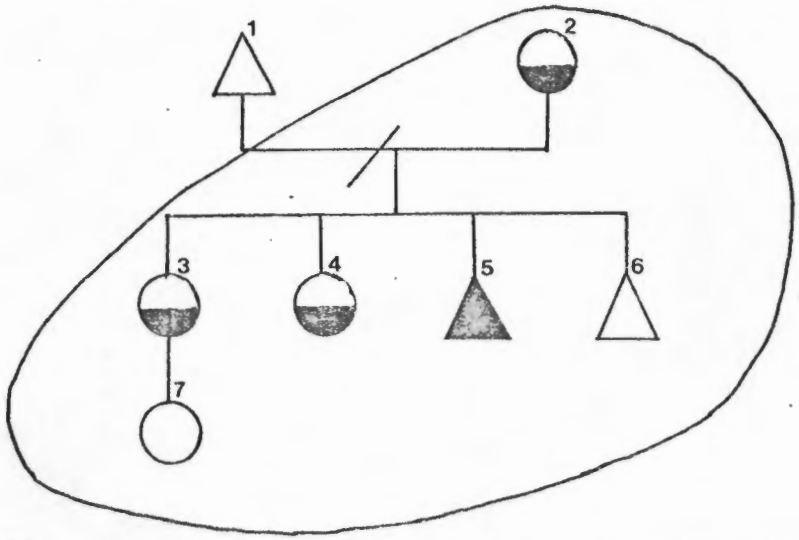
3. 24 years - Std VI; truck driver; R300 p.m.

4. 22 years - housewife; Std VIII.

5. 21 years - Std III; stallholder - stall 14.

6. 10 months.

2) L.E.'s HOUSEHOLD



1. 48 years - divorced; sheet metal worker, no contribution to household.

2. 41 years - Std X (failed); clerical work in Salt River; wages R300 p.m.

3. 27 years - Std VII; unemployed; maintenance grant for 7; R150 p.m.

4. 24 years - Std IX; receptionist; wages R300 p.m.

5. 18 years - stallholder; stall 14.

6. 15 years - Std VIII; school in Grassy Park.

7. 3 years.

The economic and domestic circumstances of these three stallholders were similar in several respects. They appeared with several other street traders on the railway platform on a part-time basis forming a cluster of fruit and vegetable traders (see map : stalls 13-18). The lack of employment opportunities and exploitative employment situations had provided the incentive for these individuals to become street traders. But the relative independence of the stallholders' households from the stalls made the individuals less committed to domestic responsibilities. The common but significant point, however, was that all three individuals managed to provide their own subsistence. In this way they evaded and transcended often demoralizing and exploitative wage earning or chronic unemployment situations. To this extent they were able to assert themselves as independent and dignified individuals. During the interviews these factors were very clear.

More generally, we may deduce that although the personal circumstances of the individuals varied widely, all these stallholders participated in a considerable degree of co-operation. A logical deduction from this is that the small street traders in Wynberg depended on a complex network of inter-dependence for their efficiency as street traders.

ITINERANT STREET TRADERS

It was mentioned earlier that the socio-economic circumstances of a select number of itinerant traders would be investigated.

Itinerant traders who operated in Wynberg were chosen for two closely related reasons :

(i) to investigate whether the restrictive prohibitions governing the operation of fixed stalls and the limited trading space had any bearing on the reasons for street traders becoming mobile ; and

(ii) because they were conspicuous, and easier to observe and contact given the small size of the "Coloured" section of the suburb.

As far as (i) is concerned, the features of this category of traders are deeply embedded within the political economic domain of the South African social formation. Itinerant vendors who were classified "Coloured" were socially more secure than those classified "African" who were illegally in Cape Town under Section 10 of the influx control legislation.

The trading patterns of 11 itinerant traders were examined. Seven of these 11 stalls were operated by members of the "Coloured" community whilst four were operated by "Africans".

Of the seven itinerant stalls that were operated by members of the Coloured community, all were retailers of fruit and vegetables. Their weekly outlays ranged from between R120 to R680. Six operated from bakkies and one from a horse and cart. Each stall moved to several roads and districts at different times of the day and week. Their movements followed a regular pattern since the traders depended largely on a specific clientele for support. Their mobility was, however, restricted by trafffic officials who persistently

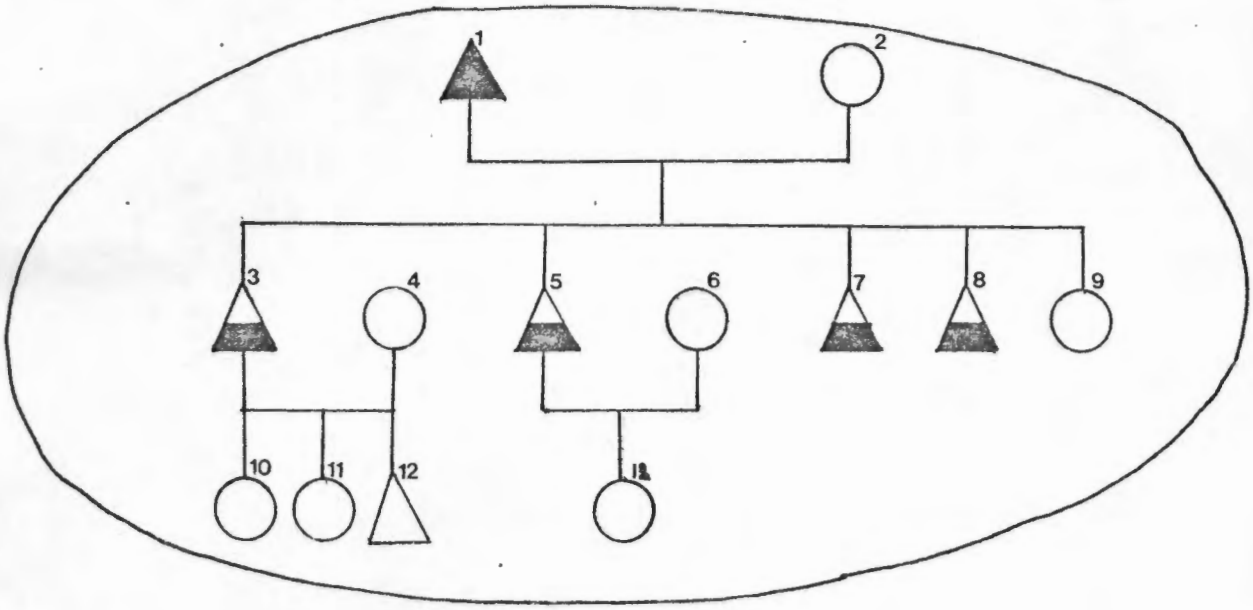
hounded them for trading from Municipal property. One way in which they avoided official harassment was by driving into the premises of their clientele whenever circumstances allowed.

Their position as street traders was made precarious not only by a highly fluctuating market and official harassment but also by their reliance on a very specific clientele. This factor placed the itinerant vendors in a highly vulnerable position which consumers exploited by aggressive bargaining and demanding credit. The vendors had no option but to accept these demands even though their clients were not notably reliable purchasers.

Two itinerant stalls and their stallholders were selected for intensive study. Both had once operated from fixed positions but had been forced to become mobile traders for different reasons.

CASE 4.9 : B.A., a 62 year old fruit and vegetable itinerant vendor from Grassy Park was originally resident in Wynberg until he was removed by the Group Areas Act. Alternate accommodation was provided for him by the Department of Community Development in a Council house in Grassy Park. Establishing a new clientele in Grassy Park would have meant starting from scratch again and so he chose to travel to his stationary spot in Wynberg since being the pioneer stationary hawker in Wynberg had made him familiar to daily commuters and residents there. His stall, however, came to a standstill when he took ill and underwent an operation. His son gave up his chances of an education to take on the stall but the venture failed. B.W. was forced to return to street trading after an absence of 18 months because he knew no other job; at the late age of 48 years nobody was going to employ him and his household depended on the venture for their survival. In 1974, however, B.A. fell ill for a second time and was forced to withdraw once again. On returning in 1976 he was no longer the only trader - the place was apparently "full of hawkers" - leaving him with no place to set up his stall. B.A. then turned to mobile street trading and started experiencing its frustrations. On the day of the first interview, for instance, he was being forced to sell a kilogram of sweet potatoes at 29c, although his buying price was 35c per kg. The client insisted on having the sweet potatoes at 29c per kg. because it was Pick 'n Pay's price. B.A. acceded to his client's demand only for the sake of keeping her as a customer. He claimed that Pick 'n Pay could sell sweet potatoes at 29c per kg. because their purchase price was 13c per kg. amounting to more than 100% in the purchase price difference between supermarkets and hawkers.

B.A. complained that on the same day, as part of a co-operative, he had purchased tomatoes in bulk in order to earn a discount. But this failed because the supermarkets apparently purchased the same quality of tomatoes at 60c per tray, whilst B.A. and his co-op paid R2,20 - over 200% more. At this point B.A. was able to cope with the difficulties since his sons were all employed and living within and supporting his household.



1. 62 years - Sub B; stallholder.

2. 55 years - housewife; no education.

3. 35 years - Std VIII; electrical; wages R90-R110 p.w.

4. 31 years - Std VI; housewife.

5. 31 years - Std IX; works in darkroom of I.M.A.; wage R70 p.w.

6. 28 years - housewife; Std IX.

7. 26 years - matric; land surveyor; R600 p.m.

8. 19 years - matric exemption - 1981.

9. to 13. Scholars.

CASE 4.10 : B.U., a victim of District Six Group Area removals, had learnt and adopted street trading from his parents and friends. When evicted in 1969 he arrived in Athlone to share a three bedroomed home with his father's kin. Fifteen people resided in this single dwelling.* After marrying in 1970, and after his father's death two years later, B.U. continued with street trading to earn his living. At about this time he found his stationary stall operations becoming increasingly difficult. He was forced to evade the police once too often, for fear of having his stock confiscated and decided that operating a stationary stall was too risky and costly to continue. He thus retreated and continued in fruit and vegetable retailing in a more disguised fashion. By establishing himself with a handful of regular and "reliable" clients, B.U. was able to earn a living by retailing on a door to door basis. B.U.'s collection days for payment were Fridays and Saturdays. Two problems persisted however :

(i) clients tended not to make their payments regularly, and

(ii) highly fluctuating prices in the market made it impossible for him to operate with fixed price charts.

These traders operated on foot on a door to door basis, and appeared in Wynberg fortnightly. Five individuals, all from Guguletu, were observed and interviewed. Two were a husband and wife team, who operated one stall. They were not known to the remaining three women who traded together as a team, but owned the produce they retailed individually. They travelled to and from Guguletu by train, which provided them with the cheapest form of transport.

All five were illegal residents in Cape Town. The husband and wife team claimed that to acquire financially rewarding employment was an impossibility. They were originally from the Eastern Cape, and came to Cape Town to escape the harshness of their original environment. The team of three women also claimed that their presence in Cape Town was an attempt to escape their unproductive and poor rural villages in the Transkei, and to be with their families, in spite of legislation prohibiting them from residing in Cape Town. In the case studies below, their circumstances reflect the general hardships that those classified as Blacks suffer.

