

**INDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING AND
CHANGING GENDER RELATIONS: THE CASE OF
ISITHEBE IN KWAZULU NATAL**

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Science (Urban and Regional Planning) at the University of Natal, Durban. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Patrick Burton

The twenty-fifth day of November, 1999.

ABSTRACT

This research, by focusing on the Isithebe industrial estate in KwaZulu Natal, analyses the process of industrial change within one location and the resulting impact on the gender relations within the surrounding communities. Rather than adopting the rather simplistic approach utilised by Women in Development advocates, it is suggested that the identification, location and particular experience of power between men and women provides for a more informed position from which gender relations can be understood. Using Social Relations Analysis as a departure point, it is argued that a range of variables and impact on the construction and experience of gender, and thus the relation between men and women. In South Africa, the particular economic and social discourse initiated by apartheid resulted in the formulation of a particular understanding of gender. Various economic and industrial and social shifts over the past decade have served to challenge this conceptualisation and experience, and have resulted in a range of new dynamics between men and women.

It is argued that many of the businesses located in Isithebe have been slow to follow the trends and processes of restructuring identified nationally. However, there has been some change in the gendered division of labour on the estate, as men gradually move into sectors previously reliant on female labour. Women are concurrently trapped in low skilled, low paid employment. While the increasing engagement by women in multiple livelihood strategies, within an environment of high male unemployment, is increasing the dependence of households on the ability of women to earn an income, there is little change in the location of power at a household level. The increased autonomy and decision-making power anticipated by many theorists is not evidenced in the Isithebe community.

However, as men seek for alternative sources of security as their traditional role as breadwinner is eroded, women are increasingly aware of the discrepancies and dichotomies within the household, and are beginning to reassess the relations between men and women, and the location of power. Concomitantly both men and women are in a position to reconceptualise the gender component of identity. These processes provide the basis from which unequal relations between men and women can be challenged in the future.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING STUDIES.....	3
1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	3
1.4 CENTRAL ARGUMENT.....	4
1.2 METHODOLOGY.....	5
1.2.1 <i>Methodological Approach</i>	5
1.2.2 <i>Selection of Case Study</i>	5
1.2.3 <i>Industrial Survey</i>	7
1.2.4 <i>Community Survey</i>	9
1.2.5 <i>Post-survey data</i>	12
1.3 LIMITATIONS.....	12
1.4 THESIS STRUCTURE.....	13
CHAPTER TWO	15
GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT	15
2.1 WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT.....	15
2.1.1 <i>Origins of the Women in Development discourse</i>	15
2.1.2 <i>Central Concerns</i>	16
2.1.3 <i>The Triple Role of Women in Society</i>	17
2.1.4 <i>Practical and Strategic Needs</i>	19
2.1.5 <i>Gender Roles Framework</i>	20
2.1.6 <i>Approaches Within WID</i>	20
2.1.7 <i>Women and Development</i>	22
2.1.8 <i>Critique of WID</i>	22
2.2 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT.....	23
2.2.1 <i>Social Relations Analysis</i>	26
2.2.2 <i>Recent Debates on GAD</i>	29
2.3 BEYOND GAD: THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE.....	30
2.3.1 <i>The Influence of Postmodern Theory</i>	30
2.3.2 <i>Foucault's Concept of "Power"</i>	32
2.3.3 <i>Gender, Masculinity and Development</i>	34
2.3.4 <i>Gender and Identity</i>	36
2.4 CONCLUDING COMMENTS.....	39

CHAPTER THREE	42
GENDER AND INDUSTRY.....	42
3.1 GLOBAL ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING.	42
3.1.1 <i>Globalisation</i>	42
3.1.2 <i>Emerging Methods of Production</i>	45
3.2 SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING.	47
3.3 GENDER AND INDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING.....	49
3.3.1 <i>Gender and Restructuring in South Africa</i>	56
3.3.2 <i>Gender and Regional Policy in South Africa</i>	60
3.3.3 <i>The Locality in Restructuring</i>	64
3.4 CONCLUDING COMMENTS.	65
CHAPTER FOUR.....	67
GENDER AND HOUSEHOLD RELATIONS	67
4.1 MEN AND WOMEN IN THE HOUSEHOLD	67
4.2 WOMEN'S INCOME AND THE HOUSEHOLD.....	69
4.3 EXPENDITURE IN THE HOUSEHOLD.....	71
4.3 HOUSEWORK AND HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES	74
4.4 POWER AND INCOME WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD	76
4.5 CONCLUDING COMMENTS	80
CHAPTER FIVE.....	82
KWAZULU NATAL AND THE ISITHEBE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE.....	82
5.1 KWAZULU NATAL: A REGIONAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT TO ISITHEBE	83
5.2 A CONTEXTUAL PROFILE OF ISITHEBE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE.....	89
5.2.1 <i>Historical and physical environment</i>	89
5.2.2 <i>Social environment</i>	90
5.2.3 <i>Historical characteristics of Isithebe</i>	91
5.3 RECENT TRENDS	92
5.3.1 <i>Profile of the Estate</i>	93
5.3.2 <i>Total Employment on the Estate 1985 to 1998</i>	94
5.3.3 <i>Sectoral Trends</i>	95
5.3.4 <i>The 1996 survey: sectoral trends</i>	97
5.3.5 <i>Employment Patterns</i>	100
5.3.6 <i>Foreign Investment</i>	109
5.3.7 <i>Locational Factors</i>	110
5.3.8 <i>1996 Survey: Restructuring on the Estate</i>	114
5.3.9 <i>Some examples Of Different Preconceptions of Gender</i>	124
5.4 CONCLUDING COMMENTS	126
CHAPTER SIX.....	129
THE ISITHEBE COMMUNITIES.....	129
6.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE	129
6.2 HOUSEHOLD DYNAMICS	133
6.2.1 <i>Household Profile</i>	133
6.3 GENDER RELATIONS IN THE HOUSEHOLD	137
6.3.1 <i>Household Types</i>	137
6.3.2 <i>Household Finances</i>	137
6.3.3 <i>Labour Division</i>	143
6.3.4 <i>Power distribution in the household</i>	148
6.4 CHALLENGING GENDER IDENTITY WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD.....	151
6.5 CONCLUDING COMMENTS	154

CONCLUSION.....	158
BIBLIOGRAPHY	165
APPENDIX 1	174
APPENDIX 2	175

List of Tables and Figures

TABLE 1	WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE IN KWAZULU NATAL AND SOUTH AFRICA	84
TABLE 2	WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN EACH SECTOR	85
TABLE 3	WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA AND KWAZULU NATAL	86
TABLE 4	SECTORAL BREAKDOWN OF FACTORIES 1991 TO 1999	97
TABLE 5	SECTORAL COMPOSITION OF EMPLOYMENT IN ISITHEBE, 1991-1998	101
TABLE 6	SECTORAL COMPOSITION OF EMPLOYMENT IN ISITHEBE, 1991-1998 (%)	102
TABLE 7	FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN ISITHEBE BY SECTOR 1994-1998	106
TABLE 8	INVENTORY CHANGES SINCE ADOPTING JIT OR MAKE TO ORDER SYSTEMS	115
TABLE 9	STANDARD OF TECHNOLOGY BY DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS	121
TABLE 10	POPULATION OF EMPLOYABLE AGE	131
TABLE 11	LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED	134
TABLE 12	SECTORAL ANALYSES OF EMPLOYMENT	135
TABLE 13	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS BY GENDER	137
TABLE 14	HOUSEHOLD CONTROL OF FINANCES	142
TABLE 15	BREAKDOWN OF INFORMAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES BY GENDER	147
FIGURE 1	NUMBER OF FIRMS ON THE ESTATE 1991 TO 1999	94
FIGURE 2	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT 1991 – 1998	95
FIGURE 3	SECTORAL BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY	98
FIGURE 4	EMPLOYMENT BY GENDER 1991 TO 1998	100
FIGURE 5	FOREIGN OWNERSHIP WITHIN ISITHEBE 1996	109
FIGURE 6	LOCATIONAL FACTORS WITHIN ISITHEBE 1996	111
FIGURE 7	SUBCONTRACTING IN ISITHEBE	117
FIGURE 8	IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING	119
FIGURE 9	PERCEPTION OF PRODUCTIVITY	122
FIGURE 10	ACTIONS TAKEN TO ADDRESS LABOUR PROBLEMS	123
FIGURE 11	EMPLOYMENT PROFILE OF SAMPLE	131
FIGURE 12	NON ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE BY GENDER (PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE)	132
FIGURE 13	AGE PROFILE OF SAMPLE	134
FIGURE 14	INCOME PROFILE OF SAMPLE	136
FIGURE 15	INCOME BY GENDER	136
FIGURE 16	PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYED WOMEN ENGAGED IN MULTIPLE HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES AS OPPOSED TO PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYED MEN.	144
FIGURE 17	EMPLOYMENT IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL SECTOR BY GENDER	146

List of Maps

Map One	8
Map Two	11

List of Acronyms

EPZ	Export Processing Zone
GAD	Gender and Development
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GEAR	Growth, Equity and Redistribution
HSL	Household Subsistence Level
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
KDC	KwaZulu Development Corporation
KFC	KwaZulu Natal Finance Corporation
LED	Local Economic Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RIDP	Regional Industrial Decentralisation Programme
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDI	Spatial Development Initiatives
WID	Women in Development

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Contextual Background

Over the past two decades development policy has become increasingly concerned with gender issues. This has led to the formulation of gender policies within governments, development organisations, and to a lesser extent, the private sector. Many governments are verbalising their commitment to gender equality, whilst a large number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are dedicating themselves purely to women's issues. However, the degree to which this professed concern is translated into action has been questioned by a number of players, not least by feminist organisations and NGOs involved in gender issues. The growing focus on gender issues is happening at a time when attention is being directed to accelerated processes of globalisation and to the many transformations that globalisation initiates. Indeed Marchand (1995) uses the term 'platitudinous' to describe the constant referrals to global economic transformation.

This thesis explores the relationships between the constructions of gender relations, and locality specific industrial restructuring, which is occurring in response to economic transformations at a global and national level. Integral to the implementation of policy and programmes addressing gender issues at any level is an awareness of the diversity of issues and experiences which are experienced by different communities. While shifts in economic policy and the transition to a global economy often occur at a level far removed from the community, the effects of these processes are felt in different ways and at different times by different communities and individuals. Thus an understanding of the way in which global dynamics are experienced by local people is essential to the formulation of policies and to planning that will ultimately shape the lives and environment of the communities. This thesis is concerned with providing a gender sensitive appreciation of the outcome of global change at a local level. 'Gender sensitive' does not only imply a consideration of women's issues. It involves the exploration of the concerns of both men and women. The range of experiences which are lived, and the pressures and dynamics influencing and shaping gender identities, are essential to an understanding of the issues which confront both men and women.

The terms *men* and *women* conjure up different preconceptions and understandings dependant on the context, culture and class in which they are used. Gender categories cannot be used as a single universal indicator; not all men and women are affected in the same way by economic and social change. The meanings that are ascribed to the concepts of men and women differ according to a myriad of factors, including race, culture and class. Social and cultural norms of each society further shape the way men and women experience masculinity and femininity.

This thesis therefore uses the term gender in an inclusive way to embrace the full spectrum of relationships and interactions between men and women in the household. Since this thesis is concerned with economic change it also focuses on relations within the work context. Studies from around the world have indicated that women generally experience employment limitations, restrictions, often poorer working conditions, and certainly poorer-paid job opportunities than men¹. Gender is undoubtedly a major factor in this labour differentiation. Women are competing for employment within a wider set of social relations which are usually determined by a patriarchal society. However, there is considerable contextual variation, with some societies experiencing a significant increase in the status of women. An examination of the comparative position of men within the workforce and within the home will allow for a more complex understanding of the dynamics and relationships between men and women. This thesis therefore includes chapters on both the community and the work environment. It will show that gender relations in the work environment and the household are being affected by the local outcome of global transformations.

The global economic shifts that are occurring have been in motion in various forms for the last two decades. In the early 1970s the Bretton Woods agreement on fixed exchange rates and a controlled economic market disintegrated. At the same time mass production and Fordism was in crisis, and the oil crisis of 1973 and 1979 presented new challenges for the global economy. The resulting upheavals stimulated the emergence of a New International Division of Labour, and the 'Third World' made demands for a New International Economic Order. These macro-economic changes are reflected at regional, national and local levels, with moves by companies

¹ See Standing 1992, Marchand 1995, Sylvester 1995, Katz 1993, Sen and Grown 1987 amongst others indicating the comparative relation of women in the labour force.

towards new economic, industrial and production techniques. These changes impacted on employment patterns and socio-economic relations. Boserup (1990) argues that whenever rapid development or economic change occurs, tensions are created between sexes and generations, and that pressure groups or involved parties often intervene in attempts to preserve traditional hierarchical, patriarchal and cultural patterns. The precise way in which this happens is dependent on the particular context. A specific region or area cannot be placed or examined within a vacuum, and the physical, social, cultural and economic characteristics which define a locality mediate the effect of global forces. The effect of these changes on women, as well as men, need to be explored in relation to particular localities.

1.2 Relationship to Existing Studies

This thesis is intended to contribute to an emergent literature on gender and economic issues in South Africa. Contributions to date have included that of Todes (1997), Posel and Todes (1993, 1995), Platzky (1997), Mager (1989), Gwagwa (1995) and Ward (1986). The work of Posel and Todes provides a gendered analysis of regional planning in KwaZulu-Natal, which facilitates the understanding of the regional and locality-based gender issues within the province. The study by Pudifin and Ward on women in Isithebe provides a benchmark against which recent trends can be assessed, as does the recent work by Platzky focusing on Isithebe as one of three case studies. This thesis builds on this previous work, and extends the analysis of the impact of decentralisation points on the bantustans, and particularly women, in the work environment, to explore the affects of industrial and economic change on gender in the surrounding communities. Platzky suggests that as a result of industrial decentralisation women are better able to participate in household decisions, and for the first time earn an independent income. This argument provides a departure point in this thesis.

1.3 Research Objectives

In the following research, I attempt to address a number of objectives arising from the issues discussed above:

- ◆ To assess the degree to which global economic trends have impacted on industry within South Africa, through the examination of trends within an identified industrial estate.
- ◆ To examine the impact that shifts in production methods, together with macro-economic changes, have had on men and women in communities surrounding a focal point of industry within the province of KwaZulu Natal.
- ◆ To gauge observations within an identified community against basic tenets of the Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) paradigms, thus exploring the appropriateness of different approaches to gender issues within the context of localities in South Africa
- ◆ To evaluate a number of claims deriving from these paradigms regarding the effect of the changing economic status of women in challenging or accepting existing gender structures and relations in both the household and the workplace.
- ◆ In doing so, to analyse the effect that any shifts within the workplace and macro-economic environment may have had on the social relationships between men and women within the household and community, and the extent to which these have initiated any fundamental change in the power structures which underpin inequality and discrimination between men and women in economic, social and cultural environments.

1.4 Central Argument

As indicated above, this thesis explores the shifting gender relations within the context of economic change and transition. It suggests that despite these changes in the economic and employment climate, the relations and balance of power between men and women are not experiencing a concomitant change, which is inhibiting to a large degree the autonomy and freedom of women to operate independently within the social and economic sphere. It is shown that women remain in specific low-paid and limited sectors within the workforce, and that the formal income that is earned does not provide the basis for a substantial challenge to existing power relations within the household. Further, it is argued that the new pressures exerted on men through the changing economic environment are in fact serving to reinforce many of the dynamics and mechanisms which characterise a patriarchal system.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Methodological Approach

A number of methodological approaches are utilised to best achieve the formulated objectives of this research. The focus of this study comprises two components: firstly, an investigation into the more measurable shifts in the economy and industry, and the resulting trends; and secondly, a consideration of the impact of such processes on communities. The former lends itself to a more empirical approach, as it produces data which is relatively easily quantified. The latter recognises the variety of meanings and understandings which may be construed or developed by individuals and society, as well as the diverse effects which these have. Meanings, experience and values cannot be easily quantified, and this component of the research does not lend itself to a quantitative, positivist measurement. The information gathered represents merely a moment in the lives and values of the communities on which the research is based. To deal with this aspect of the study I have drawn on a more qualitative approach, which is better able to reflect, rather than capture, the variety of meanings and responses which characterise the lives of the respondents.

The research methodology comprised three components. A review of the existing literature on gender and development, and on economic and industrial change, focusing on South Africa, was conducted. This review led to the formulation of the theoretical framework within which the resulting research was conducted. A case study² in KwaZulu Natal was then identified. Both structured and semi-structured interviews were used in the research, the former to capture the process and trends within industry, and the latter to explore the dynamics of gender and relationships within the household and community, as well as the workplace.

1.2.2 Selection of Case Study

KwaZulu Natal is one of the poorer provinces in South Africa, with the majority of people

² Stake (1995) explains the appropriateness of the term 'case study' which emphasises what specifically can be learnt from a single study (*ibid.*236)

living in rural areas. The province is home to 8 417 021 people, 20.7% of the South African population³, making it the most populated province in the country. 53.1% of the population in the province are women. Of the total population, 43.1% live in urban areas, while 56.9% live in non-urban areas. Within the provinces are several decentralisation points developed by the apartheid regime. These areas have had a significant impact on the surrounding communities. The impact of capital injection and industry into such an essentially rural context has influenced employment patterns and social and socio-economic relations in such areas.

The selected case study, the Isithebe Industrial Estate was established as an industrial decentralisation point under the South African government's regional policy in 1970. The estate has been managed by the KwaZulu Finance Corporation (KFC) since 1972. The estate is situated midway between Richards Bay and Durban on the North Coast route of KwaZulu Natal (see map one). The estate has easy access to the N2 Toll road which runs between Durban and Richards Bay, and is served by a rail link between the two cities. This facilitates access to the ports in both cities. The introduction of the Regional Industrial Decentralisation Package (RIDP) in 1982 resulted in rapid growth on the estate, leading to Isithebe being considered the most successful decentralisation point in KwaZulu Natal (McCarthy et al 1996). The estate, together with the large-scale, largely white-owned sugar plantations in the area, and the SAPPI mill (located in Mandeni), are the primary employers for the communities in the region. Mandeni is the formal, largely white township that was developed to serve the SAPPI Mill, and later, the estate. Between the estate and Mandeni is Sundumbili, a formal black township serving the estate, Mandeni and the Sappi mill. To the south of Mandeni lies Tugela Rail, separated from Mandeni by the Tugela River, and home to many of the Indian employees of Isithebe and Mandeni. The estate, the surrounding informal settlement, and much of the community fall into the Chief Mathonsi ward. With the exception of the established townships, the area is characterised by a lack of efficient services, poor living conditions, pollution, and violence (both political and criminal). The formal areas of Mandeni, Sundumbili and Tugela have access to at least basic service provision, and have established access points and routes.

³ Source: Statistics South Africa (1998) The People of South Africa Population census: Census in Brief, Pretoria

The growth and success of the Isithebe estate since 1982 together with the more diverse industrial base than other estates led to Isithebe suggesting itself as an example in which industrial and economic trends might be well evidenced. The presence of traditionally female-reliant sectors such as clothing and textile, together with the range of other sectors, further substantiated the belief that there might be unique visible gender dynamics on the estate. The range of urban, peri-urban and informal, and rural communities surrounding the estate provide a unique opportunity to sample a range of populations, and explore the social dynamics within different environments. As an instrumental case study⁴, it was believed that Isithebe could contribute to an exploration at both a theoretical and a experiential level of the dynamics between economic shift, and gender relations.

1.2.3 Industrial Survey

The industrial component of the research was conducted in November 1996. The KFC was approached prior to the research in order to obtain permission to conduct research on the estate. A comprehensive listing of the firms on the estate, together with a listing from six months earlier, was obtained from the KFC. The two lists were then compared to detail any change over the period. The more recent list was then used as the basis from which to randomly sample. Use was made of an industrial questionnaire which had been conducted in January 1996 by Harrison, K and Patel, Y as part of the RIDP evaluation study. An interview schedule was compiled incorporating both structured and semi-structured interviewing techniques. Such a combination was considered to be the tool best suited to the collection of both qualitative and limited quantitative information required from the respondents.

⁴ Stake RE (1995) 'Case Studies' in Denzin and Lincoln (eds.) A Handbook of Qualitative Research London: Sage

MAP ONE KWAZULU NATAL: THE DURBAN – RICHARDS BAY AXIS



A total of 55 surveys by Harrison and Patel in January 1996 supplemented by 28 additional surveys undertaken by myself in November 1996 provided a total of 83 firms, representing 65% of the total firms in Isithebe at the time. The samples from both surveys covered all major sectors located in Isithebe. Results were then tabulated and compared, and relevant conclusions drawn. The Harrison and Patel survey was written up in a report for the Board of Industrial Decentralisation. I wish to fully acknowledge the extent to which the Harrison and Patel survey has informed my own findings on Isithebe. The study was supplemented by KFC data from periods before and after 1996, facilitating the location of trends at the time of the study within a broader context.

The use of two surveys in this study does pose some methodological problems. However, it has enabled a higher number of firms to be sampled, and has, on balance, added value to this study. The methodological problems relate to the possible changes in the business environment between January and November 1996 (although these are not likely to have been great), and some slight variations in the questions asked.

1.2.4 Community Survey

In order to complement the information gained from the above survey, a second field visit was undertaken to assess the impact of Isithebe and changes on the estate on the surrounding communities. The second visit was conducted ten months after the first, allowing sufficient time for the data to be analysed, and trends identified. The fieldwork was undertaken together with a fellow researcher from the University of Natal, Benjamin Roberts, who was also undertaking a community survey for the purpose of a Masters dissertation, and made use of a questionnaire formulated for a study undertaken for the Centre for Social and Development Studies⁵. While some questions were common to both studies, for example demographic data, our studies had a different focus, mine concerning gender relations and Mr. Roberts concerning the effect of electrification on rural communities. There were thus additional gender-specific questions which were added to the questionnaire. An open-ended discursive survey component was compiled for the study of the communities surrounding Isithebe. The first section of the

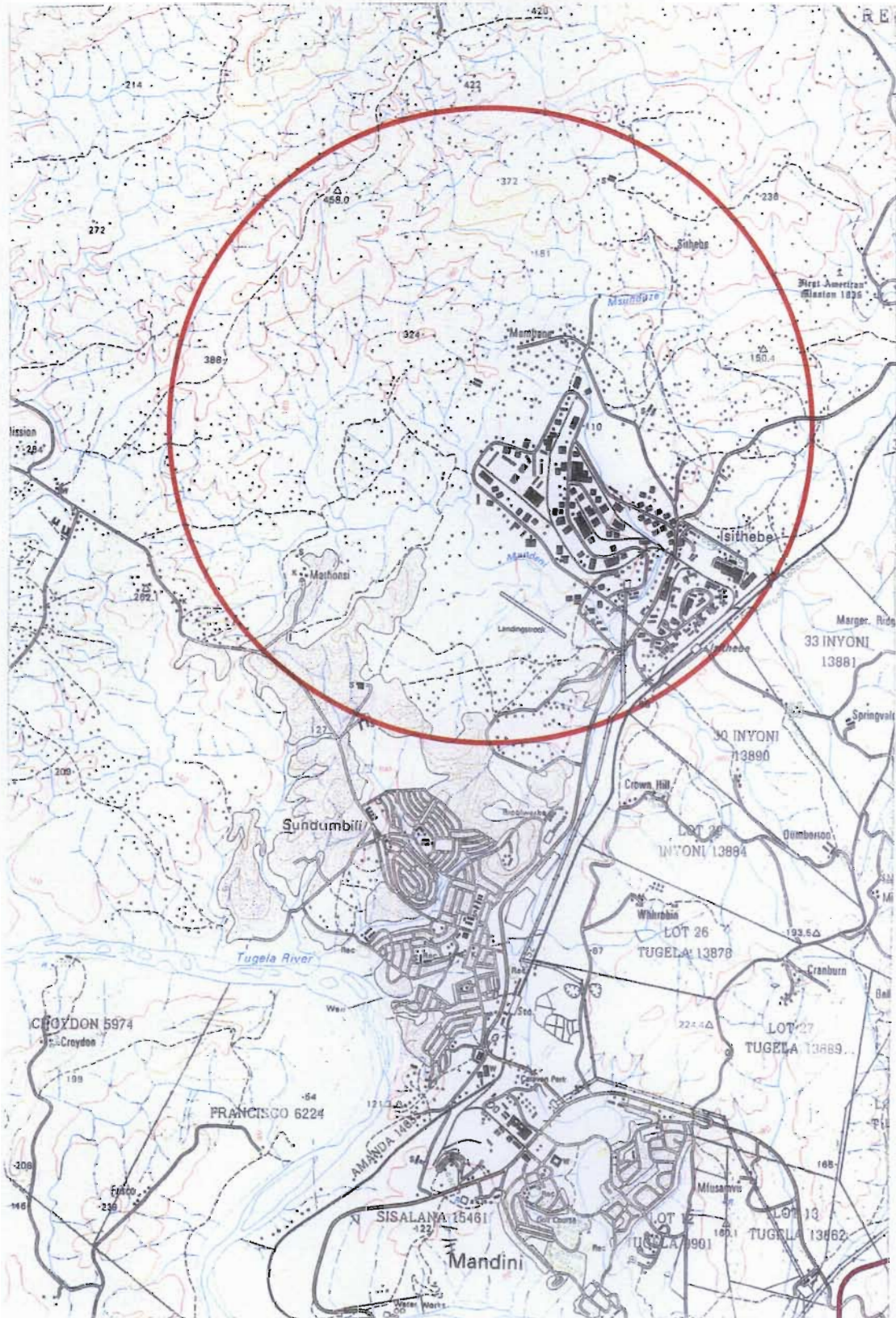
survey was designed to establish a basic household profile. The second component was compiled drawing on a number of techniques aimed at establishing an informal atmosphere for the interview, and the promotion of an environment conducive to the discussion of issues that could be perceived as sensitive and provocative.

While the original intention was to generate a sample from aerial photographs, this was rendered impossible by the growth of the informal communities surrounding the estate. In the informal settlements a one in five dwelling sample was used. However, as the settlement merged into the rural tribal village, this became more random as the households became more scattered. The original one in five technique was also subject to the availability of household members. In a number of instances the dwellings were deserted, and the limited time available made a later return to the dwelling impractical. The sample was approached from the Isithebe estate, and concentrated on the land to the North and West of the estate. The communities represented were thus the informal settlement on Mandeni TLC land, and, predominantly, tribal land belonging to Chief Mathonsi (see map 2). While it was initially intended to generate a sample from within the formal settlement of Sundumbile, this was not possible as we were asked to leave the area as our personal safety could not be guaranteed. A total of 62 households were sampled in the community study, representing a total of 508 adults and children.

The use of a fieldworker from one of the communities facilitated access to the communities and households, and assisted in addressing some of the suspicion and formality which may otherwise have been encountered. Where difficulty was encountered, a shift to a more discursive meeting assisted in establishing a rapport between the researcher and the respondent. The dynamics and interactions between various household members and respondents were also observed, which further facilitated an open discussion as well as identifying various issues which may not otherwise have been raised in the interview. These observations did at times inevitably lead to a specific interpretation by the researcher based on individual values. Interviews could take up to 2 hours per household, but on average lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. The researchers were also invited to observe the monthly meeting of the Isithebe development committee, where the objectives of the research were explained to the committee.

⁵ Benjamin Roberts was undertaking a social research study for the CSDS, University of Natal, Durban

MAP TWO SAMPLING



1.2.5 Post-survey data

Further data became available during the writing up of the research. This included limited data from the 1996 population census. Where possible, this data was incorporated into the analytical chapters of this thesis, and serves to provide some insight into population and employment trends up to 1996. In addition, further information was made available by the KFC for the period 1989 to 1998, and provides information on the sectoral and employment trends on Isithebe. This data has been incorporated into chapters five and six, and provides a more comprehensive study of the trends in employment, in terms of the broad employment profile on the estate within sectors, and further differentiated by gender. Sectoral data was also provided, which allows the growth and decline of sectors on the estate to be mapped, and where possible, correlated with trends in employment patterns

1.3 Limitations

It must be noted that various problems were encountered in the gathering of the industrial and social information.

- ◆ Many of the industries that have located within Isithebe are of foreign origin, which on more than one occasion led to a language barrier. In these cases, it was also found that many respondents gave what they perceived as being the “correct” answers. In such instances, the information was gathered as was best possible, but such information may be somewhat distorted. In addition, many employers or management granted interviews, but did not respond in person, sending instead employees with an incomplete knowledge or understanding of the firm.

- ◆ The statistical figures used reflect the usual shortcomings in such a study. Owing to the nature of study, it is often hard to attain totally accurate figures for Chapter Five, especially with regard to figures concerning employment in the informal sector. The latest complete 1996 Census figures were not available at the time of writing. Further, differences in

methodological approaches to the census conducted in different years, together with the incorporation or exclusion differing geographical and political areas limits the accurate comparability of much of the data.

- ◆ The community survey was limited by the impracticalities of interviewing all adults within the household. Where possible the acknowledged head was interviewed, and in their absence the partner or person of following seniority in the household was interviewed. This, process, however, failed to capture many of the nuances and implicit perceptions of wives, mothers and other women within the households. While ideally both partners should be present at the interview, this too was unattainable, and the responses thus reflect many of the biases and perceptions associated with gender and power that are discussed in the following theoretical chapters.
- ◆ While it was intended to generate a sample within Sundumbili, the formal township serving Isithebe, violence in the township resulted in a mere two households being interviewed, before the researchers were asked to leave.

1.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter Two provides an overview of the different paradigms in which gender and development has been studied. These paradigms provide the bases on which the theoretical framework for this study is formulated, and highlights the importance of context, social relations, power and identity in understanding and addressing gender issues. This leads to a discussion in **Chapter Three** of the wealth of literature which has arisen around globalisation, economic and industrial restructuring, and gender. Dominant literature regarding gender and restructuring within South Africa is explored, and the key themes of relations, power and identity discussed in chapter two are integrated into the understanding of gendered industrial change. **Chapter Four** draws together a number of strands of thought on the household structure, and using identified focal points explores the major issues surrounding gender, income and the household. **Chapter Five** introduces the first component of the case study, the Isithebe Industrial Estate, and assesses the trends in restructuring which are being felt in the

range of sectors located on the estate, and the gendered component which is often present. **Chapter Six** explores the gender dynamics within and between the households in a number of communities surrounding the industrial estate, and the impact that changes on the estate have initiated. This leads to the **Conclusion** that both macro and micro economic changes are impacting in a number of ways on men and women in these peri-urban and rural communities. There is evidence to suggest that the increasing involvement of women in the economy witnessed in the 1980s and early 1990s, and the female domination of certain industries, may be in decline. Concomitantly there is an increasing blurring of the gender divide within many industries. The involvement of women in the workforce does not correlate to a fundamental shift in unequal relations between men and women, and provides little with which existing relations can be challenged. A platform is provided, through this involvement, of increased discontent and opportunity from which existing relations can be challenged. This platform is provided by a combination of social and economic changes, to which economic and industrial change in Isithebe contributes.

In the exploration of both the economic and social environment, this thesis does not attempt to reveal a timeless truth about gender and the effects of economic change. Instead it situates the findings within the context of a particular locality and the specific cultural experience of the people involved. By doing so, I hope that I can contribute to a better understanding of the life experiences of the people of KwaZulu Natal, in particular an understanding of the gender dynamics and relations. In addition, I hope to clarify some of the misconceptions and understandings that are prevalent within the field of planning and development.

Chapter Two Gender and Development

*"To name ourselves rather than be named we must first see ourselves."
Lorraine O'Grady: 'Olympia's Maid'*

Gender discourse has undergone a marked shift in the past two decades. It has moved from the largely economic theory of Women in Development (WID), based on the assumption that involving women in development processes will enable economic equality with men, to a more holistic emphasis on relationships and power structures in the present discourse of Gender and Development (GAD). In this chapter I will trace the course of the transition, showing how the initial paradigm is giving way to the more convincing paradigm of GAD and Social Relations Analysis. I conclude by discussing some of the current debates in international literature and will use these to formulate the conceptual framework that will be used in this study.

Many development practitioners consider the primary goal of gender planning as the emancipation of women. This in itself is a problematic concept, with "oppressed" women being constructed as the "other." For the purpose of this thesis, gender development will be seen as the process of seeking to achieve the independent equality of women in all spheres: domestic, social, political and economic; but within the specific spatial and cultural context. This thesis will consider women in relation to men, thus emphasising the role of gender rather than the role merely of women. A focus on gender relationships leads to a better understanding of the dynamics and processes that interact to produce subordination, oppression and discrimination.

2.1 Women in Development.

2.1.1 Origins of the Women in Development discourse

During the 1950s women were viewed primarily as mothers and wives, fulfilling a reproductive, nurturing and domestic role in society. The focus of development on women attempted to protect this role through family planning and nutrition foci. Development was top-

down and imposed on communities by those planners with the experience and knowledge to address development issues. These concerns were considered to be sufficient in addressing women-specific issues within the development arena. The publication of Boserup's (1970) *Women's Role in Economic Development* initiated a marked shift in the consideration of women within development. Boserup suggested that, in many instances, women were the victims of development projects rather than the beneficiaries, and that the subordinate position of women in society and communities was often perpetuated through imposed development initiatives. NB

Dominant concerns in the women's movement at the time, together with the changing focus of women within development led to an attempt to integrate social justice and equity, equal employment and opportunities, and equal social and political involvement, into development theory and practice. The ideology of liberal feminism influenced the development discourse by arguing that gender subordination resulted primarily from men's expectations, which were internalised by women and in turn reinforced through external agents of socialisation such as the state and other structures (Connell, 1987). The solution, it was argued, was to open education and economic opportunity to women on an equal scale to men.

2.1.2 Central Concerns

The discourse of Women in Development (WID) emerged from these influences. WID suggested that the integration of women into mainstream society on the same terms as men would address concerns specific to women, and lead to the challenging of the subordination of women in society. This argument was premised on the assumption that the integration of women into the economy would solve gender discrimination, and promote the role of women within society. Not only, it was argued, would the inclusion of women on the development agenda address gender inequality, but it would ultimately lead to greater economic efficiency and productivity.

While in developed countries other concerns such as social equality remained essential if not the core of WID discourse, in developing countries this was not the case. As this paradigm was

introduced into Third World countries, the focus centred wholly on the women's productive capacity, and how best to integrate this into development processes as a means of both economic efficiency and improving women's status. Researchers within a number of developing countries pointed out the importance of women within primarily agricultural economies, on both a subsistence and market level⁶. Indeed, Boserup (1970) argued that women's traditional role in the economy was being undermined through development programmes, with men gaining control of cash-crop agriculture, and women dominating subsistence agriculture. This led to a dichotomy where further power was placed in the hands of men, and the role of women in agriculture became invisible. In response to the dominant welfare approach, and the perception of women as wives and mothers, WID advocates argued that women had a vital role to play in the economy, and thus in development. Thus women should not be the passive recipients of handouts and welfare, but rather active participants in the economic processes.

2.1.3 The Triple Role of Women in Society

WID theorists attempted to identify the different roles of women within society. Women were perceived as fulfilling three roles in society: reproductive, productive and community managing work. When men perceive themselves as having a role in the house it is as an income-earners; they also can play a role in the community, but it is a very different one to women. The roles of women were thus identified in the following way:

- Reproductive roles can be seen as either the reproduction of labour, or biological reproduction.⁷ Feminists argue that the strict division of labour makes reproductive work a consequence of capitalism. However, it can also be argued that there is no clear division between work and leisure. Work takes on an exchange value rather than a use value. This occurs in non-capitalist societies as well. Reproduction cannot be seen as a purely economic task, in many cultures it is seen as a way of enhancing social status and power

⁶ This was particularly relevant in Sub-Saharan Africa, which was characterised as "the great global area of female farming systems" (Razavi and Miller, 1995: 4)

(Galal, 1995)⁸; however, it can be argued that this form of status is largely a result of patriarchal structures and values.

- Productive work includes both market and subsistence/home production with a use value rather than an exchange value. This generates an income, and thus does create a potential exchange value. The multiple form of women's work reveals the limitation of planning categories, which emphasise the difference between women's reproductive and men's productive work, thus rendering women's reproductive work invisible (Moser, 1993:31). Working within the invisible market or informal sector, women face constraints by the formal sector and through their gendered roles at home. This leads to women adopting a dual productive role.
- Community managing and politics are often identified with reproductive work, and labelled "naturally women's work". Social relations include neighbours and friends as well as family. Moser (1993) cites Castell's crises of collective consumption, where private capital does not want to contribute to the reproduction of the labour force that it requires, so the state fills the gap and takes responsibility for labour power. These interventions, and often those of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well, assume that women will do the usually unpaid work. Whilst men work at a community level, it is in a different role. For women it is an extension of the private domestic life; for men it is the public world of politics. In organisations, men take up the leadership and managing roles, while women make up the numbers of the group. Moser points out that when women do move into the world of politics, confrontation is inevitable. Such confrontation is viewed by Moser as destructive, or of negative influence. It may be suggested that such forms of non-aggressive confrontation may benefit the position of women in a particular society, if such

⁷. Chafetz is just one of many theorists who has argued that the reproductive role of women is what ultimately gives men the advantage in economic power relations (Chafetz, 1991).

⁸. Huber offers a different opinion: that primary social status is achieved by the perception of being the primary controller and bestower of resources outside the family (Huber, 1987).

2.1.5 Gender Roles Framework

In an attempt to overcome existing inequalities and subordination roles, a process of gender analysis was developed. This intended to provide a conceptual framework within which existing inequalities in resource allocation could be challenged. Examining differentiation in access, control and output of productive and reproductive labour, and the access and control of resources; it identified concerns and goals for development planning and project designs. Gender Role Framework is one such analytical tool, which seeks to identify and approach the distribution of roles, access and resources within the household. While this approach enlightens much of the “invisible” differentiation within households, it shifts the emphasis away from welfare and social concerns to largely economic insight. It has already been ascertained that it is essential to consider gender relationships and oppression holistically, without focusing on merely a single aspect. This approach tends to identify static, rigid, homogenous roles identified with each gender.

2.1.6 Approaches Within WID

A number of development approaches were formulated under the influence of WID discourse, and reflect the dominant arguments and concerns. The **Equity Approach** recognised the triple role of women in society and sought to better the position of women purely through economic autonomy. Investing in women’s economic integration and development would produce economic returns and thus became the primary goal of gender planning within development. The **Anti-Poverty Approach** argued that women’s poverty was not so much a result of subordination to men, as a problem of underdevelopment. Thus in rural economies, the introduction of small-scale agricultural projects should provide women with access to a cash income.

