BLACK AND WHITE WOMEN: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL STUDY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

by

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J.J.R. JOLOBE - THE MAKING OF A SERVANT

I can no longer ask how it feels
To be choked by a yoke-rope
Because I have seen it for myself in the chained ox.
The blindness has left my eyes. I have become aware,
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

He was sleek, lovely, born for freedom,
Not asking anything from any one, simply
    priding himself on being a young ox.
Someone said: Let him be caught and
    trained and broken in,
Going about it as if he meant to help him.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

He tried to resist, fighting for his freedom.
He was surrounded, fenced in with wisdom and experience.
They overcame him by trickery: 'He must be trained.'
A good piece of rationalisation can camouflage evil.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

He was bound with ropes that cut into his head,
He was bullied, kicked, now and again petted,
But their aim was the same: to put a yoke on him.
Being trained in own's own interests is for the privileged.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

The last stage. The yoke is set on him.
They tie the halter round his neck, slightly choking him.
They say the job's done, he'll be put out to work with
    the others
To obey the will of his owner and taskmaster.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

He kicks out, trying to break away.
They speak with their whips. He turns backwards
Doing his best to resist but then they say: 'Hit him.'
A prisoner is a coward's plaything.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

Though he stumbled and fell, he was bitten on the tail.
Sometimes I saw him raking at his yoke-mate
With his horns - his friend of a minute, his blood-brother.
The suffering under the yoke makes for bad blood.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

The sky seemed black as soft rain fell.
I looked at his hump, it was red,
Dripping blood, the mark of resistance.
He yearns for his home, where he was free.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

Stockstill, tired, there was no sympathy.
He bellowed notes of bitterness.
They loosened his halter a little - to let him breathe,
They tightened it again, snatching back his breath.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

I saw him later, broken, trained,
Pulling a double-shared plough through deep soil,
Serving, struggling for breath, in pain.
To be driven is death. Life is doing things for yourself.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

I saw him climb the steepest of roads.
He carried heavy loads, staggering -
The mud of sweat which wins profit for another.
The savour of working is a share in the harvest.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

I saw him hungry with toil and sweat,
Eyes all tears, spirit crushed,
No longer able to resist. He was tame.
Hope lies in action aimed at freedom.
I have seen the making of a servant
In the young yoke-ox.

The Making of a Servant and other Poems.
Translated from Xhosa by Robert Kavanagh and
Z.S. Qangule.
(Johannesburg: Ophir: Ravan, 1974)

PART I: THE ULTRA-EXPLOITATION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

CHAPTER 1

I. INTRODUCTION

A victory on every page
Who cooked the victory feast?

Bertolt Brecht[1]

...to trace the lines of exploitation in a society is to discover the key to the understanding of social relations of superordination and subordination which apply within that society.

A. Giddens[2]

Domestic service constitutes one of the largest sources of employment for black women in South Africa.[3] Yet it is a largely unstudied occupation. There has been no previous investigation of domestic workers in the Eastern Cape, and to date only two comprehensive studies of domestic workers in other areas of South Africa.[4] This neglect is significant, for such inquiry involves questioning the accepted pattern of inequalities on which the entire social order is based.

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1. Bertolt Brecht, 'A Worker's questions while reading'. K. Dickson (ed.), Kalendergeschichten (London: Methuen Educational Ltd., 1971), p.75.

2. A. Giddens, The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1974), p.29.

3. According to the 1970 Census domestic service accounts for 38 percent of all employed black women. Republic of South Africa, Department of Statistics, Population Census, 1970. Occupations. Report No.02-05-04 (Pretoria: The Government Printer, 1975), Table 1, p.1. However, this cannot be regarded as a wholly reliable statistic. In the 1970 Census enumerators were instructed that a woman who gave her occupation as a domestic servant and who was unemployed, had to be classified as employed as a domestic servant. Simkins points out that this procedure leads to an overestimate of the numbers of domestic servants. C. Simkins, 'Measuring and Predicting Unemployment in South Africa, 1960-1977' in C. Simkins and D. Clarke, Structural Unemployment in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1978), p.45.

4. M.G. Whisson and W.M. Weil, Domestic Servants: A Microcosm of the Race Problem (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1971); E.M. Preston-Whyte, Between Two Worlds. A Study of the working life, social ties and interpersonal relationships of African women migrants in domestic service in Durban. University of Natal, 1969. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis.

Domestic workers are among the most exploited groups in a society marked by extreme inequality. They are situated at the convergence of three lines along which social inequality is generated - class, race and sex. These inequalities are related to the capitalist system of production in South Africa, which is not unique, but is 'perhaps uniquely vicious in its degree of exploitation and repression'.[5] I have tried to document one particular aspect of that exploitation.

The argument advanced is tentative and exploratory. It offers a broad overview, a brief sketch. Much more detailed research is needed to fill in the outlines. There are three parts to my argument.

The first section describes briefly the situation of domestic workers in contemporary South Africa generally, and specifically the situation of a random sample of 225 domestic servants in an area of the Eastern Cape commonly described as 'Settler Country'. It is suggested that as an occupational group, domestic workers are subject to ultra-exploitation. They are deprived of a negotiated wage, of reasonable working hours and of family and social life. They are also denied favourable working conditions, respectful treatment and any acknowledgement of the dignity of their labour, as well as specific legal protection, membership in an effective worker organisation and effective bargaining power.

The second section gives a brief historical overview, showing the roots of this exploitation in the treatment of domestic workers by the early European settlers in the Eastern Cape. Viewed over the last two hundred years of South African history, domestic service is a kaleidoscopic institution. It has involved San, Khoikhoi, European, 'Coloured', Indian and African men as well as women. Its development reflects changing patterns of both racial and sexual domination. The process whereby it was transformed into a predominantly black, female institution is outlined.

The third section analyses the structures which have created the ultra-exploitability of domestic workers and the mechanisms by which this is

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5. R. Davies, 'The White Working Class in South Africa', New Left Review No.82, November-December, 1973, p.56.

maintained.[6] The powerlessness and vulnerability - the ultra-exploitability - of black women within the institution of domestic service derive from the discrimination to which both blacks and women are subject in South Africa. A central tenet of this study is that one cannot arrive at any understanding of the situation of domestic workers without some analysis of the situation of black women in South Africa today. This is especially important in view of the dearth of published material analysing the position of women in South Africa.

This is not to ignore the fact that domestic service in South Africa includes a number of black men. I have focused upon the ultra-exploitation of black female domestic workers because they are overall the majority. According to figures calculated from the 1970 Census 88,9 percent of all domestic workers are black, and 88,4 percent of all black domestic workers are women.[7] While among the Xhosa of the Eastern Cape, domestic work for wages is the prerogative of women, this is not true of other areas and groups within South Africa. Male domestic workers are in a similar position of exploitation. Indeed they could be said to experience a specific, though different 'edge' to their exploitation deriving from the violation of the traditional male role that the nature of domestic work involves.

This study draws on insights from both sociology and history in order to locate domestic workers at three levels: in terms of historical processes; in the wider social structure and in the home; in both the political and domestic economy. This constitutes the landscape in which domestic workers are placed. But it would be a bleak painting if this were all. The most important aspect of this picture lies in the human figures it depicts. Whatever colour and richness the study has, comes largely from individual biographies, from the thoughts and experiences

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6. The distinction between 'ultra-exploitation' and 'ultra-exploitability' is derived from F. Johnstone, Class, Race and Gold: a study of class relations and racial discrimination in South Africa (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), p.22.

7. Population Census, 1970, Occupations, Table 1, 'Occupation by Population Group', p.1. The most recent figures available show that the majority of domestic servants in the main urban areas are black women. Department of Statistics, Report No. 11-03-13. Statistics of Houses and Domestic Servants, October, 1977. (Pretoria: The Government Printer, 1979), p.9.

of individual servants. Their definitions of the situation, their perception of themselves and their employers, their relationships with their employers and the ways in which these are negotiated, their hopes and fears, constitute a moving record of human suffering, endurance and denial.

As an occupational group, the almost 800 000 black women who are domestic workers in contemporary South Africa show a considerable variety of characteristics. Some are part of an urban-industrial proletariat; others are migrant workers who send money to a family living in the homelands or on a white-owned farm. However, the prevailing characteristic of the domestic worker's situation in South Africa is exploitation. They are 'trapped' within a tightly woven structure of constraints: a condition of subjugation and immobility.

This study attempts to describe that framework of constraints, and to analyse some of the mechanisms which block their ability to resist exploitation. For the most part their parameters of choice are extremely narrow; they are markedly powerless to alter their situation. Lack of educational opportunities and employment alternatives, coupled with influx control legislation restricting the movement of black workers, all combine to 'trap' black women generally, and in the Eastern Cape most specifically, in domestic service. Employers set wages and conditions of work according to their own preference. These are usually decidedly disadvantageous to the worker. The predominant response obtained from the domestic workers interviewed in the Eastern Cape is a sense of being trapped; of having no alternatives; of living out an infinite series of daily frustrations, indignities and denials.

Domestic workers are widely viewed as 'deferential workers', yet this 'deference' is more apparent than real. Many domestic workers adopt a 'mask of deference' as a protective disguise, enabling them to conform to employers' expectations and shield their real feelings. The poor and ill-educated women who form the vast majority of domestic workers in the Eastern Cape do not accept the legitimacy of their own subordination in the social order. On the contrary, they have a high consciousness of exploitation; a sense of community of interests; and considerable insight into the structures which maintain their subordination. Domestic servants are not deferential workers but trapped workers. This is generally true of South Africa's black workers, who are among the

most regimented labour forces in the world. Ultimately, the problems of domestic servants are generated by a system which does not operate in their interests.

The ultra-exploitability of black women in South Africa derives from two sets of forces: a system of racial domination and one of sexual domination. Various measures of racial discrimination serve to maintain blacks in a subordinate position. These measures are shown to operate at five levels: political rights, property and residence rights, employment, education and income. Moreover a racist ideology legitimises this system of domination.[8] Similarly various measures of sexual discrimination serve to maintain women in a subordinate and dependent position. These measures are shown to operate at four critical levels: legal status, employment, education and reproduction. Again a sexist ideology legitimises this system of domination. Both sets of forces are generated by the capitalist system of production and class structure, which operate to produce a complex pattern of inequality.

While all women in South African society are subject to the sexual domination that operates in a system of 'sex bars', the system of racial domination provides white women with important mechanisms of escape from this structure of constraints. The employment of cheap, black domestic labour is one instance and this presents a challenge to conventional feminist analysis.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

(a) Marxist analysis

While this study draws on insights from different theoretical perspectives and disciplines in order to describe and explain the framework of constraints within which domestic workers in South Africa live out their lives, the emphasis is on the significance of the system of production. Such a marxist approach is not infallible, but it has a special explanatory value, particularly important when one is writing about sexual and racial inequalities. There is nothing intrinsically problematical about sex or race. As Marx wrote

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8. This distinction between the two components of the system of racial domination is derived from Johnstone, 1976: 23.

> What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race. The one explanation is as good as the other. A Negro is a Negro. He only becomes a slave in certain relations. A cotton spinning jenny is a machine for spinning cotton. It becomes capital only in certain relations. Torn from these relationships it is no more capital than gold in itself is money or sugar is the price of sugar. [9]

Rubin rephrases this and asks

> What is a domesticated woman? A female of the species. The one explanation is as good as the other. A woman is a woman. She only becomes a domestic, a wife, a chattel, a playboy bunny, a prostitute or a human dictaphone in certain relations. Torn from these relations she is no more the helpmate of man than gold in itself is money and so on. [10]

Social inequalities along racial and sexual lines are frequently described in terms of the concept of 'minority groups'. But such formulations do not tell us very much. In fact they mystify rather than explain.

> ...in cases of biologically based inequality, such as the racial system in South Africa, the specific form of inequality is an absolute mystification....telling us nothing whatever about its specific nature, because of the intrinsic insignificance of race and sex as causal determinants of the social inequality so often formally constituted in terms of them. [11]

The marxist approach enables us to deal with this problem of mystification and avoid the limitations of both idealism and empiricism.

Empiricism is often heavily descriptive and equates reality with its apparent form. Further, it rests upon a false assumption that observational entities are, to some extent, independent of theoretical ones. According to marxist epistemology observation cannot occur pre-theoretically; it is invariably the product of a determinate theoretical practice.

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9. K. Marx, Wage-Labour and Capital (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p.28.

10. Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex' in R. Reiter (ed.), Towards an Anthropology of Women (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), p.158.

11. Johnstone, 1976: 6.

Idealism neglects the material basis of social reality. According to idealist epistemology, social science has to be founded upon descriptions of 'reality' that are similarly 'pre-theoretical', but this is a reality composed of ideations that are distinct from sensory experience. Several writers have dealt with the difficulties involved here, and specifically with the inadequacies of the idealist assertion that racial discrimination is due to racial beliefs, generated and maintained by ideological factors outside the economic system.

However, in the sociology of South Africa the dominant perspective has been that of a variant of idealism, namely pluralism. It is a framework which has some descriptive use, but little explanatory value.[12]

In terms of contemporary marxist analysis much of the 'pluralist-revisionist debate' in the sociology of South Africa takes on a shadowy character. It is often an unreal landscape populated by Don Quixote figures tilting at imaginary windmills. The favourite 'windmill' is the conception of 'vulgar determinism'.

The key to the difference between classical and contemporary accounts of marxism seems to lie in the question of causation. Used loosely this covers three interrelated problems: those of economism, voluntarism and historicism. The first, focusing on the role of the economy, is especially important. Neo-marxism insists that it is not a form of economic determinism. A more sophisticated conception of cause replaces the classical monist conception. To argue that the political and ideological superstructure of society necessarily reflects the underlying economic base is 'vulgar determinism' or 'mechanistic materialism'. Williams points out that where 'determinism' implies a single cause which totally predicts and controls a social formation, the notion of 'determination' is a much looser, more sophisticated

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12. While pluralist analyses offer extensive definition, classification and description, "all that they offer in the way of explanation is a tautological redescription of the phenomenon to be explained." (Johnstone, 1976: 209). Similarly Wolpe decries the pluralist approaches of Kuper and Smith (1970) and Van der Berghe (1967) which "accept the critical salience of race to the exclusion of the mode of production." H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid', Economy and Society, vol. 1, No. 4, Autumn, 1972, p.429.

concept.[13] It implies a conception of the economic level as generating pressures and defining the parameters of superstructural forms.

This is expressed in Althusser's notion of 'overdetermination'.[14] This involves basically two principles: the relative autonomy of the superstructural forms and their specific effectivity, and the 'determination in-the-last-instance' by the economic level. In Althusser's formulation each social formation is composed of several modes of production but in each we find "the dominance of one mode which produces complex effects of dissolution or conservation on the other modes of production"[15] and gives the social formation its character. Thus the social formation is a combination of distinct structural levels - economic, political and ideological, determined by a specific mode of production.

South African society has for some time included different modes of production but the capitalist mode has gradually become dominant. The South African variant of capitalism is characterised by the extreme extra-economic coercion of the majority of the labour force which is associated with slavery or feudalism. Feudalism is not the dominant mode because the workers have been separated from ownership of the means of production; nor is slavery because the appropriator of surplus assumes no rights of ownership over, or responsibilities for, the person of the exploited. Thus, as Rex suggests, the South African variant is possibly "the theoretically most perfect system of labour exploitation yet devised."[16]

Exploitation is a concept which is frequently used very loosely and very infrequently examined. It is not the prerogative of marxism but

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13. R. Williams, 'Base and Superstructure', New Left Review, No.82, November-December, 1973, p.4.

14. See L. Althusser, 'Contradiction and Overdetermination', pp.89-128 in L. Althusser, For Marx (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1970); and L. Althusser and C. Balibar, Reading Capital (London: N.L.B., 1970).

15. N. Poulantzas, 'On Social Classes', New Left Review, No.78, March-April, 1973, p.33.

16. J. Rex, 'The Plural Society: The South African Case', Race, Vol. XII, No.4, April, 1971. Reprinted in A. Leftwich, South Africa: Economic Growth and Political Change (London: Allison and Busby, 1974), p.50.

it is a concept to which marxists have a special claim. On the theoretical level, in Marx's critique of capitalism, exploitation was one of a set of linked concepts which provided an interpretative framework. At the empirical level there is a tradition in marxism of documenting and exposing historically specific situations of exploitation. One obvious example is Engels' exposure of working class living conditions in Manchester in 1844; another is Marx's exposé of the exploitation of the Moselle vinegrowers in 1843, a work that led him, according to Engels, "from pure politics to economic relationships and so to socialism."[17]

In marxist terms the concept of exploitation is tied to the notion of surplus value. Marx considered that the worker in a capitalist system was exploited because he did not receive in the form of wages, the whole of the value produced by his labour. Thus the 'exploitative' character of capitalism is inevitable. It is based on the extraction of surplus value from productive labour. But the meaning of 'productive labour' is problematical, and this has given rise to widely different interpretations within marxist analysis.

For instance Poulantzas refers to the "myth which identifies wage earners and working class." He writes, "while every worker is a wage earner, not every wage earner is a worker, since not every wage earner is necessarily a productive worker" producing surplus value. He stresses that wage earners in commerce, banks, service industries and so on, "are not included among productive workers in Marxist analysis."[18] Wolpe points out that this view relegates workers who produce use-values in the form of services which are consumed as wage goods by the working class to the sphere of unproductive labour. Given that service workers are often the most 'exploited' in capitalist systems, this formulation seems questionable. As Wolpe points out, "whether service workers are productive or unproductive, affects only the form of their exploitation, not the issue of whether they are exploited or not."[19]

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17. D. McLennan, Marx (London: Fontana, 1975), p.12.

18. Poulantzas, 1973: 30-31.

19. H. Wolpe, 'The White Working Class in South Africa', Economy and Society, May, 1976, Vol.5, No.2, p.222.

The form of exploitation is a complex theoretical question. It will be argued below that because the domestic servant is an unproductive worker who does not produce surplus value for capital, she is not 'exploited' in the narrow marxist sense. Exploitation is given a different meaning in this study. 'Ultra-exploitation' is used to refer to a condition of extreme deprivation and denial of the domestic servant's human needs, generated by her subordination to the ends of her employer in the work place. Different levels of this extreme deprivation are cited. 'Ultra-exploitability' is used to refer to a condition of extreme powerlessness and vulnerability.

While the emphasis on the significance of the mode of production enables one to identify the structural relationships and historical processes which have created the ultra-exploitability of black women, and their ultra-exploitation as domestic servants, the sociological perspective should enable one to connect structural and historical processes with individual biographies.

It is necessary to locate the domestic servant in a social context, particularly in terms of the constraints this context imposes, but at the same time to take account of subjective meanings. We need to explore the way in which domestic servants and their employers define their situations, their typifications of themselves and others, and the rules which define how their reality is constituted and experienced in interaction. To understand what Jolobe called 'the making of a servant' in the poem at the beginning of this study, requires drawing on insights from 'Phenomenological Sociology'.[20]

Drawing from both marxist and phenomenological sociology gives one an eclectic view which recognises the essential individuality and uniqueness of each person, but insists that the individual can only be understood in terms of his location in a social context. Thus an analysis of subjective meaning is linked to a conception of the actual situation

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20. This is using the term very broadly. As Zeitlin writes, 'phenomenology' is "a notoriously ambiguous concept that covers a bewildering variety of ideas." I. Zeitlin, Rethinking Sociology (New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1973), p.139. See especially, A. Schutz, Collected Papers, 3 vols (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962, 1964, 1966); and A. Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World (London: Heinemann, 1972).

within which the individual is embedded. The following four chapters focus, in part, on this micro-level: the interaction between servant and employer. The remaining chapters attempt to locate this interaction in a social and historical context. The key notion is that the macro-structures which control the distribution of power and resources in society, colour the interactions of these individuals at the micro-level. Domestic servants and their employers are not free and equal participants in interaction. Their interaction cannot be comprehended without examining the parties' respective situations in South African society. The fact that both parties are women is of crucial importance.

Marxism alone is inadequate to the task of analysing the subordination of women. As Hartmann points out, "while Marxist analysis provides essential insight into the laws of historical development, and those of capital in particular, the categories of Marxism are sex-blind. Only a specifically feminist analysis reveals the systemic character of relations between men and women."[21] Therefore the eclectic approach of this study also involves drawing from feminist analysis.

(b) Feminist analysis

Patriarchy is the central concept which has been developed in feminist analysis, yet as with 'phenomenology' there is no consensus about its meaning or status.[22] It is frequently used loosely and ahistorically in a dualistic type of analysis in which society is conceptualised as consisting of two separate and independent structures - patriarchy and the mode of production. So far attempts undertaken by marxist-feminists to specify the dialectical relationship between the two are extremely problematic. However, as Kuhn and Wolpe point out, "marxist-feminist theoretical work is as yet in its infancy."[23]

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21. H. Hartmann, 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a more Progressive Union', Capital and Class, No.8, Summer, 1979, p.8.

22. It has been given a variety of different meanings. For instance, see K. Millet, Sexual Politics (New York: Doubleday, 1970); J. Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1975); Hartmann, 1979.