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* *This case was too complicated and sensitive to investigate in depth.*

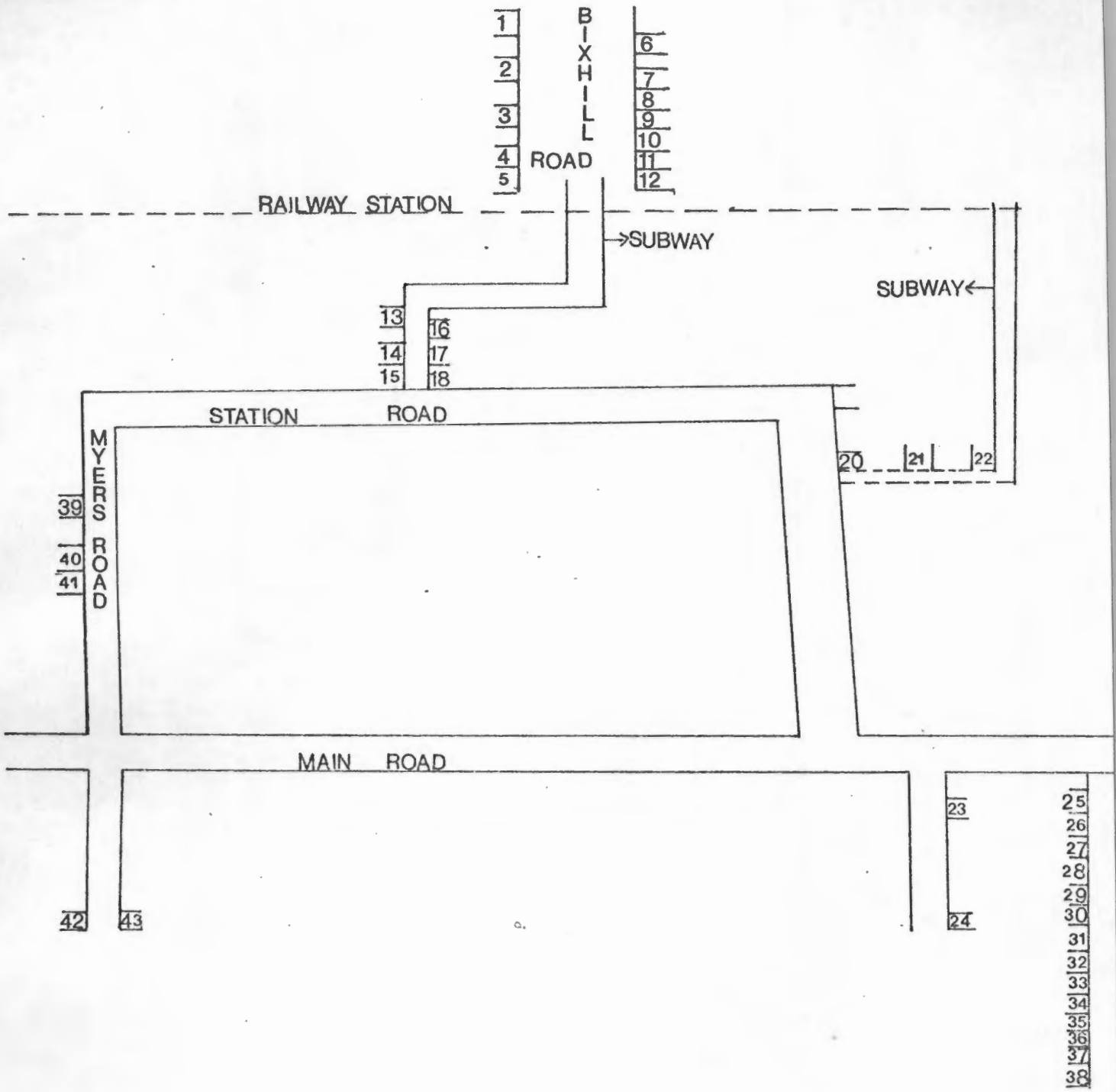
CASE 4.11 : M.J., originally from Mdantsane, was first employed as a block layer in East London. He found it increasingly difficult to subsist on the meagre wage that his employment earned him. He thus decided to learn bamboo weaving in the township in which he lived. After acquiring this skill he wove bamboo baskets and flower pots and sold them at weekends. This endeavour, however, did not effectively supplement his wage earnings. After hearing about a demand for woven baskets and flower pots in Cape Town, M.J. decided to leave Mdantsane and seek employment in this city. He acquired employment in a building firm as a handyman, and supplemented his income by selling the produce he wove. His wage earnings, however, hardly improved, although his produce sold well. He thus decided to quit working as a handyman and invest more time in weaving. From the beginning of 1981, M.J. turned to weaving bamboo chairs and tables as well. His accessories were purchased from shops when the situation demanded it. He had left his two children in the care of kin in East London and this enabled him and his wife to share a house with friends.

CASE 4.12 : M.R. was one of the three women who made grass brooms and mats in Guguletu. She had arrived in Cape Town in 1976, and had been arrested twice for being illegally in Cape Town, but she considered being in the city a necessity if she, like her friends, wanted to live with her husband. Producing grass mats and brooms were skills they brought from the Transkei. Being mobile and trading in a Coloured area, in preference to a White area, was their way of avoiding harassment from the local officials and possible eviction from Cape Town. M.R. shared a two-bedroomed dwelling with one of her trading partners. Thirteen people shared this dwelling.

Three common but significant points emerge clearly from these case studies. First, it is obvious that all of these mobile itinerant traders were forced to become mobile, through fear of being prosecuted. Those street traders who were African were classified "illegal" in terms of the influx control regulations. They thus operated with greater fear than their Coloured counterparts. Second, each of these street traders relied heavily on a set number of clients to support them, which placed their earning potential on an unpredictable scale, and left them open to abuse and exploitation since customers felt they had a right to bargain. And thirdly, the success of each of these traders was related to the degree to which they co-operated with others to ensure their survival. In the case of B.A., co-operation was with traders in a buyers co-operative; with B.U. it was co-operation

with another family within the homestead; with M.J. it was sharing the work load with his wife; and with M.R. it was being part of a group that gathered material, processed it, and retailed it together. This generated in M.R. and her co-partners a sense of togetherness and feeling of relative security within a political environment that did not offer them anything.

2. SKETCH MAP ILLUSTRATING GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF STALLS IN WYNBERG ON 29/8/1981



CHAPTER FIVE

STREET TRADERS IN CLAREMONT : A PROCLAIMED WHITE GROUP AREA

In the last two Chapters we noticed that the features which characterized the patterns of trading in the two suburbs presented certain contrasts. Two significant similarities emerge, however. First, the position and future of stallholders in these areas appeared to be relatively secure, where they set up their enterprises in Coloured Group Areas. And second, the wide range of items they retailed was directed mainly to the lower income groups. In summary thus the pattern of street trading and the range of retail items which the street traders retailed in Athlone and Wynberg was largely determined by the class character of these suburbs.

To this extent the features that characterize street trading in Claremont are quite similar. But here again there were aspects of this suburb that were significantly different from Athlone or Wynberg. In Claremont both the C.B.D. and residential areas were proclaimed for White occupation only. Thousands of "Coloured" families and many businessmen were removed under the Group Areas Act. Being a suburb occupied predominantly by Whites, retail within the C.B.D. was likely to follow a more formalised pattern.

The features that characterized the C.B.D. in Claremont appeared to be similar to Wynberg. Within the C.B.D. most of the retail passed through the hands of chain stores and small-scale retail outlets that were owned mainly by White entrepreneurs. The more formalised pattern of trading amongst these "White" owned enterprises had created, as in Wynberg, an atmosphere that was less congenial to street traders.

Thus the number of stalls in Claremont, particularly those set up by "Coloureds" and "Africans" could only reach a theoretical maximum. Stalls could not follow the casual and informal pattern that was characteristic of Athlone. A number of stalls were, however, set up immediately outside several shopping centres. In this instance the stallholders took care not to provoke either the owners or local officials. Authorised permission was essential and most stallholders sought the required permission before they set up their stalls.

Although some stalls were set up in isolation from others the majority appeared as two clusters. Two significant features characterized these stalls. First, in one cluster, stalls 1-16, the street traders hailed from one classified population group only, i.e. "Coloured"; whilst in the second cluster there were street traders who were from the four population groups, "Whites", "Coloureds", "Africans" and an "Indian" The latter traded side by side, without any sign of animosity. And secondly, most of the stalls directed their sales mainly to the middle and upper income groups.

SELECTING STALLS FOR CLOSER EXAMINATION

Within the two clusters that were closely examined in Claremont, there was a diverse range of items retailed on different days of the week and month. Fruit and vegetable stalls were not as numerous as in Athlone and Wynberg. Fresh flowers and clothing appeared to be the most popular items. The count that was made on 3/10/1981, for instance, illustrates this point in the table below.

TABLE 5.1 : ILLUSTRATING RANGE OF ITEMS SOLD ON 3/10/1981

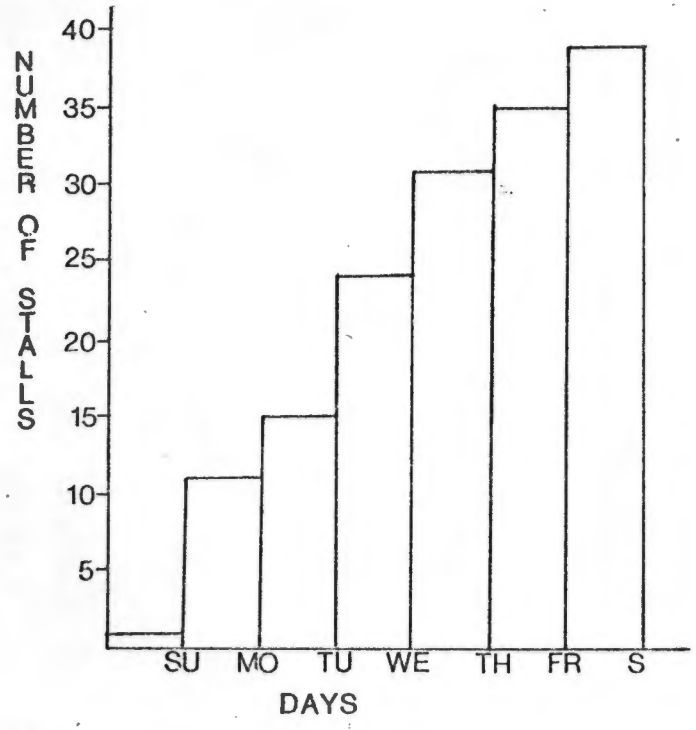
FRUIT & VEGETABLES	FLOWERS	CLOTHING	JEWELLERY	LEATHER WEAR	PAINTINGS	TOYS	ANTIQUE BOTTLES
6	14	11	2	2	2	1	1

TOTAL : 39

Of all items depicted in the table above only three - flowers, fruit and vegetables - were retailed on a regular daily basis from 5 to 7 days per week. The street traders who retailed the numerous other items appeared on weekends only. These varying appearance patterns in Claremont, as in the two other target areas, formed the basis of initial observations and subsequent examination of street traders' backgrounds. The fluctuations were observed between 27/9/1981 - 3/10/1981 and are depicted in the graph below.

FIGURE 5.1

GRAPH ILLUSTRATING STREET COUNTS BETWEEN 27/9/1981 - 3/10/1981



Because of the various population groups represented amongst street traders, and their highly fluid appearance pattern, an attempt to establish a "representative sample" would be worthless. In one of the clusters (see map - stalls 18-34) most of the street traders appeared on a part-time basis only, which allowed me the opportunity to interview intensively only a selected number of individuals from this group.

On closer examination of 10 stalls in the target area, the characteristics of the stallholders' households and their economic circumstances appeared very diverse. But before a discussion of these issues, the overt features of these 10 stalls need to be mentioned. Four stalls retailed fruit and vegetables, four were retailers in flowers and two retailed clothes; eight appeared on a regular basis, the fruit and vegetables and flower sellers, whilst the two retailers of clothes were set up on a part-time basis only. One of the two retailers appeared on a weekend basis only whilst the other appeared monthly.