The Anti-Poverty Approach was followed by the **Efficiency Approach**, undoubtedly the most popular concept utilised by NGOs and governments worldwide. It arose largely from the huge debt crisis manifested in many developing countries during the 1980s, and continues to influence much policy and gender theory.

Elson (1991) suggests that while macro-economic policy is usually presented in gender-neutral terms, there is in fact an inherent bias in such policy. The Gender Efficiency Approach argues that differentiated resources are allocated between sectors in an uneven and inequitable manner, a result of various constraints placed upon such allocation. These include the reproductive burden placed on women; the differentiated roles and role modelling inherent in traditional households; inequitable rights and obligations between partners, and discrimination in the marketplace (Collier, 1989:8). The answer, for Collier, is to address these differentials through public policy, thus addressing gender discrimination, and enabling women to participate more actively, willingly and equitably in the production processes. In turn this would benefit any structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) or other imposed reforms.

The Efficiency Approach tends to isolate and target the practical gender needs through development programmes. Women are viewed as possessing elastic time frames and expected to extend their working day to compensate for the decline of welfare and social service. In this way, the triple role of women discussed above is recognised, but nothing is done to alleviate the pressure in any sphere. The concept of elastic time limits places further burden on women, who are expected to add wage labour to their unpaid labour. In addition, there is an inherent male bias of ignoring barriers to the reallocation of resources to women in policies which are designed to switch to tradable commodities (Moser, 1993; Elson, 1993).

A fourth approach is proposed by Moser, termed the **Empowerment Approach**. This aims at developing greater self-reliance in women. The subordination of women is contextualised not only in relation to men, but rather as a result of neo-colonial and colonial oppression. It seeks to meet both practical and strategic gender needs through grassroots and bottom-up empowerment. While this approach is popular among developing world women's NGO's, it has met much opposition with others, as it is seen as challenging to existing systems and authorities. This approach hints at the concerns and issues which are taken up in Gender and Development discourse, the most popular at the current time.

2.1.7 Women and Development

Concomitant to the development of WID was the discourse of *Women and Development*. Developed largely by radical feminists, WAD argued that women could only develop outside patriarchal structures, and thus that women's movements and development programmes should be developed and implemented independent from any male participation or influence, with minimal co-operation or contact with men or non-female dominated structures.

2.1.8 Critique of WID

The attempts of WID to focus attention on the economic contribution that women could make to development diverted attention away from other concerns of gender equality. The concept became very much a matter of what women could do for development, rather than what development could do for women (Goetz, 1994). Women were seen as a homogenous undifferentiated group, where a single policy could be universally applied, and became the group through which planning goals could be prioritised, even when these did not necessarily turn out to be to the advantage or best interest of women. As small-scale income-generating programmes were often seen as a means of strengthening women's productive roles in the developing world, traditional skills and roles were targeted, and this did nothing to break out of the gendered labour practices or marginalisation that occurred. The problem of women's subordination and oppression was seen to be primarily logistic rather than requiring a transformation of the basic societal relations and ideologies (Parpart and Marchand, 1995). As Goetz has pointed out, where women were targeted as a high-profile group, their ability to contribute to development was often over-emphasised, and so they became the solution to national problems and crises, thus increasing the burden on them.

Gender Roles Framework is inherently self-limiting and echoes the dominant concerns of WID. While Gender Roles Framework ascribes static, homogenous roles according to gender, in reality, responsibilities tend to oscillate according to each gender's ability to handle defined roles and responsibilities, and the ability to access the other's sphere of activity. The relationship between men and women is ignored, and so the dynamics and changes in

responsibility and activities are ignored. For instance, while in many countries greater access and resources have been accorded to women, much of these resources have been appropriated from the women by men, and often put to other uses than originally intended. Gender Roles Framework often ignores such relations and interactions and thus undermines the legitimacy of many of its claims.

While Gender Roles Framework and the Efficiency Approach illuminate some of the processes and reasons for gender differentiation and discrimination, they are unable to explain how these processes relate to economic reform and restructuring, their primary focus. There appears to be an inherent flaw in the argument of gender efficiency: processes such as SAPs intensify gender biases and rigidities that theorists identify as stumbling blocks to these very economic processes. It is implied that 'natural' gender roles are merely intensified and reinforced through economic reform programmes. As Razavi and Miller argue, "if the processes unleashed by economic restructuring are not considered to be responsible for the creation and accentuation of gender inequality, then how is the reproduction of gender inequality explained?"

Moser (1993) points out that the nature of WID remains unchallenging to the inherently patriarchal structure of many governments and development organisations, which thus accounts for the continued popularity of the approach within many such bodies.

2.2 Gender and Development

It is apparent that while women were concerned with their subordinate role in society, this was placed in largely productive terms. The emergence of the Gender and Development (GAD) paradigm sought to look beyond the market forces to the social relations, what Kabeer (1994) calls the "social connectedness" of men and women, and the social construction of gender identity and its role in the position of women in society. Parpart (1995) suggests that GAD is grounded very much in socialist feminist and Third World feminist writing, a point that is proved very well by recent writings. Sen (1990) points out that unlike other typical conflicts such as class and race, gender cannot be seen in isolation; men and women live and interact under the same roof and thus introduce a new aspect to such conflict. GAD, while not

repudiating the importance of production in gender theory, looks at social construction and reinforcement of gender roles and identities, through various structures and agencies, such as socialisation, the market, household, state and community. GAD extends analyses from a gender disaggregation of roles and access to systems and relations through which essential needs are met. This is based on the premise of the inherent difference between sex and gender, where gender is seen as a social construct powerfully influenced through social activities, structures and agents. The role of structure and agency in the construction of gender is hotly contested, and it is incidental to the scope of this paper to explore this debate beyond citing its basic arguments. Apter and Garnsey (1994) explicitly title the debate “Male power and social structures: Female psychology and agency”. The first argument locates inequality in male power, where prejudice sustains job segregation, and men retain power at home. In this way labour differentiation and restriction serve to reinforce dominant patriarchal regimes. The opposing argument cites the perspective taken by women regarding the cost of success in a male-dominated world as the cause of inequality; women choose different goals and means of achieving them, and refuse to “buy into” the largely male structures (Apter and Garnsey 1994:20). This highlights the question of the degree to which individuals are able to act independently of structural constraints.

In attempts to examine gender relations and the subordination of women more holistically, much focus has been directed at the household and family, and both intra- and extra-household relationships. Moser (1993) looks at the myth that the predominant family form is still the nuclear family, and the related concept of the head of the household as the breadwinner (here the head is traditionally assumed to be male). It is increasingly recognised that the extended family still exists in various forms, not least of which are female-headed households. Female-headed households, for example, cannot themselves be regarded as homogenous, undifferentiated category. Rather, they should be examined at least as *de jure* or *de facto* female-headed households. Male migration has led to the increase of *de facto* female-headed households. Whereas in the past it has been assumed that women suffer more when their husbands are away, some households are often better off when remittances are sent, and women

gain control over the household economy¹¹. It also cannot be assumed that a female-headed household is in a worse financial position than a male-headed household - the reasons for poverty in both cases are often the same. The most disadvantaged are those with only a single earner and with many dependants. In some female-headed households the mother works while the father is away working, in some only the husband or wife works, and in other cases one or more children work.

A second point to clarify is the view of the household, i.e. the wife and husband, as joint decision-maker. Moser (1993) examines New Household Economics (NHE), which argues that the household, rather than the individual, is the most relevant unit of utility maximisation. The household does not merely maximise profits, but rather the joint utility of all its members. The welfare of each member is integrated into a unified family welfare function. However, it is argued that this model cannot handle the dynamics of intra-household equalities. In contrast to the Weberian concept of a benevolent dictator inherent to NHE, the head of the family cannot have the true interests of each member of his family as his own, and therefore ultimately acts in his own interests. Whitehead (1984) argues for a maternal altruism, that is, an obligation to children and family. This no doubt relates to Kaplan who states that "the bedrock of women's consciousness is to preserve life" (Kaplan, 1992:546). Other models recognise that family decisions are more often modelled on negotiations among primarily self-interested individuals. These individuals argue, compromise, and exchange in order to gain their individual ends. Sen (1990) termed this process "co-operative conflict," and stresses each household members' perception as an important parameter in the determination of intra-family divisions and inequalities. This perception determines the relation of individual demands to perceptions of self and value, and to the perceptions of actual contribution against perceived contribution. He suggests that women very often buy into a false perception of self and own economic interests. Feldstein (1986) agrees with this concept, defining the household as "a system of resource allocation between individuals in which members share some goals, benefits and resources, are independent on some, and conflict on others." Moser then shows that working women have

¹¹ Agarwal (1994) show that in India, men are often not perceived by their wives as part of the family, and that women often need the independence provided by migratory labour to feed their family.

more control over the allocation of resources than non-working women, however the connection is not straightforward. The important issue is the degree to which work enhances women's decision-making power, and this will be further explored later in this paper. Contrary to the point this thesis attempts to prove, Blumberg et al argue that relative male versus female control of income is the primary factor influencing intra household relations. They maintain that with greater relative income, women maintain greater leverage in intra-household decision-making processes (Blumberg et al, 1989).

2.2.1 Social Relations Analysis

A more comprehensive approach to gender analysis is that of Social Relations Analysis (see Kabeer, 1994; Razavi and Miller, 1995; Whitehead, 1990). This paradigm views the cause of gender inequality as the social relations, structures and processes between men and women, not merely the economic forces in play. Thus the emphasis shifts from the integration of women into development processes, to addressing the forces and processes that manifest through women's oppressed position in the family, workforce and society. The role of the economy is considered alongside other variables such as class and race, and it is suggested that the social dynamics need to be addressed in order to ensure equitable resource allocation and utilisation in gender terms. This, it is argued, will order a dramatic shift in the allocation and distribution of power. Power assumes a crucial role within this paradigm. Kabeer (1994) explores the difference between *power to*, where decisions are made against the will of others; *power over*, which demarcates the decision from the non-decision-making processes, where some benefit at the expense of others; and *power within*, a feminist phrase which recognises that conflicting interests go beyond decision-making or non-decision-making processes, to the absence of conflict and/or consciousness. *Power within* implies that social rules, norms and practices play a crucial role in concealing the reality of gender conflict and male dominance. Indeed, the development paradigm proposed by Kabeer relies strongly on the concept of power, and empowerment from below. While in many ways similar to that proposed by Moser (1993), it recognises that power generally remains where it always has - in the hands of a few at the top - and development is rooted in the concepts of power and powerlessness.

Various assumptions that are taken for granted in the approaches discussed above are challenged in Social Relations Analysis. It is argued that allocation of resources to women will not effect an increase in production, and that the reallocation of resources to women will not necessarily stimulate equality and autonomy. An essential recognition is that for any progress to be made, in both the long and short term, men will have to relinquish some of their power, economically, politically and socially; creating what Kabeer (1994:97) calls a “zero sum game.”¹² Social Relations Analysis is based on various premises:

- There is a need to look not only at the relations of production to understand gender relations, but at the relations through which needs are met, what Pearson *et al* call the relations of everyday life (Pearson et al, 1981 cited in Razavi and Miller, 1995).
- Any planner aiming at addressing gender development needs to take cognisance of the broad set of social relations through which needs and production are met.
- Other forms of social relations and inequality need to be considered. These include race, culture, ethnicity, religion, age, caste and class. These variables ensure that any group of women have something in common, rather than adopting a feminist “sisterhood”-type presumption.
- There is a need to consider both differences and similarities in any group of women.
- The analysis also takes cognisance of the influence of a range of institutions through which resources and influence are acquired; the household, market, state and community.

The concept of social connectedness assumes primary importance in social relations analysis. Labour relations are considered to be both co-operative and conflictual. The terms of co-operation and exchange need to be understood, and where necessary, addressed, if any progress in eliminating gender differentiation is to be made. It is proposed, as does the hypothesis of this

¹² Moghadam criticises this view of gender relations as a zero-sum game, arguing that such a view is detrimental to a clear understanding or to the implementation of effective policy (Moghadan, 1995:3).

paper, that an increase in the autonomous ability to generate an equitable income does not relate to an increase in household or relational power and decision-making. Thus the processes whereby power relations are structured in all spheres of life need to be examined, understood, and addressed in order to promote equitable authority and power-sharing. It has been suggested that women are not always aware of their exact position in relation to others; Social Relations Analysis recognises the need to accept women's own perceptions of self as valid, and mould these into any development plan or project. It thus becomes the primary concern of any development planner concerned with gender to develop an understanding of the relations and power distribution in the household, market and community, as well as the economic distribution and forces in order to in any way address such gender concerns. Women must be afforded greater power within every sphere if any balance is to be achieved, and it is suggested that this is best done through the increase of bargaining power. Undoubtedly increased economic independence will be a factor, but it cannot be seen as the solution, as previous paradigms have suggested. It is within such theory that many developing country's NGOs are now working (See for example DAWN (Sen and Crown, 1988)).¹³

In that it recognises that the redistribution of power is essential for headway in gender development, Social Relations Analysis remains largely a tool for understanding gender and social relations per se; it does not afford a positive contribution in how best to initiate and enact such redistribution of power and resources in a non-challenging and acceptable way. It also ignores the fact that there are instances where the women is accorded greater power through her own economic activity. Moser (1993) suggests that in many *de facto* female-headed households, women are afforded more power than if the man was present. Indeed, the man, by his absence, surrenders much of his practical authority in the relationship to the women. While this is by no means the rule, it is equally not the exception. This indicates some of the dynamic and ambivalent processes that characterise gender studies, and also highlights the different ways that the economy can and often does effect gender relations.

¹³. DAWN - Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era

2.2.2 Recent Debates on GAD¹⁴

A new strand of literature has emerged as a result of debates dominating the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1994. Included in this is a debate of the gains which the GAD paradigms have achieved for women. While GAD and Social Relations Analysis remain a touchstone of gender and development research and training, the very concept and terminology of gender has been contested by policy-makers and activists.¹⁵ It has been suggested by some feminists that the focus on gender, as opposed to women, has been counter-productive, in that the focus has moved from women, to women and men, and back to women (argued at the NGO Forum, Beijing, 1994; cited in Baden and Goetz, 1997: 7). Such an argument was repeated by several “southern” (sic) women, who expressed concern that women in development had not been adequately addressed, and thus undermined a conceptual shift to gender. A further critique levelled at GAD is the increasing focus on the instrumental explanation of gender differentiation: statistical analyses incorporated into the agenda of development agencies and institutions, which tend to neglect the fundamental power and social relations inherent to gender inequality. This isolates women from the environment of relations in which they exist, a key tenet of Social Relations Analysis. To counter this, the concept and practise of power has to be integral to the understanding and analysis of gender at all levels.

A second debate prevalent in the literature following the Conference is the relationship between gender identities, political subjectivities, and biological fundamentalism (Baden and Goetz, 1997). Of concern is the apparent institutionalisation of gender in development policy and practice, resulting in a perceived “depoliticisation” of gender through gender mainstreaming. What has resulted is the acknowledgement of the need to consider a number of previously neglected topics as essential to an understanding of gender, such as the multiple constructions of masculinities, as well as femininities. Some of these discussion are included in the following sections.

¹⁴ An emerging paradigm, that of Feminist Economics, is not discussed here. This body of literature is only just emerging, and defining itself as a discipline within economics (Razavi and Miller, 1998). Some theorists locating themselves within this paradigm work within neo-classical economics; others draw on a range of approaches.

¹⁵ This reflects the gulf which may develop between theorists and academia and those involved in development lobbying and practice.

2.3 Beyond GAD: The Politics of Difference

"I believe too much in truth not to suppose that there are different truths and different ways of speaking the truth."

(Foucault, 1988:51)

The central problematic in current feminist literature is the concept of power and its opposite, oppression, articulated in gender relations in terms of the subordination of women to men. The penetration of Western capital, with its separation of production and reproduction has resulted in such an artificial division and its ideological reinforcement. At the same time, the analyses of identity, not only of gender, but race, culture and ethnic identities, has accentuated a further dynamic associated with the exercise, perpetuation and legitimation of power. These debates reflect the growing preoccupation and exploration of the differences and subjective realities which serve to create the range of discourses through which the living and experiencing of diverse individuals, communities and societies are understood. The following section explores the emerging theoretical debates reflecting these diversities, through which the nuances of gender dynamics and characteristics can be better understood, and provide the basis for the conceptual framework in which this thesis is situated. Central to this framework is the concept of power, and that of gender identity, and the impact that these notions have on the experiencing and living of gender, and gender relations.

2.3.1 The Influence of Postmodern Theory

The principles of postmodernism have increasingly influenced gender debates in the 1990s. While many theorists have indicated a paradigm shift to incorporate postmodernist thinking, other ideologues and academics, especially feminists, have launched an assault on postmodernism as undermining a true understanding of gender issues.

Postmodernism rejects totality. It rejects metanarratives. It rejects the universalism and objective truths that are inherent in neo-liberal and modernist theorising. Instead it embraces diversity, spatial and cultural specifics, localism, entrepreneurialism, pragmatism and determinism (Harrison, 1995c). The absolute is nothing more than an illusion of semiotic practices, a projection of strivings for power (Epstein, 1998). Postmodernist discourse is seen

as directing attention to minorities and previously marginalised groups. Goodchild (1990) suggests that postmodernist theory is particularly appropriate to the development of equal and democratic lifestyles, welcoming the “growth of localised protest as a means of promoting diversity” (*ibid.*: 119). It explores the power of discourse and knowledge. Rather than viewing diversity as a stumbling block to planning, it is embraced as a means by which to access understandings of decentralisation and different processes and dynamics. Complexity, contextuality, and contingency are core to postmodernist approaches (Ward 1993:166), which delve into the myriad of options and specifics, and so open up the planning process to a wider range of possibilities than that accorded by the modernist certainties on which planning has been previously built (Goodchild, 1990:119).

The origins of postmodernist theory are found in literary and architectural essays and styles. It has been closely associated with the French post-structuralist movement, which argues that social action can only be explained in terms of the motives and beliefs of the actors. Language is the source of reality, the shaper and creator of perceptions and knowledge. Murphy (1989) goes so far as to suggest that society is embodied in and originates from language games, that the concept of truth without perception is no more than a fantasy. The equation of postmodern theory with post-structuralism is sensible in that both share a concern with language and imply a research strategy which focuses on the details of social life rather than structure. A distinction must be drawn however, in that post-structuralism is confined largely to the discipline of literary criticism, whereas postmodernism refers more to a holistic approach to all spheres. As knowledge originates in perception and truth in desire, the understanding of the way in which people conceptualise or define their lives is essential in predicting their actions, goals and potentialities in any situation. This understanding of individual consciousness impinges on one’s understanding of prospects for change, the desire for change, and in the case of such desire, the most effective forms of action. It also detracts from the possibility of universal answers, in this case a “meta-solution” or encompassing view of gender-relations. The view that women have of their situation, their employment positions, their relation to husbands and families, are unique to their perception of self and surroundings. The breakdown of the grand narrative provides the opportunity for co-habitation amongst various, often diverse, small narratives, the appearance of which may assume different forms (Taylor, 1998).

This is not to imply that there may be no form of consensus of commonality; shared experiences and situations might very well combine to create a shared world view that exists in tandem, or rather in conjunction with, unique individual perceptions. Murphy (1989) explains this phenomenon as a “systase”, a system of order that does not have a centre around which order is established, but rather people or factors that relate without an intermediary, forming a loosely coupled network, a reality or order that is “inter-subjectively instituted” (*ibid.*: 612). If, for instance, one used the example of resistance, particularly covert resistance, whether it be in response to employment situations, patriarchal dominance or intra-family authority structures, while shared experiences and oppression could form the bond for women to resist with a sense of unity, each individual’s perception of that dominance or situation would vary according to their consciousness and values, and their ultimate goal in resisting would be different. Their sense of subjective linguistic affinity, however, would form the core of social order. If one examines Sen’s (1990) notion, discussed earlier, that women subscribe to a false perception of themselves, their worth and their own economic interests, one could argue that this adherence is encouraged, and very often initiated, through the linguistic “truth” that is created by a patriarchal system, and it is this knowledge and perception that contributes to uneven or discriminatory relations in employment and domestic spheres. In assuming different identities, one can repeat the marginalisations of the past, in the mistaken belief that one is now in control of one’s identity in a way not previously possible.

2.3.2 Foucault’s Concept of “Power”.

It has been argued in section 2.2.1 that an understanding of power is integral to a Social Relations Analysis of gender. Foucault provided a (contested) insight into the dynamics of power and knowledge in his discussions. His work, and the resulting critiques, have influenced much of the emerging literature on gender, not least from a feminist perspective. I believe that his discussion of power, together with his arguments concerning the body and sexuality, contribute to a better conceptualisation of the dynamics influencing both the construction of gender and the power between and within gender. This is not to imply that I accept the Foucault theories of power without reserve – rather I highlight specific aspects which are relevant, and I believe, illuminating.

Foucault argued that power was constituted through discourse, the historically variable ways of expressing truth and knowledge. Power can thus not be possessed, but is rather expressed in multiple ways: it has no source, but is exercised in various ways; negotiations and struggles within society are not about the possession of power, but rather about the deployment of power. Power is not something that exists elsewhere, rather it comes into being from moment to moment in daily life. A subject (person) is merely a docile body through which power is traversed. Furthermore, power, by definition, is productive, in that resistance is always produced reciprocally through the exercise of power; power cannot exist without resistance, and resistance cannot exist without power. Integral to his perception of power is that of knowledge. Power and knowledge are, for Foucault, coexistent (where there is one there is the other):

"The exercise of knowledge perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power"
(Foucault, 1980: 52).

The power/knowledge formula allows power to both enable and limit the myriad of identities which may exist within a specific discourse. However, this is not to argue that knowledge equates to power; the two coexist but are not necessarily equivalent. In his later work, Foucault became increasingly concerned with the expression of the subjugated discourse, the manifestation of resistance and power within the dominated discourse. However, this is not to imply that the general dualistic nature of power (oppressor and oppressed) is sufficient. Power changes its form and expression in response to historical contexts. Power, as manifested in sexuality or between and within gender relations and formulations, exists "as a relation between all strands of a given social web, and does not necessarily take the form of a prohibition, refusal, denial" (Bailey, 1993: 110). If power and knowledge are indeed cited within historical discourse, then power, and the expression of that power, becomes institutionalised, and is reinforced through knowledge.

Bordo (1993) encapsulates in three points the conception of modern power outlined by Foucault:

1. Power exists as a dynamic or network of non-centralised forces rather than the possession of individuals or groups
2. The forces of power assume particular historical and contextual forms, achieved through multiple processes, with different origins and scattered locations
3. Prevailing forms of the self and subjectivity are maintained, not through coercion, but through individual and group surveillance and self-correction to prevailing norms (Bordo, 1993: 191).

The vital insight that Foucault provides when considering gender and power is not that gender, and what is considered normal, is a societal construct, but he instead focuses on the understanding and analysis of power relations involved in the creation of gender, within a specific historical context, as an object of knowledge, and a source of truth. This then leads to the need to discuss the construction and living of sexuality, the notions of masculinity and femininity, and the ways in which power interacts in these processes.

2.3.3 Gender, Masculinity and Development

Up to this point, the focus has been largely on women, and despite the claims of GAD theorising to look at the constructs of both men and women, and the relations between them, there is a marked lack of concern with the construction or experience of men in approaching gender relations. This may be explained by the political imperative of addressing primarily women's concerns. Until recently, and often under the apparent guise of gender neutrality, masculinity has defined the terms of knowledge and practice (Hirschmann, 1998). However, Social Relations Analysis is premised on the social relations through which needs are met, and on the difference and multitude of experience and identities which interact to produce gender relations. The focus in current influential literature remains on women, rather than considering women and men. While the study of women, their experiences, subordination and identity fit neatly into gender studies, or within development work; GAD, the study of men, their experiences and constructions, fit more into men's studies, which is too often considered outside the realm of gender studies. There is also only a small body of literature, much of it reactionary, examining men, and masculinity. However, I would suggest that to fully appreciate

the dynamics and experiences of men and women with regard to changes in the economy and industry, the understanding of *men* and *masculinity*, as much as that of women, are a precondition for the understanding of the changes in gender, and in power relations. While I have not explicitly examined *women*, or *femininity*, I believe that the above discussion does shed some light, and presupposes a degree of understanding, of the processes present in the making, living, and experiencing of women. I would thus like to briefly outline basic tenets regarding *men* and *masculinity*, in order to incorporate them better into the subjective construction of self and gender on which Social Relations Analysis draws. Many of the principles are applicable to women as much as men, and I have chosen to discuss them in relation to men to produce a more balanced understanding of gender.

In the same way that women cannot be considered a homogenous study group, with “sisterhood” type characteristics, neither can men be examined as a single category, but rather as an eclectic range of expressions and influences (UNESCO Sources, 1997:20). The interaction of a variety of characteristics, combined with a series of experiences, produce different manifestations of *man* and *masculinity*. Ethnicity, race, religion and history all interact to mould a product. However, this is not to imply that the resulting identity is fixed. Epstein (1998:49) talks about the process of “doing man”, or the different components which interact to produce a concept of masculinity or manhood. However, Morell (1998:7) looks at the change in what has been expected of men. The incorporation of men into gender studies as a discipline has led to the emergence of a more domestic caricature of man, as introspective, caring, anxious, domestically aware and responsible: the ‘new man’. However, this icon is being threatened by the growing backlash and reactionary literature calling for a return to man’s “roots”, asserting their authority and power over women (Morell, 1998:7). These changes in the understanding of masculinity and man, result in a variety of different dynamics and pressures on men as they determine for themselves their role and individual gender identity.

The construction of identity, not only in terms of gender, is a process that is never complete, but which is constantly reconsidered and re-examined, and reformulated and re-experienced, according to the hegemonic discourse, and in relations to the experiences and history, and specific context in which the person is living. Thus masculinity, as gender, is something that is constantly being performed: “...gender is something people perform, a performance which

takes place in time, which is often fragile and needs to be defended, and which is produced both within oneself and for other people as a stylised repetition of acts” (Butler, 1990:140). This description imparts perfectly the dynamic, precarious and reactive nature of the construction of men and women. The context, or audience to which the identity is being performed, influences to some degree the nature of the performance, or the way in which identity is moulded. This reiterates the concept that to better understand the nature in which gender is performed one needs to examine the environment, and relationships in which it is formulated and manifested, as well as the institutions and discourse which validate and perpetuate these notions and demand certain performances from people in order to validate their identity within a gender classification.

2.3.4 Gender and Identity

The notions of gender identity and the construction of masculinity and femininity also benefit from an understanding of postmodern concepts. The way in which men and women formulate, mould and experience their identities is fluid and responsive. The body, in which and through which identities are manifested, is equally multiply invested, at times by different and competing interests. Foucault viewed bodies as historical constructs, in the same way as gender, altered and shaped by historical discourses (Foucault, 1988). This hints of the complex relationship Foucault developed between the body, identity and power:

how deployments of power are directly connected to the body...what is needed is to make it visible through an analysis in which the biological and historical are not consecutive to one another...but are bound together in an increasingly complex fashion in accordance with the development of modern technologies of power that take life as their objective (Foucault, 1978: 151).

Thus one’s sexual identity also results from particular discourse, and from particular manifestations of power, defining what is *permitted* to be true. Femininity and masculinity

result from the prevailing social conceptions and laws, which define and regulate what and how sexuality, practices and relationships can exist, and can be thought of (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993).

Masculinity and femininity (sexuality), therefore, cannot be understood as embodying a single set of characteristics, through which individuals can be categorised and labelled. Identities are influenced by a multitude of external pressures, and result in shifts and restructuring as social pressures change. Construction of identities are influenced by individual and societal discourse, hegemonic and subordinated¹⁶. Each society often exhibits, or demands, a preferred or dominant form of femininity and masculinity (UNESCO Sources, 1997:20). Epstein (1998) argues that masculinities in South Africa have been subjected to the dominant discourse resulting from apartheid, and race has shaped to a large degree the understanding and acceptance of gender roles. Race was thus the discourse through which the notions of masculinity, at least, was constructed. However, at a different level, other factors such as class and ethnicity have interacted with race to impose a number of influences on identity construction. Of particular relevance to this paper is Epstein's notion of "doing man", conveying the ongoing processes and dynamics through which identity is constructed and manifested. The theory of what it means to be a man or women originating in biological differences is negated by the very fact that the science of gender, as the science of race, is itself socially produced. Identities are reinforced through actions and performances, and recreated through oral and physical explanations, justified by the social situation and dominant ideology and understanding specific to that instance.

In the past, in South Africa, there has therefore been a shared perception of what it is to be a

¹⁶ Many feminist theorists are sceptical of the decentering of the subject and call for an adherence to a politics based on universalizing constructions of women. De Stefano (1990) argues that a feminist appropriation of postmodernism "would make any semblance of a feminist politics impossible. To the extent that feminist politics is bound up with a specific constituency or subject, namely women, the postmodernist prohibition against subject-centred inquiry and theory undermines the legitimacy of a broad-based organised movement dedicated to articulating and implementing the goals of such a constituency" (p 76). However, such an argument ignores the possibility of coalition politics based on shared opposition to domination (Young, 1997:184). Foucault argued for specific strategies for specific struggles and through his suggestion that all discourses give rise to resistance provided opportunity for a more fluid identity, around which feminists could organise.

black man, or a white man, and a black women, or a white, or Indian, or coloured women. This is not to say that the construction of identity assumes homogenous characteristics within the dominant discourse, as differences within the construction of, for example, black female domestic workers, need to be explored. Nor is it to say that there is, in South Africa, one monolithic understanding of white men, or black women. Rather there are a variety of variations both within, and opposed to, the dominant discourse of identity. The historical specifics of the past in South Africa has led to a diverse creation of gender identity, as gender consciousness emerged “as a complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble of beliefs and attitudes” (Beinart and Bundy, 1987:271). In the past, identities have often been expressed in the acceptance of certain roles and through physical actions: the ownership of women’s labour in the case of black women, or the ‘protection’ of white women (*ibid.*:50).

Epstein (1998), while concentrating on the appraisal of the importance of historical discourse and institutional structures, does acknowledge the multitude of factors and particularities of each to influence identity. The classification of *black men*, or the concept of *black masculinity* has appeared problematic for a while, and is not something new. Ratele (1998) recognises this, identifying the change in what it means to be a black man. Not only is the notion of *man* and *women* being questioned, but the concept of *blackness* as a political body is being questioned.

Equally as problematic for this paper as the assumption of homogenous identity is the household terminology that is rarely questioned. Concepts such as ‘head of households’, ‘bread-winners’ and ‘home-makers’ present a set of preconceived notions and associations, which themselves imply a degree of undifferentiated homogeny. Gwagwa (1995b) briefly discusses this problem in her examination of gender dynamics within the household.

It has already been mentioned that in order to address inequality and discrimination within the sphere of gender relations, one needs to come to some understanding of co-operative and conflictual relations and the notions of power and powerlessness. Kabeer’s (1994) suggestion that the relinquishing of a degree of power by men needs to be considered in the light of the varied and subjective perceptions of power that different people assume. If one examines individual values and subjective realities, as well as subjective social-connectedness, one will be better able to address the redistribution of power and effect change of social structures and

processes. The approach of social relations analysis in examining the relations, structures and dynamics between gender needs to be extended to incorporate, or rather adopt as a premise the understanding of the subjective construction of truth and perception inherent in individual characterisations of self and other. A critique has been levelled at gender development up to now in that it has concentrated predominantly on women, and the achieving the equality of women, and the means thereto is seen as by detracting from characteristics previously ascribed to men. By using a postmodern approach to gender dynamics, the focus is shifted from the roles themselves, and instead directed at the construction of the characteristics and forces which permeate and mould the realities which people live.

2.4 Concluding Comments

It has been suggested that gender developmental theory is inherently oppressive and biased in that it is constructed on the understanding of the Third World or Underdeveloped women as the “other”, as being tradition-bound, voiceless and powerless victims, who are oppressed both by gender and by Third World underdevelopment (Chowdhry, 1995; Lazreg, 1995; Hirschman, 1995; Parpart, 1995; Marchand, 1995). Such a norm has been reinforced by the current economic crisis and industrial change that is being experienced the world over (Parpart, 1995). This understanding reduces an effective sharing of experiences and learning between “Western” and Third World women, as well as reducing the multiple realities and experiences of women. It has also undermined confidence in the capacity of Third World/Southern development knowledge and expertise (*ibid.*). While this argument may be countered by the suggestion that many theorists in this field originate and practice in these very countries, it is argued that while this is so, these theorists or practitioners are educated and grounded in Western knowledge and perspectives. There is thus a need to deconstruct this otherness, empowering women from any origin to share and experience openly, leading to a better understanding and thus planning approach, in which they themselves can be involved.

To briefly expand on the necessity to do this, a deeper understanding of the power and meaning of development discourse and language needs to be developed. This can be facilitated through an examination of the dominant linguistic and non-linguistic discourse, in order to integrate all

knowledge and expertise that the Third World has to offer. Both postmodernism and development need to adapt themselves to the subject if they are to be useful when examining gender. Nzomo (1995) suggests “that it is postmodernism that needs to adapt itself to feminism and third world condition/knowledge if the former is to acquire significant and practical relevance to women, especially in the African context” (*ibid.*:221). In doing so, however, care must be taken not to stray towards the converse, an inauthentic adoration of the “other” together with the relativisation of universals or narratives. What is needed in the practical arena, is not the assumption of homogeneity (sisterhood or brotherhood) on the basis of gender or sex, but rather the pursuit and formulation of coalitions which acknowledge difference (Nicholson, 1994).

South Africa, in particular, has very specific historical and cultural dynamics, which have led to the formulation and perpetuation of a range of specific gender dynamics and power relations. These are manifest in different ways within different communities, according to a range of factors including spatial, economic and cultural characteristics. This provides for a particular understanding of the gender relations which can be identified within Isithebe and the surrounding communities, which have been profoundly shaped by the spatial, industrial and economic policy of the previous and current government regimes. Furthermore, the pursuit of ‘coalitions of knowledge’ provide for a better understanding of the range of dynamics which can be identified within a location itself, and avoids the formulation and imposition of single conclusions or observations originating in area specific research.

The use of Social Relations Analysis as a tool for gender exploration provides the opportunity to consider the role of both men and women and the interaction between them, the manifestation of power and authority between them, in coming to an understanding of existing gender relations, and thus perhaps providing a way of addressing issues arising out of such relations.

The construction of gender and the understanding of the Foucauldian role of power and resistance, in the moulding of gender within a specific historical context and dominant discourse, further provide for a better understanding of the ways in which *male* and *female* may be lived and experienced in the Isithebe communities. Further, this provides an insight into the

role of men and women in the workplace, as well as the interaction of men and women within the home. The living of gender (Epstein 1998, Butler 1990) provides an insight into the different responses of men and women to changes in the environment, and particularly the effects of globalisation, and locates such responses within a particular environment. These notions and concepts provide a framework in which the Isithebe case-study is presented, and provide clarity on the responses and dynamics of men and women living within the community.

A brief note of caution needs to be sounded on the premise on which WID is founded, that of the sexual division of labour, both domestic and economic. Rather than such division being accepted as biological (a rather reductionist argument) it is suggested that it originated in secondary sociological and anthropological universals. While a certain predisposition is not denied, bodies are subject to the influence of specific discourses. The unquestioning acceptance of such sexual division of labour often legitimates certain norms, which lead to what is seen as the oppression of women. While authors such as Sen and Grown (1987), who offer alternative visions of women and labour in Third World countries, recognise that the sexual division of labour is often imposed through systems of gender-based subordination, assumptions of a 'natural' division of labour are often expressed, both implicitly and explicitly, in the work of WID theorists.

It will become apparent in the following chapters that as postmodernist theorists suggest, there is an inherent need for a historical, cultural and spatial contextualisation. There is a specific set of dynamics manifesting in gender relations in the Isithebe communities. The understanding of the dynamics of such discourse, together with an appreciation of the dynamics of power, facilitates the understanding of the associations and relations which Social Relations Analysis demands. These themes recur throughout this study, and can be identified in the following chapter, where a number of trends regarding gender in industry are identified.

Chapter Three Gender and Industry

In this chapter I intend to indicate briefly the trends prevalent in the global economy, in order to enable a broader understanding of the shaping of the South African economy. It has already been argued that the state of gender relations and the position of men and women in the workforce is directly related to the state of the economy. The effect these global economic changes are having on the local economy and industry will be examined, and the impact of these changes on women in the workforce and gender relations will be considered, again with particular bearing on the South African situation.

3.1 Global Economic Restructuring.

Economies of all countries without exception are experiencing change and restructuring. There has been a marked shift from the post-war Fordist production and organisational regime of mass production and mass consumption. Deregulation and decreased state control and intervention have been both a result and a cause of transformation. Restructuring comprises two characteristics of particular importance to this thesis: the globalisation of economic relations and new organisation of production.

3.1.1 Globalisation

The notion of globalisation encompasses a diversity of meanings and perceptions. Indeed, Giddens (1996) has suggested that there are few terms used as frequently, yet as poorly conceptualised, as globalisation. It can reflect an unprecedented internationalisation of economic and political life, a fundamental altering in the nature of culture and society and the unfettered expansion of the global market-place. Through globalisation, relationships between politics and economic, state and economy, public and private, and family and nation are utterly changed (Eisenstein, 1996). There are two prominent schools of thought regarding the desirability of globalisation. The first views the process as a continuum of the liberalisation and

opening up of economies initiated by major economies in the 1980s, something both desirable and inevitable. The trend is merely characterised by the “increasing inter-penetration between individual lives and global futures” (Giddens 1996:1), a contradictory and diverging phenomenon in which new forms of unity develop concomitant to new forms of fragmentation.

Secondly, there are also those that view the globalisation process as having potentially catastrophic effects on society. The process can be seen as characterised by a mere representation of previous discourses, adapting and utilising old formations and constructions of race, gender and culture (Eisenstein, 1997), rather than providing a new discourse which addresses the needs and concerns of each component of society. It has even been suggested that globalisation contains various dominant characteristics of old-style imperialism, reliving experiences of the late nineteenth century rather than inventing anything new (Galtung, 1996; Touraine, 1996). The rise of nationalism and search for security within an environment of increasing change, and the transcendence of national boundaries may result in increasing violence and aggression between societies and societal components. Ethnicity and racial identity become increasingly important as people search for security in common identity. Traditional and familial relations become too constraining, while religious, hetero-sexist and racial borders serve to replace the national borders, and renegotiate globalised spaces (Eisenstein, 1996). The racial, sexual and ethnic constructions of identity (‘otherness’) often serve to consolidate and support the diversification and internationalisation of economies. In the workplace, companies are under increasing pressure to downsize, becoming more streamlined and competitive. Business becoming increasingly automated as employees become surplus to the production process. The merging of capital and economies, together with the undermining of national authority allows global capital to operate “not merely without borders, but without responsibility” (Eisenstein, 1996:4). The problems identified can be categorised into three themes (Kazancigil, 1998):

- A backlash movement to an emerging hegemonic order seeks increasing security in individual, separatist ethnic and religious identities. Thus the emerging integration of economies and political systems results in the growing separatism of identities, thus feeding social instability.

