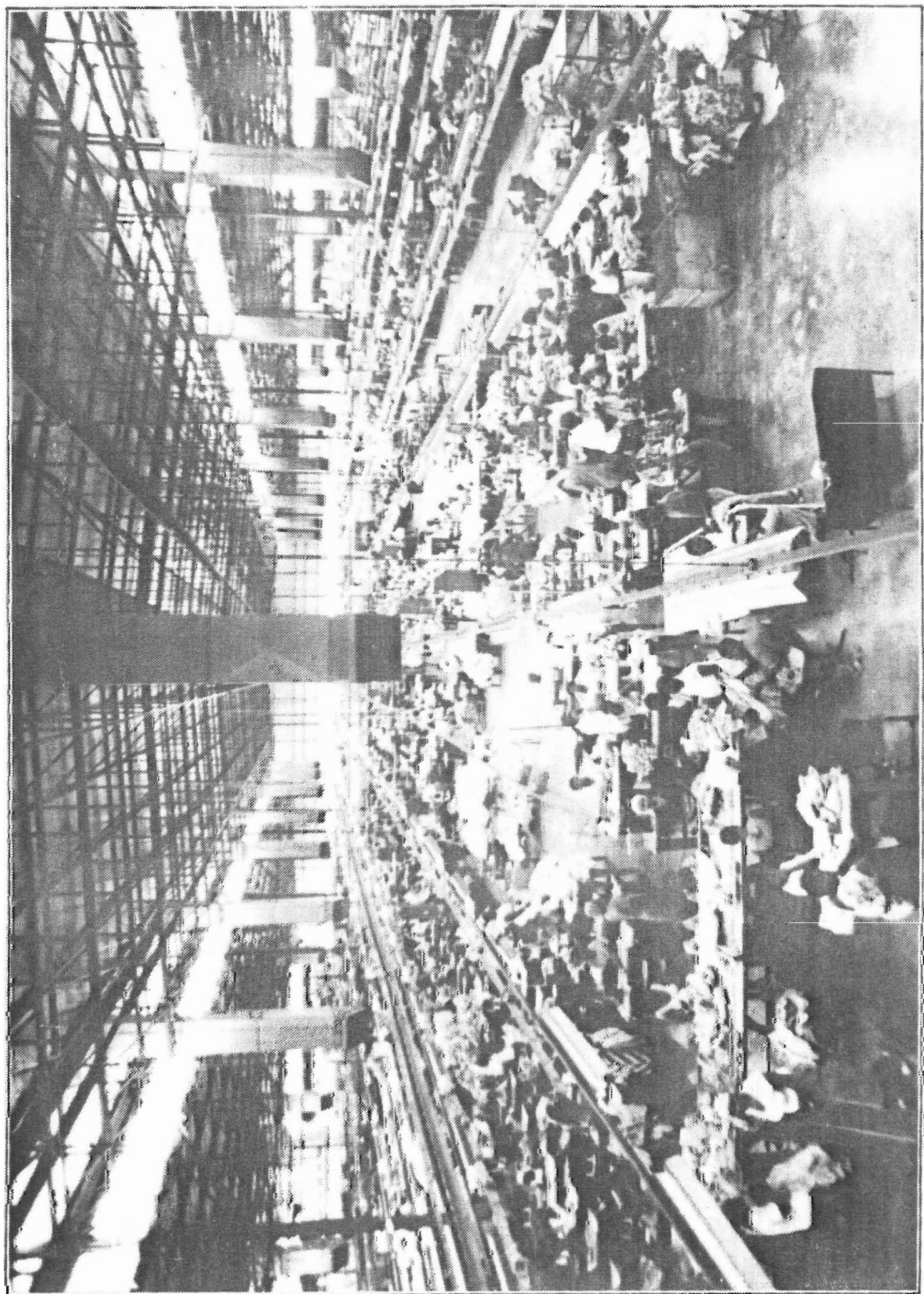


working for nothing:
gender and industrial
decentralisation in Isithebe

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Working for nothing...

Gender and Industrial Decentralisation in Isithebe.

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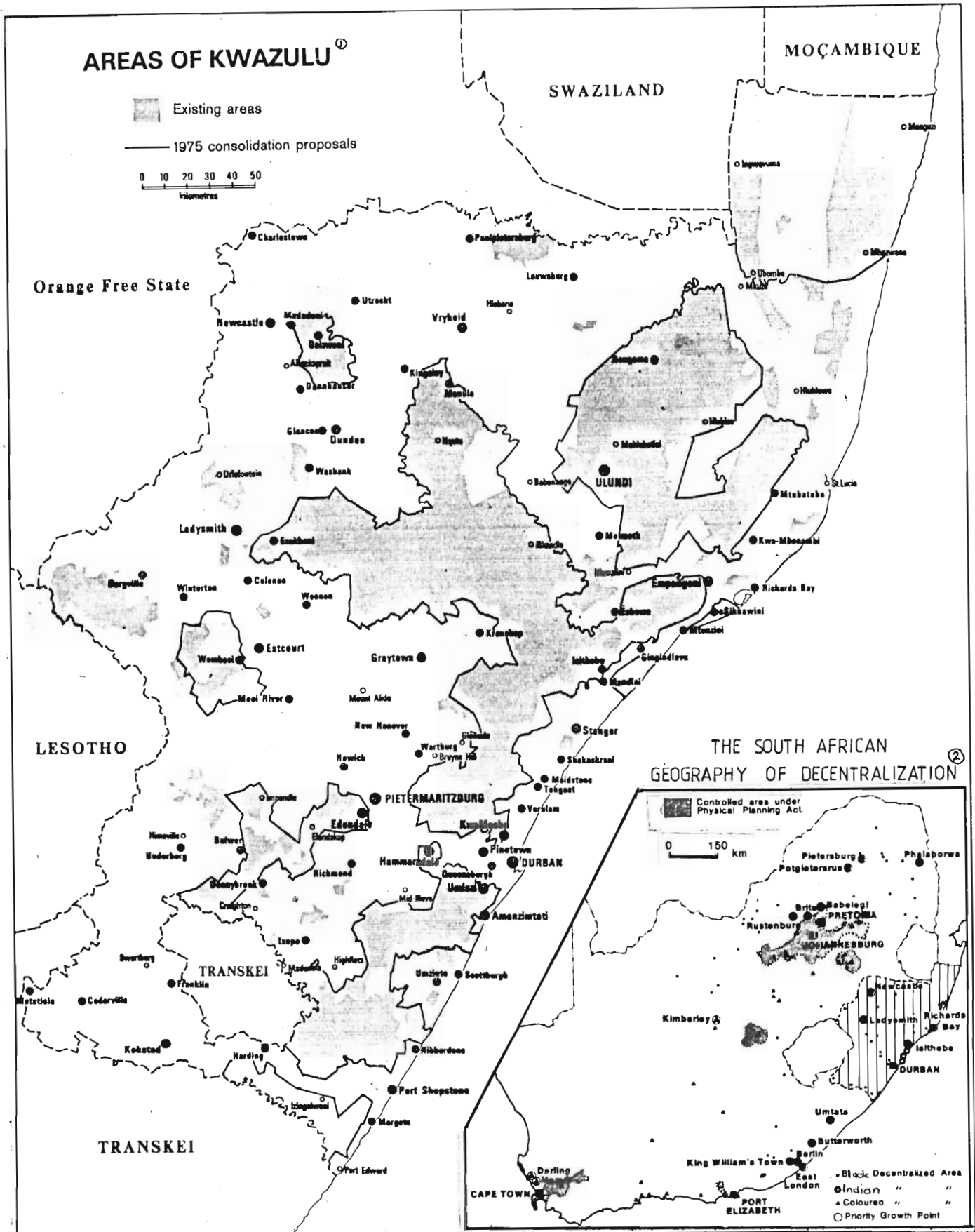
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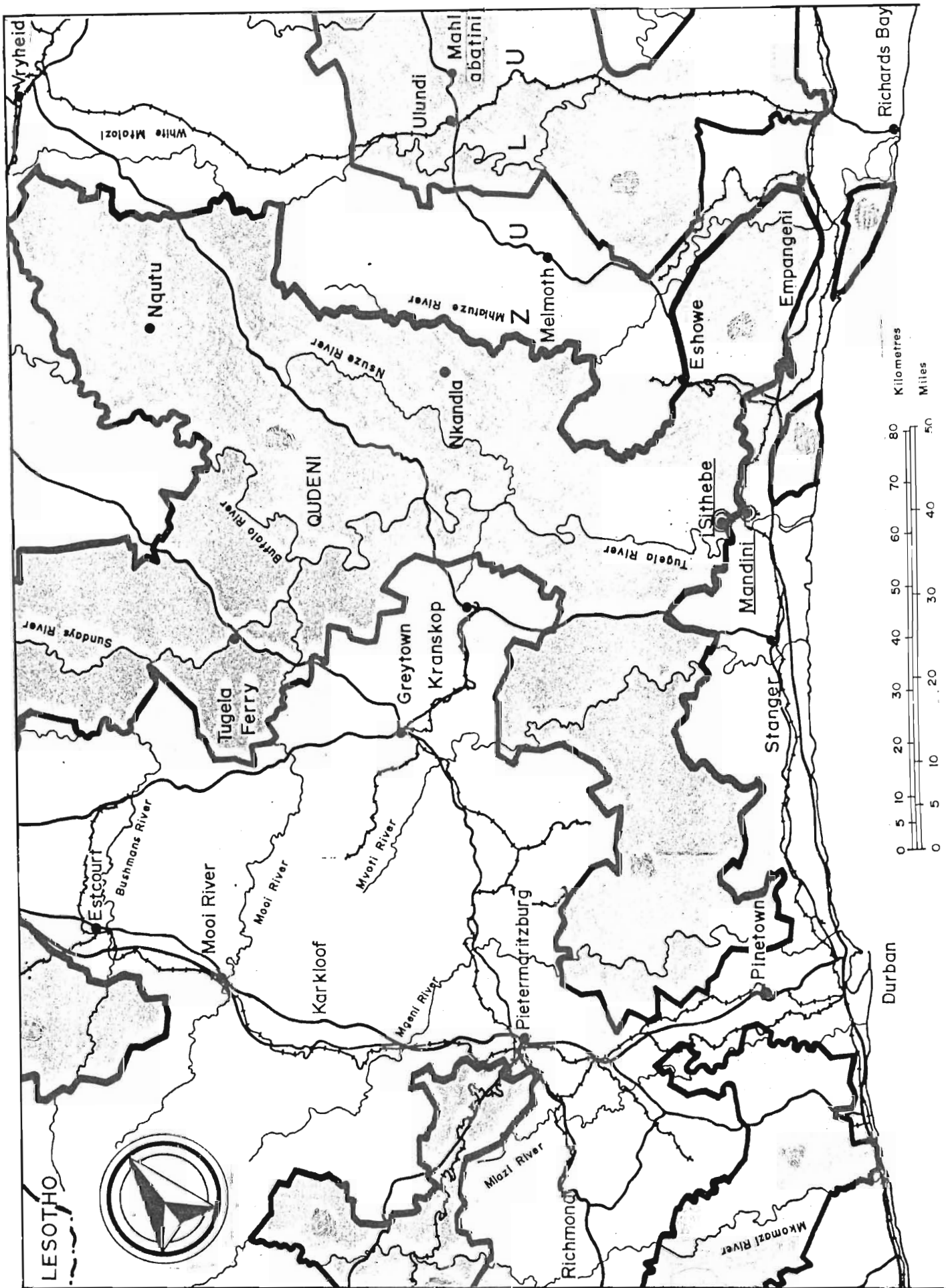
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sources: ^①dept. of geography, university of natal, pmburg, oct. 1980; & ^②supplement to the standard bank review, oct. 1974.



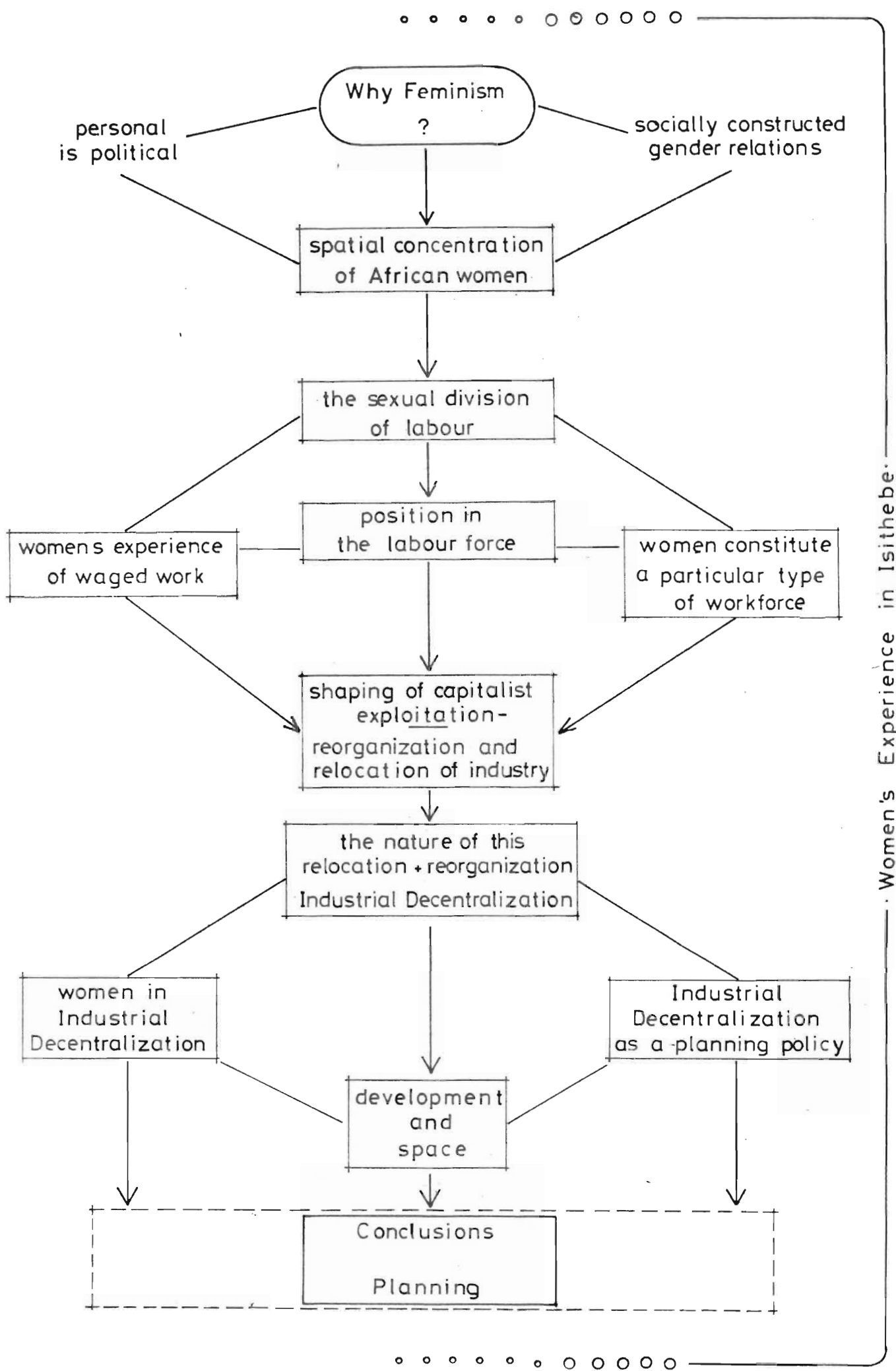
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MAP 3: The Isithebe-Sundumbili-Mandini Area:
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source : government produced 150 000 map: 1976 (reduced)

OUTLINE OF PROCESS



Women's Experience in Isithebe

Abstract

"One of the central tenets of critical approaches to social science is that we should not only understand society (theory), but use such understanding as a basis for a programme of action (practice) to change society, ...change is only possible through an endless cycle of theory and practice. The feminist approach changes and deepens our analysis" (IRG Women's Group 1984:38).

A fundamental issue for planners and planning is the question of 'development' - how does it occur, for whom, and with what result? One of the South Africa State's policies which is couched in 'development' terms is that of Industrial Decentralization. This policy is having an impact on both the organization and the location of industry. In this thesis we explore the significance of gender-relations and the geography of gender relations in the reorganization of industry and employment. Our specific orientation is towards drawing the links between gender and industrial decentralization and in order to do this we look at life experiences in Isithebe, an industrial decentralization point in KwaZulu near Stanger.

Below we outline the contents of each chapter. The choice of structure and the reasons behind it are discussed in the section on Methodology in Part 1. In brief the process moves from women's personal experience of life (part 2) in Isithebe to the broader social context of this experience (Part 3).

Part 1

Chapter 1:

In this chapter we discuss 'the process' and 'the product.'

1) What it means to adopt a feminist approach and why we feel it is important to do so:

- the androcentricity of knowledge
- the personal is political - how women are absent from and present in research and theory.
- feminist research.

2) Our research and methodology:

- feminist research
- problems and constraints
- description of the research and who was interviewed
- our own commitment to the area.

Part 2

A descriptive analysis of life in Isithebe based on discussions with the Macembeni Women's Association, group discussions with women working in Isithebe, case studies and interviews with factory managers.

Part 3

Chapter 1

This chapter discusses why women remained in rural areas and men have moved into urban waged labour. In order to do this we look at:

- relations of patriarchy
- problems arising from omitting a conceptualization of gender
- how gender shapes the process of capitalist exploitation
- patriarchal control of women's labour
- state control of women

Chapter 2

We link the above discussion and the analysis of women's participation in the wage labour force together through a discussion of:

- 1) Gender roles and the sexual division of labour
 - a discussion of 'necessary labour' and the domestic component of necessary labour.
 - how this relates to women's position in the labour force
- 2) State Control and the construction of "space" around Gender and Race

Chapter 3

- 1) The first section of this chapter considers the nature of gendered employment, concentrating particularly on women's

experience of waged work. It also suggests connections between female labour reserves and the reorganisation and relocation of industry.

- 2) The second section locates the concept of gendered employment in an historical analysis of the incorporation of women into industrial labour in South Africa.

Chapter 4

- 1) Having traced women's concentration in particular sectors of the economy - particularly the Clothing and Textile Industry, this chapter covers the nature of the clothing and textile industry - its production processes, size, 'footloose' character and why it employs female labour. We also look at women's experience of waged employment in the Clothing and Textile industry.

- 2) In this section we discuss more particularly the Clothing and Textile industry in South Africa, concentrating on the spatial location and relocation of this sector in order to take advantage of pools of female labour. We conclude this chapter with a discussion of the Clothing and textile industry in Isithebe.

Chapter 5

Having established in the previous sections the relationship between the reorganisation and relocation of industry and the exploitation of spatially concentrated African women's labour we outline.

- 1) the part played by the policy of industrial decentralisation as a State regional strategy and
- 2) whether and how capital is taking advantage of this policy

Chapter 6

Is this development? In this chapter we look at the implications for development of industrial decentralisation - by tracing its links with regional and development theory ie. what "spatial" development means - and we assess its impact in these terms. We look at the reality of industrial decentralisation - who is being employed and what the "geography of gender" means for regional development.

Part 4

Summary and Conclusion

Our conclusions revolve around the implications for planning theory and practice of:- linking gender to regional strategies; of including the totality of people's experience in our world view - and of not perceiving of women as neutral or their

position as natural.

PART 1

A. Introduction : Why a Feminist Approach

"... the process by which a product is created is just as important as the product itself. Indeed, the product is inseparable from the process of its creation : the process is the product." (A. Jagger 1983:277).

For us the process which has created this document is vitally important to the content of the document. And we have tried as far as possible, to reflect this process both in its structure and its content. We feel it is therefore important to establish at the outset how we came to work with this particular subject and to adopt the approach that we have.

Obviously the process of enquiry is a personal one; and a product is a reflection, not only of investigation immediately preceding it, but also of one's total life experience. In this thesis, our experiences have been combined through lengthy discussion and in the writing up. The ideas and understanding put forward are a reflection of this combination.

We have both been involved with regional theory, development theory, planning theory and so on for some time. Our interest in this body of knowledge has been paralleled by our involvement with feminist theory and activities - the two have however, been

kept rigidly separate, due, firstly to the content and origins of much of the first body of theory plus the context within which we were studying and secondly, to the very underdeveloped nature of feminist theory and feminist politics in South Africa. While our conceptualization of the latter theory and its implications is still nascent and we are still struggling with the blinkers of an androcentric socialization/education, we have become increasingly aware of the enormous problems that exist with theory that ignores gender and the implications of gender. As expressed by Catherine McKinnon (1982:357), we have found that it is not that these theories are half-right but that they evoke the wrong whole. Our aim in this process has been to stress the importance of a feminist understanding and to bring feminist theory and regional theory - that theory which informs our understanding of space - closer together. We have not tackled the enormous and necessary task of rewriting regional theory per se. Rather we have looked at aspects of this theory - particularly that relating to decentralisation as a development strategy - and asked many questions and provided some answers which will hopefully facilitate its redirection. Again we do not see what we have done as a finished product but as part of the process of feminist enquiry : "feminism is not a finished structure but a living process" (Stanley & Wise 1983).

How does a feminist approach change our analysis? Why is it important? Firstly, feminism perceives of gender as fundamentally affecting every aspect of life. It insists on the

validity of personal experience and on the validity of human agency. Secondly, this must confront and change our conceptualization of social processes and therefore, of social change. In the first part of this chapter we wish to explore the following

- why gender has not been part of mainstream analysis
- what it means to adopt a feminist approach
- why it is important to do so and
- how we have gone about it

In the second part of this chapter we will describe and explain our own methodology in carrying out this project.

To begin with: the fact that gender has been excluded from the predominant 'worldview' has meant that the concerns of women have been largely excluded. This exclusion is in itself a genuine reflection of the enormous impact that gender has on society. It reflects the predominant social relations of male supremacy and female subordination which have historically characterised human relationships. These social relations are the product of historically specific meanings of masculinity and femininity, ie. the differential status of men and women, and their polarization is attributable to the social construction of what is considered "natural" to maleness and what is considered "natural" to femaleness. Male and female gender-roles are mapped out by social practices:

"Social practice and social practice alone, transforms a physical fact (which is itself devoid of meaning, like all physical facts) into a category of thought" (Christine Delphy 1984:144 in Friedman & Wilkes 1985).

Through this social construction, men acquire a dominant position which pervades all aspects of life and women are forced into a subordinate position.' What interests us here is - how does this affect our perception of "reality"? And, if it is 'knowledge' that informs the way in which we perceive reality, how does it affect this body of knowledge? Within a society which is hierarchically ordered the prevailing body of knowledge will reflect the attitudes and desires of the dominant group - and this refers to all hierarchically structured aspects of society - gender, race and class. This is so because the content of this 'knowledge' depends on who produces it, what methods are used to procure it and for what purposes it is acquired (D. Spender 1981) ie. knowledge is a social construction and is therefore not neutral. Historically men have predominantly been 'knowledge producers' and are therefore in control of defining 'reality' - and this 'reality' is compatible with their own experience (Michelle Friedman and Alison Wilkes 1985).

The logic of positivism which has dominated the construction of knowledge has done much to entrench and reinforce androcentrism. It relies on the justification of 'rationality' and 'objectivity' and is bent on a separation of facts from values, subject from

'The actual relations of patriarchy are discussed in more detail in Part 3 Chapter 1.

object. Its tendency is to trivialise personal experience and human agency and to reduce complex relationships to mono-causatory ones. Androcentricity in theory, has effectively been 'hidden' by this process - David Mogan asks the pertinent question:

"How far is the academic discourse a male discourse, sheltering behind such labels as 'rationality', 'scientific' or 'scholarly'? (1981:97).

And this process has effectively 'hidden' women from analysis. Gender is unconsidered and unproblematised and if considered it is merely squeezed into another neat social division. Although historical materialist approaches offer a fundamental critique of positivistic approaches, they too fall into its trap. 'Structuralism' and 'Functionalism' look respectively to structures or single causes as being determinant of complex relationships. Unfortunately these models have superceded the original dialectical Marxism - a model from which feminists draw inspiration because it problematises the complexity or, as some have called it, the multiplicity, of life. Feminism, like Marxism, rejects the idea of 'knowledge' being neutral, and in fact embraces this 'bias' as the first step to creating an alternative methodology and theory:

"Feminism is in the first place an attempt to insist on the experience and very existence of women. To this extent it is most importantly a feature of our ideological conflict and does not itself attempt an 'unbiased' or 'value-free' methodology. Rather by creating a dialectic at the ideological level it creates the conditions in which a non-sexist methodology might be approached" (Helen Roberts 1981:15)

To take a feminist approach implies not only documenting the social position of women - 'women and development', 'women and housing'... (Such an approach being accused of 'ghettoizing' woman and seeing women as merely another category for analysis), but understanding and explaining the why and how of this position. This means linking gender relations to the wider framework of social relations.

It is important for clarity at this point, to briefly set out the parameters of our approach. We believe that those theories which have their roots in historical materialism are the most coherent both in terms of interpretation and theory of social change. As such our approach is based on socialist feminist theory (particularly as outlined by Jagger 1983); While this body of theory is still relatively underdeveloped and has its roots in the First World, it overcomes many of the shortcomings of marxist and of radical feminist theory. It critiques Marxism for its functionalist view of patriarchy² and for its very economic restriction of the realm of 'relevant' struggle and social change to the public realm (the sphere of production); and it incorporates useful aspects of radical feminism - particularly with regard to its recognition of the "personal as political." Socialist feminism draws the domestic sphere, the 'private' and

²Marxism perceives of patriarchy as merely functional to capital and defines a very strict division between public and private (productive and reproductive spheres). It presumes that once women are drawn into the workforce, they will be free of male domination / with the demise of capitalism, they will be liberated. Historical experience shows this not to be true and reveals therefore, the importance of problematizing relations

personal into analysis - those areas of life which are usually devalued and deemed unimportant are drawn into a new conception of the material base.

Alison Jagger puts it concisely:

"Socialist feminists have developed a conception of the material base as that set of social relations which structures the production and reproduction of the necessities of daily life, the production of people including the production of sexuality, as well as the production of goods and services." (1983:332) "...the traditional emphasis in marxism on battles between capital and workers over the production process is modified to include struggle to change the entire way of life of people living in capitalist societies, so allowing explicit attention to be given not only to the public position of women and other oppressed groups, but also to the "private sphere" as an area which is intrinsically political. As many feminists have put it 'the personal is political' (1983, 55. Our emphasis.)

This new conception of the material base means that many more forms of struggle and change than previously thought are in fact challenges to the basic system of social relations, for example, challenges to the existing system of social relations in the domestic sphere. Such a conception is also more likely to ensure that social change is feminist as well as socialist. In fact socialist feminists have reconsidered the marxist claim that the standpoint of the oppressed provides a more impartial view of reality than that of the ruling class - because it comes closer to representing the interests of society as a whole. The socialist feminist paradigm puts forward the idea that because of the special form of oppression suffered by women, reality is more

between men and women.

accurately reflected from the standpoint of women. (Jagger 1983).

The inclusion of the private sphere, the recognition of the personal as political, the problematizing of gender ensure that the feminist approach changes and deepens our analysis.

In summary then: firstly - because the socialization of women and men is different and they each have different life experiences based on the social construction of gender, we cannot simply assume men's experience to be equivalent with everyone's experience. "We need to ensure that our picture of social reality presents more of the diversity that exists" (Friedman and Wilkes 1985). Secondly, the inclusion of women's and men's experience should transform our view rather than 'simply fill the frame'. Double-gendered seeing is not only important for women's interests but for the construction of social theory and knowledge as a whole - it is also a means to examining the social construction of sexuality and gender in relation to the whole social system. (Friedman and Wilkes 1985).

To know what we are up against - the breadth and depth of androcentrism - and so how to tackle it, it has been important to understand how women are absent from, how they are present in, knowledge. The problems below have been very much present in the statistics we have had to deal with, in the theory we have read and in the institution we have studied in. Most obvious is the blatant sexism of language where 'man', 'mankind', 'manpower' are

used to refer to all humans, or alternatively in the use of supposedly gender-blind terms such as 'worker' which preclude the possibility of the different experience of women workers and men workers and so assumes the experience of men workers. Friedman and Wilkes (1985) give a comprehensive breakdown of the problems with ways in which women are included:

- 1) Women may be present but effectively invisible : they are included from a 'masculinist perspective', and assumptions about gender-role behaviour are implicit and are not problematised. For example women are more often than not categorised according to the occupation of their husbands or, if unmarried, their fathers, thus assuming firstly that women's status is equal to men's and secondly that the family unit is the primary unit of stratification (Delphy 1984).
- 2) Women are relegated to the domestic sphere. This frequently contains within it a devaluation of women's activities. For example references to 'work' usually refer to the formal sector and to the public sphere thus omitting or devaluing 'informal' work - in which women are frequently involved in the 'private' or domestic sphere.
- 3) Women may be included only in the 'public sphere' with only their activities in this sphere being problematised thus excluding from analysis a large portion of women's reality.

- 4) Women may be included in a 'women's issues' approach. The importance of work done here must not be denied as analysis of specifically women-related aspects of any issue is part of the process of building foundations for more extensive gender analysis. Of course the danger is the consequent marginalization of women and of gender as such.

Taking account of gender is evidently not a simple operation - the mere addition of one more category for analysis. It involves critical examination of all the assumptions outlined above, a self-consciousness on the part of the researchers, theorists, and a rethinking of the methods as well as the purposes of research. We must, in research take account of the gender of the researcher and the researched, we must get beneath entrenched gendered attitudes (one researcher recounts how women claim to be "helping out" with farm work when in fact they work longer or similar hours to men in the family (White and Yang 1984).

Life-story or case study research methods are better able to reveal power relations between men and women, the difference and length of activities performed by both and so on. And most important to feminist research are questions of accessibility and of accountability ie. who uses the research, and the researchers responsibility to the researched.

In carrying through all the ideas expressed above into our own analysis, our research methods have been vitally important.

These we discuss below.

B. Our Research and Methodology

" 'Everyday Life' is what we spend our lives doing, is what we are involved in all of our waking and a large part of our sleeping hours. What all people spend most of their time doing must obviously be the subject of research (Stanley and Wise 1983:167).

This comment by Stanley and Wise may be taken as informing the nature of the research which we conducted in the area of Isithebe. We tried as far as possible to follow a feminist research process - particularly as expressed in the phrase "the personal is political." In other words the intent of our research was to recognise as valid the totality of human experience particularly in our case, women's experience. We were ourselves intimately involved in the research process which consisted of discussions with groups of women, case studies, and interviews with clothing and textile factory managers. Part of this research has been a commitment to return at least as much information as we received from the women of Isithebe.