TABLE 5.2 : ILLUSTRATING WEEKLY OUTLAYS OF 10 STALLHOLDERS

CATEGORY	NO. OF STALLS	AMOUNTS
BIG	2	R 900 750
MIDDLE	4	680 650 500 400
SMALL	4	120 120 60 20

Stalls 18A and 18B were, in fact, set up as a single stall, but they comprised two independent traders, one being forced to set up in a disguised manner since the individuals were "African". (See Case 6.12).

The situation of these 10 stallholders is fraught with insecurities. Eight had authorized permission, either from the management of businesses or from the Municipality, to trade from their respective trading positions. In addition, they enjoyed a strong sense of togetherness and solidarity. And yet these favourable factors, as the case studies below indicate, did not remove the difficulties under which they traded.

Information from the 10 stallholders show that 7 of these individuals and their families were formerly resident in Claremont.

On being forcibly removed under the Group Areas Act they were resettled in cramped C.T.C.C. housing schemes. The frustrations and financial losses that these stallholders suffered were phenomenal, but discussion of this will be delayed until the next Chapter.

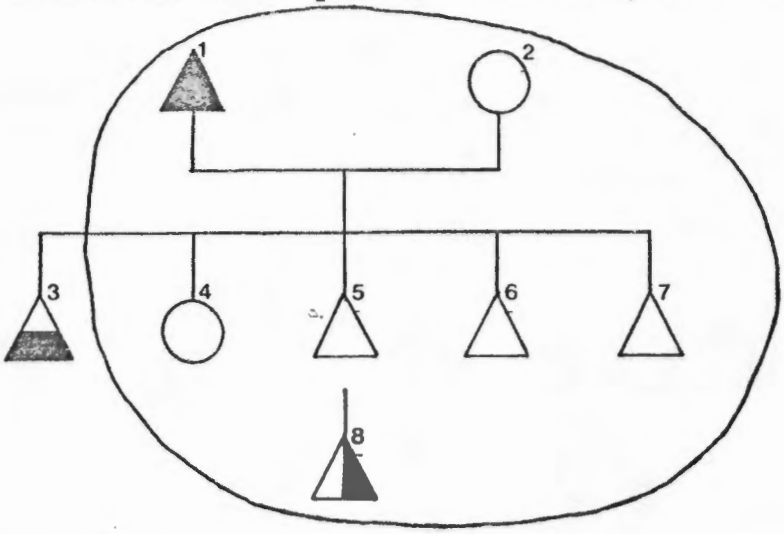
Group Areas affected individuals differentially : some stallholders were hardly affected, others barely survived as street traders, yet others were totally phased out of the activity, because of the very high travelling costs they now had to incur.

BIG STALLHOLDERS

The point made earlier (see Introduction) that capital outlays do not tell us much about the domestic backgrounds of stallholders is brought out succinctly in the information that follows. A range of contingent factors had played an influential role in the stallholders' assessments of their positions as street traders. In the case studies below, for instance, one

stallholder spread his subsistence efforts by continuing sub-contracting as a tradesman while devoting part of his savings to a retail outlet in Manenberg with another individual as an equal partner; whilst another relied on earnings from his stall and the contribution from the salary of his government-employed son, for his family's survival.

CASE 5.1 : A.D., a fifty year old fruit and vegetable trader in Claremont had lived in the suburb for 49 years, until he was forcibly removed to Mitchell's Plain under the Group Areas Act. In 1947 A.D. joined a shippping company and worked as a deck hand for two years. He did this in preference to helping his parents in their fruit and vegetable stall which they operated in Claremont. After several years at sea, A.D. managed to acquire some technical skills but decided to resign when he found it too demanding. In 1958 he returned to his parents' home in Claremont and found employment as a welder. Although A.D. "earned well", he considered the circumstances under which he worked frustrating. He claimed that he had to work between 10 and 15 hours every day to earn R100-R150 per week. When work was slack he was put on short time for months at a time, and his unemployment benefit hardly met his household expenses. Between 1958 and 1976 A.D. claims to have been put on short time 12 times, which finally decided him to return to his parents' livelihood, street trading.



1. 50 years - Std VII; stallholder; previously a seaman and welder.

2. 46 years - housewife.

3. 23 years - teachers diploma; teaching and board in Retreat contributes substantially to household.

5. to 7. Scholars.

8. 13 years - lives with and works for "1".

CASE 5.2 : (Stall 4) A.M., born and raised in Claremont, was evicted to Manenberg in 1979. He completed his apprenticeship as a carpenter in 1968. On completion, he worked as a journeyman, but found it unbearable, since too much was demanded for too little return. A.M. thus decided to take on sub-contracting independently. Although he enjoyed working on his own account, competition for contracts with other sub-contractors did not help ease his financial problem. In 1974 A.M. decided to supplement his income by investing part of his finances together with a friend in a general dealer's store in Manenberg and in a street trading stall (i.e. Stall 5). Their investments were equal, therefore profits and losses were to be shared equally. He relied largely on his established networks for his carpentry sub-contracts. He spent between three and four working days on these contracts, from Sunday to Wednesday, and the remainder of the week at the stall and store - at the stall during the day and the shop in the evenings. The stall was run in his absence by his partner's son. A.M., like the other traders in Claremont, feared that with the suburb being proclaimed for White occupation only, he would be forced to discontinue his enterprise. His future as a sub-contractor remains equally insecure since the depression in the economy inevitably causes cut-price competition for contracts. A.M.'s only favourable investment at the time was his partnership in the general dealer's store, which he hoped would not collapse.

The economic backgrounds of these stallholders differ considerably, but their current situations are equally precarious. A common factor affecting them both was that they traded in a "White" Group Area, and thus carried out their day-to-day activities in perpetual fear of being required to leave the area.

The stallholders' additional avenues of income vary considerably, though both met their households' reproduction needs through several avenues. Survival at a reasonable level depended on their ability to sustain a combination of income-generating activities (Case 5.1) and contributions from sources outside the household enterprise (Case 5.2).

MIDDLE STALLHOLDERS

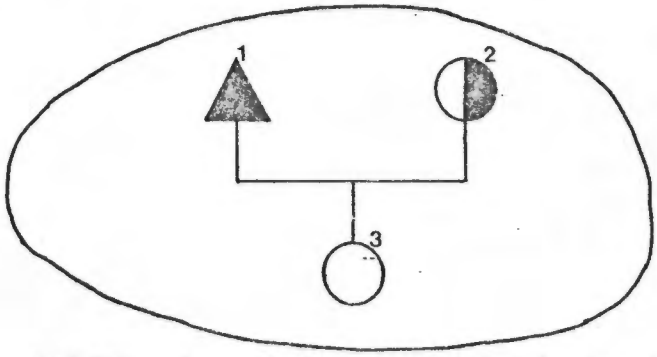
In some respects the circumstances of the middle traders in Claremont were similar to that of their big counterparts. Although the amounts they expended to set up their stalls might suggest relative economic ease, no such conclusions can be drawn. The fact that they traded in perpetual fear of being phased out through discriminatory practices placed them on precarious footing. One informant in Claremont who had traded in the area since 1981 succinctly summed up his position as a street trader :

"When you are a Darkie you must keep moving. I've tried for the past six years to save up some money to rent a shop. But every time I managed to save something it was only used to support me when I was unemployed. You see you could build up a fortune today, but lose it tomorrow when you start getting pushed around".

Information supplied by the middle traders who were intensively interviewed in Claremont suggests that at the time of research their position was not threatened. But it is against their income-earning histories that their position as street traders needs to be examined.

CASE 5.3 : A.B.K. completed eight years of schooling in Durban, and arrived in Cape Town in 1973. He worked as a labourer for three years and then registered as an apprentice carpenter with the same firm. On completing his apprenticeship in 1976, A.B.K. resigned because the firm refused to pay him a higher wage. At that time the depression in the building industry "made tradesmen look like handymen - for the pay they were receiving". A.B.K. then decided to work as a salesman, and found employment with a clothing retailer - first as a weekend assistant for a month, in order to prove himself. His ability as a salesman was apparently good, and he became a full-time employee earning R200 per month, and 3% commission for goods sold above the value of R8 000. In the first month, A.B.K.'s sales totalled R12 400, and he was paid his full commission. In the next months he sold R13 200, but was not paid his full commission as his manager apparently claimed a misunderstanding, and that commission would only be paid on sales above R10 000. This resulted in an argument, and A.B.K. resigned. He decided to venture into street trading, buying steel wool from Woolworths at 5c

a piece, which he sold on a door-to-door basis in Lansdowne for 10c a piece. When he was familiar to his clients he started retailing toiletries and light kitchenware. A.B.K. built up a clientele by offering them credit. He further increased his sales by setting up a stall in Adderley Street. His success here prompted him to stop trading on a door-to-door basis, and trade from one stationary stall. Along with other street traders, A.B.K. was stopped from trading in central Cape Town, and he returned once again to his trade. In 1981 he resumed street trading on a part-time basis (weekends only) on noting the fast sales of Indian print dresses and scarves. He established a new spot for himself in Claremont and had since become a familiar sight. He feels that his position in Claremont remains uncertain, however, since "being an Indian", had only "proved to be for the worst".

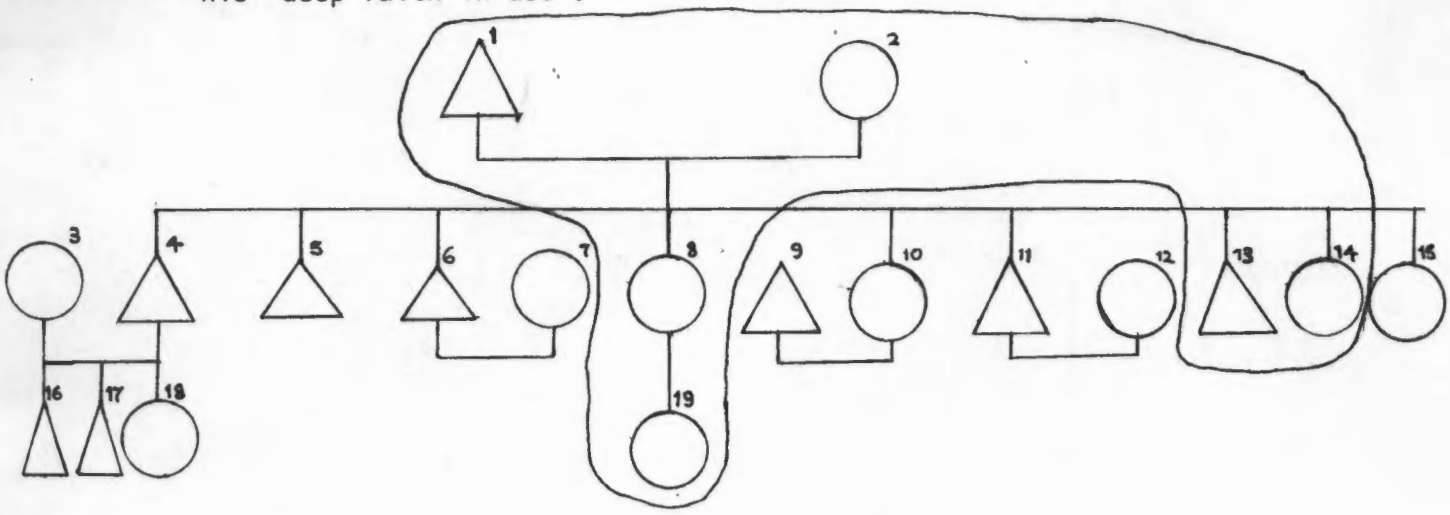


1. 28 years - Std VI; from Durban; stallholder during weekends; works five days per week as a carpenter.

2. 24 years - Std VI; works in a clothing factory; helps her spouse in selling material by distributing it to friends in the factory.