- The growing integration of political systems and the emergence of regional blocks and authorities seriously undermines the sovereignty and legitimacy of the nation-state. This can be accompanied by the growing domination of phenomena that may be considered less than desirable, such as negative environmental phenomena, crime syndicates, multinational corporations, migrations and Diaspora.
- The erosion of the social benefits and living conditions which in some instances depend on the state benefits through the concentration of economic and financial power and the attempts to integrate into globalised markets. The state's ability to address rising poverty, unemployment and other social issues is undermined, and the ability for direct financial intervention for vulnerable and fringe populations and communities is weakened.

The volume and scope of international migrancy has increased dramatically, in response, it is argued, to globalisation pressures. Not only are societies transformed, but a new, transnational identity is created, often exerting pressures on the experiences and roles performed in response to this identity. This dynamic has been further complicated by the increasing *feminisation* of migrancy, providing labour as domestic workers, tourism and entertainment workers, and assembly line workers in clothing, textile and electronic industries (Castles and Brownlee, 1998)¹⁷. It is also suggested that the growing temporary nature of labour, especially of female labour, is partly a response to the globalisation and internationalisation of work and labour.

Globalisation has forced labour and unions to face new challenges through new forms of regulation of international markets, and from developments within the international working class. This has led to a variety of pressures on countries to develop new ways of protecting their labour in a way that does not restrict integration into the global economy yet addresses the dynamic needs and interests of its workers. While many less or undeveloped countries often compete on the basis of their cheap, often female, labour, it has been suggested that globalisation will lead to countries competing more on the basis of low taxes, than low wages (Galtung, 1996).

3.1.2 Emerging Methods of Production

New organisational and production techniques that have emerged best characterises many of the global trends in the economy, and are finding their way into many emerging, developing economies. Many of these characteristics have aptly led to the term Flexible Specialisation, an organisational technique that both characterises and results from these global changes. While it is certainly not the only form of restructuring, it is argued that it is a process which is manifesting itself both globally and within the South African economy, and having a profound effect on gender relations and employment patterns. It has been used to describe change at both a macro- and micro-level, indicating a shift towards diversified and changing markets focusing on competitiveness and innovation at the macro-level, and referring to the move towards the response of firms to the demand for rapid change and adaptability. The nature of flexible production requires an innovative, multi-skilled, adaptable workforce. The survival of firms and industries is becoming increasingly dependant on their ability to adapt to changing markets, increased competitiveness, and individual consumer demand, production aimed at a specific and small market niche. Porter (1990: 73) has argued that survival and prosperity is dependant on the ability to be constantly creative and innovative, and to upgrade techniques and products, utilising competitive advantage rather than comparative advantage as had been previously suggested. Flexible Specialisation is often associated with a revival of craft-based technology, better enabling the necessary flexibility and customisation of production and organisation. The geographical implications are also of importance. The locational clustering of firms and related industries is seen as associated with the rise of flexible specialisation¹⁸.

Two very different economic models have been related to flexible specialisation: what is termed the Third Italy, and the Japanese model. In the south of Italy small and medium-sized firms, highly specialised and densely networked, prevail. The firms are usually clustered together into districts, better enabling communications, co-operation, and the transfer of specialised knowledge and information. These firms are linked to each other, react to each other, and

¹⁷ Labour is second only to oil in the global trade, estimated at \$67 billion dollars annually (Castles and Brownlee, 1998)

¹⁸ Excellent examples of which can be seen in the "Third Italy", and industrial sites such as Silicon Valley near Stanford in the USA

adjust to the needs of each other. Linkages are both formal and informal. These independent firms are able to compete favourably with larger mass-production firms.¹⁹ The second model is that of the Japanese model, using Just-In-Time (JIT) production techniques. The Japanese model is characterised more by large firms, with strong state control as opposed to organisational control. However, the focus here is also on innovation and flexibility. The JIT production techniques have had huge influence world-wide, and are often seen as being responsible for the massive economic growth experienced in that country since the Second World War. JIT manufacturing has been introduced in many forms throughout the world, including the developing countries, and not least in parts of South Africa. JIT manufacturing relies on small batch production, catering to immediate demand only, but works in conjunction with huge global companies. This make-to-order system relies very much on the availability, flexibility, and multi-skilling of the labour force.

Various spatial implications have resulted from global shifts. The results and effects are subject to a number of debates, from the diffusion of production processes over a multitude of localities (Soja, 1989), to the spatial consolidation and agglomeration of production. Common in all of these threads is the importance of the locality to production. In many cases the emergence of local economies has been a result, or a response, to global influences and patterns, with far-reaching results for the surrounding communities, and the relations within those communities. Local Economic Development (LED), another trend that has emerged as a response to global restructuring, also place emphasis on the spatial dimension of economic development, specifically Export-Processing Zones (EPZs) and Science and Technology Parks (Urban Foundation Report, 1994). EPZs have received considerable attention from academics concerned with gender issues, as women often constitute the bulk of the workforce within these areas (Marchand, 1995; Marchand and Parpart, 1995; Moghadam, 1995). It has been suggested that the re-concentration of industry and capital in global cities has posed a great threat to key manufacturing industries in developing countries²⁰. This is usually in key sectors which dominate industry in many export-processing zones, textile, clothing and electronics. This process attracts import labour, low-wage employment opportunities, and in many cases the

¹⁹ For further discussion of the Italian example see Pyke and Sengenberger (1992)

²⁰ See Marchand (1994) and Sassen-Koobs (1987) for some examples

development of the informal sector and home-working (Marchand, 1994:68), all of which have profound effects on female labour.

3.2 South African Economic and Industrial Restructuring.

South Africa has for a long time been characterised by spatial disparities and uneven development arising out of the uneven and artificial political, developmental and spatial policies of the past, from racial Fordism to Import Substitution Industrialisation. The Apartheid regime contributed to the development of specific localities, at the neglect of others. Policies of forced removals, “black-spot” areas and industrial development programmes led to a diverse and unnatural landscape. In most cases, the most underdeveloped areas fell under the control of the homeland governments, who were unable, or unprepared, to address development issues of any kind. Thus provinces such as the Transvaal and Cape thrived and became centres of economic development, while other provinces and homelands floundered deeper into underdevelopment and economic stagnation. South Africa followed a range of industrial policies, from protectionism and Import-Substitution industrialisation, a policy used in many developing countries²¹, to export oriented industrialisation and the eventual opening of markets and industries in the 1990s. The incorporation of South Africa into the global economy following the political advances in the early 1990s forced industry to become more competitive in the face international competition, and encouraged debate on the suitability of competitive advantage, local economic development, new industrial and manufacturing processes such as flexible specialisation, and other global processes, to South African development. Sectorally, South Africa reflected the trends experienced worldwide, showing a decline in the mining sector while the manufacturing sector developed, due in part to the Regional Industrial Decentralisation Programmes (RIDP). However, the manufacturing sector has shown gradual decline in recent years, being superceded by employment and growth in the service sector (these trends are discussed further in Chapter Five).

²¹ Moghadam (1995) points to three industrialisation processes often characterised in development theory: Classic Primary Export Dependency, which concentrates capital in a few areas and hinders the creation of secondary employment; Dependent Development, characterised by Import-Substitution industrialisation (the path on which South Africa first embarked); and Export-Led industrialisation, characterised by labour-intensive industrialisation which creates secondary employment.

The early 1990s were characterised by economic recession, with various manufacturing industries being hardest hit.²² A number of strategies have been embarked upon, while at the same time various critiques and alternatives have been proposed from a number of directions. The proposed solutions incorporate methods and experiences gained from other developing countries, while at the same time trying to capture the specific demands and dynamics unique to South Africa. These vary from macro to micro-level suggestions, from the targeting of the export market to the introduction of new methods of production²³. The introduction of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) in 1996 by the government provides a macro-level framework in which economic development can be situated. The effects of this strategy have been debated, with critics suggesting that the policy is too market-oriented, and neglects the concerns of labour²⁴. A number of different mechanisms were explored and developed as a means of promoting economic and industrial development, such as the Industrial Strategy Project and the RIDP. However, many consider these to be ineffective. Key role players in these debates and initiatives have included government, unions, and private sector agencies, as well as business forums. The specific requirements of the South Africa economy have been debated, and the specific requirements explored (see Hart, 1995; Kaplinsky, 1994). The effects of global restructuring has prompted attempts to make South Africa more competitive within the global market, while addressing the unemployment and social issues which characterise the country. New focus on diverse initiatives such as the spatial component of development (Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs), Local Economic Development (LED)), new production trends such as downsizing, outsourcing and sub-contracting, as well as macro-economic trends have resulted in new social trends and pressures, which in many instances assume a distinct gendered component.

²² In South Africa, apparently following the global trend, the service sector seems to be on the rise while the manufacturing industry plummets.

²³ A point that appears not to have been considered in support for methods such as JIT and flexible specialisation is that industrialisation and JIT techniques in East Asia were preceded by state spending on redistribution and the provision of social security (Hart, 1995: 43). The success of the Asian economies is largely a result of the way that industrial wages are subsidised by other forms of social and economic security. There is thus a need to prioritise issues such as land, which provide a potential form of security in South Africa (*ibid.*: 46).

²⁴ For a critique of the policy see, amongst others, Patrick Bond "Gearing Up or Gearing Down" SA Labour Bulletin 20 (4) 1996

3.3 Gender and Industrial Restructuring²⁵.

Until recently, the implications of globalisation and the associated changes have seldom been disaggregated in terms of gender, but rather discussed in terms of the labour force as a homogenous entity. Globally, industrialisation processes followed by developing and newly-developed country's have often generated gender-differentiated employment opportunities. Feminists argue that that women provide the flexibility the global market requires, working either in and from their homes, or in specified third world markets, reifying their position in society: "these women build nations from their families, and build the global markets from their families, farms and factories... (they) also supply enormous sustenance to the families they rear, and meet private needs within this domestic sphere. As globalisation spreads, women work harder – either in and from their homes and/or in specified third world markets. They become the third world of the third world, the third world of the first world. They are the cheapest of the cheap workers" (Eisenstein, 1996:6). The marginalisation of women in the past has resulted in dependence on state support in many instances for survival. As the most vulnerable, women become the most susceptible to the transformations processes initiated by global processes. The identities and solidarity's of women reinforce the process of discrimination and oppression: "as economies diversify and internationalise, they utilise and corporatise the racialised and gendered construction of otherness while also naturalising the more traditional roles of race and sex/gender in bordering identities" (*ibid.*:5).

The extent to which this has happened has depended largely on the nature of the trade orientation of the production process (Joeques, 1995). In the majority of cases, the transition to export-orientated industrialisation has indeed resulted in a growth of the female component of the work-force. Pearson (1992, 1994) cites the examples of the move to export markets in the Asian and East-Asian countries in the 1980s and 1990s as prime examples of this shift, and Eviota (1992) supports this in her study of women's work in the Philippines. Howe and Singh (1995: 1905) suggest that in the South East Asian countries as a group, female employment as a

²⁵ While this title explicitly states gender and industrial restructuring, the bulk of the following discussion refers to women and restructuring, and women in the work-force. This results from the nature of the literature reviewed, rather than falling into the trap of using gender and women interchangeably, and should perhaps be considered a failing on the part of much of the literature to explore the dynamics and differences within

proportion of industrial employment exceeds that of any industrialised countries. The feminisation of the labour force in export-led economies can be identified worldwide, regardless of levels of income, previous patterns of female employment, education or qualification levels, or the cultural environment and norms surrounding female labour (Joekes, 1995). A further generalised pattern can be identified: the importance of, and demand for, female labour is lowest in production jobs in heavy industry, and highest in labour intensive, light, manufacturing production. However, the increased involvement of women in the labour force is not restricted to 'developing' countries, but instead mirrors changes occurring in the labour force worldwide. Within this trend, there still remains various differentials, including culture and ethnic diversity, class inequality, and increasingly, age (Walby, 1997).

A number of debates have arisen around this trend. Standing (1989) argues that women are consciously being substituted for men, as employers seek cheaper labour to compete globally, and macro-economic and stabilisation policies exacerbate unequal income distribution, thus forcing women to supplement the household income. Joekes (1987), however, argues that the greatest feminisation of the workforce has occurred in those countries basing economic expansion on the export of light manufacturing industries.

Manufacturing, a growth industry under export-orientated growth, is considered one of the most forward-looking sectors, and provides one of women's most direct access to international capital. The growth of specific sectors such as the garment, textile and electronic industries were seen as conducive to attracting female labour, for various reasons²⁶. The most common of these include the perceived suitability of women for such dextrous tasks, the less militant attitude, and the acceptance of lower wages²⁷. These ultimately effect the employability of women. Joekes (1995) identifies three components of social discourse which explain the gendered labour differentiation within the workforce: in some instances capital intensive heavy industry requires women to work varying shifts on a rotating basis – this is forbidden by

different constructs, as found in industry.

²⁶ An exception to this argument can be found in Penn (1995) et al's examination of the textile industry in the UK, where it was shown that the female component of the textile labour industry has in fact dropped over the past 20 years.

²⁷ See Elson and Pearson, 1981; Stichter, 1990 and Sklair, 1994 for a further discussion of the merits of these arguments.

legislation in some countries on the grounds that such a process interferes with the domestic obligations of women; cultural norms often prevent women from carrying out heavy and dangerous work; and thirdly, women are often characterised as lacking commitment to the workforce, based on periodic withdrawal from the workforce and high rates of absenteeism. Despite such questionable perceptions, studies continue to suggest that the increase in the female component of the work-force in manufacturing continues to outstrip male growth.

In a survey of international literature, Todes (1994) presents two theories on the high number of women entering the manufacturing labour force. The first, she suggests, affects the supply of, the second, the demand for, female labour. Supply factors include the incentive of increased real wages available to women entering the workforce, as well as changes in the socialisation of women, their education and training, and their challenging of “traditional” domestic roles²⁸. The demand factors include the expansion of sectors that have traditionally employed women, and an increase of the jobs available to women. Howes and Singh (1995) identify three factors on the demand side: a significant change in the distribution between manual and non-manual employment, the growth of the service sector, and the roles assigned to women as cheap, flexible labour. On the supply side, it is argued that changes in the sphere of reproduction, increased availability of flexible employment, and increased equal opportunity legislation²⁹ (Howes and Singh, 1995: 1901). Todes (1994) also points to an association between the female labour figures and organisational and technological changes within sectors, reflecting global trends. The employment, and very often terms of employment, in these industries as others, are very highly gendered. These sectors traditionally rely on minimal technology and mass, cheap labour. The related rise of female labour and manufacturing in these sectors has led Joekes (1987) to suggest that “export of manufacturers from developing countries have been made up in the main of the kinds of goods normally produced by female labour: industrialisation in the post-war period has been as much female-led as export led” (*ibid.*:81).

²⁸ It has been suggested that, in the case of South Africa, traditional domestic roles were in many cases formulated as a result of migrant labour, as women were forced to participate in agricultural work in their families absence. Before entrance into a commodities market, while existed defined roles, these were on a much more equitable level, and in many cases the women were considered as the heads of their families. (See Webster, D. “Abafazi Bathonga Bafihlakala Ethnicity and gender in a KwaZulu Border Community”, in Spiegel and McAllister (eds.) (1991) *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa* University of the Witwatersrand Press: Johannesburg

While the high female employment levels in certain industries may appear unproblematic in environments where a higher female unemployment rate exists, or where the labour supply is generally problematic, the attraction of female labour in the context of higher male unemployment, or within certain cultural contexts can result in social tensions, and in some cases social dislocation. Various aspects of gender identity are often invoked to facilitate access to the labour force by males in such a scenario.

The longer term reliance on women within the manufacturing sector has also yet to be conclusively defined. Some studies emphasise the continued reliance on women, especially in the East Asian economies, even after diversification (Woods, 1991). Other studies reflect a change in the gender composition of the workforce through diversification. The latter can be found in a number of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) (Joekes, 1995). A key component in the differentiation is proposed by Joekes (1995), who suggests that, given that the primary EPZ manufacturing industries, clothing and electronics, are more female-intensive than other industries, the ratio of women workers in the EPZs is related to the extent of product diversification. This implies that the more diversified a manufacturing industry, the less the reliance on female labour.

To illustrate the divergent nature of the relationship between industrialisation and women, it is useful to use an analysis described proposed by Pearson (1992). In the *First Consensus*, Pearson suggests that industrialisation served to marginalise women. This, she argues, was a result of the focus on import-substitution processes associated with capital-intensive and male employment characteristics. The *Second Consensus* argues that industrialisation has been dependent on the increasing employment of women. This view has focused on export-orientated production. Pearson then suggests that neither suggestion is adequate, rather women are excluded from industrialisation at some points, while targeted at others. This is due to the dynamic nature of industrialisation. A number of variables certainly do effect women's employment on the market place: the organisation of production, the organisation of labour, the introduction and use of technology, and the changing requirements of the market (Stichter,

²⁹This argument is primarily developed within the developed countries, where such legislation exists, and has in many cases imposed stiff penalties on non-compliance

1990). Two different tendencies can be seen. The first is that of countries who maintain a rigid export-processing strategy in order to gain an edge in the increasingly competitive world market. The continued female-participation growth in the work force reflect general labour market growth. The second tendency is to retreat from low-cost female labour, as companies move up to higher quality and technology levels. Whichever view is subscribed to, one common factor is the fact that despite the transition to capital- and technologically-intensive production, there still dominates a flat and sexualised hierarchy in the majority of factories.

The threat posed by the relocation of capital and industry thus impacts directly on a large component of the female labour-force. While Piore and Sabel (1984) suggest that the move to flexible labour and production would enhance the transfer of skills, and provide a variety of employment opportunities, there seems to be more evidence that changes effected by moves towards flexible production processes and JIT manufacturing also impact negatively on the labour force. In many instances, sectors such as the textile and garments industries have been labour-intensive; the shift towards these newer production techniques demand a more mechanised, multi-skilled workforce. As a high number of employees get laid off, the majority of more skilled opportunities are given to men. Thus, as Atkinson (1986) argues, a core workforce enhances their skills and benefits, while the majority (periphery) are more subject to the uncertainty and fluctuations of work availability. The move to sub-contracting and part-time employment has dichotomous results. More women are able to find employment working from home, but at the same time the opportunity exists for the development of sweat-shops and abusive labour practices³⁰. The increasing demand for the flexible labour required for new production techniques makes it harder in many instances for people to find second jobs or child care, as time requirements for a primary job become uncertain. While employment is generally higher for certain months of the year, supplier-driven production still injects a need for instant labour availability. The “unreliability”, and high turnover of female labour perceptions discussed above become advantageous to employees. Women are employed in part because the perceived high turnover provides a flexible workforce. There is an inherent contradiction in that

³⁰ In July 1994 the Self-Employed Women’s Union (SEWU) was created to make visible the role, work and issues of self-employed and sub-contracted women., and to build leadership and solidarity among the bottom end of the economy. For further discussion on the union, see Horn, P “Self-Employed Women’s Union: Tackling the class-gender intersection” , *South African Labour Bulletin*, 19 (6) 1995 (pp 34-38)

the combination of this flexible production with low-wage practises creates a situation in which despite the fact that wages don't cover full living costs, employees are unable to seek for second jobs. Yet it is assumed that workers do have another source of income (Rosenthal, 1996: 52). Rosenthal continues to raise a number of issues which result from restructuring procedure: flexible labour usage makes it difficult to organise family and child care; flexible labour wages rarely cover full living costs; and flexible labour presupposes dependency, which in turn perpetuates a domestic division of labour which limits the potential involvement of women in the formal economy.

It is against this scenario that subcontracting and home-workers assume great survival and social importance. Sitas (1995: 19) also points out that the nature of this rather postmodern move towards new managerial techniques and production processes, couple with training schemes and a distinct culture of individualism within the workplace has weakened workers solidarity and ability to mobilise. This is echoed in the feelings expressed in an interview of two shop stewards employed in the manufacturing industry (Pillay and Phillips, 1995).

Manufacturing in the past has relied on largely uneducated, or poorly educated, labour. While much of the industry follows this trend, new techniques and methods of production are increasingly resulting in technology improvements, and the introduction of machinery demanding a higher skilled, smaller, workforce. Thus any gender-differentiated education levels may serve to confine female labour to more arduous, low-paid employment, while men enter the more skilled, higher-paid opportunities.

The most obvious differential between male and female labour is that of the wage differential. While it is commonly accepted that such a differentiation exists, the prioritisation of such an issue remains contested. The abolition of such a differentiation will not necessarily equal gender relations; however, it is an issue which needs to be addressed as a component of eliminating gender discrimination. A relationship has been identified between the degree and duration of export orientated manufacturing, and the gender differentiated wage gap (Joekes, 1995)

Business Week (October 17, 1994) points to the social stratification and increasing polarisation

of society due to restructuring within the labour market. Harrison (1995c) argues the same point, highlighting the rise of populist movements - nationalism, populism, anti-government and anti-bureaucratic, in response to this insecurity. Whilst there is undoubtedly a trend towards individualism, uniqueness and personal satisfaction with identity, *ipso facto* there is a concurrent move towards security in cultural identity as a platform for political and economic mobilisation. It would appear that these economic trends have seemingly mutually exclusive, and dichotomous, effects.³¹ Foremost among the reactionary movements is a call to the return to traditional values, cultures and ethics. Movements such as this have a strong impact on gender relations in the household, in the home, and in the attitude towards women in general. In the majority of cases a return to “traditional” and cultural roots and origins results in the reinstatement of gender oppression, legitimised in traditional culture and lifestyle. Harrison (1995c) suggests that this re-emergence of culture and identity should be seen as positive in the context of an alienating world. While the importance of identity cannot be over-estimated, the return to culture should be viewed cautiously in order to be aware of the possible consequence on gender relations and the position of women in the home and workplace.

A primary concern for many theorists is increasingly the extent to which the gendered effects identified in manufacturing and industrial change will be reflected, or repeated in the future process of change. The sector which is likely to have major effects, and to be of primary concern, is the service sector. The service sector has long been reliant on a predominantly female labour force, and in South Africa accounts for the largest sectoral employer of women (CSS, 1991). The service sector is becoming increasingly internationalised. This reflects the global trend, as women are incorporated into both low and high skilled employment within the sector. There has as yet been no comprehensive assessment of the gender implications of employment generation in the service, and international service sector, in developing countries. There is however, indication that trends identified in manufacturing are being replicated in the service sector (Joekes, 1995). This provides opportunity for further research if South Africa follows the service sector growth trend.

³¹ A good example of this can be seen in the certain political parties very active in KwaZulu/Natal. While, on one hand, leaders at times appeal to a mass, traditional and cultural ideology, witnessed in presentation and emotive language, the leaders of other parties, encourage individualism and unique, individual, separatist identities.

Thus globalisation and industrial restructuring can be identified as having a profound and distinct impact on women, both within the workplace, and as a result, in the home. The effect of these processes on women are in many instances juxtaposed to the effect on men. The dynamic nature of industrialisation has in the past resulted in both the inclusion and exclusion of women within the workforce. The new organisations of production, of labour, the introduction and upgrading of technology, the changing requirements of the market, together with the changing positioning of businesses within the global economy combine to create dichotomous pressures on men and women. The position of women within the workplace is increasingly threatened, as sub-contracting, home-working, shift work and technology enhancements serve to marginalise women within the economy in some cases, and at other times increase employment opportunities while concomitantly increasing pressure and demands on them. Additionally, the different identities and characteristics ascribed to male and female labour are perpetuating discrimination and differentiation of women within the economy and society, and contributing to the reinforcement of a sexual hierarchy of labour. The growth of the service sector, as the manufacturing sector declines, may merely reflect these trends, rather than challenging these common characteristics.

3.3.1 Gender and Restructuring in South Africa

It has already been argued that South Africa is following global trends of restructuring and industrial and economic development. This process could reflect many of the gender concerns which have arisen worldwide following this process. However, the particular circumstances from which the South African economy and industry has emerged, and the historical context, has led to a complex interplay of a number of factors such as race and culture as well as gender. This discourse will inevitably shape the process of restructuring in the future, through the definition of the point from which it originates.

Mager (1989) shows how the textile industry in the border area of Ciskei followed a clearly discernable racial and gendered path from the post World War 2 period to the present. Following a transition from white female, to black male labour in the 1940s, the textile employees in the area, embarked on a policy of recruiting, uneducated, and displaced young

men, largely from the new township of Mdantsane. This process took another gendered aspect when management, in an attempt to reduce production costs, moved to black, female labour in jobs which, in the British system, were perceived as traditionally female. Following an application for exemption from legislation barring women from night work, the transition to female labour became almost complete. The increasing mechanisation of the industry, together with rationalisation and retrenchment policies, led to a 2:3 female to male ratio in the textile workforce by the 1980s. Of note in the study, was the way in which the differentiated proletarianisation, the footloose nature of factories attracted by the incentive programs, political repression, unemployment and poverty impacted in a variety of ways on women's consciousness, at times highlighting, but at times obscuring, patriarchal relations (Mager, 1989: 60)

Sectoral shifts identified globally can also be identified in South Africa. A growing number of women have entered the formal workforce. This increased attachment to the work-force indicates both an increase of women as a proportion of the total labour force, and as the total number of women involved in labour. Verhoef (1996) points out that the Female Activity rate (FAR) shows that the ratio of economically active women to the size of the total female population has increased dramatically. The manufacturing sector was the highest female-employing sector behind the service sector in 1991. The 1980s reflected the growth in the service sector, along with the gradual decline in manufacturing (CSS 1984, 1991. See Eisenstein, 1997; Howes and Singh, 1995; Eviota 1992, for a discussion of this internationally). In 1996 women were highest represented in the clerical sector, followed by professionals, followed then by service, sales and marketing workers, followed by technicians (SSA, 1996). However, this is differentiated by race as well: Black women were highest represented in the professional occupations, followed by service, shop and market sales workers, followed by clerical occupations.³²

Posel and Todes (1995) argue that the 1980s witnessed increasing female employment concomitant with the expansion of the public sector. The public sector is largely labour

³² These figures are based on identified occupations, and do not include unspecified work, and elementary work. According to Census 1996 (SSA, 1996), Black women still represent the highest proportion of elementary workers.

intensive. This could be substantiated by the growth of female professionals, which include health care workers and teachers. These are likely to be concentrated in the public sector. However, within each sector, different occupational patterns are exhibited (Posel and Todes, 1993). This, it is suggested, reinforces the gendered access to employment. Women are generally confined to lower-waged employment within the public sector, and dominate the niches which rely on care-giving and social services. This then goes beyond the reinforcement of gendered access to labour, and reifies the public perception and gendered discourse of the position of women in society.

The intersection of gender and race is also briefly referred to by Posel and Todes (1995) in their examination of the labour force in KwaZulu/Natal. The manufacturing industry has seen a decline of both coloured and white men, while participation of black women, and to a lesser degree, African men and Indian women, has increased. The majority of the 28% rise in female employment in KwaZulu/Natal over the past decade has been concentrated on the KwaZulu Natal Finance and Investment Corporation (KFC) industrial estates, in which much of the new manufacturing industries tends to concentrate. The above study associates the growth of female employment in KwaZulu/Natal with sub-sectoral shifts within manufacturing. However, it must be borne in mind that KwaZulu/Natal accounts for 28% of South Africa's manufacturing, and thus does not necessarily reflect the trend elsewhere in the country. For example, Gauteng and the Free State rely more on heavy industry and mining, which are largely male-dominated sectors. Many of these male-dominated sectors are experiencing various degrees of rationalisation and downsizing, which is resulting in a decrease in predominantly male employment, both sectorally and spatially. This has to some degree narrowed the gap between levels of male and female employment (Posel and Todes, 1993).

Posel and Todes (1995) point out that despite the slump in economic growth in the 1980s, female employment levels continued to rise, indicating that the attachment of women to the workforce is permanent. In analysing the supply versus demand driven factors enticing women into the workforce, Posel and Todes suggest that the primary supply factor has been the recession conditions placing pressure on women to seek additional income as well as the changing household structure. Included in both of these factors would be the specific conditions generated by the legislative demands of the apartheid government, which resulted in

spatial dislocation and migration. Whatever the incentive to enter the workforce, such a move is premised on the availability of work for women. This then necessitates the need for demand-driven factors, which include the expansion of “traditional” female-based sectors, and the increase of jobs available to women within the recessionary context in South Africa in the 1980s (*ibid.*).

These trends raise the question of whether women are entering the workforce as replacement to men’s participation, or alternatively as new jobs are created. In examining the employment figures for Region E³³ in South Africa, Posel and Todes (1993) ascertain that as new jobs are created, so women’s employment in the formal sector increases relative to men. This is due in part to the nature of the jobs being created, i.e. the growth of certain sectors, but must be seen within a context in which other traditionally male-dominated sectors are in decline. To corroborate this, the study shows how those decentralisation points which rely primarily on light industries such as manufacturing, have indicated a higher (and faster feminisation) rate of female employment as opposed to those points which in the past have relied more on heavier industries.

The growth of female labour is not seen merely as a reflection of sectoral growth in South Africa. Such growth is also related to the organisational and technological changes which are occurring in an attempt to become more competitive internationally. The opening up of South Africa to global competition, the removal of certain trade restrictions and labour regulations³⁴, along with the process of globalisation means that industry and manufacturing has to become more competitive in order to survive. The need to reduce costs, move to a flexible and responsive workforce, and the need to subcontract work has led to an increased reliance on female workers, who are perceived as most suitable for such a style of production. These trends have been perceived as both favorable and detrimental to women workers. On one side, employment in the formal economy provides better alternatives to the informal sector or domestic work, and allows women to retain closer ties with their families (Bonnin et al, 1991 in

³³ Region E is one of the regions demarcated for analysis, incorporating what was previously the KwaZulu homeland, and Natal.

³⁴ See WIDE 1997 for a discussion of the implications of trade negotiations and free trade agreements for women and women in the labour force.

Posel and Todes, 1995), as well as providing room for women to manoeuvre within the constraints of influx control (Posel 1997). Critics have, however, illustrated the sexual harassment, wage differential and primitive working conditions which characterise manufacturing employment (Pudifin and Ward, 1986). Samson (1997) argues that growing competitiveness reliant to such a degree of women within the workforce is exclusively incompatible with any form of gender equity. Both arguments reflect that the increase of female labour in South Africa has been primarily based on a perception of gender roles and suitability, and serve merely to reinforce the dominant societal discourse.

What Posel and Todes (1995) do highlight, in conclusion, is that the reinforcement of gender stereotypes may begin to undermine the previously unchallenged position of men within the workforce. As has already been mentioned, a number of sectors reliant on a male workforce are declining or stagnating. If certain sectors are favoring a move to more flexible, low-cost labour, the trend will be to employ female over male labour, thus working to challenge the position of both men and women within the workforce and within society. Whether this will result in tangible changes in gender relations on different levels, or will merely reinforce existing relations in a different manner, remains to be seen. In some instances, various trends are already emerging to compensate for the increasing unemployment of men in local communities. While multiple livelihood strategies have been developed over previous decades, there is an increasing reliance on the contribution of women in the household, both wives and daughters. In instances where wives have been forbidden to work while the husband has been employed, there is a growing acceptance of the need for the valuable input that can be made by women in both the formal and informal economy (Todes, 1997). This indicates just one of the responses formulated to restructuring and emerging economic and industrial trends.

3.3.2 Gender and Regional Policy in South Africa

Regional development policy is located within the rationale of a spatially and economically balanced environment. The concentration of industry and economic stimuli within developed metropolitan areas, while neglecting other regions, was considered a threat to the growth of developing countries (Todes and Posel, 1994). In theory, at least, the concept of regional

development was to achieve a spatially more balanced environment, through the promotion of industry within under-, or undeveloped regions, while limiting growth within economically strong regions. This has often occurred with scant regard to the social impact of the policies, including the gendered impact that might result (*ibid.*: 59).

The regional policy promoted by South Africa attempted to address a number of issues, both economically, spatially and socially. The Regional Industrial Development Policy promoted the relocation of capital and industry to less developed regions within the country, drawing investment away from the core metropolitan regions. This, it was envisaged, would allow for the development of areas according to their comparative advantage to be fostered by a multi-sectoral development strategy. Regional policy worldwide, including the RIDP as a component of such policy, has been critiqued from a number of quarters³⁵.

In her evaluation of the neo-liberal critique of regional policy, Todes (1997) highlights the importance of place and space in the formulation of household survival strategies and responses to economic transformations and industrial restructuring. Integral to this is the discussion of locality and gender dynamics which impact on attachments to place, and the investment often made in place. Regional policy methodologies in South Africa were developed to address *inter alia*, space or regional-specific decline, provide employment in peripheral areas as well as stabilise relocation settlements, and provided the rationale for interventionist policies. This did not limit the effect of regional policy to existing settlements but, as Todes points out, led also to the creation of new settlements, such as Isithebe and Atlantis (Todes, 1997: 76).

The response to regional policy practices has been mixed and varied, losing popularity internationally in the 1980s. However, the 1990s has seen a resurgence of regional planning, incorporating new methodologies and components such as LED and the SDIs. The regional policies imposed by the South African government in the past tended to ignore the dynamics and differentials within communities, and were often considered a tool of the Apartheid state. Neither the Border policies initially adopted, nor the Industrial Decentralisation policies, took

³⁵ As Todes and Posel (1994) point out, critiques of the RIDP were as much a critique of the policy as a tool of apartheid, as of the regional policy itself.

cognizance of the social differentiation of the communities, and instead established a system which exploited gender dynamics and oppression. Forced removals and migration merely added to social and gender differentiation. The growth pole developments focused on specific industries, both large scale heavy industries which relied primarily on a male workforce, and later in the programme, on industries which relied on cheap female labour such as textile and clothing sectors.

The focus on different sectors also assumed a spatial component, both generating and dependent on, specific characteristics of the labour available. The geographical focus encouraged the growth of urban areas, attracting labour and communities to prospective urban formal and informal employment opportunities. This led to a shift from long-distance migration trends to commuting practices (Todes, 1997: 76). Patterns of migration and cyclical employment away from home communities generated specific gender dynamics, and over the decades led to particular relations and roles in communities. The real, and perceived, opportunity for employment close to home challenged the roles of men and women in the communities in a number of different ways, not least in the possibility of additional informal employment close to home for those communities in close proximity to the decentralisation points. The development of industrial decentralisation points also resulted in the growth of informal settlements on the periphery of these centres. This had consequences for both the migration patterns of labourers and workers, and for inter and intra-family relationships and responsibilities. These trends combined with the legislation of influx control created unique and anomalous social and spatial characteristics. The complexities and dynamics of these changes have been explored by a number of researchers over the past decades (Todes, 1994; Mabin, 1992; Cross, 1996; Tomlinson, 1987; and Rogerson, 1995 amongst others), and remain secondary to this discussion, other than to highlight the social effects and changes that such transformations affected.

The mid 1980s witnessed a shift away from the previous emphasis on decentralisation, despite the relative success of the policy in creating employment in identified areas (Todes, 1997: 84). Uniform incentive packages were introduced under the RIDP for firms locating outside of the PWV, Durban or Cape Town. The decline of protective regional policy in the 1980s provided the space for the initiation of more locally-oriented programmes (Todes and Posel 1994: 60), which in turn provided the platform for the development of LED strategies, implemented by local

authorities in the 1990s, and facilitated by central government. A developmental mandate has been provided to local government to ensure the promotion of social and economic development within localities and regions. These strategies co-exist with more centralised spatial and economic planning initiatives such as SDI's, which are managed at a national level, while not excluding the role of provincial and local stakeholders.

Despite a number of critiques being directed at gendered impact of regional policy, as Todes and Posel point out, there remains very little constructive proposals on how best to integrate gender concerns into regional development discourse. As Todes (1997) indicates, the South African context reflects the need to consider the dynamics of space-specific employment and immobility, a point which is further explored in the context of the Isithebe case study, where various gendered components of immobility and attachments to place are revealed. These issues assume even more importance when one considers the proximity of Isithebe and the surrounds to the Pietermaritzburg – DFR – Richards Bay development axis, identified through a national Spatial Development Initiatives as development foci for capital-intensive industries. This presents the opportunity to maximise assets which may not have been recognised within a true LED strategy, and to develop alternative growth potentials in a sensitive and equitable manner, other than the sectoral or locational advantages which may have initially been central to the development of Isithebe. The effect on women that these policies may have, however, has not yet necessarily been integrated into these initiatives, despite a growing focus on gender within government policies.

Specific gender concerns regarding regional policy include gender differentiation within local and industrial economies, primarily through differentiated access to employment opportunities in promoted industry. This concern is located more in the past policies where comparative advantage has been primarily, almost exclusively industry-oriented, but remains an issue as existing industrial clusters are consolidated. Incorporated into these issues are the related remuneration and working conditions (Todes and Posel, 1994), and the impact which these have on gender in the wider environment and community. The issue of women's unpaid labour is ignored as is the role of women in the informal economy within many regions to which these policies are applied. Related to this is the lack of consideration of the existing relations and power distribution in the communities within these regions, and the impact that these relations

have on the way in which men and women are incorporated into, or respond to, the implementation of such policies.

3.3.3 The Locality in Restructuring.

The focus on a locality within the globalisation context may appear futile. Why, it may be asked, is there a need to examine a specific geographical site in an environment where economic change, as well as political and social dynamics are occurring globally, along with the disintegration of national boundaries, power and authority? I have already mentioned the importance of examining the global city as an aid to understand the processes stimulating globalisation, as strategic sites for coordinating capital, and the production that makes such a dynamic possible. This predicates the need to focus on place, and processes within place, within the analysis of globalisation. The two concepts are not mutually exclusive. The locality and dynamics within, can make the hyper-mobility of capital and power possible. It is the focus on place within the process of globalisation that enables one to capture the dynamics of society and cultures, and the specific contextual and historical problems of that place, that foster a better understanding of the production of globalisation dynamics. Place thus performs an essential function to the operation of the local, and global, economy.