Of course we were acting within a number of constraints, not the least of which was our own inexperience with conducting research, and particularly in carrying out feminist research. Much of what we did was necessarily experimental and was forced to remain at this level due to the major constraints of time and cost. We carried out all field work in the space of three weeks after

which the factories closed and we had various personal commitments. In conjunction with the time factor, another major constraint determining the quality of our research is the fact that neither of us are Zulu speakers. Most discussions were therefore through the medium of a translator and were frequently of the question and answer type rather than as spontaneous discussion. There were various other difficulties associated with the research such as the difficulty of finding people to interview - people being very dispersed in the rural area and isolated in the township. Another factor to be taken into account was our own personal biasing effect as "white middle class women." Our major regret is that the research does not go 'deep' enough - we would have liked to look in more depth at 'privatized' relationships, sexual politics and the dynamics of the "domestic struggle" (to use Bozzoli's term, 1981) ie, at the actual workings of patriarchy, of women - men relationships. We also regret not having more information on men and male activities both for a better conception of social relations and because - it would have been particularly interesting to build up a comparison between gender roles in terms of type and range of activities and time spent on work. All this would however require living in the area and a far more meaningful involvement there. Because of this lack we have had to rely heavily on existing research and theory ie, the analysis (Part 3) has involved a process of stepping back and drawing in other analysis in order to obtain a conception of how women's lives at Isithebe fit into the broader social framework.

Overall our research consists of three group interviews - the first with women of the Macambeni? Women's Association, the other two with the women working in the factories - most of the women in these groups were living in the rural areas of KwaZulu around Isithebe. We undertook three case studies with rural women, two with women living in Sundumbili (the township adjacent to Isithebe - Isithebe being where the factories are located) and one with a women boarding in a textile factory. We also interviewed the social worker in Sundumbili.

Of the three translators, two were from Sundumbili and were present for the later two group interviews, and the case studies conducted in Zulu. The other translator was a member of the Women's Association and knew many of the women interviewed.

Apart from these, we also conducted seven interviews with managers of clothing and textile factories in Isithebe.

In terms of the group and case studies we were extremely fortunate in making contact at the start with the Macambeni Women's Association. This is an extremely remarkable organisation. Historically it preceeded the Inkatha Women's Brigade and while many of the Association members are also Inkatha members the Association is determinedly independent of the Brigade. The group initially constituted itself over the issue of quotas for women. They argued that because many of the

women on the tribal land were widowed their husband's quotas should revert directly to them rather than the eldest son or some other male relative. This was a highly political and feminist issue. Having achieved this (in the process of which the group's spokesperson said in a speech to KwaZulu officials, "And may God make you give us our quotas"!) they then organised around a community issue ie. the provision of a primary school (in KwaZulu the burden of the provision of school buildings lies with those who can least afford it - the communities themselves). At present the most pressing issue is that of a creche (also a significantly feminist issue) as well as setting up sewing and other co-operatives.

The Women's Association is made up of older, rurally based women, the majority of whom have daughters working in Isithebe. They play a vital role in the child-care of their daughter's children. The majority of them also work on cane fields as wage labourers and/or on their own land.

The group discussions with women working in the factories took place on a Sunday and were arranged through the Women's Association - in all about 60 women (+ 2 men) were involved in these discussions. The discussions were of a general nature and were intended to provide some overall impression of women's lives in Isithebe - at home and at work.

Discussion about the home revolved around: the nature and

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diversity of daily activities; the care of children; needs; how they satisfy these; conditions in the house; attitudes to, and relationships with men and other people in the home; attitudes to marriage, to where they live, to why they live as they do; their visions of the future and so on.

Discussion about the factory revolved around: What they feel about the work, how the factories have changed their lives, why the factories came to Isithebe, conditions in the factories, sexual harassment, attitudes to other women and men in the factory, major grievances and what they thought they could do about these.

The case studies relate these general impressions to individual women - they reveal the personal experience of oppression and exploitation of individual women. We asked these women for a lot of factual information - number of dependents, household income, married/single, education, wages, hours of work, costs and so on - so we could build up some kind of comparative basis between them. We were also able to discuss their attitudes, relationships, fears and wants in more detail with them.

The social worker gave an overall impression of the dynamics of the township of Sundumbili and the impact of the factories on social relations specifically regarding women and men in the area. She also gave a wonderful account of her own life relating it specifically to her being a woman.

In our interviews with the managers of Isithebe Clothing and Textile factories (we concentrated on these factories for reasons which will become clearer further on but essentially they represent the largest single sector and employ the greatest number of women), we hoped to obtain some idea of the attitudes of the employers to their employees - questions revolved mainly around: why they employ so many women, wages for women and men, firing and hiring, what extra problems/benefits are associated with employing women, their impressions of the women workers' lives outside the factory, did they think the factory owners had any obligation to provide workers with housing, transport, child-care etc. Questions also related to their choice of location - why they had relocated there - what advantages/disadvantages are associated with the location, would they move again - for what reasons.

As can be seen, our research in the area concentrated on gaining information on the life experience of people in an industrial decentralisation point (IDP). To supplement this and to compare this to other IDPs we have extracted data from the numerous studies which have been conducted on IDPs and on Isithebe specifically. It goes without saying that the majority of this data is plagued by the problems of androcentricity discussed above. As a consequence we have had to avoid using much of the available data and rely very heavily on data which does recognise gender. It would be very interesting to do a gender analysis of

industrial decentralization in South Africa - the scope of this study however, obviously falls short of such a large task, and we have concentrated our energies on Isithebe.

Our own personal commitment to the area is an extremely important part of the process of this research and should be seen as as much a part of the research as this product. Our involvement has been to establish contact between the Women's Association and other organizations involved in similar problems and projects. TREE (Training and Resources for Early Education) organizes around child care and the provision of creches, and the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW) is interested in sewing co-operatives and building up contact with women's groups. We also intend writing an article for SPEAK magazine on 'Women and Work in Isithebe'. We will make all our information on the area available to women and other interested organisations.

C. How we have Written Up the Thesis and Why we took this Approach

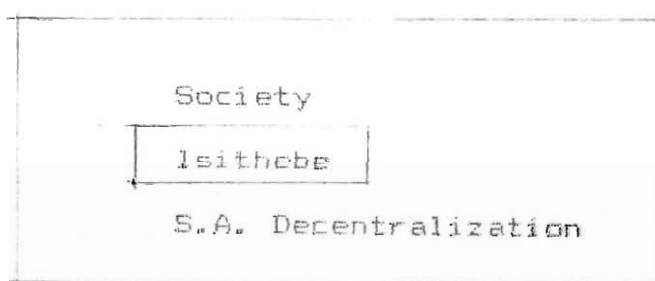
If feminism changes the way we see, changes the way we understand, changes what we do and how we do it, it must also change the content and the structure of a document such as this.

Theory in the common androcentric mould requires that the writer detach her/himself from the work in hand, extract and present the facts in neat logical categories and attach the appropriate label

- marxist, neoclassical etc. etc. However - and feminism has made us deeply aware of this - our thought processes, and life itself, are not divided up into neat categories of race/class/gender or production/reproduction, family/society or even men/women; and these categories cannot, in abstracted analysis, communicate the intense diversity of life. Nor should the perception of this diversity be divorced from those involved in its perception.

We wish to make these issues explicit in the structure and the content of this document - we wish to make explicit our thought processes and our understanding. The thesis is therefore structured much as our thoughts and our enquiry proceeded; it also reflects how we feel Isithebe is best understood - from the life experiences of people in Isithebe to the broader social context of Isithebe.

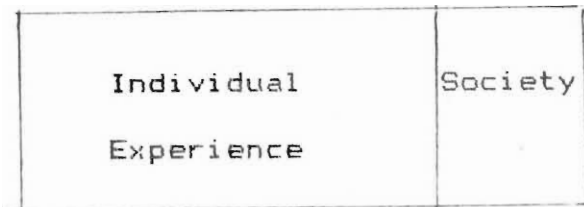
Diagrammatically it can be illustrated as follows:



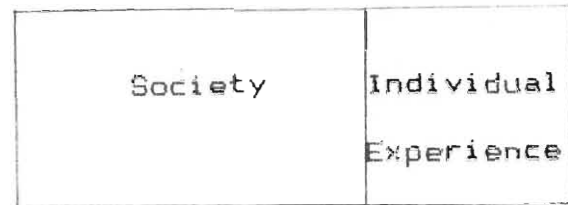
PART 2 emphasises the experience of people in Isithebe. It has been told in the form of "descriptive analysis." PART 3 emphasises the broader dynamics, looking at the interrelationship of gender, race and class; at the social processes affecting

Isithebe. Diagrammatically it can be seen like this:

PART 2



PART 3



The one is not separate from the other but represents a different emphasis.

We hope that this communicates what we feel to be the core of to a feminist understanding of social process - ie. that society is not people writ big" nor are people "society writ small", in other words there is a continuing dynamic between the two, - between people and society, between individuals and structures. Understanding the one will not tell us all about the other; rather it is the process for interaction between the two which is important.

D. A Note on Terminology

Our use of such terms as patriarchy, gender-relations the mode of procreation, necessary labour are discussed in the text. There are however a few terms which need clarification here.

We have used the term "African" to denote those people who are Zulu, Xhosa, etc.; we have used the term "black" if we are referring to 'coloured', Indians and African. We have chosen the term "homelands" in preference to "bantustans" as we wish to denote the latest developments in the State's policy. "State"; "state" with a small 's' is used when we wish to refer to state processes.

PART 2

The Interviews

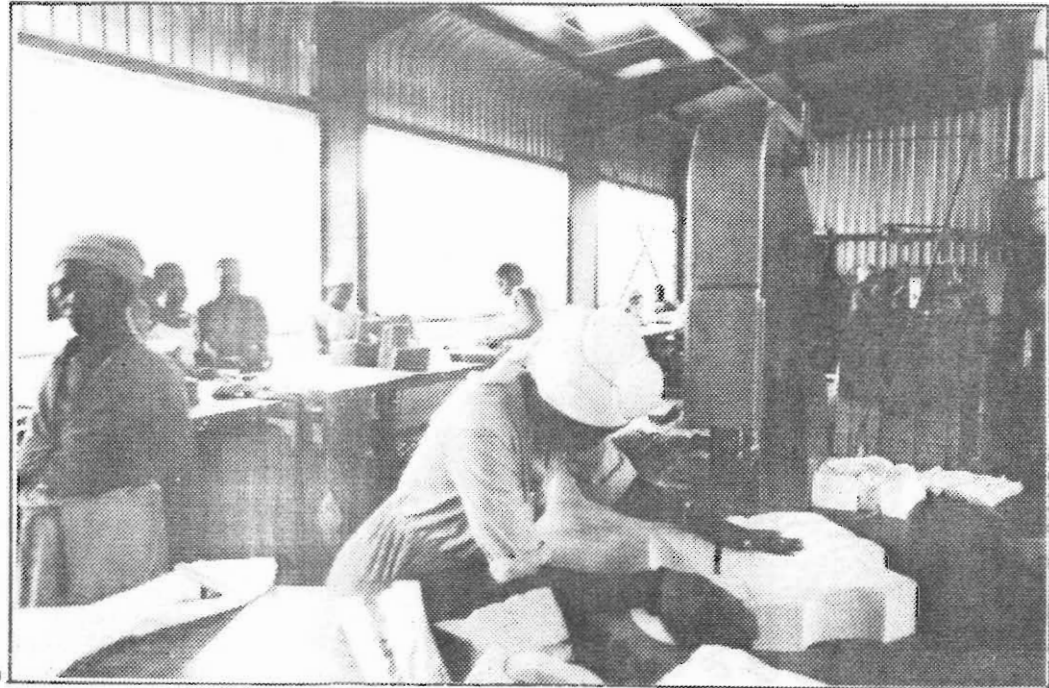
In Part 2, we relate the "story" of how industry has affected the lives of some of the women who live and/or work in the area and also how these experiences differ substantially from person to person. In Part 1, we discussed our methodology, as well as the Women's Association with whom we made contact, the group discussions, case studies and interviews with the social worker and factory managers. The actual process of our enquiry evolved from our own thought processes wherein it was clear that our foremost interest lay with the women and their experiences. We therefore interviewed the women first and then the factory managers.

In relating the interviews then, we follow a similar structure to the one in which our enquiry was organised. Broadly, our aim was to assess the impact - in terms of both limits and opportunities - of industry in Isithebe for the women who have either entered into waged labour or who, for various reasons have remained in the home. Basically, we tried to formulate an understanding of how these women cope with the tasks that, because of the social construction of their gender they are expected to perform in the home and place of employment.

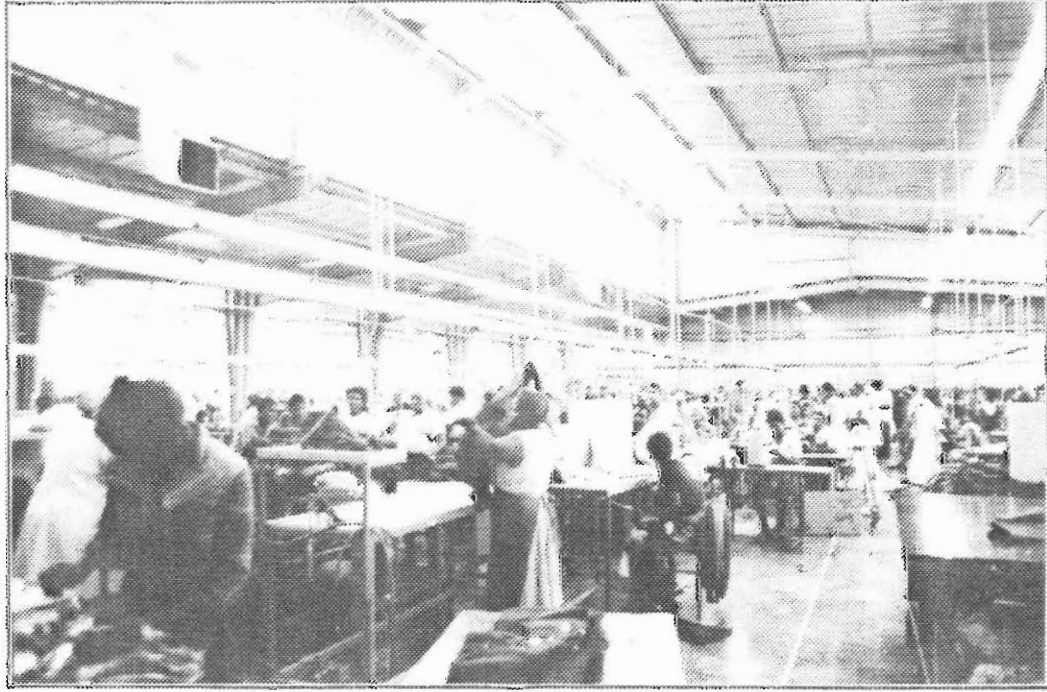
The overall impression we gained from talking to women in the Isithebe area was one of limited choice and opportunity for themselves and limited choice and opportunity for their children. Although their lives are, by their own admission a struggle, the women are tenacious and resilient. We found strong support systems to exist especially between the women who live, mostly with their families (although often the men are absent) in the areas surrounding Isithebe. However, besides the Women's Association (and Inkatha Women's Brigade), manifestation of the links between women in any form of organisation is hampered by the struggle of their existence and which is expressed by them in the fact that they have no time.

The experiences of the two women we interviewed who live in Sundumbili and the woman we met who lives in a factory in Isithebe, have a somewhat different dimension. Forced to migrate to the Isithebe area in search of waged employment, they live an isolated and alienated existence - away from their families and friends and with no established supportive relationships. Generally, the lives of all these women are cycles of endless drudgery. For women working in the factories, their days consist of domestic work in the morning, work in the factories during the day, domestic work in the evenings. For mothers (in particular, those we interviewed from the Women's Association), their days are filled with child care, "gardening", and other domestic tasks and some work on farms.³

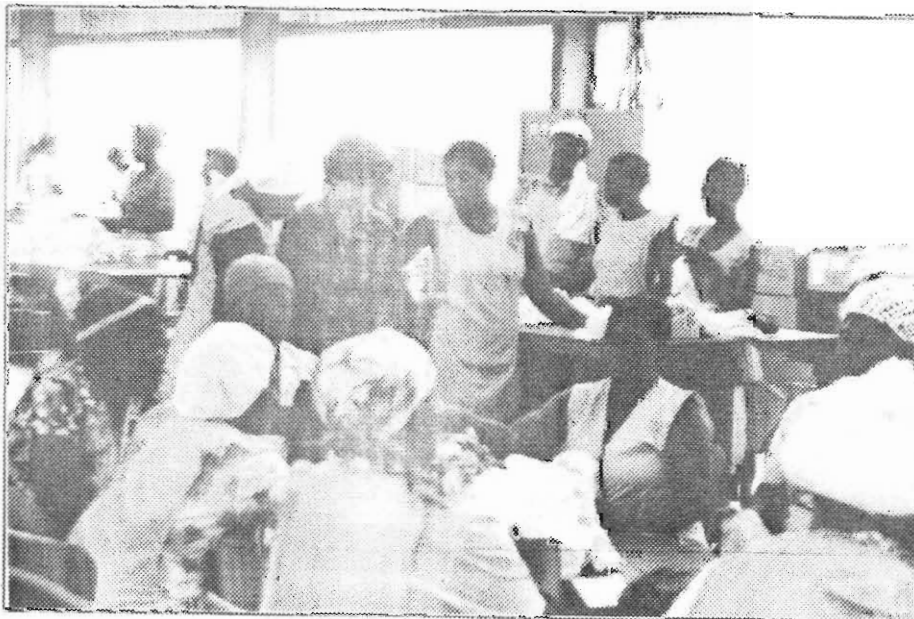




portraits 2



portraits 3



portraits 4

A. Life Experiences of Women in Isithebe

Group discussion 1

Our first meeting was with four women from the Women's Association, Mrs Jale (who interpreted for us), Mrs Ngobaza, Mrs Ivy Mathaba (the chairperson) and Mrs Mathaba (Ivy's sister). The Association is based in the Inyoni district (about 10km from Isithebe) and comprises mainly older women, many of whom have daughters who work in Isithebe. Most of the women had either lived in the area all their lives or had come to live there because it was the home of the man they had married. Women become "the property" of their husbands on marriage and as such, have no option but to move to "his home." Of the women we interviewed, a few still lived with their husbands, some of whom either worked in Mandini, or when it was possible to get a job, at places situated much closer to home - for example, at a nearby garage. Some men had migrated to Durban or Johannesburg or had managed to find employment at Darnall or Amatikulu, in which case, they would come home over week-ends (see map).

The women themselves rely mainly on farming. They either serve on "white" farms in the area or help people out with weeding on

³In Appendices 1-8, we set the broad context of Isithebe. We draw on Libby Ardington's (1984/5) studies of Nkandla (an area where no industrial development has occurred) and of Isithebe - in order to assess the impact, in terms of both household income and access to facilities - of industrial development. These studies provide the "empirical base" for assessing the effects of industrial decentralisation.

smaller "cane-growers" plots. As outlined in Chapter 1, the "quota system" enables people with enough land to produce cane which is bought by Tongaat-Hulett. It was only very recently (1982) that women were able to get quotas in their names enabling them to benefit from the scheme in the absence of their husbands. Chiefs automatically get allocated quotas. We came across the sister of a chief who was "making use of" the quota which had been allocated to the chief's wife. This woman spent much of her time "working in the garden" and sometimes, she would try to "plough something other than sugar cane." However, income from cane-growing is irregular - "you have to risk the weather" - and some women, including those without quotas attempt to raise money by selling grass mats; sitting mats and sleeping mats. Mrs. Mathaba, for example, who has a quota, might also make 10 mats in a month and if possible sells them at R10.00 each.

An essential role that these older women play in the community is that of child-care. One of the main reasons for them not going to work in Isithebe is that "as our daughters are serving in Isithebe and as they are all having children, we, as mothers, must look after the children because there is no creche." The issue of a creche is of great concern to the Association and representations have been made to people who might be able to help-financially or otherwise - to get one started. The women are adamant that a creche should be located in the vicinity of their homes rather than in Isithebe itself because it would be too disruptive for the children and difficult for their daughters

to take the children to work. "The buses that are running are full up" and it would also mean an increase in already high transport costs.

While the women are extremely aware that having a creche in the area would ease the burden of their daily lives, they nonetheless, feel that a communalised informal form of child-care, is too costly to contemplate. If one woman takes care of a group of children for a day or two, on a rotating basis, it means having to have enough food in the household to feed the children each time ones turn comes up. People live a hand to mouth existence here and the problems associated with having to provide a number of children with food for a day or two, means that opportunities for this form of child-care are highly constrained. Such problems present themselves in the form of limited financial resources and in the fact that the women have many other daily tasks to perform.

It became evident to us that these older women feel largely responsible for the children. This is further reflected in other issues in which the Association has been involved such as that of a community primary school. The Association organised both funds for and the building of the school. The sense of responsibility felt by these women is heightened by the fact that, in most cases, the fathers of the children play a small part in their upbringing. Many of the children are illegitimate. "A lot of girls" we were told, "fall pregnant while still at school and the

boys can't take responsibility because they are still young." Sometimes a father will contribute financially to the raising of a child, although this is often dependent on whether he is a wage earner. Even in such cases, however, only small amounts of money are forthcoming.

For many of the women, in particular, those whose husbands have either migrated or are no longer alive, the wages earned by their daughters working in the factories, represent the major source of household income. Often, this is as little as R20 a week. Some of the women are fortunate enough to draw pensions (about R80 every two months). While a large proportion of this money goes into household expenses, we came across women who put varying amounts aside to "pay for their funerals because no one else will be able to." Pensions, however, are extremely difficult to acquire. We were asked by the widow of a chief (she had been his first wife), who knew that she was entitled to a pension, if we could help her in acquiring one as she had tried several times but with no success.

The women have mixed attitudes towards the employment of their daughters in the factories, but feelings of despair and frustration about the conditions under which their daughters work, and a sense of security that is gained by the knowledge that at least some money is coming into the household. A sense of empathy with their daughters is evident in what the women have to say about the conditions of employment in Isithebe. Feelings

about the low wages, long hours, high transport costs, limited opportunities for promotion, lack of compensation for injuries sustained on the job, stringent conditions for maternity leave, sexual harassment and, generally, the limited opportunities and choices available to their daughters and to themselves, are best summed up in the following quotes.

On low wages :- "These factories are from Durban and Pinetown and they are paying well those people in the locations, but here, they get much less, even though they are doing the same thing. Even the small girls are serving in Isithebe - the ones without reference books. Some are about 11. They are not registered and they get paid very little. It is better than getting nothing."

On long hours :- "Our daughters leave here at 5 am, returning at 6 pm - working only for little money. Some work over-time on Saturdays and some work night-shift, having to wait till morning for a bus to come home."

On high transport costs :- "And they don't serve them with transport. While special buses are serving people from Stanger, Darnall and Durban who are well paid [meaning management and clerical staff who don't have to pay for transport] these poor people are paying for themselves to use buses - with no subsidy on these buses."

On limited opportunities for promotion :- "What happens is that our children have Form 3 and Form 4 and they can't do this clerk business. What is mainly done is this machine business - sewing."

On lack of compensation for injuries :- "They get nothing, nothing. About 3 years ago, Mrs Gumede, who was working at Durity, got cut on the leg by a machine. This machine had "special poison" and she died from that poison. The parents enquired about compensation, but got nothing. A lot of accidents happen - but they don't get a cent."

On maternity leave :- "Our daughters serve until the eighth month. They get no pay for maternity and no work after maternity if they stay away for longer than two weeks."

On sexual harassment :- "They are doing such a corruption, you won't believe. You can't be appointed if you don't "be in love" - which is very odd. If our daughters argue, they get chased away from the job. We feel cross, but because we are poor and have no money, we can't provide for them - we can't do anything."

"Some of our daughters have tried to go to Durban for jobs, but there are very few jobs. So they were pleased when the factories came here but now, because there is no money, they know they're

stranded."

"It would be a great loss to our daughters who are mothers if we went to work in the factories. We must remain at home because otherwise we wouldn't manage."

The issues of mutual concern around which the Women's Association has organised and continues to organise are indicative of the social awareness of these women and of the need for systems of support. Their contribution to household survival rests in their moral support for their daughters, in their dedication of time and physical labour to child-care and, where possible, in the growing of agricultural produce and/or making mats as well as in the fact that they undertake to do many necessary household tasks such as cleaning and washing.

Group Discussion (2)

Our second meeting was with a group of 60 women, most of whom work in clothing factories in Isithebe. Where possible, some of the women were accompanied by their mothers. Three of the women in the group were unemployed.

From these women, we gained overall impressions of the hardships endured in daily life in the area, and more particularly those endured in the factories. These hardships are derived from:-

- the physical labour and time involved in domestic tasks (especially for those women who do not have mothers to help them out).
- the physical labour and time involved in working in the factories.
- the limited financial benefits of working in the factories.
- the dependence on these women for their income and for the maintenance of the household.

The lives of these women thus typifies the "double shift." This is further exemplified by the fact that most of the women said that the incomes they earn are crucial to household survival and are adamant that if they stopped working, the household would collapse. They therefore have no option but to seek waged employment wherever jobs can be found.

Before the factories came to Isithebe, most of the women in the group had worked on cane farms. They said, however, that "it is better working in the factories because the work is much lighter." Also, working on the farms sometimes brings in as little as only R30 a month. There were a few women in the group who have been unable to get jobs on either the farms or in the factories - unemployment is still high in the area - and the only

option left open to them is to try and eke out an existence by knitting, sewing or making grass mats at home.

In some cases, men contribute to household income either through migrant remittances or, by contributing small amounts of their incomes if they are working in the area and living at home. Most of the women in the group said that the men had gone to Durban to look for jobs because "there are no jobs for men in Isithebe - only for women." Some women had tried, unsuccessfully to find jobs in Durban while others said that they had never been there because "we are not allowed to go from Kwazulu." They all expressed the desire to go "if we could get the money."

The wages earned by the women in the group vary from R18 a week to R38 a week. Generally, the women spend their wages on food and other household provisions, education for their children and on transport to and from work. In one case, a women told us that, although she did not want to go and work in the factories, her husband (who works on a farm in the area) told her that she had to. Often, after spending her wages on food and provisions, she has no money left to pay for the bus and has to ask her husband for the R5 necessary to pay bus fare for a week. Her husband resents this, saying that now she is earning "her own" money, she shouldn't have to ask him. This has caused much friction between wife and husband and the woman summed up her plight in the following statement : "I don't want to earn R38 a week because it is less than my problems."

Commonly, a day in the lives of these women starts at 4.00 am. Before catching the bus at 5.00 am, they spend time doing domestic chores and ensuring that their children are provided for during the day. Although the role mothers play as child-minders is extremely important, they are often unable to take the responsibility of, for example, preparing food for the children for the day. In cases where there are no mothers, the women leave their children with neighbours or friends.

Once at the factory, women "clock-in" and are not allowed to leave the premises until closing time which varies from between 4.30 pm to 6.00 pm and sometimes later. They get a fifteen minute break for tea at 9.30 in the morning and thirty minutes break for lunch at 12.30. In some cases, women are given a slice of bread and a mug of tea in the morning break, but they all have to take their own food for lunch. On Fridays, they finish early at 1.00 pm and the rest of the afternoon is spent going to the shops and stocking up (with wages earned during the week) on provisions for the following week. The women said that "although we are too tired to do anything when we get home, we are still expected to do everything - everyone is waiting for us.". They cook evening meals after work and generally wash and clean in preparation for the following day. Some said they go to bed at 9.30 or 10.00 at night, which means that these women have an average of 6 to 7 hours sleep a night. It is obvious, from the things they say and by the way they say them, that the women are

physically exhausted and mentally numbed. No attempts are made by men, if present in the household, to take responsibility for any domestic tasks which might help to ease the burden of the "double shift" for the women.

The sexual division of labour in the factories means that women do certain tasks and men do others. The cutting, sorting, sewing, pressing and checking of garments are done by women, while men are employed as supervisors, as loaders and as truck drivers. Men, therefore are put into positions of control over women or into positions which are deemed more suitable for men because the "tasks are heavier." The women feel that, generally men are better treated in the factories. They also get higher wages. This, they say, is because "ladies are in the lower class so men must be better paid." (An example was given of a weaving factory where both men and women do weaving and men get paid R27 a week while women get paid R21 a week). In the clothing factories, women are relegated to tedious and monotonous tasks. On the production line, the women sew one section of an article of clothing, never a whole garment. Examples of this were given by some of the women in the group. One said that all she does is sew side seams, another sleeve seams, another sewed cuffs onto sleeves, another belt loops onto trousers and so on. Targets are set for daily production and "if you get lazy you are sent to the office to be scolded." All the women agreed that they would far rather sew a whole garment because they feel that they are not "learning a skill by only sewing seams."

There is little chance for promotion in the factories although the women said that if you work hard for a long time, you might be appointed as a supervisor. They were not clear on how hard or for how long one must work. The women said that, generally, they prefer male supervisors because sometimes when a woman is placed in that position, "she becomes cheeky to us." This represents, firstly, an "acceptance" of male control and implies, secondly, an understanding that given their position, women should support each other even, and perhaps especially when, put in positions of control.

The general conditions under which women work in Isithebe indicates an obvious lack of concern by the managers for the well-being of both the women they employ and their families. This is vividly illustrated in our case studies and in the interviews with managers of various clothing firms. It is also reflected by the group in their changing perceptions of why the factories had come to Isithebe. They said that although they initially thought that the factories had "...come to help us, we can see now that the bosses are making people work for them and the people are gaining nothing - only the bosses are gaining. The bosses have come to make money through us."

It became evident to us, as our discussion proceeded, that conditions under which women work vary from factory to factory. At the time of our interviews, for example, wages varied quite

significantly between factories. Starting wages are determined by whether or not the women have received training. If trained in a factory, sometimes the "training wage" is as low as R18 a week, rising to R22 a week once trained. While in others, training wages are R23 a week rising to R28 a week once trained. (This variation has since been eliminated for reasons explained in the interviews with the managers). Levels of education and experience are irrelevant in determining wages, and increases of varying amounts (sometimes R3 in 6 months) rest wholly on the length of time spent working in a factory. The women do not get paid for public holidays.

In some factories, conditions are imposed on the age of the women employed although in most, there seems to be no concern for how young the women are. There were girls in the group as young as 15 and 16 who are working in factories. "Some factories prefer school-children because they can work harder." None of the women in the group were made to sign a contract when starting work in a factory, enabling managers to fire them "on the spot" for any reason or to lay them off whenever necessary. The women are searched every evening after work and "even if we take a few scraps of material, we are fired." No formal period of time is allotted for maternity leave and generally, women lose their jobs if they fall pregnant. In most cases, the women said that there are no health officers or nurses at the factories to deal with accidents or illness - "only first-aid boxes." Accidents, for example, the cutting of fingers, are common. Some women

experience pains in their legs and backs from having to stand all day at knitting machines while others get stiff and painful backs from leaning over sewing machines. If a woman has to take time off, her salary is docked - often by as much as R8 if she is absent for a day. She must also produce some form of documentation (a doctor's certificate in cases of illness or, if a child had to be taken to a clinic, a certificate to verify this) to explain her absence. Some factories seem to be more lenient than others on this score but most women said that in their factories, if you are absent for a day, you get fired "because they don't believe that you can be sick for one day." The women are not allowed to talk to each other while working - "we just have to shut up."