CASE 5.4 : B.R. was the son of a butcher who had had his business destroyed when an eviction order was served on him in 1971. Alternative housing was provided in Retreat, but no consideration was made for the lost source of income. Out of desperation his parents took to flower trading. B.R. assisted them by trading on a door-to-door basis in the central business districts of Claremont and Rondebosch. His parents, for reasons of old age and ill health, retired after several years and acquired a stall for B.R. in the Stall 7-16 cluster. However, after a year of "gossip and stealing", B.R. left the cluster and took to the streets again. Fortunately for him, the manager of a complex from which he traded gave B.R. permission to set up a stationary stall. Success thereafter led him to increase his weekly outlay and also extend his business by opening another stall at the hypermarket in Brackenfell. B.R. subsequently purchased the rights to eight other flower stalls in central Cape Town which he rented to people at a rate of R7 per week.

However, on days before big national holidays, B.R. ensured that he alone derived the benefit from these stalls. He attributed this success, after being evicted under the Group Areas Act, to his "deep faith in God".



1. 67 years - Std I; Malay school; retired butcher after evicted from Claremont to Retreat.

2. 60 years - no schooling; retired housewife.

3. Not part of the household.
4.
16.
17.
18.

5. 33 years - Std VI; stallholder - Stall 18; previously unemployed.

6. Not part of the household.
7.

8. 29 years - Std VII; helps "5" in stall; moves to central Cape Town on big holidays to sell flowers.

9.
10.
11. Not part of the household.
12.

15. 24 years - Std VI; operates flower stall in Brackenfell.

13. 22 years - Std VIII; unemployed; previously a storeman in a factory; helps "15" occasionally.

14. 19 years - Std VI; helps "15" in stall everyday.

What emerges as important in both these cases is that the stallholders were victims of circumstances that were essentially discriminatory in nature. But within an extremely unpredictable environment they managed to secure for themselves incomes that supplemented the collective efforts of their household members. Of equal importance, however, was the fact that both stallholders had relied on a network of contacts to maximize the sales of their products. A.B., for instance, relied on contacts at his spouse's place of employment for a wider, faster and cheaper distribution of the produce he retailed, whilst B.R. relied on additional stalls operated by members of his immediate kin to derive maximum benefit from his flower sales. These additional avenues of income appear to act as insurance against the loss of one avenue of income.

SMALL STALLHOLDERS

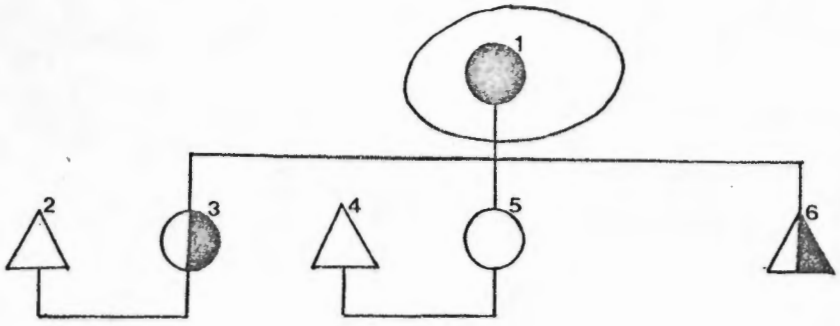
Detailed information on the characteristics of small stallholders in Claremont was sought mainly from women flower sellers. Most of these women operated as a single cluster from a trading space that was legally designated to them by the local authority.

Within this cluster were 10 stallholders who maintained their independence by investing their own capital. The close-knit network formed by these stallholders ensured that help was given to one another whenever the situation demanded. Stallholders assisted one another by helping to arrange their stalls, cleaning them and bundling the flowers. In addition, they ensured that flowers were sold according to a standard price chart and this maintained a level of harmony within the network and avoided rifts and conflicts.

Most of the women in the cluster were rather apprehensive about the future of their time-honoured enterprises. A number of them were reaching

retirement age, with the average age being 57,4 years. Their personal incentives to continue their stalls were still strong. However, the thought of not having their kin members to continue their enterprises appeared to trouble them. In one case, the sentimental attachment to flower trading built up through years of stress and strain appeared too strong merely to abandon it.

CASE 5.5 : Mrs A.M. first sold flowers in 1949, starting off with a capital of £1,10 per week. This weekly outlay increased to £5 per week, which earned her a weekly profit of £1,50. She claimed that this had conveniently supplemented her first husband's income, allowing them to live reasonably well. After he died, she remarried in 1956 - a railway employee who rented a house in Claremont. He continuously complained of being badly paid and bullied by his superiors. Frustration at work thus led Mr A.M. to resign and join his wife in flower selling. The couple purchased a van for £100 in which Mr A.M. transported their flowers. In 1969 a Group Areas eviction order was served on them, forcing them to move to Manenberg. In 1970 Mr A.M. died, and by 1976 all three of Mrs A.M.'s children were married. None, however, intended to continue the stall since the investment in time was too much and the returns in money too little.



1. 52 years - stallholder; stall.

2. 3. Living in Lenasia; sends ± R50 every 3 months - no further information.

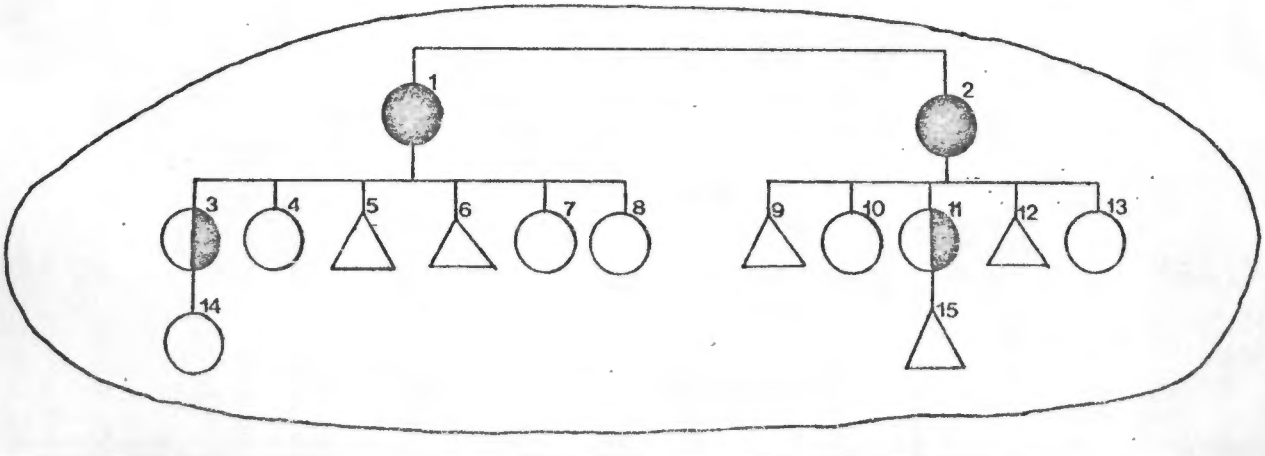
4. 5. Living in Athlone; no regular cash contributions - no further information.

6. 26 years - matriculated in Cape Town; works in Sasolburg; seldom sends his mother money.

The circumstances of two other flower sellers who operated in a rather clandestine fashion were intensively examined.

Being African and constrained by Section 10, the possibility of these individuals obtaining licences to set up stalls legally in a "White" Group Area such as Claremont was unthinkable. However, they managed to evade the issue by incorporating their produce into Stall 18 - thus creating Stall 18B - and offered their services in exchange. Significantly, care was taken not to include a wide range of flowers in their stock so as not to affect the sales of the legal stallholder. The incomes they earned were inadequate to meet the needs of their domestic group. Three meals per day were a rarity to these women and their immediate kin, but in the circumstances, flower-selling appeared to be one of the few income generating avenues open to them.

CASE 5.6 : T.E. and J.O. were two sisters who were resident in Valhalla Park. Their chances of obtaining hawker's licences were nil in terms of their legal classification as "African". Between them, they had 12 children and grandchildren. They did not have husbands, and their children made negligible contributions to the survival of the household. The highest wage T.E. had earned was R80 per month whilst employed as a school caretaker; J.O. had earned R42 as a domestic servant. T.E. was eventually dismissed, with no reasons given. J.O. was allergic to dust, and was advised by her doctor to withdraw from domestic service. Alternative full-time employment was difficult to acquire. They thus decided that the only way out of their dilemma was to purchase from the Cape Town Municipality permits at 25c per day to break bullrushes and water lilies - which they sold through Stall 18A. The demand for these items was not large, so did not pose any threat to their hosts. In return, both women assisted B.R. in setting up his stall, bundling his flowers, and keeping the trading space tidy. Together the sisters earned between R17 and R25 per week.



MAIN CONTRIBUTORS TOWARDS HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL

1. 41 years - Stall 18"B"

2. 38 years - Stall 18"B"

3. 24 years - does washing 3 times per week in three different houses in Claremont, and does additional casual work when available.

12. 19 years - domestic servant in Wynberg; earns R60 p.m.

Other household members depend on casual work or beg for their survival but make no material contribution towards upkeep of household.

The economic and domestic circumstances of the three women in the two case studies above vary widely, but what is common to them is that the women were barely able to survive on the incomes they earned from their ventures. Although A.M. (Case 6.5) did receive cash from her son and daughters periodically, they were too irregular to sustain her. Thus the meagre proceeds from the stall she operated served a useful purpose in seeing to her daily requirements.

More significantly, however, were the household circumstances of J.O. and T.E. The subsistence efforts of the younger generation of this household provides a good example of a domestic group that exists on the brink of survival. Morning and midday meals were luxuries for them and they often depended on their better-off neighbours or the sympathy of the public for food.

The solidarity and collaborative efforts that characterized the social networks to which these "small" traders belonged reiterates the features that were illustrated in the case studies discussed earlier on. These

stallholders lived a marginal existence and were heavily dependent on their counterparts for survival.

EMPLOYEES OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLE TRADERS

Employees in Claremont who worked for fruit and vegetable stallholders hailed from equally and usually more depressed domestic situations than their employers. The majority of these employees came from the Peninsula's African townships. Of the eleven, eight were under the age of 15.

The direct bus services between African townships and Claremont served as a convenient link for these youngsters who needed food and money. Seeking employment with the fruit and vegetable traders was one way out of their daily problem.

Although these children served the needs and interests of their employers they often constituted a severe loss to them. The employees were often victims of the Hawkers Squad which made almost daily raids on the bus terminal/train station complex. During raids the employees threw away all the produce they carried around in plastic packets for retail, to escape arrest. The Hawkers Squad, in turn, appropriated this produce, and its destination remained unknown. On average the street traders in the bus terminal/train station complex estimated their weekly losses to be around R15-R20. They suspected that the produce was being re-distributed amongst the officers of the Hawkers Squad.

One might ask why stallholders bothered to employ child labour, given the losses incurred because it was illegal to do so. Firstly, these children's labour was cheap and provided faster and wider distribution of their produce. And, secondly, they stated that they employed children out of sympathy for them.

Payments for the employee's services were often irregular and seldom based on standardized values. Regular attendance for the entire week sometimes earned the children between R10 and R13. This payment was often referred to as "commission", but was actually based on whether the employer felt his business had fared well enough to warrant a payment. The only regular payment employees received took the form of a lunch of fish and bread, which was obtainable from the local shops retailing cooked food. Occasionally, they were also allowed to eat fruit.

Of the eight employees studied, seven commuted daily between Claremont and the African townships. All mentioned that their aims were twofold : to earn themselves a meal for the day and at least to try to supplement household income. The eighth employee was a dependent worker who lived with his employer. Although his domestic circumstances were not very different from his counterparts, his situation was unique (see Case 5.8). Of the two case studies below, the first is representative of the seven employees who commuted to Claremont.