Much debate surrounded the future of decentralisation points after the break-up of the apartheid political and economic regime. A neo-liberal approach suggested that the shift away from the previous system would facilitate the natural decline of the centres as people voluntarily moved to larger cities in search of economic prosperity and social security. However, various critiques emerged in the late '80s and early 1990s that suggested that decentralisation centres would remain despite the macro-economic change that would be experienced. This would imply the existence of forces not previously recognised in these localities, that fostered a desire to remain in the areas. Todes (1995) has examined this trend in Newcastle in KwaZulu Natal in a gendered analysis of the area, and reveals a number of dynamics in place, including a trend of in-migration to the area, despite the demise of the decentralisation programme. In her discussion of locality and local employment for women, Todes indicates that within the context of influx control, local labour provided the opportunity to live a life of semi-normality and

dignity within 'normal' family parameters. However, the last decade has witnessed a similar attachment to place, despite the removal of influx and migration controls, and has in fact evidenced a trend of in-migration to rural localities. Some of this can no doubt be accounted for by the return to their homes of both men and women employed in urban centres, retrenched through the downsizing and decline of various industries such as mining. However, within this trend, various factors need to be considered. Many of those returning from previous employment remain at home despite an inability to obtain work in the area of their home. There is also evidence that many are willing to accept lower wages than would possibly be obtainable in urban centres, in return for the ability to remain in the area³⁶. Todes (1995) suggests that wages in Newcastle are at least a third of the Household Subsistence Level (HSL) (2), and result in the supplementing of primary income with alternative/additional incomes. This trend is itself gendered, as women are more willing to seek work away from their home, than are men. Isithebe has exhibited a return-migration of people born in the area; however, there is very little evidence of any in-migration of people from outside the region. However, another component which needs to be factored into such an argument is the spatial component which multiple livelihood strategies can assume. Most community households engaged in multiple livelihood strategies in order to survive. These strategies are themselves often located over distance, maximising benefits accumulated in diverse spaces and contexts (Moser, 1996).

Todes (1995) suggests that migration, both circular and commuting, can contribute to essential livelihood strategies for many households.

3.4 Concluding Comments.

The arguments presented above show that as the South African industrial and economic regimes adapt to become more competitive and better integrated into the global economy, new and emerging practices and production methods are generating both positive and negative effects on men and women in the formal and informal economy. This in turn impacts on relations and dynamics in the community and the household. Proponents argue that modern

³⁶Walby (1997) argues that the growing male unemployment has generated the increased involvement of men in household activities as women household members enter the workplace. This, however, does not appear to be the case in South Africa, or at least in KwaZulu/Natal, as the discussion later reveals

flexible work provides greater opportunity for women to enter the workplace, providing much-needed income and a measure of independence and power within generally restrictive interpersonal and intra-household relations. However, such practices appear to facilitate the polarisation of the workforce, as the core of higher-waged, higher skilled jobs favour men, and provide little security for those situated in the peripheral workforce. This is occurring within the context of growing male unemployment as labour is increasingly made redundant through the rationalising and down-sizing of many heavy industries and mining facilities throughout South Africa. Thus, while the opportunities do exist for the increased participation of women in the workforce, specific measures need to be taken to ensure that such a process maximises the advantages for women, while addressing the potential dangers. An essential component of such a process is the understanding of the dynamics native to specific contexts and space, as well as particular historical effects. The effects of male unemployment on gender relations and dynamics also demand consideration, in terms of both the economic and social implications, and provide a point of discussion in the following chapters.

Chapter Four Gender and Household Relations

4.1 Men and Women in the household

The gendered nature of industrialisation in South Africa and gender relations within the workplace have been discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter focuses on relations within the private realm, that is, the household. The chapter explores the position of men and women in the household, examines the impact of women's income on the household structure and the relations within the household, and continues to look at the patterns of expenditure. This is followed by an analysis of housework, and the gendered differentiation and allocation of household responsibilities, and concludes by relating income and power within the household.

However, as Sharma (1997) argues, it is impossible to separate contractual and personal obligations, or to delineate in any absolute way the private sphere of kinship and personal commitment from the public sphere of the market³⁷. The continual interaction of the two spheres, and the exposure of household members to changing ideology and new ideas in the workplace ensures that the two spheres do not exist in isolation from each other. It is against this background of the interaction between the work environment and private life that this chapter focuses on the household. It is important to recognise from the outset that the household is not an undifferentiated, or constant, entity. A number of definitions have been proposed which recognise the diversity of the household. Feldstein (1986) defines the household as a system of resource allocation between individuals in which members share some goals, benefits and resources, are independent on some, and conflict on others. In using the term 'household' it is necessary to avoid many of the common problems and false assumptions which are often associated with the term, particularly:

- the consideration of the household as an undifferentiated unit of analysis, which ignores the different dynamics which may characterise different households, and the fluid and

³⁷ Sharma also suggests that such interaction and inseparability is characteristic of developing countries, and that advanced capitalist societies are characterised by a distinct separation of kin and contract.

changing nature of many households;

- the household exists primarily as a nuclear structure, consisting of a man, women and children. This has often been addressed by attempting to include extended family, which still negates the possible spatial dimensions (see Todes, 1997) and the female-headed household (Moser, 1993; Kabeer, 1994; amongst others). Inherent in this is an assumption of a clear division of labour;
- the fluid nature of households has also been excluded from many analyses. Premises that the household is based on mechanisms such as income-pooling and shared-decision making fail to consider the dynamics of power and differentiated distribution and access to resources that may exist.

The application of gender roles framework is one analytical tool which attempts to identify and differentiate the distribution of roles, access and resources within the household. However, this is often limited to a rather economic-oriented analysis, which still fails to take cognisance of the social environment and related dynamics. What is more important, as Gwagwa (1995a) points out, is the analysis of the household as a means of better understanding various social processes. In the context of this study, the changing economic environment, together with the range of related social and cultural pressures and trends resulting from globalisation, is having a profound effect on the structure, nature and dynamics within the household, as well as on the multitude of reactions formulated in response to these changes.

Regardless of definitions, there are a range of roles that women perform to ensure the survival and reproduction of the household, through both productive and reproductive contributions. Furthermore, a range of dynamics within the household are initiated, or accentuated, through increased involvement of women in productive labour. The degree to which women contribute in terms of income varies according to both micro and macro environments. Livelihood strategies (see Moser, 1996; Todes, 1997 amongst others for a discussion of these strategies) can at times depend entirely on the contribution made by women. In other instances, such strategies are primarily reliant on the financial input of men. However, as an increasing male

unemployment trend is experienced in many countries, livelihood strategies, and indeed households, become increasingly reliant on the contribution made by women entering the workforce, often supplemented by activity in the informal economy. What is often evidenced is that, as livelihood, or household strategies become increasingly reliant on women's income, women also engage in a multiplicity of strategies, in contrast to the single strategy which has in the past been pursued by men within the household. As Gwagwa (1995a) points out, this is forced on them both by men, and themselves, although this tends to ignore the demands that the immediate economic environment may place on them. These multiple strategies are often pursued by women regardless of the employment status of the men in the household

It has been argued that the power structures in the workplace often mirror those at home. This has been countered by the suggestion that the structures experienced at work initiate a backlash that is lived out in the home. Work undertaken in various rural communities by development researchers and practitioners indicate that the gendered aspect of industrialisation and the workplace is perceived as having two distinct effects on roles and relationships in the home (Kabeer, 1997; Bowlby et al, 1997; Pahl, 1989). For some women, the added pressure of employment contributes to both reproductive and social pressures in the household, and undermines what power and authority women are already granted. For others, engaging in the formal market economy provides both overt and covert opportunities through which the existing power balance within the household is challenged (Pahl, 1989; Kabeer, 1994, 1997). In many instances, increasing male unemployment patterns have not only led to a change in the income profile of the household, but has led to the dislocation of traditional masculine identity, and the manner in which this has been managed has impacted on the relationship between men and women within the household.

4.2 Women's Income and the Household

The impact of women's earning on the household, and on the relations within the household, has been the subject of much debate by development and sociology theorists and practitioners. Those theorists supporting the 'benevolent dictator' and 'bargaining theory' suggest that women's income can potentially increase the bargaining power of women in the household, and

enhances the perceived contribution to the household, and is likely to align their interests with their individual well-being (Pahl, 1989). While the household remains both a tool and subject of analysis for many people, there is a clear delineation between the various approaches (Kabeer, 1997). These models tend to follow a continuum from a largely economically oriented understanding to a more comprehensive, social relations understanding of the dynamics within households. Originating in Becker's New Household Economics, the concept of the benevolent dictator is premised on the assumption that an increase in the financial contribution made by women into the household would result in a related increased share in household resources. Household income is notionally pooled, before allocation by the household head, who reflects an altruistic concern for the welfare of all household members. Following from this, the increased contribution of women into the household would result in an increased access to financial resource allocation. No allowance is made within this model for the possibility of conflicting interests between household members, and the household head. This led to the notion of bargaining power, where conflicts in resource allocation were resolved through a process of bargaining, and bargaining power reflected the fallback position of the member, should household co-operation break down. Sen (1990) introduced the notions of subjectivity and perception into the allocation and access to resources. It is in this model that the importance of power within the household is first considered. Furthermore, the model provides for the distinction between perceived interests and personal well-being (Kabeer, 1997). This, Kabeer argues, offers the more plausible theory that apparently altruistic behaviour within the household reflects the lack of power within the household hierarchy, rather than the monopoly thereof.

It has been suggested, that a simple causal relationship between income generation and power cannot be drawn, but rather the access to, management of and control over, the income needs to be examined in order to determine the effect on intra-household relations (Gwagwa, 1995a). Of further concern is the role of tradition, ideology and culture in the household, and in the community in which the household is situated. When considering rural communities, the influence and interaction of urban culture needs to be distinguished.

Many women feel that involvement in the formal economy merely exacerbates the pressures already inherent in existing patriarchal structures. The triple role of women concept explored

by GAD theory assumes further burdens as women assume greater responsibility for the economic survival of the household. Where the household has a male head, the income generated by women is generally contributing to meeting the reproductive needs of the family. This is often the scenario in those households with a female head as well. The growing move to shift work has resulted in women often working in the fields, collecting wood and water, cooking for the family, and only then starting their paid employment. Women are increasingly assuming a financial responsibility in the household as the economic crisis experienced over the region results in higher male unemployment as well. The responsibilities of the mother are often distributed among children; however, even these are gendered, with traditionally female jobs assumed by daughters and female relatives within the household.

4.3 Expenditure in the Household

Expenditure of individual or combined incomes also assumes a gender – differentiated component. While women direct income largely towards the well-being of the household and towards saving for the future, men tend to retain a portion of their income for social expenditure. Gwagwa (1995a) points out that in accounting for expenditure and investment in the household, what is reported as joint payment on household improvements and furnishings correlates with households where men are unemployed. The contribution towards the household assumes a gendered nature as wives tend to invest more in cooking facilities such as stoves and refrigerators, while the furnishings such as televisions and video recorders, are purchased by men. Housing investments are generally made by household heads, whether male or female. In households with children, there is further differentiation between what sons and daughter generally buy. While this research was conducted in a formal township outside Durban, it is suggested that the same trend would apply to Isithebe. What Gwagwa does not explore in her examination of income, expenditure and power in the household is the perception and understanding of roles and responsibilities within the household structure. For example, in the case study included in this thesis, women respondents consider men to be ‘lazy’ and failures’, attributes which force the women to formulate a combination of survival strategies. Any indirect power which may be achieved through women's income is directed to those areas “that impact directly on them” , such as food, decoration and children’s clothing (Gwagwa,

1995a:13). This fails to consider the source, nature or implications of such assumed roles and responsibilities.

Pahl (1989) constructs various typologies as a means of examining the household structure, and more specifically the flow of income within the household. The two most relevant to this study are “household income management” and “independent income management”. Household income management entails the management of all monthly income by a single family member, which is then responsible for all household expenditure and financial management within the household. The degree to which this system is implemented may vary depending on a number of variables: notional and physical ‘earmarking’ of incomes for specific expenditure (Kabeer, 1997), as well as the form of wage or salary income (monthly, weekly, daily) which different household members may earn.

The latter of Pahl’s categories, ‘independent income management’, indicates the degree to which each waged household member controls and manages their own earnings. This still allows for the directing of individual incomes to predetermined responsibilities, but at the same times opens more opportunities for individual management of, and control over, earnings. Independent income management does not negate the interdependency of household members with regard to expenditure, but can reflect the different allocation of finances to highlight different priorities as well as notional and actual practicalities. For example, a mother may assume responsibility for the grocery and food expenses, while the father may purchase the weekly or monthly electricity cards. Each may maintain a separate account or engage in alternative savings mechanisms, but income is still channelled to specific needs. These generally reflect the preconceptions of responsibilities and priorities reinforced through the family structure. However, independent management of finances may provide otherwise scarce opportunity for a degree of independent income utilisation, or in some cases, the withholding of a portion of personal income. As the financial responsibilities assumed by women within the household are generally more essential for survival (practical) than those of men, this can lead to further differentiation as men may have more opportunity to withhold earnings than women. Women thus often sacrifice the opportunity to maintain some form of independent savings, despite independent management, through what is understood to be practical and maternal altruism.

Not only expenditure, but saving regimes within the household are further differentiated. Stokvels have long been a favoured method of saving both income and resources in primarily rural communities in South Africa. While there is an increased use of formal banking institutions by rural communities, the use of stokvels continues. Gwagwa (1995b) points out that men are generally exclusively involved in cash-savings stokvels, while women participate more in food and resource stokvels. This role distinction is at times carried through to the use of formal banking institutions, where the one partner assumes responsibility for bank savings, the other for savings for everyday expenditure. This may reflect patterns which can be identified in the expenditures of income, whether pooled or individual.

In single-income households, where the income is generated by women, men often utilise a portion of their partners income for their drinking and socialising, a fact which their partners generally resent. Very little, if any, income is used for by women for social purposes. In instances where the female does retain any income, this is increasingly used to generate income in informal business in which she may engage. The scenario and relationships that are experienced in the workplace often reify the gendered division of labour at home, as well as the patriarchal structures of authority and power.

The employment status of the male in the household has some, if usually little, impact on the division of labour within the household. A differentiation is made between males that are unemployed and active in the household, males who are unemployed and seeking work, and males who are unemployed and not seeking work. These scenarios often impact on the tasks that the males undertake, and can influence the distribution of power within the household. Where a high male unemployment rate exists in a community, the reticence of males to actively seek work can multiply the burden on the female – generated income into the household. It has been indicated by Gwagwa (1995a) that males direct a large proportion of their income to individual social concerns such as drinking and gambling (an issue which will be explored in the Chapter Six). This increases the responsibility on alternative income-generation for the wife, and is sometime the motivation behind additional generation through the informal sector in addition to more formal participation in the economy.

4.3 Housework and household responsibilities

Responsibilities for household duties are not only gendered, but reflect the range of different attitudes and understandings that may exist as a result of a variety of influences and environments. In many communities, men and women have “traditionally” assumed responsibilities for different tasks. However, what is important is the understanding given to different needs, and the prioritisation of needs. What is considered essential by many mothers and wives is often very different to those needs prioritised by husbands and fathers. These stem largely from the roles and responsibilities which are assumed within the household. These roles seldom change, despite the additional pressures that may be exerted through altered patterns in economic participation. For example Gwagwa (1995b) shows how priority is given to access to water in a housing project by the wife, while the husband deems electricity to be more important.

The involvement of men in household duties is the subject of various debates surrounding the division of labour within the home, and power and relations in housework and responsibility. Gwagwa (1995a), examining relationships at the household level, refers to a crisis in masculinity, or a dislocation of male identity, resulting from the growing male unemployment³⁸. The point is made that whereas women, when unemployed, can revert to the status of wife, mother or housewife, men, on the other hand, do not have such a role to fulfill: their role as husband or father is dependent on the ability to generate an income to support his family. The alternative to employment for a man is poverty, both for self and for family. The differentiation between those men actively seeking employment and those not is also emphasised by Gwagwa (1995a). Yet, there is a perception by women of men as inherently lazy, disinterested in anything beyond what is considered to be their basic responsibility to their families. The dichotomy between the realities of economic survival of these men and their households, and the apparent unwillingness to contribute to the successful functioning of the household is one that needs to be further explored. Popular thought up to the late 1980s contended that men

³⁸ A distinction needs to be made between the crisis of masculinity referred to here, and the more fundamental, movement arising as a response to feminism and the promotion of gender equality as discussed by Lemon, J (1995) “Masculinity in Crisis?” in *Agenda*, 37

suffered greater psychological stress as a result of unemployment than women, and were unable to respond to such stress in a constructive and productive manner (Kessler et al, 1987). However, more recent work has indicated that this is not so, although it is still held that men suffer more stress when their wives are employed in wage labour (Turner, 1992). However, much of this work is situated in a context very different from the rural, less developed environs of KwaZulu Natal, and is perhaps of more merit when considering a fully industrialised and developed community. What is of importance to note is that many of the men who are not household heads, i.e. husbands and fathers, return to the homes of the parents when unemployed; a fact that is perhaps related to the reluctance of unemployed men in the area to search for employment away from their home.

Gwagwa (1995b) also suggests that there is a change in the content of household roles, which could partially account for this scenario. Whereas home-making, and the responsibility for household duties has been extended to include the role of breadwinner, the male role has shifted in emphasis from breadwinner to household head. The male's primary responsibility therefore shifts from the economic support of the household, to ensuring the respect and dignity that needs to be accorded to the household by the community. The uncertainty surrounding the concrete content of this role has led to a reification of the ideological content of the role of household head (Gwagwa, 1995b:55-60). However, it is not certain that a community accords such males the respect which is expected, and at times join women in the community in the perception that such men are lazy, and have to rely on the women to get anything done properly.

The discussion up to now reflects, perhaps erroneously, an underlying assumption that the primary motivation for women to enter the workforce is economic. While this is certainly recognised as an essential, and in many cases certainly a primary factor, one cannot exclude the social dynamics and demands which influence both the decision to engage in wage labour, and the apparent acceptance of patriarchal structures and ideologies. There is in many cases a security that is provided in social terms through deference to male authority and decision-making. Highlighting the complexities of household dynamics, Kabeer (1997) terms this the patriarchal bargain, arguing that "patriarchal structures create gender-asymmetries in endowments, risks and constraints which penalise autonomous behaviour for women but offers them provision and protection if they remain within its parameters" (*ibid.*:300). This reflects

both pressures at a macro and micro level, societal and familial. The challenging of these social pressures can often happen in conjunction with a move to economic independence and decision-making within the household.

Equally so, to assume that all societies are homogeneously patriarchal, and that men assume a position of power within the household would be to deny the variety and range of eclectic societies in which these issues have been raised. While many are indeed patriarchal, there are many communities in which women have been considered to head the household, assuming responsibility for resource allocation and decision-making, despite the presence of a husband or father within the household.

4.4 Power and Income within the Household

In examining power within gender relations, it is essential to consider power within the household structure. Morgan (1985) argues that the household is the site for the creation, reproduction and maintenance of patriarchal relations. Approached from another perspective, the relationship between female workers and the usually male boss in a wage economy often reinforces the status quo at home, and is accepted by women³⁹. It has been suggested that a predominantly female workforce operating under the control and authority of male supervisor allows for the creation of a female culture of resistance, characterised by subtlety and covertness, of which a male supervisor is unaware (see Hale 1996 amongst others). This allows for manoeuvring in power negotiations, and the subtle shift of balance to the female workers⁴⁰. This is akin to a collective consciousness, and often does result in a subtle form of resistance. In the same way, some theorists argue, the generation of income to the household is sometimes able to initiate a shift in the balance of power. Although the income contributed by the wife is directed to reproductive rather than individual, personal use, this is used to reinforce the bargaining power, through equally overt and subtle techniques. However, this is not always the case. The contribution of a female income into the household does not necessarily give women

³⁹ At home, however, labour division and activities are not rewarded with the payment of a wage.

the power to utilise that income at her discretion, without the permission of the male head, where one is present⁴¹. Indeed, the majority of women often remain trapped in low-paid employment, and their fortunes remain attached very much to those of their partners, or constrained by the economic realities to which they are subject. The focus of women's lives is largely restricted ideologically and materially to the home and the family, and the sustainability and support of them. However, a strand of social research has shown that women are more likely to retain control over resources which they have generated when the production process in which they engage is independent of male household members (Whitehead, 1985). Whitehead also argues that despite "ideologies of maternal altruism", the longer term interests of women are likely to be better served through sacrifices which preserve the stability of the household.

Kabeer (1997), in examining intra-household power relation in urban Bangladesh shows how married men consider the inclusion of women in a wage economy as a threat to the stability of marriage, threatening husbands rather than sons, brothers or fathers. Despite this, men still do not perceive the ability to generate a separate income as a threat to male power within the household, or to the sanctity of male decision-making. However, what is implied is the threat to the masculine identity, through the process of a wife generating an income. The husband feels "belittled" when he is not earning enough to support his household" (*ibid.*:270). It is possible that married men are aware of the possible bargaining power that employment may offer women in the household. It also reflects the dynamics and pressures in the formulation and validation of identity within gender roles that are inherent in the economic and employment restructuring processes that are being experienced. Kabeer finds evidence in this case study to support the NHE concept of a benevolent dictator, as this is the perception of the household head that the men in this community appear to hold.

A further complication to the unravelling of these complex relationship is the threat that women

⁴⁰ Kabeer (1997) does point out that the household does not consist of managers, workers and shareholder, but rather fathers, mothers and children, who define themselves in familial terms, and create identities according to these definitions, and thus exercise power accordingly, and in different ways to, workers, managers, etc.

themselves may perceive if and when men do participate more actively in the household. While a small minority of research does provide some evidence that there is an increase involvement of men in parenting and household activities, the *responsibilities* for these still rest with women (Bowlby et al, 1997). In some instances, women perceive the increased involvement by men as challenging the only sources of power within the household that they possess, and undermining their sense of security. Bowlby continues to present an interesting argument suggesting that this process can lead to subtle and complex negotiations invoking the essential nature of gender identity, and the 'naturalness' of certain roles and responsibilities (*ibid.*:345). This would suggest that women themselves reinforce the roles and subsequent burden on themselves in order to maintain a sense of security and limited power which may otherwise be threatened (see also VanEvery, 1997 for a discussion of the self reinforcing use of nature within households).

A dynamic which is not often explored is raised briefly by Gwagwa (1995), in her discussion of the power dynamics between children and parents within the household. The two specific examples raised are that of a daughter and a father who is lazy, and in this instance taken to be unemployed, and that of daughters and mothers in households headed by women. What is suggested is that the former example creates potential explicit and implicit bitterness, and lowers the tolerance levels of the daughter. This creates a platform on which future intentions and actions may be developed, and may create an environment conducive to the fostering of independence. The early participation of daughters in the formal economy which usually results, also provides an environment in which perceptions of self and existing relations may be developed which may challenge the existing norms. The involvement of a daughter in the formal economy in a female-headed household also provides scope for the mother to relinquish primary decision-making and responsibility to the daughter, which introduces a new set of dynamics and relations into the household scenario.

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the debate around housework and the division of labour within the house, it may be useful to briefly discuss some of the issues in this

⁴¹ A differentiation also needs to be made between actual power and apparent power which may be achieved through income. Many women may assume management of income or finances, as opposed to autonomous control. Pahl (1989) identifies three dimensions of financial control within the household: access to, management of, and control over, household resources.

debate to better understand the gender dynamics within the household, and their relationship to the economy. VanEvery (1997) raises some of the problems of conceptualising housework in gendered terms, and reflecting gender relations and power through housework indicators. Empirical definitions of gender, housework, labour and leisure within the household are unclear. Underlying assumptions of communality and definitions are problematic and categorisation of tasks and routines, and the gender association of each, misleading. The naturalisation of power relations leads to a lack of understanding of the true relationships and role that dominate domestic, social and economic lives of men and women. Critiquing research on the relationship between women's participation in the economy and domestic roles, Van Every (1997:417) argues

“it is *women's* labour market participation that is being researched, and the lack of affordable alternative *child care* that is the main obstacle to it. The implications of the empirical finding that men rarely do laundry, for example, are not pursued. In other words, the possibility that women's responsibility for domestic works results from being *wives* rather than *mothers* is part of a naturalizing of the power relations of marriage” (original italics) .

While this discussion appears to be formulated around a generalised, primarily “developed” society, and in the context in which it is situated addresses the conceptualisation of housework and gender, the implications may hold true for understanding the local communities around Isithebe. It will be seen that the issue raised as to the variety of roles that women perform, and the expectation of the society in which they are located, and the corresponding attitude of men in that society, can be identified in the dynamics operating in Isithebe. The appropriateness of considering the division of labour as resulting from the ‘natural’ role of mothering is tentatively accepted, but it is suggested that of more importance is the how and when of when ‘nature’ comes into play (VanEvery, 1997:148). The acceptance of this natural role by employers (see Chapter Three) and communities itself is a factor that inhibits women from breaking out of the low-wage, over-burdened situation in which they are situated, and one which will be further explored within the specific environment of Isithebe in following chapters.

4.5 Concluding Comments

A note of caution needs to be sounded on the tendency to aggregate the role, status and functions of men and women within the household. This has often been the approach of development planners and agencies in the past when undertaking gender analyses of community and household profiles. Explicit reference does need to be made of the roles of the individual members of the household, rather than assuming a common goal for all women and men in that household (See Warner et al (1997) for a discussion on research methodology for gender analyses of households). For the purposes of this paper, this distinction is made and the assumption is made that the focus is primarily on the primary female member of the household, and the divergence of interests between this member and other members of the same gender within the household is acknowledged.

Concern has been expressed from a number of quarters that inclusion into a formal economy, and the introduction of a female-generated wage into the household has merely exacerbated the position and subordination of women within the household. An opposing, yet not mutually exclusive argument, posits that such employment provides a bargaining mechanism, or alters the bargaining position of women in the household structure. These arguments have been discussed, and the conclusion drawn that both processes can be witnessed in a variety of case studies and academic works.

This chapter has located specific interests within the household. A women does not gain access to money through individual wage earning, and then use it on personal spending. What has been argued is that men will often utilise a portion of income on individual interests, while women are concerned more with the welfare of their home and family. Women do tend to use agency to meet individual preferences and needs, but this is a defensive form of agency, which leaves the broader structures of constraints imposed by traditional and accepted gender relations unchallenged (Kabeer, 1997). This agency, fostered through growing employment in the formal wage economy, and increased dependence of the household of this together with other survival strategies, does however provide a possible platform on which existing relations of inequality can be challenged. The degree to which this is happening in Isithebe and the surrounding

communities will be examined in the following chapters, and the implications of such trends for men and women in these communities will be explored. A number of further issues have been raised, which will be explored in the specific case study discussed in the following chapters. These include the division of labour within the household in circumstances in which males are unemployed, and the location of power within the household within a changing economic environment, and under dynamic and new social pressures and expectations. An awareness of these issues provides a context in which a number of trends identified in Isithebe can be located, and further explored.

Chapter Five KwaZulu Natal and the Isithebe Industrial Estate

KwaZulu Natal and Isithebe have been selected as the case study for this thesis for a number of reasons. Firstly, Isithebe is one of the most significant decentralisation points that resulted from apartheid-related regional industrial industrialisation policy. It has been considered one of the most successful Industrial Decentralisation Points (IDPs), showing remarkable growth during the 1980s and early 1990s (Pudifin and Ward, 1986; Platzky, 1997; Todes 1997). Secondly, Isithebe represents the insertion of concentrated industry into a predominantly rural environment, which was not necessarily the case in a number of other decentralisation points. As a result of the above factors, Isithebe represents an interesting case of the impact of fairly rapid industrialisation on the gender relations within what were previously relatively stable communities.

Using the discussions from Chapter Three as the departure, this chapter starts with a background to the demographic and employment trends on the estate through an examination of the broader environment in which Isithebe is located, looking particularly at population changes and employment and sectoral trends both nationally and in KwaZulu Natal. These trends provide a reference point from which the specific regional dynamics, and those of Isithebe itself, can then be explored.

The changes taking place, both demographically and structurally on the estate, are detailed, with particular reference to possible gender difference within the processes, and the implications thereof. The discussion draws on previous findings from research conducted on the estate, the findings of the research conducted for the purpose of this thesis, as well as additional statistics provided by the estate managers. This facilitates the identification of trends over a period of time, rather than a particular stage in the history of the estate. The discussion locates Isithebe within the globalisation process, and provides a point from which the dynamics and household relations in the surrounding areas can be further explored and better understood.

5.1 KwaZulu Natal: A Regional Economic Environment to Isithebe

Despite an environment of economic decline, South Africa has reflected the global increase in the number of women entering the formal economy, both as a proportion of the total workforce, and as the total number of women engaged in formal labour. Even during the recession in the 1970s, women were developing the ability to convert themselves to economic agents. When combined with estimates of women's informal employment, it is clear that women's involvement in wage labour is an important factor relating to both the state of the economy and the state of social relations outside the workplace.

Reflecting global trends, South African employment statistics indicate a shift away from male-dominated industries in the period leading up to the 1990s, to sectors traditionally characterised by higher numbers of female workers such as certain industries within the manufacturing and the service sectors (these trends are illustrated in Appendix 1). The growth of the workforce from 1970 can be followed to 1991, when the impact of recession resulted in a decrease of those actively engaged in formal employment within a number of sectors⁴². Unemployment⁴³ in KwaZulu Natal was slightly higher in 1996 than the national figures, standing at 39.1% as opposed to 33.9% nationally (SSA 2000). Both nationally and provincially, the female unemployment rate was higher than the male rate at 42% nationally, as opposed to 27.1% of males, and 45.5% in KwaZulu Natal, as opposed to 36.6% among males. The impact of the economic recession on the male-dominated mining industry in particular, as well as the more female-dominated manufacturing industry can be identified on a macro level both nationally and within KwaZulu Natal. Nationally, the mining sector showed a negative average annual growth rate of -1.6% between 1970 and 1998, while manufacturing reflected a mere 0.8% average annual growth rate during the same period⁴⁴. A decline can also be identified in the agricultural sector, together with a burgeoning of employment within the national and civil service sectors.

⁴² According to SSA (November, 1999) no undercount was taken in the 1985 population census, which prevents the comparison of data from this year against the other data

⁴³ Unemployed includes all those between 15 and 65 not working but seeking work, at the time the count was taken.

⁴⁴ These figures have been adjusted by SSA to reflect over and undercounting, and include estimates for the TBVC states (SSA 2000: 43).

It can be seen that employment trends in KwaZulu Natal have at times reflected the trends experienced in the rest of South Africa, whilst at other times following a different route. However, the decline of formal employment opportunities in the province in the early 1990s has contributed to the profile and poverty, inequality and unemployment which currently characterises the province. The following table gives an indication of women's growing participation in KwaZulu Natal's economy from 1970 to 1991⁴⁵.

TABLE 1 WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE IN KWAZULU NATAL AND SOUTH AFRICA

Sector	1970		1980		1991	
	RSA	KZN	RSA	KZN	RSA	KZN
Agric	889 372	270 062	320 505	81 545	331 788	73 950
Mining	6 655	494	11 054	2 025	26 759	1 772
Manuf	215 165	36 062	301 242	98 788	409 853	112 874
Service ⁴⁶	1 011 066	150 216	998 681	221 134	1 646 920	322 162
Other ⁴⁷	311 698	44229	813 730	250 271	2 165 994	528 555
Total	2 433 956	501 063	2 445 212	653 756	4 581 314	1 039 313

Source: Central Statistical Services 1970, 1980, 1991

However, while these figures provide an indication of the increasing number of women entering the formal economy both nationally and provincially, of greater significance is the number of women entering each sector in relation to the total number of workers within these sectors, and the penetration of women into sectors which may have been traditionally dominated by men, or out of sectors in which women may have traditionally been dominant. This is reflected in the following table, which details women's employment in each of the major sectors as a

⁴⁵ The only available data is from the population census. While various limitations and flaws in this data are accepted, the data does still provide an indication of employment trends. While the most recent census data does exist in a gender disaggregated form, the cost of obtaining this data is prohibitive to the point that it is unavailable even at major academic institutions, as well as generally within the private or NGO sector. This prevents an analysis of the trends within the 1990s. The statistics do, however, provide an indication of increased penetration of the formal workforce by women in this period.

⁴⁶ The definitions used here reflect those used within the census data. The service sector here thus encompasses the community, social and personal services. It must thus be noted that this does not reflect the dynamics within the various components, or sub-sectors of the service sector.

⁴⁷ Other includes the financial, transport, commerce, electricity and construction sectors.

percentage of the total employment within that sector.

TABLE 2 WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN EACH SECTOR

Sector	1970		1980		1991	
	RSA	KZN	RSA	KZN	RSA	KZN
Agric	35.8	44.7	29.3	33.0	27.1	32.6
Mining	1.0	1.5	1.7	5.3	3.2	5.5
Manuf	21.0	17.7	30.0	30.2	12.8	32.5
Service	63.3	56.7	68.4	62.1	62.4	63.1
Other	17.7	16.0	32.6	33.2	39.4	40
Total	32.3	36.3	36.4	37.9	39.4	42.6

Source: Central Statistical Services 1970, 1980, 1991

One of the most fundamental changes has undoubtedly been in the agriculture sector, as women have shifted out of this sector to manufacturing, and various components of the service sector. In 1970, women workers in the agricultural sector accounted for 35.8% of the total workforce in South Africa. By 1991, this figure had dropped to 27.1%. The change was more pronounced in KwaZulu Natal, which given its largely rural nature, had a more rural economy than much of the rest of South Africa. By 1991, women accounted for 32.6% of the total workforce engaged in the agricultural sector within the province, as opposed to 44.7% in 1970. The rapid absorption of women into the manufacturing sector was evident in the increase in the proportion of women in relation to the total workforce from 21% in 1970, to 30% in 1980. However, this dropped rapidly between 1980 and 1991 nationally, but continued a slight growth within KwaZulu Natal from 30.2% to 32.5% in 1991. The growth in KwaZulu Natal reflects the concentrated growth of the sector within the province during this period, influenced particularly by the industrial decentralisation policies.

Of further significance is not only the penetration of women in relation to the total workforce, but the location of women within various sectors in relation to the total female component of the workforce. While it can be expected that this would to a large degree mirror the trends in the workforce as a whole, a number of different trends may occur.

TABLE 3 WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA AND KWAZULU NATAL

Sector	1970		1980		1991	
	RSA	KZN	RSA	KZN	RSA	KZN
Agric	36.6	53.9	13.1	12.5	7.2	7.1
Mining	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.2
Manufact	8.8	7.2	12.3	15.1	8.9	10.9
Services	41.5	30.0	40.8	33.8	35.9	31.0
Other	12.8	8.8	33.3	38.3	47.4	50.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Central Statistical Services 1970, 1980, 1991

Following the growth in numbers of women workers in the manufacturing sector in the early 1980s, women began to shift to various service-related industries. Female employment in manufacturing in South Africa accounted for 8.8% of the total female employment in 1970, and showed steady increase to 1980 where it peaked at 12.3% (see table 3)⁴⁸. This growth of the female component of the manufacturing sector during the 1980s reflects the trends identified worldwide in the 1980s, especially in EPZs in developing or less-developed countries. The increasing penetration of women into the manufacturing sector is reflected in both the increase in women as a percentage of the total workforce, and as a percentage of the female workforce up to 1980. However, the decline in women's employment relative to men's at a national level within this sector from 1980 to 1991 is more marked than expected. Of importance is the fact that in KwaZulu Natal a growth was shown in this period, an increase from 30.2% in 1980 to 32.5% in 1991, despite the decline nationally.

While the service sector experienced a growth in terms of the number of women moving into the sector, the sector itself does not reflect the real growth expected in terms of the proportion of women compared to other sectors, especially between 1980 and 1991. Women's

⁴⁸ It is suggested that the number will have continued to grow to the mid to late 1980s, before dropping to the 1991 level.

employment in this sector, in fact, decreased nationally from 68.4% to 62.4% of the total workforce. An increasing number of women have moved into other sectors including electricity, banking and finance, and more significantly, micro enterprises⁴⁹. This is of particular importance as women increasingly engage in multiple livelihood strategies and rely less on a single source of income such as agriculture or manufacturing. The slower decline of women within the agricultural sector in KwaZulu Natal than nationally between 1980 and 1991 may also reflect this trend towards multiple livelihood strategies. Not reflected in these tables is the move of women into a number of tertiary sectors, including various forms of government and civil service structures. For example, the average annual growth rate of the civil service sector between the period 1970 to 1998 was 3.6%, and it shows the most sustained growth of all sectors in this period. Another significant shift within the 'other' sector not reflected in the table is that to the financial and banking sector. For example, between 1980 and 1990, the sector grew by 34.5%, from 123 776 to 189 420. However, between 1990 and 1998, this figure increased even more dramatically to 218 286. In 1995, women's involvement in the sector accounted for 7% of total women's employment nationally (Budlender 1998: 5). Concomitantly, sectors such as construction, also categorised here as 'other', have shown little change in relation to the female component employed within the sector.

These trends indicate that the decline in female employment in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing, both nationally and provincially, has partly been absorbed within a variety of other smaller sectors, both within the service category and sectors classified as 'other'. This implies that there are a number of trends on a micro level, as well as those occurring on a macro level, and within a variety of sectors, which are impacting on women's employment patterns.

The level of female participation in the workforce in KwaZulu/Natal has been significantly higher than the national average since 1970. While the same trends have generally been followed as those characterising South Africa as a whole, women appear to historically have been more active in KZN than other provinces. While agriculture has mirrored the decline in employment witnessed nationally, female employment in KZN has remained 5% above the national figures. The same trend can be identified in both mining and manufacturing. The

⁴⁹ Part of this may be a result of definitional problems and inconsistencies within the census reports

service industry however, reflects a growth of female employment in the province relative to the national proportion from below the national figure in 1970, to 63.1% as opposed to 62.4% in 1991.

While women's participation in the workforce is increasing, in many sectors male labour is decreasing. The growth of women in various sectors does not imply the growth of the sector itself, but in some cases indicates the growth of women as a percentage of the workforce, even in sectors which may be in decline, either nationally or regionally. The decline of the mining sector in certain provinces, and Gauteng and KwaZulu/Natal in particular, has led to thousands of male migrant workers returning to their families.

In many cases, the returning workers do not have the employment opportunities that are emerging for the women in the communities. This is situated within a provincial environment characterised by high unemployment. KwaZulu Natal has the third highest unemployment rate, at 39.1%, behind only the Eastern Cape (48.5%) and Northern Province (46%) (SSA, 1996)⁵⁰. This places KwaZulu Natal well above the national unemployment rate of 33.9% (*ibid.*).