23. A. Kuhn and A. Wolpe, Feminism and Materialism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p.7.

To date marxist feminist analysis has attempted to locate the specificity of women's oppression under capitalism in three main inter-related areas: their domestic labour, their role as members of the industrial reserve army, and their role as wage workers.

All the contributors to what has come to be termed 'the domestic labour debate' have stressed that domestic work involves the maintenance and reproduction of labour power - the crucial element of productive capital. It is crucial because in the capitalist mode of production labour power has a unique value as a commodity, it creates value. Thus surplus value is the specific form of surplus labour in the capitalist mode of production and is the basis of capital accumulation.

Domestic work involves

> ...the production and reproduction of the capitalist's most indispensable means of production: the worker. The individual consumption of the worker, whether it occurs inside or outside the workshop, inside or outside the labour process, remains an aspect of the production and reproduction of capital, just as the cleaning of machinery does, whether it is done during the labour process, or when intervals in that process permit... The maintenance and reproduction of the working class is, and must ever be, a necessary condition to the reproduction of capital. But the capitalist may safely leave this to the worker's drives for self preservation and propagation. [24]

Domestic work contributes to the production of use values which are necessary for the production and reproduction of labour power both on a daily and a generational basis. "Generational reproduction involves biological reproduction, the regulation of sexuality and the socialisation of children, while day-to-day reproduction involves numerous tasks of domestic labour such as shopping, cooking meals, washing, cleaning and caring."[25] The crucial question, to which the contributors to the domestic labour debate have addressed themselves, is whether these tasks are productive labour which create value. Two major sources of difficulty within this debate concern the meaning of 'productive labour' and the determination of the 'value of labour power'.

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24. K. Marx, Capital, Vol.I (London: Pelican Marx Library, 1976), p.718.

25. V. Beechey, 'Women and production: a critical analysis of some sociological theories of women's work', in Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978: 194.

The meaning of productive labour is problematical. Gardiner maintains that this difficulty originates, in part, from Marx's rather contradictory treatment of the concept in different contexts.[26] Marx distinguishes between labour that is productive in general, that is, any labour that produces use values, goods or services that are socially useful; and labour that is productive from the point of view of capital, i.e. which produces surplus value. According to Gardiner, in Capital, where Marx was concerned with the pure capitalist mode of production, the distinction between productive and unproductive labour is tied to wage labour working for capital, which is technically indispensable to the production and distribution of commodities. In Theories of Surplus Value the distinction centres on whether the labour is paid out of capital or out of revenue (profits and wages). Thus productive workers are those employed within the capitalist mode of production, whilst unproductive workers are those whose labour power is bought by capitalists (or workers) for personal consumption.[27] Gardiner points out that this distinction "was a useful device for analysing a society in which capitalists employed large numbers of domestic servants in their homes as well as employing labour in their factories, since it pinpointed the distinctive contributions to capitalist accumulation of the two groups of workers."[28] What is of crucial importance in this distinction between productive and unproductive labour, is the social form of labour. As Braverman points out,

> it is clear that this definition has nothing to do with the utility of the labor employed, or even its concrete form. The very same labour may be either productive or unproductive depending upon its social form. To hire the neighbour's boy to cut the lawn is to set in motion unproductive labour; to call a gardening firm which sends out a boy to do the job (perhaps even the same boy) is another thing entirely.[29]

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26. J. Gardiner, 'Domestic Labour in Capitalist Society', in D.L. Barker and S. Allen (eds.), Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage (London: Longmans, 1976), pp.110-113.

27. Gardiner, 1976: 112.

28. Ibid.

29. H. Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital. The Degredation of Work in the Twentieth Century (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), p.412. Braverman shows that "the distinction between productive and unproductive labour, which disregards its concrete form in order to analyse it as a social form, far from being a useless

A second major source of difficulty within the domestic labour debate focuses on the value of labour power. Marx's definition is unclear. He wrote,

> The value of labour power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labour time necessary for the production, and consequently also the reproduction, of this special article. In so far as it has value it represents no more than a definite quantity of the average social labour objectified in it. Labour power exists only as a capacity of the living individual. Its production consequently presupposes his existence. Given the existence of the individual, the production of labour-power consists in his reproduction of himself or his maintenance. For his maintenance he requires a certain quantity of the means of subsistence. Therefore the labour-time necessary for the production of labour power is the same as that necessary for the production of those means of subsistence; in other words, the value of labour power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of its owner. [30]

Here Marx appears to make the determination of the value of labour power on the basis of the quantities of commodities which would be necessary to maintain the health, strength and culturally defined standard of living of a worker. But "these commodities must be consumed before they can be sustenance and they are not immediately in consumable form when they are purchased with the wage. Additional labour must be performed upon these things before they can be turned into people. Food must be cooked, clothes cleaned, beds made, wood chopped, etc."[31] In other words, labour must be expended in the transformation of commodities purchased with the wage into regenerated labour power. Therefore the labour time necessary for the production of labour power is not reducible to that necessary for the production of the means of subsistence since additional domestic labour must be performed.

In his analysis of the value of labour power Marx seems to assume a proletarian family unit in which wife and children do not work. He wrote,

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abstraction, represents a decisive point in the analysis of capitalism...The transformation of unproductive labour into labour which is, for the capitalist's purpose of extracting surplus value, productive, is the very process of the creation of capitalist society." Braverman, 1974: 412-3.

30. Marx, 1976: 274.

31. Rubin, 1975: 162.

> The value of labour power was determined, not only by the labour time necessary to maintain the individual adult labourer, but also by that necessary to maintain his family. Machinery, by throwing every member of that family on to the labour market, spreads the value of the man's labour over his whole family. It thus depreciates his labour power. [32]

Foreman concludes from this passage that Marx clearly "defined labour power as the man's capacity to labour."[33] She argues that in Britain by the latter part of the nineteenth century "the growth in strength of the working class movement was pitted towards defining labour power as a male capacity and demanding accordingly that their wage should reflect that fact."[34] Clearly the working class demand for 'a family wage' which was sufficient to maintain the worker's wife at home in her 'proper sphere' was also aimed at avoiding the worst excesses of child and female labour abuse.

All the contributors to the domestic labour debate accept that the subsistence level of the working class is subject to historical and cultural determinants. As Marx wrote,

> ...the number and extent of his so-called necessary requirements, as also the manner in which they are satisfied, are themselves products of history, and depend therefore to a great extent on the level of civilization attained by a country; in particular they depend on the conditions in which, and consequently on the habits and expectations with which, the class of free workers has been formed. In contrast therefore, with the case of other commodities, the determination of the value of labour-power contains a historical and moral element. [35]

However, the part played by domestic labour, and its precise relation to capital, have been conceptualised very differently.

One line of argument is that domestic work takes place outside the capitalist mode of production and therefore cannot be subsumed under

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32. Marx, 1976: 518.

33. A. Foreman, Femininity as Alienation: Women and the Family in Marxism and Psychoanalysis (London: Pluto Press, 1978), p.118.

34. Ibid., p.120.

35. Marx, 1976: 275.

Marx's categories of either productive or unproductive labour. Domestic labour is seen as socially necessary labour in that it involves the reproduction of labour power, but it is privatized labour. As Smith writes, "both sides in the domestic labour debate recognize that it was the establishment of the capitalist mode of production that brought about the privatization of domestic labour, its exclusion from social production, yet both sides attempt to include this excluded sector within the capitalist mode of production." [36] He stresses that, "it is not Marx's theory of value which marginalizes domestic labour, but the capitalist mode of production."[37] Similarly Adamson et al argue that "domestic work is privatized, individual toil. It is concrete labour which lies outside the capitalist production process and therefore cannot produce value or surplus value."[38] The implication is that domestic labour is necessary to the capitalist mode of production but external to it.

A totally different line of argument is that the housewife produces surplus value indirectly because she produces the value-creating commodity, labour power. Thus Seccombe argues that although domestic work is privatized, unproductive labour, it creates value.[39] Housework, he claims, is unproductive labour since it is exchanged with revenue - wages or profits. He thus equates it with the hired labour of a domestic servant, and the housewife is seen as having exchanged her labour for her means of subsistence. Marx is quite clear that this type of unproductive worker simply consumes revenue and creates no value.[40] But Seccombe attempts to draw support from Marx for his argument that categorizing domestic labour as unproductive does not negate the assertion that it creates value.[41] He maintains that,

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36. P. Smith, 'Domestic labour and Marx's theory of value', in Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978: 214.

37. Smith, 1978: 215.

38. O. Adamson, C. Brown, J. Harrison and J. Price, 'Women's Oppression under Capitalism' (R.C.G. Publications, No.5, 1976), p.8.

39. W. Seccombe, The Housewife and her Labour under Capitalism (Socialist Women's Special, I.M.G. Publications, 1974, Second edition).

40. See Marx quoted on p.26 below.

41. Seccombe, 1974: 11.

> When the housewife acts directly upon wage purchased goods and necessarily alters their form, her labour becomes part of the congealed mass of past labour embodied in labour power. The value she creates is realized as one part of the value labour power achieves as a commodity when it is sold. [42]

He claims that "all this is merely a consistent application of the labour theory of value to the reproduction of labour power itself - namely that all labour produces value when it produces any part of a commodity that achieves equivalence in the market place with other commodities."[43] But as Smith shows, it is not all labour that produces value, but labour performed within the social relations of commodity production which takes the form of socially necessary, abstract and social labour. Domestic labour does not conform to this. On the contrary, it is "concrete, private and individual labour."[44] Thus, Seccombe's formulation, far from being a mere application of Marx's theory of value, as he claims, "represents a serious challenge to it in that it suggests one commodity, labour power, is always sold below its value, since this would be equivalent to the value of the means of subsistence bought with the wage plus the value said to be created by the domestic labour."[45] Thus Smith's argument is that domestic labour does not create value. It transfers the value of the means of subsistence to the replenished labour power "but does not add to that value."[46]

Similarly, Magas, Coulson and Wainwright have argued that domestic labour "does not create value at all, because its immediate products are use values and not commodities; they are not directed towards the market, but are for immediate consumption within the family." Further, "while domestic labour is a necessary condition of reproduction of labour power, it does not contribute to its value or realize its own value when that commodity is sold on the market, because it is not in the Marxist sense, socially necessary labour."[47]

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42. Seccombe, 1974: 8.
43. Ibid.
44. Smith, 1978: 203.
45. Smith, 1978: 202.
46. Smith, 1978: 211.
47. M. Coulson, F. Magas and H. Wainwright, 'The Housewife and her labour under Capitalism - a Critique', New Left Review, No.89, January-February, 1975), p.62.

Others have put forward the argument that domestic labour contributes to surplus value indirectly in the sense that it reduces the value of labour power. McIntosch argues that domestic labour "reduces the amount of commodities needed to reproduce the husband's labour power. At any given time, therefore, it reduces the value of these commodities... Domestic labour therefore helps to keep down the value of labour power and so keep down wages."[48] Gardiner argues that domestic labour does not create value, in Marx's sense, but "does nevertheless contribute to surplus value by keeping down necessary labour, or the value of labour power, to a level that is lower than the actual subsistence level of the working class."[49] The implication is that women's domestic labour allows the extraction of a higher rate of surplus value than what would be the situation if labour power was wholly dependent on wages for its reproduction.

Clearly marxist concepts of value and productive and unproductive labour cannot easily be transferred to an analysis of housework which is essentially reproductive labour. However both occur within the system of capitalist production if this is conceived as a totality. As Robinson writes, "...the production of labour power...which is sold as a commodity to capitalists and the production of commodities by wage labour, are two sides of one total process."[50] While the precise relation of domestic labour to capital remains controversial, it is true that "since the production and reproduction of labour power takes place substantially within the family through the labour of the housewife, then it is clear that her labour is in one way or another crucial to the generation of surplus value."[51] Thus domestic labour contributes, at least indirectly, to the circuit of capital accumulation.

What needs to be emphasised is that the work involved in the maintenance and reproduction of labour power, the cleaning, washing, shopping,

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48. M. McIntosch, 'The State and the Oppression of Women', in Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978: 268-69.

49. J. Gardiner, 'Women's Domestic Labour', New Left Review, No.89, January-February, 1975, p.58.

50. B. Robinson, 'Women and Class Consciousness: A Proposal for the Dialectical Study of Class Consciousness', The Insurgent Sociologist, Vol.VIII, No.IV, Winter, 1979, p.49.

51. A. Kuhn, 'Structures of patriarchy and capital in the family', in Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978: 57.

cooking and child care, is done mainly by women in the home, and so men as well as capital benefit from this labour. Thus Hartmann stresses that "the importance of housework as a social relation lies in its crucial role in perpetuating male supremacy. That women do housework, performing labour for men, is crucial to the maintenance of patriarchy... Who benefits from women's labour? Surely capitalists, but surely men, who as husbands and fathers receive personalized services at home."[52] In privatizing this work capitalism secured women's dependence upon men.

> By distinguishing between production for use and production for exchange, and by progressively subordinating the former to the latter, by confining production for use to the private world of the home and female labour, and production for exchange increasingly to the workshop outside the home, and male labour, capitalism ensured the economic dependence of women upon their husbands or fathers for a substantial part of their lives. [53]

Both Lenin and Engels saw the roots of female subordination in this separation between private or domestic labour and social or collective labour which is a distinctive feature of capitalism. However women's subordination is clearly mediated through different levels of the social formation and is inscribed within different practices. It "is not reducible to any simple causality and is certainly not reducible just to the problem of domestic labour."[54]

The problem of women's role in the industrial reserve army is the second area on which marxist-feminist analysis has focused. Because of the sexual division of labour which locates women mainly in the home, the family is both the main site of the reproduction of labour power and an important source of the industrial reserve army. The concept of the industrial reserve army is not given a very precise definition by Marx, and in the same way that he failed to develop any satisfactory theory of the reproduction of labour power, he failed to give an adequate

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52. Hartmann, 1979: 6.

53. S. Alexander, 'Women's work in nineteenth century London: a study of the years 1820-50', in J. Mitchell and A. Oakley (eds.), The Rights and Wrongs of Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p.77.

54. M. Molyneux, 'Beyond the Domestic Labour Debate', New Left Review, No.116, July-August, 1979, p.27.

analysis of the role of the family in supplying female labour as part of the industrial reserve army.

Marxist analysis distinguishes between 'an active army of labour' and 'a relative surplus population' which "forms a disposable industrial reserve army, which belongs to capital just as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost."[55] For Marx the formation of the industrial reserve army is a constant tendency for capitalism. It functions as a flexible and disposable labour force who can be drawn into production in times of growth, but is vulnerable to redundancy or the introduction of part-time work during recessions. Braverman explains increased female labour force participation in terms of this concept.[56] However Beechey points out that he "loses sight of the fact that it is because of the family that capital is able to draw on female labour in particular ways as a form of industrial reserve army."[57] She suggests that a possible criterion of the potential sources of the industrial reserve army is "those categories of labour which are partially dependent upon sources of income other than the wage to meet some of the costs of reproduction of labour power."[58] Thus while women "can occupy Marx's floating, latent and stagnant categories,[59] married women also have a position which derives specifically from their role in the family."[60] In this respect Beechey points to a parallel between the position of married women and semi-proletarianised workers from the point of view of capital - both groups can be paid wages at a price which is below the value of labour power.

> In the case of married women it is their dependence upon male wages within the family for part of the costs of production and reproduction of labour power which accounts for individual capitals paying wages which are below the value of labour power. The married woman does not, therefore, have to pay for the entire costs of reproducing her labour power, nor for that of her

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55. Marx, 1976: 784.

56. Braverman, 1974: 391-2.

57. Beechey, 1978: 187.

58. V. Beechey, 'Some Notes on Female Wage Labour in Capitalist Production', Capital and Class, 3, Autumn, 1977, p.56.

59. Marx, 1976: 794-799.

60. Beechey, 1978: 191.

> children who will become the next generation of wage labourers and domestic labourers. [61]

While recognising that women in capitalist society occupy different places within the industrial reserve army, it is clear that not all female wage labour can be analysed in terms of this concept. Some women are a permanent part of the labour force, and so women's role in wage labour is the third area on which marxist-feminist analysis has focused.

Here it must be stressed that women's labour is not divided into one sector who work at home and another that work in the market. In fact these sectors overlap, and many women at some time experience the 'dual shift' phenomenon of working both inside and outside the home. This implies that women wage workers are the servants of capital in a dual sense for they perform both wage labour and unpaid reproductive labour.

In all capitalist societies women's participation in the labour force has been increasing, but their participation differs markedly from that of men. It is structured upon their position as domestic workers in the privatized sphere of the home. Thus the vast majority work in 'women's jobs', occupations which have some structural resemblance to their domestic role. "They work in industries which produce commodities, formerly manufactured by women in the home, such as clothing and processed food. In white collar occupations, as secretaries, teachers, waitresses, nurses and so forth, women perform such wifely and motherly functions as schedule management, ego building, child socialization, cleaning up, caring for the ill, and serving as sex objects."[62] They are predominantly involved in the service sector and in part-time work; are less skilled than men and their wages are lower. Consequently it has been suggested that the capitalist labour market has a 'dual' structure so that most well-paid, skilled, permanent, full-time work is done by men and other kinds of work mainly by women.[63] However this formulation has been effectively criticised by Beechey as static,

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61. Beechey, 1977: 53.

62. R. Milkman, 'Women's Work and Economic Crisis: Some Lessons of the Great Depression', Review of Radical Political Economy, 8, 1, 1976, p.76.

63. R.D. Barron and G.M. Norris, 'Sexual divisions and the dual labour market', in Barker and Allen, 1976.

ahistorical and descriptive rather than explanatory.[64] She suggests that the employment of women who are dependent upon the family for part of the costs of producing and reproducing labour power can be advantageous to capital in three ways: "in reducing the value of labour power overall; because female labour power has a lower average value than male labour power; and because married women can be paid wages at a price which is below the value of labour power."[65] Thus the sexual division of labour has a specific effectivity within capitalism.

This is not to gloss over the tensions between capitalism and patriarchy. As Mandel writes, "the increasing discrepancy between the needs of family consumption and the wages of the industrial male worker, leads to an increased employment of married women."[66] Thus to maintain its income the family is increasingly obliged to send women into the labour force. This has the potential for decreasing the economic dependence of women on men and so weakens the material basis of patriarchy within the family. Thus "the continuation of male supremacy and the family form is under potential threat from the development of female wage labour."[67]

At the same time the employment of women leads to an increased demand for commodities previously produced as use values within the home. Thus Beechey suggests that the employment of female labour speeds up the circulation of commodities and the family is increasingly penetrated by capital's quest for a universal market.[68] This also operates in a contradictory way.

> ...while the new branches of production of domestic goods potentially 'free' the housewife from much domestic labour, at the same time hers and the family's 'needs' become different and greater. She must now shop not simply for the curtains she no longer makes but for cushion covers to match, the lampshade to complement etc. The ideology of domesticity in play here supports the fulfilling of these new 'needs' yet contradictorily they can only be obtained within the

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64. Beechey, 1978: 158.

65. Beechey, 1977: 53.

66. E. Mandel, Late Capitalism (London: Verso, 1978), p.392.

67. Kuhn, 1978: 189.

68. Beechey, 1978: 189.

> working class by women entering wage labour, a move which the new production and new divisions of labour in part make possible. [69]

This 'ideology of domesticity' which is elaborated through the family (as well as the church, the school and the media) has a specific effectivity in capitalist society. It structures women's expectations around becoming housewives and mothers, or part-time and intermittent workers earning 'pin money'. Thus a ceiling is placed on women's educational aspirations and attainments. This goes some way towards explaining the fact that women have less training, which Beechey suggests, is an important factor in explaining why female labour power has a lower value. It also illustrates how the analysis of women's subordination is incomplete without attention to particular forms of ideology.

Overall, what marxist-feminist analysis has shown is that the family is of fundamental importance to the capitalist mode of production. It operates as the main site of the reproduction and maintenance of labour power; an important source of the reserve army of labour; the main site of the consumption of commodities; and is an important part of the 'ideological state apparatus' which Althusser has shown to secure the reproduction of the relations of production.[70] Thus, as Beechey has argued, although "the family appears to have become separated from the capitalist mode of production, it is in reality divorced only from the labour process (the site of production) and continues to play a vitally important role in the system of capitalist production as a whole."[71] To penetrate the disjuncture between appearance and reality in capitalist society is an important task of marxist analysis.

This study focuses upon the household - a more concrete category than the family - as a crucial and largely obscured site of inequality. It attempts to show that the household and relations within it are of

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69. L. Bland et al., 'Women 'inside and outside' the relations of production', in Women's Study Group, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, Women Take Issue, Aspects of Women's Subordination (London: Hutchinson, 1978), p.57.

70. L. Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays (London: New Left Books, 1971).

71. Beechey, 1977: 48.

critical importance in the South African social formation. This is viewed as a complex totality comprising a number of relatively autonomous levels, each with its own degree of effectivity. It is suggested that within it there is a strong and healthy co-operation between capitalism and the structures of both sexual and racial domination. The household is one site of their interpenetration. Sexual and racial domination have a relative autonomy, but are determined 'in the last instance' by the economic level of the capitalist mode of production. Thus women's experience of patriarchy (institutionalised sexual domination) is defined by their location in the class structure. Class power, defined by different access to the means of production, is the basis of power in capitalist society. As Poulantzas has stressed, power relations are not reducible to class relations, but "these relations always have a class pertinency."[72] In South Africa racial as well as sexual domination operate through class relations.