CASE 5.7 : See Case 6.6

G.N., together with friends whose ages ranged from 9 to 12 years travelled daily between Nyanga and Claremont. G.N. explained that as much as he possibly could he avoided either train or bus fares. This was relatively easy - get into crowded buses or trains and hide from the drivers or conductors. The fare avoidance was made easier when G.N.'s friends sold newspapers at the train station entrance or bus terminal. He would take half the consignment of papers from his friend who would follow him into the train or bus, since conductors neglected newspaper vendors, and then return the newspapers to his friend after his journey was considered safe. This is how G.N. and his friends sought to save their meagre earnings and supplement household income.

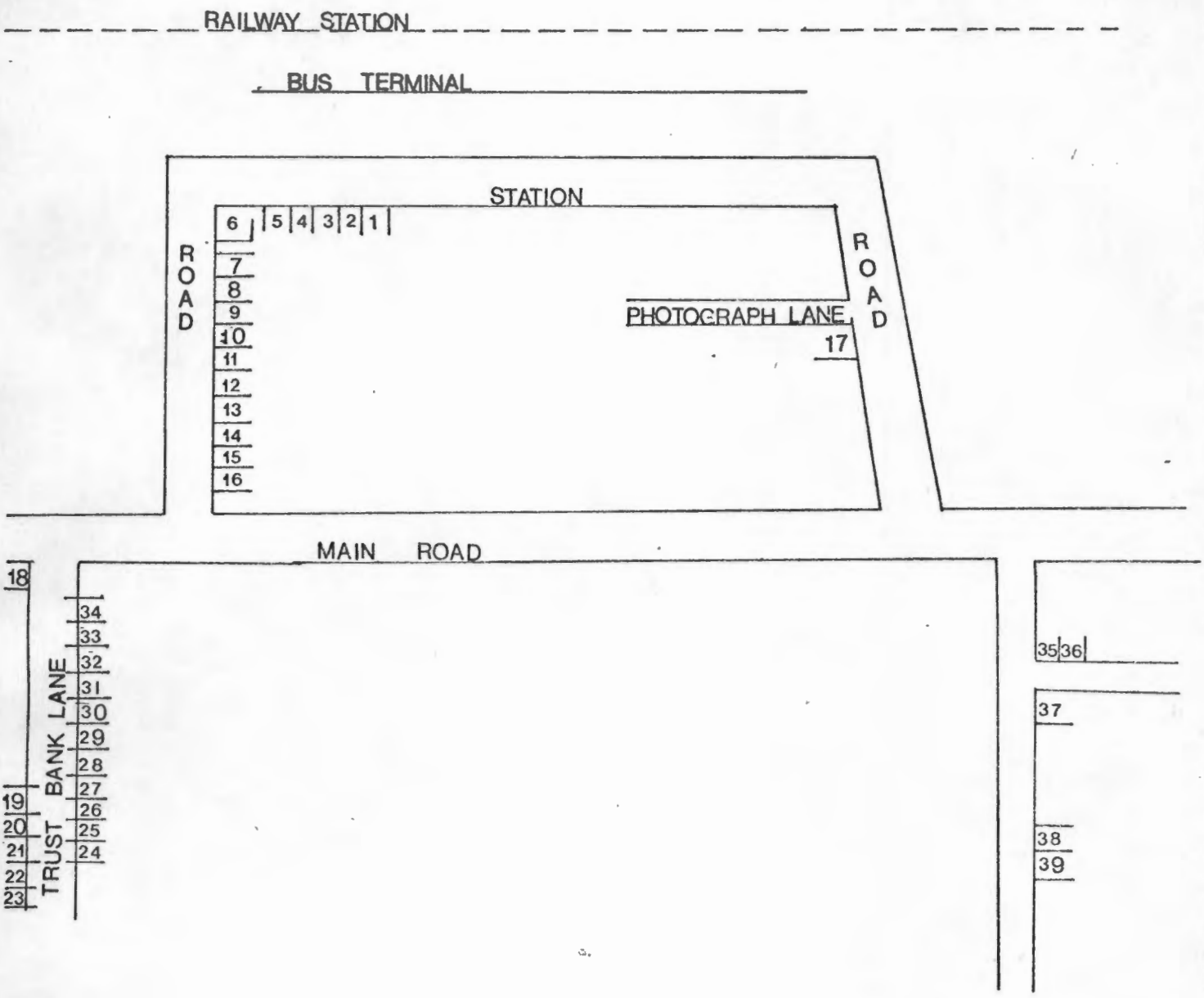
CASE 5.8 : See Case 6.7

F.R. was a thirteen year old boy who lived with his employer (Case 6.2 - Stall 17). The relationship was unusual in that it constituted a rare case of mutual trust amongst the stallholders in Claremont. F.R. was given the responsibility for the stall whilst his employer spent a considerable period of almost every day in the fresh produce market. This meant that

> F.R. had to take note of the products which sold fastest and advise his employer on what to purchase. Even in the presence of A.D. (the employer), F.R. handled cash when the situation demanded, and this was most unusual. From his regular wage of R20 per week, F.R. handed between R15-R18 to his mother whom he visited on Sundays.

The case of F.R. was unusual for Claremont on a number of counts. He was the only employee in the clique with whom he worked who was given shelter, three meals per day and a standard wage of R20 per week. Amongst other employees he was considered fortunate for employees such as G.N., in their capacity as "commission sellers" were at the mercy of the stallholder employers for their earnings. Whatever their remuneration, it was clear that it barely met their personal subsistence needs, and only meagrely supplemented their parents' incomes, if at all.

3. SKETCH MAP ILLUSTRATING GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF STALLS IN CLAREMONT ON 3/10/1981



CHAPTER SIX

STREET TRADERS AND THEIR ALTERNATIVES TO STREET TRADING

In this Chapter I shift my emphasis to focus attention on the socio-economic positions of street traders from all three categories in a more generalized way. It was apparent in the three preceding Chapters that there were those street traders who, either through support from additional avenues of income earned outside the household enterprise or not, managed to establish themselves on a relatively secure footing. There were also some who managed reasonably well as street traders with support from household members. And there were other stall-holders whose households, despite material support from more than one source, still presented a picture of precariousness.

As a starting point to the examination of the issues the questions below are confronted :

(i) Amongst the numerous stallholders whose cases have been discussed, who could we possibly regard as entrepreneurs? Who traded merely to survive, and why?

(ii) What were the possibilities of street traders, whose income was generated solely through this activity, switching to an alternative mode of employment such as wage-labour? Put simply, were those stallholders who barely subsisted through street trading and/or marginally supplemented household subsistence efforts, able to acquire wage employment? Thus, what were the stallholders' skills and their levels of education, and what were the factors that inhibited their occupational mobility?

(iii) Which of the stallholders were likely not to survive as street traders and why?

It is obvious that these questions are restricted to examining the position of stallholders. On another level, a similar approach is adopted to examine the position of those street traders who were employees. In this sub-section I aim to illuminate the marginal positions that force such individuals to remain continuously dependent on stallholders who themselves either subsist or thrive upon the offerings of peripheral capitalism.

STALLHOLDERS

Most of the 50 stallholders who were extensively interviewed expressed a desire to remain in street trading and build up on whatever volume of trade they were then handling. With this thought in mind they remained ever hopeful of building up a bigger clientele. In these often overstated remarks the stallholders were clearly expressing their entrepreneurial sentiments, thus reflecting on the economic values they had internalized and thrived upon. To this extent there could very well arise the often stated misconception that street trading is a legitimate alternative to wage employment, and as such it is a rewarding form of self-employment (see Souza and Tokman, 1976; Weeks 1973).

Indeed, amongst several stallholders this did appear to be the case. The fact that their households depended either fully or partly on street trading for their survival was partial proof of this assertion. Their ability to accommodate numbers of people, both kin and non-kin within their households as well as remunerate some members for their labour adds to this contention. In addition, some stallholders were able to

purchase and maintain vehicles solely from stall takings.

Twenty-one of the fifty stallholders, for instance, had vehicles, and also regular employees. Four stallholders out of this twenty-one had more than one vehicle, whilst nine had more than one employee working for them. The acquisition of vehicles by the stallholders was largely a result of the build-up of the stalls over the years. As the enterprises develop through time, stallholders endeavour continuously to make their operations more efficient and viable. One way of achieving this is by acquiring vehicles.

From the early stage as stallholders, individuals often acquired push carts or wagons which were later replaced by horses and carts - a more spacious and expensive form of transport. Although contemporary municipal by-laws have now made this widespread form of transport in Cape Town a legacy of the past, horses and carts when in use were often replaced by pick-up vans wherever possible. In short, these continuous replacements of forms of transport reflects for some stallholders a rise to self-sufficiency as budding entrepreneurs.

The picture of stallholders as entrepreneurs becomes more complete when the labour of kin members from within the household becomes inadequate, and when the stallholder is in a position to use the labour of non-kin members. On a general level, it could be safely argued that the hiring of regular employees most often occurs at an advanced stage in a stall's development. Using hired labour for better efficiency and/or a wider distribution of produce is thus no doubt related to the profits extracted from the operation of the enterprise. In this respect there is a clear indication that street trading can be a profitable exercise.

But amidst the numerous political economic forces that regulate street trading, the road towards establishing an enterprise of such a nature is obviously an arduous one. The ethnographic data in the three preceding chapters confirm this. It was for reasons related to such factors that street traders had become so enduring and equally determined to remain self-employed. As one stallholder in Athlone remarked :

"*If they* (reference to local officials and businessmen) *chase me away from where I am trading now, and if they stop me from setting up a stall anywhere near here I will buy another horse and cart so that it does not become too expensive to do my selling. But I will not rent a shop because it is too much botheration*".

This was a statement made by one of the street traders who inherited a part of his parents' enterprise in the late 1930s and built it up thereafter from the little that he had. The background of this stallholder is largely representative of the experiences that street traders undergo in their attempts to establish their independence.

CASE 6.1 : S.M. was an elderly man of 59 years of age and the most senior person in his household. He acquired the skills of street trading from early childhood. In 1947, he married at the age of 23 and thereafter received a fraction of his father's street trading enterprise as his legitimate share. He managed gradually to acquire a bigger clientele and thus slowly increased his capital outlay. From this period until the early 1950s he traded on a door to door basis from baskets. In 1955 he purchased a pushcart, and two years later acquired a horse and cart. He retailed from the pushcart while his wife and two children did the same from the horse and cart. In 1963 he purchased a second team of horses and another cart, which he used himself. This venture ceased when the City Council started harassing all runners of horses and carts, and accused them of being too unhygienic in the maintenance of their animals and premises. By 1969 S.M. was forced to abandon his horse and cart and purchased a second-hand truck. During this time Athlone had a second supermarket added to its C.B.D. On the opening day of this supermarket, S.M. decided to set up a stall outside its premises. The good support he received on this day from the public wooed him into returning to the spot over the next few days, which in turn led to his "permanent" establishment there.

Indeed, the circumstances in this case study reflect the fortunate position of an enterprising stallholder who was acquainted with no other skill, and who was never in the employment of someone else. If seen, for instance, in conjunction with Case 4.2 (Chapter Four) where the stallholders managed to purchase two vehicles, employ three individuals and support the entire household through the proceeds of the four stalls they operated, street trading would appear to be a profitable exercise.

But the situation amongst these stallholders were exceptions and not a reflection of the general characteristics of the personal backgrounds of most stallholders. In both the cases cited above the stallholders had established themselves in Athlone - a proclaimed Coloured area. This was the first favourable factor towards their entrenchment as successful street traders/stallholders. On another related front only one stallholder referred to was affected by the Group Areas Act (Case 4.2). But fortunately, he was not beset with the burden of extreme financial hardship, and was able to establish his business within a period of a few years.