National and global policies are targeting women's employment as a priority; this is often at the expense of the previously advantaged male population. Explicitly, affirmative action policies can often lead to discriminatory practices against male potential employees, and implicitly, attention is focused on the formulation of gendered policies which neglect the increasingly desperate plight of the male unemployed sectors. This is not to detract from the need for approaches that consider and aim to redress gender discrimination and inequalities of the past, rather it must be argued that one cannot ignore the dilemma that is faced more and more by the male workers returning home unemployed⁵¹. Bearing this in mind, and given the background provided by the above figures and discussions, one can now focus explicitly on the Isithebe estate, and the trends and dynamics occurring within that particular location.

⁵⁰ As opposed to an estimated unemployment of 29% for KwaZulu-Natal in 1991 (Platzky, 1997)

⁵¹ Having said that, however, it will be seen in the following sections that Isithebe exhibits very little overt affirmative gender policy.

5.2 A Contextual Profile of Isithebe Industrial Estate

5.2.1 Historical and physical environment

Isithebe industrial estate was established as an industrial decentralisation point under the South African government's regional policy. The site was proposed in 1968, and the estate established in 1970. The SAPPI pulp and paper mill had been established in 1952 in the area with funding from the Industry Development Corporation, and had already provided a source of local employment for surrounding communities from Isithebe and the Tugela region. With the establishment of Isithebe, SAPPI has created a number of forward and backward linkages in the region (High Road, Mercury, February 24, 1998). Mandeni was established as a formal township serving the mills, and providing accommodation for the mill management. The stated rationale behind the development of industrial parks such as Isithebe was twofold: the promotion of a more spatially balanced economic development, and the development of comparative advantages of each region. This was presented as the rationale for an Apartheid-motivated decentralisation programme. Prioritisation of Industrial Decentralisation Points (IDPs) was ostensibly formulated according to the need for employment creation in each region, the need for higher standards of living in the regions, and the potential of each region to meet employment needs through the regions own economic growth (SA Government, 1982).

However, the development of Isithebe and other growth points furthered the Apartheid state's attempts to deflect the increasing urbanisation of black South Africans away from metropolitan areas, to predominantly rural areas within South Africa, close to the homeland states. The location of Isithebe within KwaZulu, together with the existing infrastructure of the SAPPI mill, was a departure from the Border location policy. Isithebe was the first location of government incentive capital inside the *bantustans* as opposed to within South Africa close to the homeland borders. By 1971, the first factories were opened on the estate. Overall responsibility for the estate was initially that of the KwaZulu Legislative Authority (KLA), situated in Ulundi, while the Bantu Development Corporation was functionally responsible for the estate. The KLA assumed responsibility for Sundumbili, the formal township established adjacent to Mandeni to accommodate workers on the SAPPI mill in 1965, while Mandeni was managed by the Natal Provincial Administration. The surrounding rural areas, which became

increasingly populated by migrant rural workers, as well as the established rural communities, fell under the authority of Chief Mathonsi. The fragmented and disjointed historical management of the region has been emphasised by a number of authors (Platzky, 1997; McCarthy et al, 1996; Harrison and Patel, 1996; Pudifin and Ward, 1986), and has led to a fragmented service structure, which has been wholly inadequate for the communities served.

The incentive schemes offered under the RIDP encouraged the location of a range of industries to locate in Isithebe, who saw the opportunity to utilise cheap unskilled labour, together with the variety of subsidies and incentives. Under the 1982 incentive scheme, these included a rebate on rail costs (50%), employment incentives (95% of total wage bill, together with a training grant), rental subsidies (70%), housing subsidies (50%), and a relocation allowance (SA Government, 1982). By 1984, the initial 86 sites allocated on for the estate were occupied (Platzky, 1997). In 1984, the management and responsibility of the estate was assumed by the KwaZulu Finance Corporation (KFC).

5.2.2 Social environment

Isithebe is situated midway between the Durban/Richards Bay corridor, 14km inland from the Indian Ocean. Located alongside the estate is the formal black township of Sundumbili, and the white township of Mandeni. A short distance away is the predominantly Asian township of Tugela Newark. The establishment of the estate in 1970 led to the housing of many workers from the estate in these townships, on a strictly racially differentiated basis. Mandeni provided accommodation for white employees (predominantly management), Sundumbili housed unskilled black workers (when they were able to in fact find accommodation there), and Tugela Newark housed Asian employees. Mandeni is gradually experiencing deracialisation, as a number of black and Asian management families move into the area. Many of the white middle and upper management from both the SAPPI mill and the estate have moved to the nearby coastal towns (McCarthy et al, 1996). Sundumbili, together with the surrounding informal settlements, is now a primary source of unskilled and semi-skilled local labour for the estate.

Additionally, a number of dense informal settlements have sprung up around the estate,

spreading into the surrounding tribal lands belonging to Chief Mathonsi. This has led to a mix of rural and peri-urban settlements around the estate. The rural and peri-urban settlements are reliant primarily on the physical resource base for survival. Beyond the informal settlements are rural settlements of the various tribal lands surrounding Isithebe. The convergence of labour from other rural areas to Isithebe has created an uneasy tension between Chief Mathonsi, from whom land is requested by the migrants for shacks, and the labourers themselves, as well as creating resentment towards the industrialists (Platzky, 1997).

The formal townships of Mandeni and Sundumbili have a relatively well-developed infrastructure base, with piped water, sanitation and electricity supplied to each stand. However, poor municipal services, together with increased pressure on these services by a burgeoning population has led to a deterioration of physical conditions in Sundumbili. Despite this, the townships still stand in stark contrast to the squalor of the informal settlements surrounding the estate. Infrastructure and service provision are currently duplicated through the racially differentiated planning and administrative methods which are still in place (McCarthy *et al*, 1996). While the informal settlements house a large number of people attracted to Isithebe in the hope of employment from the surrounding areas, subsistence agriculture and informal trading still provide an important means of survival for members of many of the communities.

The region is experiencing high levels of environmental degradation; high (and growing) levels of water and air pollution; growing levels of crime and violence; and a high unemployment rate. As a result of the lack of services and infrastructure in the informal area, the area is characterised by poor living conditions and health problems as well as the pollution and crime trends experienced in Mandeni and Sundumbili.

5.2.3 Historical characteristics of Isithebe

Various factors have previously been identified in Isithebe which makes it unique from other Industrial Decentralisation Points (IDP). It exhibits a more diverse sectoral composition, relying on metal as well as clothing and textile industries, and indicating a growing plastics and chemical sector (Platzky, 1995; Patel and Harrison, 1996; McCarthy *et al*, 1996). Several other

distinguishing features were identified by Patel and Harrison in their evaluation of the RIDP scheme in Isithebe:

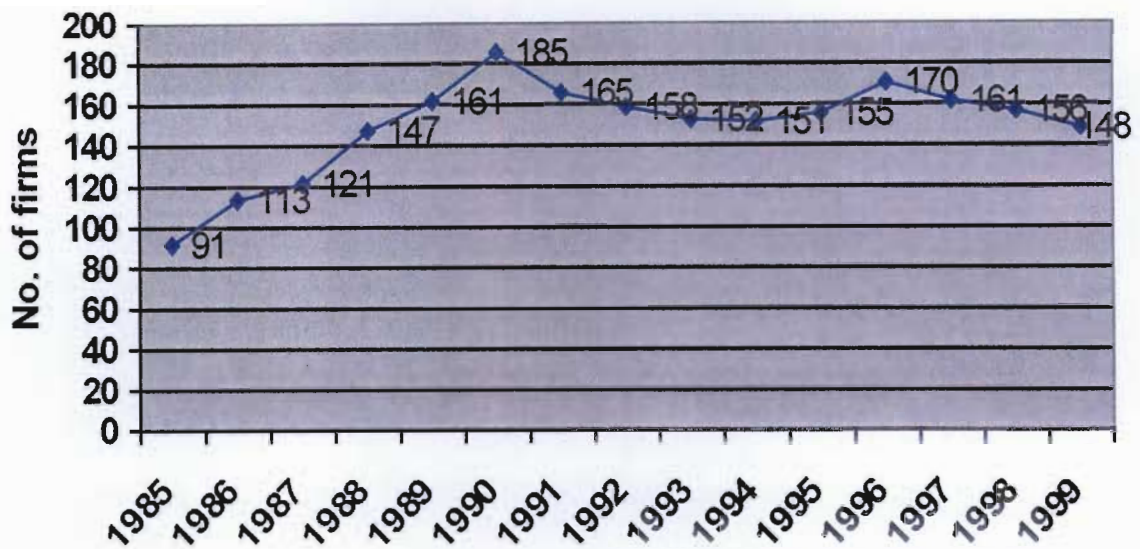
- In 1989, the clothing sector generated the largest number of jobs on the estate, despite the KFC policy during the 1980s to actively attract alternative industries, given the often negative impact on IDP development associated with the clothing and textile sectors (Platzky 1997: 237). The plastics and clothing sector, together with the metal industry, showed increased investment in 1989. Other sectors showing growth up to 1994 were electrical machinery, furniture and chemical sectors.
- Up to 1989, Isithebe witnessed less foreign investment than other IDPs in KwaZulu/Natal. However, the 1990s saw an increase in Taiwanese and Chinese investment in the estate.
- The KFC has sought to stimulate the development of agglomeration industries facilitated by the development of the service sector.
- Isithebe possesses a locational advantage over other IDPs through its access to ports in Richards Bay and Durban, as well as access to raw materials along the Natal North Coast. This has been further enhanced by the completion of the N2 highway running along the Richards Bay – Durban axis.

These characteristics have served to provide a pattern of development different from most of the other IDPs established by the government, and have in turn produced specific relationships both within the estate itself, and the surrounding communities. The following section will discuss the results of the fieldwork conducted on the estate, and compare these with previous findings, as well as highlighting a number of new trends that can be identified.

5.3 Recent Trends

The profile and trends on the estate were mapped using a number of sources. The survey undertaken by Patel and Harrison in 1996 provided baseline information on the major trends on

FIGURE 1 NUMBER OF FIRMS ON THE ESTATE 1985 TO 1999⁵³



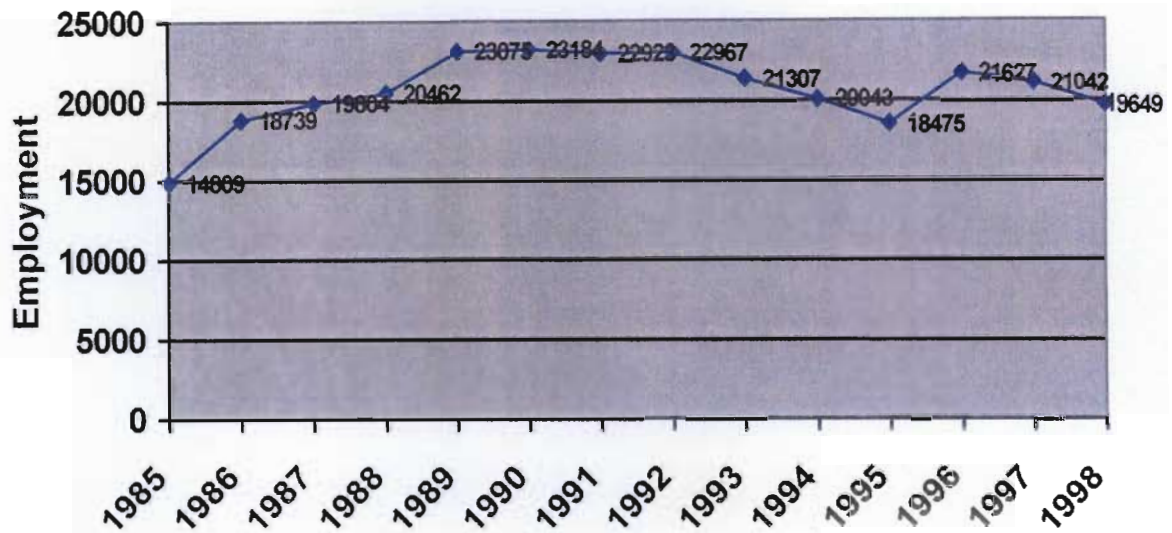
5.3.2 Total Employment on the Estate 1985 to 1998

However, the size, and relative growth or decline of the estate cannot be measured in terms of businesses alone, but perhaps more importantly should be assessed in terms of the employment patterns on the estate.

The overall employment figures reflect the trends which can be identified in the sectoral representation of factories on the estate, following a similar, if not differentiated pattern. Following the high employment level of 23 184 in 1990, the employment figures remained relatively stable up to 1992. However, between 1992 and 1995 employment on the estate decreased dramatically to 18 475, before increasing again to 21 627 in 1996, 6.7% below the 1990 peak. Since 1996, the total employment has dropped from 21 627 to 19 649 (see figure 2). Thus it can be seen that employment patterns have tended to follow much the same trends as the number of business on the estate, with employment dropping only marginally faster (15.2%) than the number of business (14.5%) from the peak in 1990.

⁵³ Source: KFC data, 24 March 1999

FIGURE 2 TOTAL EMPLOYMENT 1985 – 1998⁵⁴



5.3.3 Sectoral Trends

Through the history of the estate, a number of sectoral trends can be identified. While these have at times corresponded with increases and declines in other sectors nationally, they are also the result of interventionist policies on the part of the KFC. For example, the wearing apparel sector, with a predominantly female workforce, was strongly represented on the estate in 1991 with 22 factories, but then experienced a decline to 12 factories in 1995. This was followed by a slight increase to 16 factories in 1996, which remained stable up to 1999, when it decreased to 15 factories. The textile sector has remained relatively constant, peaking in 1996 at 17 factories, but dropping since then to 12 factories in 1999. This may, in part, be explained by the decision of the KFC in 1996 to discourage investment on the estate within these sectors.

The sectoral profile of Isithebe has been more varied than other KFC-managed estates, or than most of the other IDPs. This may, in part, be a result of the more refined criteria of the KFC that were applied to the estate from the 1980s in order to promote investment in certain sectors over other. Criteria considered included: the risk involved in granting of loans, the long-term profitability or sustainability of businesses without concessions, and the development impact

⁵⁴ Source: KFC data, 24 March 1999

(including the number of jobs created) of the business (Platzky, 1997: 236). In this way, particular characteristics within the workforce, and of the factories themselves, were encouraged. Inherent to this was a conscious decision, for example, not to promote the clothing sector on the estate, as KFC studies highlighted that this sector had a negative impact on IDP development. Metal industries are characterised by a higher starting wage, plastics and chemicals indicate a more positive relationship with unions, and show more potential for growth, while textile and wearing apparel sectors evidenced low wages, and, at times, abusive labour practices. The history of these firms on the estate also indicated that they were not considered as long-term investments in the estate, and indeed, as Platzky points out, most of the older clothing plants in Isithebe did not survive (1997: 237)

The degree to which this decision has facilitated the growth of other sectors is ambiguous. The effects of the decline of these traditionally female-dominated industries (i.e. clothing and textile) on the estate may in part have been absorbed in the growth of the service sector which relies on female labour. The service sector showed a 15% increase between 1991 and 1999, despite the overall decline of the estate since 1996. The only other sector which shows remarkable growth during the period from 1991 to 1999 is plastics, and it will be seen that this sector, between 1994 and 1999 at least, relied increasingly on male rather than female labour. However, certain other industries which are associated with male labour have also experienced a marked decline over the period 1991 to 1999. For instance, basic metal products decreased from 10 factories in 1991 to 6 factories in 1999, while fabricated metals decreased from 31 to 18 factories over the same period.

However, the trend within the basic metal sector is better viewed between the period 1993 to 1999. A slight increase was shown in 1996, which correlates with the general peak in the total number of factories on the estate. The sector moved from 7 factories in 1993, to 8 factories in 1996, to 6 factories in 1998, and the same in 1999. This indicates a move away from labour intensive industry to more capital reliant sectors. The effect of this is likely to impact negatively on the employment patterns on the estate, and can be reflected as a factor in the growing unemployment in the communities surrounding Isithebe. Platzky (1997) does argue that the sectoral composition on the estate is unlikely to impact in a significant way on the organisation of production, ownership structure, or in explaining the growth or decline of

factories.

TABLE 4 SECTORAL BREAKDOWN OF FACTORIES 1991 TO 1999

No. of Factories per sector	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99
Food and Food Products	5	5	6	7	5	5	5	5	5
Textiles	12	15	16	13	14	17	14	13	12
Wearing Apparel	22	21	14	11	14	16	16	16	12
Leather Products	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Footwear	2	1	1	1	2	3	3	2	2
Wood/Wood products	8	6	3	4	3	3	3	2	3
Furniture	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	9
Paper/Paper products	13	12	12	14	12	13	13	10	10
Chemicals	10	9	9	9	8	9	9	10	7
Plastic Products	14	13	16	15	16	16	20	21	21
Non-Metalic products	6	6	5	5	5	5	4	3	3
Basic Metal products	10	8	7	7	7	8	7	6	6
Fabricated Metal products	31	28	26	23	23	21	19	18	18
Electrical Machinery/appliances	8	8	6	7	9	8	6	5	5
Transport Equipment	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	2
Other Manufacturing	6	6	7	5	5	4	3	4	6
Service Industry	5	7	11	15	17	27	25	27	26
Total	165	158	152	151	155	170	161	156	148

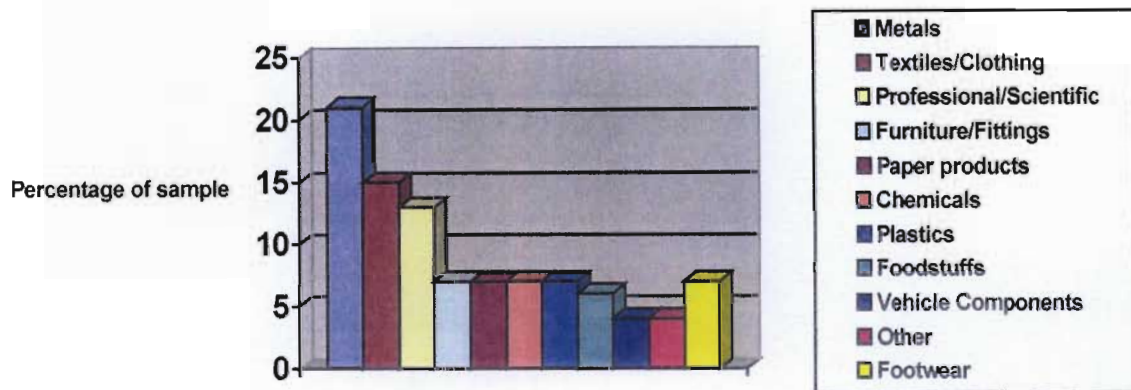
Source: KFC Data, July 1999

5.3.4 The 1996 survey: sectoral trends

The 1996 survey conducted on the estate for the purpose of this thesis revealed broad similarities with the trends identified above. The estate peaked in 1990, with 185 factories present, employing a total of 23 184 workers. This was followed by a dip in both number of

factories and employment, before reaching another, slightly lower peak in 1996, of 170 factories employing 23 184 workers. The information gathered from the factory listings used in the survey reflected the numbers provided by the KFC. The sampling methodology was not intended to reflect the sectoral breakdown of the estate, but the survey did reveal that the textile and clothing industry, (while not the largest sector on the estate) was significantly represented on the estate, while the fabricated metal and basic metal products constitute the other major sector. The 1996 survey sector breakdown is reflected in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3 SECTORAL BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY (%)⁵⁵



Of the firms sampled, 21% were metal industries, followed by the textile sector at 15%, followed by professional/scientific instrument manufacture (13%), and plastics, furniture/fittings, paper products and chemicals (7%). This correlates with the KFC data for this period, as for the purpose of the 1996 survey, basic metals and fabricated metal products were categorised together.

However, of more use for comparative purposes are the actual number of firms sampled. These enable direct comparison to the actual representation of each sector on the estate provided by the KFC data portrayed in Table 4. Patel and Harrison (1996) argue for the decline of the clothing and textile industry on the estate, between the period 1988 and 1994. After showing a slight increase between 1994 and 1995 (concomitant to broad estate growth patterns), the KFC data reflects that these sectors have indeed shown a decline in relation to other industries on the

estate. What is not reflected in the sample of firms surveyed in 1996 is the importance of the plastics industry on the estate. The KFC data further reflects that since the 1996 survey, the plastics sector has continued to grow. Given the various shifts identified in both the KFC data and the 1996 survey, specific gender disaggregated employment trends are likely to be identified within both major and smaller sectors on the estate.

TABLE 5 SECTORAL BREAKDOWN OF SAMPLE (NO.)

Sector	No.
Food and Food Products	3
Textiles	5
Wearing Apparel	3
Leather Products	0
Footwear	1
Wood/Wood products	0
Furniture	4
Paper/Paper products	4
Chemical	4
Plastic Products	4
Non-Metalic products	2
Basic Metal products	5
Fabricated Metal products	5
Electrical machinery	5
Transport Equipment	2
Other Manufacturing	4
Services	4
Total	55

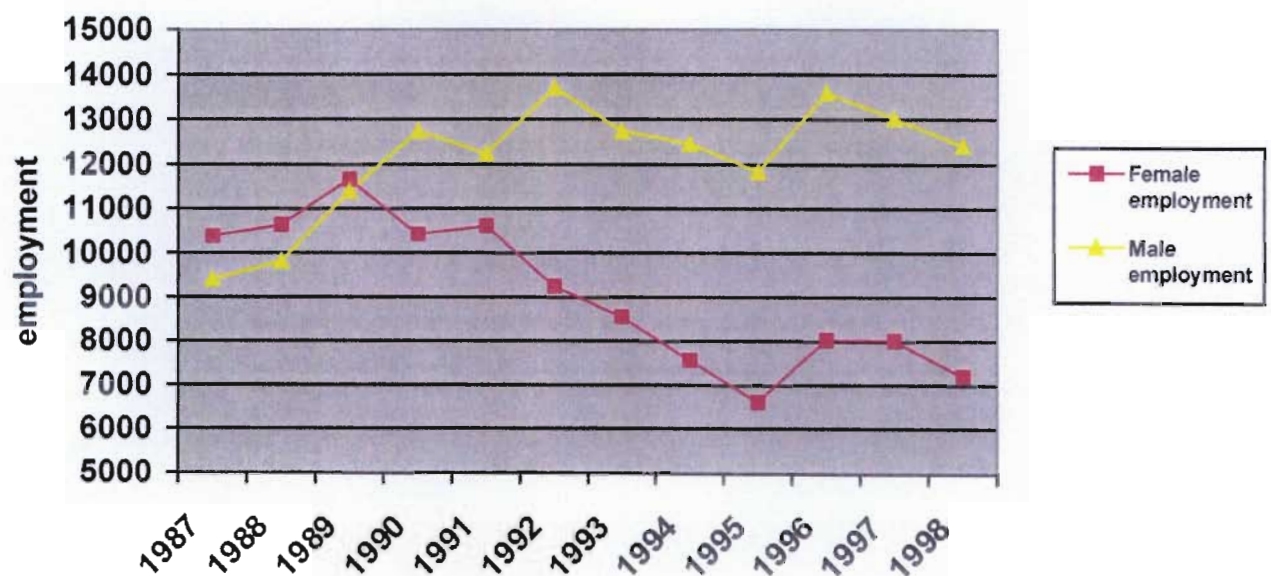
Source: 1996 Isithebe Survey

⁵⁵ Source: 1996 Isithebe Survey

5.3.5 Employment Patterns

The period between 1987 and 1999 has exhibited an increasing polarisation between male and female employment on the estate, particularly towards the end of the 1980s and 1990. In 1987, the workforce on Isithebe was predominantly female, with women accounting for 52.5% of the total employment (Platzky 1997: 257). In 1988 this remained relatively constant, with women constituting 52.1% of employment. By 1989, however, this had dropped to 50.6%, and by 1990, to 45% (*ibid.*). In 1991, 44% of the 22 923 workers on the estate were female⁵⁶. In 1996, 21 627 workers were employed on the estate, of which 32.7% were women. In 1998, of the 19 649 workers employed on the estate, 36.8% were women. Figure 4 shows that between 1991 and 1995, the number of women workers on the estate decreased at a faster rate than men. However, the growth in number of men and women between 1995 and 1996 occurred at much the same rate, while between 1996 and 1997 the number of women has remained slightly more stable than men. In the period between 1997 and 1998, the number of women employed decreased at 10.2%, as opposed to the 8.5% decrease in the number of men employed on the estate.

FIGURE 4 EMPLOYMENT BY GENDER 1987 TO 1998⁵⁷



⁵⁶ Source: KFC Data, 24 March 1999

The differential in numbers between men and women workers appears to have remained relatively constant in the late 1990s, after the period 1989 to 1995 when women's employment declined faster than men's, mainly as a result of the decline in the wearing apparel industry. The trends identified between 1995 and 1999, while significant in terms of the relatively constant employment gap between men and women, must thus be seen within the macro trends of decreasing female employment from 1989.

Within this longer term context, a number of correlations can be drawn at a micro level between the growth and decline of certain sectors and a gender differentiation in employment figures, between the period 1991 to 1998. The importance of the clothing and textile sectors, for women especially, has been discussed in both international and local literature. Patel and Harrison (1996:5) highlighted the importance of these sectors within Isithebe.

TABLE 5 SECTORAL COMPOSITION OF EMPLOYMENT IN ISITHEBE, 1991-1998

Sector	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Food and food products	399	397	373	323	269	647	420	420
Textiles	1463	1782	1709	1652	1167	1673	1558	1320
Wearing Apparel	6106	6099	5447	4562	4379	6477	6574	6779
Leather Products	219	263	248	225	225	260	260	260
Footwear	51	46	46	46	46	199	166	72
Wood and wood products	776	415	206	206	206	300	301	236
Furniture	691	962	967	927	786	1484	1364	1402
Paper and paper products	1630	1751	1625	1645	1166	1415	1240	1091
Chemicals	632	646	698	716	619	537	483	603
Plastic Products	2845	2424	2590	2420	2407	2705	3162	2420
Non-Metallic mineral products	420	420	201	199	150	188	171	99
Basic Metal products	1990	2452	2386	2278	2278	1935	1930	1410
Fabricated Metal products	3405	2987	2814	2717	2658	2497	2294	2207
Electrical mach. and Appliances	1814	1819	1643	1635	1635	659	594	764
Transport equipment	105	96	95	138	138	157	153	153
Other Manufacturing	295	262	97	117	117	96	85	101
Service Industries	82	146	162	237	229	398	287	312
Total	22923	22967	21307	20043	18475	21627	21042	19649

Source: KFC Data, July 1999

In 1994 the clothing sector contributed 22.7% of the total employment on the estate, despite being only the 5th largest sector in terms of the number of firms represented. The textile sector after showing growth in 1994 and 1995 has since dropped back down to the 1991 level,

⁵⁷ KFC Data, 24 March 1999

providing 1 320 jobs, or 6.7% of total employment on the estate⁵⁸.

The wearing apparel sector, however, has continued to thrive in relative terms at least, employing 6 779 (34.5%) of total employment compared to 6106, or 26.6%, in 1991. While the slight decline in the textile sector correlates with the lower number of factories on the estate, the growth in the wearing apparel sector is juxtaposed to the decreasing number of factories present. This indicates that while a number of factories have closed down since 1991, those that remain, are increasing the size of the workforce. This flies in the face of global trends which are tending towards downsizing the workforce.

TABLE 6 SECTORAL COMPOSITION OF EMPLOYMENT IN ISITHEBE, 1991-1998 (%)

Sector	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Food and food products	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.5	3.0	2.0	2.1
Textiles	6.4	7.8	8.0	8.2	6.3	7.7	7.4	6.7
Wearing Apparel	26.6	26.6	25.6	22.8	23.7	29.9	31.2	34.5
Leather Products	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3
Footwear	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.8	0.4
Wood and wood products	3.4	1.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.2
Furniture	3.0	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.3	6.9	6.5	7.1
Paper and paper products	7.1	7.6	7.6	8.2	6.3	6.5	5.9	5.6
Chemicals	2.76	2.8	3.3	3.6	3.4	2.5	2.3	3.1
Plastic Products	12.41	10.6	12.2	12.0	13.0	12.5	15.0	12.3
Non-Metallic mineral products	1.83	1.8	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.5
Basic Metal products	8.68	10.7	11.2	11.4	12.3	8.9	9.2	7.2
Fabricated Metal products	14.9	13.0	13.2	13.6	13.4	11.6	10.9	11.2
Electrical mach. and Appliances	7.91	7.9	7.7	8.1	8.8	3.0	2.8	3.9
Transport equipment	0.46	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
Other Manufacturing	1.29	1.1	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5
Service Industries	0.36	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.8	1.4	1.6
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: KFC Data, 24 March 1999

Another sector which has indicated growth in terms of the relative employment offered is the furniture sector. While the number of factories has in fact decreased from 1991, the sector employs 1 402 workers, or 7.1% of the total workforce on the estate, as opposed to the 691 workers or 3.0% in 1991⁵⁹. This may be significant in that it is a more skilled industry. Wood and wood products, a more labour intensive sector, declined from 3.4% in 1991 to 1.0% in

⁵⁸ Op Cit.

⁵⁹ Op Cit.

1994, and has remained around that level, offering 236 jobs or 1.2% of employment in 1998. An examination of the sectoral employment patterns from 1996 to 1998 indicate that despite the continued intention of the KFC to not actively attract wearing apparel industries to the estate, the sector continues to be the largest on the estate. Textile industries account for a decreasing portion of employment, of concern to employment in the region considering the high labour needs of this sector.

The increased employment within the furniture industry does, however, imply that there is an increased supply in the availability of semi-skilled workers, as these constitute a component of the workforce required. This could potentially be a result of an increased training within the population of the area, or more probably the increase of in-house training within Isithebe itself, which would indicate a departure from the observations made during the period of the survey.

5.3.5.1 Gender and the sectoral composition of industry in Isithebe

It has already been argued that changes in the global and national economy are accompanied by shifts in the gender composition of the workforce, with different sectors reflecting an increase in women's employment, while others remain the domain of men. The national trend towards a growing female component in manufacturing and service industries should therefore, theoretically, be reflected in Isithebe. While the service industry has in the past been very poorly represented, manufacturing has occupied a large proportion of industry on the estate. The sectoral shifts in composition of the estate will undoubtedly result in associated changes in the employment patterns amongst men and women surrounding the estate, and specific trends associated with the area.

The gender composition of the workforce in Isithebe can be assessed on both a macro and a micro level. On a macro level the growth of the traditionally female-dominated sectors in the 1990s and 1980s contributed to the rapid penetration of women into the workforce within this period, peaking in 1989, before a decline in absolute terms from 1989 to 1990, and then from 1991 to 1995. The growth in the female component in the 1980s is undoubtedly associated with the national, and global trends of reliance on a predominantly female workforce in the manufacturing sector. However, within the periods of decline following the 1980s, the rate of

women employed on the estate fell in both absolute and relative terms.

On a micro level, the trends within the 1990s point to a slight slowing in the differentials between men and women in the workforce on the estate. A slight recovery in the wearing apparel sector between 1995 and 1998 contributed to overall female employment declining at a rate slightly slower than that of their male counterparts. Despite this, however, the declining female employment figures, on a macro scale, indicate that there could be an increasing penetration of the male workforce into the wearing apparel sector, challenging the traditionally female domination of the sector.

The textile industry provides the second significant female dominated industry. The decline of this sector along with the growth in the wearing apparel sector between 1994 and 1998, provokes the expectations of interesting changes in the gendered analysis of the workforce within the sectors. It should also be noted at this stage, however, that the previously clear gender divisions along sectoral lines is becoming blurred as men are increasingly moving to employment that has traditionally been dominated by women. While females still remain in the majority in both sectors, in both 1996 and 1998 there has been an increase in males employed in the textile industry, with a steady growth of males employed in the wearing apparel sector. The growth in the male percentage of the textile sector has not been as marked as that in the wearing apparel sector: in 1992, males constituted only 41.1% of the workforce in the textile industry, while in 1998, this had increased to 47.42%⁶⁰. The garment industry reflects a steadier trend, with male representation growing from 31.5% in 1992 to 46.41% in 1998. This is a slight drop from the 47.49% male component in 1996. This growth may be facilitated by the growing male unemployment in the region and nationally over the period, thus freeing up male labour for these positions. The increased male component in these sectors can partially be explained by the decline in other predominantly male-dominated sectors such as fabricated metals, base metals and non-metallic mineral sectors. Within these sectors, despite the decline in employment, males still continue to dominate the workforce, and in fact have increased as a percentage of the sector's workforce (see table 7).

⁶⁰ Op Cit.

Another sector of significance in terms of gender composition, the food sector, has also shown some remarkable change in the workforce. Between 1992 and 1996, the female component grew by 11.5%. However, since 1996, males have increasingly entered the sector, accounting for 76% in 1998. The footwear sector has shown a growth in the female component of the workforce, despite the fact that the sector itself has shown minimal growth as an employer since 1994. The industry is reliant, as the textile and garment sectors, on unskilled, low wage labour, and indicates that women are remaining trapped within sectors which are considered more abusive and restrictive, and which provide little social development such as training for the labour force. While women accounted for 60% of the workforce in the leather industry on the estate in 1992, the figure dropped to 30.6% in 1994, and has since remained around that level, with 35% of employment in the sector taken by women⁶¹. Together with the plastics sector, the leather industry shows the biggest change of all the sectors on the estate during the period.

While the percentage of women employed in the service sector has increased both in real terms, and in relation to men in the same sector, this has not followed the same pattern identified nationally, or provincially. Indeed, no clear trend can be identified. While the 1998 figure of 14.4% is significantly higher than the 5.5% in 1992, it is well below the 21.6 percent high of 1996⁶². The growth of women within the service sector correlates with the growth of the sector as a whole on the estate over the same period.

⁶¹ Op Cit.

⁶² Op Cit.

TABLE 7 FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN ISITHEBE BY SECTOR 1994-1998

Sector	1992		1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		1998	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Food and food products	105	26.4	104	27.9	105	32.5	96	35.7	245	37.9	101	24	101	24.0
Textiles	1050	58.9	1001	58.6	1100	66.6	747	64	954	57.0	954	61.2	694	52.6
Wearing Apparel	4179	68.5	3727	68.4	2929	64.2	2773	63.3	3401	52.5	3806	57.9	3633	53.59
Leather Products	184	70	180	72.6	69	30.7	69	30.7	91	35.0	91	35	91	35
Footwear	31	67.4	31	67.4	31	67.4	31	67.4	147	73.9	135	81.3	61	86.1
Wood and wood products	74	17.8	23	11.2	23	11.1	23	11.1	56	18.7	38	12.6	23	9.8
Furniture	196	20.4	204	21.1	265	17.8	165	21	419	28.2	315	23.1	348	24.8
Paper and paper products	701	40	634	39	667	40.6	308	26.4	401	28.3	333	26.9	279	25.6
Chemicals	87	13.5	87	12.5	91	12.7	38	6.1	61	11.4	33	6.8	99	16.4
Plastic Products	1434	59.2	1520	58.7	1368	56.5	1363	56.6	1329	49.1	1454	46	1093	45.2
Non-Metallic mineral products	88	21	24	11.9	23	11.6	19	12.7	32	17.0	18	10.5	15	15.2
Basic Metal products	157	6.4	168	7	167	7.3	167	7.3	149	7.7	148	7.7	135	9.6
Fabricated Metal products	571	19.1	594	21.1	570	21.0	573	21.6	436	17.5	428	18.7	378	17.1
Electrical machinery and Appliances	306	16.8	220	13.4	216	13.2	216	13.2	205	31.1	145	24.4	203	26.6
Transport equipment	3	3.1	3	3.2	9	6.5	9	6.5	9	5.7	9	5.9	9	5.9
Other Manufacturing	89	34	37	38.1	30	25.6	30	25.6	19	19.8	18	21.2	14	13.9
Service Industries	8	5.5	13	8	14	5.9	12	5.2	86	21.6	4	1.4	45	14.4
Total	9263	-	8570	-	7677	-	6639	-	8040	-	8030	-	7221	-

5.3.5.2 Gender and sectoral employment in the 1996 survey

Of the firms interviewed in 1996, 58.2% employed predominantly male labour, 41.8% employed a predominantly female workforce. The administrative staff employed by every firm was almost exclusively female. Due to the inability of several factories to provide an exact breakdown of the composition of the workforce, the precise numerical component could not be established at the time of the survey, and the responses given did not correlate exactly with the figures later provided by the KFC.

Considering that textile and clothing industries appeared to be under pressure on the estate, and these have in the past accounted for the primary employers of female labour, the ratios identified in 1996 were to be expected. In addition, the predominance of metal and fabricated metal industries accounts for the higher male component, as men are seen to be better suited for such labour. The suitability of gender for specific sectors at the time of the survey, was considered a major justification for differential gender based employment. In fact, 47.3% of the respondents considered the better suitability to the nature of the work reason for the gender patterns of employment, and 12.7% considered their labour to be more reliable and stable⁶³. All of the textile and clothing industries were composed of an entirely female workforce, with 2 firms having men in supervisory positions on the shop floor. All of the respondents in these sectors considered females more suitable to the type of work, with two of the firms in the sector adding that female labour was more reliable. However, the remainder of the textile and clothing firms cited unreliability of the workforce as a problem. This was manifest in low productivity, failure to arrive at work, as well as bickering and fighting on the shop floor. The single pharmaceutical company on the estate was also comprised of an entirely female workforce.

The 1996 survey reflected further perceptions regarding gender common in industry. Of the metal and fabricated metal firms interviewed, seven employed a largely male workforce because men were considered better suited to the type of work, which was predominantly heavy

⁶³ Pudifin and Ward (1986) suggest that women have more difficulty in organising within labour, thus possibly not having the same degree of union involvement that may be found among male workers.