Recent marxist-feminist writing has stressed the need for such historically specific analysis. Beechey suggests that "the forms of patriarchy which exist in particular social formations and social institutions have to be investigated."[73] Middleton points out that the domestic labour debate "has been conducted at a very high level of theoretical abstraction with little regard for historical variations in the form of capitalism."[74] This is a serious weakness. Questions such as the relation between domestic labour and the value of labour power can only be posed at the level of concrete class practices within a specific social formation. By the same terms Molyneux has effectively argued the case for moving beyond the narrow focus of the domestic labour debate. She writes,

> ...if the main theoretical object is to conceptualise the material significance of the domestic sphere, then the emphasis must be shifted from the level of the capitalist mode of production to the level of determinate

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72. N. Poulantzas, State, Power Socialism (London: NLB, 1978), p.43.

73. V. Beechey, 'Feminist Theory', Education and Development. A Collection of papers presented at the Education and Development conference held at the University of Cape Town, July, 1979 (Cape Town: NUSAS, 1979), p.148.

74. C. Middleton, 'Sexual Divisions in Feudalism', New Left Review, Nos.113-4, January-April, 1979, p.148.

> social formations and their reproduction. In addition instead of narrowly concentrating on domestic labour, the analysis could usefully be expanded to include consideration of the broader significance of the household and the relations within it for the wider society, without losing sight of the specific position of women within these structures. 75

An implication is that further understanding of the relation of domestic labour to capitalism should be based on an investigation of the household in specific social formations. It is hoped that this study will contribute in a small way towards such an understanding. The case of South Africa shows how the existence of a cheap, unorganised black working force means that the responsibility for the reproduction and maintenance of labour power can be displaced from members of the dominant class onto women of the subordinate class. Furthermore, it is suggested that the household is the site of important contradictions in the South African social formation.

III. DOMESTIC SERVANTS IN THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa black women do the bulk of domestic work. Through this work they maintain existing workers, reproduce new workers, fulfil the major consuming functions of the family and play an important part in the socialisation of children. Black women perform this domestic labour on a dual level. They are responsible for these functions in their own households, and fulfil a large part of these functions in the households of the dominant class and in those of the white working class as domestic servants.

Their domestic labour is important to the perpetuation of the existing order benefiting capital, men and white women. However neither the domestic work they perform as housewives nor as domestic servants is productive labour. The domestic servant is not a productive worker "even though employed by the capitalist, because the labor of the

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75. Molyneux, 1979: 22.

servant is exchanged not against capital but against revenue. The capitalist who hires servants is not making profits but spending them."[76] And the worker who hires servants is spending part of his wages. Marx makes it very clear that the domestic servant does not produce value.

> ...the cook does not replace for me (the private person) the fund from which I pay her because I buy her labour not as a value-creating element but purely for the sake of its use value. Her labour as little replaces for me the fund with which I pay for it, that is, her wages, as for example, the dinner I eat in the hotel in itself enables me to buy and eat the same dinner again a second time. [77]

Thus the employers of domestic servants are engaging in unproductive consumption.[78]

While domestic servants are unproductive workers, the institution of domestic service has a crucial importance. The structures which control the distribution of power and resources in the South African social formation define the relationship between whites and blacks as "a master servant relationship in all spheres, enforced through a variety of effective controls and sanctions."[79] There is thus a very real sense in which the institution of domestic service is a microcosm of the inequality which is refracted through the entire social order. However the institution also contributes to these inequalities through its role in reproducing the existing relations of domination and subordination.

Firstly, domestic servants provide services which are essential for the maintenance and reproduction of labour power, both on a daily and a generational basis, for which there are no substitutes provided in a comparatively cheap quantity by either capital or the state.

Secondly, the employment of domestic servants releases white women for employment in the labour market. The participation of white women in

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76. Braverman, 1974: 412.

77. K. Marx, Theories of Surplus Value. Part I (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1968), p.165.

78. An exception to this is the domestic servant who produces the commodities sold through Home Industries. She produces a profit for her employer. See below, chapter 5.

79. F. Johnstone, 'White Prosperity and White Supremacy in South Africa Today', African Affairs, Vol.69, No.275, April, 1970, p.136.

the labour market in South Africa has been steadily increasing so that by 1981 they will comprise 37 percent of the white labour force.[80] They are largely employed in the service sector as salesworkers, typists and office workers where their wages are considerably higher than those paid to their domestic servants.[81] Domestic servants also release many white housewives from their domestic 'duties' making a more leisurely life style possible.

Thirdly, the institution of domestic service has an ideological function which operates in two directions. On the one hand, it socializes whites into the dominant ideological order. Often it is the only significant inter-racial contact whites experience, and they experience this relationship in extremely asymmetrical terms. Many white South African children learn the attitudes and practices of racial domination from domestic relationships with servants, particularly 'nannies'. On the other hand, it is shown below how domestic service socializes blacks into a normative rejection of their subordinate position in society.[82] According to Steve Biko's sister, the founder of 'Black Consciousness' first became 'politicised' through observing the exploitation to which his mother was subject as a domestic servant.[83] At the same time their occupational socialization involves the adoption of a mask of deference in order to conform to employer expectations and manipulative practices. The question must then be posed: does the institution of domestic service contain tensions in this social formation through the promoting of deference relationships which exact feelings of loyalty and gratitude? If this was the case domestic service could be said to undermine solidarity among the oppressed by linking them as individuals to their

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80. Professor Swart, 'How the Wiehahn Report Affects Women', UNISA Seminar, Reported in the Sunday Times, 28.9.1979.

81. It might be argued in an extension of Seccombe's analysis, that the labour of the domestic servant becomes part of the congealed mass of past labour embodied in the labour power of the employer who is also a wage worker. Thus the value the domestic servant creates would be realised as one part of the value labour power achieves as a commodity when it is sold by her employer. However Smith has shown that Seccombe's position is ultimately untenable.

82. See below, chapter 4, 'The Self Imagery of Domestic Workers'.

83. Personal communication from Biko's sister, Nobandile Mvovo.

oppressors.[84] It might then afford a fragile bridge across the contradictions of a social formation based on racism and exploitation. However the self imagery of domestic workers reported below suggests that the institution of domestic service inflames rather than dissipates such tensions.

The role of the domestic servant in these functions is best illustrated diagramatically.

Figure 1. The role of domestic work in the reproduction of labour power and the relations of production.[85]

C indicates a function where paid domestic labour makes a contribution in some households; R indicates that the function is usually the paid domestic servant's responsibility in many white South African households.

(a) Labour power reproduced	Domestic labour required
1. Physical maintenance	Pregnancy and childbirth Childcare C Cleaning R Cooking R Washing R Shopping C Sewing and mending C
2. Psychological maintenance	Tension absorption and promotion of cordial family relations C Sexual relations
(b) Relations of production	Domestic labour required
Ideological maintenance	Child socialization C Social control

84. Genovese has analysed the paternalism of the American slave-holding south in these terms. E. Genovese, Roll, Jordan Roll. The World the Slaves made (London: Andre Deutsch, 1975).

85. Adapted from Seccombe, 1974: 14.

In its transformation into a predominantly black female occupation, domestic service also reflects changing patterns of racial and sexual domination. Marx observed that capitalism,

> develops a hierarchy of labour powers to which there corresponds a scale of wages. If, on the one hand, the individual labourers are appropriated and annexed for life by a limited function; on the other hand, the various operations of the hierarchy are parcelled out among the labourers according to both their natural and their acquired abilities. 86

'Natural and acquired abilities' are subject to racial and sexual determinations.

> Racism and sexism train us to acquire and develop certain capabilities at the expense of all others. Then these acquired abilities are taken to be our nature and fix our functions for life, and fix also the quality of our mutual relations. So planting cane or tea is not a job for white people, and changing nappies is not a job for men...[87]

In the institution of domestic service sexual and racial hierarchies are fused. Domestic work is inappropriate to men; unskilled work is inappropriate to whites. Chapter six shows how, starting on the Eastern Frontier in the nineteenth century we see the articulation between two particular ideologies - those of domesticity and domestication - and a set of economic relations.

Finally, the institution of domestic service absorbs considerable numbers of largely unskilled workers. It thus takes up some of the surplus labour power of those who cannot gain wage employment in the dominant levels of the economy. It could also be viewed as a category of 'disguised underemployment' in that earnings are abnormally low, and of 'visible underemployment' in the case of domestic servants who are involuntarily restricted to part-time jobs.[88]

The implication is that the household and relations within it are of considerable significance in the South African social formation. The

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86. Marx, 1976: 469.

87. S. James, Sex, Race and Class (Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1975), p.4.

88. See Smith's division of underemployment into three categories. Quoted by Simkins in Simkins and Clarke, 1978.

household is also the site of important contradictions. It is the main site of the reproduction of the commodity, labour power, which is necessary to the capitalist accumulation process. The reproduction of labour power increasingly involves the transformation and consumption of commodities produced by capital. The purchase of these commodities increasingly draws women into social production as wage workers, which undermines the economic basis of the family. Many of these women are temporary and part-time workers who can be drawn into production in times of boom and are vulnerable to redundancy in periods of recession. Thus they constitute a flexible and disposable labour force - an important part of the industrial reserve army. Clearly, as Braverman points out, this situation of 'multiple job holding' generates strain and tensions in advanced capitalist societies.[89] In South Africa this tension is alleviated for white women through the employment of domestic servants. It is aggravated for the black women propelled into domestic service by the need to support their families, and who suffer most from inadequate child care provisions by the state. There is a sense in which domestic servants are squeezed between two households: their own and their employers'. Their subordinate status as servants, and the long working hours exacted by their employers, means that they are full members of neither.

It is possible that the household acts as a source of the reserve army of labour in a double sense: firstly for white married women who comprise an important part of the 'floating' relative surplus population; and secondly for black women who comprise an important part of the 'stagnant' relative surplus population, those irregularly employed in domestic service, living close to subsistence levels in an occupation characterised "by a maximum of working time and a minimum of wages."[90] For those black women in the homelands mainly involved in agriculture, forming part of the 'latent' relative surplus population, domestic service has represented an escape route from harsh, grinding poverty; a strategy for survival in an increasingly complex social formation.[91]

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89. Braverman, 1974: 397.

90. Marx, 1976: 796.

91. However the recent tightening up of influx control means that this strategy is increasingly blocked for them. See Chapter Seven, 'Discrimination on the Basis of Race and Sex'.

This suggests an analogy between the homelands and the home in the political economy of South Africa. Both might be said to operate as important sites of the maintenance and reproduction of labour power, and as sources of the reserve army of labour. Both blacks and women may be paid wages below the value of labour power because both groups have less training and are assumed to have access to means of subsistence apart from the wage. It might even be argued that both the home and the homelands are structured on the existence of non-capitalist modes of production - the homelands on the African redistributive mode and the home on a 'client mode'[92] or a 'domestic mode of production'.[93] While the positing of a separate domestic or client mode of production is dubious, it is clear that increasing capitalist penetration has underlined both 'economies'.[94] The collapse of the homeland economies after about 1920 has eroded the economic basis of cheap migrant labour power.[95] Capitalist penetration into the home has increasingly drawn women into wage labour in a direct and visible relation with capital. This has eroded the material basis of the family. The result is that the social control function of the homelands and the home is increasingly significant.

IV. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Objectives

The study had three main objectives:

(1) Firstly to describe the situation of domestic workers in contemporary South Africa generally, and specifically that of a random sample of domestic workers employed in private white households in an area of the Eastern Cape commonly described as 'Settler country'. This involved obtaining data on:

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92. J. Harrison, 'The Political Economy of Housework', Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists, Vol.4, 1973, p.40.

93. C. Delphy, The Main Enemy (London: Women's Research and Resource Centre, 1976).

94. Homeland production while originally a mode of production, now remains only as a pre-capitalist form of production. Domestic work is also a form of production. As forms of production dominated by the capitalist mode they are both characterised by a high unpaid labour content.

95. Wolpe, 1972.

(a) the working conditions of domestic servants, their extra-occupational lives, their relationship with their employers, and their subjective perceptions of themselves and their situation.

(b) the part played by domestic servants in the organisation of the home, their employers' account of their working conditions, the employers' perception of their relationship with their servants, and the employers' subjective perception of themselves and their situation. Specifically I wanted to investigate the extent to which the employment of domestic servants freed these women from their domestic role, and enabled them to engage in extra-domestic activities.

I hypothesized that domestic servants are subject to 'ultra-exploitation' in their deprivation of reasonable working hours, of a just and negotiated wage, of family and social life, of respectful treatment and the acknowledgement of the dignity of their labour, of specific legal protection, of membership in an effective worker organisation and of effective bargaining power.

(2) Secondly to give a brief historical overview showing the roots of this exploitation in the treatment of domestic servants by the initial European settlers in the Eastern Cape.

(3) Thirdly to analyse the structures which have created the powerlessness, or 'ultra-exploitability' of domestic servants and the mechanisms by which this is maintained.

Area of investigation

I intended the geographical area of the study to approximate that of the Zuurveld, the area of the Eastern Cape in which the British settlers of 1820 were chiefly located.[96] The area chosen was that covered by the Albany and Bathurst Divisional Councils. This forms a kind of triangle, the apex of which is Grahamstown, the sides of which are the Fish and Bushmen rivers, and the base the sea. This is essentially colonial country. It was the cockpit of four Frontier Wars, and a frontier area in the social, cultural and economic, as well as the military sense.

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96. G. Cory, The Rise of South Africa (London: Longmans, 1910-1930), 5 vols. Vol.II, p.63.

The choice of this area ensured that representatives of both rural and urban areas were included. In the rural areas there is a wide variety of agricultural undertakings, with beef and dairy cattle, pineapples, chicory, citrus and mixed farming being the chief activities. The area includes two urban centres: Grahamstown, Irhini in Xhosa, is an educational centre. It has a population of over 35 000 Xhosa speaking people, along with 7 000 'Coloureds' and 11 000 Whites. Port Alfred is a holiday resort with only a fishing industry, a small White community of 2 000, and almost 9 000 Blacks.

Both are non-industrial towns and are sometimes said to be unique in their large Black populations and lack of employment opportunities. However Nyquist shows that Grahamstown is quite typical of smaller cities when evaluated as part of a sample of 16 small cities from a total of 32 with populations between 15 000 and 49 000 scattered throughout the four provinces of South Africa.[97] Further, as the historian W. Macmillan, wrote of Grahamstown many years ago:

> ...from all I can learn of wages and conditions elsewhere I believe it is easy to exaggerate the difference between this and any other country town, and make this an excuse for regarding our own case as peculiarly insoluble.[98]

Sixty years later his words are still peculiarly apt. Both the urban centres in the study seem to be quite typical of South Africa's smaller cities and coastal resorts.

Research Procedure

The research techniques were deliberately varied and combined several methods:

(1) A search of historical sources. Here I was fortunate to have access to old diaries, newspapers, letters, housekeeping account books and other family papers which are stored in the Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University;

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97. For a detailed discussion, see T.E. Nyquist, 'Criticisms of Grahamstown as a Locus of Research', pp.23-28, in African Middle Class Elite (Grahamstown: I.S.E.R., 1969-70), unpublished research project.

98. W.M. Macmillan, Economic conditions in a non-industrial South African town (Grahamstown: Grocott and Sherry, 1915), p.7.

(2) Participant observation in the home-work setting;

(3) The routine perusal of statistics and the available literature on domestic workers;

(4) A random sample survey, which was the most important source of data. This involved 225 interviews with domestic workers and employers using interview schedules.

The interviews attempted to combine the richness of case studies with the comparability of survey interviews.[99] The most appropriate research instrument appeared to be the semi-structural interview questionnaire. This technique allows for a level of spontaneity while ensuring a high degree of comparability between one interview and another. The framing of questions was standardised and thus the same substantive material was covered in all the interviews in order to produce quantifiable data.

The questions were first framed in terms of five informal interviews with key informants in the community. These were women with an extensive knowledge of the community and the general situation of domestic workers. A draft was then prepared and discussed with some colleagues and friends. On the basis of their criticisms an amended draft was then tested in the field in a pilot study.

The pilot survey consisted of 15 interviews conducted during July 1978. The purpose of the pilot survey was mainly to test the suitability of the questions on the respondents. On the basis of these sources of preliminary information, the final interview schedules were constructed.

Three different interview schedules were used:

(i) 125 domestic workers were briefly interviewed by me using a structured interview schedule focusing on objective aspects of their work situation. (This is reproduced in Appendix I.)

(ii) 50 domestic workers were interviewed in depth by a field worker using a semi-structured interview schedule which focused on both

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99. See chapter 7 of C. Selldítz, M. Jahoda, M. Deutsch and S. Cook, 'Data Collection. 11 Questionnaires and Interviews', pp.235-279. Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1959. Revised one-volume edition).

objective and subjective aspects of their situation. (See Appendix II.)

(iii) 50 employers of domestic servants were interviewed in depth by me using a semi-structured interview schedule which similarly focused on both objective and subjective aspects. (See Appendix III.)

Interview schedules (ii) and (iii) combined open-ended and fixed choice questions. It was surmised that many of the respondents would not have clearly formulated opinions on many of the issues. To avoid a forced statement of opinion and elicit a free response it was decided to keep some of the questions open-ended. The questions followed a psychological rather than a logical sequence. 'Touchy' questions were placed towards the end of the interview schedule.[100] As Madge writes, "the principal application of the interview in social science is its use for the purpose of making people talk about themselves."[101] The interviewer insisted on complete privacy with the respondent, where this was practicable, in order to encourage an atmosphere in which candour was possible. In the interview with employers some excluded their husbands reluctantly, while others seemed to enjoy doing so - "this is woman's talk." The task of the interviewer was to encourage the respondent to talk freely and fully in response to the questions included in the interview schedule and to make a verbatim record of her replies. This was done with the use of a tape-recorder or shorthand notes.

Experience in the pilot study revealed that a considerable degree of rapport was necessary for a satisfactory interview on the subjects covered, especially those which involved attitudes and emotions. This rapport was established in most cases largely because both interviewers are themselves part of the culture they were exploring. The 50 domestic workers who were studied in depth were interviewed by my field worker who is a Black, Xhosa-speaking woman, from this area, with little formal education, and herself a part-time domestic worker. She was chosen because of these attributes. It was felt that a more educated

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100. See W.J. Goode and P.K. Hatt, Methods in Social Research (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), p.195.

101. J. Madge, The Tools of Social Science (London: Longmans, 1965), p.150.

person might have inhibited the respondents. Her personal qualities of warmth and compassion went a long way to establish trust in her respondents. Indeed, the insights she has elicited on extremely delicate and thorny topics is the most effective tribute to her skill in the interview situation.

Similarly the writer is part of the cultural world of the employers interviewed. I am White, middle-class, of 1820 Settler descent and have lived most of my life in the Eastern Cape. These attributes contributed to overcoming initial suspicion. It is doubtful whether an 'outsider' would have achieved the same results. In addition some time was spent at the beginning of each interview establishing rapport by exchanging small pieces of conversational information. Certain questions were included in the interview schedule specifically to reinforce such rapport; for example asking the employers to name the two television programmes they enjoyed the most. This usually elicited some discussion. I followed Beatrice Webb's maxim, "accept what is offered", and tried not to rush away after the interview session. I often stayed for tea, to chat, look through photographs and scrap books, see over the garden and so on. The depth interviews lasted two hours on average.

The interview schedules were carefully coded, and each question checked for accuracy and reliability before tabulation of the results.

Research Difficulties

At many points in the field work I felt that this was a study in guilt and fear. The fear was expressed largely by the domestic workers. Several refused to be interviewed at work without their employers' permission, and others were reluctant to be interviewed at all for fear of repercussions from their employers. The guilt was expressed in the response of several employers.

During the pilot survey I introduced myself by saying I was investigating the situation of domestic servants. This provoked a 25 percent refusal rate. The refusals varied from hostility: "Haven't you anything better to do?" "Whatever next...No, I'm too busy" to employers who denied that they employed domestic servants at all. In several cases these women avoided my eye and were unwilling to open their doors very far. I had the impression that they were lying, and were simply unwilling to be interviewed. One woman said proudly that she did not

employ servants because she preferred to be self-reliant and do her own work. It was subsequently reported to me that this woman "could not keep a servant." She had employed a series of servants who left because she "was always chasing after them", and at the time she was approached was employing a servant she had engaged two months previously. On the basis of employers' responses in the pilot survey I changed my method of introduction and said I was doing a study "on the position of women and the organisation of the home." This introduction proved far more successful and in the survey proper only three employers refused to be interviewed.

The largest source of difficulty in the study came in arranging interviews with workers without their employers' knowledge. The importance of this was underlined in the pilot study where one domestic reported to the field worker that her employer had subjected her to abuse

> "She shouted at me for telling your madam what I earn.
> She said I should have said it's none of her business."