In summary thus the cases above reflect a situation where stallholders managed to establish for themselves a state of relative security.

The contradiction, however, sets in when competent stallholders with similar histories and fairly high capital outlays are on the brink of being phased out. Although numerous factors such as their possession of transport and ability to hire labour might suggest at least a high turnover with a reasonable surplus value, their positions merely allowed economic survival and not growth. Unlike their counterparts in Athlone who were favoured by the political economic status of the area, the two

stallholders who are discussed below were faced with conditions that were of quite an opposite nature. They were trading in a suburb that had a sizeable area reclaimed from a number of families classified Coloured, for White occupation. As former residents of the suburb they were forcibly moved to distant outlying C.T.C.C. housing areas. The consequences of these actions had brought untold misery to these stallholders, forced them into a position of marginality and into a more dependent relationship to sources of income earned outside of street trading. The case below provides an example.

CASE 6.2 : A.D. was a 50 year old stallholder who had lived in Claremont all his life. In 1980 he and his family were forced to move to Hanover Park under a Group Areas Act eviction order. Prior to the suburb being proclaimed "White", A.D. claimed that "the Jews" played a trick on the Coloured people. They sold houses to Coloured people at phenomenally high prices and re-purchased them at lower prices when they were forcibly removed. After the eviction order was served on him, .A.D. was notified that a City Council cottage was available to him in Hanover Park. A.D. immediately began to make renovations to the cottage before moving in. During the course of his renovations, A.D.'s neighbours in Hanover Park reported to have seen "Skollies" interfering with his premises and stealing his building material. This prompted A.D. to stay in his empty house together with his African employee until the renovations were complete. After moving into the cottage with his family, A.D. alleged that the "Skollies" approached him for protection fees, which they felt he could afford. His refusal to submit to their demands led to a very unpleasant first and last week in Hanover Park, with a violent clash between himself and two members of the group. As a result the "Skollies" ganged up on the weekend and entered his backyard with pangas, guns and knives. A.D. escaped, but a great deal of damage was done to his furniture and doors. By the next day he had taken his family out of Hanover Park and left them in several places with friends and family. For the next two months A.D. slept in his van at the spot where he traded. By this time he claimed to have spent and lost up to R4 000 in renovations and keeping his family in different places. By a stroke of luck A.D. was allocated a house in Mitchell's Plain. A rent of R56 per month was required as opposed to the R15 per month he paid in Claremont; his travelling expenses increased threefold to up to R40-R50 per week; an extra R12 per week was needed for his school-going children who schooled in Wynberg, and another 3 hours per day was added to his daily routine. With the profits from his stall A.D. was barely able to pay his monthly rent and cater for a few incidental needs. The remainder of the basic household needs was met through a monthly contribution from his son, who resided and taught at a school in

Retreat. Under such uncertain circumstances, and in view of the fate that other stallholders had met (see case study below), A.D. predicted that he would hardly last another 2 years as a stallholder. But he prayed *"to Allah that my children start earning and support me within the next few years"*.

CASE 6.3 : O.M. lived in Claremont for 45 years until 1981. He had been involved in street trading since childhood. From the money he earned through street trading and from some of what he inherited from his parents, who had also been street traders, O.M. invested in a General Dealer's store in Claremont in 1968. His eviction notice served under the Group Areas Act was first handed to him in 1976. He was to discontinue his business in his general dealer's store, and remove all his household belongings to a C.T.C.C. cottage allotted to him in Mitchell's Plain. However, O.M. only moved to Mitchell's Plain in September 1981. He claimed that the house, driveway and yard were all too cramped and small. In addition, he complained that his travelling expenses had risen phenomenally, that his working hours had greatly increased and that his schoolgoing children were finding extreme difficulty in travelling to their Wynberg school everyday.

O.M. managed to run his stall for only three weeks after he moved to Mitchell's Plain. Thereafter, he could not be contacted. But according to A.D. (above), O.M., for the first time in his working career, sought wage employment - in a firm that built swimming pools. His earnings apparently were "peanuts".

It is possible, if looked at from the perspective of Case 6.3, that alternative sources of employment could be sought by the street traders if the situation demanded it. But this perhaps depends on two closely related factors. First is the issue of the current economic situation, and the availability of wage employment where street traders could seek refuge. And second is the issue of skills which they could effectively utilize in the formal sector during times of stress and hardship as street traders. But a number of street traders were handicapped by the fact that they did not acquire any skills, and did not attain higher educational standards which could have earned them a more secure place in the wage labour sector.

In reality, the factors that are mentioned above are contradictory and ambiguous particularly in the South African social formation. In addition, the boom period in the South African context does not necessarily imply that employment opportunities suddenly appear in abundance. The most recent boom, 1979-1982, has shown that employment in certain sectors is not so readily available as the economic situation might suggest.

To this extent stallholders often realized their worth in the labour market which catered for only a limited number of the active labour force. It was thus a normative ideal amongst most, if not all, stallholders that they remained as street traders despite the perpetual uncertainties under which they operated. One informant once said :

"You see, I work all by myself as a hawker and I've got nobody to stand in for me if the cops arrest me. But I like it because I am a boss of my own and I make enough to keep me going for the whole week. It is really the same, no, even better than working for someone else. If you do you are ruled by time, do more work than you should and still get underpaid. And when the firm runs short of work you just get kicked around until you decide you can't take anymore, or they simply fire you. This happened to me so many times already. God help me if I work for a Boer again".

This statement of resentment is in fact a direct reflection of most of the stallholders' attitudes towards wage employment. More particularly, however, the remark is one which was often repeated in similar terms by those stallholders who were formerly wage earners, and who have turned against wage employment as an avenue of income. In a number of instances the street traders who were previously wage employees and had acquired artisan skills, were hard hit by the fact that their labour was in demand mainly in the northern parts of the Republic, and to a much lesser extent within the Peninsula. The case of A.D., for instance, reflects the limited range of alternatives that are open to artisans of skills and years of experience in a trade such as welding. Employment

was available to A.D., but the difficulty was that it was a great distance away from his home and family. For him to have opted for such a measure would have resulted in a loss of his C.T.C.C. house, and it could take him years to qualify for another - in view of the drastic housing shortage, not to mention a break from his time-honoured ties with kith and kin in the Peninsula. Alternative employment was not, therefore, seen as a viable option.

Other stallholders, on the other hand, were placed in an equally if not more precarious position with regard to alternative employment. These were the individuals who were doubly unfortunate in that they were often handicapped by low educational levels and low levels of skill. Stumbling blocks to their range of alternatives were numerous and diverse.

CASE 6.4 : A.M. was a stallholder who operated in partnership with another individual. He had attended school until Std VIII but withdrew at the age of fourteen. For the following two years A.M. remained unemployed, but earned himself pocket money by doing odd jobs - particularly painting when people offered to hire him. After acquiring wage employment in two firms between 1969 and 1972, A.M. found employment in a lock and safe company in central Cape Town. His duties were of the nature of a semi-skilled artisan. However, after several years of service A.M. found his position as an employee increasingly unacceptable. He said he was being overworked and underpaid. After approaching his employers for an increase in his wage he was refused. A.M. re-assessed his position within the firm. He continued to look for alternative employment in other firms, but without success. Two months later he resigned. In spite of intensive attempts to find employment over the next six months however, A.M. was unsuccessful. He attributed his failure to the situation that not many firms did his type of work, which therefore reduced his chances of finding employment in a similar field. It was then that A.M. decided to venture into street trading.

CASE 6.5 : M.J. was a blocklayer who hailed from the Eastern Cape. He was classified "African", and his presence in the Peninsula was illegal. M.J.'s chances of legally acquiring employment were nil, and for this reason M.J. refrained from seeking employment in firms that would have demanded his pass for registration purposes. He chose to remain as a mobile street trader and evade the laws that would have deported him back to the Eastern Cape and denied him a chance to profit from his weaving talents.

On a general level it is obvious from these brief illustrations that street trading to these street traders meant one of two things. Firstly, it was the preferred avenue of employment to those street traders who had acquired the skills of operating a stall from their household members at an early age. Although wage employment was perhaps within reach of a number of such street traders there hardly appeared a need for them to make this a priority. Two factors were obviously in their favour. First, most if not all were fortunate enough to inherit fractions of divided but "established" enterprises, which enabled them to work with relative convenience towards the positions in which they were. And second, the apparent position of the street traders, particularly those retailing fruit and vegetables - prior to the intervention of supermarkets - was relatively free of the bureaucratic constraints that so inhibit them presently. The implication in this latter point is that not all stallholders had progressed to the extent that their positions as street traders remained unaffected by supermarket penetration into fruit and vegetable retail. In cases such as that of A.D., for instance, there is ample evidence to suggest that his future as a street trader has less than a 50% chance of surviving. This is not merely hypothetical since the similar circumstances of O.M. has shown that when street traders are affected by such demoralizing forces, street trading can turn out to be even less than a mere subsistence-oriented activity. It becomes impossible for a stall to be viably operated when the stallholder is forcibly relocated to live in an area that requires him to commute at least 10 times his normal distance, and which consequently raises his expenses by a similar proportion.

Secondly, street trading has proved to be in the eyes of many stallholders, a legitimate alternative or supplementary activity to wage employment. It has allowed the numerous stallholders who were formerly

wage employees - and frustrated over their constraints - a chance to reassert their individualities by establishing themselves as independent breadwinners. The implication is that stallholders were able to manoeuvre in their choice of employment or evade the horrors of unemployment. To this extent they were free to operate in a manner that best suited their circumstances. They traded on :

(i) a full-time basis to meet mainly their household needs ;

(ii) a part-time basis to meet mainly their personal subsistence needs, or supplement household subsistence efforts, and/or

(iii) a mobile basis to either evade the law or establish a clientele from whom they were assured of getting support.

EMPLOYEES

It was obvious from the case studies in the three preceding Chapters that most stallholders paid those whom they employed only meagre sums in cash or kind. But yet the latter had still held on to their positions either in the hope of possibly eking out more from their employers or merely content in the capacities in which they were employed. Whatever their situations, one common but significant point was clearly discernible : they had taken to this form of employment out of necessity, and they had remained in it because it was often the only avenue of employment open to them. This assertion stands out explicitly amongst those children who commuted from the underdeveloped Black townships within the Peninsula to the better developed White suburbs such as Claremont (see Cases 5.6 and 5.7); and the younger employees who immigrated from distant areas to seek employment within the "booming" city of Cape Town (see Cases 3.16 and 3.17).

The children who commuted to Claremont were well aware of their status as "Black" individuals, and of the impossibility of their acquiring better employment at their age. These were the individuals who were often the targets and victims of the Hawkers Squad. It was obvious from the attitude of these officials that their continuous harassment of these children - who mostly appeared in the ambiguous role of "commission sellers" in Claremont for the fruit and vegetable stallholders - was one way of frustrating the latter out of their livelihoods. Indeed, the stallholders believed this. As one once remarked :

"They are doing this because we are Coloured. They took away my house and they took away my shop. And now they want to chase me away from Claremont".

After shaking his head in self-pity and disgust, he said :

"You just can't win with these bastards".

The same stallholder defended his and the other stallholders' employment of the young Black children, saying that had they not employed the children they would go without food for the day. *"They would starve"*, he said.

However, in an interview with the sergeant in charge of the Hawkers Squad, a totally contradictory statement was made to legitimize their harassment and the way in which they chased the children around the busy bus terminal/railway staion complex in their bids to arrest them. *"These children should be in school"* the sergeant said, *"they are the pickpockets and the ones who cause the trouble in the area"*. There could perhaps be some truth in this statement, but after speaking to commuters, shopkeepers and assistants within the target area, no support for this view was found.