Being subjected to sexual harassment on a daily basis is a common experience for many of the women in the group and, they say, for all women in the factories. "The supervisors", we were told, "touch us openly." When asked if they ever complained about it, they said that "there is no-one to complain to." Some women also cited examples of women they know who had "been in love with a boss to get a job." Others told of how, because one can only get a job if one has a reference book, some women, with no reference books "have sex with a boss - to get a job." The prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual manipulation of women is by no means unique to the factory situation. "Sometimes", a woman told us, "when we have no money, we must pay the taxi drivers with sex." Although strikes are uncommon in factories

employing mainly women, in 1984, women at Kempar Appliances (an electrical appliance manufacturer) went on strike over sexual harassment. The women in the group were aware that this strike had taken place but are afraid to institute such action in the factories where they work because "we will lose our jobs."

The issue of trade union organisation is one which frustrates and angers the women in the group. For they are aware that organisation and strike activity holds the potential - although limited - of improving the conditions under which they work. They told us that "the unions had been to some factories, but the bosses had torn the papers up" and that "the unions came and gave us forms but we never saw them again." None of the women in the group belong to a union and all said that they would like to belong, either to a union or to some form of organisation. "The bosses tell us we musn't join." The women also said that they have "problems of time for meetings because sometimes, we only have Sundays free." The interviews with the managers provides insight into the constraints placed on organisation, in particular union organisation, for women.

We asked the women to describe any special problems they felt they, as women, experienced. After much discussion, it became clear that the main concern of the women is how to support their children on the little money they earn.

"We are struggling very much to support our children and have

little money to look after them." "Although I am working, I can't support my children the way I would like to." "We must pay for everything for their schooling - the fees, for the uniforms, and for books." Because there is only a primary school in the area, these costs are often exacerbated by the fact that older children either have to travel to Sundumbili (if they are fortunate enough to gain admission to a high school there) or have to be sent away (mostly to Durban) to high school. A younger woman said that although she had wanted to finish school, her father had died so she "had to go to work." She aims, at some stage, to finish school through correspondence.

Most of the women said that they would prefer to live closer to their jobs. Not only is it "difficult to get houses anywhere, especially in Sundumbili", but it is also "difficult to pay." Even if they could get houses in the township, the women said that they would not be able to afford the rent. "Here, in the rural area, we pay R5 a month." One woman said that "in the factory, they asked who wanted houses, but nothing ever happened." ... "Another, pay R300 before you can get a house." While the women say : "We can't do anything about our problems " and : "Some of us just want to be old so that we can get pensions", somehow mixed with this despair is a sense that "women must help themselves." Setting up a creche would, they feel, relieve them of much concern for their children as well as dependence on mothers, neighbours and friends for child-minding. Everything depends however, on how much money they earn,

succintly summed up in the following quote: "We want the firms to be here, but we cannot live on the money they are paying."

What emerges strongly from the two group discussions is the sense that none of the women - mothers or daughters - has any choice in what they do with their lives. Being "stranded" (to use an often quoted way of describing themselves) in the area, the younger women must take up jobs in the factories and the older women must look after the children. It is a relationship of mutual dependence and relationships with men, while still ever-present in their control of women, become somewhat peripheral in the women's lives. We discussed this in detail with the social worker.

THE CASE STUDIES

We conducted case studies to get an idea firstly, of women's individual experience and secondly, of how experiences differ from person to person. We interviewed 6 women, 3 of whom live in the Inyoni area, Duduzile, Thobile and Jabu, 2 of whom live in Sundumbili, Albertina and Christa and one Betty, who lives in a factory. Because much of what was said in the group discussions was repeated in the case studies (such as some aspects of the general conditions under which women work), we have only highlighted those which reveal the different and shared life experiences of women.

DUDUZILE (44)

Duduzile stays in a household comprising two families totalling 20 people. Her family "unit" is made up of herself, her husband, her mother and five of her eight children (three are away at school) The rest of the household is made up of her brother, sister-in-law and their seven children. Each family "unit" is separately provided for and maintained. Duduzile is the only wage earner in her family "unit" and thus supports eleven people on R30 per week. Her mother receives a pension of about R80 once every two months but contributes only a small amount to the household as she is putting the rest away to pay for her funeral. Duduzile's husband is disabled and does not get a pension. "We went to ask for a pension but they said he must go to the hospital ." Three of her children are at school in Durban, two at school in Inyoni and three at home. They range in age from 16 to 11 months old. Duduzile's brother works at the KwaZulu Development Corporation and earns approximately R200 a month while her sister-in-law is a domestic worker and gets paid R20 a month. The two "units", although forming a household, are not organised communally; they share neither their earnings nor domestic tasks and Duduzile finds herself trapped in a situation where, in her group, "I have to do everything and everyone depends on me."

We asked Duduzile to describe a day in her life, from which it is clear that she is fully preoccupied with caring for her family:-

"I wake up every morning at 3 o'clock and prepare food for the young ones who are going to school and for the ones who are staying at home - especially the one who is 11 months old - who have to stay with my mother. My mother is too old to do cooking so I must leave them with cooked food. In the evening, I try to cook something which is light which can be cooked easily because I get back late - at 6 o'clock. No-one else can cook and I can't pay to get someone to come and cook. I have to do everything. After cooking and eating, I put the children to bed and then do washing and cleaning. I go to bed sometimes at 9.30. I don't get enough sleep and always feel tired. On Saturdays, I clean and wash. All this is too much for one person."

The three children in Durban are staying with Duduzile's sister-in-law in KwaMashu. The eldest, a boy (Duduzile says that she wanted to have a girl first so that she would look after the other children) is in Form 4 and the other two in Form 3 and in Standard 4. Duduzile said that she had wanted to have many children because "I like children." When asked how she could afford to send them to school, Duduzile said: "I am helped by the Almighty. But now, there is no hope that the children can continue schooling because there is no money."

Duduzile, herself, had stayed in Durban with her husband when he

was working for the Railways, "but I didn't stay long because it is not easy to get a job." Having worked on a cane farm, her pass would have stated as much and women who have worked on farms may not get jobs in urban areas. Duduzile remembers the time when "women had to hang their passes around their necks like beads."

Her job at Kingswear factory entails checking seams on completed garments. There are approximately 800 women working in the factory, conditions are crowded and she has to stand all day. There are about 10 men in the factory who have better positions and who get better wages than the women. When asked why she thought the men got paid more, Duduzile said that she "can't believe that a man can be paid only R30 a week like women because they know that a man is the breadwinner." She has worked in the factory for a year, starting on R24 a week with an increase of R3 every 6 months. She said that she would like to belong to a union but "the bosses do not allow them" and she had no idea what could be done to make the bosses pay better wages "...because when we complain about money, the bosses just say that if you are not satisfied with the money, you can leave the job. They say that the firm has no money."

Duduzile has no choice. Her husband cannot work, she has eight children and an aging mother to support. She carries a heavy burden.

THOBILE (20)

Thobile lives in "Chief Mathaba's kraal" with 8 other people including her mother and two sisters. The eldest of whom has a child, and the younger one is still in school. In this household too, "everybody is in different groups and each group looks after themselves." The money Thobile earns is the only "regular money" and her mother and sisters depend on it. However, because they form part of the chief's family, Thobile feels that they are more secure. A major concern in Thobile's life is the prospect of marriage and having to leave the relative security of her present home environment. "But", she says, "marriage is natural." She is adamant, however, that she be the only wife because she "has had good experience of many wives and she doesn't want to live like that. It is better to be one wife and one husband because if there are two wives, you may not be the favourite - even if you are suggesting something sensible."

Thobile left school in Standard 5 because of ill health. Her job at Bridge Clothing, where she has worked for two years, earns her R26 a week. It entails either sewing loops onto trousers, where she has to go through 80 pairs an hour, or sewing the lining of jackets, in which case, she must do 10 an hour. There are 400 women in the factory and 30 men. There are few men, she says ... "because they cannot sew with the machine and are not interested in learning. There is still this primitive idea that there is work that should be done only by women and other work

that men should do."

On the issue of sexual harassment, Thobile said : "The supervisors are the worst. If we don't respond, they complain about our work until we lose our jobs."

Thobile understood the factories to have come to Isithebe because "they knew that the people here would accept low wages, lower wages than other places, because there is no work here only work in the cane fields and the work in the factories is better than the cane fields."

Because Thobile lives in a household of mainly women, she is not relied on so heavily to do domestic chores and although she does her share, she is still able to find time for a youth group (Inkatha) to which she belongs. "We do stage plays, sing, raise funds - but we are not sure what for. The leaders are organising us."

Thobile feels that she is "overworked for little money" but doesn't know what she can do about it. "Women are not brave enough to get together to complain because they are afraid of being fired." Women have no control - a point clearly illustrated in the following case study.

We knew before Jabu that she was about to lose her job. When we spoke to her, it was clear that she had no idea that Polysoles, where she worked, was to close down within a week of our interview with her.

Jabu lives with her mother, three brothers who "are still young" and two sisters, who are both at school. She has one child of her own and has had promises from the father of the child that he will come from Newcastle and live with her and her family. Her mother works at a local store and earns R100 per month, while Jabu herself was earning R60.03 per week - "a good wage, much better than all the other factories." The women pay a next-door neighbour R20 a month to look after the children while they are at work.

Jabu had worked at Polysoles from September 1983. Her job entailed making the upper soles for an average of 400 pairs of shoes a day. Not only was the pay better in this factory, but Jabu was also able to take 6 months unpaid maternity leave (she had health problems during her pregnancy) and return to her job thereafter. But Juba is now out of a job and the eight family members are dependent on the money her mother earns each month.

ALBERTINA (62)

Albertina has lodged in Sundumbili for 7 years and has worked at Durity for

5 years. Previously, she had been employed as a domestic worker in Mandini earning R50 per month. Her present wage is R33 a week. Nine people share the 4-roomed house in which she lives in Sundumbili, seven of whom are working and two of whom are children. She pays R3.50 a month in rent. The house is not organised communally and each person cooks her or his own food every evening. "It is better to cook yourself because you know how much food you use in a week."

In the 9 years before 1978, Albertina had worked in Durban. "I was working by the kitchen." Her husband was a taxi driver in Sundumbili at this time but when he died, she came to Sundumbili to be nearer home. "Home" is in Nongoma where she has a farm and where her 5 children are staying and "watching the farm." She supports "many people at home" by sending money every month - "perhaps R20, perhaps if I haven't got it, R10 - there is no money by this firm." When she stops working, she says she will go to Nongoma and "sell bushes and trees and use my machine." She started sewing when she was 12. "I am a dress maker" but, although she has her own sewing machine, "I haven't got money to buy the materials and I can't save money to start although it would be nice to do that." She tries to get home for a week-end about once every three months, "but the bus is very expensive", costing R26 for a return trip.

Although Sundumbili is approximately 4km from Isithebe, Albertina still has to leave home at 5.30 am to be at work by 7 am. To her, it seems as though there are "10 000 people working in the factory - many older people, but also some young ones." "In the factory we get nice tea (for which the people must pay 3c a day). We get paid for public holidays, but only if we work on the Saturday after the holiday. We must talk first before we can get paid without working." Albertina feels that although organisation is a good thing, she is frustrated by the fact that "the people can't agree with each other - each one talks what they like." "The women", she says "- our sense is wrong. Too many people by the firm didn't go to school so they don't know what they're doing. If you want to organise, you must think first of what you are doing."

Albertina lives a lonely and isolated existence in Sundumbili. She misses her family but cannot give up her job because they depend on her. It was clear to us, though, that Albertina is losing her eyesight - she has cataracts in her eyes - and the chances are good that her days are numbered at Durity - "then there will be even less money."

CHRISTA (31)

Christa has lived in the same house as Albertina - her aunt - for 3 years. She has 3 children, two of whom are at home (also in

the Nongoma district) and one, a baby of 4 months who lives with her in Sundumbili. She works at Maspik, earns R38 a week and is the sole supporter of her children. She pays R30 per month for her child to be looked after by a "a nanny" because "the creche in the township doesn't take such small ones" and send R20 to R30 home for her children each month.

Before working at Maspik, Christa was employed at Durity for 6 years but left in 1983 because the wages were too low. She was fortunate enough to get her job back at Maspik after three months maternity leave with no pay. She is still breastfeeding her baby in the mornings and evenings but "I am starving myself to make my milk dry up." She has no desire to get married and would rather "live with all my children." She has tried to get a house so that her children can come and live with her but has been told that "you have to have a marriage certificate to get a house."

Her job at Maspik entails lining jackets at the rate of 20 per hour. The wages are low, she says "because they think that we know nothing about money - but half a loaf is better than nothing." "Many women are employed because most of them are not married and have to support children." Christa also feels the need for organisation. "The unions came to the factory, but those who joined were treated badly. There are no unions now." Although she is not a member, Christa sees advantages in joining Inkatha "because Zululand can't help you if you are not a member of Inkatha."

For these women, there is no choice but to be separated from their families. Living in the township however, at least holds the potential for forming friendships and is both closer to work and facilities such as shops, clinic and possibly, schools.

BETTY (48)

Betty is not only separated from her family but also isolated from friends. She lives in a small room adjoining Zululand Weavers, works in the factory during the day and "is a sort of a nightwatch person" during the evenings and over week-ends. She has two boys who are both at school and who live with their aunt in Ulundi. She earns R48 a week and her job entails packing the finished woven products into boxes. "It is a heavy job and my body is getting old."

Betty is afraid that she might be told to leave her room in the factory. "Then where will I live? I will have to build a paper house like some of the other people have done around Sundumbili. But how can a person live in a paper house? When it rains, you have to start again." She has tried to get a house in Sundumbili. "I got the paper from the office in January (we spoke to her in December of the same year) but I have never heard anything. When I go back to ask about houses, they shout and say there are no houses and they are building them, but no-one sees

where they are being built." The pressure for Betty to find somewhere else to live is being increased because the aunt with whom the children are living says that her husband doesn't want the children there any more "because they are noisy."

Betty's loneliness and isolation is compounded by the fact that she is not allowed visitors, nor are her children allowed to come and stay with her. "Only the birds are my friends" - and she feeds them with bread. "I am very frightened of being here on my own, especially on week-ends."

On marriage and relationships with men, Betty says: "Well, I never got married and now I am old and have decided I don't want to get married. It is difficult to find a good man. They all just want to fall in love and then do nothing. I fell in love when I had my first child but as soon as he knew that I was with child, he ran away. I then had another friend who said he would marry me but then he said that because I wasn't a teacher or a nurse, he couldn't marry me because his wife must be able to earn her own money. He also wanted to see my bank book and because I wouldn't show it to him, he said he wouldn't marry me. I told him my bank book is my business and my money is my business so then he left. You know these men just want to know if you've got money and they want you to work so they can just sit by. I have seen some nice men who will share the money and help to carry things when you are shopping. But most will just stand back with their hands on their hips, or walk in front while their wife

carries everything behind. Now I think I am better to stay on my own. These men are just lying to you and taking your money."

Betty's case is extreme and her isolation is complete. She is quite plainly, depressed about her present situation and about what the future holds. "What am I going to do? As soon as I get too old, they will send me away from the factory and then who will look after me? I must just get old and be thrown out."

BRENDA : Social Worker in Sundumbili.

Our discussion with Brenda revolved mainly around relationships between women and men. We wanted to understand, through her experience of women and men in the area, the nature of and reasons for, power relations between the two.

"Many of the men living in Sundumbili are migrants from Nongoma. They will not bring their families because they believe a man must have a home in the rural area. When a black man marries, he marries for his people and not for himself. If you are a wife, then you must remain under the control of his people. If you do not, then you are not a wife, you are something else. To be a wife, you must remain in the rural areas and entertain your husband only on week-ends. You must become a sort of a girl friend."

It is normal for a man to have an extra-marital affair. Because the biggest problem for women working in Sundumbili is accomodation, most of them are forced to fall in love so that they can go to work the following day. They must get a married man with a '4-roomed' and cohabit with him for as long as circumstances permit. Sometimes, if the wife in the rural area finds out, there is divorce, but most times, she must just swallow it. By having an extra-marital affair, a man retains the respect of the community, but a wife must not have a boyfriend. With our culture, suppressing a women is power. A man will not bring his family to the township because he thinks that township life will corrupt his children. In the meantime, he will assist to corrupt that township life."

"For women, it is becoming more acceptable if they fall pregnant and are not married. Before, when this happended and no-one showed up, it used to be seen as incest because, how else can you fall pregnant if you are still your parent's child? Usually, in such cases, the woman would be kept in the home. But now, a lot of women are choosing not to get married because they cease to be themselves once they are married. You just become something that doesn't exist. You have no opinions of your own. You are a woman, you are just a woman, a man must rule like a lion and not you."

There is no joint decision-making, even in educated families. There is this problem of next-of-kin who will say you are being

led by your wife and no man would like to know he is not a man. If a wife earns a higher salary than her husband, it causes a lot of tension. A man wants emotional power and he won't say no to taking a woman's money even if he has some himself. On pay day, a man will come and take that money and if he is kind enough, will give her some of it. I have had cases of women who, while employed, have had to apply for a state grant. A state grant ranges from between R30 to R56 per month, depending on the number of children and how much one is earning."

"It is common for women to be beaten by their husbands, but they won't say so. They are afraid to say it. A woman will say she was drunk and had a fall. She is protecting her husband because he is a source of life to her. If the husband tells her to get out of his house she would be a stranded person. The argument may start as a minor thing, but the husband does not like the wife to keep on talking if he has no words to say - then he will take the stick and the stick will do the talking."

On polygamy, Brenda said:- "If the husband says he needs another woman, he will instruct his wife to go and talk to the woman and then he will marry her. A man has more power by having many wives. If you try to discipline a man in a polygamous situation, you are just playing, and he will ignore your disciplines and go to another woman. The wives do become friends because the first woman automatically becomes their mother and so they respect her. The only common ground is the man. Marriages, however, go

according to a man's financial situation - he can't afford to marry if he can't pay dowry. For women, to have a man is also a status - it's a reputation. Women define themselves by how many suitors are interested in them. The concept of a black woman lies in what men think of her, not what she can become."

This "ownership" of women by men incorporates the "ownership" of daughters by their fathers. Brenda cited her own upbringing as an example-:

"My mother was a housewife and my father was employed but he didn't share what he got with us and I remember when I had graduated from primary school, my father told me that I was no longer going to school and that I must stay at home and he would feed me. I just asked myself-: "What type of feeding is that, that I should stop going to school and start eating, for how long am I going to eat?" That was my question. "What type of food am I going to eat that's so important that I must be a full-time eater?" My mother helped me, by borrowing money, to get through school. It was a decision to fight against my father that made me go further in education. When I get married, the price with me will be higher because my father will be counting things like education. I, for example, am worth 11 cattle at R700 per beast, and why can't a person pay that for a life partner - a man pays more for a car after all." The contradiction expressed by Brenda - that, while fighting against her father to continue schooling on the one hand, and still "accepting", on the other, that she is "owned" by him and will eventually be "sold" by him - reflects

how fundamentally patriarchy structures the lives of women and men. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

Generally, Brenda sees the main problems for women working in the factories as being those of maintenance and of family relationships. "In principle, the factories coming here was a good thing but in practice, it is not. In principle, they provide our people with a means of life, but when it comes to the means, they are non-existent. The factories won't last long - they have no future. They have no confidence in building houses for the workers. This makes me think that they are employing on a temporary basis. The potential for women to organise then, is limited. In 1984, women workers from Francois Fashions came to me complaining that they had been unfairly dismissed. They had gone on strike because they had not been paid and the police had been called to disperse them."

When discussing the sexual harassment of women, Brenda said : "Women don't report cases of sexual harassment because they think they will be blamed and will have to leave their job. If you have 5 children to support, you can't really afford your principles, you have got to deviate from them - otherwise you won't survive. For men, sex is power." A contradiction of patriarchy is that, for women, sex may also mean "power", although in a different sense. Women use sex to achieve an element of control over their own lives. "Women know", Brenda says, "that if you tempt a man with sex, and he declines, he will

be thought of as not being virile. The councillors in 71
Sundumbili are pro-women because of the sexual benefits. For
women, it might mean getting a child into a school or creche."

B. Attitudes of the Factory Managers

The companies we interviewed were Sellwell Clothing, Emvick Clothing, Durity Clothing, Maspick Clothing, Shield Overalls, Francois Fashions and Moto Weavers. We asked general questions relating to:-

- Why they had established in Isithebe.
- Who they employ and why?
- The general conditions of employment for women, specifically.
- The problems associated with their location in Isithebe.

Without exception, the managers cited the main reasons for establishing in Isithebe as being:- "To lower our costs of labour and to take advantage of the financial incentives." The managers of two Durban-based companies, Sellwell and Durity said that to employ a machinist there costs R75 to R80 a week, while in Isithebe, a top machinist earns R40 a week. The average wage of the women we interviewed was, however, three times less than average Durban wages. "We must be realistic here. If we paid more, there would be fewer jobs". Another said:- "If we paid them R70 a week there wouldn't be any factories here". The manager of Emvick (an Israeli company which had relocated from Johannesburg) added that they experienced "expansion problems", forcing them to look elsewhere "to become profitable". The

managers of Maspick (an American company which had relocated from Manila in the Phillipines) and Francois Fashions (a Taiwanese company), cited American import quotas on clothing produced in the Far East as a major reason for their relocation. "Here, we can produce as much as we want and export it all". They expressed some concern, however, at the increasing difficulty of selling goods which had been produced in South Africa.

"Clothing firms", in particular, one manager said "are labour intensive and every cent makes a difference to production. Moving to Isithebe has enabled us to be more competitive. We can produce a shirt more cheaply and can therefore, afford to sell it for less. If a shirt is made in Durban for example, it gets sold for R10.99. But if it is made in Isithebe, we can sell it for R7.99 and still make a profit".

In relation to who they employ and why, they all said they employed mainly women. "Historically, it is women who have always worked in clothing and we wouldn't like to change that." "Sitting at a sewing machine is more a job for women - men do the physical labour." "Sewing is suitable for women - they are more careful than men." "Women work better, they are easier to control, they don't strike and they don't want unions. If there had been only men here, we would probably not have come."

Predictably, when discussing the general conditions of employment under which women work, major discrepancies arose between how the women we spoke to actually experience their jobs and what the managers had to say about the jobs. "The women," they said "are employed on a full-time basis - they are permanent employees." In some cases, we were told that if women are fired, they get one month's notice, while others said that women are warned three times (the warnings get written onto their clocking-in cards) before being fired. But, the women receive no paid leave, no unemployment benefits nor do they pay into a pension fund and if laid off, they receive no compensation.

In some factories the women are trained, while in others, labour is recruited from the Isithebe Industrial Training School. The manager of Durity, however, said that he only takes "raw workers and we train everyone from scratch." "This," he said "is because, firstly, we don't want to take the rubbish from other factories and secondly, because we want to train them our way." The issue of training is obviously a highly sensitive one for managers. We were told that the Training School had been set up because "there were malpractices with the training grants - managers were saying they were training thirty people, and claiming for that many, meantime, they were only training fifteen." But now, managers are complaining that some "bribe the people at the Training School with a bottle of whisky, and they

get the best workers." Also, resentment is expressed at the way in which "workers are going off to the towns looking for better wages - after we've had to train them." While women do get paid whilst training - albeit a minimal amount - many face the prospect of being told to leave "if they don't come up to scratch." "Many people apply for jobs and we take most in, but we throw out the rejects."

The issue of wages creates similar tensions to those that training does, as managers accuse each other of trying to "undercut" them by offering higher wages. Generally, it seems that the lowest starting wage (after training) is 39c an hour or R18 a week. Most firms, however, pay women R23 a week as a starting wage. The managers of clothing firms in Isithebe have formed a Clothing Industry Association and have formulated a fixed wage scale in order to prevent "undercutting". It was decided that as of January 1st 1986, women would earn R22 a day starting wage. Women must work for over three years (at an increase of R3 every 6 months) before they reach the maximum "qualified" wage rate of R36 a week. In some factories, women work overtime during the evenings and on week-ends. They get paid the standard rate for this work. The wage scale is to be re-negotiated in September 1987.

When asked if he thought that what the women earned was

sufficient, one manager said:- "If we were anywhere else in the world, I would have said no. But these people - they just go out and buy a R20 shirt with the R18 they earn." We asked how he thought that anyone could support four children on the amount earned, one manager said:- "Correct me if I'm wrong, but if a Zulu girl has a child, she gets money from the government. But anyway, they just have babies for fun." Another said "We don't understand it. Some of them dress better than our own wives and sisters." The manager of the Taiwanese firm had this to say:- "There is nothing to make workers here ambitious. In Taiwan, they all want stereo's and TV's, but the South African worker has no hope of a higher standard of living, so they don't need higher wages." A general response was that "you can't compare the urban black with the rural black." "The urban black is more socially developed and warrants being paid more. Here, we've forced civilisation on them - maybe they don't want civilisation." Related to this is, that a few managers told us:- "We have to put the women through an induction course. They come totally raw. We have to teach them to sit on a chair, how to sit on a toilet, how to use toilet paper - and also, how much time they can spend on the toilet."

Most managers said that "it is irrelevant how old a woman is - as long as she can do the job." They had no idea what the average age of the women they employ is, but said - "it varies from

between 16 to any age - depending on their dexterity." Some said their preference is to employ younger women - "we take school girls on a part-time basis during the holidays." The manager of Francois Fashions told us that he employed women between the ages of 19-30. We had interviewed a 15 year old girl who works there. In the Emvick factory we saw a number of obviously much older women doing jobs such as folding and packing completed garments. "The older women," the manager told us "they do the cleaning and sitting jobs. We just keep them in employment. We have no use for them on the shop floor."

Although there are few women supervisors, a manager told us that "women have the opportunity to upgrade themselves to become chargehands or superivors and earn R45 a week - but they must earn it." Apart from the fact that "men upgrade more quickly", reasons given for the small number of women supervisors are that - "there is a high labour turnover and there is the problem that many women fall pregnant." If a woman falls pregnant, some managers say that she will get her job back. "They work until the eighth month and if they are good workers, they can come back after two weeks." In two of the factories, Durity and Emvick, we were told that women were made to have pregnancy tests once every three months. The manager of Francois Fashions told us that the Department of Health and Welfare came round to check the women for pregnancy. This is indicative of firstly the way in which

women are robbed of control over their own bodies and secondly, how, when there is such an abundant supply of labour, capital loses interest in the reproduction of its present workforce.

On the issue of unions and organisation, the managers were united in their view that "the unions will not get into the clothing factories first." The manager of Francois Fashions told us that:- "In 1984, there was a strike over wages. The people next door started yelling and the workers here felt that because someone was yelling, they must also yell. We called in the police and fired the leaders." The manager of Maspik said:- "We have had contact with the National Union of Textile Workers but they are very aggressive. The unions won't find their first base in the clothing firms. If the unions move in and the wages go up, the clothing firms won't be here anymore. In the Emvick factory, the manager sees himself as a "father figure." "We have fair labour practices - the workers aren't interested in unions. Anyway, the unions must also make a profit - they are profit-making organisations too - and they told the workers that they would be taking 2c a week off their wages. The workers weren't interested because no-one must touch their wages. The unions make more profit in other areas. Here, they are seen as guys who are trying to rip the workers off." A few managers accepted that "it is inevitable that the unions will be moving in, but we won't be overjoyed" and one went so far as to say "we

realise we must negotiate."

Asked if they made any provisions for child-care, transport or housing for the women, the general attitude was that "we are here to make garments." "It is in their culture that the grandmother looks after the children - I don't know of any problems with child-care." "We are not a transport company. If the women want to work, they must find their own way to work." On housing, there was general acknowledgement that there is a severe shortage and blame is laid on the Corporation for Economic Development who "don't care much about the social side of industrial decentralisation." "Private enterprise is not in a position to contribute to housing. It is also not our responsibility. We have a social conscience and we don't see why the price of garments should be put up so that houses can be built for workers. All this paraphernalia for companies to build houses - the Kwazulu government must build houses."

For managers then, the main problems associated with being located in Isithebe relate to those of unskilled labour resulting in lower productivity, the problems of finding management staff - "they have to be imported from Durban" - and the shortage of housing and facilities for this staff. An Indian manager said that "because there is no Group Area for Indians in Mandini, most Indians working in Isithebe must live in Stanger - and sometimes

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they commute from Durban." "The shortage of skilled labour in the area is responsible," the manager of Durity said, "for the level of production being one-third lower than it is in Durban." While women in this factory produce 6 500 shirts a day, the manager says that "there is a problem with quality. "These people are not quality conscious."

The actual tasks that women perform in the factories is outlined in our discussions with them. While they expressed the desire to make whole garments, managers feel that:- "A black person who must make a garment from A to B gets easily intimidated." The manager of Emvick said : "It is debateable whether workers would prefer to make whole garments. When a worker does something repetitive, it becomes like second nature to her. She becomes very good, for example, at putting on pockets. We have a skills matrix here - workers are taught to do a total of four operations. This means that we have sufficiently skilled workers. If a worker can only do one thing - like putting on a zip, she could hold a gun to my head if she thought I was dependent on her. We make 5 000 garments a day here." Another said:- "We have skilled a nation."

All in all, these interviews provide a graphic account of the hardship, deprivation and complete lack of choice experienced by women in Isithebe.

At the outset of Part 3, we raise the main questions with which we subsequently attempt to deal. Our analysis moves through the specific to the broad. Through the analytical tool of gender, we understand the nature of women's oppression - why it is "women" who are in the area, why they are being drawn into the labour force, what types of jobs they are being drawn into, why capital is requiring cheap women's labour, how state intervention is enabling capital to relocate to the area and finally, what employment creation in this area has meant in terms of "development."

PART 3

Chapter 1

The Geography of Gender Relations in South Africa

"It is essential to break down the ahistorical category "woman" and ask what social relations define the specificity of women's position... These relations will form the conceptual tools with which we can approach urban and regional development and begin to understand the relation between gender and environmental reproduction and change" (McKenzie 1980:7).

This chapter, as the first in Part 3, represents the first chapter in the process of moving outwards and contextualising Isithebe in the broader social dynamics (See end of methodology). This process has been structured around a sequence of questions which arose directly out of our experience with people in Isithebe, plus our involvement with regional/development theory and with feminist theory. These are very simply:

- i) Why are there women there? - understanding how this is related to social gender-construction, - the workings of patriarchal relations and most importantly, how this has shaped the

process of capitalist exploitation.

- ii) Why are women employed in the industry? - understanding cheaper labour, industrial reserve army, sexual division of labour.
- iii) What is the nature of women's employment? - skill categories, types of work, 'foot-loose' industry, sectoral division of labour.
- iv) What is the impact on women's lives of industrial decentralization? - wage employment, organisation, liberation.