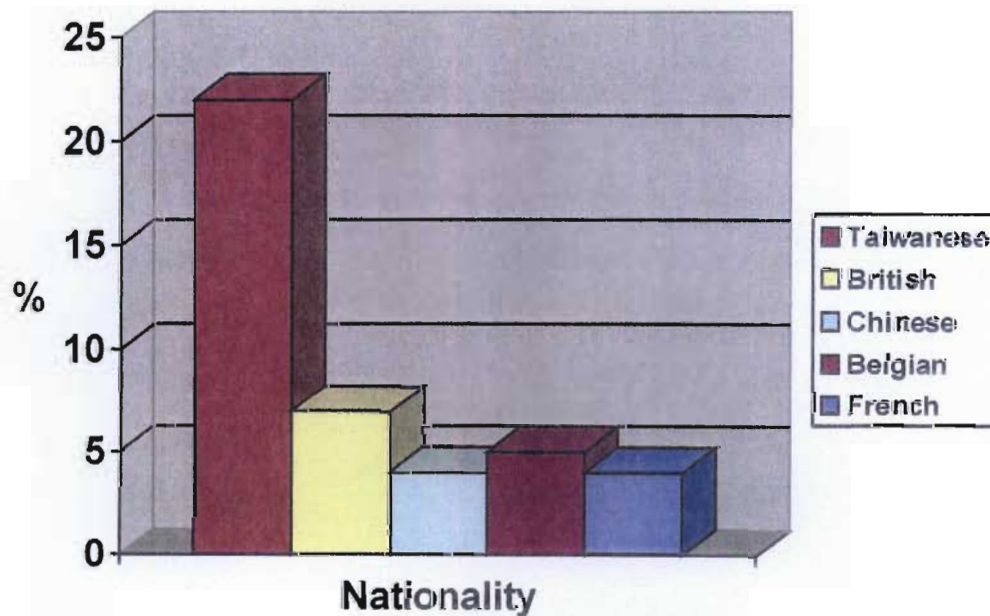
manual labour. Five firms had no explicit preference regarding gender, explaining that the composition was purely incidental and was not the result of any explicit policy. However, each respondent did suggest that they considered the industry to be largely the domain of men. The firms falling into the scientific and professional instruments sector were also overwhelmingly male. These firms were in each case small, skilled operations, with a workforce below fifty. While the majority of businesses on the estate are labour intensive, the few businesses that relied on a smaller skilled workforce reflected the trend to incorporate men into the skilled and semi-skilled positions, while women remained in the labour intensive, and generally lower paid jobs. Skills training in many cases was undertaken in-house, or in some cases employees were sent to branches or head offices in urban centres such as Durban and Johannesburg. The plastics sector employed a female workforce, arguing women were better suited to the nature of the work, and more reliable. However, the KFC data reveals that this has changed since 1996, and in fact even at the time of the survey women comprised just under 50% of the workforce.

The results of the 1996 survey does not reflect many of the trends in gender composition identified in the KFC data. While the analysis of the KFC data highlights the increasing blurring of the traditional divide between the gendered division of labour within the workplace, the 1996 survey tended to reveal more historical gender divisions between sectors. However, it must be remembered that exact figures regarding the gender composition of the workforce for factories was not available at the time of the survey, and the findings were based very much on the perceptions of the interview respondents. This, it can be argued, reflect the more traditional understandings of gender and the division of labour, rather than providing an accurate reflection of the actual composition. These perceptions do provide an indication of the constructed perceptions, or understandings, of gender discussed earlier in this thesis. The KFC data reveals that, while within the traditionally female-dominated industries, which are low-skilled and low-paid, women remain in the majority, there is an increasing penetration of men into these sectors. However, the penetration of women into those sectors traditionally dominated by men appears to be occurring at a slower rate.

5.3.6 Foreign Investment

Isithebe has attracted a number of foreign investors to the estate, a trend reflected both by previous work undertaken on the estate (see Platzky 1995, Patel and Harrison 1996), official data, and the 1996 survey. In 1996, foreign investors owned 44% of the sample surveyed⁶⁴. Of these foreign-owned firms, 22% were Taiwanese, 7% were British, 4% were owned by Chinese, and 11% were owned by other foreign nationals, including Belgium and France. The survey results mirror to a degree the findings of Platzky (1997: 239) from her 1989 research, who found that 59% of the firms were South African owned and 4% Chinese-owned. However, Platzky also found that 21% of the plants were owned by UK nationals, significantly higher than the 7% indicated in this survey. This may imply that there has been a decrease in UK investment in the estate; however, the limited sample of the 1996 surveys in this respect prevents the drawing of concrete conclusions.

FIGURE 5 FOREIGN OWNERSHIP WITHIN ISITHEBE 1996⁶⁵



The high investment by Taiwanese in Isithebe mirrors the high concentration of Taiwanese

⁶⁴ It must be borne in mind that the 1996 figures are based on a significantly smaller sample

and mainland Chinese investments in the province. In 1997, 40% of the 280 Republic of China's industrial factories in South Africa were located in KwaZulu Natal⁶⁶. The majority of these were also situated on industrial estates, of which 19 were located in Isithebe. The Taiwanese investment is very closely aligned to the textile and garment industry, with the garment manufacturing and knitted sweaters production accounting for 44 factories nationally each. High levels of Chinese and Taiwanese investment can also be identified in the plastic products sectors, footwear manufacturing, and the electronic and electrical sectors⁶⁷.

A number of specific reasons were cited in the 1996 survey for the location of internationally owned firms in Isithebe. These included market reasons (35%), which included identified market needs and incentives (rebates, tax concessions); labour (10%), which included relatively cheap labour, as well as a plentiful supply thereof; and family networks (5%). A number of respondents indicated that the initial intention was to establish a business for the duration of the concessions, and then relocate elsewhere. Knowledge of Isithebe was gained by the foreign investors through family networks, business connections, and the Taipei office of the KFC. Eleven of the twelve Taiwanese firms were involved in the textile, clothing and garment industries. Two of the firms had second factories, operating under different names, on the estate, operated and managed by a family member. The 12th Taiwanese owned firm had recently moved into the estate, and was manufacturing chipboard pallets. As argued in Chapter Three, the garment and textile industries, together with other labour intensive sectors, are often associated with abusive labour practices, with particular impact on the predominantly female component of the workforce. There have been allegations internationally of sweatshop practices, low wages, long hours and shift work, all practices that have a particular affect on women workers.

5.3.7 Locational Factors

Of the total number of firms, both local and international, interviewed in the 1996 survey, 55%

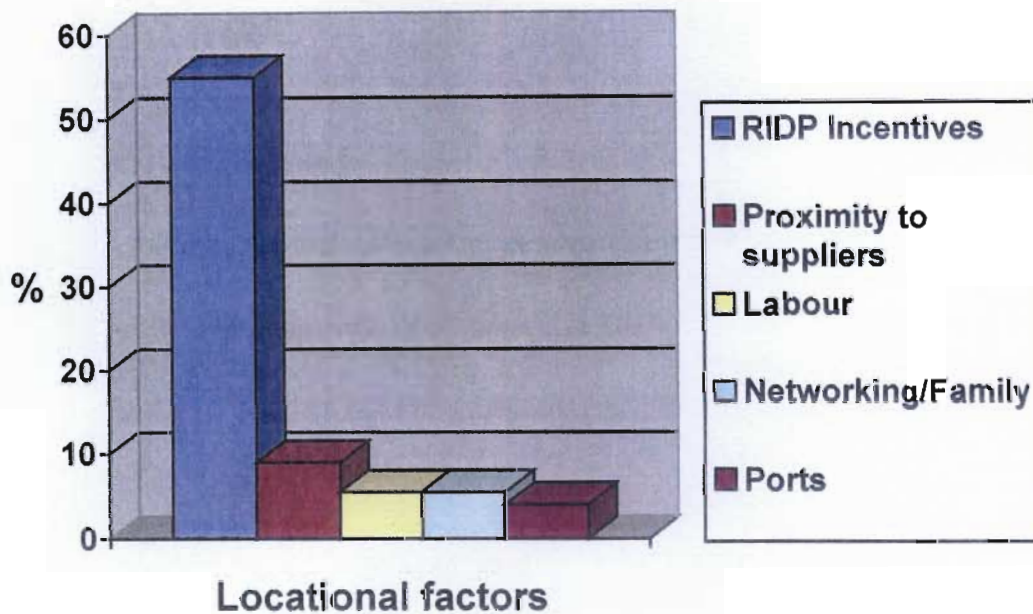
⁶⁵ Source: 1996 Isithebe Survey

⁶⁶ ROC Press Release, May 1997

⁶⁷ Source: 1996 Isithebe Survey

considered the incentives offered by the RIDP and the SRIDP as primary reasons for locating in Isithebe. This was followed by proximity to suppliers (9%), labour and family and networking reasons (5.5%), and proximity to ports (4%) as the last significant factors. This is echoed in the release on ROC investment in South Africa, which cites the proximity to ports and suppliers, together with the climate, as dominant locational factors for Taiwanese investment.

FIGURE 6 LOCATIONAL FACTORS WITHIN ISITHEBE 1996⁶⁸



The availability of labour assumes various components. For the purpose of the survey, labour was broken down into unskilled, skilled, and supervisory and management. None of the respondents expressed difficulty in sourcing unskilled labour, nor anticipated such a problem, regardless of whether the factory was reliant on male or female labour. Approximately 50% reported difficulty finding supervisory and managerial staff, and 65% reported difficulty in attracting skilled workers. The administrative personnel of the firms interviewed in the survey was 98% female, while supervisory and management staff was predominantly male.

Many interviewees were negative about the scaling down and withdrawal of incentives under the RIDP. Essential components of the RIDP package were labour and transport incentives.

⁶⁸ Op Cit.

The fact that such a large percentage of firms located in Isithebe largely because of these incentives does not bode well for the future after withdrawal of the package incentives. Further to this, the KFC has indicated that those businesses that remain on the estate after withdrawal of incentives generally scale down the unskilled workforce, impacting on the employment profile and social relations within the area (Platzky, 1997). Coupled with this was an overwhelming negative perception of the estate itself. While no patterns or trends of openings and closures in the estate were noticeable, a fact highlighted by Patel and Harrison (1996) and substantiated by the 1996 survey, the perception by management and workers in the 1996 survey was that there were in fact more closures than openings. In the period since the survey, it has been seen that this perception was not unfounded, as KFC figures indicate that there have been significantly more firms closing than opening since 1996.

This negative perception by tenants was exacerbated by the problems identified by the firms: transport, despite the rail link, is cited as a major problem for 40% of the firms interviewed. The potential opening of the N2 highway along the Richards Bay – Durban axis was not considered by many to provide any relief from the transport problems. The respondents prioritised problematic issues, with the transport concerns being followed by labour problems (22%) and by security problems (18%). Labour problems include poor reliability of labour, low productivity, high labour turnover, and the high rate of unionisation. Unionisation appeared to be increasing in Isithebe and the surrounds⁶⁹. The growing rate of unionisation appeared to reflect the trend nationwide, and this dynamic was exacerbated by the politicisation of the process, as the area is primarily an African National Congress (ANC) stronghold, in an Inkhatha Freedom Party (IFP) region. Sitas (1995) explores the dynamics and implications of such a politicised union environment in KwaZulu/Natal, suggesting that the unions are operating in a vulnerable and declining regional economy, which in conjunction with other factors are serving to weaken the power of unions.

Whether this is the case, unions were still perceived as a growing force in Isithebe. Response to this unionisation process was mixed. Labour was seen by industrialists to be extremely

⁶⁹ 30% of the firms estimated 100% unionization of their workforce, 24% estimated that over 50% of the workforce belonged to unions. It was perceived by the respondents that there had been a marked increase in unionization since 1994

organised and militant although Patel and Harrison (1996) suggest that the growth of the plastics and chemical sector was accompanied by improved relations with the unions⁷⁰. While the South African firms generally indicated a neutral or even constructive relationship with the relevant unions, the firms of foreign origin expressed antagonism towards the unions, and saw them as undermining the potential of their firms, and adversely affecting productivity⁷¹. Several of the firms had experienced strike action during the year prior to the survey, and had embarked on a policy of immediate dismissal of striking workers, a course of action facilitated by the availability of unskilled labour within an environment of high unemployment in the area. Security is closely related to unemployment issues, and many respondents suggested that as unemployment increased in the area, so the incidents of crime had followed. However, it has been suggested that in the two years following the survey, a more productive relationship has been fostered, and the politicisation of the workforce is no longer of concern to investors (High Road, *Mercury*, February 24, 1998).

Many of the factory management interviewed considered the primary reason for closures on the estate to be a combination of transport costs, and labour problems. The latter seemed to be of more concern for management, as a high crime rate and poor security in the area was seen as originating in the labour problem. Concern over security was expressed by most respondents, and was, in conjunction with transport and labour, listed as reasons to consider relocating elsewhere. Over 50% of the respondents had experienced burglaries and crime committed on their premises in the month prior to the study. The security situation was of further concern to many of the middle management and clerical staff, the majority who resided in Tugela or Newark, a predominantly Indian residential area serving the estate, where crime was on the increase. This was of less concern to that section of management (predominantly white) who lived in nearby coastal resorts and commuted to Isithebe daily. These staff were aware of security problems, and experienced such problems in the workplace, but were removed from such issues outside of work. The security issue was highlighted when a Chinese factory owner was killed on the estate in 1997, and was potentially a contributing factor to the increased

⁷⁰ Patel and Harrison, Isithebe Report, RIDP Evaluation (1996) pg. 3

number of closures since 1997.

5.3.8 1996 Survey: Restructuring on the Estate

Various processes and dynamics within the organisation and management of labour and industry on the estate can be identified. The fact that these processes are present indicate that industries on the estate are engaged in a form of restructuring. However, the degree to which these reflect the broader changes in the national economy and internationally needs to be determined.

The dynamics within the firms were assessed primarily through the characteristics of and changes in production techniques and organisational change. These can be categorised as follows:

- ◆ the size of the workforce;
- ◆ a move to new production techniques such as make-to-order or just-in-time;
- ◆ the use of subcontracting and outsourcing;
- ◆ the refocusing of markets and the targeting of niche markets;
- ◆ the creation of strategic alliances and networking
- ◆ the upgrading of technology, and an associated move to more highly skilled labour.

5.3.8.1 Workforce size

The size of the workforce employed within the sample varied, with the textile firms employing the largest workforce. Of the firms sampled, the majority employed under 200 workers. Of the rest, 54.5% of the businesses employed less than 100 workers, while 25.5% employed between 100 and 200 workers, 12.7% employed between 200 and 300 workers, 3.6% employed between

⁷¹ This point is substantiated in the ROC press release, which suggests that while the Chinese owned factories producing knitted sweaters has reached agreement with labour, the wage disputes and militancy of the labour force was catalyzing the movement of industrial investment from China to neighbouring African countries such as Lesotho and Swaziland (ROC Press release, 1997).

300 and 400 workers, and 1.8% employed between 400 and 500, and more than 500 workers. These employment figures drawn from the sample correlate with the sectoral breakdown of the firms sampled. The predominance of smaller workforces reflects trends identified globally towards down-sizing, and the growth of small businesses.

5.3.8.2 *Emerging Production Techniques*

The use of new techniques such as make-to-order, or just-in-time manufacturing (JIT), demand that the inventory of raw materials, work in progress and finished goods be reduced. Smaller inventories aid flexibility in production, and assist in the targeting of flexible and changing markets and market needs. The success of this lies very much in the reliable access to multi-skilled flexible labour. Of the 26 firms who indicated that they had adopted make-to-order or just-in-time processes, only 2 had decreased inventories of raw materials, 3 decreased inventories of work in progress, and 5 decreased inventories of finished goods. Despite the fact that these firms had apparently adopted these new systems, the following table indicates that for the majority, the size of their inventories remained the same (see table 8).

TABLE 8 INVENTORY CHANGES SINCE ADOPTING JIT OR MAKE TO ORDER SYSTEMS

	Raw materials %	Work in Progress %	Finished Goods %
Inventories increased	46.1	42.3	38.4
Inventories stayed the same	46.1	46.1	42.3
Inventories decreased	7.6	11.5	19.2

Source: 1996 Isithebe Survey

This trend could be explained by a number of reasons. It is possible that industries are slow in initiating a complete transformation of production systems, and the risks that accompany them. It is also possible that the labour problems identified by many firms prevent a full-scale transformation to these new systems. This would be reinforced by the fact that those firms that had moved to new production techniques, and had identified labour as a problem of locality, had not decreased their inventories. Platzky (1997) argues that Isithebe has a locational advantage for the implementation of JIT production, through the availability of overnight freight facilities.

The particular impact on women of processes such as JIT production has been discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. While many of the negative effects apply to both men and women workers, the specific demands for a flexible and multi-skilled labour force often effectively exclude many women (see Pearson 1994, Penn et al 1991 amongst others for a detailed discussion of these impacts). However, the fact that factories in Isithebe have on the whole been slow to implement new production techniques, or to implement them in their entirety, does minimise the negative impact of these processes on women in the workforce. For instance, the supplier-driven production process demands of JIT manufacturing relies predominantly on highly and instantly available flexible labour, which not only detracts from medium to long-term job security, but presupposes the instant availability of workers. This also increases the pressure on women within the household and community, makes it harder to find alternative or additional employment, and creates further difficulties in child and home care. While this has not been happening in Isithebe to the degree expected, it does imply that increased training, which is associated with new techniques has, in all likelihood, not occurred.

5.3.8.3 Subcontracting and Outsourcing

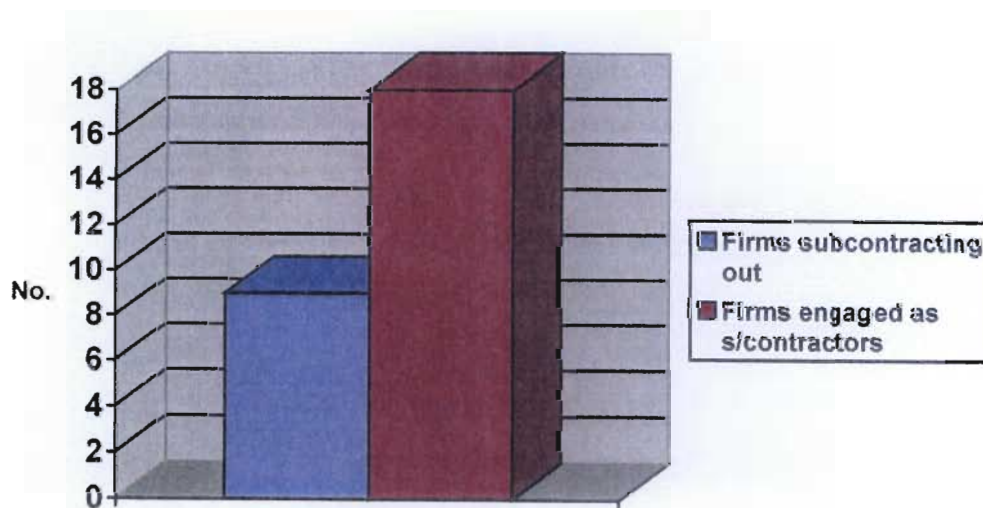
Restructuring is also characterised by a move to subcontracting processes within and without the industry. Subcontracting frees up labour within the factory, allowing the flexible and specialised production of specific processes and components. The move to flexible production and decreased inventories also negates the need for a full-time permanent large workforce. In many instances world-wide, this has been facilitated by the increasing utilisation of home-workers in the region of the factory.

Within Isithebe, 9 factories surveyed were engaged in subcontracting out processes to companies. This was both to companies on the estate, and to companies based in Stanger, Richards Bay, Durban and Empangeni. Only one factory had in the past subcontracted to a home-worker, and this policy had been discontinued. Of the firms that subcontracted out, only one had a predominantly female workforce. It was apparent that the type of industries located on the estate did not facilitate the subcontracting to individuals or homeworkers.

However, 18 factories were currently engaged as subcontractors for other firms, again both within the estate and within the region. It is interesting to note that only two firms were subcontracted to companies within Isithebe itself, the remaining 16 to companies distributed over the province, and in one instance, to a company based in Johannesburg. (It is also important to note that not all products are suitable for subcontracting at any stage of manufacture). However the fact that only two have sub-contractual relationships with factories on the estate may have implications for another trend associated with restructuring, that of networks and alliances. The two firms that had worked as a subcontractor to Isithebe firms both had a female-dominated workforce. Of those businesses that were contracted by firms outside of Isithebe, 10 had a male-dominated workforce, and 6 had a predominantly female workforce.

The lack of subcontracting to homeworkers often related to the restructuring of manufacturing impacts both positively and negatively on the surrounding communities. The practice, which is generally related to women more than men, in many instances gives rise to abusive practices and sweatshop-type industries. However, subcontracting also often facilitates the entrance of women into the workforce. The lack of this mechanism in Isithebe and the surrounding communities further contributes to the unemployment status quo in the area, and prevents the development of another survival mechanism for unemployed women.

FIGURE 7 SUBCONTRACTING IN ISITHEBE⁷²



⁷² Source: 1996 Isithebe Survey

5.3.8.4 Refocusing of production and markets

Both emerging national and international trends have demanded a refocusing of production and markets in order to remain competitive. Shifts in the domestic environment have resulted in many firms embarking on a series of strategies to remain afloat within a context of increasing violence, devaluation of the economy, political uncertainty in the early part of the decade, the impact of GATT, and more recently the influence of GEAR and various national policies.

The 1996 survey revealed that in Isithebe, these shifts resulted in 40% of the respondent firms refocusing their product and market, and 36% moving towards a specific niche in the market in the period leading up to the survey. In the fabricated metal sector, and professional equipment sectors, this is less of an issue as they are already supplying, by definition, a niche market. A further option, as domestic markets saturate and local demand shifts, is to target the export market. While Isithebe does not fall within an export-processing zone, an increasing number of firms (27%) specifically started targeting the export market. Several firms were intending on shifting exclusively to export production over the next 3 to 5 years, but at the time of the survey, no firms interviewed were supplying purely the export market. Several firms on the estate targeted the Isithebe community and regional markets specifically. The reasons for not targeting export markets varied from the product not being suitable, or designed specifically for domestic markets (46%), to not competitive or profitable enough (11%), to the inability to meet domestic demand (13%).

Of those firms that were already targeting the export market, only 28% were businesses dominated by a predominately female workforce. Many of those firms that were involved in exporting were within specialist sectors, and as such still reliant on a largely male skilled workforce.

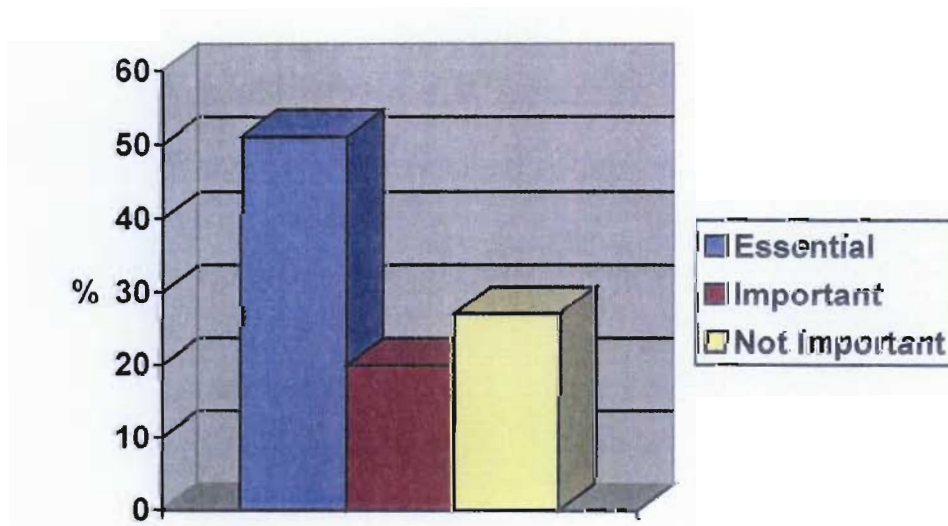
5.3.8.5 Strategic Alliances

In response to increasing competition from both domestic and international sources, a further option that is emerging is that of strategic alliances. Only 18% of the respondents had formulated such alliances, but several others indicated that they were considering, or in the

process of negotiating such alliances.

Examples from the Italian, and to a lesser extent Japanese economic models, have indicated the importance and advantages of constructive networking, communications and the sharing of expertise and knowledge within the field. These characteristics facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skill, and create both horizontal and vertical linkages within the industry. Such a scenario is further facilitated by the physical proximity of firms, especially apparent in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy. Given characteristics such as locational proximity, and the potential for both horizontal and vertical linkages in an environment such as Isithebe, one might expect that networking and alliances were attributed much of the same importance as within the Italian and Japanese models⁷³. Of the firms interviewed, 51% considered networking and sharing of knowledge and experience to be very important, 20% considered it to be important, and 27% considered it not important (see figure 8). However, many firms explained that, of the networks that were established, the majority were regional and national, rather than within the estate.

FIGURE 8 IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING⁷⁴



⁷³ Other example can also be found in a number of Latin American countries

⁷⁴ Source: 1996 Isithebe Survey

The importance of clustering of firms, especially amongst those of smaller size, is considered to be minimal by the respondents. A mere 11% of those interviewed believed that there were advantages to the clustering or physical proximity of firms in an area. The exception was the textile and clothing firms, who fostered networks through family and friends within the estate, rather than through the industry and colleagues. Of equal importance is the need to share knowledge, skills and experiences within the industry. While most respondents saw the advantages of shared ideas, only 11% regularly shared ideas with others within the industry, 44% occasionally, and 16% never actively shared ideas with others in the industry.

The majority (74%) of firms had no formal agreements or relationships with firms (other than parent/sister companies), and contacts within and between industries, with the exception of the Taiwanese-owned textile and clothing firms which were predominantly familial, were formulated through friends and colleagues, and established business contacts. Relationships with suppliers were both formal (47%) and informal (53%), with no identifiable trend noticeable over the sectors. However, one respondent within the metal industry did express the opinion that relationships with suppliers and distributors was becoming more informal.

The few existing networks appeared to be linked to family relationships within the Taiwanese community. The gender relations within these networks remain unexplored. While these firms were generally characterised by a predominantly female workforce, these have little to do with the networking or alliances between the firms.

5.3.8.6 Technology

The need to compete locally and internationally necessitates effective, modern machinery and equipment, to consolidate competitiveness. However, a disturbing characteristic of Isithebe was the lack of machinery that could be considered advanced by domestic or international standards (see table 9).

TABLE 9 STANDARD OF TECHNOLOGY BY DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

	South African (%)	Internationally (%)
Advanced	29.1	18.2
Average	63.6	50.9
Backwards	7.3	30.9

Source: 1996 Isithebe Survey

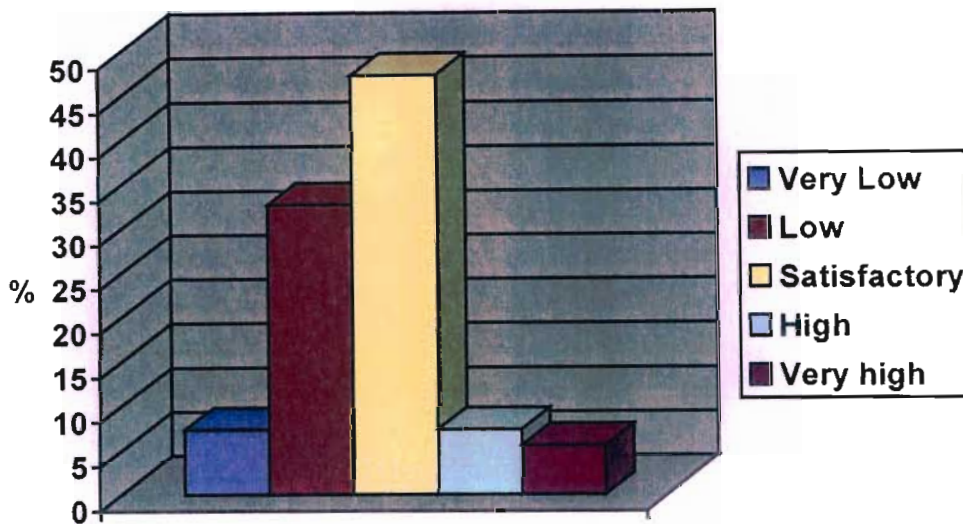
An anomaly remains in that despite the fact that 46% of the businesses had purchased new technology in the past five years, only 18.2% considered their equipment advanced by international standards, and 29.1% advanced by national norms. Many companies did intend to purchase new equipment in the immediate future, in an attempt to increase productivity, and reduce labour costs. The respondents thought that this would have little impact on the size of the labour force, with only four suggesting that they would decrease the number of employees. However, the intention of some firms to purchase new equipment was curtailed by plans to move out of Isithebe to centres such as Pinetown and Durban, and it was explained that the move to new premises would include the purchase of new technology. There was no apparent correlation between the gender composition of the workforce and those firms that had purchased, or were planning to purchase, new machinery. Those firms that were planning on upgrading technology in the process of relocation were generally male-dominated firms. Those firms that had recently upgraded technology and equipment were also predominantly male. This implies that, assuming training is provided in the operation of new technology, more men in the community are receiving training than women (note that training is discussed in the following section).

5.3.8.7 Training

It has already been mentioned that labour was viewed as an impediment to production in Isithebe. While 47% of respondents considered productivity satisfactory, 33% considered it low, and 7% considered their productivity very low. Additionally, it has been argued that Isithebe produces higher quality goods than other IDPs, and thus requires a higher skilled workforce, and is equally characterised by a deeper technical division of labour (Platzky, 1997). However, despite the perception of low productivity, the dissatisfaction with labour appears to

have decreased from 89% of industrialists in 1985 to 44% in 1989 (*ibid.*). The findings of this survey do indicate that less respondents were satisfied with productivity than the findings of Platzky's research, which reveals that 81% of respondents were satisfied.

FIGURE 9 PERCEPTION OF PRODUCTIVITY⁷⁵



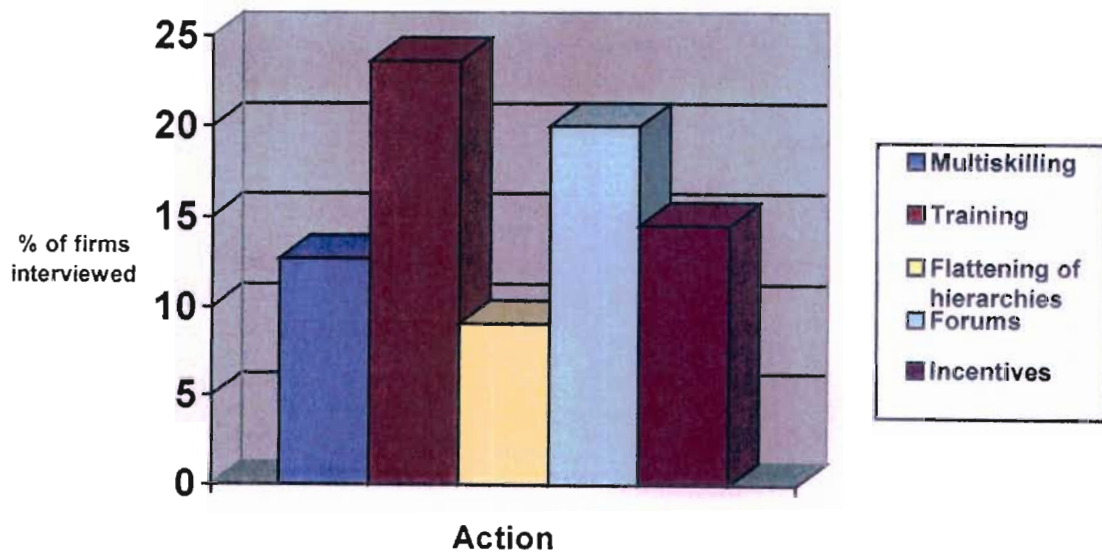
These perceptions, in conjunction with other labour problems, have led to various steps being taken to deal with perceived labour problems. The multi-skilling of the workforce is considered as advantageous to the adoption of new flexible production techniques, and should result in the lowering of labour costs. However, only 12,7% of the firms interviewed have adopted a multi-skilling approach, while 23.6% have provided some form of training for their workers. This was predominantly in the metal and fabricated metal industries. The textile and clothing firms had provided no form of training. Netshitomboni (1995) argues that this sector is reluctant to train workers as they consider it lost production time. This would tend to be borne out by this research. The flattening of hierarchies and the introduction of shop forums and communication structures between workers and management were other steps taken, with 9.1% flattening the hierarchical structure in the workplace, and 20% introducing some form of communication channel or forum within the factory. Finally, a number of firms had introduced incentive or bonus schemes for their staff. Although these were without exception introduced in

⁷⁵ Source: 1996 Isithebe Survey

conjunction with other steps mentioned above, the respondents all expressed enthusiasm for the response to these initiatives by the workers, indicating increased productivity and a decrease in labour problems.

The fact that training was primarily confined to the fabricated and basic metal sectors has overt gender implications. Training offered is limited to male-dominated sectors such as these, while those which remain the domain primarily of female workers are characterised by a lack of training. However, the sectors that have introduced training are also those which have declined in terms of total employment, and thus training has occurred while the size of the workforce is decreasing. This will also limit the number of male workers benefiting from the training. This implies that the population working on the estate and living in the surrounding areas remains largely without training and skilling, which limits their potential to enter higher waged employment.

FIGURE 10 ACTIONS TAKEN TO ADDRESS LABOUR PROBLEMS⁷⁶



⁷⁶ Op Cit.

5.3.9 Some examples Of Different Preconceptions of Gender

At this stage it would be useful to discuss two specific factories on the estate, which stand apart from the others by virtue of their size. The first is a pharmaceutical firm, producing basic medicinal supplies and traditional remedies, as well as hygiene and domestic health products. The second is a peanut butter producing company, which at the time of interview had just received the contract to provide a number of RDP schools projects. Both firms are small, family owned concerns, which originated on the estate. The owners were attracted to the estate by the RIDP incentives and the identification of prospective markets in the area. Both firms indicated high productivity and growth rates. The former employs a primarily female workforce, with very few men on the shop floor or in administrative positions. The latter employs a mixed workforce. The owners of the pharmaceutical company, two brothers, complained that they often experienced fighting and domestic rivalry on the shop floor. This was put down to what were perceived as inherent female characteristics, but were seen as preferable to the more violent fighting that men often engaged in. Women, it was explained, were also more productive than men. A point of concern, however, was the childbirth and parenting responsibilities that accompanied women. However, it was noted that women who left to have children returned to work soon after giving birth. Productivity had been considered very low up to 1995, but the introduction of incentives and bonus schemes had resulted in increased productivity and high growth rates, which were expected to be maintained.

The peanut butter firm was a breakaway from an established firm elsewhere in KwaZulu Natal, and was run by a father and son. The owners had no preference in employing men or women, and employed people they felt would work well within the system. The factory had recently converted to shift work, and was operated on a 24-hour basis. It was found, however, that the night shift consisted of more men than women, and the day shift was characterised by more women. Both companies have recently purchased new technology, and consider their operations advanced by South African standards, and average by international standards. They have identified niches in the domestic market, and after initially targeting the local and regional markets, have expanded to supply markets nationally. The pharmaceutical firm had recently launched a sister company in Pinetown. As both firms produced unique goods to the estate,

networking and clustering was of little importance. However, the peanut butter firm had established formal relationships with suppliers elsewhere in the province.

The above discussion reveals a number of perceptions regarding the difference between men and women in the workplace. Entrenched in the minds of employers and management is the notion of suitability of men and women to specific tasks, associated with preconceptions of strength, dexterity, reliability and efficiency. At the time of the survey, the textile and garment sectors were composed of a predominantly female workforce, with men only engaged in supervisory positions. Heavier industries such as metal factories employed almost exclusively men. This reflects the perception of employers themselves of suitability according to physical and strength and dexterity of men and women to different tasks. What remains to be explored however, is the degree to which the employees consider themselves to be restricted in ability, and the degree to which this differentiation is imposed by the employers. More skilled sectors such as scientific instruments are also occupied almost exclusively by men. This may reflect both the perceived suitability of men to the job, and possibly different educational profiles between men and women. The move to 24-hour shift operations also highlighted the fact that men engaged primarily in the night shift, while women participated in daytime shifts. Employers suggest that this reflects the need for women in the household in the evening to perform household tasks.

Fundamental to this discussion is the fact that differentiation is made according to gender in prescribing the suitability of employees to specific employment. Inherent in this is the role that identity plays in the differentiation of men and women within the workforce in Isithebe. This identity may be one ascribed to men and women by employers and management, the identity given to them by their communities and families, the identity they have themselves formulated, or most likely an identity which has been formulated through the interaction of all of these, and the environment in which each individual lives. This differentiation has contributed to a specific manifestation of power in the workplace on the basis of gender, where supervisory and management positions remain the domain of men.

It has been argued by a number of authors that the location of industry in Isithebe, and the growth of the estate, has impacted positively on women in the surrounding communities, in

terms of the opportunities to realistically enter a wage economy for the first time (Platzky, 1997; Pudifin and Ward, 1986, Ardington, 1984). The benefits of the IDPs to women in a number of locations have been explored (Platzky, 1997; Jaffe, 1988). The results of the survey conducted here indicate that the rapid penetration of the workforce by women in the 1980s has declined at a faster rate than the actual penetration, thus depriving many households of the advantages of additional wages, or at time primary wages, which many were privy to during the second half of the 1980s. Within an environment of growing unemployment, both nationally and regionally, which has impacted on both men and women, women appear to be finding it harder to enter, and survive in the workplace, than men. However, this does not imply that men are not effected, as since 1995 they too appear to be experiencing difficulties in retaining employment.

The decline of female employment, in Isithebe and the surrounds at least is due in part to the fact that certain female-dominated sectors are in decline on the estate. There has also been an increasing penetration by men into previously female-dominated industries since 1996, which has further threatened the position of women within these industries. Concurrently, however, women are, albeit at a much slower pace, making moves into industries characterised as the domain of male workers, resulting in a slight blurring of the gender divide within various industries. This does provide the opportunity for potential household livelihood strategies to be developed where an environment of increasing ‘blanket’ unemployment might otherwise threaten the existence of many households.

5.4 Concluding Comments

Many of the changes associated with restructuring are conspicuous in their absence from Isithebe, or are being followed at a slow rate of change. The “new managerial initiatives in the workplace, promotion of shopstewards, and training schemes” that Sitas (1995: 19) argues has created a new culture of individualism on the shopfloor in KwaZulu/Natal, are difficult to identify in Isithebe. The slow and piecemeal adoption of new production techniques identified with restructuring have limited the full impact that could potentially be felt, particularly by female workers, in specific industries. While the sectoral diversity in Isithebe provides for a

more varied gender pattern in employment, there is evidence to suggest that the enthusiasm displayed for female labour in the 1980s is declining. This is further evidenced in the relative decline of the female component of the workforce in certain traditionally female-oriented sectors such as the textile and garment industries, within a context of absolute decline in female employment since 1989. Following this rapid drop, the differential in employment patterns tends to have stabilised slightly, with the total male workforce in Isithebe declining at a slightly slower rate than the female workforce. There has undoubtedly been movement between sectors by male workers, and to a much lesser degree female workers, challenging the conventional gender divisions within industry. The decline of sectors such as fabricated metals, together with increased training within the sector, has made available a disproportionate number of male workers, which may account in part for the increased penetration of male labour into sectors such as the wearing apparel, and to a lesser degree, the textile sectors. Sectors in which training and multi-skilling is occurring remain, and are in fact increasingly, the domain of men. Thus while an increasing number of male workers are excluded from these processes, women remain unable to benefit from them either.