I was aware of the difficulties experienced by previous researchers on other 'delicate' topics in the Eastern Cape. For example, in her study on farm labour, Roberts found that "the large majority of farmers were not prepared to co-operate with any attempt to interview their labour on conditions of work and work preferences."[102] Studies of domestic workers in other areas reported similar difficulties. For instance, in her study of domestic workers in a Rhodesian community, Weinrich reported that some employers looked on her research with disfavour. "They feared that if servants were asked questions, they would begin to think of themselves as important people and become insubordinate."[103] Similarly, in her Durban study, Preston-Whyte reported that "lack of understanding, suspicion and mistrust of the motives of the study were rife" and many employers were uncooperative.[104] For these reasons, while the initial contact was made by the researcher at the servants' place of work, all the depth interviews took place at the servants'

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102. M. Roberts, Farm Labour in the Eastern Cape (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1959), p.5.

103. A.K. Weinrich, Mucheke: race, status and politics in a Rhodesian Community (Paris: UNESCO, 1976), p.216.

104. Preston-Whyte, 1969: 14.

home. These were often extremely difficult to arrange because many of them had little free time.

A further source of difficulty lay in discrepancies in information given. I expected a discrepancy between information given by employers and that given by their workers. This was reported by Roberts who found that "on a number of farms the picture painted by workers of their conditions of work was certainly less rosy than that conveyed by their employers."[105] For this reason the workers' and employers' responses were calculated separately. The employers' accounts of the wages and working hours of their workers did differ from those of the workers themselves.

Period of investigation

The domestic workers and employers were interviewed during a nine-month period, between August 1978 and February 1979. The historical research was started in July 1976. The project will thus have taken four years to complete.

The Sampling Frame

The universe of the study consisted of White households in the Divisional Council areas of Albany and Bathurst. The areas and populations covered are as follows:

Table 1. Albany Divisional Council Area, 1976

Population	European	Coloured Asiatic	Bantu	Total
Rural	1 803	1 301	28 240	31 344
Urban	14 080	5 511	33 101	52 692

Table 2. Bathurst Divisional Council Area, 1976

Population	European	Coloured Asiatic	Bantu	Total
Rural	1 859	145	23 149	25 153
Urban	2 974	1 025	7 613	11 612

105. Roberts, 1959: 5-6.

The number of households in the area was computed by dividing the total population by the average household size. According to the 1970 Census there are 3,7 persons per household for the White population of South Africa. This gave a total of 487,3 White households in rural Albany, 3 805,4 White households in urban Albany, 502,4 White households in rural Bathurst and 803,8 White households in urban Bathurst.

The distribution of the population in the area thus involved the following population proportions in the sample of 225 households:

Table 3. Sample Proportions

Area	Short Domestic servant interview schedule	Depth Domestic servant interview schedule	Depth Employer interview schedule
Rural Albany	9	3	3
Urban Albany	85	35	35
Rural Bathurst	12	5	5
Urban Bathurst	19	7	7
Total	125	50	50

The study involved the use of a random multi-stage stratified systematic sample from lists.

Sample Frames

The samples were drawn from four sample frames:

(i) White household electricity accounts in Grahamstown. This involved drawing 155 addresses from almost over 3 000. Every 22nd address was taken. This constituted the urban Albany sample.

(ii) White household electricity accounts in Port Alfred. This involved drawing 33 addresses from almost 800. Every 24th address was taken. This constituted the urban Bathurst sample.

(iii) Veterinary services list of farmers in the Albany district. This involved drawing 15 addresses from 528 farms and small holdings. Every 35th address was taken. This constituted the rural Albany sample.

(iv) Veterinary services list of farmers in the Bathurst district. This involved drawing 22 addresses from 360 farms and small holdings. Every 16th address was taken. This constituted the rural Bathurst sample.

A reserve list of the same number for each stratum was made by listing the preceding address, in the event of the researcher being unable to make contact with the employer at the original address.

These sampling frames were chosen because they were taken to be the most inclusive of the universe under investigation. The most obvious sampling frame to use, and certainly an easier one, would have been the numbers of registered domestic workers in European households in the area. However this would have excluded the unregistered workers who, it was suspected, constitute a large number, especially in Grahamstown. This was not tested in the study because it could have been used to serve the interests of the officials who administer the influx control regulations. This problem highlights the considerable dangers in social science research. As Nicolaus warns,

> Sociologists stand guard in the garrison and report to its masters on the movement of the occupied populace. The more adventurous sociologists don the disguise of the people and go out to mix with the peasants in the 'field', returning with books and articles that break the protective secrecy in which a subjugated population wraps itself, and make it more accessible to manipulation and control. [106]

This is not the aim of my study.

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106. M. Nicolaus, 'Sociology Liberation Movement', in T. Pateman (ed.), Counter Course (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), p.39.

The representativeness of the sample

A sample of 175 domestic servants and 50 employers is undoubtedly small. Are generalizations from the sample population warranted? There is a widespread tendency in social science to assume that a large sample provides some guarantee of reliable results, while a small one suggests unreliability. This is a misconception which is

> based on a naive idea of what constitutes 'validity' and 'reliability' in research procedure. Statistical representativeness is not, of course assured simply by means of large numbers; a large sample running into several hundreds or thousands may be selected in a way which makes it unrepresentative of the general population, while a small sample, may conversely meet more precisely the criterion of representativeness. [107]

Oakley stresses that "every research study needs to be assessed on the criterion of whether it measures up to its own stated objectives."[108] Her sample consisted of 40 London housewives. She writes

> For the goals of mapping out an area, describing a field and connecting events, processes or characteristics which appear to go together, a sample of forty individuals is certainly adequate. This kind of taxonomic approach may, perfectly appropriately, give rise to explanatory hypotheses, and particular, well-defined hypotheses may also be tested with samples of this size. In Theory and Methods of Social Research Johan Galtung makes a useful distinction between a 'substantive' hypothesis 'which is about social reality and to be tested by means of the data', and a 'generalization' hypothesis 'which is about the data'. The question as to whether a specific hypothesis is confirmed or not confirmed by the data is in principle different from the issue of whether the research findings can be generalized to a wider population. For testing substantive hypotheses Galtung considers a sample of forty perfectly acceptable (the criterion being the minimum number of cases required for statistical tests to be applicable). On the other hand, to be on the safe side for the purposes of generalization, a sample size of around eight hundred individuals is needed. [109]

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107. A. Oakley, The Sociology of Housework (London: Martin Robinson, 1974), p.31.

108. Ibid., p.33.

109. Ibid.

Oakley points out that important contributions to sociological knowledge have been made using data from small samples. For instance Bott's influential study Family and Social Network, is based on interviews with twenty couples. Hannah Gavron's The Captive Wife is based on ninety-six interviews and Oakley's own study is based on only forty London housewives. This study sets out to describe and explain a situation of exploitation. In the analysis of the data which follows, the conclusions drawn about domestic workers in the Eastern Cape do, strictly speaking, apply only to the research sample. However, as Oakley stresses in her own study, there is no reason to believe that the sample is unrepresentative.

Moser identifies three sources of bias in sample selection: the use of a sampling frame which does not cover the population accurately; the use of a 'non-random' method of sampling so that the selection of subjects is consciously or unconsciously affected by human judgement; and the refusal to co-operate among segments of the chosen population.[110] In terms of these criteria there is no evidence that the sample is unrepresentative of the wider population in any way.

There are also questions of the researcher's responsibility involved here. "The researcher who cautiously confines his conclusions to those strictly justified by the data may be safe from criticism, but he is not making his own full potential contribution."[111] Oakley goes on to say:

> It would be shirking one's responsibility not to speculate on how one's own findings may or may not be generalizable beyond the research universe. Important connections to draw are those between one's own findings and the conclusions of other, related research. These are broadly the approaches I adopt. I also operate with the assumption that, although my results pertain strictly only to the sample of forty housewives I interviewed, there is no reason why they should not relate to the wider population of housewives, since it cannot be shown that the forty women are unrepresentative of the larger population.[112]

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110. C.A. Moser, Survey Methods in Social Investigation (London: Heinemann, 1958), p.73.

111. Oakley, 1974: 35.

112. Ibid., p.36.

This study adopts the same approach. No pretentious claims are made to portray the situation of the 'typical' domestic servant. However, there is no reason to suppose that the 50 employers and 175 domestic servants interviewed are unrepresentative of the larger population. In spite of the small size of the sample the results are probably representative of the area under investigation. Thus while the results pertain strictly to that sample, evidence from other studies and sources is used to argue that domestic servants are an ultra-exploited group of workers, and that their ultra-exploitability derives from the constraints operating on Blacks and women generally in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2

THE EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

"I have been a slave all my life."

- Domestic worker, January 1979.

> One of the first things I noticed when I landed was that I was immediately dependent on the services of men and women who are not of my own colour. I felt I was in a slave state, and that, too, the very worst sort of slave state. I mean the sort in which the slaves are not owned by masters responsible for their welfare, nor protected by stringent laws from ill-treatment, but one in which they are nominally like white people, and can be thrown into the streets to starve, without pensions, or public relief when nobody happens to need their services, or when they are old and are displaced by the young. [1]

Domestic service is widespread in South Africa. All the White households in my sample employed domestic workers on either a full-time or part-time basis. Many of these workers perceived themselves as slaves. This chapter will show that they are an extremely insecure group of workers, who lack fundamental workers' rights and work for long hours at extremely low wages for employers, many of whom are indifferent to their welfare. It will attempt to show how domestic workers are 'frozen' in a condition of subjugation and immobility within which they are subject to exploitation. Their exploitation in the words of John Rex, is sometimes "suggestive of slavery."[2]

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1. George Bernard Shaw, April 1932, in a message to South Africa broadcast from Cape Town on the eve of his departure from the country. Quoted in F. Wilson and D. Perrot (eds.), Outlook on a Century, 1870-1970 (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, Spro-Cas, 1973), p.563.

2. Rex points to a number of aspects of the domestic servant's situation in colonial contexts which are 'suggestive of slavery'. J. Rex, Race Relations in Sociological Theory (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p.54.

Two Case Histories

Mavis[3] is a domestic worker and the mother of two young children. She earns R28 a month and works an 80-hour week. The only time she sees her children is during her 'off' on Sunday afternoons. The time she goes off varies because she must serve and wash up her employer's Sunday lunch. Sometimes, when there are guests, she gets off as late as 3.30 p.m., but usually it is earlier. She sleeps in because her employer, a widow, is too nervous to sleep alone. Even on Sundays she must return to her work place to sleep.

Mavis is devoted to her husband, and is extremely anxious that her marriage seems to be breaking up. Her husband is not allowed to sleep over with her, but he used to do so occasionally. He is now involved with a young nurse.

Mavis is 38 years old and has worked for the same employer for eight years. She has not had a holiday during that period. She is given the occasional day off "to attend a funeral". She dreads the holiday season because then her employer's married daughter and her three small children come to stay, which means a good deal of extra work for Mavis.

She says the worst things about her job are not having time to be with her husband and children and her employer's constant joking about how fat she is. She has no hobbies or interests and spends her evenings alone in her room making grass mats which she sells. She cannot belong to any voluntary associations and says she does not see other people much. Her social life consists of conversations with other servants in the neighbourhood on the afternoons when her employer is out playing bridge.

She finds no satisfaction in her work, but feels a good deal of compassion for her employer who is elderly and has poor sight. She feels trapped in her present job by pity and by the lack of any viable alternatives. She expects, though, that she will have to go on working until her children are educated. It is a source of considerable distress to her that her children see so little of her. She fears

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3. All the names have been changed to protect the informants.

"they do not think of me as their mother." Her employer is the widow of a retired professional man and is actively involved in community work.

Elsie, aged 42, has been a domestic servant all her working life, having started at the age of 12 as a 'nanny'. She earns R25 a month and works a 66-hour week. She has no day off and has had one week's holiday in the four years she has worked for her present employer. She spends about two hours each day walking to and from work. At home, she spends most of her time doing her own domestic work. She has three children. Her husband is a contract worker in Port Elizabeth, and comes home for one month each year.

She says the worst thing about her job is that she "has to live on the smell of meat". She is given bread, tea, jam and mealie meal, and occasionally manages to steal a piece of meat out of the cooking pot when making stew for her employer's family. She jokes that she much prefers cooking stew to steak or chops, for this reason.

She describes her employer as "a chameleon, she changes from day to day." But overall, "I don't think she has any feelings for me. She looks down on me and shouts at me in front of her children." Her employer, married to a successful professional man in Grahamstown, describes her as "one of the family". Elsie sees herself as "a slave in the house" and talks a good deal about the difficulty of having to look after two families. Her hopes for the future centre on her children.

'Mavis' and 'Elsie' are two domestic workers encountered in a random sample of domestic servants in the Eastern Cape. There is no reason to suppose that they are atypical.

In order to establish that domestic workers like them are among the most exploited occupational groups in South Africa, seven aspects of their situation will be described: their wages, working hours, status in the community, family and social lives, their level of job satisfaction, their relationship with their employers, and their rights as workers.

1. Wages

"Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a master in heaven."

- Colossians 4:1

This was quoted to me by a Baptist minister who pays his servant R48 a month. He expressed considerable concern about the wages paid to domestic servants in the Eastern Cape. In his view 'a just wage' is an essential starting point for people who are trying to organise their lives around Christian principles. Although the majority of the employers I interviewed claim to be Christians and belong to a church, few pay their domestic servants a 'living', let alone a 'just' wage.

In my sample of 225 households, wages ranged from R4 (in two cases) to R60 (one case) a month. Of the 175 domestic worker informants, 157 were full-time workers as defined by a working week of at least 40 hours. They earned an average (arithmetic mean) of R22,77 per month. The mode was R24,57 and the median R24,46. The average calculated from the employers' answers was somewhat higher. The employer sample included 36 full-time workers. One employer refused to answer this question.[4] The average of the 35 answers given by employers was R24,62 a month.

Table 4. Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Monthly Wages of Full-time Domestic Workers

Monthly wages in Rands	No. of workers	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
0 - 9	11	7,0	7,0
10 - 19	38	24,2	31,2
20 - 29	66	42,0	73,2
30 - 39	32	20,4	93,6
40 - 49	5	3,2	96,8
50 - 59	4	2,5	99,3
60	1	0,6	99,9
Total	157	99,9	

4. In fact I had expected more refusals, but this question was strategically placed in the interview, at a time when good rapport had usually been established with the respondent.

This table shows that almost three-quarters of the full-time domestic workers in the sample earn below R30 a month.

In only five cases was this the wage the servant received when she started working for her present employer. In one case the worker had started at R3 a month and was now earning R30 a month, after 17 years service. In another the increase was from R5 to R22, after 20 years service with the same employer; in another from R8 to R35 after 25 years service.

Only in seven cases was this wage increased regularly every year. The remainder received irregular increases in their wage, and not one worker knew how much it would be increased by during the next year. As one worker expressed it, "she gives me an increase when she feels like it."

Several of the servants said that they were too afraid of losing their jobs to ask for an increase.

> "I tried complaining that I cannot afford my children's school fees, but she said she is also struggling. I am afraid she will sack me if I speak again."

Others said they had given up trying to ask for increased wages:

> "I always wait until she gives me an increase. Once when I tried to ask for an increase she told me in a low voice that I must never ask for an increase. I must just wait, because her husband never asked for an increase when he was employed by other people. He worked hard until he got himself his own job. Now he has a garage of his own."
>
> "I was told I must never ask for an increase because her husband does not ask for an increase at Fort England."

In the Eastern Cape there seems to be no bargaining over wages when the domestic worker is initially employed. This reflects their atomised, vulnerable position as workers. In 74 percent of the depth sample the worker was told by her employer what she would be paid. In the remaining 26 percent of the depth sample the worker started work without knowing how much she would be paid; she simply waited until the end of the month to see what her first payment would be. Overall, wages appear to be settled entirely by the employer, in a haphazard way decidedly disadvantageous to the worker.[5]

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5. In fact the domestic worker is in much the same position as Elsie, the domestic worker in Arnold Bennett's novel, Riceyman

It is significant that Stewart's Xhosa Phrase Book and Vocabulary, first printed in 1899 and reprinted in 1906 and 1976, contains a section entitled "About work in the House" in which wage negotiation proceeds as follows:

> "What wages do you want?"
>
> "I want sixteen shillings a month."
>
> OR "I want a pound a month."
>
> "That is too much; I cannot give that, till I see how you work."
>
> "What will you give me?"
>
> "I will give you fourteen shillings a month and your food."
>
> "I agree to that." [6]

Clearly the manner in which the starting wage is arrived at reflects the vulnerability and powerlessness of the worker vis-à-vis her employer. Whisson and Weil point out that this fixing of wages by the employer without consultation with the worker is "the 'traditional relationship' in South Africa. The employer states the terms and the employee accepts them without attempting to negotiate."[7] The domestic worker can hardly do so, as she is trapped within a structure of constraints which leave her little choice of alternative employment or life style.

Two arguments are frequently heard to justify the payment of such low cash wages: one to do with the unskilled nature of the work involved; and the other with payment 'in kind'.

Steps. Her employer, Mr Earlforward is about to marry Mrs Arb who opens the conversation:
"Now, I expect Mr Earlforward's settled your wages with you."
"No, 'm."
"Not said anything at all?"
"No, 'm. But it'll be all right."
"Now what wages do you want, Elsie?"
"I prefer to leave it to you, 'm."
"Well of course, Elsie, being a 'general' is a very different thing from being a char. You have a good home and all your food. And a regular situation..." Her wage was settled at £20 a year. A. Bennett, Riceyman Steps (London: Cassell, 1959 edition), p.81.

6. J. Stewart, Xhosa Phrase Book and Vocabulary (Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1899, 1976), pp.18-19. I am grateful to Janet Shapiro for drawing my attention to this passage.

7. Whisson and Weil, 1971: 3.

Both these arguments present difficulties. In the first case it must be stressed that domestic labour is not a simple commodity. While it is traditionally regarded as an unskilled occupation, in fact there is an enormous range in the demands made upon the worker, the skills expected, the knowledge assumed, and the trust and responsibility involved. While one employer may expect her worker to do only the simplest of cleaning work, another may require of her extremely complicated and personal services.

The majority of the domestic workers in the Eastern Cape depth sample, 84 percent, did general domestic work. Only six percent did no cooking. The workers interviewed demonstrated an extremely wide range of skills. Some seemed to be doing all the household work plus a range of jobs from cleaning the car, to doing the shopping, to bathing, brushing and walking the employer's dogs. A number of the employers, 20 percent, said they did no domestic work themselves and of those who said that they did, the amount was sometimes extremely limited. For example, one employer who said she did do domestic work, could only list 'tidying of drawers' when asked to specify her tasks. In one case where the worker did all the household work, this included shopping and ordering food over the telephone. For what should be considered the job of a housekeeper she was paid R18 a month.

The duties of domestic workers depend primarily on the size and wealth of the households in which they work, and on the number of workers employed. In small households many roles have to be combined. In the Eastern Cape study the average size of the employer's household was 3,9 persons; 47 lived in houses and three in flats. A small proportion included young children: two households had three children under six years of age, and four had two children under six years of age. The houses varied from extremely luxurious to small suburban. There were no slum dwellings in the sample. The size of the house varied as follows:

Table 5. Size of Employer Homes

Number of Rooms, excluding bathroom and kitchen	Number of Homes
3 - 4	13
5 - 6	25
7 - 8	10
9 - 10	2

In one of the two largest houses two workers were employed, but in the other only one worker, earning R22 a month. Sixteen households employed two workers and the rest only one.[8] Thus the one-worker household seems to be the norm, at least in the urban areas of the Eastern Cape. Most are 'maids of all work', often overburdened with a combination of drudgery and isolation.[9]

The drudgery is sometimes alleviated by modern household appliances. Most of the workers had access to hot water in the kitchen, and several households contained appliances such as polishers and vacuum cleaners. However, domestic workers are not always allowed to use these and this is often a source of grievance.

> "She does have a vacuum cleaner, but I am not allowed to use it. She said I will break it. I must kneel. She uses it when she is at home, then that day is a day of hell."

Another domestic worker who was not allowed to use the vacuum cleaner reported

> "She uses it when she wants to be a devil on me. I use a brush which does not clean as well as the machine.

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8. Van der Vliet and Bromberger found a maximum of three domestic servants per farm. E. van der Vliet and N. Bromberger, 'Farm Labour in the Albany district', in Wilson, Kooy and Hendrie (eds.), Farm Labour in South Africa (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1977), p.121.

9. There are many echoes here of Miss Matty's 'Martha' in Elizabeth Gaskill's Cranford (London: Dent, 1948).

> As soon as she takes that vacuum she says I do not clean properly. I don't know what she pays me for." [This worker was earning R10 a month.]

In the Eastern Cape, and throughout South Africa generally, payments 'in kind' are frequently used to legitimize low cash wages. Income in kind cannot be easily calculated. For example, payments in kind generally include food supplied, either full board for those living in, or meals at work for those living out. But, as Whisson and Weil point out, it is debatable whether this food should "be valued in terms of what it cost the employer, in terms of the value that it represents to the employer (for example, left-overs that might have been thrown away had the servant not eaten them)..." or in terms of what the worker would have spent on food of her choice.[10]

Writing of domestic service in nineteenth century Britain, Burnett focuses on the difficulty of estimating the real, as opposed to the money earnings of domestic servants.