This chapter deals with the first question "Why are women there?" ie. why are African women concentrated in the rural homeland areas and why do Africa men work in the towns/cities of South Africa living either in township housing or in hostels? Such an anomaly can only be explained in terms of gender, and of course, the 'cross-cutting cleavages' of race and class. For clarity we put all these aspects into question form:- Why was it women who stayed behind? Why was it specifically African women who stayed behind? and why do these women represent the poorest stratum of society? Ultimately we aim to understand how existing patterns of regional development are in part the product of the division

of labour between men and women.

In order to answer these questions the discussion develops as follows: we take up Belinda Bozzoli's (1983) argument that the relations of patriarchy were initially responsible for keeping women on the land. The established spatial dichotomy (both in terms of gender and in terms of function) was later enforced by racial segregationist state machinery ensuring firstly, that responsibility for collective consumption goods for a fully urbanized population did not fall to the state and secondly, that capital did not have to pay family wages - the burden of responsibility for the reproduction of the workforce fell to woman and the rural subsistence economy, such that by controlling the movement of women a whole population was controlled. The contradictions arising out of this structuring were later to play themselves out in the movement of industry to take advantage of this stranded industrial reserve army of women workers. Essentially, this chapter opens the door to exploring the extremely powerful, sometimes contradictory partnership that exists between the State, Patriarchy and Capital.

To begin with, following Bozzoli's argument, we explore the problems of existing analyses which omit the historically determining effects of gender relations. We then discuss in some detail the workings of patriarchal relations in order to

understand the means by which women were kept on the land. This chapter does not go into the sexual division of labour in any detail - a discussion of this is contained in Chapter 2.

a. Problems with approaches which omit gender

Bozzoli's approach represents a fundamental departure from marxist and marxist feminist writers. She wholly rejects the functionalist trend of marxism which analyses all social processes/structures in terms of their functionality to capital. While it is true that female subordination is functional to capital, there remain many aspects of women's oppression which are not so explained. Such a reductionist analysis obscures, as well as limits, analysis - one logical conclusion which 'functionalism' implies is that with the demise of capitalism, women's oppression will disappear. That this does not occur has been proven through historical experience (borne out in revolutionary socialist societies). Bozzoli displaces attention from the contradiction between capital and labour and allows consideration of how pre-capitalist contradictions and gender struggles have shaped the process of capitalist exploitation (Abrahams 1985). This approach allows for an analysis of people rather than a "manipulation of categories." Bozzoli thus grants 'conceptual autonomy' to gender and insists on the importance of gender relations not only for understanding women, but for

understanding capitalism. As Abrahams puts it:

"instead of trying to understand women in terms of class theory [as writers such as Jacklyn Cock and Jo-anne Yawitch have done], Bozzoli attempts to understand capitalist development through a concern with gender." (pg. 14, 1985)

Bozzoli moves away from the functionalist approach through analysing the particular type of female subordination historically and contextually, ie. she perceives that patriarchy is not definable as one particular set of social relations, rather it takes different forms under different historical and social circumstances. She also confronts the analytical complexity in South Africa caused by the "faultline of race which cleaves the capitalist system" (Bozzoli:143).

It is useful here to illustrate concretely the changes that a feminist analysis means for established materialist writing. Wolpe's article - 'Capitalism and cheap labour power in South Africa' (1972)⁴ represents a structuralist analysis of the 'reserve' economies since the development of mining. As the demands of the capitalist MOP for labour increased, he argues, so men were drawn, or forced, off the land and women were increasingly left behind to maintain the subsistence economies. He suggests that men were drawn into capitalist production, while women performed the function of reproducing, maintaining and

⁴This work is commonly used as a basis for analysis of the position of black women in South African society.

sustaining in times of sickness and old age, the cheap labour force required by the mines (Bozzoli 143). Evidently this analysis omits any explanation of why it was women who remained behind, and men who left. As history was shown it is not inevitable that men should be proletarianised first.⁶ Bozzoli suggests a more fruitful approach based on the notion of struggle rather than structure, an approach which is still materialist, dialectical and historical. She locates this struggle specifically in the domestic sphere. Our own interest in understanding the nature and dynamics of an area like Isithebe, is well served by this approach in terms of perceiving how gender relations shape social processes. As Bozzoli writes:

"... some understanding of the nature of (women's) subordination is surely important... to clarify our understanding of the path taken by the subordination of those (pre-capitalist) systems to capital, and the disgoring of a labour force, initially male, from them" (1983:145).

b. The relations of patriarchy

The means of women's subordination - the relations of patriarchy - require some more detailed discussion here before going onto look at the unequal structuring effects of these relations. Heidi Hartmann (1979) describes these relations as 'unequal

⁶Bozzoli compares how in Afrikaner families young women were the first to leave the land while in African societies men were first.

relations of domination and subordination which exist between men and women', relations which place men in a superior and women in a subordinated position. Through these relations men exercise control over women as sexual beings and over women's labour power - they exercise this control by excluding women from access to some essential resources - for example control over procreation (contraception; technological advances etc); access to land, living-wage employment etc. Patriarchy thus represents a set of social relations between men which have a material base, and, although men of different classes, races, or ethnic groups have different places in the patriarchy, they are united in their shared relationship of dominance over women. Hierarchies 'work' at least in part because they create vested interests in the status quo - those at higher levels can "buy off" those at the lower levels by offering them power over those still lower.

The basis of this dichotomy and hierarchical relationship between men and women lies in the 'gender construction' of 'men' and 'women', or as Engels has said "the production of people in the sex/gender sphere" (Hartmann:13). While the arising sexual division of labour will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, suffice it to say here that, while the mode of production may establish the type and amount of work to be done, patriarchal relations and similarly racial hierarchies determine who will do the work and how it will be done. Hartmann describes

the "who" with specific reference to capitalism as follows:

"Capitalist development creates the places for a hierarchy of workers but traditional marxist categories cannot tell us who will fill which places. Gender and racial hierarchies determine who fills the empty places. Patriarchy is not simply hierarchical organisation, but hierarchy in which particular people fill particular places" (1979, 13, her emphasis).

From this perspective, patriarchy will have different characteristics under different modes of production and in different historical contexts - for example, patriarchy based on tribal systems as compared to nuclear family patriarchy. State machinery may actively promote these differential patriarchal controls, for example, in maintaining tribal systems or in building nuclear family housing estates.

c. Keeping African women on the land

To return to Bozzoli's discussion of patriarchal structuring - she identifies two struggles as being responsible for keeping women on the land and drawing male labour into wage labour. The first is that which occurs in the domestic sphere around male/female relations and the second is that which occurs between the domestic sphere (and the patriarchal control lodged there) and the capitalist system.

In the conflict between pre-capitalist societies and capitalism,

it was the strength of the former's domestic economy which determined the extent and the form of its survival. Their strength in the face of capitalism's demand for labour was based on the patriarchal control over women's labour in the societies. On the basis of this control, male - female divisions of labour could be reorganised. It is as a function of this control that

"the extended family in the reserves is able to, and does, fulfill social security functions for the reproduction of the migrant work-force. By caring for the very young and very old, the sick, the migrant labourer in periods of 'rest', by educating the young, the Reserve families relieve the capitalist sector and its State from the need to expand resources for these necessary functions." (Wolpe 1972, cited in Bozzoli, 146).

It is evident therefore, that the initial force keeping women on the land - and so South Africa's labour force - only partially proletarianized - was an internal patriarchal one ie. that arising in the domestic sphere. This patriarchal control was exercised not only through individual men-women relationships but through a tribal system of chiefly control in which women were subject to the tight controls of chiefs and headmen, as well as heads of families. In these systems - and it is true of Zulu societies - cultivation is the responsibility of the women of the household and a range of prohibitions prevent women from owning or being associated in any way with cattle. Women are thus excluded from a primary source of wealth. John Wright ('Women's Labour' cited in Bozzoli, 148) suggests that this prohibition in

Zulu Society was central to the subordination of women. Added to this were ideological controls, operating largely through kinship systems which served to socialize women into accepting a position of inferiority, as well as material controls exercised by married men over their wife's and daughter's access to the products of their own labour and to the means of producing life's basic necessities.

The consequence of domestic struggles and the sexual division of labour can be traced alongside the encroachment of capital. By the time of full migration, after decades of encroachments by Colonial rule on traditionally "male" spheres of labour (hunting, trading, administration, cattle herding, fighting), the vast bulk of rural labour had come to be performed by women. Anthropologists (eg. Monica Hunter 1936) have mapped the markedly distorted pattern in the sexual division of labour which had developed - with wives and mothers bearing the brunt of agricultural work, child care, cooking, cleaning, house building and maintenance, and men doing very little.

The penetration into South Africa of mining capital meant that the various patriarchal systems became subordinated to the "hegemony of a more powerful and revolutionary form of capital than ever before." It brought with it the entrenchment of territorial segregation (rural 'black' subsistence areas and

developed 'white' urban areas) and the division of the working class into black and white strata. Mine owners, looking for cheaper labour, rejected fully proletarianized whites as unskilled labour because of their higher levels of subsistence and turned to the semi-proletarianized black population drawing off its male labour as required. The demand for male labour was a function both of the mineowners' own 'social vision' which perceived men as 'natural' labourers and secondly of the nature of the domestic sphere described above. This is an instance where Bozzoli warns of not seeing all strategies as being functional to capital. There are evidently a number of trade offs taking place: capital and the state were happy not to take responsibility for workers' families, however this meant that women were not accessible as cheap labour units; and African men could earn wages while ensuring, through tribal patriarchy, that the domestic economy was maintained.

In the long term however, the capacity of African Societies to retain their access to land and subsistence, was to be disastrous. As Bozzoli comments - the systems that the women were defending were doomed. The progressive intrusion of capitalism severely undermined the domestic economy until it reached its present state of complete collapse. An old Transkeian woman described it as follows:

"We used to have 20 morgen before the land was cut. Then

we got 50-60 bags of mielies and also beans. We used to sell. Now the land is cut there is only one morgen and all there is is one or two bags of maize." (Vukani, 1985, 77).

By the time it became a matter of survival for African women and families to move off the land state machinery had massively entrenched racial spatial segregation. Women and children - 'superfluous appendages' to the South African regime - were being kept out of urban areas (the actual means to how this was achieved is discussed in the next chapter) and in the rural areas. The collapse of the reserve economies has meant that these areas in fact represent little more than rural slums - the women in them being added to the long list of unemployed, almost entirely dependent on migrant remittances (Appendix 4). Their status has changed more recently with the restructuring of capital and these women are now seen as potentially members of the industrial reserve army of labour. This is discussed in Chapter 2.

The implications of the pace and nature of African women's proletarianization are of central importance to understanding the nature of South African Capitalism. Bozzoli attributes the 'peripheral' character of South African capitalism to this process. It has been retarded through the persistence of subsistence economies and through the inaccessibility of African women's labour. In other words, patriarchy has had fundamental

affects on the "shape" of South African capitalism.

The next chapter extends the discussion of the 'means of women's oppression' into the sexual division of labour and its implications for women's incorporation into the waged labour force.

PART 3

Chapter 2

The Gender Division of Labour and the Effect of State Control

The previous chapter considered how gender relations - or to use Bozzoli's term (1983) the relations of patriarchy - through a process of interaction with certain historical givens, led to African men leaving the land and women, under the patriarchal power of the chiefs, with the responsibility for reproductive work. This, in conjunction with the development of South Africa's peculiar brand of racial segregation, has had very specific implications for the homeland economies and for the position of women in the wage labour force. In this chapter we look at the gender division of labour and its implications for women's participation in the labour force. From this chapter on we move away from looking specifically at African women in order to emphasise women's shared experience of gender divisions, and to locate the incorporation of African women workers into decentralised industry within the context of a history of women's participation into the labour force (Chapter 3).

A. Gender Roles and the Sexual Division of Labour

The participation of women and their status as cheap labour in the workforce is predicated on patriarchal relations - essentially male control over women's labour and women's enforced dependence on men - and on the gender construction of people's lives which means that certain tasks are considered as being 'natural' to each sex. This is the basis of the sexual division of labour.

While the origins of the sexual division of labour may lie in a biological fact - the bearing and suckling of children by women - it has been amplified such that men and women are perceived as having certain gender-specific "natural" attributes which makes them best suited for specific tasks and confines them to specific activities. While the definition of these tasks may differ substantially from culture to culture and between pre-capitalist and capitalist social orders, as is Bozzoli's point, the basic principles remain the same.

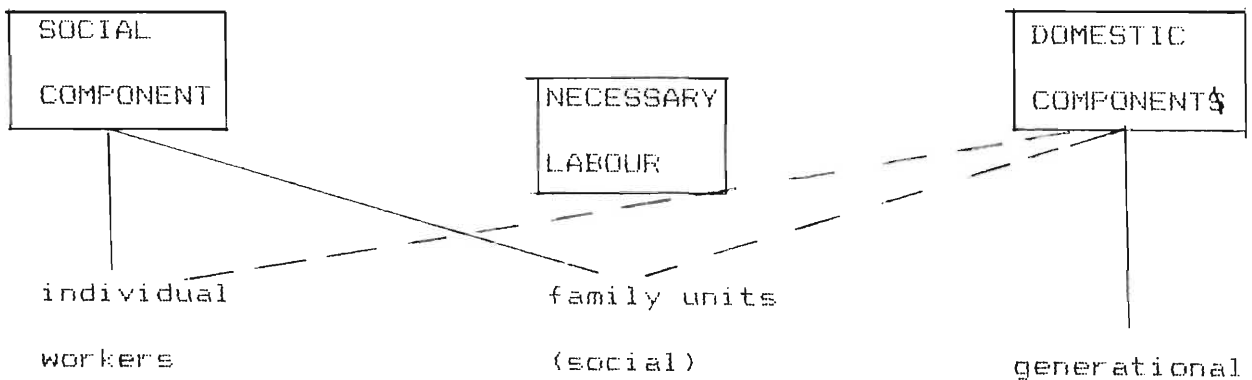
Vogel analyses the sexual division of labour through the concept of necessary labour(2) - a concept which overcomes the artificial of public/private, production/reproduction spheres distinction. Necessary labour refers to that work which is absolutely necessary to the reproduction of the system as a whole. 'Reproduction' can be delineated as follows : 1) individual

reproduction - this refers to that which is necessary to reproduce each individual labourer, 2) total social reproduction - this refers to that which is necessary to reproduce all people in the social order and 3) generational replacement - giving birth to and suckling children. This labour is all necessary to the process of capital accumulation. It was Marx who first referred to necessary labour - he concentrated in his writings on that aspect of labour which is bound up with surplus labour in the capitalist production process - an aspect that we can call the social component of necessary labour. This can be described as follows: the working day in capitalist employment includes a certain amount of time during which the worker produces value equivalent to the value of the commodities necessary for the reproduction of his or her labour power (Vogel 1983:152) - for the rest of the day the worker produces surplus value for the capitalist, value for which she or he is not paid. To the worker, however, "the wage form extinguishes every trace of the division of the working day into necessary labour and surplus labour... All labour appears as paid labour" (Marx cited in Vogel 152).

Marx did not discuss the second component of necessary labour in capitalist society - that is the domestic component, or what we can call domestic labour. It is performed outside the sphere of capitalist production. For the reproduction of labour power to

take place, both the domestic and the social components of necessary labour are required. That is, wages may enable a worker to purchase commodities, but additional labour - domestic labour - must be performed before they are consumed. In addition, many of the labour processes associated with the generational replacement of labour power are carried out as part of domestic labour. In capitalist societies, the domestic component of necessary labour becomes dissociated from wage labour - where surplus labour is performed.

Diagrammatically the relationship between the two components of necessary labour can be shown as follows:



The size of the realm of necessary labour is determined by two things:

- 1) the level of development of the forces of production and

2) the organisation of the social relations of production (Jagger 1983:304).

In these terms, the size of the domestic component of necessary labour is very large: 1) the forces of production are very underdeveloped eg. child-care, health-care, technology, contraception, and so on, and 2) the social relations are extremely exploitative: labour is unpaid, unshared, private, isolated, and dependency relations are enforced. Evidently this is also directly affected by class position, and in South Africa, race.

Under a system of male supremacy and within a capitalist mode of production, it is evident that women take overwhelming responsibility for the domestic component of necessary labour - ie. for procreative and reproductive tasks. The allocation of this responsibility is very much a function of patriarchal power relations and the male control of women's labour that this implies. Vogel comments with regard to the implications of this allocation:

"It is responsibility for the domestic labour necessary to capitalist social reproduction - and not the sexual division of labour or the family perse - that materially underpins the perpetuation of women's oppression and inequality in capitalist society." (Vogel 1983:170).

That there exists for capital a major contradiction between domestic labour and wage labour is evident: as a component of necessary labour, domestic labour (which does not itself produce surplus value in any way) potentially reduces the commitment workers can make to performing surplus labour through participation in wage work. Objectively then it competes with capitalism's drive for accumulation. However, the fact that women do take disproportionate responsibility for domestic work and that this occurs within a family structure has certain benefits for capital. This reveals the "partnership" of patriarchy and capital.

- a) Women perform maintenance and reproductive work, thus "freeing" people for wage work. This responsibility can be passed on to any woman in the family - for example grandmothers or young girls - the former being too old to work and the latter too young.
- b) Women perform this work at little or no cost to capital - on the basis of the male family wage, or on the basis of a 'viable' subsistence economy.
- c) Women - through being "supported" by the family wage or subsistence agriculture - constitute a "flexible" work force and are therefore a major component of the industrial reserve

army of labour.

[That this industrial reserve army of labour is actively constituted through State mechanisms and that, for capital at particular stages in its development, women - black women - constitute the preferred source of the industrial reserve is a significant feature, particularly with regards to industrial decentralisation. Beechey comments as follows:

"A possible criterion for the preferred sources of the industrial reserve army from the viewpoint of capital is those categories of labour which are partially dependent upon sources of income other than the wage to meet some of the costs of the reproduction of labour power"* (our emphasis)

d) because women, according to the dominant ideology are the "property" of their husbands or fathers, the cost of their own reproduction is nil. They therefore constitute an extremely cheap source of labour as capital can justify paying them below the cost of their own reproduction.

Thus capital finds that, through patriarchal social structuring,

*She refers to married women as fitting into this category, however in Isithebe where many women are without husbands, and where their husbands are only paid a single wage if employed, a far broader spectrum of women fit into the Industrial reserve army, with only the grandmothers (although not in all cases) who take over the reproductive tasks and very young children being except. Evidently the historical development of conditions at Isithebe have culminated in the indiscriminate and extreme exploitability of all women.

women are the most exploitable labour force of all and, as Vogel comments:

"At a particular juncture in the development of a given class society, the oppression of women in the exploited class is shaped not only by women's relationship to the processes of maintenance and renewal of labour power, but by the extent and character of their participation in surplus labour" (Vogel 1983:149).

What are the characteristic features of women's participation in the labour force?

- they constitute a 'flexible and disposable' working population
- they are lower waged
- the type of jobs available to women are determined, and in turn determine the above two points: unskilled work which does not require continuous service and is often oversupplied; part-time and marginal employment.
- women are concentrated in the lower levels of employment and have little chance of promotion.
- women's jobs are poorly represented by trade unions
- jobs provide poor social security.
- there is little commitment to training women
- there is a very evident sexual division of labour in the types of jobs women and men do. Women are concentrated in jobs

?These do of course differ according to class and race, however there is very definitely a shared experience of 'work' felt by all women.

considered 'natural' to their sex and which are often similar to jobs they do at home.

All these aspects are informed by an overriding dominant patriarchal ideology, an ideology which assumes either the nuclear family form where the family wage earned by the male head of household provides for all members of the family. Or, in the case of rural black families, it assumes an extended family form with its own subsistence economy - the single wage of the male head of household is therefore not considered necessary to the survival of that family. That these assumptions are an inaccurate reflection of reality is patently obvious in the number of women who consider themselves unemployed, the number of single parent/single women earner households, the starvation and destitution of homeland families and so on.

However, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, capital has adapted to and made use of these assumptions and, with the help of the state, contributed to the maintenance - albeit in a distorted form - of the patriarchal structuring of society. Before looking at the employment of women in the industrial economy - and, more particularly, the employment of African women in industry, what follows is a brief overview of State controls which have affected the proletarianization of African men and women.

B. State Control : the Construction of Space Around Gender and Race

The purpose of the capitalist State is to act in the overall interests of capital. The complexities of this 'acting in the interests of capital' are brought about by the contradictions inherent to the capitalist accumulation process, contradictions exemplified in those between capital and labour. We will not go into the nature of these contradictions in any great detail here - rather we are interested in understanding how the State makes use of the hierarchical ordering devices of race and gender. The State has blatantly made use of patriarchy and racism as structuring devices. Notably this may not always be in the interests of capital - the State and capital may have to adapt to the exigencies of patriarchy, and capital may have to adapt to those aspects of the apartheid system which are in contradiction with it. What comes across very clearly is that racism and patriarchy are used as systems of control by the State and that this is on the whole suited to capitalism.

We concentrate in this section specifically on the imposition of controls over Africans because the employment of African women is central to this thesis:-

African women and men are subject to extremely rigid controls exercised by the state over their access to wage labour. Overall, these controls are aimed at keeping women and children in the homeland areas and the South African economy well supplied with a cheap source of labour.

Such intentions were neatly put by the Stallard Commission in 1922 as follows:

"It should be a recognised principle that Natives - men, women and children - should only be permitted within municipal areas insofar and for as long as their presence is demonstrated by the wants of the white population" (cited in Chaskalson and Duncan 1984).

In recent years influx control has been closely linked with the government policy of nationalization of African citizens and the creation of 'independent' homelands. Such a policy which limits employment opportunities for blacks in the urban areas has been a major cause of rural poverty.

Outside of the "independent states" or "national states" (of which KwaZulu is one) South Africa is divided into prescribed areas (urban areas) and non-prescribed areas (farm land and mines). The presence of blacks in prescribed areas is controlled by the Urban Areas Act of 1945 and the Black Labour Act of 1967.

The Urban Areas Act prohibits any black person being in an urban

area for more than 72 hours, excluding those defined in Section 10(1)(a); (b) and (c). Qualification for 10(1)(a) derives from continuous residence in the area since birth; 10(1)(b) - continuous lawful employment in an area with one employer for a period of not less than ten years, or continuous lawful residence within the area for a period of 15 years. The wife or dependent child of a person with 10(1)(a) or 10(1)(b) qualification and who resides with him qualify under 10(1)(c). All other African require permission from the manager of the local labour bureau to be in an area for a period in excess of 72 hours - these are Section 10(1)(d) workers, usually migrants or commuters on a contract system.

African women who do not have section 10(1)(a)(b) or (c) rights have even more limited employment opportunities than the latter group. Their employment is controlled through the Black Labour Act. Women may not enter any contract save with the consent of the Director of Black Labour - which is seldom given. A woman also requires the consent of her guardian (her father, husband, son or kraalhead) to take up work (Chaskalson and Duncan 1984). African women in Natal are subject to the Natal Code under which "a Bantu female is deemed a perpetual minor in law and has no legal powers, save as to her own person" (Horrel 1975 cited in Boddington 1979:20). Under the Natal code a woman must obtain her guardian's permission to work, and her earnings are the

property of her guardian.

Control over employment is one of the bases of influx control; another is control over residence. Although a man who qualifies under Section 10(1)(a) or (b) may have his wife to live with him, a woman who qualifies under the same, may not. Upon divorce, separation from or the death of her husband a woman loses her section 10(1)(c) qualification and must leave the area. In terms of housing provision, the government has since the 1950's increasingly limited funds for housing, thus "encouraging" the settlement of workers in hostels. With the government intention that no new family housing should be provided for blacks in urban areas (particularly since 1968) a massive housing backlog has arisen. People who do have access to housing, hold onto this precariously. Housing is usually only provided to married men, who also have to provide proof of continuous employment. All these controls are brought together in the reference book - *dompas*. People from the homelands are effectively prevented from entering the urban areas and in fact there is a total embargo on homeland women seeking work in urban areas. The unlikely event of women finding work 'legally' in urban areas makes their position extremely precarious.

Within the homeland boundaries access to work is very limited, as has been mentioned, and because of the almost total lack of

legislative protection, the level of exploitation is extremely high. No minimum wage rates exist in the homelands (whether 'independent' or 'national states') and there is little recourse for worker representation. Such conditions of "plentiful cheap, unorganised labour", are of course very attractive to employers, and authorities are careful to ensure that "nothing will be allowed in the bantustan that will interfere with free enterprise there" (C. Cooper 1984:168). Until recently, South African Trade Unions were allowed limited activity in industry located in KwaZulu (under KwaZulu's Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act of 1981.) However KwaZulu is presently passing legislation which will prevent any trade union from outside the bantustan from operating within it. The full content and implications of this legislation have yet to be seen. Companies within the bantustan borders use levers such as the threat to withdraw their business to 'persuade' authorities not to support workers in disputes (c/f, KwaZulu Bata Shoe Company, Loskop-two strikes 1982 cited in C. Cooper 1984).

These numerous legislative restrictions and/or lack of legislative protection give some indication of the nature of women's position in the labour force and the attitudes, practices and ideologies which enforce it. That women's position in terms of employment in the homelands or border areas is even worse, is evident in the kind of legislation which applies there and by the

extreme marginality of these women. There is very little protection for any workers, women or men, and the status of the areas as grossly underdeveloped, entrenches an extremely high level of exploitation. The choices Africans have in this country are extremely limited and, for women they are even more so.

A. Women go out to Work : The Place of Gendered Employment
in the Development of the Economy and in Women's Lives

The participation of women in the labour force is not a neutral phenomenon. The nature of their incorporation is gender-specific, and their experience of wage labour is gender-specific. In this chapter we wish to draw links between the analysis contained in the previous chapters and the experience and position of women in the workforce. From this we will draw conclusions about the relationship between the organization and location of industry, and the employment of a female workforce, particularly in later more empirical discussions:

1. a periodization of women's incorporation into industrial labour in South Africa (B of this chapter) and
2. the nature of the Clothing and Textile Industry in South Africa (Chapter 4).

The IBG Women's Study Group (1984) suggests that

"Changes in the organisation and location of industry have generated a demand for female labour. These changes have also been a response to, and have been shaped by, the existence and specific geographical

distribution of female labour supplies. Without such female labour reserves, the reorganisation and relocation of industry may well have been very different" (IBG 1984:76).

Such a statement implies that certain characteristics are associated with female labour and that certain geographical locations will 'take on' these characteristics according to the concentration of female labour.

These 'characteristics', which were mentioned in the last chapter, will be explored in more detail here. Women are commonly seen first as 'domestic labourers' and only secondly as 'wage employees.' Contrary to this assumption, most women go out to work and make an essential contribution to household income. They often work fulltime and are often the sole supporters of their families. The prevailing view that women's waged work is secondary, and so insignificant as a major source of income, serves to maintain women's low wages, unequal job opportunities, women's low expectations of waged work and so on.

From a feminist perspective the nature of women's employment must be understood in terms of their life experience. Such an orientation enables us to understand how women do combine

such diverse activities as domestic labour and wage labour in time and space. The importance of this in conceptualising women's work is made very clear by the women in Isithebe (Part 2).

In South Africa - as in the rest of the world - there have been increasingly large numbers of women entering the labour force, and these women have entered particular sectors of the economy, working either in the expanding service sector or in a few sectors of the manufacturing industry. The pattern of their incorporation into the workforce has roughly corresponded with the pattern of economic development in South Africa: from agriculture, through service, industry and clerical work. There is no doubt a relationship between the expansion of the economy and the incorporation of women - as the economy expands workers are drawn into new areas of employment, and, as women workers become available on the job market, so they are drawn into particular jobs, thus prompting economic development.

The long established gender division of labour between sectors and industries, is also reflected within them. Research has shown that women occupy the lowest skilled jobs which require little official training and return the lowest pay (Vukani 1985, Factory and Family 1984, Working Women

1985). It is often repetitive work and either requires the 'dexterity' to assemble components quickly in a factory, or the 'patience' to carry out routine clerical and cleaning work. Women are thus concentrated in a very narrow range of jobs and are found almost invariably in subordinate positions. The trend in the manufacturing sector to employ women in unskilled jobs and men in skilled jobs and supervisory positions, has been accelerated by changes in the production process towards mass assembly and rapid technical and professional specialisation. Gender separation is thus being accelerated.

These inter - and intra-sectoral gender divisions are, in the South African instance cross-cut by racial categorization. While this does not affect the range of jobs in which women are typically employed, it determines who moves into which sectors - from clerical being the most congenial and better paid to agricultural work which is notoriously oppressive. Erica Boddington (1979) has commented on this process as follows:

"as the economy expanded the interrelationship between different sectors necessitated different types of workers and successive waves of women have entered the labour market, facilitating the movement of women in the colour group above them to jobs generally requiring a greater degree of skill and earning a higher wage" (1979:15).

The racial divisions in women's employment are evident from a 1970 study (cited in Boddington 1979): White women were mainly concentrated in clerical work (55,9% of all 'economically active' white women), Coloured women were concentrated in the service sector (43,8%), Indian women were moving out of agricultural and service work into the industrial sector and African women were concentrated in unskilled jobs in service (37,9%) and agriculture (34,7%). There is also a racial break down within each sector, with African women occupying the lowest rungs. Table 1 below, which covers employment in food, clothing, textiles, printing and chemical industries, also illustrates the racial concentrations of women and notably, how these concentrations have changed. This can be attributed to the expansion of the economy and the reorganisation and/or relocation of industries to take advantage of certain labour supplies and economies of agglomeration (discussed in more detail in B. and Chapter 4).

Table 1 : Industry groups with a relative overconcentration of women by race

1915/16	1924/25	1929/30	1934/35
Food — Coloureds Clothing and Textiles — Whites	Food — Coloureds Clothing and Textiles — Whites	Food — Coloureds Clothing and Textiles — Whites	Food — Coloureds Clothing and Textiles — Whites and Coloureds
Printing — Whites Chemicals — Whites	Printing — Whites Chemicals — Whites	Printing — Whites Chemicals — Whites Leather — Whites	Printing — Whites Chemicals — Whites Leather — Whites
1944/45	1963	1970	
Food — Coloureds Clothing and Textiles — Coloureds Printing — Whites Chemicals — Whites Leather — Whites	Food — Blacks and Coloureds Textiles — Blacks and Coloureds Clothing — Coloureds and Asians Printing — Whites Chemicals — Whites	Food — Blacks and Coloureds Textiles — Blacks Clothing — Coloureds and Asians Printing — Whites	

(Source : Martin and Rogerson 1984:42).