This results in part from pre-existing associations of women and men with different jobs based on gender identities. Additionally, despite the flattening of hierarchies in a number of cases, the study reveals that supervisory and management positions are largely reserved for men. It is suggested that a proportion of men employed on the estate increasingly enjoy a relatively higher degree of job security than women, despite the high unemployment levels regionally and nationally, due to the increasingly skilled nature of their employment. This is at the same time resulting in an increasing degree of marginalisation or redundancy within the male workforce as well, as those men not able to enter the higher skilled positions face increasing unemployment.

The refocusing of industry has concomitantly resulted in growing male unemployment from the period 1992 up to 1996. Those women that were able to enter the workforce, or remain within employment were limited, in this environment, to low paid, low-skilled repetitive labour, while men moved to higher skilled, higher wage jobs, within a wider environment of growing male unemployment. The faster decline of the female workforce, compared to that of the male workforce may have initiated further dynamics, and the relationship between this trend and restructuring provides the opportunity for further exploration. It has been suggested that women

employed in semi-skilled, secure jobs in the textile industry have viable ways of challenging their oppression in the workplace and at home (Mager, 1989). However, the nature of employment in the clothing, textile and to a lesser degree the plastics industry, in Isithebe, provides none of these opportunities, existing as an insecure, low-paid means of obtaining additional or primary income to support selves and families. Further, while the wearing apparel sector has grown in employment, indications are that the textile sector is on the decline on the estate. The effect that these incomes have on relations within the household, and the positions of women within the household will be discussed in the following chapter, and the implications of such effects, or lack thereof, will be explored.

Chapter Six The Isithebe Communities

The previous chapters have explored a number of debates surrounding the household, and the effect that women's income has on relations and power within the household, as well as studying the profile of the industrial estate itself and assessing the participation of women employed on the estate. This leads to the examining of the communities surrounding Isithebe estate, and the range of dynamics which are present in many of the households in this area in relation to the previous discussion on the workplace. This exploration comprises a number of components discussed in the following chapter. The chapter starts by profiling the broad characteristics of the communities, and moves to detailing employment trends and household characteristics. This is followed by a section examining the participation of men and women within the household, the division of labour and the gender relations within these households. The final section identifies a number of challenges to traditional gender identities and associations on a household level. This process leads to the identification of a number of dynamics and issues which can then be associated with the findings of the previous chapter.

6.1 Community Profile

A number of communities surrounding Isithebe were identified. The focus was primarily on the north and west of the estate. To the south of the estate lies Mandeni and Sundumbili. The profusion of informal settlements around the estate makes it almost impossible at times to classify household as belonging to a specific community, as the informal communities merge into the more rural and traditional communities. Dwellings varied from one-roomed shack structures to traditional multi-hut kraals. Infrastructure and service provision to these areas was almost negligible at the time, although Eskom was in the process of extending the provision of electricity to the area. A number of central water pumps have been provided in the communities immediately bordering Isithebe, but these become more scarce away from the estate. Other than the road from Nyoni through Isithebe to Mandeni, the only roads in the area are dirt, and many become impassible in wet weather.

In Isithebe and the surrounding communities, a total of 62 households were interviewed. Within these households, 313 people were of employable age, that is, between 16 and 65. Of these 313 people, 150 were male, 161 were female. Incidentally this reflects the gender composition of the province as a whole. Recent census data indicates that 46.9% of the population of KwaZulu Natal is male, 53.1% female (SSA, 1996). Of the total of 508 people counted in the household sample, 197 people were either under the age of 16 or over 65, and were considered to be not of employable age. This does not imply that the remainder of the sample does not perform any work, as many within this category engage in the informal economy, and perform work in the household. While this figure was higher than expected, it too reflects national and provincial trends. In 1996, 37.8% of the male population was under the age of 15, while 35.1% of the female population was younger than 15. Also, 3.8% and 5.8% of the male and female population respectively was over 65 years of age (*ibid.*).

From the sample of the working age population, 116 men were employed, while 99 females were employed. These figures reflect the findings discussed in the previous chapter of a lower female employment rate, while differing from the trend of higher female employment in other decentralisation points. The lower number of employed females in areas around Isithebe can be partially explained by the greater diversification of industries on the estate, as opposed to the reliance on clothing and textile industries in other decentralisation points. The number of textile and clothing industries on the estate is relatively limited, although still significant, and it is these sectors that tend to rely heavily on a predominantly labour force. Of the women engaged in formal employment, 90% were employed on the estate, primarily in the textile and clothing factories. Of these, 13% were employed in Mandeni in a variety of service-oriented jobs. A greater proportion of men than women were engaged in migrant labour elsewhere in the province and distributed over the rest of South Africa.

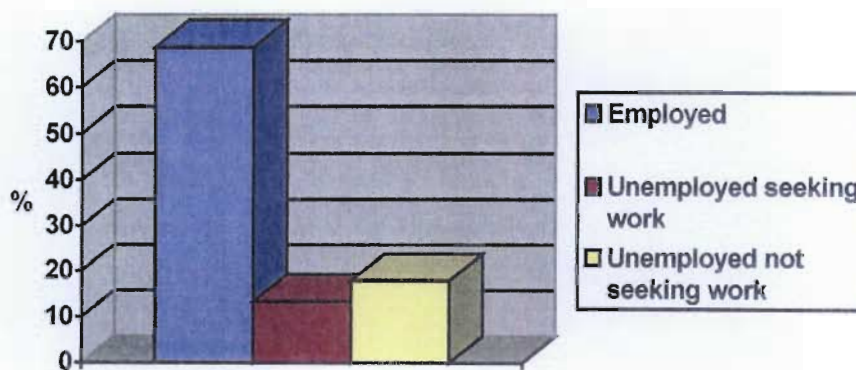
TABLE 10 POPULATION OF EMPLOYABLE AGE

	No.	Percentage
Employed	215	68.7
Unemployed seeking work	42	13.4
Unemployed not seeking work	56	17.9
Total of employable age	313	100

Source: 1996 Household survey

A total of 31% of the sample interviewed within the working age parameters were unemployed⁷⁷, which is below the 39% for KwaZulu Natal, as well as below the national average of 34% (SSA 1996). This would indicate that the presence of Isithebe still plays a crucial role in employment patterns for the area⁷⁸, despite the relative decline in female employment from the 1980s, and is undoubtedly an essential component in household and individual survival strategies for the communities surrounding the estate. The employment data was further broken down into those who were actively engaged in seeking work, either in the region or elsewhere, and those that were not looking for any work at all.

FIGURE 11 EMPLOYMENT PROFILE OF SAMPLE⁷⁹



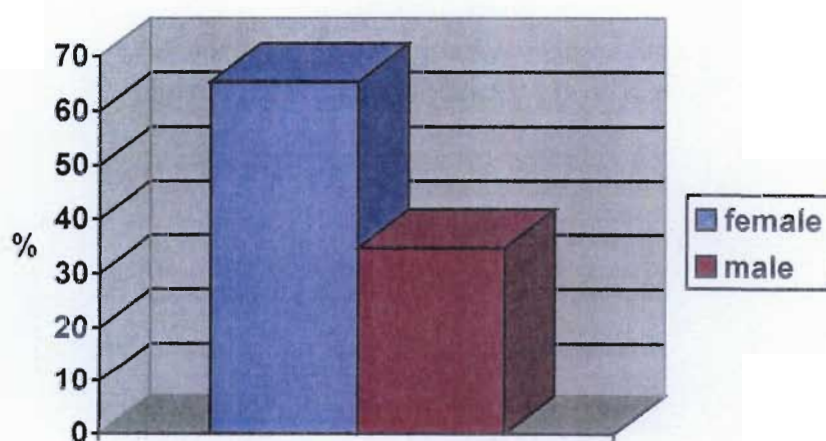
⁷⁷ For the purpose of this survey, unemployed was defined to be without regular employment in the formal economy from which a wage was generated.

⁷⁸ This however, does not seem to be the perception of industries on the estate itself. Interviews with the management and owners of factories on the estate revealed a perception of high, and growing unemployment in the area. Most of the factories, with the exception of the two small, family-owned businesses, indicated a high labour turnover. See chapter 5.

⁷⁹ Source: 1996 Household survey

While females accounted for a larger proportion of the unemployed⁸⁰ in the area (see figure 12), the perception of the community was that the proportion of male unemployment is growing at a faster rate than that of women. The higher rate of female unemployment reflects the findings detailed in Chapter Five. Of those that were unemployed, a greater number of men were looking for work than men. 52% of men were looking for work, while 48% of women were seeking employment. The interviews in the household survey indicated that a number of male respondents had returned from migrant labour, or that the dwelling included a person who had recently returned. This was reinforced by the suggestion by many of the respondents that it was easier for women to get a job, than for men. The data from the 1996 Household survey, together with the KFC data discussed in Chapter Five has suggested, however, that this has been changing throughout the 1990s, and that since 1989 women may be finding securing employment more difficult than men. However, having said this, in the last two years the rate of women does appear to have stabilised, and thus lends more weight to the perceptions of the community.

FIGURE 12 UNEMPLOYED BY GENDER (PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE)⁸¹



There was no evidence of in-migration to Isithebe and its surrounds. Of the households sampled, only a single respondent had moved to Isithebe from outside the region. The

⁸⁰ The phrase unemployed is more appropriate than not economically active, as respondents may be engaged in the informal economy, and generating an income for household or personal use. Not economically active may also fail to make the differentiation between those of employable age, and those outside these boundaries.

⁸¹ Op Cit.

remainder were born either in Isithebe, or in the surrounding rural communities. Rather there was an indication of outward-migration, as the younger population sought work in Pinetown, Richards Bay and Empangeni, and Durban. Thus although Isithebe is a significant employment node, it is not a major attractor at provincial or even regional scale. Rather, it is dwarfed by both Durban and the Richards Bay/Empangeni complex. In addition, there may be a general awareness amongst potential migrants that employment on the estate is declining.

6.2 Household dynamics

The complexities of assessing an institution such as a household, and the difficulties in using the household as a tool of analysis have been discussed in Chapter Four. The households interviewed in the communities ranged from single member structures to extended family units. A number of issues can be extracted from the household study, three of which will be considered in this chapter: household finances, division of labour and power. These do not exist independently, but each interacts and moulds the others in both concept and practice. However, a change in one does not necessarily result in a change in the others. The chapter starts by constructing a household profile of the sample used in the 1996 household survey. This is followed by a section exploring the flow, management and control of household finances in those households interviewed, while establishing links between theoretical analyses and the trends identified in Isithebe. A discussion on the division of labour which was identified during the 1996 household survey ensues, followed by a discussion on the different manifestations of power between household members within the sample.

6.2.1 Household Profile

During the 1996 household survey, a total of 508 people ranging in age from babies to pensioners were represented. The highest age representation was within the 10 years to 25 years of age category, as illustrated in figure 13.

FIGURE 13 AGE PROFILE OF SAMPLE⁸²



Levels of education were generally low, with only 57 household members having matriculated. 18 household members had completed some tertiary education, 14 of which were teachers or nursing diplomas. The importance of education was emphasised by respondents, and this attitude was borne out by the fact that only 2 children of school going age were not attending school, as opposed to the 137 children between the ages of 7 and 17 which were attending local schools. A further 37 children were away at boarding schools in KwaZulu Natal, as well as other provinces.

TABLE 11 LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED

Level of Education	No.
none	106
std 1	32
std 2	31
std 3	38
std 4	31
std 5	34
std 6	36
std 7	32
std 8	32
std 9	25
matric	57
pre school	14
class 1/2	40
Total	508

Source: 1996 Household Survey

⁸² Op Cit.

A number of households reported household members working away from home, with a total of 57 household members classified as migrant workers.

Given the location of the communities surrounding the estate, it was to be expected that manufacturing would provide a major source of employment for workers living in the area. While this was indeed the case, only 21 females were employed in the manufacturing industry, as opposed to 38 males (see table 12). The service sector provided another source of employment, accounting for 8 men and 9 females. This corresponds with the growth of the service sector on Isithebe estate. Construction provided employment for 9 men. A clear gender division can be identified in the types of formal employment in which household members engaged. Construction remains exclusively a male occupation, while domestic service predominantly female. Similarly, the security sector (police and armed forces) was represented in the community exclusively by males. However, the penetration of men into the manufacturing sector as discussed in the previous chapter was borne out by the household survey.

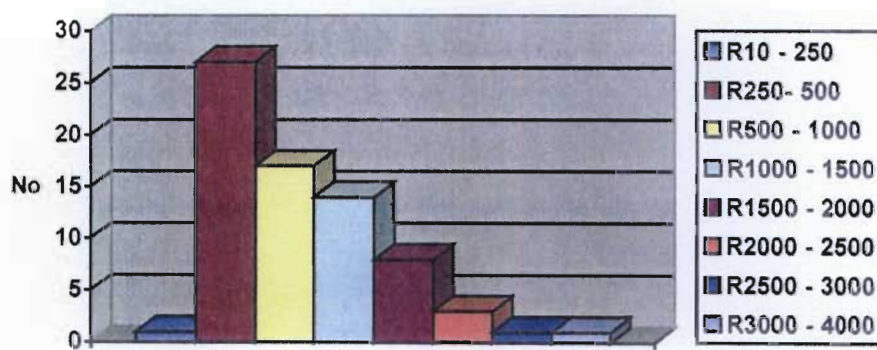
TABLE 12 SECTORAL ANALYSES OF EMPLOYMENT

Sector of Primary Employment	GENDER	
	male	female
agriculture/fishing/forestry	3	2
Manufacturing	38	21
electricity and water	1	
Construction	9	
wholesale and retail	7	1
restaurants/entertainment/sport	1	
transport/communications	2	
community/social/personnel services	8	9
domestic services	2	5
armed forces/police	4	
Total	75	38

Source: 1996 Household Survey

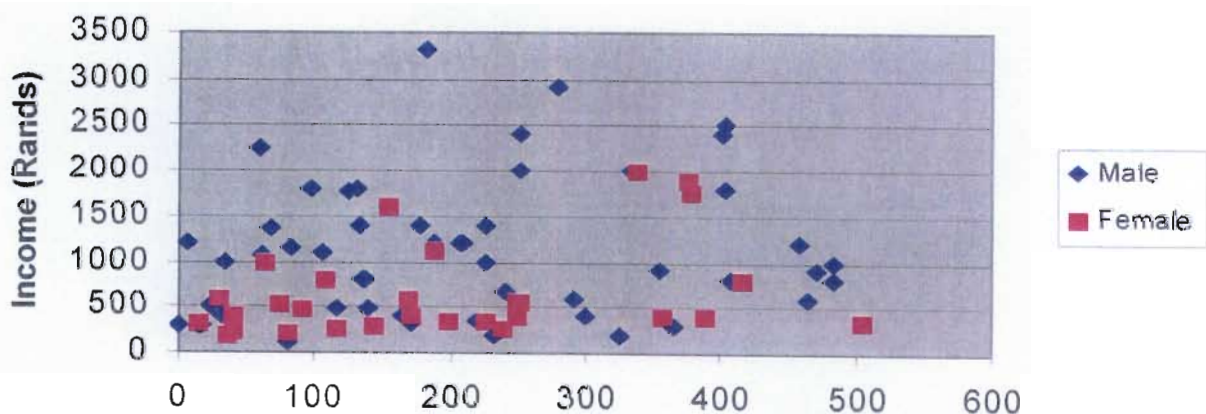
Wages earned by household members varied from R120 a month to R3200⁸³. These were wages from the formal economy, and did not include income earned from informal activities. Income from the informal sector provides an essential contribution to the monthly income of individuals and households, and in some instances may even exceed the monthly wage which may be earned from formal employment.

FIGURE 14 INCOME PROFILE OF SAMPLE⁸⁴



Women were concentrated in the lower end of the wage profile, with only 5 women earning a monthly wage between R1500 and R2000. Only 5 males earned a wage higher than R2000, with the highest wage of R3300 earned by a migrant worker in Durban⁸⁵.

FIGURE 15 INCOME BY GENDER⁸⁶



⁸³ Only 72 responses were provided for this question.

⁸⁴ Op Cit.

⁸⁵ Difficulty was encountered in eliciting the exact income of respondents and family members. This was due to the fact that many respondents were unaware of the exact income of other family members, but knew the range in which the income fell, or were uncomfortable in revealing the exact income for themselves or others in the family. The analysis is thus based only on those that could provide a figure.

6.3 Gender Relations in the Household

6.3.1 Household Types

Contrary to the common assumption that the household exists primarily as a nuclear structure, the household, as a tool of analysis, assumes a range of different forms. These can vary according to the gender of the household head, the family that may live within the household, the presence of children, or extended relatives that live within the household. The structure is often influenced by a range of cultural, social or economic pressures or dynamics. Further, the household rarely exists as a constant entity, but rather is fluid and constantly changing according to the environment.

A variety of different household structures were encountered in Isithebe. Of the total households interviewed, 25 were headed by females. All female household heads were employed in the formal or informal economy in Isithebe estate or the surrounds.

TABLE 13 HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS BY GENDER

	No of households.	%
Female Household Head	25	40
Male Household Head	37	60
Total	62	100

Source: 1996 Household Survey

Household size varied from single member households to households consisting of seventeen members, all family members. Households were further differentiated by the employment status of the working-age members living within the household. Each different household structure tended to be characterised by various differing dynamics in terms of the finances, division of labour, and power relations

6.3.2 Household Finances

Pahl (1989) constructs a number of typologies as a means of examining the household structure.

⁸⁶ Source: 1996 Household survey.

These include “household income management” and “independent income management”. The former was the one evidenced most commonly in the households surveyed in Isithebe. The income generated by any member of the household was handed over to a single person, usually female, either the head of the household, a wife or occasionally grandparent, for safe-keeping and management. Two of the households interviewed placed the responsibility for management of income with the grandmother (paternal) who lived with the household. There was a tendency to notionally earmark different incomes for different purposes. For example, the majority of household members were paid weekly. In those households where a member, usually the male head, was paid monthly or bimonthly, that income was allocated to purchases that were not essential for daily consumption, or for saving for expenditure on furnishings or contingencies. The income generated by other members of the household, earning weekly, was directed for weekly expenditure, such as electricity cards, perishables and groceries. However, women respondents acknowledged that men often did not hand over all their income, but rather the portion which was to be spent on household and family requirements. This scenario is not restricted to a gender disaggregated analysis: in female-headed households where there was more than one earner, the same process was often followed.

Women generating any income through the formal or informal economy, generally held bank accounts, or participated in *stockvels*. Of interest was the fact that the income of men was often directed into the household account, which was held in the women’s name. There was no evidence of a separate bank account for wives and husbands. One interviewee explained this by saying that both incomes (the husband and wives) should go towards the support of the household, and saving for the future, but men often don’t do this, they just spend their money on “drink”. Thus it is the woman who has apparent control of the household finance. However, although the account may be held in the wives’ name, any decision as to the spending of savings remains the prerogative of the husband. The mother or wife may make suggestions, but before any action is taken, the approval of the husband needs to be sought.

One household interviewed consisted of an unemployed husband looking for work in the area, a wife working on the estate, and three children, all below the age of 10. The sole income for the family was that generated by the wife through her formal employment, and this went into an account held in her name. Despite the fact that the family survived on her single income, the

wife had to seek the approval and sanction of her husband on when and where to send the eldest child to school, and indeed whether this could be done at all. This, however, was not a form of cooperative bargaining, but rather a deferment to the authority and power of the husband. The wife, when interviewed, explained that had the husband refused to allow the child to go to school, or had disagreed on the potential school, she would have had to defer to his wish, as he was the head of the household. When questioned on the other use of the money in the bank account, the wife explained that any decision made as to how to spend the savings was subject to the approval of the husband. At times, there was no justification for his decision, it depended on his mood at the time. It was best, she explained, to wait until he was in a good mood to ask. This practice, it was discovered, was common to many households, regardless of whether the man, or women, worked.

In a household consisting of an employed wife, unemployed husband, grandparents and children, the wife retains a portion of her weekly income to purchase drinks, which she then sells from home. The wife works in a sacking company on the estate, and works shifts. When she is not at home to sell, her husband sells for her, and the income is directed to the daily household account, which the wife manages. This scenario, or similar, was witnessed several times, where the husband participated in the wife's informal business while the wife was at work. However, the men were also known to retain the money made to spend it on drinks for themselves.

At this point the difference between the management of, and the control of, household finances must be reintroduced. The management of the finances and various incomes does not by any means imply control over the utilisation of money. The wife or mother, despite access to money through the household account in her name, or through (primarily female, and decreasing) participation in stockvel, sought the approval of the male household head for any expenditure. In the cases of extended households, or at least those households with children, wives generally indicated that the husband or father was reasonable in his decision, and did consider the wellbeing of his family and the household. The allocation of particular finances was not considered to be open to debate, and was taken as a given.

In those households where the men earned an income, either as a sole or joint provider, the

scenario was not much different. While the women assumed responsibility for daily household management and decision-making, all decisions were subject to the approval of the man. What was, however, apparent was that the generation of a dual income led to slightly more cooperative arrangements within the household. The man, when working, was less likely to retain income for drinking, and the women generally expressed satisfaction with the running of the finances, the running of the household, and the management of daily tasks within the household. One would expect that the involvement of both primary household members in a wage economy merely increased the pressure on women to perform both in the workplace and at home. This does in fact seem to be the case. However there seems to be increased cooperation, akin to cooperative bargaining, that manifests itself in dual-income households. The man appears to be more involved in the household than those households where the man is unemployed. A household in Sundumbili was interviewed where both the man and the women were employed. The man worked night shift, his wife a day shift, in different factories on the estate. During the day, the man slept, and before he went to work in the evening he performed various household chores, and took care of the three children. The wife assumed responsibility for the remaining tasks in the evening when she finished work. A joint bank account was held, with both parties having access to the account. While the wife could not be interviewed as she was at work, the man indicated an agreeable relationship, and a rather equitable power sharing and decision-making relationship with his wife. A point to note, however, was that the location of this household afforded on-site access to water and electricity, thus reducing two of the most time-consuming household tasks identified by other households. However this trend was noticed across the spectrum of rural and peri-urban households interviewed.

The latter of Pahl's (1989) categories, "independent income management", was scarcely evidenced in the community. One exception stands out: a household consisting of a single mother, and grandmother, and seven adult daughters. The mother was a school teacher, as were all seven daughters, employed throughout the province, both in the area and without. Five of the daughters lived in the areas in which they taught, and returned home only during school holidays. The remaining two lived at home. While all seven daughters sent a remittance home to their mother, each retained most of their income in individual bank accounts. The mother then pooled the remittances in a separate bank account for the upkeep of the house, and as a joint contingent savings account. All seven daughters were present at the interview, and all

expressed disinterest at marriage opportunities, complaining that they preferred their independence and to make money, to be able to support themselves, and spend money on what they wanted to. This indicates to some degree the surrendering of financial autonomy which characterises the marriage process in the community. However, when asked about the stigma of remaining single, the women replied that that was changing, that they were able to look after themselves, and would only marry when they were ready to. Of interest was the fact that everyone in this family had attained a tertiary certificate of some kind (financed partly through the pension and disability grant of the late grandfather, as well as the earnings of both the grandmother and the mother), and lived for part of the year in an urban or peri-urban environment. This suggests the influence on urban influences on the ideology of the women in the family. The family appeared more cosmopolitan or urban in their ideology, style of living, and attitudes.

The only other family with any post secondary qualification that was encountered was that of an elderly, retired couple, whose son was at the University of Zululand studying engineering on a bursary. The couple existed on the state pension received for the couple. The son returned home only occasionally.

Thus if one was to distinguish between the ability to generate income, the control one has over that income, and the access and management of the income, a variety of scenarios exist. The majority of households contribute to a single account, which is generally held in the women's name, regardless of the employment status of either the man or women in the household. While the women often have access to this account, in that the account is in their name, the authority, whether verbalised or not, of the man over the household prevents the women accessing income without the approval of the male in the household. The women can make suggestions, and formulate plans for expenditure, but these are subject to authorisation by the male. This scenario exists even in situations where the women is the sole generator of income in the household, and is responsible for the household budgeting.

While in most instances the wife is responsible for the household budgeting, and plans weekly or monthly trips into Mandeni or elsewhere, this budget is still subject to the close scrutiny of the husband. Women often allocate money for savings for household appliances and

furnishings, more so than men generating an income. However, requests from the women in the house to purchase such “luxuries” are generally approved, as they improve the status of the family in the community. In addition, purchases such as refrigerators and freezers create the opportunity to diversify into the informal economy, providing sales and storage facilities.

In households in which the male ‘breadwinner’ is unemployed, and survival is largely dependent on a female income, men often utilize a portion of their partners income for personal consumption. Very little, if any, income is used by women for social purposes. In instances where the female does retain any income, this is increasingly used to generate income in informal business in which she may engage. The different characteristics of income management and control are generally summarised in the following table.

TABLE 14 HOUSEHOLD CONTROL OF FINANCES (TYPE AND NUMBER INTERVIEWED)

Household Type ⁸⁷	Characteristic	No of Households ⁸⁸ .
Dual income	Single bank account in wives (and husbands) name Household expenses managed by wife Decision-making by both partners (co-operative bargaining)	4
Employed woman, unemployed man	Single account in wives name Household expenses managed by wife Decision-making by man Wife’s income accessed by husband for personal spending Income often directed into additional informal activities	14
Unemployed woman, employed man	Single account in wives name Household expenses managed by wife Decision-making by man	19

⁸⁷ It is assumed that within female-headed households, the female head assumes responsibility for the primary generation and management of the household finances, as well as for decision-making.

⁸⁸ While this table provides an idea of the typology of the different households interviewed, this is not totally accurate. For example, several households are not easily categorised within one of these categories, such as the household that directs money to the grandmother. Further, issues such as decision-making, and ‘illicit’ income access is often hard to accurately assess without prolonged exposure to the subjects. This table is thus intended to provide a broad framework for different households. It also only applies to households in which there are adult males present, i.e. not the female-headed households interviewed.

6.3.3 Labour Division

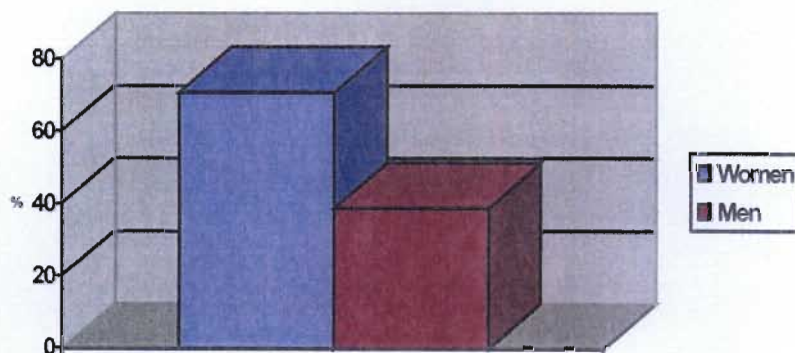
Of the total sample interviewed, 118 women assumed sole responsibility for more than three household activities, whereas only 22 men engaged in three or more household activities (see figure 6). The difference between the men and women engaging in multiple activities is not as large as expected. However, a further factor that needs to be considered in this equation is the diverse nature of the household units sampled. The sample interviewed ranged from extended families housing up to four generations, to nuclear families consisting of husband and wife and child, to single member households. The last two examples, however, were in the minority. Only one household interviewed consisted of only husband and wife. In this instance, both were employed, the husband in Isithebe, the wife in informal activities, selling knitting and crochet work. All of the women engaged in formal employment were responsible for the daily functioning of the household, including cooking, child-minding, and ensuring water and wood collecting. When questioned, women explained that the husbands still perceived these jobs as the responsibility of women, and were also too lazy to take responsibility for household management.

A clear perception of the legitimacy of existing gender roles within the household was witnessed in the community research. Many men and women interviewed professed to believe to some degree that women did have a 'natural' role in the household, one which included responsibility for specific household chores, and which defined the relationship between the women and other household members. This was partly explained by a number of women who suggested that men had never tried to "belong in the house", implying an evolved naturalism rather than a biological condition.

Despite the fact that 46% of the employed respondents interviewed were women, what was apparent was that women are still engaged in supporting the daily running of the household. This provides some indication of the degree to which the daily running of the household, or household work, is borne in addition to formal employment in a wage economy. In a community with very little access to running water and in parts devoid of electricity, responsibility for water and wood collecting is strictly gendered. Only the two households

interviewed in Sundumbili had access to piped water on the property. This reflects the provincial environment, in which only 39.8% of households in KwaZulu Natal have access to water inside the dwelling (SSA, 1996). Even those areas that have been electrified still rely on the purchasing of electricity cards, usually from Mandeni. The collection of these cards is usually undertaken by women in the household, with the exception of those families where the male is employed in the town. Where this is the case, the man collects cards after or before work. Many households draw on dual energy sources, using electricity sparingly, and using wood to perform specific tasks. In these cases, the tasks of energy collection is duplicated, with women collecting wood, and travelling into town to purchase electricity cards. While several water pumps have been installed in the community, the average household still spends up to an hour collecting water twice a day. This too is primarily the responsibility of the women, although it is sometimes delegated to young boys. Grass cutting, cooking, child-minding, and other household tasks are still perceived very much as the responsibility of the women.

FIGURE 16 PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYED WOMEN ENGAGED IN MULTIPLE HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES AS OPPOSED TO PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYED MEN⁸⁹.



A complaint that surfaced frequently was that men, especially when unemployed, lazed around the community, drinking, playing cards, gambling and socialising. The households appeared to become increasingly reliant on female income as the sole input into the household. The perception by the women of men as lazy reveals in many instances a subtle acceptance of the role that women were expected to perform. Despite the multiple employment burden of many women, the laziness of unemployed household men was generally not challenged. No forms of overt resistance to patriarchal structures or dominance explored by GAD theorists were

⁸⁹ Source: 1996 Household Survey

evidenced in this community.

Of the 62 households surveyed in Isithebe and surrounds, 25 were headed by females. This included households consisting only of single women (two, both looking for work), households consisting of mother and children, and those extended families where the grandmother was considered head of the household. This last category was somewhat problematic. In certain instances, although income was generated only by younger members of the household, the position of authority was assumed by the “Gogo” (grandmother), who was responsible for all decision-making in the household. In other instances, while the opinion of the Gogo was respected, and sought, decision-making rested with those members of the household who were employed, as they, the Gogo said, were the ones supporting the household. This indicates to some extent the interaction of age and sex on decision-making and power within the household structure, as well as the ambiguity surrounding the relationship between income and power, more so as there were instances within dual-income, male-female households where the elder fitted into the decision-making process to some extent. In those households where the household was, *de facto* or *de jure*, headed by a female, the children were allocated specific duties within the house, especially water and wood collecting, or the purchasing of electricity cards over the weekends, so as to alleviate the pressure on the usually employed single-parent. In each of these households interviewed, the eldest child was generally in her teens, thus ensuring adequate capabilities for coping with household tasks, and participation in household management. Tasks such as cooking still remained primarily the domain of the mother, although with the assistance of her daughters.

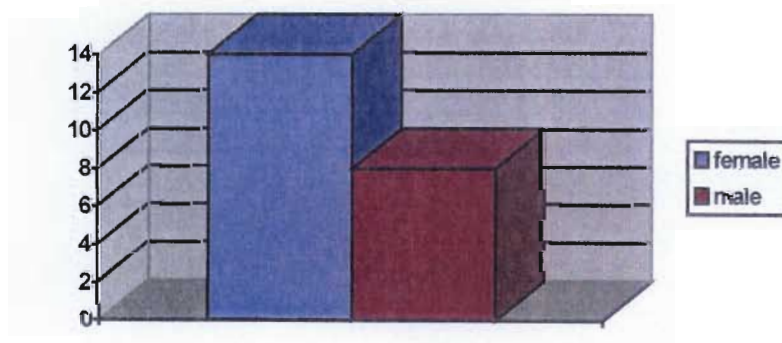
The implications of this is that where the children are not old enough to assume certain responsibilities, the onus is on the mother for all responsibilities including cooking, water and wood collection and shopping, as well as child minding. In each of the female headed household cases sampled, where the wife was married, her husband was away working or had passed away, and in only one case was a remittance sent back, and this was done infrequently. The house therefore subsisted on the income of the sole female head.

Many of the women interviewed expressed the need to engage more actively in the formal economy through a second job. However, the nature of their employment on the estate, and the

need to manage the household prevented this. The increasing move to shift work in the factories on the estate, the primary source of employment for the women, prevented further participation in a more formal second job, and forced those seeking additional income into the informal sector, for example selling drinks, meat and foodstuffs, craft-making such as needlework and grasswork, and other forms of informal activities. The shift work also increased pressure on the time allocated to domestic chores within the household, suggesting that participation in the formal economy has increased the burden on the women in the community, as argued by many GAD theorists. Women respondents expressed this implicitly in their discussion of how when they returned from work they had to start performing household functions.

Of all the households interviewed, seven women produced and marketed grasswork, three women sold foodstuffs and beer from their home, and four women produced and sold crochet work. Those women that sold foodstuffs and drinks from home were responsible themselves for the purchasing of produce from Mandeni at weekly intervals. Of the 25 female-headed households, all had some informal business conducted by an individual in the household, whether it was the female head, or daughters or sister. Eight of the female household heads engaged in the informal economy themselves. Three men were engaged in the selling of beer and cold drinks from their homes. Of the 32 respondents from both male and female headed households who engaged in informal activities, 22 were engaged in both the formal and informal economy. Of these 22, 14 were women (see figure 17).

FIGURE 17 EMPLOYMENT IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL SECTOR BY GENDER⁹⁰



⁹⁰ Op Cit.

Of interest is the fact that one of the eight men counted renting of a room as an informal activity. However, the rent generated was managed by the wife of the household. The eight men engaged in informal employment were generally employed in maintenance and building services in the community. The breakdown of the informal activities engaged in by households is detailed in table 15.

TABLE 15 BREAKDOWN OF INFORMAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES BY GENDER

Business Activities (informal/small)	SEX	
	male	female
Housebuilding general	1	
Timber	2	
Grasswork	1	7
Sewing		2
Crochet		4
Foodstuffs and beer	3	3
Clothing		1
Own production		1
Other selling	1	
Radio repair	1	
Electrician/handyman	2	
Cane		1
Renting	1	
Transport	1	
Total	13	19

Source: 1996 Household Survey

Several of the people interviewed had recently started producing products for selling, or were considering doing so, due to the increasing economic hardships they were experiencing. A further option that was being considered by several people not currently engaged in the informal economy was that of purchasing a fridge or freezer enabling the selling of food and drinks from

home, facilitated by the recent introduction of electricity to the area. The gendered division of labour in the informal economy can be identified from the figures presented. Those men that were engaged in the informal market were concentrated in traditionally masculine services (maintenance and building), while women engaged in a range of activities.

Thus it can be seen that within all realms of the household, a gendered division of labour does exist. Women assume responsibility for multiple household activities to a greater degree than men, although the extent of this difference is not as great as expected. The household chores and activities are themselves allocated according to gender. The employment status of the husband has little bearing on the allocation of management and responsibilities; even when men are unemployed, the management of the household remains the burden of the wife. The increasing penetration of the informal market as an additional livelihood strategy appears to be pursued by women more than men, and the nature of activities also assumes a gendered differentiation.

6.3.4 Power distribution in the household

At first glance it would appear that women are apparently content to defer to the male head of the household, regardless of his employment status. It would also seem that there has been little overt resistance to male authority and that relations are generally accepted as being naturally unequal. This however is probably a superficial reading of gender relations. For example, women's apparent reticence to surrender certain of the household burdens and pressure males to take further responsibility may have to do with protecting a source of power they do have, control over household management and resources. This reading may also ignore the extent to which women are able to manipulate men in relation to household activities. Power relations are probably more complex and multidirectional than may initially be perceived.

In research conducted by Gwagwa (1995a), one respondent explained how she would manipulate her husband through the daily routine of cooking:

“I know what he does not like. But when he does not give me enough

money, I cook exactly that. When he queries me I just say that was the cheapest I could get. I am telling it works because he gets so angry that he gives me more money.”

This, to some degree, explains the acceptance of women in the community to accept the role they assume within the household, and the apparent acceptance of an increased burden. An exception to this trend in Isithebe was a household where the woman was employed, the man unemployed, and there was a single baby. The women, when interviewed, said that she went to work, and because she was contributing to, or in this case providing, the income to the household, it was the mans responsibility to look after the baby when she was at work, and to organise water collection. What needs to be questioned here is the desire of women for men to contribute a greater role in the household work, thus lessening the burden on the women themselves, whether employed or not.

The discussion above indicates that the non-involvement validated by traditional and perceived natural roles provides an opportunity to undermine the authority and power of the male household head, or at least to manipulate the man to provide what the wife desires, as a means of furthering his own interests. If this is in fact true, do women then use their own position of subordination to the male head as a way of furthering their own interest, according to Sen’s (1990) notion of perceived interest response? Subtle and less subtle negotiations around various household issues employ essential ideas of femininity and masculinity and the roles and obligations of men and women presented as ‘natural’ (Bowlby et al, 1997: p344).

However, the interests which are being met through negotiation remain founded primarily in the household. A women does not gain access to money in this way, and then use it on personal spending. Even when this was the case, the negotiation process still reflects a lack of control and power for women in the household. The fact therefore still remains that men will utilise a portion of income on individual interests, while women are concerned more with the welfare of their home and family. Women do tend to use agency to meet individual preferences and needs, but this is a defensive form of agency, which leaves the broader structures of constraints imposed by traditional and accepted gender relations unchallenged (Kabeer, 1997).

The employment status of the male in the household has some, if usually little, impact on the division of labour within the household. A differentiation is made between males that are unemployed and active in the household, males who are unemployed and seeking work, and males who are unemployed and not seeking work. These scenarios often impact on the tasks that the males undertake, and can influence the distribution of power within the household. Where a high male unemployment rate exists in a community, the reticence of males to actively seek work can multiply the burden on the female – generated income into the household. It has been indicated that males direct a large proportion of their income to individual social concerns. This increases the responsibility on alternative income-generation for the wife, and is sometime the motivation behind additional generation through the informal sector in addition to more formal participation in the economy.