> One of the major attractions of the occupation was that it normally offered board and lodging and, for men servants, livery when required, so that the wage was clear of out goings and available for spending, saving or other uses. [11]

Burnett implies that in the case of a live-in servant the cash wage is simply 'pocket money'. However, in the total Eastern Cape sample of 225 only 16 percent of the workers 'lived in'. Hence the 'pocket money' thesis is not generally applicable. Nevertheless it is a widely used rationalisation for the payment of low cash wages. For this reason Macmillan has termed it "the most pernicious pocket money theory". He writes

> I must insist on this as at the root of the most general type of poverty in the world, the poor and solitary woman, and I must insist I am blaming no individual, only a system based on lack of understanding. [12]

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10. Whisson and Weil, 1971: 19.

11. J. Burnett, Useful Toil. Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820's to the 1970's (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p.158.

12. Macmillan, 1915: 13.

In the Eastern Cape payments in kind vary considerably. All the workers in the depth sample received some food daily. The following items were most frequently mentioned: samp, beans, mealie meal, bread, jam and tea. In the majority of cases, 86 percent, the food was rationed. Sometimes this rationing is done in minute detail. For example, one employer said she gave her domestic worker

> "1 carrot, 1 tomato or onion, half a pound of samp, 2 inches of milk, 2 slices of bread, 1 piece of 'servant's meat', 2 tea bags and 1 spoonful of jam"

each day. This employer itemised the above proudly, and reckons that her worker is "the best fed in Port Alfred."[13]

A large proportion, 40 percent, were not allowed to take any food home. However a total of 82 percent said they did sometimes take food home for their families, though one said

> "No, there is nothing I could take home. My children know that they must not expect anything from me when I come home from work."

A number of workers, 18 percent, received the same food as their employers, but the majority, 80 percent, received 'servant's rations' and one received both.

The 'rationing of food is subject to different cultural meanings. In traditional Xhosa society everyone is allotted their pre-ordained portions of food according to age, sex and family position. However, in the workplace the practice and language of 'rationing' often conveys hurtful messages of inferiority and reinforces the domestic worker's dependence on her employer.

The quantity and quality of food given varied widely. Almost half, 48 percent of the depth sample received no meat at all. This was a particular source of frustration to servants who had to cook meat for their employers, two and even three times a day. As one expressed it, "The smell of meat must be enough for me."

Almost a quarter (23) of the depth sample received meat every day, two twice a week, and one once a week. A number of the depth sample (32),

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13. 'Servant's meat' refers to the cheapest cuts of meat available such as 'chuck' and 'brisket'.

said they were allowed to make coffee or tea at any time, but often the quantities were rationed. One domestic servant was given one tea bag every two days; in another case a worker was dismissed for stealing a tea bag.

Just less than a quarter (12) thought they got enough food, and only eight were satisfied with both the quantity and quality of the food they got. Twenty-four were dissatisfied because they did not get what they considered sufficient meat; ten because they got no fruit or vegetables, and eight because generally the quantities given were considered too small. Some comments were

> "I only get samp, but I cook everything and am not allowed to eat it. Everybody would like a piece of meat, specially if you have to cook it. The smell is enough."
>
> "I only get samp, bread and jam. I could get TB quite easily."
>
> "The smell of their food makes me hungry."
>
> "Making puddings for them is the worst. I have to just lick the dish and that's the end."
>
> "The only meat I get is what I steal from the pot while the stew is cooking." 14

Another had to take her food home uncooked. She commented

> "I only eat the smell of food because they cook their own meals."

Several were given 'left overs' from the employer's table. One said,

> "I'm just a rubbish tin for them."

Clearly, most employers in the Eastern Cape do not share the opinion of Arnold Bennett's Maggie Clayhanger that "to give inferior food to

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14. This temptation is beautifully described by Bennett in Elsie's response to some left over steak. "The steak during its cooking, had caused her a lot of inconvenience; the smell of it had awakened desires which she had had difficulty in withstanding; it had made her mouth water abundantly; and she had been very thankful to get the steak safely into the dining room without any accident happening to it." Elsie wrestles with temptation, succumbs, eats the steak and then suffers agonies of remorse, as she did whenever she pilfered food. Bennett, 1959: 148.

a servant was...the most unforgivable in parsimony."[15]

Nevertheless, 'left overs' and 'hand-me-downs' to the domestic worker often mean that she is able to feed and clothe her own children better. Neil Williams has described how a domestic worker,

> was allowed to take the food in the pot after her masters had eaten. So we ate well. The faceless, voiceless people she served faithfully gave her some old baby clothes for me to wear. I was always warm. [16]

Unlike the English domestic worker whose "greatest horror was the knowledge that I would now have to submit to the badge of servitude - a cap and apron", uniforms are highly prized.[17] Many (62 percent) of the depth Eastern Cape sample said they were provided with a uniform by their employers, though sometimes this was only an apron. It is not uncommon for this to constitute the domestic servant's Christmas present.

> "She buys me overalls at Christmas and tells me that is my Christmas present and I must wear it at work. To avoid trouble I take it as a Christmas present and wear it at work but you shouldn't have to wear your Christmas present to work."

Another worker reacted differently to the same situation

> "She gives me overalls and tells me that's my Christmas present and I must wear it to work. But I say a Christmas present is something different. I will never wear it at work. I only wear it when I feel like it to save my clothes. I mean she cannot tell me what to do about it."

Another, when asked what she received last Christmas replied, "Only an overall" and did not elaborate further.

Some domestic workers are given old clothing by their employers, though 46 percent of the depth sample said they received no clothing other than a uniform, from their employers for either themselves or members

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15. A. Bennett, Clayhanger (London: Methuen and Co.Ltd., 1910, 1967), p.53.

16. N.A. Williams, 'Just a little stretch of road', Staffrider, Vol.I, No.4, November/December 1978, p.23.

17. Jean Rennie 'Scullery-maid, kitchen maid and cook-housekeeper', Burnett, 1977: 235. Similarly in 'industrializing America' between 1870 and 1920 servants' uniforms were resented as a source of personal degradation. See D. Katzman, Seven Days a Week. Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp.10, 237.

of their families. In a few cases the employers sold their old clothing to their workers.

> "I buy their old clothes from this little bit of money they give me."

Most domestic workers are given something extra at Christmas. The majority (38) of the domestic workers in the depth sample said they got extra money at Christmas. The amount given ranged from R3 (in two cases) to R20 (one case). The average amount given was R7,63. Eighty-two percent of the domestic workers said they received Christmas presents for themselves or their children. These presents mainly took the form of groceries and clothing (either old or new). One was given overalls for herself and a pair of socks for her son. Another was given "R3 and a petticoat"; another "a dish towel, a face cloth and some soap"; another "R1 worth of meat and two cups". Sometimes workers were given sweets for their children, and in a few cases fairly substantial amounts of groceries such as "sugar, samp, rice, biscuits, jam and a box of Surf."

Other forms of cash payment are rare. Only 12 percent said they were paid overtime for work done outside of their normal hours. Eleven said they were paid extra if there were guests staying in the house, and fifteen said the guests sometimes tipped them. Other times the guests "just say good-bye". In only one case was the employer paying into a savings account on her worker's behalf. In no case did the worker know whether her employer would provide a pension for her when she was too old to work.

In a few cases employers help with their workers' children's school fees. In the 48 cases in the depth sample where domestic workers had children attending school, only eight said that their employers regularly helped them with their children's schooling expenses. One commented

> "No, she does not care. She does not like our children to go to school because she says they end up nowhere."

Another said,

> "She is not interested in that because she says our children don't go far in school."

One of the best aspects of the domestic worker's situation is that she usually has access to a service equivalent to medical insurance. This is a beneficial aspect of the paternalistic nature of the relationship between workers and employers within the institution of domestic service. As Roberts found in her study of farm labour in the Eastern Cape,

> the paternalistic nature of the relationship between farmers and their labour usually implies the tacit acceptance by the farmers of an obligation to care for the health of their farm servant. [18]

Many employers of domestic workers accept the same obligation, though the degree to which this is fulfilled varies extremely widely. The large majority of workers, 98 percent, were given medicines when they were ill, usually inexpensive aspirin and cough mixture.

A few workers were provided with other facilities such as the use of the employer's stove to cook for themselves, the use of the employer's facilities to wash their own clothes, or the use of a radio. Several said they were not allowed to use the radio or the telephone. Sometimes they had been told this was because they might break them. However, 98 percent said they sometimes used some of these facilities surreptitiously without their employers' knowledge. The one who didn't, said it was because her employer "is always around". When asked, "Do you use any of these facilities without your employers knowing?" one answered

> "Yes, especially the radio but I have to lock the front door so I can hear her when she comes."

One worker was only allowed to use the radio from 9 to 9.30 a.m. for the church service, but did so surreptitiously at other times. This question elicited some surprising responses. For example, one domestic worker replied "Yes, especially the kitchen to eat in." It transpired that both the domestic workers employed in this household had to eat their meals "outside, next to the toilet", when their employers were at home, as they usually were.

Of course, by acting in this way, domestic workers are conforming to their employers' expectations. Employers expect their workers to

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18. Roberts, 1959: 46.

cheat and steal, and in doing so the worker accepts and reinforces the master's image of themselves. As Genovese has pointed out, writing of slavery in the American south, this also reinforces their inferiority.[19] However, in the vast majority of cases, stealing appears to be a strategy of survival.

This is especially true of farm workers. Their payments in kind generally involve free housing, fuel, water, part rations and the use of a garden plot.[20] One domestic worker earns R6 a month as a domestic servant in a farmer's kitchen. Her husband earns R9 a month as a farm hand. The only food they are given is a tin of mealies once a week for the whole family of six people. They have a small vegetable garden, but half the vegetables they grow have to be given to the 'Madam', to be used in her own kitchen. One farm worker said:

> "The time has come for us to see that being a domestic is just a waste of time. Although we don't pay rent or buy wood we have to buy clothes, coffee and all the other things, and pay for our children's school fees."

This comment reveals the extent to which payment in kind ignores the fact that most domestic workers have dependants. All the domestic workers interviewed had others besides themselves dependent on their earnings, with an average of 5,53 dependants per domestic worker.

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19. "Southern folklore abounds with charming stories of slaves outwitting masters by behaving like black versions of the Good Soldier Schweik. The trouble is that too often the masters enjoyed being outwitted in the same way that a tyrannical father sometimes enjoys being outwitted by a child. Every contortion necessary to the job implied inferiority. It proved the slave a clever fellow; it hardly proved him a man. It gained a few privileges or crumbs but undermined self-respect and confirmed the master's sense of superiority. The post-slavery tradition of obsequiousness, indirection and the wearing of a mask before white men has played a similar role in the south ever since."

    E. Genovese, 'The Legacy of Slavery and Roots of Black Nationalism', in J. Weinstein and D. Eakins (eds.), For a New America (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p.400.

20. Antrobus states that in the Eastern Cape (defined to include a much larger area than in this study), "some farm labourers are allowed free grazing rights." G. Antrobus, 'Farm Labour in the Eastern Cape 1950-1973'. Unpublished paper. August, 1976, p.7. Only one of the small sample of farms investigated in this study allowed this.

This finding is confirmed by studies of domestic servants in other areas of South Africa. Preston-Whyte found that 60 percent of the domestic workers in her Durban study were supporting minor children,[21] and Whisson and Weil quote a survey conducted in Johannesburg in 1970 which estimated that "on an average each maid has four dependants, namely mother, two children of schoolgoing age and one child of pre-school age. On an average 76 percent of the minimum expenses for food, clothing and schooling are paid by the maid."[22] In Cape Town, Whisson and Weil found that 80 percent of the domestic servants had dependant families.[23]

Clearly wage calculations in the Eastern Cape do not take account of these responsibilities. Domestic workers on farms are especially exploited. The average (arithmetic mean) wage paid to 28 full-time domestic servants in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape (farms plus the small village of Bathurst) was R11,25 per month. The mode was R10,00 and the median R10,71. The following table shows that 82 percent of the domestic workers interviewed who are working full-time in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape earned R13 or less per month.

Table 6. Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Monthly Wages of Full-time Rural Domestic Workers

Monthly wages in Rands	No. of workers	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
4	1	3,6	3,6
7	2	7,1	10,7
9	6	21,4	32,1
10	7	25,0	57,1
11	1	3,6	60,7
12	3	10,7	71,4
13	3	10,7	82,1
15	2	7,1	89,2
17	1	3,6	92,8
20	2	7,1	99,9
Total	28	99,9	

21. E.M. Preston-Whyte, 'The Making of a Townswoman? The Process and Dilemma of Rural-Urban Migration amongst African women in Southern Natal', pp.257-292, in Papers from the First Congress of the Association for Sociologists in Southern Africa (Durban: University of Natal, 1973), p.261.

22. Whisson and Weil, 1971: 29.

23. Ibid.

Cash wages paid to farm workers throughout the Eastern Cape are low. Antrobus found the monthly cash wage paid on 299 farms in the Eastern Cape in 1973 was on average R10,67, with a median of R9,89. He reports that 15 percent of the farmers surveyed were paying permanent workers a cash wage of R5 or less per month; 45 percent were paying between R6 and R10, 20 percent between R11 and R15; and a further 20 percent between R16 and R30.[24] He estimates the monthly cash wage to constitute only about one-fifth to one-quarter of total remuneration with rations making up another quarter.[25] Thus domestic workers on farms are in a special position of exploitability and exploitation.

The low wages paid to domestic workers in the Eastern Cape are confirmed by other sources. According to one source, domestic workers in Riebeeck East, a small village 40 kilometres northwest of Grahamstown, earn "an average fulltime wage of R10 a month." One woman who "had worked for the same employer for 30 years earned R8 a month."[26] The Mayor of Port Alfred has stated, "the domestic wage paid to those lucky enough to get a job is probably less than R10 a month."[27] In Grahamstown the situation is not much better.

In their study of Grahamstown's Fingo Village, Roux and St.Leger found that 92 percent of the females in employment were in domestic service, and their wages averaged R8,44 a month in 1970.[28] Domestic workers comprised 73,5 percent of all women workers in Grest's 1973 Grahamstown study, and they earned the lowest wages of all occupational groups. Their wages ranged from R2,15 per month to R43,34, with an average of R12,78. This was in a year when the Primary Poverty Datum Line for

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24. Antrobus in Wilson et al., 1977: 12.

25. Overall farm workers are an exploited group: "They are among the lowest paid in the South African economy: denied access to elementary political rights or to collective bargaining processes, and unprotected by statutory minimum wage legislations. Black farm workers are also prevented by lack of schooling, lack of skills and an apparently chronic shortage of urban housing from seeking alternative industrial employment. African workers are, in addition, trapped on the farms by legislation restricting their movement." Ibid., cover.

26. Quoted in the Eastern Province Herald, 24.9.1979.

27. Quoted in the Eastern Province Herald, 7.11.1978.

28. M. Roux and M. St.Leger, Grahamstown Fingo Village (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1971), p.15

Grahamstown was calculated to be R66,32.[29] In a follow-up survey of Black wages in the Grahamstown area May 1976-1977, Getz found that domestic workers were the lowest paid. Using a cumulative score, over half the sample (51 percent) earned less than R20 a month. Almost the entire sample (96,4 percent) earned less than R40 a month. Overall the mean wage for female workers was R44 a month, with 96 percent earning under R60 a month. The mean for males was R59,25 a month, with wages on either side rising and dropping sharply. Thus Black females earn less than men and Black female domestic workers are among the lowest paid of all occupational categories.[30]

This is true of other areas besides the Eastern Cape.[31] The most comprehensive picture comes from the Department of Statistics who give the following average monthly cash wages being paid to general full-time domestic servants in October, 1977:

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29. J. Grest, African Wages in Grahamstown (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1974), pp.9-10.

30. A. Getz, A Survey of Black Wages in the Grahamstown Area, May 1976-1977. Unpublished Research Project, Rhodes University, 1978, p.16. The last Poverty Datum Line calculation for Grahamstown was done in 1976. The Primary PDL is the absolute minimum income upon which a family of two adults and four children can survive each month. It is calculated by allotting each member of the 'average' family a certain percentage of the family's monthly requirements of food, clothing, etc. It does not take account of rent (site rents are now over R8 a month), medical care or schooling. In 1976 it was fixed at R105,06 per month. The Secondary PDL which includes rent, as well as medical expenses, entertainment or transport costs for one person in the family was determined at R117,22 per month. The Minimum Effective Level, the amount required to satisfy the standards for minimum requirements, including education and health costs, was determined at R175. (Refocus, Rhodes University Nusas Local Committee, Vol. I, No.2, 1976.) Getz has shown that almost all Blacks in Grahamstown (98,7 percent) earn less than R110 per month, which is less than the Secondary PDL. Thus the low wages paid to Black female domestic servants must be located in terms of low Black wages generally.

31. The average cash wage for a full-time domestic servant in Pretoria in 1977 was R36 a month. (University of South Africa, Bureau of Market Research. Reported in the Eastern Province Herald, 28.11.1978.) A study conducted by Spektor in Cape Town during 1975 found average wages ranged from R18 to R45 a month, with an average wage of just over 13,5 cents per hour. She comments, "if we compare these figures to the wages paid to workers in other sectors of the economy, we find that even the lowest paid factory worker receives about R52 a month or 32 cents per hour." (Western Cape Regional Welfare Board, Report on Conference on the Welfare of the Domestic Worker, March, 1977, Cape Town.) Whisson

Table 7. Average Monthly Cash Wages of Full-time Domestic Servants Employed by Whites in the 11 Principal Urban Areas of South Africa, 1977.[32]

Urban Area	Monthly Cash Wage	Population Group and Sex
Cape Town	49,96	Black female
	45,97	Coloured female
Port Elizabeth	36,38	Black female
	32,96	Coloured female
East London	30,38	Black female
Kimberley	32,72	Black female
Pietermaritzburg	35,51	Black male
	34,80	Black female
Durban	32,70	Black male
	36,63	Black female
Pretoria	41,69	Black male
	37,00	Black female
Witwatersrand	49,80	Black male
	41,62	Black female
Bloemfontein	28,70	Black female
Vaal Triangle	32,58	Black female
O.F.S. Goldfields	30,86	Black female

and Weil found a great variation in the wages earned by full-time domestic workers; wages ranged from R16 average in Goodwood, to R29,51 average in Sea Point. At that time the lowest paid workers in the Garment Workers' Union earned R35-R40 per month. Whisson and Weil quote a Labour Department official's 'unofficial' suggestion that the minimum wage for African servants could be R12 a month, while the minimum wage for Coloured servants was placed at R16 a month. In Cape Town they found that the lowest figure for a full-time living-in servant was R5 a month, the two highest being R45 paid to a Coloured servant in Sea Point, and R100 to a White servant. (Whisson and Weil, 1971: 15.) In Durban Preston-Whyte found that the monthly salary paid to domestic servants ranged from R2 to R5 for part-time work and from R10 to R20 for full-time employment. She found overall that in the homes of the Durban rich most domestic servants received between R11 and R15 in wages; in the households of middle-class families they received R7-R10; and in the homes of the poor, as little as R4-R6. (Preston-Whyte, 1969. Quoted by Weinrich, 1976: 235.) A survey conducted at the end of 1974 among Border members of the Black Sash and the Institute of Race Relations, on various aspects of domestic employment, found that 'living-in' servants in the Border area worked a 208-hour month at an hourly rate of 14,5 cents or R30 a month with a range of R12 to R62. (F. Street (ed.), Domestic Servants. A study of the service conditions of domestic servants employed by Border members of the Black Sash and South

Overall, wages are considerably lower than is recommended by the South African Institute of Race Relations' Domestic Workers and Employers Project (DWEP). Their latest recommendation is a minimum monthly wage of R71,50 for a 44-hour week for a live-in, unskilled domestic worker, and R88 per month for a skilled worker. They suggest that living-out domestic workers should be paid not less than R82,50 for a 40-hour week and should be given a transport allowance.[33]

Domestic workers are not protected by any legislation stipulating the minimum wage, hours of work, or other conditions of service. Add to this legal vacuum the lack of disability and unemployment insurance, pensions and paid sick leave, and domestic workers are clearly an extremely insecure group of workers, open to exploitation by their employers. Such exploitation is evident, not only in their low wages, but also in the long hours they work.

African Institute of Race Relations. Beacon Bay, Black Sash, 1974.) Walther found, on the basis of a small sample taken from the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, that the average monthly wage was R18,60 with a range from R9 a month to R34. (M. Walther, 'Patterns of Life in Domestic Service'. Unpublished Honours thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1968.)

32. Department of Statistics, Statistics of Houses and Domestic Servants, October 1977. Report No. 11-03-13 (Pretoria: The Government Printer, 1979), pp.10-12.
It should be noted that (i) the population group and sex given constitute the largest portion of the labour force in general domestic service in each area; (ii) cash wages are those quoted by employers; (iii) in three areas where data is given for Black males and females, the cash wages of Black females were lower - in Pietermaritzburg, Pretoria and the Witwatersrand. However in Durban the wages of Black females were higher.

33. South African Institute of Race Relations, Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1979 (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1980), p.239.

2. Hours of Work

Domestic workers work far longer hours than other workers, with the exception of farm labourers. In the Eastern Cape study the average (arithmetic mean) is 61 hours per week for full-time workers.