Historically large numbers of women have been incorporated into the workforce during economic booms or when male labour is not available. They have also been the first to loose their jobs when these circumstances no longer exist. Hence general job insecurity, plus vulnerability to change in the economy and changes in the production process accompany women's low rates of pay. On average, women earn 40 - 60% of male wages. Men starting at the same level, move into more senior better paid positions more quickly. [In Isithebe this discrepancy is even greater. Ardington's figures (1984) show that women earn 37% of male salaries in Isithebe. Notably the discrepancy between migrants remuneration is even greater (women earn 29% of male salaries) indicating the exploitativeness of the jobs

available to women migrants (primarily concentrated in domestic work) and the higher male urban wage]. Wage discrepancies within each sector are paralleled by those between sectors - where male employees predominate, wages are generally higher for both men and women. But where female employees predominate (eg. in food and drink, tobacco, clothing and textiles, electronics), the reverse is true.

Average wage rates disguise several other factors which strongly influence women's earning capacity. Women in lower graded occupations do not do as many hours overtime as men, rarely work night shifts and seldom benefit from extra bonuses or fringe perks. Also a large number of women work part-time and so are excluded from employee benefits altogether. Part-time and temporary employees are also ineligible for trade union membership. The gap therefore between individual women's and men's earnings is, if anything wider than generally imagined (IBG, 1984).

Legislation and Worker Organisation

Added to the insecurity and vulnerability of women in the South African workforce is their lack of legislative protection (however ineffective this may be in the South African context). As has been mentioned, a large number of the job categories in which women are concentrated are regarded as being marginal/part-time and thus have limited recourse to protection. All these factors are very much a function of patriarchal power relations as meted out by the State, by male workers, by capitalists.

Neither the Industrial Conciliation Act (which governs relations between employers and employees, negotiating agreements about wages and conditions of employment), nor the Wage Act (which recommends minimum wages and investigates working conditions) apply to agricultural and domestic workers, state employees or people employed in schools. The Unemployment Insurance Act excludes agricultural and domestic workers, those employed less than a day per week and those who take work home. The Workmen's Compensation Act excludes domestic workers and casual employees from compensation for injury or job-related disease.

A significant feature of legislation restricting women's employment is that it is frequently aimed at protecting male employment - i.e. much the same as job reservation protects 'white' jobs from undercutting by cheaper black labour, so such legislation as the Factories Act which limits the amount of overtime done by women will keep women out of the industrial work place. The justification for such an act is put forward as being 'to allow women more time for domestic work' and that women are not sole breadwinners. Their domestic roles are also used as justification for not training women or promoting them. This domestic work is regarded very much as a "private" affair. For example few if any, firms provide unpaid, let alone paid, maternity leave (in Isithebe, falling pregnant is synonymous with losing one's job). The Industrial Council Agreement, covering sick leave for men and women, makes no provision for pregnancy or miscarriage (Westmore 1975 cited in Boddington 1979:23). The Factories Act does not make provision for maternity leave either, and yet it specifies for example that up to four months military training for male employees per annum is not regarded as leave (Boddington 1979:23).

The subordination of women and women's needs is also depressingly evident in Trade Union organizing - unions are

generally organized to represent 'the worker'. The failure to take account of gender means that in practice they have tended to represent male workers and working women have been represented only through their dependence on male workers.⁹ In addition, the specific problems that concern women are often problems which are not easy for conventional (ie. male-centred) forms of trade union activity to tackle. These problems are perceived as being individual and personal, outside of the realm of political activity. Women worker's lack of involvement in such apparently central issues as pay and working conditions may in part reflect the fact that for women, it is gender subordination which is primary and capitalist exploitation secondary and derivative (D. Elson 1983:53). Isithebe factories have barricaded themselves against trade union infiltration, both by employing women on a 'temporary' basis and by threatening to relocate to more favourable (oppressive) locations such as that offered by the Ciskei.

We have argued earlier that women's inferior social position is related to the patriarchal organisation of necessary domestic labour. Some theorists have suggested that waged

⁹A notable example is that of male workers demands for better wages: these demands are usually based on men's "rights" to earn a family wage - ie. enough to support a wife and children. This kind of demand is in contradiction with women coming into the workforce and with their demands for better pay.

work for women is liberatory. That this is not the case and that in fact it worsens their already subordinate position is testament the workings of patriarchal relations and the predominance of these in all areas of life.

The difficulties that face women in combining their 'dual-role' restrict their choice of jobs as well as their ability to perform them. Women are also limited by the time they spend away from work, bearing and looking after children. They are restricted to jobs which involve the least conflict with their home lives.

While we have stressed women's shared experience of work thus far, the differences between the experience of women of different classes and racial categories should not be obscured. These factors together ensure that African women trapped in the homelands have least choice, carry the heaviest burdens, and are most exploitable.

We began this chapter by briefly mentioning the relationship between the organization and location of industry and geographical concentrations of female labour. We then went on to discuss the nature of women's waged labour. We have thus discussed the basis of the links between the industrial production processes, geographical location and women's labour. As the chapter on the clothing and textile industry illustrates (Chapter 4), a distinct geography of women's employment has arisen - i.e. those industries employing mainly women are concentrated in particular areas. Women have formed a flexible pool of workers with the qualities that modern industry requires. The introduction of new assembly techniques and production processes have demanded new sources of labour. Women are cheap to employ, are often inexperienced in wage work and in union matters, and are available in large numbers. The availability of labour with such desirable characteristics is however differentiated over space.

In the following section we periodise women's incorporation into the industrial labour force; thereafter we look at the nature of women's employment in the clothing and textile industry and the spatial location of this employment.

B. The Historical Incorporation of Women into Industrial Labour

In this Section we look more closely at the incorporation of women into industrial labour. Vicky Martin and Chris Rogerson are amongst the few theorists in South Africa to have carried out such an investigation ("Women and Industrial Change : the South African Experience," 1984). While their investigation omits to theorise the gender-relations which explain women's position in the workforce (a gap which it has been our intention to fill) it has proved a very useful source and we draw heavily on it for information. We illustrate more explicitly in this section the relationship between changes in industrial capital, changes in the spatial location of industry (although this is covered in much more detail in Chapter 4), and changes in the nature of the labour force used. We have so far discussed in some detail the correspondence of gender and women's status in the labour force.

Before tracing the incorporation of women into industrial labour, a word should be said about the general reliability of available statistics. Most of the analysis below is derived from official census figures - there are however a number of problems with using this data:

- 1) the unreliability of early industrial census reports,

- 2) problems arising from the reclassification of industrial categories which precludes any direct comparison between data before and after 1950,
- 3) difficulties in studying the racial composition of the workforce because in certain years race categories of Black, Coloured and Asian are combined together under a category 'non-white'.
- 4) problems in studying the geographical distribution of women in the manufacturing workforce because there has been a continual reshuffling of statistical regions. 5) more importantly, since the 1950 industrial census, no geographical breakdown of women's employment in manufacturing has been provided. Here the population census for 1960, 1970 and 1980 have been used - these are not directly comparable with the industrial census. In addition, instructions given to population census enumerators make analysis based on these figures precarious : Maree, for example, quotes instructions given to census enumerators "all females in rural areas and unemployed to be classified a farm workers, unless the wife of the household head"! (Maree 1978, cited in Martin and Rogerson 1984:36).

We periodise the incorporation of women into the workforce in order to consider how at different junctures, women were

incorporated into different sectors. We wish to make clear in this discussion that their differential incorporation is very much a function of their gender, as well as their class position and 'racial category' - and to show the interrelationship between these three.

a. Women's employment in manufacturing.

Over the period 1915 - 1960 the absolute number of women workers expanded from 10 000 (1915) to 400 000 (1980). In relative terms the contribution of women has more than doubled: they constituted one in every four workers by 1980. However their incorporation did not occur evenly. The most dramatic increase occurred post 1945/50 - between 1950 and 1980 the relative share of women in the total industrial workforce increased from 11% to 25%.

**Table 2 : Women employed in manufacturing in South Africa .
1915/16 to 1980**

	1915/16 *	1924/5	1929/30	1934/5	1939/40	1944/5	1949/50	1960	1963	1970	1976	1980 *
No of Women	9 363	14 105	21 383	33 025	42 614	58 912	79 105	99 844	128 808	206 736	291 595	370 000
% of total employment	9.2	9.9	11.5	12.4	11.8	12.0	11.0	14.7	15.6	18.9	21.5	25.0

Note: * The 1980 figure is an estimate from both the data in the population census and from figures for the 'independent Homelands'.

(Source : Martin and Rogerson 1984:36).

b. Racial divisions and Women's employment.

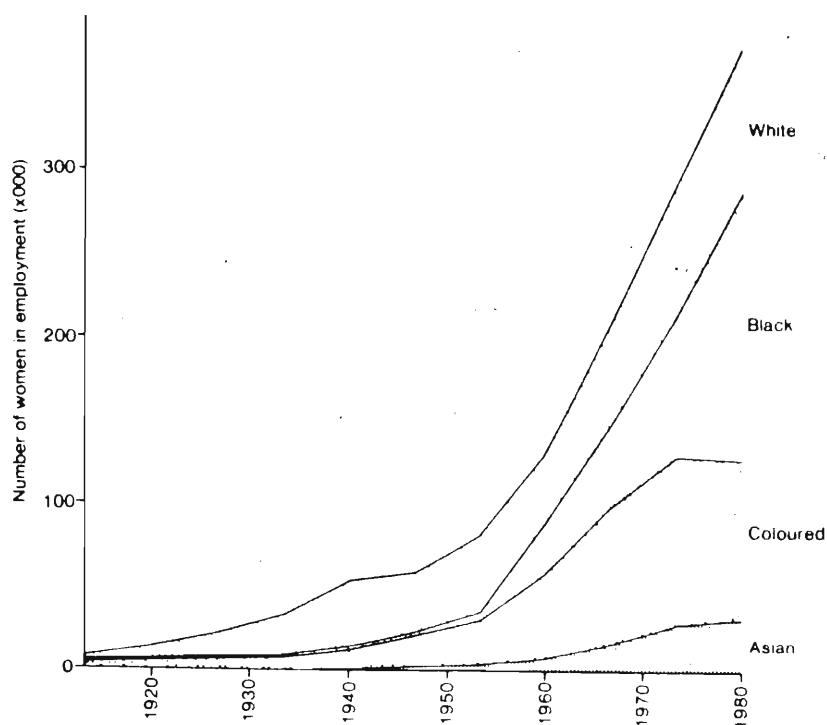
The effect of the structures of racial domination are evident if these figures are analysed in terms of their racial composition. Martin and Rogerson identify three phases (reflected in Figure 1 below):

- 1) 1915-1945 represents a phase in which whites formed the major constituent of the workforce. In 1935 they constituted three quarters of female industrial labour. If we go back to Bozzoli's (1983) discussion of the pace and nature of women's proletarianization, such a predominance of white women workers clearly reflects their early experience of proletarianization - thrust, as they were, into the cities by rural poverty and their particular experience of patriarchy in the 1920s. It also reflects the protectionist measures introduced in terms of the 'civilised labour' policy wherein the government encouraged employment of "civilised labour rather than low-wage African workers" (Mariotti 1979, cited in Martin and

Rogerson 37).

With new employment opportunities after the war, these whites - their class position "corresponding" with their colour - were able to move into more congenial types of work.

Figure 1 : Female Employment in South African Industry 1915 - 1980 by race groups



(Source : Martin and Rogerson 1984:37)

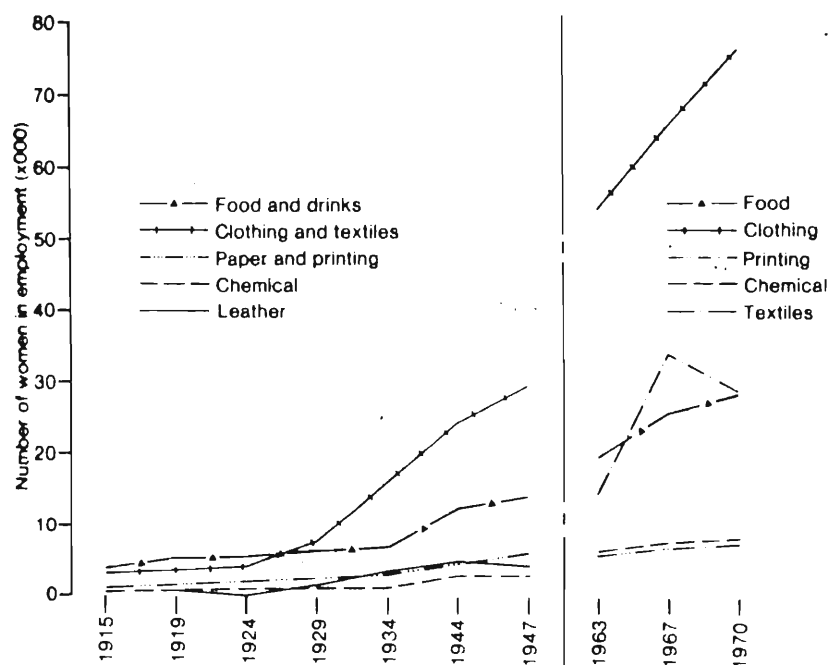
- 2) 1945-1960. Coloured women advanced into niches left vacant by white women. From 1950 - mid 60s Coloured women became the major racial component in the female labour force. Also appearing however were newly proletarianized African women.
- 3) From 1965 to mid 70s, African women comprised overwhelmingly the bulk of women industrial workers. In 1934 African women accounted for less than 1000 workers in industry while by 1980 this number had risen to 160 000; 40% of all female industrial labour. Again this reflects the later proletarianization of African women as discussed by Bozzoli. Partly due to patriarchal structuring, (both in their own domestic sphere and that of the dominant mode), apartheid and 'civilized labour' legislation, these women either remained in the homelands or they were absorbed into informal work in urban areas. Their movement into formal industry was facilitated both by the "occupational mobility of first whites and later coloureds", (Martin and Rogerson 1984:38), and by the continual search by capital for cheaper and cheaper labour. These African women represent the most oppressed group and so enter in at the bottom layer of industrial employment. This had far reaching implications for capital - as illustrated by Mariotti (1979):

"The availability of Black women for absorption from the reserve army of labour enabled South African industry during the 1960s and 70s to keep down wage levels in a

critical phase of rapid national economic expansion" (cited in Martin and Rogerson 1984:38).

The availability of African women meant that wages could be kept down, that industry could remain relatively labour intensive, and that the economy could expand in certain sectors which require a cheap, unskilled and flexible working population. This is most evident in the clothing and textiles sector - a sector in which women have historically come to be concentrated.*

Figure 2 : Major industrial categories of ^{female} employment in South Africa 1915-1970



*Notably, as the process of deskilling in these industries occurred so men move out of them into other developing sectors of manufacturing - for example iron and steel and motor industries - and women moved into them at lower wages and lower levels of skill.

(Source : Martin and Rogerson 1984:39)

c. Sexual divisions of labour between sectors

The sexual division of labour is very clearly demarcated in South African industry: Of 19 industrial categories classified between 1915 and 1947, two groups, food and drink and clothing and textiles, account for two thirds of all women in South African industry. Within clothing and textiles, women constitute over half of the total national workforce (their concentration within the clothing industry alone is probably much higher as men occupy many of the heavier job categories in textiles). This particularly clear sexual division of labour and its long established existence is, apart from reasons already mentioned, also a function of the relatively broad nature of economic development in South Africa i.e. development has occurred across a number of sectors - from metal industries to clothing industries. This has meant that men have been drawn into

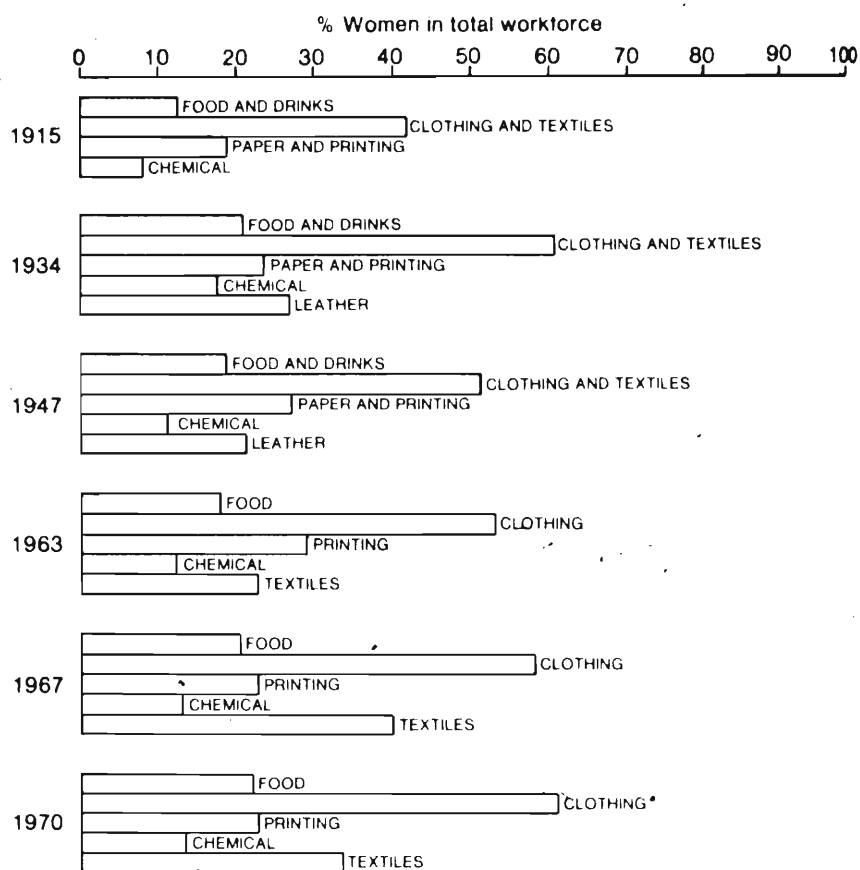
heavier, better paying industries, and women into lighter more badly paid industry.¹⁰

Apart from low wages and low levels of skill, women are also considered to be more suited to the clothing and textile industry by virtue of certain "natural" attributes - including their 'nimble fingers' and their "aptitude" for tedious, monotonous and repetitive work! Such categories are certainly not objectively defined and we can reiterate here Hartmann's comment that such discriminatory ideologies as patriarchy and racism determine who will fill which levels of the hierarchy. Elson and Pearson (1981) comment:

"women do not do unskilled jobs because they are the bearers of inferior labour; rather the jobs they do are 'unskilled' because women enter them already determined as inferior bearers of labour." (1981:94)

**Figure 3 Women in total workforce of South African industry,
major industrial groups, 1915-1970**

¹⁰This is notable because in many Third World countries where economic activity has come later and is very narrowly based and where the whole population is potentially part of the proletariat (as a result of the progressive underdevelopment of the domestic economy) the sexual division of labour is less evident - men and women are drawn indiscriminately into the labourforce. Whether it is "heavy" or "light", "women's" work or "men's." An account of this can be found in "Let me Speak"



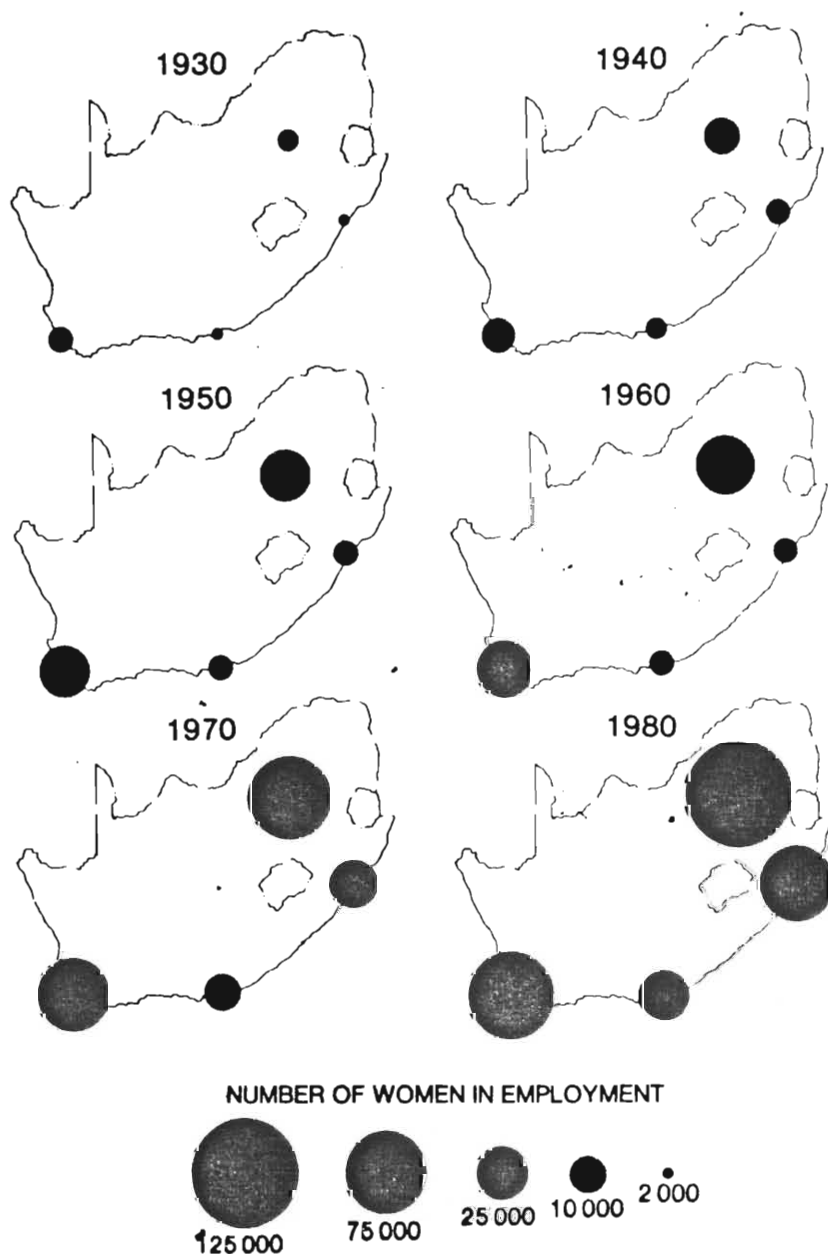
(Source : Martin and Rogerson 1984:40).

d. The spatial concentration of women's employment.

As our study revolves around regional development, and specifically industrial decentralization, the spatial distribution of this industry is extremely important, i.e the changing spatial concentrations and locations and their

relationship to the location and concentration of the appropriate workforce. Unfortunately some of the more specific figures which would be useful for our study are not available or are inaccessible. However, for a study such as this, we must make use of more general statistical interpretation.

Figure 4 : Spatial Distribution of Women in Industrial Employment in the four major Metropolitan Areas of South Africa, 1930-1980

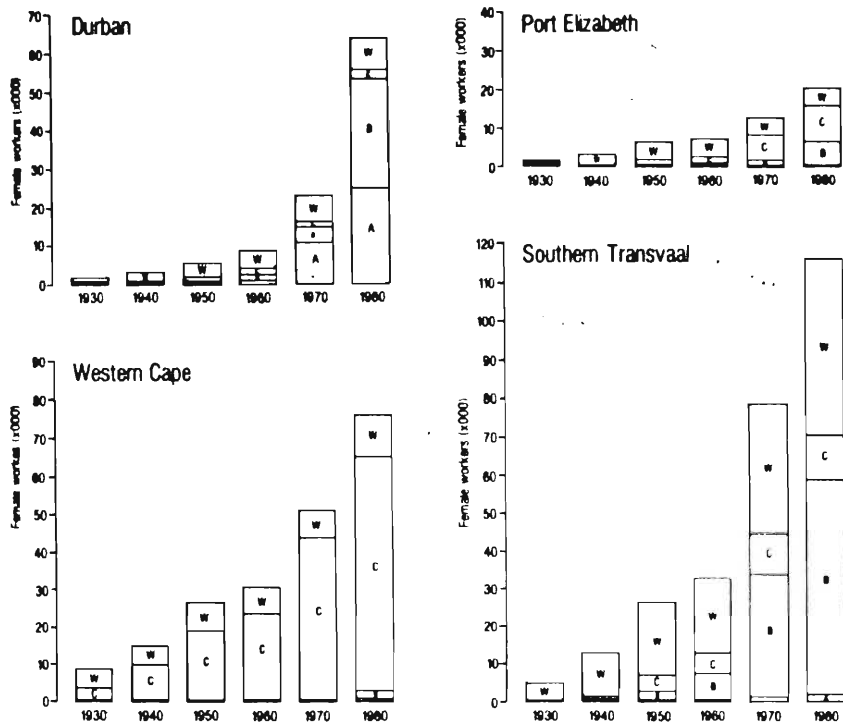


(Source : Martin and Rogerson 1984:42)

The four major metropolitan areas of South Africa have consistently comprised 80% of total employment, although various shifts have taken place in the relative importance of each area. There has been a marked relative decline in the concentration of women employed in the Western Cape, and in the Port Elizabeth regions. In 1930 these contained half of the women in industry and by 1955 this had dropped to one quarter. The concentration of women-employing industries in these areas may be explained by the availability of coloured women as a labour pool (Martin and Rogerson 1984). By contrast the rise in significance of the Southern Transvaal and later Durban is explained by the later

proletarianization of African women (and to a lesser degree Indian women). Figure 4 above illustrates the overall concentration of women's employment in the four major metropolitan areas in South Africa.

Figure 5 : Racial composition of women workforce in industry in the four major Metropolitan Areas of South Africa, 1930-1980



(Source Martin and Rogerson 1984)

From the above bar graphs it is evident that the coloured labour preference in the Western Cape effectively blocked African women from employment there. Also significant is the high proportion of Indian women employed in the Durban area - as is the notable "take off" of women-employing industry in the Southern Transvaal and Durban in the 70s. This "take off" is linked to the relative displacement of white women and, more importantly, particularly in the Durban area, the proletarianization of African, and to a lesser extent Indian women.

The development of the government's industrial decentralization policy and the 'spontaneous' tendency (Bell 1985) of industry to decentralise has added a new dimension to the interrelationship of spatial location, industrial sector and the type of labour force. Martin and Rogerson comment that

"the policy of decentralization encourages capital to take advantage of cheap pools of labour imprisoned in the Bantustans by strict influx control and the notorious programme of population removals" (Martin and Rogerson:40).

The nature of, and the implication of industrial decentralization will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. It is necessary here, however, to give some broad understanding of how industrial decentralization fits into the picture of 'gendered' employment.

Underpinning the strategy of industrial decentralization are the series of legislative controls which seriously restrict the employment of black women in industry - particularly in the Southern Transvaal (Martin and Rogerson:42). This legislation prevents black women's movement into urban areas and removes whole populations to impoverished rural areas, creating large reserves of women's labour in the homelands. The African:white labour ratio is also restricted through legislation (Environment Planning Act 1967) so that Africans do not exceed whites in industry by more than a ratio of 2:1. For capital, a major attraction of decentralization lies in the concession waiving minimum wage determination in these areas.

While at first there was a tendency for labour forces in these decentralised areas to be largely composed of men - partly as a function of the type of industry that was decentralising, and the related sexual division of labour - this trend is changing and the number of African women employed now outstrips the number of men (Green and Hirsch 1982 cited in Martin and Rogerson:43). This change is explained by the more recent decentralization of typically women-employing industry, by the greater opportunities for male workers as migrants or commuters, and most importantly, by the "ultra-exploitability of African women," (Lacey cited in Martin and Rogerson:44). Table 2 below illustrates the number of men compared to the number of women employed in the different

homelands.

**Table 3 : Black women in manufacturing employment in the
homelands**

	Total	Male	Female	Percent Female
Gazankulu (1975) (1)	434	411	23	5,3
Venda (1976)	765	279	486	63,5
Ciskei (1982)	5530	1977	3553	64,2
Bophuthatswana (1982)	16006	7597	8409	52,5
Lebowa (1983)	2157	1087	1070	49,6
Isithebe (1985) (2)	14030	5313	8717	62,1

Source : Martin and Rogerson 1984

1. Martin and Rogerson 1984
2. KFC 1986

Figure 4 in Chapter 4 illustrates the dramatic increase in the number of women employed in Isithebe especially since 1982 - thus revealing the increasing capacity for women employing industry

(ie. clothing and textiles) to decentralise and take advantage of cheap labour reserves, and the increasing relative attractiveness of cheap labour reserves (and incentives) as compared to agglomeration and scale economies.

Apart from the incentives, the advantages to employers are obvious : the workforce is largely female and therefore 'docile', cheap, powerless, unskilled, and, as one factory manager said , "this year they are falling out of the trees". Minimum wages are non-existent, overheads are subsidized, the costs of maintaining workers over slow periods is nil as workers can be hired and fired at will. Also African women workers have no choice about where or for how much they will work.

This particular form of employment is extremely unstable and insecure. Workers are very vulnerable to exploitative practices; little/no investment is made in living conditions - ie. in the reproduction of workers. When the factories leave the area - pulling up their insubstantial roots with ease - the workers will be left behind, unable to leave the area and with no hope of finding other employment. The assumption is that these workers can fall back on subsistence farming and on the male migrant breadwinner. The reality is very different and this is starkly evident in the women's own experience of life as expressed in the case studies in Part 2.

A more detailed discussion of what industrial decentralisation means for development is contained in Chapter 6.

PART 3Chapter 4.A. The Nature of the Clothing and Textile Industry : Cheap Labour
- a euphemism for Women's Labour

As has been shown, the historical development of women's incorporation into the industrial workforce reveals their concentration in particular sectors of the economy. This concentration is very much attributable to their gender and the material and ideological factors this implies. The sector with the greatest concentration of women workers is the clothing and textile industry. This phenomenon is common throughout the world, and conditions experienced by women clothing workers in KwaZulu are shared by women in other underdeveloped regions, such as the Philippines, India, the US-Mexico border area and Taiwan. The characteristics of their employment are the same - low waged, unskilled, back-breaking work, with little worker organisation or protection and extremely poor working conditions. These women are at the most exploited end of the labour force - their oppression being multiplied by their responsibility for domestic work which effectively means that they must do a double-day's work.

What is the nature of the clothing and textile industry?' - Why

'It is important to note here that there are fundamental differences between the clothing industry and the textile (and footwear) industry in terms of the nature of the production process and who is employed. These differences are becoming increasingly marked as the textile industry mechanises at a faster rate than the clothing industry. The textile industry also employs relatively more male workers than does the clothing

is it labour intensive? What technology does it use? Where is it located? Who are its workers? Where are they found? These the questions will inform and will be answered in this chapter.

The clothing industry has always been characterised by small production shops, low scale technology, high labour intensity, low levels of skill and relatively central locations. Some of these features are attributable to the "insecure" nature of the clothing industry, (the market fluctuates substantially), short production runs, low profit margins, and so on. It has also traditionally employed and had access to a cheap labour force; a labour force which can be taken in and out of the industrial reserve army - the labour of women.

Given these factors it has not been "worthwhile" for the clothing industry to mechanise its production process. Thus, to keep up with changes in the capitalist accumulation process the clothing industry has had to search for cheaper and cheaper labour.