The position of men and women within community structures can serve to increase the burden on individuals, as well as consolidate respect. For example, a female Nduna, while performing both waged work and household and developmental initiatives within the community, remained, together with younger family members, solely responsible for household management and responsibilities. Thus community responsibilities merely served to increase the workload, while the husband remained unaffected by her position.

In general, the role of women in leadership positions, or positions of authority, in the Isithebe community was extremely limited. This cannot be put down purely to time constraints resulting from employment demands and household chores, nor can it be simplified to historical and cultural restraints, but should rather be seen as perhaps resulting from a combination of these factors amongst others. The involvement of women in the economy appears to have little correlation with the authority assigned to women in the community.

These observations need to be further explored as it is extremely difficult to properly understand the nature of household and gender relations through a survey such as the one conducted.

6.4 Challenging gender identity within the household

The involvement of men in household duties is the subject of various debates surrounding the division of labour within the home, and power and relations in housework and responsibility. Gwagwa (1995a), examining relationships at the household level, refers to a crisis in masculinity, or a dislocation of male identity, resulting from the growing male unemployment⁹¹. The point is made that whereas women, when unemployed, can revert to the status of wife, mother or housewife, men do not have such a role to fulfill: their role as husband or father is dependent on the ability to generate an income to support his family. The alternative to employment for a man is perceived to be poverty, both for himself and for his family. The differentiation between those men actively seeking employment and those not doing so is also emphasised by Gwagwa (1995a). There is a perception, within Isithebe, that many of the men in the communities are inherently lazy, and disinterested in anything beyond what is considered to be their basic responsibility to their families. The dichotomy between the realities of economic survival of these men and their households, and the apparent unwillingness to contribute to the successful functioning of the household is one that needs to be further explored.

The unemployment issue was clearly visible in the communities surrounding Isithebe. During the study in the community, many men could be seen lounging around during the day, talking, playing cards, and drinking, from the early morning. This was borne out by the complaints of women, who when interviewed, complained about the men who did not seek employment, and spent their time drinking instead, while the women continued to work (wage and domestic), and they did nothing. In a household where the male is unemployed, this can generate a sense of resentment against the unemployed male when they do not actively seek employment and continue to consume domestic income on their social habits. This resentment appears not to be confined to the family concerned, but is reflected by the community as a whole. Many people expressed anger at men not related to their own family, who lazed around. Some of these men, when questioned, explained that they had looked for work on the estate and in Mandeni, and

⁹¹ A distinction needs to be made between the crisis of masculinity referred to here, and the more fundamental, movement arising as a response to feminism and the promotion of gender equality as discussed by Lemon, J. "Masculinity in Crisis?" in Agenda, 1995

having failed to find any, stay in the community all day until they hear of something. There is a reticence to actively engage in looking for employment beyond immediate environs. Unemployed women in the community appeared more willing to actively engage in searching for work. This reflects a trend that is being explored by researchers in other communities, of males to stay within their community, while unemployed women seek work further from home. This attachment to place compounds the difficulties faced by men as they are increasingly retrenched all over the country. Many of the young men had been retrenched from factories on the estate itself, while the older unemployed men had returned from employment on mines and industries in other provinces⁹². This is consistent with the decrease in migrant labour, as older men have returned from the migrancy system, and the younger have been absorbed into the decentralisation system, and have remained in their home region. The involvement in drinking and social activities such as card-playing may reflect an attempt to compensate for the erosion of what is traditionally seen as a responsibility of men as bread-winners. An undermining of perceived masculinity traits may result in engaging in other activities that are associated with men and masculine activities, or those that exist largely as the domain of men.

Popular thought up to the late 1980s contended that men suffered greater psychological stress as a result of unemployment than women, and were unable to respond to such stress in a constructive and productive manner (Kessler et al, 1987). However, more recent work has indicated that this is not so, although it is still held that men suffer more stress when their wives are employed in wage labour (Turner, 1992). However, much of this work is situated in a context very different from the rural, less developed environs of KwaZulu Natal, and is perhaps of more merit when considering a fully industrialized and developed community. What is of importance to note in Isithebe is that many of the men who are not household heads, i.e. husbands and fathers, react by returning to the homes of the parents when unemployed; a fact that is perhaps related to the reluctance of unemployed men in the area to search for employment away from their home.

⁹² The exact figures of those returning from employment outside the region, and those retrenched from within the region, was not determined. It is suggested that this is a point requiring further examination. However, it was the perception of the researcher that the majority of unemployed men in the region were from the area, and had sought employment only within the region.

Gwagwa's (1995a) "crisis in masculinity" originates largely in the growth in male unemployment in South Africa, resulting in a change in the content of gender roles. Unemployment has affected both the way that men perceive themselves, and the way they are perceived within the household and community. Furthermore, what is expected of men may also have changed. In the same way, the rapid growth in female employment during the 1980s has led to a rethinking of the roles and expectations of women. In this way, the process of the living of gender, and the changes which this may entail, is evidenced (see also Epstein, 1998; Morrell, 1998). Gender identity is formulated largely as a result of what is permitted by society, and by the different forces and pressures imposed by the relevant discourse (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 1993).

Would the concept of such a crisis in masculinity stimulated by employment dynamics (if one does indeed exist) have any relevance to the community in question? Despite the fact that female employment, on the estate at least, has dropped sharply since 1989, male employment, both on the estate, regionally and nationally has also started to decrease. It is suggested that a combination of factors may impact specifically on the reaction of men to their unemployment, and to increasing reliance of the peri-urban and rural community on a female-generated income, a characteristic which seems to have materialised since 1996. The fact that men are increasingly tied to place, despite the restrictions thereby imposed on employment possibilities, and their apparent tardiness in seeking further employment, as well as their increasing reliance on women to generate financial support in addition to household support and management, provides some indication of the conflict of pressures placed on men in the community. While they are moving from a culture of clearly defined roles as breadwinner and head of household as a process over which they have very little control, i.e. the broader economic processes evident, they are also faced with the ideological threat of women choosing to enter the workforce as a perceived means of increasing power within the household *as well as* through economic necessity. While this choice has been present since the 1980s, and in reality was less of a threat between 1989 and 1996 when women's access to employment on the estate decreased, the scenario of rapidly increasing male unemployment experienced by many within the community makes the choice all the more threatening.

The threat that is posed to their understanding of masculine responsibility and roles within the house and community is exacerbated by the increasing reliance on women for survival that has occurred since the 1980s. Within this remains the gendered understanding of expenditure and interests, reflecting Moser's strategic gender interests discussed in Chapter Two: women utilize income to maximize their perceived strategic interests, not purely altruistic, while men continue to cling to their roles and 'responsibilities' to socialise, drink, smoke and gamble. It could be suggested that this is in a way a response to cling to the security of past roles within a context of change and perceived threat to their dominance.

6.5 Concluding Comments

Restructuring processes in industry and the economy nationally, regionally, and within Isithebe itself have impacted the position of women within the household, as well as initiating a number of trends which potentially affect both men and women in the household, and the construction and living of roles and identities associated with gender differences. The absolute decline of women's employment on Isithebe from 1989 has placed increased pressure on men during this period to financially sustain households. The move to shift labour, the increasing demand for a small, skilled workforce, and the changing sectoral focus has concomitantly resulted in growing unemployment for men. This in turn has resulted in increasing reliance on the ability of women to mobilise income (either formally or informally) in order to sustain and support the household, despite the lower employment opportunities for women that have characterised much of the 1990s.

Employment figures from the 1980s and 1990s indicate that up to 1989 an increasing number of women were entering the formal economy in the communities surrounding Isithebe estate. While this dropped in the early 1990s, between 1995 and 1997 there was again a slight increase. Concomitantly there was increasing engagement in the informal economy by women during this period, as households were forced into multiple survival strategies. While there is no formal measurement of entrance into the informal sector over a period of time, a significant number of respondents in the communities expressed the intention of initiating such activities. Many of

the households intending on entering the informal economy already have members employed either on the estate or in regional centres. While the slightly increased penetration of electricity infrastructure into the communities assists such a move, informal activities are hindered by the move to shift labour on the estate. While the possibility of informal employment was raised by both men and women, the assumption, both explicit and implicit, was that women would be responsible for such activity. Despite the increase in male as much as female unemployment, men are less likely to enter the informal economy than women, even where the women is already engaged in both formal and informal labour.

Women, despite involvement in the formal wage economy, as well as in the informal sector, and regardless of comparative income mobilisation within the household, remain primarily responsible for basic household management. On a micro level at least, the burden on women, as suggested by GAD advocates is increasing as a result of employment and wage earning potential. While a direct relationship between independent income and power or autonomy in the household cannot be established, there is an indication that the formal employment of women within either a dual or single income family does not facilitate equitable access to or control of wages, or increase the women's autonomy in the household. Despite the fact that women retain primary responsibility for the management of income through accounts held in their names, the allocation and distribution of that income is still subject to the approval and decisions of men. To use Kabeer's (1994) typology outlined in Chapter Two, *power within* the household remains primarily with the man, regardless of employment status, and even in households where *power to* make decisions is slightly more equitably distributed. Despite the ability to generate an income, the family and household still remains the ideological and material focus of women's lives.

The involvement of women in decision-making structures, and in positions of authority in the community, does not affect the responsibilities or gendered division of labour within the household. Additionally, power within the community is not reflected in power within the household, which remains firmly entrenched in the hands of the man.

However, women are exhibiting more subtle, albeit limited, forms of power within the realm of the household, through the manipulation of everyday activities. Control and management of

household activities are perceived as a potential source of power, through which women can undermine the authority of the male within the household. However, this mechanism is utilised purely around household issues, and is inherently limiting in the challenge to traditional constraints associated with gender identity.

A variety of pressures on men has led to a shift in the expectations of men from a functional, traditional breadwinner for the household to a more notional role of figurehead and the provider of security. As the perception of men as the primary income generators for the household is undermined through rising unemployment, men return to alternative perceptions, or rather perceptions which coexist with the concept of the male breadwinner, through which they can reinforce their gender identity which they perceive as threatened. This correlates with the return to alternative sources of identity discussed in Chapter Two. This move, combined with the growing unemployment and the reluctance of men to seek work beyond their home has led to a reification of men as drinkers and socialites in the community.

This trend is meeting with growing dissatisfaction from wives and mothers within the communities. Despite men being unemployed, the division of labour within the household remains highly gendered, with women continuing to assume primary responsibility for household chores. These are often distributed between other family members such as children and sisters, but remain gendered in allocation. These dynamics have led to a certain degree of pressure within the household, contributing to increased tension between unemployed men and employed women.

It has been suggested that a predominantly female workforce operating under the control and authority of male supervisor allows for the creation of a female culture of resistance, characterised by subtlety and coyness, of which a male supervisor is unaware (Pearson, 1992). This allows for maneuvering in power negotiations, and the subtle shift of balance to the female workers. This is akin to a collective consciousness, and often does result in a subtle form of resistance. In the same way, the generation of income to the household is sometimes able to initiate a shift in the balance of power, as Kabeer (1994) suggests. Although the income contributed by the wife is directed to reproductive rather than individual, personal use, this is used to reinforce the bargaining power, through equally overt and subtle techniques. The reality

in Isithebe tends to question this. The contribution of a female income into the household does not give the women the power to utilise that income at her discretion, without the permission of the male head, where one is present. Indeed, the majority of women remain trapped in low-paid employment, and their fortunes remain attached very much to those of their partners, or constrained by the economic realities to which they are subject. The focus of women's lives is largely restricted ideologically and materially to the home and the family, and the sustainability and support of them.

Thus the existing understanding and experience of gender identities are being reinforced in a number of ways within the Isithebe communities, but are at the same time also constantly challenged and being broken down in diverse ways. While changes are not that evident, subtle processes are underway within the household which may be the precursor to a more overt challenge to prevalent attitudes and understandings of gender on both a household and community level.

The existing relations within the household reflect a change in the gender identity formulated as a response to external pressure by both men and women. These pressures are in large part caused by restructuring processes both within the local economy and within the national environment. The return to alternative characteristics by men as a response to the threat and undermining of the male role of breadwinner (in male-headed households), together with the increased resentment directed towards men by women, who may be involved in waged labour, in addition to involvement in the informal economy and household responsibilities indicate the potential for further conflict, and a rethinking of the roles and identities which men and women will assume, and which may become accepted by the societies in which they live.

Conclusion

Through the statistical and discursive analysis of a particular industrial location and the surrounding communities, this thesis has sought to indicate that despite various shifts within the economy and industry on both a macro and micro level, as well as a growing move challenging gender inequality, traditional constructions and understandings of gender and the accompanying relationships both within the workplace and the household have remained largely unchanged. Rather, various dynamics within industry and the local economy have to a large degree led to a reinforcement of gender stereotypes both within the workplace and the household. However, these processes can potentially provide a point from which both men and women are able to start to reassess and challenge the existing expectations attached to these identities.

Within a global environment of economic transformation, and the rise of global capital and competition, a range of new production techniques and methods have emerged. These have had variable impact on the workforce in different communities. A primary trend identified includes the growing specialisation of the workforce, increasingly reliant on a smaller core of more highly skilled labourers. It has been argued internationally that this is often at the expense of the female workforce, which is marginalised as men dominate the skilled component of the labour market (Penn et al 1991). While the South African economy has in part been shaped by the past governmental policies, it is increasingly subject to pressures to become more competitive in the global market. Thus the economic impact of the past national policies is leading to new experiences as these emerging production methods are introduced, and society experiences pressures of change. In particular, the Industrial Decentralisation policies of the previous government led to a somewhat dislocated development policy, and had distinct impacts on the communities surrounding the decentralisation points. Given the growing levels of male unemployment resulting from the macro-economic policies and restructuring of the national economy, and the high penetration rate of women into the formal economy during the 1980s, the industrial estate of Isithebe provided an interesting focal point on which to assess the impact of change on gender both within the household and workplace.

It has been shown that the extent to which Isithebe has mirrored the global trends of industrial restructuring is minimal. The majority of businesses located in Isithebe up 1996 remained very

slow to adopt new methods of production and other processes associated with restructuring, such as JIT processing, multi-skilling, and training and technology upgrading. Reflecting shifts on a macro level, the estate has experienced a decline in terms of both the number of businesses located there as well as the total employment offered by the estate since 1996. This reflects the longer term decline of the number of firms on the estate since 1990, with a brief increase between 1994 and 1996. While it is difficult to formulate a concrete relationship between these trends and the decline of the estate, one may assume that this is a result of a combination of factors, the two highlighted in this research being the failure to adapt within a changing economic environment, as well as the withdrawal of the RIDP incentives. This decline must also be located within the wider national macro economic environment.

While the sectoral diversity of the estate provided for a varied employment pattern by gender, it did indicate that the preference shown both nationally and in Isithebe for female labour in the 1980s was declining. While women still dominated various low-paid sectors (traditionally textile and garment industries) in 1996, employment figures from 1996 to 1998 show that there has been increasing penetration of male labour into these sectors. Female labour has made little headway in those sectors traditionally considered to be male, despite the increasing male retrenchments within these sectors. The perception of factory owners and management in sectors such as the textile and garment industries argue that female labour is better suited to this type of work, and is generally more docile. This perpetuates gendered myths that have dominated industry, and society in the past, and tends to trap women within low-skilled positions as opposed to the more specialised positions still dominated by men.

Women have increasingly been forced to engage in the informal economy, as the female penetration of the workforce evidenced in the 1980s declined. In many instances this has forced households to adopt multiple livelihood strategies in order to survive within the harsh economic environment. A brief increase in female employment between 1995 and 1996 provided little respite for those engaged in these multiple strategies. Where women remain employed on the estate, or within the region, they are still forced to pursue a number of different income-generating strategies, at times compensating for the growing male unemployment both nationally and regionally. In addition to the gendered division of labour encountered within the workplace in Isithebe, involvement within the informal economy also assumed gendered

dimensions, as it was women who were primarily responsible for work conducted in this sector. This was in addition to the traditional household responsibilities and duties undertaken. Despite the fact that women were increasingly becoming the primary breadwinner within households in the community (either through participation in the formal or informal economy, or both), as male unemployment increases, power remained entrenched within the hands of men in the household, regardless of their employment status.

The central argument of the thesis has been located within a framework in which gender is considered to be a dynamic and changing association of characteristics and associations which together constitute a specific identity, formulated in part as a response to particular environments and assumptions, and in part according to specific experiences. Gender is the process through which people assume locally-defined attributes of femininity and masculinity. Identity is thus seen to be an ongoing process rather than a predetermined characteristic. Foucault (1980) in his discussion on power and oppression, argued that subjectivity and the perception of self were maintained through constant individual and collective self-assessment and correction, according to the norms of the hegemonic discourse. In this way changes in the society or environment in which people live may result in a shift in the formulation, perception, understanding and experience of gender identity. This in turn affects the construction and manifestation of relations between men and women, and the terms on which they interact. The different manifestations of relations between genders often serve to reify the perception and experience of men and women.

The way that gender is experienced and is performed is thus contingent on the particular hegemonic discourse of the day. Trends associated with globalisation, and the associated restructuring in industry, together with particular social and political histories and current experiences influence the way that men and women within Isithebe conceptualise and perform their gender identities. The nature of industry and the economy in South Africa in the past, despite at times being largely dependent on women within certain sectors, has tended to locate power almost exclusively within the domain of men.

In addition, the specific history attached to the industrial decentralisation policies of the apartheid government has resulted in distinct spatial, social and economic characteristics which

can be identified in the communities surrounding Isithebe. The insertion of a industrial node within a predominantly rural economy provided employment opportunities for a large number of people previously reliant on a purely agricultural economy or a migratory labour subsistence. In the period leading up to 1989 women entered the workforce at an unprecedented rate. This provided an opportunity for many women to earn a wage without engaging in the migratory labour system. The diversity of industries in Isithebe, as opposed to the predominance of textile and garment industries as in many other decentralisation points, provided opportunities for both male and female employment.

Despite the slow introduction of restructuring processes in Isithebe, within the workforce there has been some change in the gendered divisions of labour. There is an increasing blurring of the division between traditionally male dominated sectors and female dominated sectors. This has however been a uni-directional process, as men are absorbed into industries within the textile and garment sectors, while women remain trapped in these sectors. There is minimal concomitant penetration of women into traditionally male dominated sectors. Many of these 'male' sectors are beginning to, albeit slowly, increase training and skills levels, usually at the same time as down-sizing, and this perpetuates high skills levels within the male labour force and associated unskilled characteristics of the female labour force.

Two specific processes pertaining to employment can be identified which have had particular impact on men and women in the Isithebe community, and the relationship between them. An increasing number of men are being retrenched nationally and locally. At the same time, those remaining in the workforce are increasing skills and knowledge levels, while women remain trapped in the low pay positions associated with low skilled employment. These processes are having a profound impact on the way that men and women perceive themselves and each other. Men, traditionally perceived as the breadwinner within the household structure, are increasingly feeling their identity challenged and undermined. This is exacerbated by move on a macro level to challenge existing gender inequalities, which is perceived as further undermining the traditional role of men within society. Many men within communities are thus retreating to alternative manners of reinforcing their identity as males, in the case of Isithebe by increased drinking, socialising and gambling, and enforcement of power over women in the household arena. At the same time, those men that remain engaged in the formal economy are reaping the

benefits of increased training, and higher levels of skills, that accompany increased automation and specialisation of industry. This locates the focus of power on those men that are employed

The case of Isithebe tends to reinforce the argument of social relations proponents that one has to explore the relationships between men and women on a multitude of levels, and the power dynamics between the genders in order to understand (and address) gender inequality, rather than focus on the simplistic economic aspects of the relationship between men and women. The economic trends identified in Isithebe translate in various ways at a household level. The penetration of the workforce by women in the 1980s (and to a very slight degree between 1995 and 1996) has not provided the stimulus of opportunity for women to assume a more autonomous or independent position, either within the household or society, as expected by many Women in Development theorists. Instead, in the case of Isithebe, as internationally, the workload of women merely increased, as they assumed increasing responsibility for the economic well-being or survival of the household in addition to household management and responsibility. This increased workload can be identified both through an analysis of the allocation of tasks and participation in the formal or informal economy, as well as by the women themselves. As male unemployment increased, so households became increasingly reliant on the ability of women to mobilize an income in order to survive. In Isithebe at least, the triple role of women, argued by many GAD proponents, became the reality of women's lives. While this undoubtedly was already the case as women entered the workforce during the 1980s, within the context of growing unemployment in the 1990s, both male and female, there is increased pressure on women to engage in multiple survival strategies. It is women who do engage in multiple strategies, rather than men, performing in the informal sector as well as the formal. The gendered division of household chores remained unchallenged, and children within the household assume the same gendered responsibilities.

It has been suggested that a predominantly female workforce operating under the control and authority of male supervisor allows for the creation of a female culture of resistance, characterised by subtlety and covertness, of which a male supervisor is unaware (Pearson, 1992). This allows for maneuvering in power negotiations, and the subtle shift of balance to the female workers. This is akin to a collective consciousness, and often does result in a subtle form of resistance. In the same way, the generation of income to the household is sometimes

able to initiate a shift in the balance of power, as Kabeer (1994) suggests. Although the income contributed by the wife is directed to reproductive rather than individual, personal use, this is used to reinforce the bargaining power, through equally overt and subtle techniques. The reality in Isithebe tends to challenge this. The contribution of a female income into the household does not give the women the power to utilise that income at her discretion, without the permission of the male head (where one is present). Indeed, the fortunes of the majority of women remain attached very much to those of their partners, or constrained by the economic realities to which they are subject. The focus of women's lives is largely restricted ideologically and materially to the home and the family, and the sustainability and support of these areas.

Despite the attempts to challenge the location of power within the domain of the male through various policy initiatives, there has been very little change within the Isithebe environment. However, it is argued that women within communities are perhaps beginning to evaluate and challenge existing gender relations, on a household level at least, through very subtle means. This is not to the degree suggested by Kabeer (1997), but is rather merely laying a foundation from which a more coherent challenge may be formed. Women are not challenging men through denial or refusals, or other covert or overt mechanisms, but instead are beginning to question the norms against which their own self-assessments and the formulation of their identities is gauged.

Concomitantly the conceptualisation and experience of gender identity is being challenged. Men are tending to seek alternative understandings of what it means to be a male, as their identity is threatened by the impact of growing unemployment and financial instability. An increasing reliance on the ability of women to generate and income, and the inability to access income themselves is undermining the sense of self and maleness. Thus new ways of "doing man" (Epstein 1998), the constant living and reformulation of identity, are sought which, while in the immediate term serves merely to exacerbate the position of women within the household and community, potentially provides a catalyst through which both men and women can seek to examine and address the conceptualisation, formulation and experience of gender identity and thus, the relations between men and women.

The reluctance to seek work, or to venture beyond the immediate environment to do so,

combined with a return to previously secondary traits associated with conceptualisation of gender is beginning to provide a means of focusing the resentment of women for the lack of participation and support within the household. The lack of involvement of men in household labour and daily responsibilities, and the lack of support through supplemental income generated through the informal economy provides what are considered legitimate reasons for increased tensions between household members.

Thus while various macro and micro economic changes have not yielded the opportunity for women to address the unequal relationship between men and women, as expected by many, there is an indication that there is an indirect impact which is beginning to provide the platform on which the existing manifestations and status of power between men and women can be challenged. At the same time the particular characteristics currently associated with the gender components of identity are being reconceptualised in response to these changes, illustrating the complexity of the relationship between gender, power and identity.

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APPENDIX 1

TABLE 1 TOTAL EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA AND KZN 1970-1991⁹³

Sector	1970		1980		1991		1996	
	RSA	KZN	RSA	KZN	RSA	KZN	RSA	KZN
Agriculture	2 482 452	603 683	1 091 086	246 950	1 224 434	226 794	814 350	118 071
Mining	680 384	32 494	655 594	38 359	840 747	32 260	541 546	15 860
Manufacturing	1 026 081	203 291	1 017 978	326 796	1 417 127	347 415	1 119 971	265 701
Services	1 595 839	264 776	1 459 604	356 063	2 640 522	510 843	1 350 249	221 560
Other	1 758 440	277 219	2 498 042	754 950	5 501 538	1 322 787	5 287 728	949 381
Total	7 543 196	1 381 463	6 722 304	1 723 118	11 624 368	2 440 099	9 113 844	1 570 573

Source: Central Statistical Services 1970, 1980, 1991

⁹³ While certain data from the 1996 census is available, the gendered composition of different sectors is not yet available. This prevents the inclusion of 1996 figures in this analysis. It must also be noted that an overcount in the 1990 data, and an undercount in the 1996 census prevents any accurate comparison of employment within this period.

Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE - INDUSTRY

Date	
Number	
Interviewer	

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

A.1. Name of Enterprise

A.2. Address

A.3. Telephone

A.4. Name of respondent

A.5. Position

A.6. Ethnic Group of owner

A.7. Sector (SIC classification for sectors and sub-sectors)

A.8. Nationality of owner/firm

A.9. Foreign Firms

A.9.1. If of Taiwanese/ other origin, why locate in South Africa, not elsewhere?

Why KwaZulu/Natal, not another province, and why Isithebe in particular?

A.9.2. Why did you leave your country of origin?

A.9.3. How did you find information about Isithebe? (Family contacts, networks)

A.9.4. Were you aware before you arrived that industries located in Isithebe? Yes No

A.9.5. Is Isithebe what you expected or have there been unanticipated problems? If so, explain.

A.9.6. What support was received for your relocation from your country of origin?

What support was received from South Africa for your relocation?

A.9.7. Did you bring labour with you from your country of origin? Yes No

If yes, Number _____

Gender Composition Male _____

Female _____

B. HISTORY OF ENTERPRISE AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

B.1. When was your firm established?

B.2. By whom?

B.3. Was this firm established elsewhere in South Africa? Yes No
 If yes, where?
 When did it locate in the town?

B.4. Do you have a parent company? Yes No
 If Yes, what is the name of the parent company?

Where is the head office of the parent company?

B.5. Are there sister companies? Yes No
 If Yes, where are they located?

How are your sister companies performing in relation to the performance of your firm?

B.6. What are the main products of the firm? (Itemise and indicate proportion of total production)

Product	Output	Value

B.7. Does your firm specialise in a particular product or process ? If so, what ? (eg.CMT)

B.8. What is your target market?

	Income bracket (Upper, middle, low)	Domestic/ Export	Retail/Wholesale/ Direct to the public/Other (specify)	Other Producers
Mens				

	Income bracket (Upper, middle, low)	Domestic/ Export	Retail/Wholesale/ Direct to the public/Other (specify)	Other Producers
Ladies				
Infants				
Specialised (specify)				

C. SECTOR OF INDUSTRY

- C.1. What are the problems facing your sector nationally? Prioritise.
- C.2. Would you prioritise the problems facing your sector firms in Isithebe?
- C.3. What can be done to address the problems?
- C.4. How are firms located elsewhere performing relative to firms in Isithebe? Why?
- C.5. In the last 5 years what new start ups and closures are you aware of Isithebe?
- C.6. What happens to the retrenched workers?
- C.7. What happens to the entrepreneurs and factory management?
- C.8. What are the prospects for your sector (nationally and in Isithebe) ? Why?
- C.9. What are your firm's prospects for the future? Why?

D. LOCATION DECISIONS

- D.1. What are your reasons for locating in Isithebe?
- D.2. Why did you not locate in Durban/ Pinetown or Gauteng (ie. In another decentralisation points)?
- D.3. What are the problems of doing business in Isithebe? (Check infrastructure)
- D.4. What are the benefits of doing business in Isithebe?
- D.5. Do you foresee any changes in your location? If so, why and where to?
- D.6. Do you see any advantage in locational clustering for firms in the same sector? Yes No
If yes, what are the advantages?

How can these be encouraged? And by whom?

D.7. What are the major locational factors in the sector at present? (Rank)

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a) Incentives | F) Proximity to raw materials |
| b) Social networks | G) Infrastructure |
| c) Proximity to suppliers | H) Environmental regulations |
| d) Proximity to markets | i) Availability of skilled workers |
| e) Proximity to ports | J) Availability of unskilled workers |
| k) Other (specify) | |

D.8. How has the importance of these factors changed in the last 5 years? Why?

E. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

E.1. What financial assistance did you receive to start the business and from where?

E.2. Have you ever received any form of incentive (e.g. rebates, loan etc) from government departments, provincial government, local authority or parastatals (e.g. IDC, SBDC)?

Incentive	What type of incentive?	Over what time period?	What role did it play in the firm's development?	Rank in order of importance
Decentralisation benefits prior to 1991				
1991 RIDP				
1993 SRIDP				
GEIS				
Local authority incentives				
Other (specify)				

F. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

F.1. Government support:

Institution	What role have they played in supporting the sector?	How have you benefitted?	How would you rank their support measures ?	Do you think they could have a future role in support ing the sector?	What can they do?
DTI					
IDC					
Provincial Authority					
KFC					
JSB				(RC)	(RC)
KMI					

Institution	What role have they played in supporting the sector?	How have you benefitted?	How would you rank their support measures ?	Do you think they could have a future role in support ing the sector?	What can they do?
SBDC					
Other (specify)					

Rating: Very poor, poor, satisfactory, supportive, very supportive, indifferent

F.2. What local government policies would contribute most to assisting the firm?

- | | |
|---|--|
| A) Rebates on rates and service charges | F) Support for hiring consultants |
| b) Provision of industrial infrastructure | g) Input subsidies/ rebates |
| c) Provision of social infrastructure | h) Establishing public-private sector partnerships |
| d) Technology centre | I) Other (specify) |
| e) Local service centre | |

F.3. What other institutional support is there for your firm e.g. trade fairs, marketing, information, infrastructural provision, training, technical support etc? Who provides this?

F.4. Does this meet your needs?

F.5. What other support is needed? And who should provide it?

G. PRODUCTION

G.1. What were your production volumes in 1995?

G.2. Do production volumes vary over the calendar year? Explain.

G.3. Does this variation pose any problems, what problems and how are they overcome?

G.4. Have you introduced any new production processes recently ? If so, what?

G.5. Have you adopted any form of make-to-order, or JIT? Explain.

G.6. Has the size of your inventory and batch runs changed?

Inventory of Raw Materials	Inventory of Work in Progress	Inventory of Finished Goods
----------------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------------

Inventory of Raw Materials	Inventory of Work in Progress	Inventory of Finished Goods

G.7. What is the value of your end of year stock (in Rands)?

G.8. How many stock turns do you do in a year?

G.9. Can you provide a proportionate breakdown of your production costs?

	Proportionate Breakdown (%)
Materials /Inputs	
Labour Worker	
Management	
Overheads	
Other (specify)	

G.10. Have these proportions changed over time? Explain.

G.11. In the last 5 years have you worked as a subcontractor for any companies? Yes No

If yes, location of these companies: _____

What percentage of your work occurs in this way? _____

Which stages of production ? _____

Do you receive any assistance from these companies?

Export Assistance	Quality control	Technical Assistance	Input Assistance	Other (Specify)

G.12. Does your firm subcontract out any stages of production? Yes No

If yes, which stages _____

Why?

Where are these subcontractors located?

Do you provide any form of assistance to your subcontractors (e.g.. Raw materials, Quality

control)

G.13. If you are not engaged in subcontracting now are you considering it in the future? Yes No
Please explain.

H. PERFORMANCE TRENDS

H.1. Is your turnover increasing, decreasing, or static? Growth Decline Static
Why?

H.2. Trends in firm performance:

Year(s)	Employment	Production Vol.	Profit	Reasons for changes
1980 - 1984				
1985 - 1989				
1990 - 1994				
1995				
1996				
1997 (Expec)				

(Base year: 1980 or 1st year of production; indicate increase, decline or no change and rough % change)

H.3. Has the firm responded to the changes experience in the South African economy since the 1980s (e.g. GATT, violence, stagnant domestic markets, devaluation of the rand)? Yes No

If yes, what have the strategic responses entailed?

- A) Management restructuring
- B) Structure
- C) Refocusing
- D) Strategic alliances
- E) Merges
- F) Export drives
- G) Niche markets
- H) Customising of products
- i) Outsourcing

Explain

I. LABOUR FORCE

I.1. Number of workers in 1995 in total
Non-family: _____ Family: _____

I.2. What percentage of your labour force are:
Permanent _____ Temporary _____

I.3. Composition of your workforce:

JOB CATEGORIES	Men	Women	Black	Coloured	Asian	White
Managerial- family						
Managerial-employees						
Supervisors						
Technicians						
Skilled worker						
Semi-skilled						
Unskilled						
Administrative						
Other						

I.4.1. In what way has the composition of the workforce in general changed over the past five years? Why?

I.4.2. Has the female component of your workforce changed over the past five years? Yes No
If so, How? (percentage of total workers, their position in the business, job description)

Has this happened through active policy? Yes No

If so, Why?

I.4.3. Do you think this trend will continue over the next five years, and will it be encouraged?
Yes No If Yes then why?

I.4.4. Are women in the majority or minority in your firm? Majority Minority
If majority, Why?

I.5. Do you have any difficulty in finding:

Skilled workers?	Yes	No
Unskilled workers?	Yes	No
Supervisory staff?	Yes	No
Managerial staff?	Yes	No
Technicians?	Yes	No

I.6. Do you subcontract to homeworkers? Yes No

If so, what percentage of your work? _____

Which stages of production?

If not, why not?

I.7. What is your overall wage structure?

Job Category	Starting wage	Experienced wage
Skilled workers		
Semi-skilled workers		
Unskilled workers		

I.8. How many hours a week do your employees work? _____

I.9. What percentage of your workforce are unionized? _____

I.10. Which unions are represented?

I.11. What role do they play in the firm?

I.12. What is your relationship with labour unions? Constructive Destructive Indifferent
Has this changed and do you anticipate changes?

I.13. What are your main labour problems?

I.14. What steps have you taken to avoid or to deal with labour problems? (e.g., training, multiskilling, flattening of hierarchies)

I.15. How do you train your labour force? (e.g. on-the-job, outsourced) For how ?

Who	How	How long
Managerial		
Supervisors		
Technicians		
Skilled Workers		
Semi-skilled workers		
Unskilled workers		
Administrative		
Other (Specify)		

I.16. What percentage of your budget is spent on training? _____

I.17. Are additional training courses and facilities available? Specify?

I.18 Are additional training courses and facilities necessary? What types?

I.19. If these were provided, would you use them? Yes No
If not, why not?

I.20. What are your perceptions of the productivity of your labour force?

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| A) Very low | D) High |
| b) Low | E) Very high |
| c) Satisfactory | |

I.21. How can productivity be improved?

J. MARKETS

Refer B.8

J.1. If you do not export, why?

Are you planning to export? Yes No

J.2. If you export, what percentage of your product do you export? _____
How has this percentage changed over the last five years?

Which countries did you export to in 1995?

Why these?

How did you establish your export market?

- Family or friends overseas
- Parent company
- Other (please specify)

Does the volume of your exports vary with the level of local demand?

Do you use the General Export Incentive Scheme (GEIS)?	Yes	No
Will you continue to export when the GEIS is phased out?	Yes	No

Are you planning to increase your exports?

What difficulties do you experience in operating the export market?

What advantages have you gained from export activities (technical know-how, economies of scale, productivity improvement)?

J.3. Where are your major international competitors on imports? (Indicate illegal imports and otherwise)

- A) Southern Africa
- b) Europe
- c) Far East (specify) _____
- d) Elsewhere (specify)

J.4. What are the most important determinants of competitiveness? (Rank)

- a) Price
- b) Quality
- c) Speed and punctual delivery
- d) Service
- e) Other (specify)

J.5. What do your customers expect from you?

How do you perform against these expectations?

K. RELATIONSHIPS WITH SUPPLIERS

K.1. What are the main inputs your factory uses, and where do you buy them?

INPUTS	THIS TOWN (%)	DURBAN/PINETOWN (%)	REST OF SA (%) (specify)	INTERNATIONAL (%) (specify)

K.2. Has your supplier base changed over the past five years? If so, why?

K.3. What is the nature of your relationship with your suppliers?

A) Informal b) Formal c) Other (specify)

K.4. How did you establish ties with this/these firms? (Historical, best practice, only supplier, locational advantage, strategic advantage)

K.5. Do you experience problems with suppliers that could affect the competitiveness of your firm?

K.6. Who carries out your service functions?

TYPE OF SERVICE	THIS FIRM	PARENT COMPANY HEAD OFFICE	OTHER FIRMS IN LOCAL AREA	OTHERS OUT LOCAL AREA
Machinery repair				
Accountancy				
Legal services				
Computer support				
Cleaning				
Canteen				
Other				

L. PROCESS, INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY

L.1. By South African standards is your machinery:

- a) Advanced b) Average c) Backward

L.2. By international standards is your machinery:

- a) Advanced b) Average c) Backward

L.3. Are you planning to purchase new machinery?

Yes No

Why?

If yes, will the number of workers increase, decrease, stay the same

L.4. Has your firm shifted towards using new technology/automation in the last 5 years? Yes No

If yes, what technology (capital/labour intensive; imported/locally sourced)?

What were the main driving forces behind this shift?

Did this displace labour?

L.5. Has the introduction of new technologies been a coherent firm policy or strategy?

Yes No

L.6. What has been the impact of adopting this new technology?

Productivity levels	
Output	
Financial position/ Cash flow	
Organisation of production	

Productivity levels	
Employment levels (what type of jobs have been created, if any?, are the skills available/)	
Skills requirements	
Other	

L.7. What has been the response of labour to new technology?

L.8. What problems have been experienced in introducing new technology?

L.9. Has the organisation of your factory floor changed significantly over the last five years? (Conveyor, Cells or groups, non-structured). Explain.

If yes, was this

- a) based on your own experience and ideas
- b) following new methods of organisation brought in from outside (specify)

L.10. Has management's structure changed?

L.11. Is there any computer integration:

- a) within the firm
- b) between firms and head office/parent company
- c) between firms on the same sector
- d) between buyers and firms

M. INTERFIRM COOPERATION

M.1. Do you exchange ideas/discuss problems/strategies with firms in the same sector?

- A) Never
- b) Occasionally
- c) Often

M.2. How important do you consider informal networking relations?

M.3. What are the type and extent of your informal relationships:

- a) Family ties
- b) Neighbours or spatial proximity
- C) Friends/former colleagues
- d) Other (specify)

M.4. Does your firm belong to an association? Yes No

If yes, specify

What do you use it for?

M.5. What are the dynamics between large and small firms in the sector?

M.6. Do you have any formal agreements with other firms? (Specify)

Yes No

Location of these firms? _____

Would you support a local authority initiative to support your industry in Isithebe?	Yes	No
Would you attend a workshop of the major stakeholders to discuss the issues?	Yes	No