In this study, out of the sample of 175 domestic workers, there were 157 full-time workers, that is, those working at least a 40-hour week. The average working week was calculated by substracting their time off during the working day, and the number of days, if any, they had off per week. The median calculated from the full-time domestic workers' responses was 59 hours per week.

Table 8. Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Working Hours of 157 Full-time Domestic Workers

Hours worked per week	No. of servants	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
40 - 44	13	8,3	8,3
45 - 49	27	17,2	25,5
50 - 54	23	14,6	40,1
55 - 59	19	12,1	52,2
60 - 64	15	9,6	61,8
65 - 69	13	8,3	70,1
70 - 74	10	6,4	76,5
75 - 79	22	14,0	90,5
80 - 84	12	7,6	98,1
85 - 89	3	1,9	100,0
Total	157	100,0	

This table shows that 122 domestic workers, or 77,7 percent work more than a 48-hour week.

Such long working hours have also been reported of domestic workers in other areas.[34] In the Eastern Cape study the longest hours were usually worked by live-in servants. The longest hours worked in this sample were by three domestic servants who worked 85 hours a week, and seven who worked 84 hours a week. All were 'live-in' servants. This is supported by Whisson and Weil's finding that the average live-in Goodwood domestic servant worked over 60 hours a week. The longest hours worked in their study were by two young country girls in Goodwood, who put in 84 and 78 hours a week, for which the latter received R10 a month.[35]

A living-in domestic worker in the Eastern Cape is frequently considered generally available in the evenings to cook, wash-up, baby-sit, serve snacks when her employers return from an evening out, or, as in one case, serve coffee at 11 p.m. to their bridge guests. In the latter case the domestic worker started work at 6 a.m. and earned R18 per month, with one Sunday afternoon off per month. Work until late hours is also reported by Meer in her Durban study.[36] Horn reports cases of servants working from 6 a.m. until midnight in nineteenth century Britain, but in South Africa today this appears to be the exception rather than the rule.[37] Only in six cases in the depth sample of 50

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34. Clarke, who carried out a study of domestic servants in Salisbury found that the average domestic servant worked 63½ hours a week. None worked less than 8 hours daily, and some as many as 18 hours. (D. Clarke, Domestic Workers in Rhodesia (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1974), p.36.) In a Fort Victoria study Weinrich found that 70 percent worked between 9 and 13 hours a day and 12 percent worked longer than 14 hours a day. The writer comments, "such long working days are unknown in industry and this is another reason why most Africans prefer any employment to domestic work." (Weinrich, 1976: 238.) In her Cape Town study of domestic workers Spektor found that weekly working hours averaged 61. (Spektor, 1977.) Mrs Leah Tutu of DWEP is quoted as saying, "our experience is that most domestics work a 12-hour day during the week." (Quoted in the Eastern Province Herald, 28.11.1978.).

35. Whisson and Weil, 1971: 12.

36. F. Meer (ed.), Black Women Durban 1975. Case Studies of 85 women at Home and Work (Durban: University of Natal, 1975), p.42.

37. P. Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), pp.50-51.
Burnett suggests that "eighty hours of actual work a week, against fifty six for the factory worker, may well be a fair estimate for the late nineteenth century (in Britain) and must have been exceeded in many single handed households." Burnett, 1977: 171.

domestic workers was the worker paid overtime for work done outside her normal hours. As one answered, when asked what was the worst thing about domestic work, "you never knock off."

The three part-time workers in the depth sample worked 36 (2) and 35 (1) hour weeks. The vast majority started work early in the morning.

Table 9. Time of Starting Work of 225 Domestic Workers

Starting time	Number of workers	Percentage
6 - 7 a.m.	114	50,7
7 - 8 a.m.	98	43,6
8 - 9 a.m.	10	4,4
9 - 10 a.m.	3	1,3

There was a far greater range in the time at which they usually stopped work for the day.

Table 10. Time of Stopping Work of 175 Domestic Workers

Stopping time	Number of workers
1 - 2 p.m.	7
2 - 3 p.m.	19
3 - 4 p.m.	20
4 - 5 p.m.	34
5 - 6 p.m.	41
6 - 7 p.m.	20
7 - 8 p.m.	15
8 - 9 p.m.	13
After 9 p.m.	6

In the last six cases three were living-in workers and the rest were farm workers. By these calculations 52 percent of the sample stopped work after 5 p.m. These calculations were made on the basis of when the domestic worker usually stopped work for the day. Several

mentioned that they had to stay longer if their employer had guests. One who generally went off at 6 p.m. had to stay until between 9 and 10 p.m. when her employer entertained.

The majority of workers had some time off during the day and this has been subtracted from the calculation of the average working week.

Table 11. Time Off During the Working Day of 175 Domestic Workers

Time off/Rest periods	Number of workers
½ - 1 hour	138
1 - 2 hours	13
2 - 3 hours	7
3 - 4 hours	1
No time off	16

Several workers stressed that their time off was extremely rushed.

"I only sit down when I eat."
"I only have just enough time to eat."
"I just eat while I am standing washing the dishes."

Like the factory worker who does a 44-hour week, the domestic worker may have to spend a considerable time each day travelling to and from work. This was true of the 42 living-out workers in the depth sample: 24 spent about an hour travelling to and from work; seven spent about half an hour; seven spent about two hours; one spent three hours and three spent a few minutes. Only 12 usually travelled to work by bus. These were all Grahamstown workers; in the other small town in the area of investigation, Port Alfred, no bus service is provided. Thus the majority of the domestic servants in the sample (75 percent) walked to work. Sometimes this involved a considerable distance, in one case in the depth sample as much as six kilometres from a luxurious beach front house in Port Alfred to the domestic worker's two-roomed dwelling in the township. This distance includes a steep hill and took the writer one and a half hours one way. The woman who walks this distance of twelve kilometres per day does so six days a week and is

52 years old. She earns R28 a month. In one case the domestic worker left her home shortly after 5 a.m. each day, and reached her place of work at 6.30 a.m. In the evening she left at 6 p.m. and reached home about 7.30 p.m. Black workers generally in South Africa have to spend a considerable time travelling to their workplace. However it is possible that domestic workers, because of the distance between Black and White residential areas, have to spend longer travelling.

If the working day of domestic workers generally is long, that of domestic workers in rural areas is especially so. Ninety nine point nine percent work more than 48 hours per week. The average working week is 73 hours 35 minutes (arithemtic mean). The mode is 77 hours and the median 77 hours 43 minutes.

Table 12. Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Full-time Rural Domestic Workers' Working Hours

Hours worked per week	Number of workers	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
48	2	7,1	7,1
59	1	3,6	10,7
59,5	1	3,6	14,3
65	1	3,6	17,9
66	2	7,1	25,0
68	1	3,6	28,6
76	1	3,6	32,2
77	7	25,0	57,2
78	5	17,8	75,0
80	3	10,7	85,7
81,5	1	3,6	89,3
84,5	1	3,6	92,9
85	2	7,1	100,0
Total	28	100,0	

Among the full-time domestic workers in the rural areas a low negative correlation (P = -0,04) was found between working hours and wages. This means that there is a very slight inverse relationship, that is,

the more hours worked the lower the wages. In the urban areas there was a weak positive correlation (P = +0,2).

Days off per week

Almost a third of the total sample of 175 workers work a seven-day week. Having a day off per week is considered a highly prized advantage in a job. When asked what was the best thing about their job, several workers mentioned that they got one day off, or an afternoon off, per week.

Table 13. Days Off Per Week of a Sample of 157 Full-time Domestic Workers

Days off per week	Number of workers	Percentage
no day off	50	31,8
½ day off	15	9,6
1 day off	68	43,3
1½ days off	1	0,6
2 days off	10	6,4
2 Sundays off per month	10	6,4
1 day off per month	3	1,9
Total	157	100,0

One of the workers who got one day off per month had three small children being brought up by their grandmother. She is only able to visit them on her one day off per month.

This pattern contrasts with that which emerged from Preston-Whyte's Durban study, where she found that "all full-time servants expect, and most receive at least one free day or afternoon per week. This may be, but is not necessarily, in addition to the free Sunday afternoons which are traditionally accepted as the servants' right." In Morningside and Durban North the majority of employees received both.[38]

38. Preston-Whyte, 1969: 108.

Weinrich, on the other hand, found in the Fort Victoria study that only nine percent of servants have a whole day free each week.[39]

In order to appreciate what is involved in such long working hours it is important to remember that most Black women workers are also domestic workers in their own home. On arriving home, at whatever time, from whatever work, she often has to cook the evening meal, put the children to bed, and sometimes do washing, cleaning and ironing, before she herself lies down for the night. Most domestic servants said they spent their meagre leisure time doing domestic work in their own homes.[40]

Paid leave

Not only do domestic workers work far longer hours than other workers, but they also receive less paid leave. The norm in industry is two or three weeks of paid leave a year, plus public holidays. As in the case of working hours and wages, there is considerable variation in the amount of paid leave given to domestic workers; however, within this variation certain features emerge clearly. The great majority of the domestic workers in this sample (83,4 percent) have to work on public holidays. Several mentioned that this was one of the worst features of their jobs:

> "I have to work on public holidays instead of enjoying myself in the township with my friends."

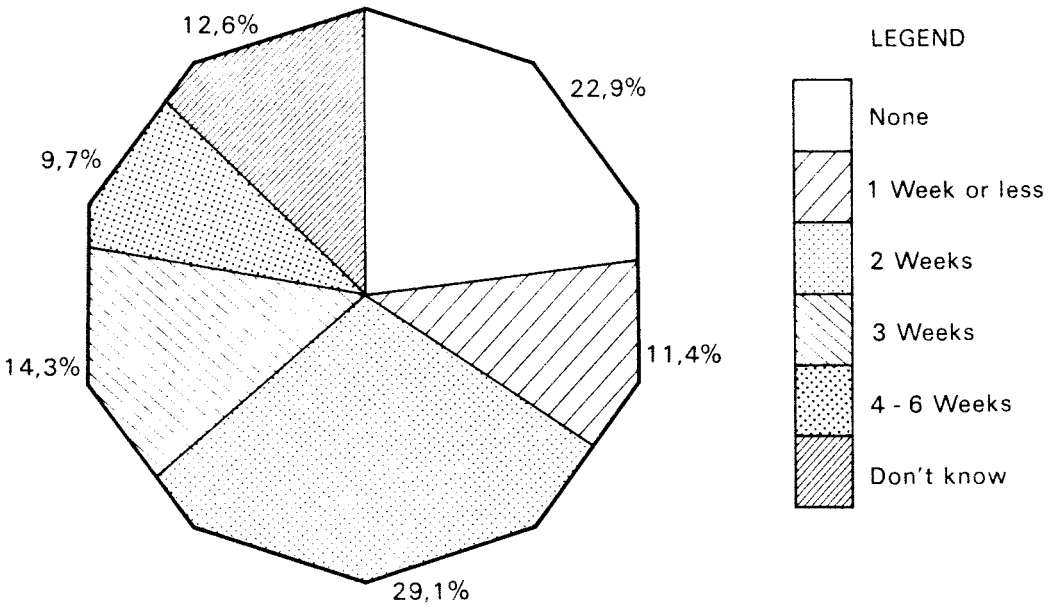
A considerable number (40), were given no annual holidays. Overall, 34 percent were given one week's holiday or less, each year.

Table 14. Annual Holiday of a Sample of 175 Domestic Workers

Annual holiday	Number of workers
No annual holiday	40
Less than 1 week	2
1 week	18
2 weeks	51
3 weeks	25
4 weeks	14
6 weeks	3
Did not know what holiday they would be given	22

39. Weinrich, 1976: 239.
40. See below, p.83.

Figure 2. Annual Holiday of a Sample of 175 Domestic Workers



Of the eight domestic workers in the depth sample who were given no annual holiday, four had worked for between five and ten years with the same employer, and four for between 15 - 20 years. In one case no leave had been given during the seventeen years the domestic servant was continuously employed by the same person.

In the Eastern Cape it seems fairly common to take a domestic servant to a holiday house on the coast. Here her duties are often even more onerous owing to primitive cooking facilities, and more time-consuming with extra visitors and guests in the house. This is often counted as the domestic worker's holiday.[41] Such 'holidays' are not always popular with domestic workers. When asked if there was one thing about their job they could change what would that be, one domestic worker replied

41. For this reason the employers' answer to the question whether servants were given a holiday has not been included in the calculation.

> "They take me to the sea and when we get back they say did you have a good holiday. But it's no holiday for me."

This practice is especially irksome to those domestic workers who have friends and relatives who are migrant workers and come home for a brief period at Christmas.

Studies of domestic workers in other areas of South Africa report a similar variation in the amount of annual leave granted by employers.[42] Paid leave is not invariably the practice in the Eastern Cape. When domestic workers are given an annual holiday, they are not always paid during this period. Only 40 percent of all the domestic workers interviewed in the Eastern Cape study said they were paid during their annual holiday. Some of the employers who do not pay their servants during their annual holiday include prominent, professional people in the community. It is beyond the writer's comprehension how they expect their domestic workers to live during this period.

Less than one third (32 percent) of the depth worker sample spent all of Christmas day with their own families. Fifty eight percent spent part of it with their own families; eight percent spent none and one was a new worker who did not know what arrangements her employer would make over Christmas. This is a frequent source of grievance. As one worker expressed it

> "Even on New Years Day I don't get off. Even if people come to visit me I have to leave them and go off to work."

Such working conditions appear to be even worse than those of farm workers, the other group of ultra-exploitable and ultra-exploitable workers in the Eastern Cape. Antrobus found that the majority of farmers give one to two weeks leave each year, though 18 percent of the farmers give no leave at all.[43] In her earlier Eastern Cape study,

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42. In their Cape Town study, Whisson and Weil found that while some employers gave up to 8 weeks a year, others gave none. Full-time living-in domestic workers in Goodwood were given an average of 1,6 weeks paid leave a year, and 2,1 in Bishopscourt. (Whisson and Weil, 1971: 19.).

43. Antrobus, 1976: 15.

Roberts found that 42 of the 73 farmers visited gave their permanent male workers regular annual paid leave, but only 11 gave more than eight days. She stresses the long hours of farm workers:

> Allmost all farmers work their labour, in theory at any rate, from sunrise to sunset. In practice this means roughly from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer and from 7 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. in winter. Most of them allow half an hour off for breakfast and an hour at midday for lunch. [44]

Such working hours obviously involve a considerable level of deprivation of family life for the workers involved.

3. Deprivation of Family Life

All the domestic workers in the depth sample had children. The average household size was 6,7 persons and in over half the sample the domestic worker was the sole breadwinner and support of her family.

Table 15. Number of Children of a Sample of 50 Domestic Workers

Children under 16	Number of workers	Children over 16	Number of workers
0	17	0	13
1	3	1	7
2	16	2	15
3	9	3	9
4	3	4	4
7	1	5	1
8	1	6	1

The domestic servant with eight children under the age of 16 (six of whom are still at school) is no longer married and earns R28 a month for an 85-hour week. The domestic worker with six children earns R22 a month for a 51-hour week. Her husband receives a pension of R19,86 per month. The domestic worker with five children is a widow and earns R35 a month for a 65-hour week. Many of these children were still at school.

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44. Roberts, 1959: 68.

Table 16. Number of Children in School of a Sample of Domestic Workers

Number of children in school	Number of workers
1	8
2	16
3	10
4	4
5	1
6	1
10	1

The last case has 11 children, seven under the age of 16 and four over the age of 16. She is married to a gardener, and earns R50 a month for a 77-hour week.

All the 175 domestic workers in the Eastern Cape study had people dependent on their earnings besides themselves. The number of dependants ranged from 11 to 3 people, with an average of 5,5 dependants per domestic worker. In 102 out of the 175 cases, no one else in the family was employed. Thus in 58,3 percent of the sample the domestic servant was the sole support of her family.

In view of their low wages it is surprising how many servants manage to send money to other members of their family. In almost a third of the depth sample the worker sent money to someone living somewhere else. In eleven of these cases the money was sent regularly, and in five occasionally. The amounts varied from R20 sent by a domestic worker earning R60 a month to her son, a political detainee, to R5 a month. In another case, R10 was sent regularly to a relative by a woman earning R22 a month; in another case R5 was sent regularly by a woman earning R15 a month; another sent R10 regularly out of R16 a month. These stark figures represent great self-denial - a denial of self that is subsumed under the workers' definition of family obligations.

Only 14 percent of the domestic workers in the depth sample had someone employed somewhere else who sent money to them. Only in one case was this money sent regularly. This consisted of R20 a month sent by

a son working in Port Elizabeth to his mother, a domestic servant earning R12 a month.

These domestic workers are frequently subject to some degree of what is termed, in the bland language of Social Science, 'family disorganisation'. The majority of the depth sample, 78 percent, had been married. Only 48 percent were still married, the others having been widowed (2), divorced or deserted. Over a third (17), had had a church marriage; three a civil rites marriage and 19 a traditional, customary marriage.

The vast majority, 98 percent, were married to unskilled workers. In seven cases the husband was employed as a labourer; four were farm workers; seven were gardeners; one was a driver; four were pensioners and one was unemployed.

A quarter of the depth sample did not know what their husband earned.[45] Where this was known the wages ranged from R80 to R9. It appears that farm workers do not always know what they will be paid at the end of the month. The husband of one respondent, who managed a farm for the owner who lived in Peddie, was only paid his promised wage of R15 a month if no farm animals died during the month. Otherwise he only received R10 a month. At the time of the interview he had received only R10 a month, for doing the job of a farm manager, for the previous eight months. He commented,

> "The animals get sick. What can I do...I've got no medicines."

In only half the cases in the depth sample was the husband living at home with his children.

These women are clearly victims of the disruption of family life that the system of migrant labour entails. Many men are forced to leave their homes and families in the Eastern Cape to go as 'contract' workers to the mines and industrial centres such as Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. Of the 24 domestic workers in the depth sample who were still married, only 16 said they saw their husbands daily; two saw them once or twice a week; three once or twice a month; and three once a year when their migrant worker husbands return home for a brief

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45. This contrasts with 34,9 percent of their White employers.

period. Only in 19 cases was the domestic worker living at home with her husband. Two 'live-in' workers were married and had husbands living in the same town but had to sleep apart from them. In six cases the worker's husband was working in another town. Of the married 'live-in' workers two said their husbands were allowed to sleep in their rooms sometimes; two were not; three said he did sleep over with her occasionally, but one said she was too afraid of losing her job to risk this. Many of these women expressed considerable anxiety over the disruption of their marital relationships this involved:

> "I have to sleep in and neglect my husband."
>
> "While we are at work other women can play with our husbands."

The picture that emerges from the domestic workers' long working hours and family circumstances is that they experience considerable deprivation of family life. One of the aspects of the domestic worker's situation which Rex found "suggestive of slavery" was the extreme limitation on his or her own family life. Of course this is not unique to the domestic worker in South Africa. The same deprivation is imposed on the Black father by the migrant labour system. But in the case of the domestic worker it is uniquely vicious, given the pivotal nature of the mother role in African culture.

This deprivation of family life involves an important contradiction. This study will attempt to show that in advanced capitalist societies all women are subject to a system of sexual domination, but their experience of it depends on their location in the class structure.[46] A woman's class position may provide her with mechanisms of escape from the structure of constraints generated by this system. For example, the woman of the property-owning class can 'buy' her way out of domestic roles by employing domestic labour. While in all advanced capitalist societies this is the prerogative of a small minority of upper class women, in South Africa, because of the system of racial domination, most White women can obtain 'outs' in this way, and most do. Frequently this involves divesting themselves of a considerable part of domestic work and reponsibilities, including the care of young children. For example, in several instances, the house and

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46. See below, Chapter 7, Discrimination on the Basis of Race and Sex.

young children were left in the care of the domestic worker, while both parents went out to work. It some instances the children appear to spend more time with the domestic worker than with their parents.[47] Thus, cheap, Black, domestic labour is the instrument whereby White women escape from some of the constraints of their domestic roles. They do so at considerable cost to Black women, especially mothers.[48]

Many domestic workers stressed that they had to look after two families and had to neglect their own families in the process.

> "We leave our children early in the morning to look after other women's families and still they don't appreciate us."

Many employers gave their reason for employing a domestic worker to be that it enabled them to devote more time to their children's intellectual and emotional development. Clearly this is done at the expense of Black children. One Grahamstown man said the employment of domestic workers explained why "white people's children don't grow up criminals." It is not from having everything they need but "having nannies who watch them every minute of the day" and instil discipline.[49]

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47. As Katzman writes of America between 1870 and 1920, "Negro women were called childish and incompetent, yet they reared Southern white children." Katzman, 1978: 189.

48. The psychological 'cost' to white children in South Africa has still to be investigated. To quote two insights from recent South African writing - the central character in Andre Brink's novel, Rumours of Rain, recounts his earliest memory of how his mother would hand him over to the care of "old Aia, our black nanny, whenever I'd been unmanageable; to be tied with a blanket to her back, resting on the soft mass of her enormous posterior: my earliest and deepest experience of security." (My emphasis.) Andre Brink, Rumours of Rain (London: Star Books, 1978), p.327. The pain inflicted on such children as reserve and detachment come to replace intimacy and affection is described by Matshoba. Dawid Steenkamp is mocked for weeping over his separation from his beloved black nannie, May, when he is sent away to boarding school. "The other children had given him hell for crying over a 'Bantu maid'. Everybody at the Hoerskool had seemed bent on subtly scarring his love for May." 'A son of the first generation', in M. Matshoba, Call Me Not a Man (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1979), p.78.