In the light of the above, if one takes into account the often nonsensical statements made by the protagonists of apartheid, then the position of the police official as "an Afrikaner" is clearly understood. For him to suggest that the children should be at school was a sensible statement to make. But in view of the circumstances that surround the plight of those classified 'Black", schooling is a luxury and often beyond the reach of the majority of this classified group. The children's endeavours to seek employment amongst stallholders is thus directly related to their marginalised existences and the lack of schooling facilities which are often too expensive for them to attend.

CASE 6.6 : N.G. was an eleven year old boy who travelled on a daily basis from Nyanga with two other friends to work for the fruit and vegetable stallholders in Claremont. His father was employed by a local construction company earning R28 per week, whilst his mother, unable to find full-time employment, was forced to take on piece work - but only when it was made available to her. The work was usually related to normal domestic chores which seldom, if ever, earned her more than R2,50 per day. There was no school close enough for N.G. to attend, and he claimed that he seldom started off the day with any breakfast. Neither were his parents in a position to support either him or his brother and a sister in school. Thus, whatever little N.G. earned was handed over to his mother to meet their incidental expenses.

CASE 6.7 : F.R. was a thirteen year old boy who completed his first five years in primary school. Circumstances at his home, however, forced him to withdraw from school. Together they were five in the family, and had no father. With his sister being married and not a member of the household and his elder brother living in the Transvaal, F.R. had to make some attempt to contribute towards the well-being of his household of four - having two younger brothers. F.R.'s mother was a domestic servant who earned R110 per month, whilst he himself earned R20 per week. He was fortunate enough to have been given a place to stay in his employer's household, and he visited his mother during weekends only. Knowing the plight of his family, F.R. avoided being lavish with his money. He handed the major part of his earnings to his mother and stressed that he would like to return to school in 1982. But this would only have been possible if circumstances allowed his mother to save enough for the forthcoming year.

Much to the disappointment of those employees who immigrated long distances to Cape Town, their expectations and hopes of finding financially rewarding employment were never met. Worse still, they had extreme difficulty in finding shelter. This prompted them to accept the first offers of employment made to them. (See cases below).

CASE 6.8 : N.G., a nineteen year old Black from Kimberley discontinued school in Std VII. He had done so for two reasons. First, Africans who went well into secondary school still ended up being employed in the mines with rarely any compensation for their education. This held no attraction for N.G. Secondly, his father's income hardly provided for more than incidental expenses. Through hearsay, he left for Cape Town in 1979, hoping to seek employment as a painter. But he was unaware of the fact that being "African" he would be forbidden to reside in the Cape Peninsula. His disappointment and desperation forced him to accept a job as a domestic servant. Here he was given a place to sleep, three meals per day and R30 per month. After six weeks he was recommended by his employer to her brother - who was then N.G.'s employer. He was told that his duties would entail that of a delivery man only, an initial wage of R50 per month, and a better place to stay. By September 1981, he was still earning R50 per month, which made it virtually impossible for him to remit on a regular monthly basis to his parents. He did manage, however, to send home postal orders on a bi-monthly basis. In what appeared to be his biggest gift to a member of his family, N.G. proudly said that at the end of 1981 he bought a suit for his younger brother.

CASE 6.9 : A.N., a sixteen year old Coloured youth from Ceres was born and raised on an orange farm. He went to school until Std VI, but withdrew after his parents thought it advisable for him to find employment in order to supplement his father's income of R35 per week as a farm hand. Employment opportunities in Ceres were, however, limited. A.N. worked for two years on the farm on which his father was employed, earning R12 per week. During this time, his mother died. A.N. then reviewed his situation and decided to leave for Cape Town in 1978, and hopefully to find employment in a factory. Desperation, however, led him to accept the first job offered to him in a shop in Stellenbosch, where he was paid R55 per month. After a while he felt the situation unbearable and decided to leave. His plight, however, was in no way improved, since a lack of accommodation forced him to shelter under trees in the open. Once again, desperation led him to accept employment in another shop in Rylands - a proclaimed Group Area for Indians - where he was paid R35 per month, given a place to stay and three meals per day. Through chance, however, A.N. learnt that a street

> trader was offering a job similar to his current employment, but with a wage of R70 per month. He applied and was given the job. His increased wage was a great relief and he managed to send regular postal orders to the value of R55 per month to his father in Ceres.

It is obvious from the case studies above that both individuals had left their natal districts at quite early ages in search of employment. They did it at the expense of their educational careers in the hope of evading their unrewarding economic surroundings, and to supplement the subsistence efforts of their parental households. But their aspirations were only partly met. Together with these misfortunes was their desperation to be employed. It was these factors that forced them into a dependancy relationship with their employers - characterized by a nominal monthly wage, food and shelter.

Put together, the various case studies presented in this chapter illustrate the hardships that numerous street traders undergo. It is clear that to many, alternative employment was not within easy reach. For both stallholders and employees, the range of alternatives were minimal. And yet there are still numerous other factors, such as housing, access to retail commodities and qualifying for trade licences, especially if one is classified "African", that add to their plight and perpetuate their misery. Collectively, this range of factors warrants a broader discussion, which is attempted in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this thesis, I argued that marginalisation theory could usefully be applied to the study of stallholders. In order to assess the validity of such an application, we need to answer the following questions :

(i) What assertions can legitimately be made on the basis of the ethnographic data?

(ii) Has marginalisation theory helped us to avoid the limitations of the paradigms that we discussed earlier? and

(iii) Is it a tool of analysis that would be useful for further research in the "informal sector", especially in the South African social formation?

In Chapter One I criticised the conventional "informal sector" analyses as highly descriptive and for assuming that "informal activities" were necessarily small scale, dependent on family labour for efficiency, and provided opportunities for the unemployed. Basing their analyses on these assumptions, writers further assumed that all individuals in the "informal sector" are self-employed, and that they suffer from lack of finance and access to the products they either produce or retail. In effect these analyses took for granted the labour force characteristics of "informal activities", and in addition avoided analysis

of the collective subsistence efforts of household members.

Because of these assumptions, Hart (1971), Weeks (1973), Souza and Tokman (1976), Moser (1977; 1979) the I.L.O. and P.R.E.A.L.C. amongst others, emphasise the role of the state, the political-economic conditions under which the "informal sector" operates, and the ways in which it remains subordinate to the ongoing process of capitalist reproduction. But they fail to illustrate how these conditions affect the daily life situations of the individuals who constitute their target group.

In contrast to these conventional dualist analyses of the "informal sector" this thesis aimed to :-

1. work towards a reformulation of the "informal sector" concept using a modified theoretical framework (see Chapter One). Thus I argued that a theory of marginalisation is best suited to contextualise the activities and household formations of individuals in the "informal sector";

2. render an account of the particular exploitative factors that strengthen, maintain and perpetuate the political economy of the South African social formation (see Chapter Two); and

3. show the range of issues that makes street trading and the "informal sector" in general more diverse than it is often taken to be (see Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6).

The first significant point to emerge from this approach is the wide variation in street trader operations. For instance, the significance of the stalls to the self-employed stallholders and their households suggested that they were often dependent for their cash income on more than one stall, and also on wage remittances.

This directs our attention to a crucial point : the scale of operation. An investigation into the capital outlays and the number of stalls/ stallholders demonstrated that there were discrepancies in the scales of operations. The amounts invested by "small" and "big" traders varied by as much as 1 000%. With such a large discrepancy, it would be senseless to suggest that an "informal acitivity", like street trading, is always and everywhere a "small scale" activity.

The various writers who take the "small scale" view fail to stipulate just what the limits of "small scale" are, and thus overlook a crucial point that contributed towards a broader understanding, namely the diversity that characterises street trading. An example of such an oversight is the work of Long and Richardson (1979) which examines how "small scale" petty producers in Central Peru expand their enterprises by establishing similar additional set-ups away from the mother enterprise. Long and Richardson failed to perceive that this constituted, in fact, variations in the scale of operations. In clinging to the notion of "small scale", they failed to explain how entrepreneurs who set up additional stalls could afford to do so, and yet remain, by their definition, "small", when there were others who could not afford to do

the same, and clearly are "small".

These are the kinds of issues that need to be examined if we are to avoid false designations of homogeneity. One way of doing this is to begin with a basic unit of analysis such as the stall. The diversity that this entity is likely to reveal, when seen in relation to household structures and scales of operation, will demonstrate the inadequacy of ascribing an "odd job" classification to heterogeneous activities such as street trading. More importantly, however, as this thesis argues, the diversity will elucidate how an activity such as street trading is functional to capitalist reproduction not simply in providing cheap services for low income groups, but in providing a base for individuals who :

1. accept and internalize economic values that are concomitant with capitalist reproduction ; and

2. abhor the system of White-controlled educational and employment facilities, and demonstrate their refutation by not seeking them or withdrawing their affiliation from them, and by taking up positions in the "informal sector".

The application of marginalisation theory thus reflects directly on the peculiarities of the South African political economy. It has contributed towards transcending the constrictive tendencies of those analyses that were criticised, and has helped to identify three main issues :-

(i) the unique character of each suburb that was surveyed ;

(ii) street traders as both self-employed and employees ; and

(iii) collective efforts to maximize gain through co-operation.

The population, organisation, and distribution of fixed stalls within the C.B.D.'s of the three suburbs depended largely on which population group comprised the predominant business entrepreneurs. In those areas where the C.B.D.'s were proclaimed for White entrepreneurship (Wynberg and Claremont), businessmen were, for the most part, unsympathetic to street traders. Several shop proprietors or managers did, however, allow a few traders to set up their stalls in front of their premises. But generally unsympathetic attitudes forced the street traders into lanes, sidewalks, and street corners, in positions that were considered least provocative to businessmen and officials. The C.B.D. of Athlone, on the other hand, presented a more casual and free atmosphere in its trading patterns. In most cases street traders operated at will from spots that would not be tolerated in Wynberg and Claremont. The advantage of this suburb to street traders was that most "formal" businesses were run by members of the Coloured and Indian communities. These businessmen were often known for the sympathy and solidarity they expressed for the street traders. Some businessmen did, however, express opposition to the street traders, but said that they were forced to accommodate them because street traders tended to become violent and destructive if shop owners adopted a negative attitude towards them; and second, they said that as "Coloureds"

they could not muster the clout that the White businessmen could to get the law to oust the street traders from the suburb.

Put together, these statements draw our attention to two important aspects :

(i) the character of the three suburbs and their relationship to the Group Areas Act ; and

(ii) the constrictive legislative devices that regulate street trading.

On these two aspects three significant points can be made. Firstly, it was the Group Areas Act, together with other legislative devices, that led to drastic disruption amongst street traders. What is significant here is the discrepancy between an estimate made before it was declared a White area, that there were at least 2 000 hawkers in District Six alone, and the figure for October 1981 when only 2 310 hawkers licences had been issued by the Trade Licences Department for the whole of Cape Town (see p.55) Secondly, it was these aspects that led to them being overcrowded within the vestigial trading spaces. And thirdly, these factors led to them being so marginalised as to be reduced to the level of mere subsistence; or alternatively allowed them to accumulate larger amounts of cash, but yet kept them marginalised by forcing them to redistribute resources within large households. As a response, thus, street traders, like other victims of the interlocking racist system, have devised numerous ways of coping with their problems (G. Gerry, 1979; Spiegel, 1979; Murray, 1981).

In all three suburbs, Athlone, Wynberg and Claremont, street traders, who appeared in varying capacities, used the opportunities of street trading as one way of complementing their personal and household subsistence efforts. Their use of such opportunities has been demonstrated in all the case studies whether as self employed or employees, and also in the co-operative measures that they have adopted.