The question of mechanisation must be seen in the context of the global restructuring of industrial production: With the rise of monopoly capital and multinationals, industries have transferred production from one part of the world to another, draining and rechanneling investments. This is reflected particularly in labour intensive industries which are continually looking for

industry. We have in our study concentrated on the Clothing Industry more specifically as being the largest employer of women with one of the most labour intensive production process.

unskilled, cheap, unorganised labour. This process of "restructuring" is of particular concern to women because the industries most affected are those which predominantly employ women - electronics, food processing, and clothing and textiles (Chapkis and Enloe, 1983). In accordance with these changes, the size and nature of the clothing and textile industry has been changing - the movement of multinationals and monopoly capital into the clothing industry has "freed" it from being location-bound and increased its size and production capacity. In fact, the industry is now well known for an international division of labour in terms of which different phases of production of a single garment or product may be located all over the globe. These industries may have their management located in First World countries, (the largest of the textile corporations are based in the US, the UK and Japan), and production located in the Third World - India, Taiwan, Philippines, in the homeland areas of South Africa and so on.²

Significantly, while the clothing industry has undergone some of the changes common to other industry, it has not matched the greater capital intensity of these other industries. Instead, in order to increase profitability, the production processes have been increasingly subdivided and deskilled. This process is made very evident in Part 2 where women describe their jobs as being, for example, to put loops on endless pairs of trousers. It has

²Maspik, a US clothing industry located in Isithebe, decentralised part of its production process from the Philippines to KwaZulu, and is considering moving to Ciskei.

retained a very high level of labour intensity, and a low level of technology - the cost of creating one job in the clothing industry in an industrial decentralisation point (IDP) is R6 000-7 000 as compared to R24 800 in the metal industry.

Amongst other reasons, some of which have already been mentioned, explanations for this retained labour intensity are:- firstly, the "risk-averseness" of the industry (D. Kaplan 1985:77) and so their general avoidance of investment with long 'payback' periods, and their inclination to adopt the conventional sewing machine which is extremely versatile and cheap. Secondly, there is a plentiful supply of cheap and flexible labour in the industrial reserve army of labour which is "suited" to the work. This is women's labour. Because clothing textile work has been robbed of skill, employers can choose this cheapest sector of the labour force - this is a fundamental reason for not moving to greater capital intensity. These women are unskilled, docile and "nimble", they can be drawn into the workforce at the whim of the industrialist. And, it is because they are women that these jobs "just happen" to be the ones receiving the least training, the least money, and the least opportunity for advancement or recognition. Chapkis and Enloe (1983) interpret the position of women textile workers as follows:-

"It is because all women are imagined to be - and are treated as being - maternal, docile, patient, dependent and weak, that women textile workers are so effectively marginalized, kept 'unskilled' and under-paid. In other words, women textile workers may supply the labour power crucial to one of the world's oldest and most fundamental industries, but above all they are treated as women... keeping women in their palce in the production process also

serves to keep them in their place in society at large" (Chapkis and Enloe 1983:2).

The patriarchal model very clearly characterises the clothing industry - women perform low paid unskilled jobs under male supervision and management. Lown and Chenut locate this historically by describing how pre-industrial forms of textile production were organised on a patriarchal basis. The man was the master who had authority over the rest of the household - this pattern was carried over into workplace relations in mechanised plants.

"In the re-creation of hierarchies of authority which accompanies the expansion of textile production, it is the assumption of women's 'domesticity' which is being transported along with the plant and machinery (Lown and Chenut 1983:37).

These structures of patriarchal authority link the experiences of women textile workers the whole world over. Of course the labour of the Third World - the women's labour of the Third World - has proved extremely attractive to industrialists under these circumstances. The 'run-away' shops which have located themselves in these areas have not however brought development with them. This factor is glaringly evident in South Africa where the government's decentralisation policy has been an enormous drain on state capital and has given the go-ahead for 'ultra-exploitation' for which women bear the largest burden. This is analysed in more detail in Chapter 5 and is starkly evident in the experience of women in Isithebe (Part 2).

B. The South African Clothing and Textile Industry

In the following discussion we look more specifically at the clothing and textile industry in South Africa, concentrating on its changes in 'size' and in location - changes which enable it to take advantage of the cheaper strata of the female labour force. Changes in the size of the industry have been a function of the growth of monopoly capital and the ongoing recession - during which small firms have found it more difficult to survive and either close down or are absorbed by larger firms. Locational changes have been, in part, a function of State legislation - particularly the Environment Planning Act (1967) - and of the 'spontaneous' tendency (Bell:1985) of industry to move away from urban areas (particularly in more recent years) to take advantage of cheap, unorganized labour. This ability to relocate is very much related to the size of the concern - the number of workers employed, the level to which the production process has been deskilled and so on. The source from which we draw much of the information in this section is an article by Rogerson and Kobben - "The Locational Impact of the Environment Planning Act on The Clothing and Textile Industry of South Africa" (1982). While this article only maps changes in the industry from 1968 - 1978 and our own figures for subsequent years are insubstantial, it does give a clear indication of the trends in changes to the industry, trends which have accelerated in recent years.

Below we situate the clothing and textile industry relative to

other manufacturing industry in South Africa and Natal. Table 1 below (1919 - 1976) illustrate by sector, percentage output, percentage employment and percentage black employment.

Clothing and textiles has accounted for an increasing percentage of employment such that in terms of employment it was by 1976 the largest single sector - accounting for 19% of all employment. It also accounts for the largest percentage of black employment (22%) and is the only sector, apart from metal products, in which black employment has increased substantially. Its labour intensity is verified by the fact that it only accounts for 10% of output.

Table 1. Structural Change in the Manufacturing Sector 1919-1976

	Percentage Contribution to Manufacturing Total										
	Food, Beverages and Tobacco	Clothing and Textiles	Wood and Paper Products	Chemicals	Non- Metallic Minerals	Base Metals	Metal Products	Machinery		Transport Equipment	Other
								Non- Electrical	Electrical		
Output											
1919	32	8	16	8	6	17	2	-	1	6	4
1936	25	12	16	8	8	15	2	-	2	7	5
1951	18	14	13	9	6	7	10	5	4	8	6
1970	14	12	12	10	6	9	9	7	4	8	9
1976	14	10	12	11	5	12	10	7	6	7	6
Employment											
1919	27	10	14	8	10	15	2	-	1	8	5
1936	21	17	13	6	14	13	3	-	1	8	4
1951	18	18	14	6	10	5	11	5	4	9	7
1970	14	19	13	5	7	7	10	6	4	8	7
1976	15	19	12	6	6	8	10	6	5	8	5
Black Employment											
1919	33	8	12	9	15	9	2	-	1	5	6
1936	24	11	11	6	20	13	4	-	1	5	4
1951	21	19	14	6	13	4	11	4	3	7	-
1970	16	23	12	5	8	5	10	5	3	6	3
1976	16	22	11	6	7	6	10	5	4	7	4

SOURCE: *Industrial and Manufacturing Censuses* for the various years selected.

(Source : Natrass, 1980)

In Natal in 1976 clothing and textiles accounted for 96 914 jobs (i.e. 33,7%) out of a total of 28 7802 jobs in all manufacturing industry. Table 2 below indicates employment percentages by sector in Natal. Clothing and textiles accounts for double that of any other sector. This is explained by the geography of this

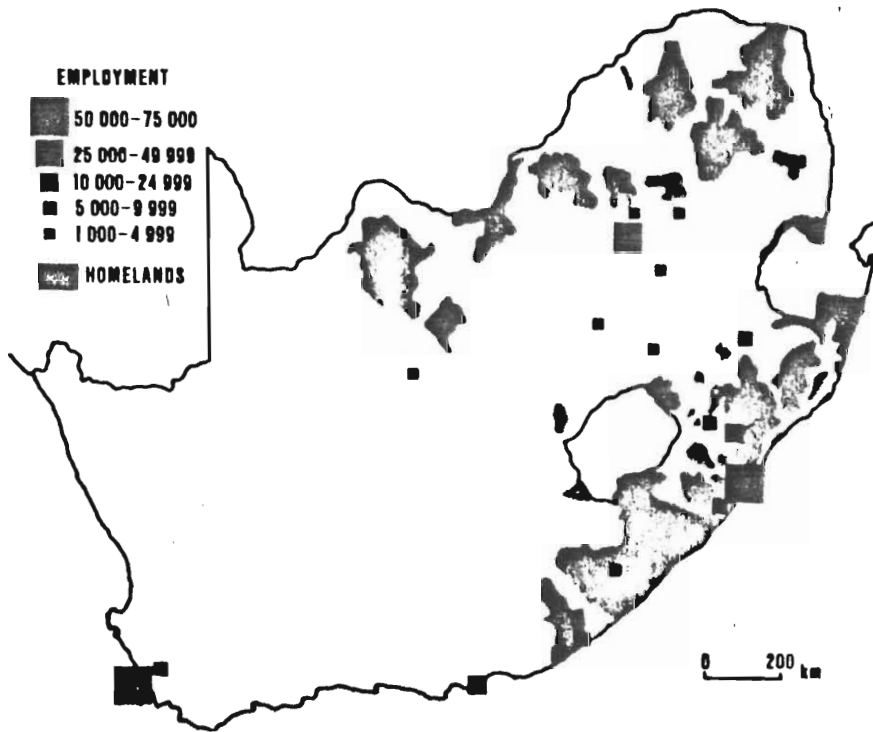
industry which is discussed below.

Table 2. Employment by Sector - Natal 1976

Sector	%
Clothing, textiles & footwear (4,7)	33,7
Food and beverages	16,9
Chemicals	9,9
Metal products	9,5
Wood and Paper	9,3
Machinery	9,3
Transport Equipment	4,9
Non-Metallic minerals	3,2
Other	1,9
Base Metals	1,4
	100

(Source : Stanwix 1984)

Figure 1 : The Geography of Employment in Clothing and Textiles Manufacture 1978



(Source : Rogerson and Kobben 1982:223).

The Durban - Pinetown region and metropolitan Cape Town are the two leading foci of the clothing and textile industry (See Figure 1 above). The Durban area's predominance has been long established: In 1934 a Wage Board investigation found that "unfair competition was particularly strong from Durban. Not

only were the minimum wages laid down by law, lower than in the Transvaal, but as a result of a test case in 1933 in which the costs had laid down that no minimum wages could be fixed for pieceworkers, piecework was extensively employed in Durban." One result of these low earnings was that manufacturers in other parts of the Union "...were losing work, which because of low prices, was being done in Durban... The weekly earnings of many pieceworkers in Durban was shockingly low. A large amount of clothing trade... is carried out by manufacturers engaged in the "cut and trim" trade for wholesale and retail merchants. It was in respect of this section of the trade that competition was the keenest and this... led to very serious reductions in the earnings of employees. Under economic pressure the employees were compelled to accept the piecework rates laid down by the employers." (cited in Sitas, Stanwix and Shaw, 1984:11).

Why was the labour cheaper in Durban and why did the "putting-out system" predominate? This relates directly to women's status. At this stage it was mostly Indian women who were employed in the clothing industry in Durban - not in the factories but at home. Patriarchal relations in muslim and hindu cultures are such that women are often not allowed to leave the home. Their choices in terms of employment are therefore extremely limited and, whereas women in the Transvaal or Cape may have been able to resist piecework through being able to take advantage of labour outside the home, Indian women were forced to take in work, and labour in isolation entirely unprotected by any legislation and

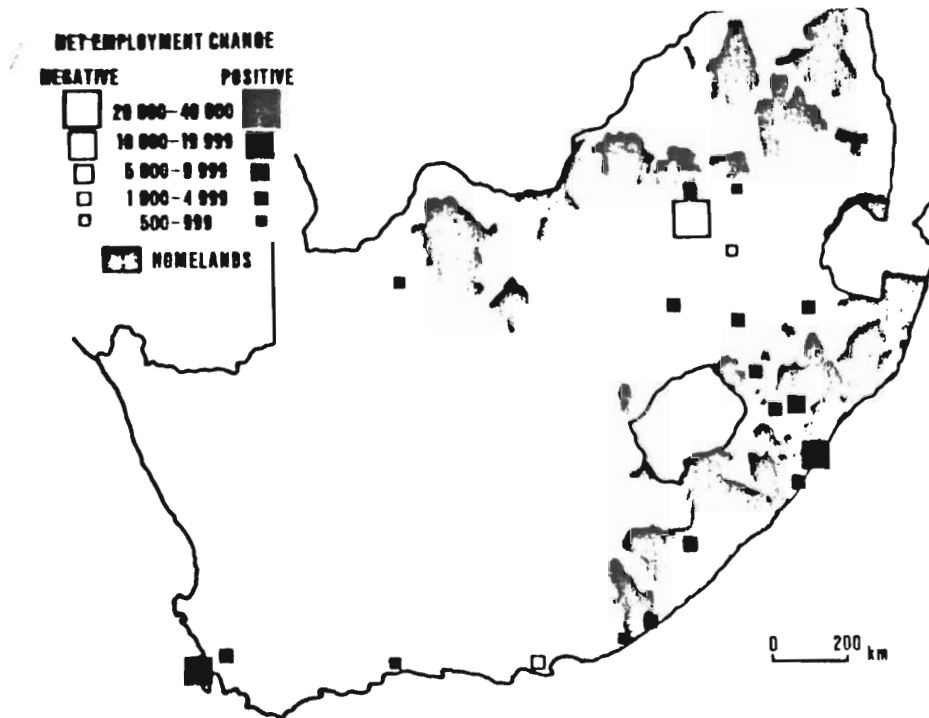
organisation. Their position as women made them the most exploitable group of all.³ It was only later when Indian women did become part of the proletariat that clothing manufacturers started looking for cheaper sources of labour amongst the 'industrial reserve' of black women.

Piecework and small paternalistic concerns continued to predominate in the Durban area, while clothing factories took advantage of proletarianized coloured and white female labour in the Cape and in the PWV. The PWV, containing as it does 55% (approximately) of all employment in South Africa dominated as the location of larger scale clothing and textile concerns. This pattern began to change during the late 1960s - for reasons already discussed above.

Rogerson and Kobben (1982), analyse the shifting spatial patterns of employment from 1968-1978 in terms of absolute change (Figure 2) and patterns of relative change (Figure 3).

³These particularly pernicious employment relations enforced by patriarchy characterise women's employment in India and in other areas where women's movements are restricted. In the book Of Common Cloth ed. Chapkis and Enloe 1983 the chapters on India and on piece-work make this explicit. Piece work is however not restricted to areas where women are spatially restricted by direct patriarchal relations, as can be seen in that South African Clothing Manufacturers are taking advantage of women stranded in the homelands both by patriarchal and apartheid barriers, and employing them as piece workers ('Bata' for example is well known for this). Locating production in the home is also a "legal" means to exploiting child labour.

Figure 2 : Pattern of Absolute Change in Employment in Clothing and Textiles Manufacture 1968-1978



(Source : Rogerson and Kobben 1982:24).

Three points with regard to absolute change are notable—:

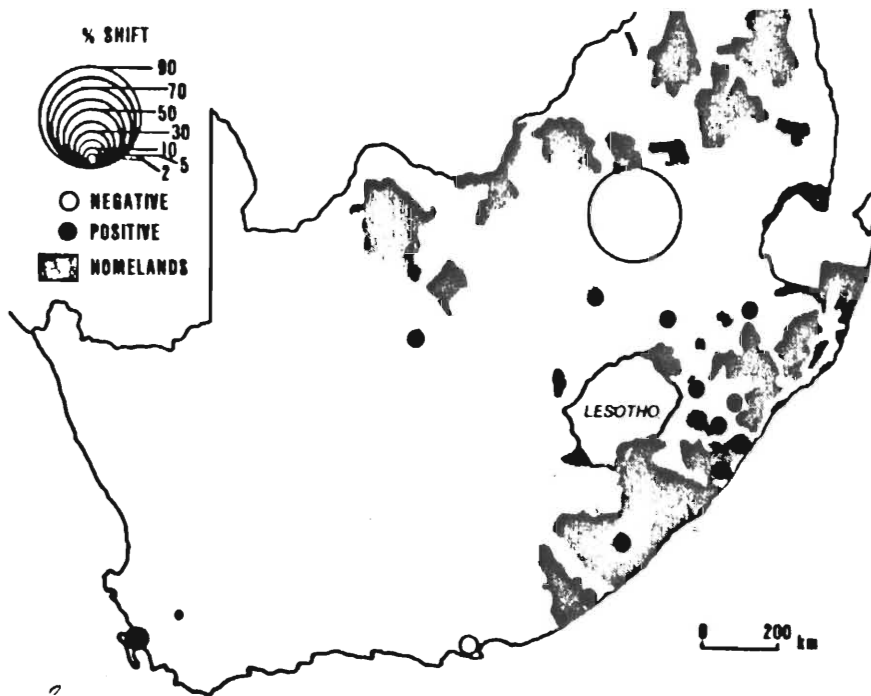
1) a net employment decline of over 20 000 jobs was recorded in

the FWV area

- 2) a corresponding net combined employment increase of almost 25 000 jobs was shared by Durban and the Western Cape, and
- 3) smaller employment gains were recorded in a number of non-metropolitan locations - most notably the homelands.

In terms of relative change, "the overall geography of positive gains is one of small employment shifts being displayed at a variety of non-metropolitan locations."

Figure 3 : Relative Employment Shifts in Clothing and Textiles
Manufacture 1968-1978



(Source : Rogerson and Kobben 1982:25).

These patterns of change are a consequence of—:

- new plants opening and closures,
- expansions and contractions in situ and

- plant relocations.

There were a total of 78 relocations of factories between 1968 and 1978.⁴ This relocation has been very important in terms of net employment gains. What part then, did the Environment Planning Act play in this relocation?

The Environment Planning Act restricted the employment of black workers in the Transvaal to a 1:2 white:black ratio. The Durban area however is exempt from these controls as it is considered as having the same status as a border area. In the Western Cape - a coloured labour preference area⁵ - low coloured unemployment meant that firms could take on black employees, while in Port Elizabeth (also a coloured labour preference area) high coloured unemployment meant that firms were not allowed to employ cheaper black workers. So from the perspective of clothing and textile firms seeking cheap female labour the preferred areas were Durban, the Western Cape and decentralisation points.

That the industry did not move to decentralisation points at first was a function of the slower process of change from small, location-bound firms to larger firms taking place in the industry: Kaplan (1985:79) notes that in 1976 there were 34 firms out of a total of 1 220 which employed more than 500

⁴This figure is an understatement because the study could not take account of firms that relocated and then closed down; firms that relocate and then moved back; firms that moved within magisterial boundaries.

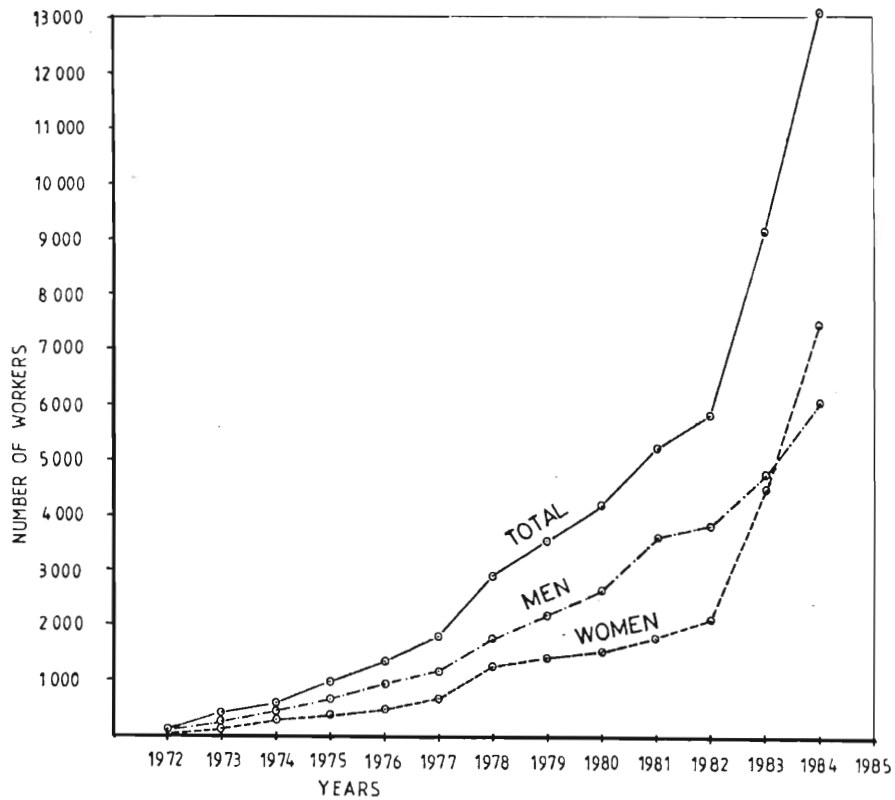
⁵This has recently been lifted.

workers (2,7% of the total firms in the industry), accounting for 32,3% of total industry employment. In 1979 there were 42 firms out of 1,304 which employed more than 500 workers (3,22% of total firms in the industry) - they accounted for 37% of total industrial employment. This trend has continued - supported by the continuing recession and by intense international competition.

The very significant rise in the number of clothing and textile firms relocating to decentralisation points is a function of both the increased size of firms - characterised by increasingly deskilled production processes and larger labour requirements, and of the boosted incentives since 1982. Clothing and textile firms have also been targeted by the decentralisation policy because they are labour intensive and the cost of each job created is relatively low (R6 000) compared to those in for example the fabricated metal or chemical industry (R24,800 and R19,700 respectively). Of the 24 clothing and textile firms in Isithebe, 17 (i.e. 71%) were established since the beginning of 1982. In terms of size 42% employ more than 300 workers and 66% more than 100 workers.

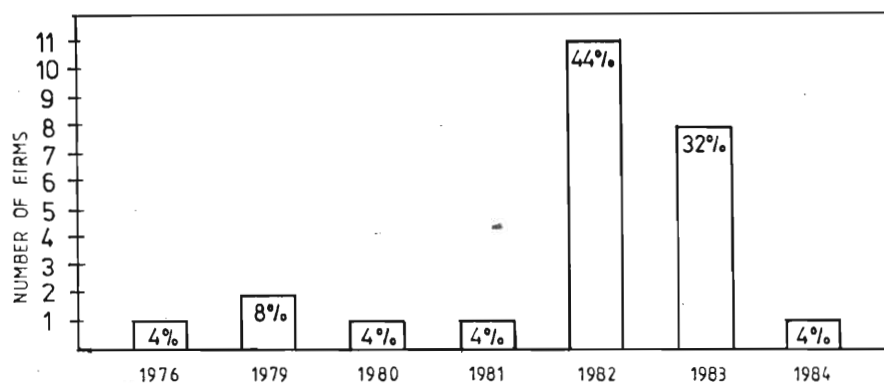
Figure 4 below indicates the dramatic rise in employment figures in the area - by comparing this to male and female employment increases we can see that this is directly related to the dramatic increase in the number of women employed.

Figure 4 : Relative Increases in Male and Female Employment in Isithebe from 1972-1984



(Source : KFC ^{figures} 1985).

Figure 5 : Number of Clothing and Textile firms established in Isithebe between 1976 and 1984.



(Source : Figures contained in Table 1 below)

Isithebe is an excellent example of relocation trends in the clothing and textile industry. There are at present 24 clothing factories in Isithebe - these makes up 23,1% of all industry there (104 firms), thus constituting the largest single sector in the area. If one compares this to the clothing and textiles industry as a proportion of all other manufacturing industry in South Africa (19%), and as a proportion of other manufacturing industry in Natal (33,7%), it is evident that clothing and textiles are taking greater advantage of decentralisation. This can be attributed quite simply to their labour intensity and therefore search for cheap female labour. 62,1% of the total workforce in Isithebe consists of women (8 717 women workers of a total of 14 030) of all women employed 81% (7052) are employed in

the clothing and textiles industry. Women constitute approximately 92% of employees in the clothing and textile industry. Table 3 below illustrates the number of women employed in all the clothing and textile factories in Isithebe.

Table 3 : Women's Employment in Isithebe Clothing and Textile Factories

Number of Women Employed								
Established in	1976	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	
Employment figures refer to present employment figures of women)								
Kydd Clothing	660	(bought out by Durity)						
Moto Weave		97						
Isithebe Embroidery		3						
Polysoles			151	(closed 1985)				
Aranda Clothing				130				
Zululand Weavers					103			
Shield Overall					356			
Elastics					7			
Bridge Clothing					299			
Durity (SA Clothing)					660			
Francois Fasions					855			
Kingscharm					315			
Yanan Textiles					300	(closed 1985)		
Sing Hsian Sweater					650			
Cleash Clothing					266			
Jason Michael					368			
Endeavour Clothing							84	
Wearwell Clothing							104	
Maspik Cloting							1220	
Apparell (bought out by Maspik)							479	
Kingswear							319	
Seven Star Garments (closed 1985)								
Emvik Clothing							275	
Kingsvik							462	
							Total 7503	
Minus firms which have closed								451
Total number of women presently employed in clothing and textile firms								7052

(Source : KFC 1986).

The actual experience of these women working in these factories is told by themselves in Part 2. That capital, that the clothing

industry, is maintaining and increasing its profit margins on the backs of these women and that these women have no CHOICE is made very clear. If we look at salaries alone these women earn on an average 30% of women in the industry in metropolitan areas. Services in the area are extremely poor and it is almost impossible to obtain housing in Sundumbili. While rentals may be less for women living in the rural areas, transport is extremely expensive (R5.00 per week out of a salary of R24.00 (average) per week), and store bought goods are 50 - 100% more expensive than in metropolitan areas. Added to this are the massive discrepancies in wage levels for men and women. This is partly due to the fact that most men in the area are employed by SAPPI - renowned to be a better, but male, employer. Ardington 1984 found male wages to average R3 284,33 per annum and female wages R1 224,42 per annum ie. 37% of the male wage (See Appendices 2 to 8). Evidently ignored is the fact that most of the women we spoke to are sole supporters of their families, and also that female migrants to the area return a greater percentage of their earnings to the homes (33%) than do male migrants (22%).

This discussion is continued in Chapter 5 in the context of Industrial Decentralisation in South Africa.

Chapter 5

State Intervention in the Relocation and Reorganisation of Industry

Having established in the previous sections the relationship between the reorganisation and relocation of industry and the exploitation of African women concentrated in specific geographic locations, we outline in this chapter :-

- 1) -the part played by the policy of industrial decentralisation as a state regional strategy and
- 2) whether and how capital is taking advantage of the policy

In the preceding chapters we discussed the sexual division of labour and an historical account of the differential incorporation of women into waged labour. More specifically we looked at the changing structure of production in the clothing industry and the spatial implications of this restructuring process. The spatial component of this process essentially involves relocation in search of 'ultra exploitable' cheap labour ie: women' labour. In this chapter then, the links between industrial restructuring (in particular, its spatial dimension) and state regional initiatives (in particular, the policy of industrial decentralisation) are examined.

A. The Evolution of Industrial Decentralisation Policy

The policy of industrial decentralisation has been a central feature of the state's regional policy and homeland strategy for over 20 years. However, suggestions for the encouragement of industrial decentralisation were put forward in a Board of Trade and Industries Report as early as 1936 and, in the Report of the Rural Industries Commission in 1940. These suggestions were motivated by a concern for the increasing concentration of industry and increasingly of population on the Witwatersrand. Not only had there been a wave of urbanization by Africans but also, a steadily increasing depopulation of the platteland by whites. But, these suggestions for decentralisation carried little weight and urban interests prevailed. The types of industry which rose to prominence at this time - especially after 1939, favoured locations in the Southern Transvaal (to have access to large urban markets or to provide inputs to the mines) or at the ports. The dominance of four "core-regions" was thus confirmed - the Pretoria - Witwatersrand - Vereeniging complex, the Western Cape, Port Elizabeth and Durban-Pinetown. These four regions increased their contribution to the national net value of output in manufacturing industry from 73,7% in 1915/16 to 82,4% in 1945/46 (McCrystal, quoted in Browett 1983:20).

In 1940, a parastatal body, the Industrial Development

Corporation was established. Its intention was to promote industrial development in South Africa "... by assisting the private sector in the financing of new industries or schemes for the expansion or rationalisation of industries..." (IDC Annual Report and Accounts, 1981. Cited in Hirsch 1984:10). One means of attracting capital (most investment was in the form of partnership arrangements, often with foreign capital) was through the provision of "cheap" labour. The IDC was able to obtain exemption from wage regulating mechanisms, such as Industrial Council agreements, by locating outside of the metropolitan regions in what became known as 'border areas' - "underdeveloped regions adjacent to black reserves" (Hirsch 1984:10). Fine Wool Products (1945), the Good Hope Textile Company (1946) and Masonite (1948) are notable examples of firms that were established in border areas through the IDC. Important here is to note that these firms, being in the clothing and wood products sectors, are typically labour-intensive and, especially in the case of clothing, make use of cheap unskilled women's labour. Thus, even in its early stages, decentralisation attempts were attracting specific types of industries.

In the post-war recession, anxiety about the influx of Africans into the urban areas grew. The Social and Economic Planning Council (a state advisory body) and the (Fagan) Native Pass Laws Commission (1948), made further suggestions for the decentralisation of industry as well as recommendations for agricultural reform in the reserves. However, no formal

industrial decentralisation programme was implemented. But rather, regional planning policies at this time were aimed at partly resolving the "contradiction between requiring black labour in urban areas and resisting the provision of social infrastructure for Africans in these areas" (Sutcliffe 1983:2). Policies were aimed, therefore, at the improvement of living conditions for Africans in rural areas. Betterment Planning was thus the response to the political and economic crises being experienced by the state. Political, because increasing urbanization threatened the policy of territorial segregation and economic, because increases in the urban population put pressure on the state to provide the necessary living conditions for the burgeoning African population. The two are however, inseparable, as the states resistance to the provision of living conditions was integral to its policy of territorial segregation.

Of relevance here is the fact that the burgeoning African population in the urban areas was predominantly male. Women either stayed behind in the reserves or were repatriated there. In 1936, the proportion of men to women in the reserves was approximately 60 men to 100 women, while on the Witwatersrand, it was 439 men to 100 women and in Durban, 340 men to 100 women. By 1946, the urban figures had marginally decreased to 308 men to 100 women on the Witwatersrand and 271 men to 100 women in Durban.⁶ Reasons for the distorted proportions between men and

⁶

Figures derived from : 1936 Population Census in Simkins (1983:9) and South Africa 1946:46 in Browett (1982:19).

women are as follows :-

- there were no "gaps" for African women in waged labour in urban areas at this stage - African women were the last to become proletarianized (see Part 3 Chapters 1 and 3).
- By confining women to the reserves, the state enabled capital to both make use of men's labour and to pay a 'single wage'. In the preceding chapters, we discussed how capital, assuming the 'reproductive' base to be in the homelands, pays male workers in urban areas a 'single wage'.