49. I. Mayer, 'Grahamstown'. Unpublished research project 1979, p.104.

All these domestic workers are mothers, some with very young and some with school-going children. All hate to leave their children alone during the day or in the care of others, but they are forced to do so either because they have no other source of income, or because their husbands do not earn enough to maintain their families.

The majority of the workers in the depth sample (33), said their children were living with them at home; 17 were living with their grandparents or another relative. Most (35), said they saw their children daily; five once or twice a week; six once or twice a month; one once every two months, and two once a year. One young woman, with three children being brought up by their grandparents on a farm, only manages to see them once a month. A significant number, 38, said their children were allowed by their employers to visit them at work; six said they were not, and six did not know. Only 15 reported that their children did visit them at work.

One worker's children were looked after by neighbours; 12 by "no one"; 25 by a relative, usually the grandmother, or an older child. Often the person looking after the children is a daughter who is thus kept out of school in order to run the home.[50] This perpetuates "the cycle of poverty, inadequate child care and incomplete education."[51] Only in six cases were the children all grown up, and six were in a creche. Only five said they had to pay someone to look after their children. Anxiety was expressed not only by the mothers of pre-school children, but also by those mothers whose children are already of school-going age. They worry because they have no check on what these children do between the time they get home from school and the time their mothers get home. They feel anxious about not being able to be at home to supervise their homework.

This deprivation of family life applies to both kinds of domestic workers. For example, there is the case of 'Evelyn' whose job includes caring for the small children of a couple, both of whom are employed. Evelyn herself is a mother with two children, aged 5 and 2 years.

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50. See below, Chapter 8, Education for Domesticity.

51. Whisson and Weil, 1971: 31.

She does not spend much time with them in the morning as she leaves home at 5 a.m. and returns about 6 p.m. The children are cared for by her sister and her family. She gets every alternate Sunday off. Thus her situation is not very different from that of a 'live-in' domestic worker, such as Regina, who is separated from her only child of 4 years old whom she sees once a week.[52]

The uniquely vicious operation of this system in South Africa is illustrated by a letter to the local newspaper telling of a visit from two policemen to a private house.

> The reasons for their visit...was that we were accommodating an additional African, the maid's three-year old boy, without a licence. The maid explained that her son normally spent the day with friends while she was at work, but for two days while they were away, she had been forced to bring him with her. He had not slept on the premises and would return each night to the location. This was apparently not legally permitted without the boy having a licence to be with his mother. Under these circumstances my maid was duly fined R10. [53]

The tension between the domestic workers' roles of mother and wage-earner are aggravated by the fact that Blacks are in the worst position as regards the provision of day-care facilities for the pre-school child.[54] The incident described above illustrates the cruel paradox of a situation that drives a Black mother to seek employment to support her family, and then neglect her family in the process.

4. Deprivation of Social Life

The long hours and lack of holidays of domestic workers clearly also involves a considerable level of deprivation of social life. None of the workers in the depth sample in the Eastern Cape study said they saw their friends daily, and only six said they were satisfied with the frequency with which they saw their friends. Almost three-quarters said they saw their friends only at weekends; fifteen said they saw

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52. Similar cases have been reported in Cape Town (Whisson and Weil, 1971) and Durban (Meer, 1975).

53. Eastern Province Herald, 27.5.1977.

54. See below, Chapter 7, Discrimination on the Basis of Race and Sex.

their friends only once or twice a month. Some commented:

> "How can you have time to visit when you have two families to look after."
>
> "I don't have time for friends and visiting."
>
> "I'm too tired."
>
> "I seldom see people...I don't have time."

All the workers in the depth sample said they were friendly with other servants in the neighbourhood or area. Nine said they saw them daily, often on the way to and from work; one once or twice a week, but most (70 percent) said they did so 'seldom', and five said 'never'. The majority spent their time together talking and "moaning about our difficulties". The cost of living and "our employers" appear to be the favourite topics of conversation. The researcher suspects that Powell's account of domestic workers' conversations is applicable here:

> If 'them' upstairs could have heard the conversations the parlourmaids carried down from upstairs, they would have realised that our impassive expressions and respectful demeanours hid scorn and derision. [55]

Since many domestic servants socialise on the pavement outside their employers' houses or in the backyards, the appropriate division seems to be 'inside' and 'outside', rather than 'upstairs' and 'downstairs'.

Membership of Voluntary Associations

Membership of voluntary associations is largely confined to church organisations. Church groups are the dominant type of voluntary association in most urban African communities in both size of membership and influence. In the Eastern Cape depth sample of domestic workers, 35 belonged to church organisations, one to a ballroom dancing club, and one to a choir. The great majority, 98 percent, belonged to a church. This compares with 94 percent of the employers. Over a quarter (27 percent) belonged to African Independent Churches, meaning "autonomous groups with an all-African membership and leadership."[56] In her Fort Victoria study Weinrich reports that 12 percent of domestic servants

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55. M. Powell, Below Stairs (London: Pan Books, 1970), p.74.

56. M. West, Bishops and Prophets in a Black City (Cape Town: David Philip, 1975), p.2.

belong to African Independent Churches, especially to the Zionist Church.[57] In Durban Preston-Whyte found that 20 percent of all domestic servants studied were Zionists. She attributed the popularity of this church to the community spirit among church members, for a sense of belonging is very lacking in the social environment of domestic servants.[58]

Despite their need for a community spirit many domestic workers do not always have the leisure time to attend church meetings and services. In the Eastern Cape study 60 percent said they went to church 'seldom'. Many expressed regret that they did not have the time to go to church more often. One woman said she would like to go to church every Sunday but was only able to go once a month, as she only got one Sunday off per month. This statistic compares with 22 percent of the employers who said they went to church 'seldom'. Many employers expressed guilt rather than regret at so doing. Six domestic workers said they generally went to church once a month; ten went two to three times a month; three went four or more times a month.

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57. Weinrich, 1976: 232.

58. Quoted by Weinrich, ibid. Brandel-Syrier points out that life in urban African townships is peculiarly hard for women, they have fewer outlets and the church manyano or women's organisation is thus very important. Small, close-knit manyano groups are a source of strength and security. The "need to belong, inherent in all human beings, but particularly strongly felt by African women in their urban situation and in the absence of their kith and kin, finds its most satisfactory fulfilment in the manyanos." M. Brandel-Syrier, Black Women in Search of God (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962), p.137. She found that domestic servants were the mainstay of the manyanos. They enabled members to confront "their strange and often hostile environment." Brandel-Syrier, 1962: 28. Similarly Thomas emphasises the functions of women's church groups (ruwadzano) in the Umtali township in fulfilling the social needs of African women for "sociability, status, security and approval" in an urban environment. N. Thomas, 'Functions of Religious Institutions in the Adjustment of African Women to Life in a Rhodesian Township', in H.L. Watts, (ed.), Focus on Cities. Proceedings of a Conference organised by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Natal, Durban, July 1968 (Durban: Institute for Social Research, University of Natal, 1970), p.284. See also Dubb's study of the East Bank African Location in East London 1957-59, A. Dubb, 'The Role of the Church in an Urban African Society', M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1961. He found that the women's guild (manyano) was "the most active group within the church", (Dubb, 1961: 40) and fulfilled important functions.

Religious activity plays a very important part in black urban dwellers' lives generally.[59] In Grahamstown Nyquist put involvement in religious activity in the township as the second most important "leisure-time activity" after drinking, and related this to the fact that "religion provides solace to those who are downtrodden."[60] According to Willsworth, there are 27 black churches operating from church buildings in Grahamstown's townships as well as numerous sects.[61] She reports that one of the main grievances of employees whose jobs involve them in weekend duties is that "we can't go to church." She reports that this was said by young and old.[62] At the time of writing, the researcher is involved in the case of a middle-aged domestic worker who came to the Grahamstown Advice Office and expressed her fear that "my church say they won't bury me unless I go more often."[63] She cannot go more often as she is only given one Sunday off per month. Her employer is one of the most respected members of white Grahamstown society and high in the Anglican Church hierarchy.

Leisure Activities

All the live-out domestic workers said they spent their evenings at home. One said,

> "I get home late so I don't have an evening. I just go to bed."

Weekends were spent visiting friends, going to church, and doing domestic work in their own homes.

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59. As West writes of Soweto, with the difficulties and frustrations of urban life, "the importance of the small independent church congregations as supportive, reference groups should not be underestimated. Aid and co-operation are both moral and material - ranging from spiritual reinforcement in services where members take part in giving testimonies, to women's groups finding employment for their fellow-members" often in domestic service. West, 1975: 87.

60. Nyquist, 1969: 102-3.

61. M. Willsworth, 'Transcending the Culture of Poverty in a Black South African Township'. Unpublished M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1979, p.282.

62. Ibid.

63. The Grahamstown Advice Office is a voluntary organisation which provides information for Black people involved in labour, housing, influx control and other problems.

> "Sometimes we have some home-made beer, and just enjoy ourselves."
>
> "I am too tired to go anywhere at week-ends."

Only 44 percent had holidays in another place; this compares with 92 percent of the employers.

Only seven domestic workers read a daily or weekly newspaper. Almost three-quarters (37) listened to the radio every day. Some did not because

> "I don't have a radio. My son promised to buy us one long ago."

Only one domestic worker read any magazines and only one said she had any special hobbies or leisure-time interests, these being "tennis and music." Many expressed regret that they did not have time for such things:

> "No, I am an old lady."
>
> "No, I have no time. I am always at work."
>
> "No, my age is beating me."
>
> "No, I have not been to school enough. I don't like to mix myself with educated people."
>
> "No, I have too many problems to have time to enjoy myself."
>
> "No, because I have no education. I feel too shy to join anything."
>
> "No, if you have not been to school, you always feel small."

The lack of leisure time that these women's dual role in production and reproduction involves, is also true of women doing other kinds of work. In their study of women textile workers, Westmore and Townsend found that many women had little leisure time. Only one woman in their study said she had time to sit back and relax with a newspaper during the week. None had creative hobbies. Westmore and Townsend also point out that "the role of reproducer as a limitation on the role of wage labourer, has a structural as well as an ideological dimension."[64] The isolation of unpaid domestic workers is broken down when they enter

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64. J. Westmore and P. Townsend, 'The African Women Workers in the Textile Industry in Durban', South African Labour Bulletin, Vol.2, No.4, 1975, p.30.

social production, but the potential for collective organisation and political action is constrained by the fact of their time-consuming labour. Clearly the paid domestic worker is under a dual disability because of the privatised, atomised nature of her work and the duplication of work her roles in production and reproduction involves.

This deprivation of social life is amplified in the case of 'live-in' workers. Only 16 percent of the domestic workers in the Eastern Cape sample lived in, a somewhat lower figure than has been reported for other areas.[65] Their situation has several characteristics of Goffman's conceptualisation of the 'total institution'.[66]

Domestic Service as a quasi 'total institution'

The central feature of total institutions can be described as a breakdown of the barriers ordinarily separating the individual's sleeping, working and playing life. "All aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority."[67] This clearly applies to many 'live-in' domestic workers. "...all aspects of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials."[68] Clearly there is a good deal of variation here, but in some households the domestic worker is subject to an extreme regimentation, and her work is done within a rigid routine. "...the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution", in this case the maximum ease, comfort and convenience of the employer.[69] "Inmates [of total institutions] typically live in the institution and have restricted contact with the world outside the walls."[70] In many households domestic workers are only allowed

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65. About half the domestic workers in both Walther's Johannesburg study and Whisson and Weil's Cape Town study 'lived-in'.

66. E. Goffman, Asylums (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).

67. Ibid., p.6.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., p.7.

visitors at certain hours, and sometimes visits from the opposite sex, even if they are husbands, are prohibited. The long working hours of many 'live-in' and 'live-out' workers often cut them off from their own communities.

"Each grouping tends to conceive of the other in terms of narrow, hostile stereotypes, staff often seeing inmates as bitter, secretive and untrustworthy, while inmates often see staff as condescending, high-handed and mean."[71] With the addition of 'lazy' to the staff's typification of inmates, and 'bad tempered' to the inmates' typification of staff, Goffman could be describing many domestic workers and their employers here.

"Social mobility between the two strata is grossly restricted; social distance is typically great and often formally prescribed. Even talk across the boundaries may be conducted in a special tone of voice..."[72] For example, the 'madams' who address their domestic servants in broken English at a slower pace, in a tone pitched much higher than usual.[73] It is shown below that most domestic workers' relationships with their employers are characterised by a degree of social distance and formality.[74]

The extent of the social distance shows a good deal of variation, however. Preston-Whyte found that in Ridgeheights, a prosperous Durban upper middle class suburb, domestic servants were expected to do all the domestic tasks, largely unassisted and unsupervised by their employers who were out for much of the day. They worked within a rigid routine and the relationship between employers and their domestic servants was "one of formality and distance." In Central Flats, a relatively low income and heterogeneous suburb of Durban, the work demanded of servants

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71. Ibid.

72. Ibid., pp.7-8.

73. How to address servants is a common theme in British nineteenth century handbooks on etiquette and household management. Burnett quotes a writer who thought that "It is better in addressing servants to use a higher key of voice, and not to suffer it to fall at the end of a sentence." (Burnett, 1977: 173).

74. See below, Chapter 3, 'Relationships between Domestic Workers and their Employers'.

was of an unskilled nature. It involved the cleaning and polishing of the house and the heavy laundry. The White women in the homes cooked, tidied and did a good deal of the washing and ironing. Their relationship with their employees was marked by "familiarity and by warmth, tolerance and understanding on both sides." Preston-Whyte emphasises the 'common social environment' of employers and employees in Central Flats, and the links between individuals within this environment. "Ridgeheights employers were, on the other hand, drawn from a different social class and in particular from urban English homes. They based their behaviour within the master/servant relationship upon an idealised conception of the pattern in upper and middle class British households of the early part of the century in which there was often little intimate contact between the woman of the home and her domestic employees."[75] In Goffman's terms "all these restrictions of contact presumably help to maintain the antagonistic stereotypes. Two different social and cultural worlds develop, jogging alongside each other with points of official contact but little mutual penetration."[76] Of course this social distance is reinforced by language differences in the South African case.

"In some institutions there is a kind of slavery, with the inmate's full time placed at the convenience of staff."[77] The domestic workers who put in an 84 or 85 hour week certainly illustrate this.

Total institutions also involve a degree of role dispossession. "The recruit comes into the establishment with a conception of himself made possible by certain stable social arrangements in his home world. Upon entrance, he is immediately stripped of the support...of these... In many total institutions the privilege of having visitors or of visiting away from the establishment is completely withheld at first, ensuring a deep initial break from past roles and an appreciation of role dispossession."[78] Visitors to domestic servants are often rigidly controlled. And frequently the domestic worker is known by a different,

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75. E.M. Preston-Whyte, 'Race Attitudes and Behaviour. The Case of Domestic Employment in White South African Homes', Paper delivered at the Sixth Annual Congress of ASSA, Durban, 1975, pp.2-16.
76. Goffman, 1968: 9.
77. Goffman, 1968: 10.
78. Goffman, 1968: 14.

English name by her employers, symbolising her break with her own social roles and cultural identity.

Goffman also points to "the forced deference pattern of total institutions; inmates are often required to punctuate their social interaction with staff by verbal acts of deference, such as saying 'sir'. Another instance is the necessity to beg, importune, or humbly ask for little things such as a light for a cigarette, a drink of water, or permission to use the telephone."[79] In the Eastern Cape domestic workers are almost invariably required to address their employers as 'madam' and 'master' in a respectful tone. This often extends to small children in the employer's family. Servants, on the other hand, are generally addressed in terms reserved for children and inferiors. The domestic worker is usually a 'girl' and the gardener a 'boy'. They are referred to by their first names (their African surnames frequently being quite unknown to their employers). They are often made to enter and exit by a side or back door and domestic workers are frequently seen sitting behind their employers in motor cars. Goffman writes, "corresponding to the indignities of speech and action required of the inmate are the indignities of treatment others accord him. The standard examples here are verbal or gestural profanities" or "talking about him or his fellow inmates as if he were not present."[80] Statements by many domestic workers in the Eastern Cape bear witness to this, and support Katzman's identification of "the requisite of invisibility" as one "peculiar and most degrading aspect of domestic service."[81]

Total institutions are also characterised by the standard issue of uniforms and food.[82] The domestic worker's uniform externalises her position in the social order. In the Eastern Cape, at least 'servants

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79. Goffman, 1968: 22.

80. Goffman, 1968: 22-23.

81. Katzman writes, "The ideal servant as servant would be invisible and silent, responsive to demands but deaf to gossip, household chatter, and conflicts, attentive to the needs of mistress and master but blind to their faults, sensitive to the moods and whims of those around them but undemanding of family warmth, love or security. Only blacks could be invisible people in white homes." Katzman, 1978: 188.

82. Goffman, 1968: 19.

rations' consists of inferior food and often includes stale, rotten or simply 'left over' food which the employer considers unsuitable for her own family's consumption.

While the concept of the 'total institution' illuminates the extreme regimentation of many domestic workers' situations, it fails to capture the extreme isolation some of these women endure. Consider, for example, the case of Nancy described by Meer who is left in sole charge of her employer's house from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. when the couple return home. They attend evening classes after supper and some evenings they go to the cinema. She is then locked in the flat. Occasionally she has a gossip with other domestic workers when she hangs out the laundry in the open space on the roof. Lacking a room of her own, she sleeps on a mattress on the floor of the living room of her employer's two-roomed flat.[83] This is a special kind of 'incapsulation'.

In his East London study Mayer found that a few Xhosa women remained 'incapsulated' like the men in their own circle of fellow villagers. Mayer points, however, to "the absence of any incapsulating social circle such as that which surrounds the average male Red migrant."[84] Clearly the emotional upheaval involved in rural-urban migration is softened somewhat for men by the 'homeboy' arrangements reported by Mayer[85] and Wilson and Mafeje.[86] Preston-Whyte points out that "the typical pattern of homeboy groupings reported from most South African urban centres, eases the introduction of the male migrant into the urban area. Men, particularly in their first visit to town, often come to employment and accommodation found for them by the group of men from their local area who are already in town. This arrangement and the continual help of homeboys mitigates what might otherwise be a complex and bewildering experience, particularly for uneducated men with little experience of the urban system. No such associations exist to sponsor

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83. Meer, 1975: 42-43.

84. P. Mayer, Townsmen or Tribesmen. Conservatism and the Process of Urbanisation in a South African City (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1961), p.245.

85. Mayer, 1961: Part II, Resisting Urbanisation, pp.90-150.

86. M. Wilson and A. Mafeje, Langa. A Study of Social Groups in an African Township (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1963).

and help female migrants."[87] Preston-Whyte found that female domestic workers made up 74 percent of the total number of economically active African women in Durban, and of these an overwhelming proportion (particularly those in resident domestic employment) were migrants, of rural origin. She describes them as "country-rooted" because they visited their homes during their short annual leave, sent money home and 85 percent had at one time left children or taken them to be reared at rural homes. However, in their life styles and aspirations many domestic workers showed an urban orientation. Therefore, in Mayer's terms they were "double-rooted."[88]

Mayer points out that in East London, as in Durban, domestic service was the most frequent form of employment for the uneducated migrant, and

> the conditions of domestic service are unfavourable both to incapsulation in town and to frequent home-visiting. There is no week-ending, for Sunday afternoon is the usual extent of the servant's free time. A fortnight's leave enables her to go home once a year. ...At work she lives, usually, in a detached room at the end of her employer's garden or adjoining the garage. This situation, while it may enable her to receive visitors fairly freely, prevents the formation of '<u>amakhaya</u>' clusters and the voluntary restriction of social contacts to people of one's own cultural background.[89]

In Johannesburg it was found that the networks of most domestic workers were both socially and spatially closed. They tended to interact with persons similarly employed in the same locality. 'Home girls' played no particular part in these networks.[90] Thus it seems clear that domestic workers experience a particular deprivation of many normal social contacts. Clearly their residential arrangements and long working hours leave very little opportunity for any social or recreational life.

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87. Preston-Whyte, 1973: 264.

88. Preston-Whyte, 1973: 259.

89. Mayer, 1961: 245.

90. Walther, 1968.

Accommodation of residential domestic workers

The accommodation provided for residential domestic workers is frequently squalid, or bare and cramped, especially in comparison with the standard or furnishings in the employer's living quarters.[91] The way in which residential homes are often built with servants' quarters at the back, frequently with a separate entrance, creates separate social universes for the two groups. The standard accommodation for domestic workers in the two towns in the Eastern Cape study contains a toilet, and sometimes a shower. Some employers furnish their servants' rooms with a bed and mattress, a chair and table; some provide blankets. Only six of the 'live-in' servants in the Eastern Cape depth sample said they liked their rooms; two said they did not. Only three had access to a bathroom, and only one had hot water available for her personal use. One said she had to "wash in the toilet with water from the kitchen." When asked "If there was one thing you could add to your room what would it be?" some answered,

> "Blankets."
>
> "A chair."
>
> "A table to put my plate when I eat."
>
> "A cupboard in which to hang my clothes."