Amongst those street traders who were employed, a wide range of features characterised their individual backgrounds and places of work. From this, one common but significant conclusion can be drawn :- that they were remunerated in ways that forced them into a dependency relationship with their employers. Payment for their services in kind (food and shelter) proved to be an attractive alternative to migrants as well as Capetonians who could not find employment elsewhere. Regular payment in cash was an advantage to them, but especially to those migrant workers who sought to supplement their families' subsistence efforts (Cases 3.15 and 3.16).

The circumstances of the migrant street traders' employees provide significant and pathetic case studies. Both A.D. (Case 3.15) and N.G. (Case 3.16), for instance, took solace in the hope that some day they would acquire more financially rewarding employment and thus be able to remit more to their families. However, whilst this was theoretically possible, N.G. was becoming increasingly afraid of the authorities catching up with him and repatriating him to Kimberley under the influx control regulations. Like other illegal Blacks in the Peninsula, N.G. was haunted by the thought of being forcibly returned to an environment

that offered him no prospect of tenable employment in terms of reasonable wages and working conditions.

Other street trader employees were also classified "Black" but came from within the Peninsula. They were mainly children under the age of 15 years who commuted between the Black townships and the White areas. What was significant in these children's endeavours was that they travelled and worked together in groups simply to earn themselves a meal for the day.

In terms of the broader political-economic issues, these children and migrants were part of the thousands if not millions of under-privileged South Africans from the marginalised households of the rural and urban proletariat.

Under these circumstances they tried to eke out a living for themselves as well as contribute in cash towards their families' subsistence efforts. But, as the ethnographic data reveals, not always were they able to accomplish both goals. Only one was able to remit to his father on a regular monthly basis (Case 3.15), another gave most of his money to his mother in the hope that she would be able to save for his schooling (Case 5.8), whilst another managed to remit to his parents in Kimberley on a bi-monthly basis (Case 3.17). But the rest earned a bare minimum (in kind) that scarcely kept them alive. Broadly speaking, these individuals were forced into street trading by circumstance. They represented the vast numbers of South Africans who are deliberately denied a proper education, and are being forced into the ranks of the marginalised

masses.

Amongst those street traders who were self-employed there was just as diverse a set of issues contributing to their peculiarities as street traders. In short, street trading offered them the opportunity to :

1. assert themselves as individuals especially if they had become dependent on wage employment ; and

2. supplement their individual and household income-generating efforts.

Point (1) above brings into focus a wide range of factors that motivated individuals to become street traders. On the one hand, the ethnographic data shows that there were many street traders who inherit their enterprises from their parents after life-long participation within them. These individuals were never inclined to take up any other form of employment. On the other hand there were individuals who became street traders as a result of their despondency about wage employment either because of low wages and exploitation, or because they had become frustrated by the difficulty of finding wage employment. Further numerous individuals who were wage employees took up street trading as an additional activity to supplement their household wage earnings.

Although the reasons for stallholders taking up street trading were diverse, what was common to their efforts as street traders was their various forms of co-operation. The level of co-operation is, however, predicated upon various difficulties that they encountered. Handicapped by

their limited individual capital resources they were aware of the difficulty of competing against big businesses that had a bigger buying potential, enjoyed the privilege of huge discounts and had a virtual monopoly over most items. Street traders have to pay much higher prices for the same produce. In response to this a number of them pool their resources in a limited form of co-operative. Their main objective is to buy in bulk to save, but this was not always possible. In the story related by B.A. (Case 4.9), for instance, many co-operatives still fail in their objectives, whilst supermarkets continue to enjoy the privilege of huge discounts.

Other significant forms of co-operation amongst the street traders were seen in the ways they collaborated with one another out of mutual interest. In Wynberg there were the part-time small traders who depended on the middle and big traders for the purchase and transport of their produce. In return small traders helped their bigger counterparts, unloading and even selling their surplus produce (Cases 4.7 and 4.8). In the case of H.M. (Case 4.3) there was a significant purchasing co-operative made up of a group of six brothers, whilst in the case of A.M. (Case 4.4) there was an equally important pact between himself and N.M. as half partners in the store. Similar circumstances featured amongst numerous other stallholders in Athlone. S.P. (Case 3.9) and S.T. (Case 3.11) were members of different purchasing co-operatives whilst A.G. (Case 3.13) was part of a group of women who operated together as a foursome. In Claremont the flower sellers engaged in slightly different but nonetheless significant forms of co-operation. The group of stallholders to which Mrs A.M. (Case 5.5) belonged operated as a close-knit

network of flower sellers. They standardized prices and ran their stalls efficiently by assisting one another with their tasks. The stall to which T.E. and J.O. (Case 5.6) were attached illustrates yet another form of co-operation. It was essentially an expression of solidarity by B.R. (Case 5.4) with two Black individuals who were struggling to earn a living and who sold flowers as disguised stall-holders for fear of being harassed by local officials . For similar reasons M.J. (Case 4.11) and M.A. (Case 4.12) felt it safer to be mobile traders, but, significantly, each was part of a group of retailers who took solace in one another's insecurity as illegal migrants.

In sum, these varying forms of co-operation are important features of the street traders' efforts to cope with their working environment. In addition, the street traders are equally co-operative and helpful in another domain, as householders. S.M. (Case 3.3), for instance, had within his extended household his employees, an unmarried son, a divorced daughter and her children, and a married son with his wife and children. S.I. (Case 3.7), became part of a matrifocal set-up after his parents' household became over-crowded with his wife and children.

The divorced daughter of S.M. was forced out of her C.T.C.C. flat and into her father's household because she had no source of income, whilst S.I. was on the waiting list for a C.T.C.C. housing unit in Athlone for more than three years. What was significant in the latter's case however, was that whilst he waited anxiously for a house of his own from the C.T.C.C., he was apprehensive about accepting it because of the allegedly continuous escalation in rates and falsely inflated water and

electricity bills. Significant in all these situations is that their problems were directly related to the housing shortage in the Peninsula.

In addition to problems associated with the housing shortage, many street traders had suffered the consequences of the Group Areas Act. Whilst A.D. (Case 6.2) still retained his stall after being affected by the Group Areas Act, O.M. (Case 6.1) had failed to do so. In the case of A.D., however, it was the regular contributions from his government-employed son that helped him to remain as a street trader, whilst O.M. enjoyed no such support. But A.D. saw little chance of continuing as a street trader for much longer. He blamed it all on his forced resettlement in Mitchells Plain which led to an escalation in his operational costs.

As a broad generalisation it is possible to say that the levels of co-operation observed are directly related to the exploitative factors to which street traders are subjected. Young employees who hail from the marginalised households of the rural and urban proletariat were forced to sacrifice their education in their attempts to supplement household incomes or earn themselves a meal for the day. These individuals were denied proper educational facilities and their parents were subjected to work for mere survival wages. Many young independent stallholders withdrew from school for similar reasons, whilst others resigned from wage employment because of exploitation and low wages.

As parents and stallholders they had to ensure, either through street trading or elsewhere, that every effort was being made to provide for their families. In addition, a number of them, as senior household members,

had to bear the brunt of dispossession under the Group Areas Act and influx control regulations which forced them to make difficult adjustments to their income generating efforts.

Whatever its shortcomings, co-operation amongst the street traders presents itself, both in the trading environment and in households, as a response to harsh political-economic constraints. By forming purchasing co-operatives the street traders were sometimes able to earn for themselves discounts which were generally confined to the big chain stores. It is because of the presence of chain stores that the pioneering street traders have been drastically reduced in number.

On another level, co-operation within households brings into focus the often over-crowded conditions under which the marginalised masses live. But overcrowding and big households are just as much a response to, and should therefore be seen in the light of, the political-economic factors that are responsible for the housing shortage, exploitative low paid wage employment, and the chronically high unemployment situation.

Thus to return to the second question((ii) above page157), marginalisation theory has, within its limits, transcended the paradigms criticised earlier by allowing us to focus attention on a significant issue such as co-operation and to relate it directly to the wider issues that shape and determine its character.

In broader terms it serves as a useful tool of analysis (question iii above page157), especially for the South African situation, since it throws

light on six important areas in which there is a need for further research :

1. the conditions and extent to which chain-stores establish preferential access to basic retail commodities ;

2. the role of women and children in the informal sector ;

3. the effects of forced removals under the Group Areas Act on its victims, coupled with the allegations that rents, water and electricity accounts of C.T.C.C. housing units are falsely inflated ;

4. the sharing of domestic resources within over-crowed households and the extent to which people outside the nuclear families are incorporated ;

5. the different types of co-operation in the informal sector ; and

6. if government policy to reduce the inflow to urban areas is to continue, then the need for more employment opportunities for both the rural and urban proletariat needs to be examined. In this regard however, more intensive and extensive assessments need to be made of the rural environment and its productive capabilities, and suitable recommendations made, if the inflow of rural dwellers

into the urban areas is to be safely reduced.

In short, these six areas in which research needs to be done direct our attention to the various forms of structural violence that are characteristic of the South African social formation. It is within this context that research and policy recommendations about the informal sector should be made. Individuals in this sphere of production are an integral part of a wider system and should be seen in this light. Calling for a repeal of legislative devices that compel street traders to move one hundred metres every hour, or which forbid them from trading on Municipal property is insufficient. It is against the background of the broader political-economic issues that produce and determine the character of this mode of production and the factors that influence their daily lives that the "informal sector" should be studied.

APPENDIX I

My fieldwork lasted for approximately seven months - between June 1981 and February 1982. In June 1981 I carried out a preliminary investigation into the items that street traders retailed, and their distribution in each of the three suburbs. At this stage it was difficult for me to ascertain how I was to gather information from the maximum number of street traders, since they came from numerous districts. But the problem did not take long to resolve.

On my first trip to Athlone I visited the police station, to find out about police attitudes towards the street traders. A policeman offered to take me on a tour of the area and introduced me to several street traders. Being familiar with and sympathetic to the street traders, he was widely respected and well received. This was of tremendous advantage to me. When I explained the purpose of my presence the street traders spoke freely and spontaneously.

In Wynberg I was a familiar sight to the street traders because I lived close to where the majority set up their stalls. After making friends with many of them, I was able to gather a great deal of information on their personal backgrounds through conversations alone. Street traders related to me easily because they accepted me as more of a friend than an out-of-town observer.

In Claremont, however, I was not known to any of the street traders and was forced to be more formal in my approach. It was here that I first experienced a backlash from two traders, independently of one another. They were two Black women who thought I asked too many questions and was taking up too much of their time. I later learned that both had been

forbidden to trade in the area because they were Black and so they feared that I might report them to the authorities. Most other street traders responded well to my questions and statements.

Although most of my interviews were conversational they were orchestrated to bring out the information that I needed. My interview schedules appear below :

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

CENSUS SCHEDULE : Responses from 114 street traders.

1. Demographic data - particularly on their distribution in each area.
2. Value of stock and material possessions in relation to stalls - motor vehicles, wagons and shelves.
3. Co-operatives - purchasing; price regulation.
4. Capacity as street traders - whether self-employed or not.
5. Other sources of income.

STATIONARY AND MOBILE SCHEDULE : Responses from 78 stationary traders and 18 mobile traders.

1. Previous place of employment; reason for taking to street trading.
2. Family assistants and employees.
3. Group Areas Act; place of residence.
4. Association with informal co-operatives.
5. Number of working days per week, and hours of work.
6. Age; Educational standards.
7. Size of household, and additional sources of income.
8. Number of stalls and value of stocks.
9. Street trading - its perceived importance and future.

EMPLOYEES SCHEDULE : Responses from 18 individuals.

1. Previous place of employment.
2. Standard of education.

3. Natal districts.
4. Why employed by street traders.
5. Parental household sizes and income.
6. Personal wages.
7. Contribution to parental household.
8. Conditions of place of residence, meals.
9. Responsibilities at work.
10. Alternative sources of income.

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