Thus, those living conditions that were provided were in the form of single-sex (men's) hostels. Betterment Planning (in the form of agricultural and land reform) represented an attempt by the state to improve the conditions for 'reproduction' in the reserves.

With the advent of the Nationalist Party Government, a system was introduced of tighter, more comprehensive and strictly enforced control over the movement of Africans - especially women - to urban areas. Accordingly, the Tomlinson Commission (for the Socio Economic Development of the Bantu areas within the Union of South Africa) of 1952, was appointed to investigate the potential for economic development in the reserves. The Commission attempted to design a programme through which the reserves could firstly, absorb their growing populations and secondly, become

economically viable. It recommended that decentralised points should be created within the 'Bantu reserves' as well as on their borders as part of an integrated thrust to create jobs in these areas. A transformation of the agricultural sector was also recommended. It would involve, firstly, massive capital injections from both private and public institutions and secondly, dividing the land into "economic" farm units which could sustain a family producing an income of about 60 pounds a year. The people "left over" as it were, from the agricultural reform, would be taken up in jobs created by industry.

Some of these proposals were rejected by Mr. Strijdom's government, and others modified. The argument put forward for rejecting the proposal for industrial development in the reserves was, that it would be followed by white settlement and eventually white domination there. "That whites could not reside in Bantu areas was the quid pro quo for blacks not being allowed to do the same thing in 'white' areas" (Hirsch 1984:13).

Hirsch (1984:14) cites three underlying reasons for the states partial rejection of the proposals made by the Tomlinson Commission:

- The state was concerned with the protection of white labour which was potentially threatened by the lifting of the job colour bar in reserve factories (the incorporation of job reservation into the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 lends

weight to this view).

- Industrialisation on the scale envisaged by the Commission would potentially weaken the chieftan system - the reconstitution of which had become central to the state's reserve policy with the passing of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951.
- The abolition of communal and trust tenure which were proposed as agricultural reforms, would have a similar effect in that they would "remove the material basis of the chief's power - the at least theoretical ability to allocate land" (Hirsch 1984:14).

The general direction of the reserve policy in the late 1950's was to achieve a:-

"a distribution of economic activity so that the 9 or 10 million Bantu expected to be born during the half century up to the year 2000 should settle in their own areas, rather than in or around the concentrations of white communities in the Republic" (Tomlinson Commission (1952) cited in Hirsch 1984:14).

However, economic development on a large scale within the reserves was not seen to be the answer. "Instead, the stabilisation of the reserves, combined with the creation of industry on the borders of the reserves was the chosen strategy" (Hirsch 1984:15). A "border area" was defined as being an industrial centre located within 30 miles of the reserves. However, the Bantu Investment Corporation was set up under its own

act in 1959. Its stated purpose was to "promote and encourage industrial and other concerns among Bantu persons in the Bantu territories and to act as a development financial and investment institution" (Hirsch 1984:16).

In 1960, the first comprehensive government statement on decentralisation was presented by Dr. Verwoerd. In it, he stressed the importance of industrial decentralisation as a means of halting and even reversing the drift of Africans into the "white cities". This drift, he said, was caused by increasing unemployment in the bantustans. Thus, the machinery for the decentralisation of industry to border areas was set up in the form of the Permanent Committee for the Location of Industry and Development of Border Areas. The type of assistance offered to industrialists included tax compensation for relocation, the construction and lease of factory buildings, housing for whites and the waiving of wage regulations for firms establishing in these areas. In justifying this move, the state surrounded the announcement of the programme with rhetoric concerning the need to "alleviate congestion in urban areas" and, the need "to create jobs for the black population." However, up until 1967, the impact of these attempts to promote decentralisation was minimal, with the exception of two well situated growth points : Rosslyn near Pretoria and Hammarsdale near Pietermaritzburg. But generally, "the border areas were never more than marginally successful in attracting investment and their impact upon development within the bantustans proved negligible" (Wellings

and Black 1984:5).

By 1967, it had become clear that the flow of Africans was continuing unabated to the urban areas. The promulgation of the Physical (later Environment) Planning Act of 1967 represented an attempt by the state to actively control the growth of metropolitan areas. The Act provided for "controlled areas" - these being the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area, Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage, Bloemfontein and Cape Town - in which the establishment or extension of certain manufacturing industries was to be limited. "For all intents and purposes, the objective of Section 3 of the Act was to relocate "African labour intensive" industries away from the PWV industrial region towards the Bantustans." (Hirsch 1984:16). Simultaneously in 1968, in response to both the failure of previous attempts to promote decentralisation as well as to the increasing deterioration of the bantustan sub-economies, a decision was taken to allow "white" capital to invest in the homelands.

The exact impact of these moves is difficult to gauge with precision. What is clear, however, is that the Act in particular, had important implications for job creation in the metropolitan areas. But it is debatable whether or not the number of jobs created in non-metropolitan areas were a direct result of these moves. Gottschalk (1977:54) calculated that in the first five years of decentralisation policy from 1968, an average of 9,2 jobs were lost in the metropolitan areas for every one created in

the growth points. Further, Bell (cited in Wellings and Black 1985:7) has argued that on the assumption that non-metropolitan areas would at least have retained a constant share of employment, only 11 600 out of 87 000 jobs (approximately 13%) generated at growth points in the 1960's were a direct result of government policy.

Developments between 1968 and 1982 were significant insofar as the restructuring of regional planning policy was concerned. In 1970, the Riekert Commission was set up to explore problems that had emerged regarding the decentralisation of industry. Perhaps the Commission's most significant recommendation was that "industrialists establishing themselves within Bantu Homelands, will receive concessions on a basis somewhat more liberal than that applicable in the case of border areas" (Hirsch 1984:18). In terms of incentives, then, the bantustans had become the most favoured investment sites.

The National Physical Development Plan of 1975 was important in that "for the first time, the emphasis shifted from a primary preoccupation with industrial decentralisation to create employment in the African 'national states', to a general concern with the rationalisation of economic activity in space." (Dewar, Todes and Watson 9:19). In terms of the plan, South Africa was divided into 38 regions encompassing a hierarchy of settlements along which development axes were defined. The hierarchy of settlements consisted of metropolitan areas, planned metropolitan

areas, growth poles, principal towns (for example : Cape Town, Atlantis, Vredenburg and Saldanha) and growth points (which correspond, by and large, with the old decentralisation points in border and bantustan areas). While the area of influence of the plan did not include the "black areas" - only those incorporated within the boundaries of "white" South Africa - incentives for investment in African areas were increased and remained the most favourable. The plan however, was never completely adopted.

For reasons that are to be discussed, the state, in 1982 announced a new programme for industrial decentralisation incorporated into a restructured regional development policy. The new Regional Development Strategy represents a significant departure from previous policy. For the purposes of this study the most important changes were as follows:-

- The country was divided into eight "functional" regions for development planning purposes. These cut across homeland boundaries thereby recognising the principal of economic interdependence between core and homeland areas.
- The incentive package was substantially upgraded in accordance with "development need". Generally speaking, Industrial Development Points which include most bantustan locations receive higher incentives than do Deconcentration Points which are points adjacent or close to the metropolitan areas.

- The revised incentives package⁷, particularly the introduction of a generous wage subsidy⁸ has clearly been aimed at attracting labour intensive industries.
- There was much greater stress on increasing the participation of private capital in decentralised industrial development.

The most notable feature of the new plan then, is its recognition of the economic interdependence of core and peripheral regions. This was partly a result of the conspicuous failure of previous attempts to create industrial employment in decentralised areas. For example, McCarthy (cited in Wellings and Black 1985:7) estimates that between 1960 and 1980, only 150 000 jobs were created. When this figure is compared to the 115 000 annual entrants into the homeland labour market (this figure excludes women - see Chapter 6), the extent of the inadequacy of the programme becomes clear.

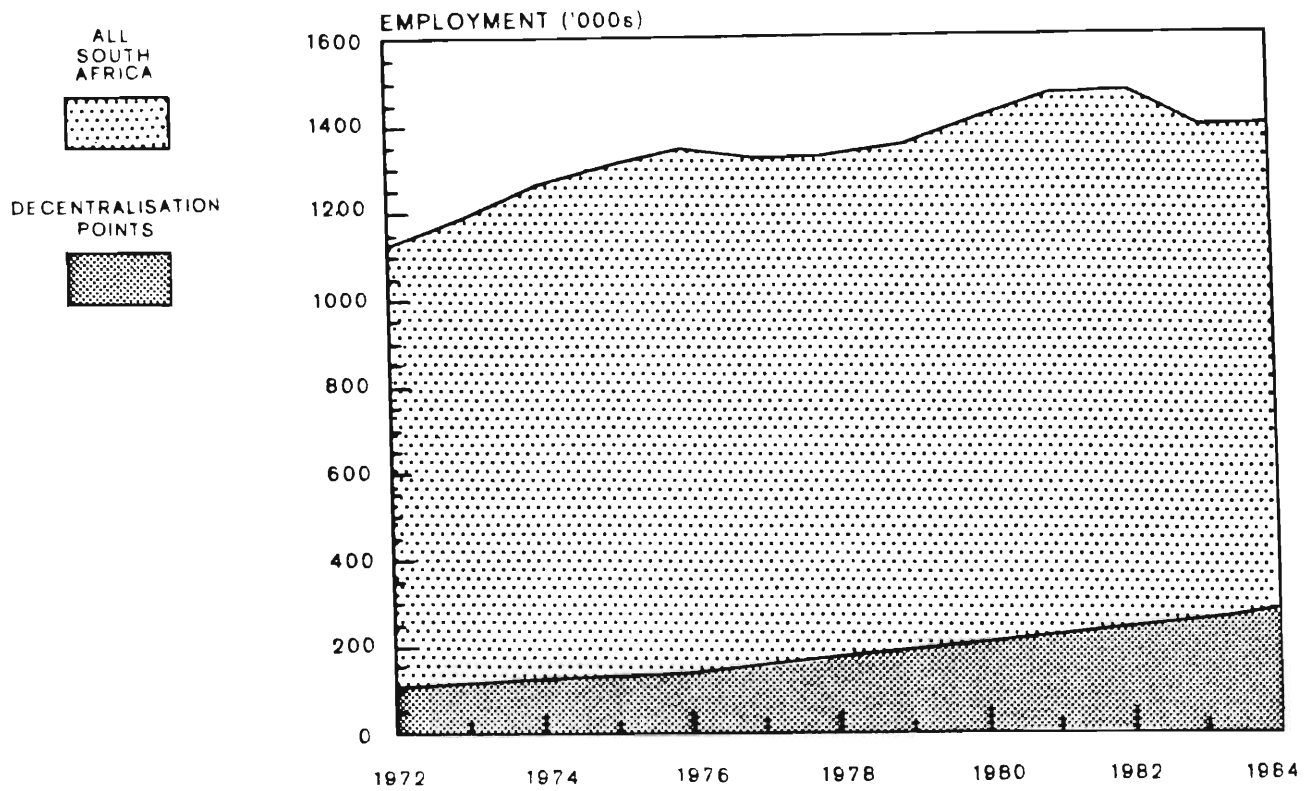
There is no doubt however, that since the 'new package' was introduced in 1982, the pace of employment creation in decentralised areas has quickened. One indication is the significant increase in the share of decentralised industry in total manufacturing employment which increased from 12,3% in 1972 and 12,9% in 1978 to 19,3% in 1984 (Wellings and Black, 1984)

⁷For details of the incentives pertaining in Isithebe see Appendix 9

⁸Whereas in the past, tax rebates were granted against a percentage of the wage bill, industrialists may now claim cash grants of, in the case of Isithebe, 95 percent of the wage.

(see Figure 1). The number of jobs created for women has also increased significantly mainly due to the types of industries that have relocated.

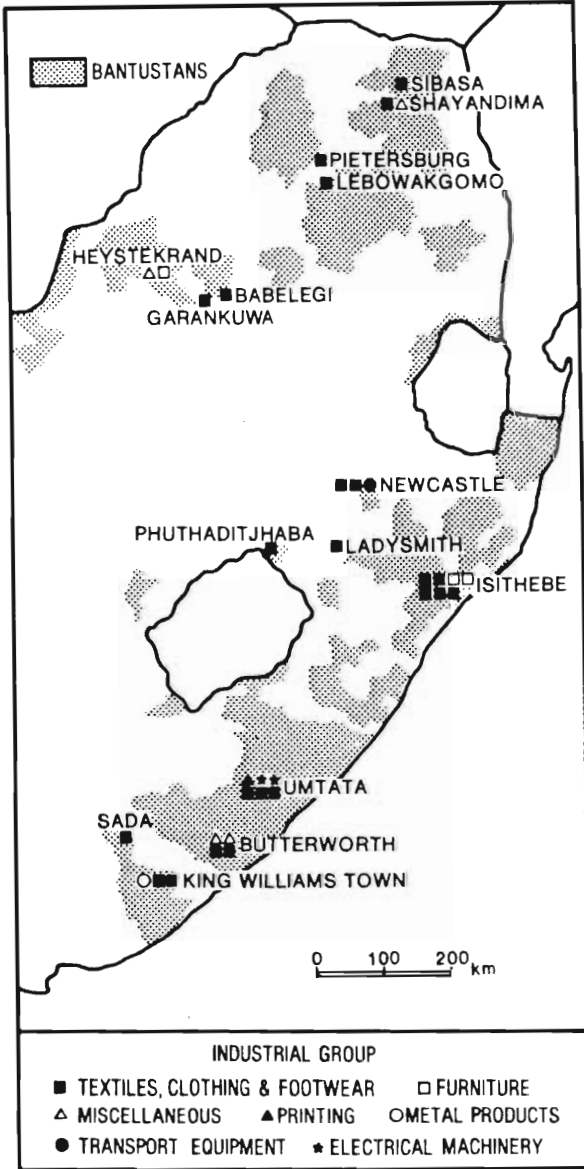
Figure 1 : The locational structure of manufacturing employment in South Africa 1972-1984



(Source : Wellings and Black, 1984.)

A notable recent development has been the increasing involvement of foreign investors in the growth points, in particular, Third World multi-nationals. Taiwan is the single major overseas investor and nearly two-thirds of the total of 35 enterprises are in the clothing, textile and footwear sectors (Rogerson 1985:8) (See Map 1 and Table 1)

Map 1 : Location of Taiwanese multinationals in South Africa



(Source : Rogerson, 1985)

Table 1 : Approvals for foreign investors in decentralised areas

	No. of Approved Applications	Average Capital Investment (R)
Taiwan	21	1 185 000
United Kingdom	10	2 160 000
Israel	10	2 030 000
Italy	5	762 000
Zimbabwe	4	521 000
Hong Kong	3	1 076 000
West Germany	2	3 157 000
United States	2	2 196 000
Peru	1	1 255 000
Belgium	1	804 000
Australia	1	367 000

(Source : Rogerson, 1985).

It is clear therefore, that certain of South Africa's decentralised industrial locations are proving increasingly attractive to capital. We turn then, to an examination of the relative importance of the abundant supply of cheap labour and of

the incentives in attracting capital to these areas. This is an important issue in the context of this thesis and its analysis requires examination not only with respect to state regional initiatives, but also in terms of the spatial implications of South Africa's particular "trajectory of industrial development" (Wellings and Black 1985:3). One therefore needs to consider the "existence of a mosaic of 'political' and economic determinants of industrial decentralisation policy and of 'spontaneous' locational shifts within the manufacturing sector" (Wellings and Black 1985:3).

B. Political and Economic Imperatives underlying State Regional Policy

The reasons for such extensive state regional interventions, particularly with regard to the location of industry, have been subject to much analysis and debate. For the purposes of our study, then, a brief outline will suffice.

Most analysts have perceived the state's policy of industrial decentralisation to be primarily political and economically irrational. For example, much criticism has focused on the economic costs of the policy and its lack of impact as a "development" tool. It has been widely seen as a necessary adjunct to apartheid. Maasdorp (1980:10) for example, regards it as "a tool in the policy of separate development aimed at

restructuring the socio-political system." Zille (1983:69) has argued that the primary intention of the revised industrial decentralisation strategy is to "achieve the demographic distribution needed for the success of the territorial and constitutional entrenchment of ethnicity." Other analysts, cited by Wellings and Black (1984:13-14) outline the range of other perceived "political" objectives of the policy as being attempts to:-

- inhibit popular protest and labour organisation in urban areas.
- foster class formation in the homelands in an attempt to legitimate homeland policy in giving it a visible "modern economic base".
- A more recent interpretation is that the new strategy, with its emphasis on 'functional' regions rather than 'homeland development' is aimed at securing economic bases for an emerging confederal or federal political structure (Cobbett et al 1985).

An entirely different view is put forward by Lacey (1982), who argues that the policy is essentially functional to the long-term interests of capital. The programme, therefore, should be seen as "part of the process of re-organisation of industrial production which has been brought about by changed conditions for

capital expansion in South Africa" (Lacey 1982:48). The essence of her argument is that industrial dispersal, by undermining labour organisation with threats of removal and making use of a cheap, predominantly female workforce in outlying areas, would depress wages in the economy as a whole. Further, she argues that the state has responded to the onset of fundamental problems in the manufacturing sector by developing a major long-term strategy, the prime objective of which is to boost the international competitiveness of South African industry by lowering wages.

While Lacey ascribes an overly functionalist motive to the policy of industrial decentralisation, particularly if one takes into account the hostility to the programme expressed by major sections of manufacturing capital, her approach is a welcome counterbalance to the many "political" explanations which continue to harp on the economic irrationality of the apartheid system. Given the increasing receptiveness of large scale capital to strategies for industrial dispersal - as long as they are based on "sound economic principles", *Lacey's analysis becomes more tenable*. And given the nature of firms that are decentralising (ie. labour intensive unskilled production processes) it is clear that there is an element of "functionality" for certain sectors of manufacturing (eg. parts of the clothing industry). *Developments in the South African economy have forced specific sectors of manufacturing industry to undertake a process of restructuring.* This process has not only

had profound spatial implications, but is also of profound relevance for the women who are concentrated in those 'spaces'. In examining the nature of the clothing industry in Chapter 4, we looked at the way in which this restructuring is occurring, particularly in terms of the increase in women's employment in IDPs. We need to look then at why, given the abundance of cheap female labour in the homelands, industry is locating at specific points in these areas.

Many analysts - see expansion in IDPs as essentially artificial, due primarily to the existence of incentives.⁹ A number of reasons are cited for this, the most important of which relates to the major drawbacks of most growth points locations as sites for autonomous industrial development. The difficulty of recruiting skilled labour and managerial staff, low productivity, and a lack of "industrial discipline" among semi-skilled and unskilled production workers, the distance from markets and suppliers and poor infrastructure were found to be the main drawbacks in a survey of Isithebe (Wellings and Black 1984).

A strong argument can therefore be put forward for the view that rapid industrial expansion in the IDPs is due to the existence of incentives. While we would not dispute the contention that it is unlikely that industry would have located at Isithebe, for example, without substantial state intervention, this should not

⁹See for example Tomlinson and Hyslop (1984) and from a Marxist viewpoint, Hirsch (1984) who, while he acknowledges the importance of cheap labour in attracting industry, argues that

obscure the existence of significant forces impelling certain sectors of capital to relocate in search of cheap labour. We would, therefore, support the view that the new policy has "fastened on to a 'spontaneous' drive towards the relocation of industry to low wage areas" (Wellings and Black 1984:2).

This spontaneous drive, then, is of particular importance in labour intensive sectors of manufacturing, especially those which are increasingly subjected to intense competition from domestic and foreign manufacturers. Faced with these pressures:-

"capitalists can individually hope to acquire relative surplus value for themselves - excess profits - by adopting superior technologies or seeking out superior locations. A direct trade off exists, therefore, between changing technology or location in the competitive search for excess profits. Producers in a disadvantaged location for example, could compensate for that disadvantage by adopting a superior technology and vice versa" (Harvey, 1982:390).

For the labour intensive and footloose clothing industry, the 'run-away shop' option is likely to assume greater significance.

This is even more likely to occur where the:-

"shift from skilled to unskilled labour... consequent upon changes in the labour process will alter the significance of access to different kinds of labour supply (quantity and quality), while the separation of design from execution may even allow split locational decisions for different phases of an otherwise integrated labour process" (Harvey 1982:392).

We have argued that this has been the case for the clothing industry on a global scale and in regional terms within South Africa's highly differentiated "production surface". Faced with

rising costs, stagnating markets and competition from Far East imports, significant relocation of the clothing industry in South Africa is taking place to areas of low cost women's labour. The reasons for the existence of a large female labour force into which capitalist production is "extending" have been discussed in Chapter 1 and 2 of Part 3. The trend was noted by the executive director of the National Clothing Federation :-

"...if you look at the world trend it is evident that industry has tended to go to low cost labour areas that might be comparable to the homelands... Taiwan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines" (cited in Wellings and Black 1986:18).

Furthermore, for some metropolitan industries faced with stiff competition from low cost decentralised producers, the only viable option open to them becomes relocation.

A major proponent of this view has been Bell (1984) who has argued that "market forces" rather than government intervention are a cause of the persistent tendency towards decentralisation. He points out that the tendency of clothing and textile firms to relocate away from the FWV began well before the imposition of the Physical (later Environment) Planning Act in 1967.¹⁰ This relocation to lower wage areas (Durban and the Western Cape - not, at this stage to decentralised areas) was, according to

¹⁰In a recent paper Bell (1985) has argued that the tendency towards deconcentration may be reversed in the future, at least in some sectors, citing the motor industry as an example. Interestingly, while the FWV's share in total employment has declined its contribution to output has continued to rise. This illustrates the increasingly sharp regional divisions in the location of manufacturing - based on criteria such as industrial sector and especially the type of labour required.

Bell, primarily the result of competitive pressures on South African manufactured products in world markets. It is interesting to note, however, that the rapid increase in the employment share of decentralised industry began in 1976 (see Figure) which was a period of recession, unrest and negligible employment growth in the South African economy. So while the introduction of the Regional Development Strategy in 1982 has certainly increased the pace of decentralisation - most markedly in the clothing sector - it was by no means the initiator of this process. Reasons why the clothing industry, in particular, showed a marked increase in the number of firms decentralising only after 1982 are as follows :-

- 1) As Emdon (1977:60) points out, clothing firms were initially too small (average size about 50 - 100 workers) and thus could not afford to decentralise. As we have shown, the size of clothing firms in Isithebe - ⁱⁿ terms of the number of people they employ - is relatively large (see Table _ Chapter 4).
- 2) The incentives on offer before 1982 - particularly those pertaining to wage subsidies - were not as attractive as those in the new programme.
- 3) The pressure of international competition only started to have a serious effect on the South African clothing industry towards the middle and late 1970s.

C. In Conclusion...

While the policy of industrial decentralisation has on the whole, achieved little success, Isithebe itself is now established as a substantial regional centre for in particular, garment production and is also heavily involved in manufacture for export. It appears likely that Isithebe will continue to attract clothing firms. Although the precise data on the number of approved applications for Isithebe from within this subsector are not available, no less than 66% of total job opportunities in textiles, wearing apparel and leather arising from approved applications for 1984/5 are for sites in Region E (Natal, Kwazulu and the northeast region of the Transkei). As the most popular growth point within Region E, Isithebe is therefore, set to continue attracting labour intensive clothing firms. Interesting to note here, is the fact that the most recent annual report put out by the Board for the Decentralisation of Industry indicates a significant reduction in the rapid rate of growth of decentralisation applications for South Africa as a whole. The number of approved applications increased by 2,2% over the previous year and there was a 10,2% increase in proposed employment. However, total proposed investment showed a marginal decline on the previous year (Decentralisation Board 1985). This indicates a move towards increasingly labour intensive production processes with lower levels of capital investment - a major characteristic of the clothing industry.

We have discussed the reasons for this trend in both the previous chapter (with specific reference to the clothing industry) and more broadly, (with reference to the policy of industrial decentralisation) in this chapter. While we do not contest the validity of the given factors contributing to decentralisation (ie.the need to increase competitiveness, incentives, cheap labour and so on), we feel, that as a full explanation, they have serious limitations. While saying that industries are relocating to areas of cheap labour, most studies do not stress that it is women's labour, thereby omitting all that 'women's labour' implies. That specific sectors of industry are relocating to areas in which women are geographically concentrated cannot be disputed. The analysis, therefore needs to emphasise :- why women are spatially concentrated in peripheral geographic locations, why do women represent a source of cheap labour, how does industry incorporate women's perceived 'attributes', what does this mean in terms of wages and, how have the above 'shaped' or how are they 'shaping' the particular process of capital accumulation in South Africa? Fundamentally, therefore, as we have attempted to show in this thesis, the analysis must include gender. For in understanding the way in which people's lives are socially constructed, thus understanding what this means in terms of opportunities and constraints for people, we are able to conceptualise more holistically, the dynamics of social processes.

This point then, relates strongly to the following and final chapter in which we discuss the issue of "development". Can the experience of the women in Isithebe be seen to constitute "development"? We highlight how conventional development models in no way take into account social process and how they assume that development affects all people equally. If the 'creation of employment opportunities' then, is thought to constitute "development", what are the implications for development if those opportunities present themselves in the form of highly exploitative jobs for women?

Chapter 6

The "Development of Space" and Industrial Decentralisation :- Is this Development?

In this chapter we examine, briefly, the conventional model of development out of which industrial decentralisation policy emanates and critique the model in terms of the way in which it conceptualises "spatial development". By looking at the effects of industrial decentralisation - both in terms of what it was meant to achieve and in terms of what it has achieved, we are able to draw implications for what "jobs for women" means in terms of development. And, we are able to draw implications for what these jobs have meant for the women themselves.

The success of any planning strategy depends to a large extent on the assumptions about the development process which inform it and, in particular, the way in which "space" is related to development. In assessing the impact and success of industrial decentralization as a development tool, we need first, to understand and to criticise the way in which "space" is conceptualised in its manipulation through regional planning policies.

A. The Modernisation Approach

The South African state's policy of industrial decentralisation has evolved from within the modernization paradigm. More specifically, it derives from growth pole theory - "At least at the level of rhetoric (a rhetoric influenced, in part, by the state's desire to de-politicise national and regional planning to the greatest possible degree)" (Dewar, Todes and Watson 1984:33). Proponents of modernization approaches have in common the view that regional equity can be achieved only through state intervention. The basis of calls for state intervention in the sphere of spatial restructuring rests in the notion of a perceived tendency towards spatial inequality characterised by polarization between "core" and "periphery". Urban/capitalist/progressive regions contrast with rural/traditional/backward regions and development is thus seen as reflected in a more balanced spatial structure - ie. a more integrated space economy. Economic growth is a pre-condition for development. It is assumed that the effects of this growth will automatically "trickle down" to benefit the society as a whole. City growth is viewed as the primary indicator and cause of development. As centres of innovating potential, the modern/urban/capitalist sector (with its higher rate of productivity - a function of specialization, technology and mechanization), initiates the "predictable" path of economic development which eventuates in this sector "breaking down" and incorporating the traditional/backward sector.

Underdevelopment, according to this model, is perceived of as a deficiency of acceptance of innovation. Growth poles therefore, could be initiated in order to stimulate waves of innovation. "Spread effects" throughout the rural hinterland would transform initial core - periphery disparities resulting eventually, in an integrated space economy. The cycle of cumulative decline within which the traditional/backward sector is caught can be arrested only with difficulty - and with decisive state intervention.

Regional policy based on this strategy would therefore seek to attract "key" or "propulsive" industries through investment incentives to outlying growth areas established with state assistance. The main characteristics of "propulsive" industries are their potential for creating "backward and forward linkages" and their innovating capacity. "Regions" are seen therefore, to have an "ability" or "inability" to attract industrial investments (given state intervention in the form of incentives and other assistance).

It is assumed that once industries are located in a region, development will occur. In some cases, governments may take the lead in establishing heavy industries with high linkages (for example iron and steel) at growth points, in an attempt to create an "industrial complex". Examples in South Africa may be found at Richards Bay and Newcastle. " But such "propulsive" industries do not necessarily generate spin-offs; they are often

capital-intensive and their linkages tend to be with markets and suppliers outside the regions in which they are located (Appalrajn and Safier 1976 in Maasdorp 1980:11).

Assesments of such policy measures would be concerned with:-

- the potential for self-sustaining growth (whether industries with high levels of linkages have attracted other industries, whether this has meant increased employment opportunities and so on) and
- whether spread effects to the rural hinterland have contributed positively to the problem of unequal regional development (the number of jobs created, impact on incomes, service provision, access to facilities and so on).

The objective being then, to raise the level of development in impoverished regions, assumes that the impact of state policy will be the same for all individuals or social groups within those regions.

Thus this positivist approach to development directs planning activities towards spatial goals (ie. regional equity) within spatially defined regions, under the assumption that regional equity is a meaningful and desireable policy objective. Within this framework it is assumed, quite simply, that once industry has located in a region, development will occur. However regions

are arbitrary constructs and there is no way of knowing that such development will be contained within a region or whether it will diffuse beyond the immediate spatial location of industry.

B. Criticisms of the Approach

The major critique of this approach is that it fails to take account of the specific conditions under which spatial inequalities arise. While the recognition of spatial inequalities by the approach is not problematic, its conceptualisation of space is. As Gore (1984 in Wellings 1985:3) puts it "... in the absence of analyses of the relationship between spatial equity and social equity, the pursuit of interregional equity becomes a meaningless goal." Conventional theories of regional development have therefore failed to conceptualise space as an integral element of social interaction. As Gore (1984 in Wellings 5:1984) sees it:

"Space is taken to be a locational matrix which contains things like cities and industries. It is an environment in which events such as the establishment of a new industry and expansion of agricultural output occur from this perspective, it is possible to write of the "spatial incidence of development." Development, however it is defined, refers to a process of change or a sequence of events connected by some mechanism. In talking of the spatial incidence of development, regional analysts are referring to where, "in space", this sequence of events occurs. "Space" is thus separated from "process"."

In other words, space should be seen as what the political economy makes of it. The mainstream conceptualisation of space

is entirely detached from the socio-economic and political forces which underpin spatial patterns. Thus, modernisation theorists give "space" its own autonomous existence. However, because the theory of the dynamic of development is flawed, the assumption that space merely contains the object of development is thus irrelevant.

For Marxists then, "space" and "spatial relations" are seen as part of the internally structured whole of a mode of production. In other words: "space represents "one window" through which we can look at the inner workings of the social process" (Walker 1978 in Manchip 1985:8). Spatial inequalities are thus the outcome of the changing relationship between the requirements of private production for profit and the spatial surface. Locational problems are the spatial manifestations of the contradictions of capitalism - the tendency for concentration to occur in certain areas resulting in uneven development. Therefore, one cannot assign an autonomous importance to space. Industrial investment, for example, takes place at discrete points in space at different historical times. The intrinsic logic of capital - that of profit maximisation through surplus value extraction - cannot therefore be ignored in assessing the extent to which spatial constructs imposed by the state (for example: growth points) affect locational decision-making by capital. While the state might attempt to influence the organisation of industrial production at a number of levels, it is impossible to force capital to act against what it sees as its

better interests. For Marxists, then :- "state interventions in spatial engineering must be placed within the wider context of accumulation and class struggle, and more especially, the continuities and discontinuities, survivals and transformations which occur within that context" (Glaser 1983:11).

The essence of a Marxist analysis of inequalities in society then, lies in exploitation and surplus value extraction within the realm of production. While the focus of this analysis is production (and while this has definite spatial implications ie. the "spatial surface" of capitalist production), it also recognises that there are different modes of production that are organically linked. There is no a priori assumption that capitalism is always dominant, and the analysis is thus of different modes of production and their interaction and not of specific regions. For radical planners then, "spatial planning" becomes subordinated to other processes of change. Their concern would be with structural transformation and, as such, would identify classes of people having the capacity for progressive action and work with them in promoting class solidarity.

Marxists argue therefore, that the "development of space" does not "cause" development and that only a transformation of the relations of production will result in social transformation (ie. "true" development). Spatial planning thus becomes important only insofar as it relates to the way in which services and policies are provided. The relationship between social transformation and

spatial planning is, therefore, a tenuous one for it raises the as yet unsatisfactorily answered question - what form of regional "spatial" planning, if any, can promote or at least contribute to the process of social transformation?

It is not within the scope of this thesis to even begin to attempt to answer this question. What is of relevance to us is the fact that, for socialist feminists, social transformation necessarily implies a transformation of gender relations as well as those of production. Feminists therefore, do not conceive of space merely in terms of the "spatial surface of production". The "geography of gender" recognises all social processes that occur within and thus, constitute "space". The "spatial surface" therefore, is not only a function of the relations of 'production' but also of 'reproduction' and domestic labour.

In analysing "space" then, it is important to stress not only how the process of capitalist accumulation "acts" upon space, creating 'productive' and 'reproductive' spaces and, how different modes of production (capitalist and non-capitalist) articulate within "space" but also, how the nature of that "space" is genderised. As we have shown, the spatial implications of gender combined with race and class, have had definite implications for the development of the South African 'space economy'. Within the concentrations of 'core' regions, urban space is broadly characterised by a separation of 'production' and 'reproduction' and a separation of racial categories. But, of

more importance to us is in this study, is the fact that regional "peripheral space" is characterised by concentrations of destitute African women. Thus, in excluding gender from this analysis, it not only excludes women, but also, an analysis of how the capitalist wage labour process, in 'extending' into the periphery, is 'making use of' existing gender hierarchies in its search for profits. However, capitalist accumulation is made possible by not only the exploitation of waged labour in the "production" process but also by the extraction of surplus from non-waged labour. Any analysis, then, of the intrusion of capitalist relations into "non-capitalist" sectors of the periphery necessitates firstly, an examination of women's roles in domestic labour and secondly, how these are reconciled with involvement in waged labour. This we have attempted to do both in our interviews and case studies (although these provide the basis for analysis) and in subsequent analysis. Having thus examined the nature of capitalist intrusion specifically in Isithebe, it remains the task of this concluding chapter to stand back and assess the so-called "development" potential of a policy specifically orientated towards the incorporation of these 'peripheral' women into waged labour, ie. industrial decentralisation.

C. The "Development" Potential of Industrial Decentralisation

The development of the South African space economy has been

characterised by a combination of segregationist policies and the process of capitalist accumulation, thus resulting in certain geographic "spaces" as being "underdeveloped". Patriarchal social relations have determined that these "spaces" are characterised by the fact that they constitute a predominance of unemployed destitute African women. While the state surrounded its use of the policy with rhetoric relating to its potential as a "development" tool, has it in fact meant development? We look firstly, then at the effects of the policy in terms of whether it has achieved the development envisaged by the state and secondly, what it has meant for the women who are being employed in terms of the policy.

In terms of growth pole theory, the aim of the policy is to create "spread effects" to the rural hinterland. Wellings and Black (1984) categorise these effects in terms of the so-called "regional multiplier". A brief summary will suffice in the context of this study.

1) "Backward" and "forward" linkages:-

- a) the relative scarcity of "propulsive" industries
- b) the small size of the industrial development points which suppresses the development of agglomeration economies
- c) the fact that most decentralised industries are branch plants
- d) the retention of metropolitan linkages and
- e) the "underdevelopment" of the periphery (in terms of raw materials, infrastructure and local capital) exacerbate

"leakage" to metropolitan areas and mitigate against "forward linkages" (inputs being derived from the local economy.) (Wellings and Black 1984:43).

2) "Trickle-down" effects:-

such as the development of commercial outlets to tap increased purchasing power in the area are prevented by low wages and leaking purchasing power out of the region (Wellings and Black 1984:45)

3) The level of "local ownership" of industrial holdings is, at present, negligible. In Isithebe, for example, 93% of industries were fully "foreign-owned". This has clear implications for profit-sharing since private companies are under no obligation to remit any share of profits or dividends to their "hosts" beyond company taxation (Wellings and Black 1984:45).

In these terms, assessment of the policy highlights a specific ambiguity in the stated criterions of the policy. The state, on the one hand, has attempted to entice relatively capital-intensive "propulsive" industries to growth points because of their perceived "multiplier" effects. While on the other, it has fixed a ceiling on public investment - incentives would not be approved if the cost per job to the local Development Corporation exceeds R20 000 - to deter highly capital

intensive industries from decentralising. Maasdorp (1980: 13) thus asserts that, in terms of a policy for "homeland development" industrial decentralisation has a "weak theoretical base". Further, he states that "the best hope the peripheral areas have of industrialising is not by attracting footlose industries away from the core but by producing the raw material inputs for processing plants." (Maasdorp 1980:14). As has been illustrated in the previous chapter, the types of industries that are decentralising are labour-intensive - with little potential for generating multiplier effects. Further, in combination with the level of impoverishment in the bantustans, it seems highly unlikely that "self-sustaining growth" will be realised.

Employment and Incomes

Industrial decentralisation has had very little effect on levels of employment in the homelands. The available figures say that only 7% of annual entrants into the labour force are being absorbed into employment in these areas each year. (McCarthy 1982:238). Of crucial importance however, is the fact that job market entrant calculations ignore women. This not only highlights the fact that (as discussed in Chapter I of Part 3), in the early stages of the process of capitalist accumulation, women were not seen to be part of the "productive" labour force required by capital but also, that at the present stage of capitalist accumulation women, while being 'used' as labour, are

not seen to constitute part of capital's 'permanent' labour force. While the official figure is cited as 115 000 people entering the job market each year, leaving women out of the calculation means that the figure is a gross misrepresentation of reality. The number of women being employed in decentralised areas is fast surpassing that of men (in Isithebe, more than half of the labour force is female). While reasons for this are discussed in preceding chapters, what we need to look at, specifically in terms of employment is firstly, whether large numbers of women being drawn into waged labour in "footlose" industries can have any significant impact on development and secondly, what being drawn into wage labour means for the women themselves?

The answer to the first question has partly been discussed in the section dealing with "multiplier effects", although these take no account of the fact that it is women's labour being employed at extremely low wages. Nonetheless, industrial decentralisation has had a significant impact on levels of income in the homelands. The average household income in Isithebe, for example, was R412 a month in 1984 compared to Nkandla, an outlying rural area, where it was R109 per month. While household incomes might have increased dramatically, it must be stressed that a sharp differentiation in household income exists between 'township' households and 'peri-urban' households. This discrepancy is illustrated by the fact that Wellings and Black (1985) assert that 45% of all households survive below the household

subsistence level (HSL was calculated to be R259 per month). It is safe to assume that the majority of these households are located in the peri-urban area (for confirmation, see Appendices 2 to 8). Most of the women we spoke to were the sole earners in their households, supporting an average of 5 people, and most earned less than R100 per month.

Wellings and Black (1985:44) found, however, that generally, what purchasing power does exist in these areas, is leaked out of the region. "An indication of this is the rapid development of small "white" towns located on the homeland "borders". Surveys of business in Eshowe (bordering Kwazulu) showed that 42% of them had established there after 1975. Surveys in Kokstad (bordering Transkei) show similar findings. Given the fact that incomes are extremely low and given the existence of these 'border towns', (Mandini is the town adjacent to Isithebe), very little scope exists for any form of 'entrepreneurial' venture for local inhabitants in these areas, apart from limited opportunities in the informal/small business sector. Further, if one takes into account the fact that "cheap labour" and incentives are prerequisites for the very existence of the growth points, it is clear that wages will be maintained at highly exploitative levels. And this further entrenches the limited potential for "spin-off" effects from increases in average household income. The increases in the number of women being employed, the fact that women work for highly exploitative wages combined with the "footlose" nature of the industries in which they are being

employed, further substantiates this point.

In formulating 'industrial dispersal' policies then, planners must take into account the 'nature' of the workforce in the areas to which industry is being attracted. That the workforce in decentralised industrial areas constitutes women's labour and that these women earn lower wages, have extremely limited decision-making power, are fully preoccupied with domestic labour when not at work and are often the sole supporters of their families, clearly indicates the inadequacies of such development policies.

This brings us then, to the implications for women of being drawn into waged labour in decentralised industries and how these implications severely limit development potential. "What has employment in manufacturing industry meant for the status of women - both in the family and in the larger community? Has it helped them to become more independent? Has it put them on an equal footing with men in the workplace?" (Members of the Subordination of Women Workshop 1983:19).

In looking at these questions a distinction must, firstly, be drawn between the social relations constructing women's new employment and those allocating women to certain jobs. The sectors of manufacturing industry (mainly clothing) into which women are being absorbed in the homelands require cheap labour (for reasons discussed - such as international competition and so

on), do not depend on superior technology, constitute arduous tasks, offer few fringe benefits and little protection for workers. Why women, specifically are being drawn into their jobs relates to the fact that they are perceived of as being willing to accept monotonous tasks, are manually dexterous, have little propensity to organise, and are thus "controllable". "This view is derived from an ideological misrepresentation of gender identities which, in itself, is explained in terms of the social relations of gender" (Members of the Subordination of Women Workshop 1983:20). That the sexual division of labour thus becomes embodied in the capitalist "production" process - has been analysed in Chapters 3 and 4, and is vividly illustrated in our interviews and case studies. We therefore turn to a discussion of the effects of this employment for women.

Firstly, the shift to waged labour by women has had an erosive effect on their capacity to be involved in subsistence production and domestic labour. Capitalist production of course takes no account of this. Thus the burden of carrying the "costs" of this labour has been "transferred" to those people who can least afford it. Grandmothers and young girls who are taken out of school now carry a "double load" of necessary domestic labour. Allied to this is the fact that the infrastructure and services provided are aimed at attracting industry with very little consideration being given to the workforce (see Appendices 7 and 8 on Sundumbili and surrounding area). Especially, no consideration is given to the fact that the workforce is largely

made up of women who carry all the domestic responsibilities and who are supporting the remains of a subsistence economy.

Secondly, the low wages being paid to women are indicative of the fact that capital is extracting surplus not only through the exploitation of waged labour. Given the limited choice and opportunity for women in the homelands, there is an abundant "supply of labour for capital". Because women are "falling out of the trees" (to quote an industrialist we interviewed), the reproduction of the labour force is evidently not a concern for capital. Such prevalent practices as enforced contraception, lack of maternity leave and lack of housing and services, substantiate this point.

Thirdly, because the industry that is moving to these areas is "footloose", it would relocate if the workforce were to organise. Organisation implies demands for higher wages and, their presence in the homelands being predicated upon "cheap" labour, industries would hurriedly relocate and return the women they had employed to the reserve army of labour.

Fourthly, and implicit in the previous point, is the insecure nature of the employment being created in the periphery. Given the inability of workers, especially women workers to organise due to constraints placed on them by the state and capital, employers are able to hire and fire, come and go at will. Workers, in particular those who are women, (see Interviews), have

no means of recourse. The insubstantial base for "development" thus becomes glaringly obvious.

Related to these points is the fact that low wages in the periphery serve to keep wages down in metropolitan areas. Using threats of relocation, capital is able to contain metropolitan wages, thus weakening labour bargaining - power in both metropolitan areas and decentralised areas.

In summary, then, it is clear that the effects of the policy for women has been to place them in a cycle of "ultra-exploitation" with very little chance of the situation improving in the immediate future. In looking back on the three questions raised at the beginning of this section, and drawing on our findings and analysis, it is evident that women's employment has

- increased the burden of necessary domestic labour for other family members,
- increased dependence on wage-earning women for household income,
- placed constraints on community activities ("lack of time") and potential organisation and
- mainly due to low wages and the sexual division of labour in the factories, perpetuated their subordination to men.

The effects of the policy thus reflect its hopelessness both in terms of its potential for creating "growth poles" in terms of orthodox definitions of development and in terms of resulting in any "meaningful development" for the women who are being employed as a result of the policy. Because there are women in decentralised areas and because these women have no choice, "footloose" industry is able to exploit their labour for as long as it requires, leaving whenever it wants to. But more importantly for the women who have entered into waged employment, it has meant the extension of their subordination into waged labour with little chance for them of "breaking out".

While having highlighted the somewhat negative aspects of industrial decentralisation and its implications for the women who are entering into waged employment, it is possible, however, that the area is becoming increasingly receptive to 'change' as a result of industry having located there. For some women, this 'change' could be in the form of decreasing - even marginally - their economic dependence on men through not having to rely on migrant remittances as the major source of household income. Or, given that working in a factory is a less 'isolated' form of employment than working on a farm, increasing their potential for organisation - a point that was confirmed for us in our discussions with women in the area, who all thought that some form of organisation for women was both desirable and necessary.

Organising around the issue of a creche, for example has provided the women in the Women's Association, with whom we talked, with increased opportunity for lessening their 'alienation'. In sharing a mutual concern, the women meet regularly, disseminating ideas and information and providing systems of mutual support.

What, then does this mean for planning practice? Given, that in an area like Isithebe where the 'choices' available to women are extremely limited because of their social position, it becomes clear that the orientation of planning must change - and feminism provides the direction for this change. In the conclusion then, we discuss the questions that planners working from a feminist perspective would ask in formulating policy. Broadly, these questions relate to the issue of "meaningful development" (ie. the transformation of the relations of gender and of production) and whether planning policy holds the potential for contributing to meaningful -ie. feminist social change.

Part 4Summary and Conclusion.

"One of the central tenets of critical approaches to social science is that we should not only understand society (theory), but use such understanding as a basis for a programme of action (practice) to change society... Change is only possible through an endless cycle of theory and practice... The feminist approach changes and deepens our analysis" (IBG Women's Group 184:38).

This thesis has been about changing the way we see 'reality.' As such it is essentially a generic study - the ground work for practice. We have, through application, illustrated that gender construction and the relations of patriarchy structure women's lives and structure social processes.

We have linked gender to the wider framework of social relations that exist in society. In doing this, we have looked specifically at the process and policy of industrial decentralisation. The analysis of this has involved incorporating the life experience of women and how Patriarchy, the State and Capital have contributed to and maintained their powerless position.

In summary:- The experiences of women living in Isithebe are central to this analysis because they provide an insight into the totality of women's experience - the enormous burden of domestic labour and factory work that they carry, their destitution, powerlessness and complete lack of choice. We have understood this by looking at how patriarchy has dictated women's mobility and location; how the gender division has defined their home lives as well as their working lives; how this has led to a specific "geography of gender" and how certain sectors of manufacturing industry have exploited this. We then discuss how the State has 'assisted' in this process through a policy of industrial decentralisation. Finally, we consider what industrial decentralisation means for development - and this 'development' means people's lives as well as 'the economy'. Understanding women's reality means that we cannot separate waged labour from domestic labour; capitalist relations from patriarchal relations.

While this has been overall a generic study, we recognise fully that the ends of Theory must be Practice : Because the feminist approach changes our theory (the way we understand society), it must also change the means and the ends of our practice. Androcentricism in theory and therefore in practice means that only the 'public' sphere is recognised as the domain of significant social processes and social change. This effectively means that women and women's experience are completely subordinated ~~and are completely subordinated~~ and are included

only from a "masculinist" perspective. Feminism however, sees the material base as including "not only the public position of women and other oppressed groups but also the 'private sphere' as an area which is intrinsically political" (Jagger 1983 : 55. Our emphasis). It thus extends our conception of the realm of social processes beyond the narrow (and male-dominated) confines of the production sphere.

Very importantly, this means that a wider range and many more challenges to the existing system of social relations should be seen as part of relevant social change ie. those changes which confront all aspects of women's oppression - in the home, in the community and in the workplace. As such, the socialist feminist conception of social change includes changes in the relations of gender as well as in the relations of production. And this has for very definite implications for planning practice.

Here we must ask : What is the efficacy of planning? What is its potential and what are its limitations? From a radical perspective planning cannot cause change - at best it can facilitate change or, alternatively, it can build the foundations for a changed society. While there is a definite overlap between 'radical planning' and 'feminist planning', the means of feminist planning must be different because, as has been mentioned, its ends are. The position and circumstances of women in Isithebe substantiate that planning practice should positively

discriminate in favour of women. Planners in this context should work with women's organisations, take up and promote women's issues, stress the way in which women are affected by certain practices and so on. Further, the way in which anything is done, has in itself liberatory potential - hence practices should stress decision-sharing, skills-sharing, non-exploitative methods, and the importance of human agency.

Given women's powerless position and isolation, practices and policies should empower women. They should contribute to women's sense of being able to control and affect their own lives and environments. They should widen women's choices. Alison Jagger comments that "the goal of revolution today is the liberation of daily life" (Jagger 1983:230). The following questions can serve as a means of assessing the progressiveness and direction of feminist planning practice :

- 1) Does the policy advance the material well-being of women - given the special form of oppression and exploitation suffered by them?
- 2) Does the policy enhance the state of awareness of women's oppression in the domestic sphere and in the sphere of waged labour.
- 3) Does the policy contribute to the mobilization of women? Does it empower women? (Ward 1985:17. Adaptation of Smit 1985).

This thesis ends within the realm of theory, but in as much as theory informs practice, the growing body of feminist theory is mapping out a path for the change of this practice.

APPENDICES : A Review of the Physical, Social and Economic Characteristics of Isithebe.

APPENDIX 1

Physical context of Isithebe

Isithebe is situated in KwaZulu about 100km north of Durban. Adjacent to it is the township of Sundumbili, established by the government to house African employees of the SAPP1 Pulp and Paper Plant erected, independently of the industrial decentralisation policy on Natal land in 1955. This plant, and later, the establishment of Isithebe, have been responsible for the growth of the town of Mandini situated just inside the Natal border. The development of the infrastructure for Isithebe began in 1968 and the first factory opened in 1971.

The impact of these developments have profoundly affected the entire area surrounding Sundumbili/Isithebe: "Not only have the original inhabitants had great changes wrought in their lives, but also the thousands who have been unable to find accommodation in the formal township of Sundumbili have been forced to settle in the area. The deconcentration area thus consists of the SAPP1 factory (situated in Natal), the Isithebe industrial area and the

township of Sundumbili (both of which were excised from the Mathonsi Tribal Ward), and that part of the remainder of Mathonsi Ward of KwaZulu which has borne some of the impact of the influx of industrial workers and their families (Ardington in Indicator: Economic Monitor, 1985a:9).

APPENDIX 2

Income comparison between Nkandla (a rural area where no industrial development has occurred) and Isithebe

In assessing the effects of industrial decentralisation on the population of a rural area, Libby Ardington (1985) conducted comparative studies of an area to which decentralisation has occurred (Isithebe) with an area where no 'development' has occurred (Nkandla - in KwaZulu 50km from Eshowe). She assumes that, for comparative purposes, the results from the Isithebe area would have been similar to those of the Nkandla area were it not for the industrial development that has taken place. The most significant impact of the creation of employment opportunities has, obviously, been on incomes. Ardington (1985) found that, in 1983, annual per capita incomes for the Isithebe area were R599, while those in the rural area were R144. Average per capita incomes in the townships of Sundumbili were found to be R650 per annum. Although incomes in the Isithebe area were unevenly distributed - ranging from R102 - R5 376 per head per annum - they were on average closer to urban than rural incomes.

The availability of local employment opportunities in the Isithebe area has had its most marked effect on the number of women who have become involved in wage labour. The average annual salary for women was found to be R1 091 per annum while for men it was R3 000 per annum. Of the 102 households surveyed in the Isithebe area each had an average of 2,1 people in wage labour. Ardington (1985a) therefore found a clear correlation to exist between per capita incomes and the number of people in wage employment in the household.

By comparing household incomes and sources of income in these two areas, it becomes evident that the effect of industrial development and the concomitant creation of wage employment in the Isithebe area has been dramatic. 75,1% of household income is now derived from local wage earnings (Ardington 1985).

Although average per capita incomes are much higher in the Isithebe area than in the Nkandla area, it must be emphasised that incomes in fact vary markedly from person to person. Ardington (1985) cites the determinants of incomes per head as including firstly, the number of people in wage employment in a household and secondly, whether their jobs allow them to live at home or not. It is also significant, however, that, on average, women earn less than half the annual salary of men and often, they are the only wage earners in the household. So, on the one hand, while it is justified to espouse the "average" benefits of industrial development in Isithebe, it is crucial, on the other,

to emphasise that not all people feel those benefits to the same extent.

APPENDIX 3

Small Business/Informal Sector

The increased availability of wage employment for women is not only reflected in higher per capita household incomes, but also in the lesser numbers of people involved in small business or informal sector activities. In comparing such activities in the Isithebe and Nkandla areas, Ardington (1984:59) found that, despite the fact that a smaller percentage of people is involved, the percentage of income derived from this source in the Isithebe area is almost as great as that in the Nkandla area.

<u>Involvement in Small Business in Isithebe</u>		<u>Involvement in Small Business in Nkandla</u>		<u>Contribution to Household Income</u>	
<u>(People Between 16 and 60</u>		<u>(People between 16 and 60</u>			
<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Isithebe</u>	<u>Inkandla</u>
1%	21%	4,8%	37,2%	18,2%	21,4%

Table 1 : Involvement in small business activities and % contribution to household income

Figures (approximate) extracted from Ardington (1985)

Survey of Isithebe area : sample size 102 households

Survey of Inkandla area : sample size 69 households

Reasons for this are firstly, that people are being absorbed from the informal sector into waged employment in Isithebe and secondly, that a spin-off of waged employment is an increase in "disposable" income, creating a market for the informal sector there. There is little land available for subsistence cultivation in the Isithebe area; none in the township of Sundumbili - so people must purchase foodstuffs either at shops or from people involved in informal sector activities. Of the people interviewed by Ardington (1985) in her survey of Isithebe, most, who were involved in small business/informal sector activities, were engaged in the sale of food (38%). Twenty five percent sold clothes which they had bought wholesale, 15% sold clothes they had sewn, knitted or crocheted themselves, 7% sold beer, 6% were faith healers, 10% were cane farmers and one had a taxi business. Some people conducted more than one type of business.

APPENDIX 4

Migrancy

A significant difference was found to exist between the proportion of household income derived from migrant remittances in the Nkandla area and that in the Isithebe area. 16,6% of the population of Nkandla area were migrants at the time of Ardington's (1984) survey, 82,7% of whom were male. The proportion of household income derived from remittances was 39,3%. The major role played by this source indicates that, compared to the Isithebe area, incomes are low.

There are migrants both in and out of the Isithebe area. Approximately 92% of migrants out of the area (of whom 60% of those interviewed were male), migrate from households surrounding the township of Sundumbili. The proportion of household income derived from their remittances was found to be 4,2%. Relative to the Nkandla area, it is obvious that the establishment of wage opportunities in the Isithebe area has not only resulted in fewer numbers of migrants from the area but also in a decrease in the proportionate amount of household income derived from migrants remittances.

A further factor contributing to the proportion of household income derived from this source is the amount remitted by migrants themselves. Households with "out" migrants in the Isithebe area had average per capita incomes of R331 per annum, approximately half that of the average per capita income for

Ardington's (1985) total survey (which was R599 per annum). She established that migrants remit approximately 22% of their salaries. This was further reflected in the average per capita incomes in households of migrants into the Isithebe area - which was found to be the highest in the survey at R4 077 per annum. Although Ardington (1985 and 1985a) does not specify whether these 'in' migrants were male or female or where they worked, it can be surmised, because the higher income per capita, that they were men who more than likely worked at the SAPPI Plant (Workers in the SAPPI Plant - being in Natal - would be unionised and the industry would be subject to minimum wage regulations - wages are therefore slightly higher than in Isithebe.) On average, therefore, migrants retain 78% of their salaries for themselves and any family members living with them while their dependents "at home" share the balance.

APPENDIX 5

Pensions

Pensions also represented a far greater proportion of household income in the Nkandla area than in the Isithebe area. 24,8% of household income was derived from this source in Nkandla, while in the Isithebe area, the figure was 2,7% (Ardington 1985).

APPENDIX 6

Access to Facilities

So-called benefits however, must not only be measured in terms of higher incomes but also, as Ardington (1985a:9) points out, in terms of access to improved standards of living. In the Isithebe area, measuring the effects of industrial development in this light is complicated by a number of factors. Of paramount importance is the fact that the industrial area itself and the formal township of Sundumbili are administered by South African and KwaZulu government departments. The land surrounding Isithebe/Sundumbili - the peri-urban area - is administered by tribal authority. This has meant that developments have not affected all households equally. Some people are living in their original homes and others (mainly migrants working at the SAPPI Plant) have obtained accommodation in the township of Sundumbili. The majority, however, have been forced, when unable to obtain formal accommodation, to obtain permission from the local chief to settle on tribal land and erect their own dwellings (Ardington 1985:9/10).

APPENDIX 7

Sundumbili township

The location of homesteads has significance in determining access to basic facilities such as water, sewerage, roads, education and so on. The KwaZulu government, in its administration of

Sundumbili, is responsible for development of the town; for building roads and houses, laying on water, sewerage and lighting, building schools, clinics and so on. In March 1983, there were 1 800 houses in Sundumbili and the population was estimated to be 12 000. In 1984 there were 13 620 people in employment in Isithebe alone (excluding workers at the SAPPI plant - who number 1 572) (Ardington 1985a). In addition to industrial workers, others requiring housing were those who serviced the community itself - teachers, nurses, storekeepers, maintenance workers, civil servants, service industry employees, priests, etc. and all those who work in the town of Mandini. Given that there are approximately 15 000 wage earners in Isithibe (including SAPPI workers) at present and that there are on average 2,1 people per household in employment (Ardington 1985), the minimum number of houses needed to accommodate workers and their families is approximately 7 640. It is obvious, then, that there is a serious housing shortage. The township has five schools with a total of 2935 pupils - not nearly enough to accommodate all school-going children in the area.

There is one creche and one clinic in the township but no hospital or ambulance based in the area. Social amenities are limited to a beer hall, a boxing ring, a church hall and a soccer field. Clearly, the township is inadequately supplied with facilities for the population living in it - let alone for the population living in the area surrounding it. The chronic shortage of housing and other social services can be attributed

to the fact that the budget for the township bears no relation to the budget for the industrial area - both, as previously stated, being administered by different authorities. Notably, in 1983, the Decentralisation Board approved the creation of 18 000 new jobs in Isithibe at a cost of R160 193 000 while the KwaZulu government allocated only R1,1 million to housing in Sundumbili - an amount insufficient to complete 150 houses (Ardington 1985a:12).

Although limited in its extent, the development of the township of Sundumbili has led to relatively significant changes in the lives of the people able to take advantage of it. Access to health, transport and education facilities has improved and is reflected in, for example, educational levels which today, are closer to urban than rural areas. In her survey of households in Sundumbili, Ardington (1985) found that whereas 70% of those people over 65 years of age had no education at all, this was the case for only 5% of the 10-14 age group.

APPENDIX 6

Surrounding 'peri-urban' area

By contrast, the area surrounding the township, where most of the original inhabitants live, as well as the more recently arrived people who have built their own dwellings, no facilities at all are provided. Because the area falls under the administration of

the local chief, all facilities have to be financed and built by the community itself. In some case, however, notably schools in the area. An example of the consequences of these inequalities in access to facilities as experienced by township and peri-urban dwellers is reflected in the following. Only 6% of the township households surveyed by Ardington contained children between the ages of 7 and 16 who were not at school while 37,5% of the households of the original residents contained children in the same age group who were not at school (Ardington 1985:).

Only men are allocated houses in Sundumbili (when available). Women are therefore compelled to get married or, if single, widowed or divorced, are forced to lodge in the township or to erect dwellings in the peri-urban area - if they do not live in an established homestead close enough to their place of employment.

The people to whom houses are allocated relates to higher average per capita incomes in the township in a number of ways. Firstly, men are allocated houses and men are higher wage earners. Secondly, most of the people living in Sundumbili migrated to the area at some time to take up employment opportunities. Ardington (1985) found that of the 51 households she surveyed in the township, 61% of them were nuclear families. She also found that, on average, there were 2,1 wage earners in each household. The presence of a second wage earner (often the wife of a migrant) pushed average per capita incomes up. And thirdly, the

vast majority of out-migrants came from the peri-urban area of whom 60% were men (Ardington 1985). Low remittances and lower wages for the women who were left behind and who work in the factories in Isithebe - as well as their inability to obtain houses anyway - heightens the disparity between average incomes per capita in the township and the surrounding area.

APPENDIX 9

Incentives applicable in Isithebe

Isithebe was designated as an industrial development point in KwaZulu in 1968. The first factory opened there in 1971. In 1985, 184 factories existed employing 14 620 people (1984 figure). In terms of the government's industrial decentralisation policy, substantial subsidies and concessions are offered to industrialists to establish in Isithebe. The following incentives are applicable there:-

- A rail rebate of 50% on all outward bound goods manufactured in Isithebe.
- A non-taxable cash reimbursement of 95% of the total annual wage bill up to a maximum of R105 per employee per month.
- A non-taxable cash reimbursement of 125% of training costs for training schemes and facilities approved by the Department of

Manpower.

- A road transportation permit for one 14 ton truck per undertaking.
- An interest rate subsidy of 70% on both loaned and own capital on projects up to R7 million.
- An interest rate subsidy of 50% on approved housing loans for 'key' personnel.
- Reimbursement of relocation costs from the PWV or Durban - Pinetown areas up to R500 000 for approved relocation expenses.

The rail rebate, wage and training subsidies are applicable for 7 years, while the interest rate subsidies are applicable for 10 years.

Reasons for the location of an industrial development point at Isithebe are a combination of a number of factors. Firstly, it is one of the few areas in KwaZulu where the land is relatively flat and hence, good for industrial use. Secondly, it is well supplied with water from the Tugela River. Thirdly, it is close to the national road and not too far from either Richards Bay or Durban. And finally, of most importance, is that it lies in a region of relatively high unemployment in KwaZulu (Stanwix

1983:222). By January 1983, approximately one half of the 250ha of land suitable for industrial development, had been serviced making provision for up to 197 factory sites. The sites have been serviced with tarred access roads, water, electricity, gas, rail facilities, refuse collection and fire protection.

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