Most servants' rooms that the researcher has seen are drab, bare, small, and cheerless. They are reminiscent of Elsie's bedroom, as described by Arnold Bennett in Riceyman Steps,

> Its furniture comprised one narrow iron bedstead, one small, yellow washstand, one small yellow chest of drawers with a small mirror, one windsor chair, and nothing else in the way of furniture unless the books behind the door could be called furniture. No carpet. No apparatus of illumination except a candle. [92]

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91. According to the Grahamstown Building Inspector there are only four specifications in the standard building regulations for Grahamstown municipality which apply to servants' accommodation. The room must not be less than 80 sq.feet in area (the minimum size of rooms in the employer's house is 100 sq.ft.). All habitable buildings must have 11-inch cavity walls for insulation purposes. No habitable room may be less than 8 ft. high. Windows must be at least 10 percent of the floor area and 50 percent of the windows must open. According to the Building Inspector, many servants' rooms have no ceilings. Personal communication, March 1980.

92. Bennett, 1923: 85.

But such accommodation has to be seen in several cultural contexts. In Elsie's case her bedroom had

> one grand, exciting quality. It was solely hers. It was the first bedroom she had ever in all her life had entirely to herself. More, in her personal experience, it was the first room that was used as a bedroom and nothing else.
>
> She had had no privacy. She now gazed on every side and what she saw and felt was privacy; a luxurious sensation, exquisite and hardly credible. [93]

To have a room of one's own, regardless of its size, is a great luxury for the vast majority of those in domestic employment, especially in the context of the acute housing shortage in most Black and 'Coloured' townships and the difficulties of finding even single accommodation.[94] It is also a luxury compared to the squalid and crowded accommodation many migrant workers live in.[95] It affords some protection from the violence and insecurity of township life, some of which are among the most "violent communities in the world."[96] Clearly residential domestic workers experience a degree of comfort and security in their accommodation which many non-residential workers lack. They often have access to facilities such as electricity and hot water which are not provided in most Black township houses. A room of one's own often symbolises independence to the young African girl, as it did to Elsie and to Virginia Woolf.[97] This is especially true for those escaping from the restraints of rural life. Mayer reports a young girl saying

> girls who had been in East London before told me the most interesting things about it, especially the freedom

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93. Ibid., p.86.

94. See 'My night as a squatter', by B. Roberts in South African Outlook, March 1977, for a moving description of the housing conditions of squatters.

95. See 'Housing conditions for migrant workers in Cape Town', Financial Mail, 7.1.1977.

96. D. Welsh, 'The Growth of Towns', in M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), The Oxford History of South Africa (Oxford: O.U.P., Vol.2, 1971), p.219.

97. Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (London: Penguin, 1962). The middle class context of her view of 'independence' is underlined by the fact that she links the requirement for private space to a private income - £500 a year!

> one enjoys there - a room to yourself, and earning money, and buying anything you like. [98]

While a 'room of one's own' may be valued, and domestic service may provide an 'escape route' from rural poverty, it appears to afford domestic workers little intrinsic satisfaction.

5. Lack of Job Satisfaction

None of the domestic workers in the Eastern Cape depth sample said they enjoyed domestic work or derived any sense of fulfilment from it. Work is a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. The end is survival in a complex and hostile society which often seems to deny even this modest goal.

When asked "What would you say is the worst thing about your job?" some answered

> "The worst thing is you don't knock off." (This worker started work at 6 a.m. and stopped between 8-9 p.m. six and a half days a week.)
>
> "Not eating what I cook."
>
> "Cooking the dog's food and not eating it."
>
> "Window cleaning and making fudge because then the Madam moans a lot about her sugar."
>
> "Baking cakes and roasting meat and not eating it."
>
> "Looking after the dogs and cats." [99]
>
> "Working on public holidays and not enjoying yourself with friends in the township."
>
> "I never sleep at home with my husband and children. Even if I have a half day off, I have to come back and sleep here at night." (This worker works a 76-hour week.)
>
> "Looking after the pigs and the dogs." (A farm domestic worker.)
>
> "Washing cars. I feel so bad when people walk past me and see a woman doing that kind of work."

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98. Mayer, 1961: 241.

99. Resentment against the employer's dogs is a theme in Mphahlele's short story, 'Mrs Plum'. The narrator, a domestic servant, refers to the employer's dogs as "stupid, spoiled angels the whites keep giving tea and biscuits." E. Mphahlele, In Corner B (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), p.177.

"To be called a 'domestic'."

"The children are rude. They don't count us as people. They think we belong to their parents."

"It's work even when the employers go away on holiday you have to look after the house, the dogs and the cats."

"It's hard work, with no respect or appreciation from your employers and very little money."

"I leave for home after supper about 7.30 p.m. It's late. I only work for one person but she won't let me put her supper in the oven. She said to me she likes her food to come straight out of the pan onto the plate."

"Having no time off."

"Only having a half day a week off."

"I sleep in. They don't have an exact time for supper, so I go off late."

"Making the fire first thing in the morning."

"Making a fire. Although there is a gas stove, I am not allowed to use it."

"The master is a nuisance. He comes into the kitchen and tastes the food and says things, but I can do nothing."

"Getting home so late."

"Ironing and looking after the children at the same time. My employer expects me to do everything."

"Her shouting and telling the master everything."

"Not being allowed to sit in the kitchen. We have to eat outside next to the toilet and it smells worse than hell."

Many domestic workers referred to specific tasks in their work routine: window cleaning and looking after the dogs and cats were mentioned most frequently. Several mentioned the monotony and boredom of doing the same tasks every day. No significant degree of specialisation in domestic roles was reported. Most servants did general domestic work including cooking, cleaning and washing.

When asked "What would you say is the best thing about your job?" many domestic workers seemed to have difficulty answering.

"There is nothing good to say. My job is hell."

But others said:

"She doesn't rush me with my work."

"There are no small children."

"That I am on my own with the children during the day."

> "Sometimes they eat out and then I get home a little earlier."
>
> "I have 2 weeks holiday. Many servants don't have that."
>
> "Nothing, but at least I have a job."
>
> "Half a loaf is better than no bread."
>
> "Perhaps that sometimes her daughter gives me a tip or a jersey but then my employer moans and says she is spoiling me."
>
> "I am allowed to sleep at home."

When asked "If there was one thing about your job you could change, what would that be?" some answered

> "Looking after the dogs."
>
> "They should not treat us like slaves."
>
> "Cleaning windows. I have to climb a ladder. One day I wanted to throw myself to the ground so she would not tell me to clean windows. But I would have broken a leg and gained nothing."
>
> "Getting home so late. Sometimes I have a sick child and I don't even have time to look after it."
>
> "I would prefer not to sleep in, especially because I am married. My husband can find other women while I am sleeping here."
>
> "Looking after the dogs. I even have to wash them once a week."
>
> "I would like to get a holiday at Christmas but my employer is old. She has nowhere to go so I can't leave her."

Their work is often monotonous drudgery, carried on for immensely long hours with very little aid from machinery.

All the domestic workers in the Eastern Cape study said they found domestic work boring rather than interesting. All said they found that they had too much to get through during the day. Only 10 percent of the depth sample said they felt lonely in the job. Several who answered in the negative added, "because I have so much to do."[100]

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100. This is contrary to what the researcher had expected. "Lonely occupations, such as domestic service and lodging house keeping, have high suicide rates." Parker et al., The Sociology of Industry (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967), p.144. In his American study, Katzman reports that "loneliness was a frequent complaint of domestics." Katzman, 1978: 14.

Over a third of the depth worker sample (36 percent) felt their employer supervised their work too closely and bossed them around too much.

> "She tells me to do one hundred things a day."[101]
>
> "The supervision is killing me."
>
> "The supervision is too much...I can't stand it. Everybody wants to tell me what to do and how to do it."

The privatized nature of the work, the high degree of observability in work performance as well as the close supervision it often involves are among the reasons for the unpopularity of domestic work.[102] It is a highly exposed occupational role. It involves not only exposure to close supervision but to the vagaries of an employer's moods.

Just under half, 46 percent of the depth sample, thought they were learning useful skills on the job. Many said they were learning skills such as making sweets, cakes and cold drinks, but these were of no use to them, because they did not have the money to buy the ingredients to make them for their own families.

> "I can't help anybody with what I have learnt because we don't have what our employers have."
>
> "No, because its things I cannot do at home."
>
> "Yes, I have learned how to cook and roast the meat that I cannot eat."
>
> "I am not interested in what I am learning because it will not help me or my children."

This contrasts with domestic service in nineteenth-century Britain which, Burnett emphasises, provided the opportunities for both learning useful skills and for social mobility.[103]

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101. Irritation provoked by close supervision is a frequent theme in studies of domestic work generally. For example, Maggie Holmes in Studs Terkel, Working (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp.112-118. See also, Katzman, 1978: 6.

102. Van der Vliet and Bromberger report that some farmers in the Eastern Cape find that domestic help is sometimes more difficult to obtain than seasonal help. They suggest "this may be connected with the fact that domestic work is often individual (rather than done in a group), subject to close supervision and the vagaries of employer personality, often demeaning in terms of skills, and perhaps involves longer hours in the evenings or over week-ends." Wilson et al., 1977: 125.

103. Domestic service accepted entrants at an early age, "typically at 12 or 13 in the mid nineteenth century - without previous experience or training; it offered them the opportunity of learning

Domestic work has been described as "barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-wracking, stultifying and crushing drudgery",[104] and it has been suggested that the biggest single 'brain drain' in industrialised societies today is "down the kitchen sink."[105] These are extreme views. Compared to factory work there are opportunities for creative and satisfying work in a domestic context. Some domestic workers take pride in the cleanliness of the homes, and a pleasure in the care of children left in their charge. Some may prefer the apparently easier routines of domestic work to the hard, driving routine of the factory. But much domestic work is of an uncongenial kind, and is extremely monotonous and repetitive. Also it should be stressed that domestic work is often of a physically demanding nature, for example, moving furniture, turning mattresses, carrying heavy loads of laundry, and so on. "Although the tasks that make up housework are dissimilar, there is said to be a 'sameness' about them, which derives from their frequent need to be repeated, their lack of intrinsic meaning, and the impermanence of the goals they achieve."[106] Speaking generally, it appears that those who glorify domestic work rarely engage in it.[107]

In Oakley's study of a group of London housewives, the predominant feeling was one of dissatisfaction with domestic work. In reply to

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those skills associated with homemaking which, hopefully they would be able to employ in later married life; it provided board and lodging as well as a cash wage, in a sheltered environment where a young girl or boy would be subject to the control and moral care of older servants and employers. In this sense employment in a good household was akin to membership of an extended family group. It was a secure and regular occupation, for which there was a steady demand both in town and country, and for the ambitious it provided a clearly defined route to respected and responsible positions. Above all it reduced the strain on a poor family's budget and living accommodation by removing daughters from overcrowded households as soon as they were old enough to be of use to another." Burnett, 1977: 137.

104. V. Lenin, On the Emancipation of Women (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), p.65. Quoted by Adamson et al., 1976: 16.

105. E. Gould-Davis, The First Sex (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1973), p.333.

106. Oakley, 1974: 80.

107. For example, John Ruskin who "washed a flight of stone stairs all down with bucket and broom, in a Savoy inn, where they hadn't washed their stairs since they first went up them; and

direct questions, 90 percent of the housewives in the sample reported 'fragmentation'; 75 percent 'monotony'; and 50 percent 'time pressures'. She compared these with Goldthorpe's results on factory workers and concluded that housewives in Britain "experience more monotony, fragmentation, and speed in their work than do workers in the factory."[108] All the women in her sample reported feeling tied to the house and isolated from meaningful, social contacts. Given that domestic work in another's home is even more privatized and may be even more solitary; given that it involves following a work routine that is imposed by the employer's orders, rather than evolved for oneself, it seems that Oakley's findings would be duplicated, with a heightened intensity, if applied to domestic workers in this society.

It is also arguable that paid domestic work in other people's homes involves an exposure to a particular set of frustrations and resentments, generated by the extreme asymmetry of power and wealth involved. For example, Pollak argues that domestic service "exposes many women to the frustration of a daily experience of difference between their own standard of living and the living standards of their employers. Such a situation exists in hardly any other line of work. To see what other people have, and what she herself does not have, can almost be called the essential job experience of the domestic servant."[109] Writing in the U.S.A. in the late 1940's, Pollak states that "in our time of class antagonism and in our country of race antagonism in which domestic workers are frequently coloured or at least members of another ethnic group than their employers, the situation is psychologically mined. Logically it must lead to a tremendous amount of pent-up resentment which cannot help but create a desire for aggressive compensation."[110]

Clearly this applies to the South African situation even more sharply because the cultural gap, social inferiority and economic disparity

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I never made a better sketch than that afternoon." J. Ruskin, Sesame and Lilies (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1808), p.199.

108. Oakley, 1974: 87.

109. O. Pollak, The Criminality of Women (Philadelphia: University of Pennysylvania Press, 1950), p.144.

110. Ibid., p.160.

involved is even greater. Pollak argues that the envy, frustration and resentment this inequality generates, often leads to criminal behaviour of a peculiarly 'masked' type. Here Pollak points to three factors concerning domestic thefts: firstly the comparative insignificance of her thefts, not only in the domestic's own eyes but also in her employer's, makes this offence not sufficiently injurious to warrant much vigour in prosecution; secondly, the employee-employer relationship often leads to an inclination towards leniency on the part of the latter which makes dismissal rather than criminal prosecution the normal consequence; and thirdly, the domestic worker's opportunity to bide her time in the committing of the offence and cover her tracks successfully. For these reasons he asserts that female domestic workers are one of the largest groups of female unprosecuted offenders.[111]

The 'masked' nature of female crime and the occupational frustration of females in domestic employment suggested by Pollak echo the insights of Lombroso and Ferrero. They argued that female thieves in Italy included a large proportion of domestic servants, and they quote Tarnowsky as saying that "49 percent of female thieves belong to the class of domestic servants." They relate this to the temptations domestic work affords: "Girls come up from the country and enter houses where the great or relative well-being which reigns seems to them a sign of enormous wealth. They are badly paid, yet are given money, plate and other valuables to handle, which awake in them the greed innate in every woman [emphasis mine]..."[112] In the South African context domestic theft reinforces the stereotypic conception of Blacks as innately dishonest, childlike and unreliable.

Many of these negative aspects of domestic work in terms of experiences and evaluations apply in all advanced capitalist societies. This study tries to stress that fundamentally it is a class relationship, which in South African society assumes a racial form. The class nature of this relationship is illustrated by the similarities between employers' perceptions of domestic servants in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, and contemporary race attitudes in South Africa. The class

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111. Ibid., pp.36-38.

112. C. Lombroso and W. Ferrero, The Female Offender (London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1895), p.208.

nature of the dominant attitudes in Britain is very clear. As one domestic worker remarked bitterly, "This locking things up makes people dishonest; it's as though because one is working class one is not to be trusted."[113] Similarly disparate class experiences are used to reinforce the negative stereotypic attitudes of the dominant class. In England, many working girls "were frequently called stupid, because they were unacquainted with the names and uses of kitchen articles, whereas it is simply ignorance from not having seen or used them."[114] "Stupidity" and "dishonesty" are both class-based components of hegemonic ideologies.

While these negative experiences and typifications of domestic work apply in all advanced capitalist societies, and assume a racial form in the South African class structure, it is also arguable that in South Africa the system of racial domination gives a special 'twist' to these experiences. It could be argued that because of their structural location in the South African social formation, Blacks employed as domestic servants experience 'apartheid' in a peculiarly humiliating way. Their duties as workers may force them into situations where as Blacks their rights are denied or restricted. In Port Elizabeth, for instance, at least, "domestic servants looking after white children are allowed on white beaches but are not allowed to swim."[115] In one case three domestic servants were charged for doing so.

The low status of their occupation is another reason for the unpopularity of domestic service.

6. The Low Status of Domestic Service

In Southern African society domestic service is the least prestigious of all occupations. To appreciate what is involved here, domestic work must be located in a cultural context, as well as in an economic system. As Davidoff emphasises, the context and meaning of domestic work are

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113. Quoted by Horn, 1975: 178.

114. Ibid., p.34.

115. A statement by Mr Shelton, Municipal Director of Parks, reported in the Eastern Province Herald, 15.1.1977.

culturally defined and culturally variable. We should ask: who does it, where, on what occasions and for what reasons? For example, sweeping a floor is an activity which has technologically changed very little. It may be a form of ritual that involves making patterns with magical or aesthetic meanings; it may also be a form of humiliation and punishment as in the army, prisons and some mental hospitals, where the most menial domestic work is used as discipline to keep order.[116]

Nor is domestic work invariably performed by women. The cross-cultural evidence is that very often such tasks as fuel-gathering, simple cooking and cleaning, child-minding and water-carrying, have been allocated to young children, and old and handicapped people of either sex, that is, to people too physically weak or socially marginal to be involved in more valued tasks.[117] In fourteenth and fifteenth century England, upper-class boys did domestic service in aristocratic households, and in many parts of Colonial Africa it is often the 'native' men who perform domestic work for the dominant group.

In South Africa domestic service is a predominantly Black female institution. Certainly there is a Xhosa tradition of women doing domestic work, which is institutionalised in the role of the umtshakazi, the period of service of the new wife. Umtshakazi involves a severe training for womanhood with the emphasis on obedience and deference. The 'Red' Xhosa wife spends several years in her mother-in-law's homestead doing all the domestic work under her direction.

> A bride when married is taken to the hut of her mother-in-law and there she spends a year or more 'cooking' for her mother-in-law. She is expected to be very humble and 'kutele' (diligent), rising before any one else, clearing the ashes, cooking, and generally acting as a servant in the household.... Many brides have to work extremely hard and often become thin and old-looking soon after marriage. [118]

Similarly in Bhaca society, the young bride must work for her mother-

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116. L. Davidoff, 'The Rationalization of Housework', in Barker and Allen, 1976: 123.

117. Ibid.

118. M. Hunter, 'The Effects of Contact with Europeans on the State of Pondo Women', Africa, Vol. VI, 1933, p.264.

in-law. "...all the heavy work of the household is relegated to her."[119]

The Xhosa girl is socialised into a domestic role. However, the traditional Xhosa world view excludes domestic work for wages. Ideally a woman, especially a woman with small children, should 'work' (ukusebenza) in the home, but she should not 'work' (ukuphangela) outside the home for wages.[120] Thus for the 'Red' Xhosa, paid domestic employment for a young mother is at variance with the dominant role definitions. For both 'Red' and 'School' Xhosa domestic work is contrasted unfavourably with so-called 'clean' occupations.[121] In the Eastern Cape study, most respondents, at some stage in the interview, complained about the low standing of domestic workers in terms of prestige.

This is confirmed by other studies of domestic workers. Weinrich found that domestic worker and street cleaner were the two occupations which received the lowest prestige rating.[122] Walther reports that Soweto dwellers often tease domestic workers by saying 'unoblind', "you have blindness", or 'uyisilima', "you are a fool", because they are employed in work notorious for its long working hours, little leisure time and poor pay. Domestic workers are also called 'inyama yezinja', "dog's meat", by workers in other occupational roles, for it is said that employers tend to buy them inexpensive and 'horrid' meat, and, or because they receive insufficient food and meat.[123] Similarly, Preston-Whyte found that

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119. W.D. Hammond-Tooke, Bhaca Society (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.114.

120. I. Mayer, 1979: 74.

121. P. Mayer, 1961: 245. 'Red people' "are the traditionalist Xhosa, the conservatives who still stand by the indigenous way of life, including the pagan Xhosa religion." 'School people' "are products of the mission and the school holding up Christianity, literacy and other Western ways as ideals." Mayer, 1961: 4.

122. A.V. Weinrich, 'Social Stratification and Change among African Women in a Rhodesian Provincial Town', in ASSA, Sociology Southern Africa, 1973. Papers from the First Congress of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa (University of Natal, Durban, 1973), p.122.

123. Walther, 1968.

> domestic service is the least prestigious of all occupations open to Africans in Durban and nearly all those women seeking employment in this field do so from urgent necessity alone. [124]

According to one view, domestic work in other people's homes per se is demeaning. For example, Du Bois states in his essay, 'The Servant in the House',

> the personal degradation of their work is so great, that any white man of decency would rather cut his daughter's throat than let her grow up to such a destiny. [125]

According to another view, domestic work in other people's homes is especially degrading for men.

> It is the considered opinion of African society that domestic service is no proper occupation for a man. It is seen as degrading him in his manhood and of providing him with no promotion possibilities and chances of bettering himself. [126]

Weinrich goes on to argue that the situation is different for African women.

> For them...domestic work is not degrading as it is for African men because cooking has always been the normal work expected of African women... For them, far fewer occupations have opened up than for African men, and for those with less than professional training domestic service is practically the only job opportunity available. [127]

She concludes that "if domestic service is to remain an integral part of the Rhodesian way of life, it would be to the advantage of Africans if servants were predominantly women and not men."[128] This seems a dangerous kind of circular argument which can only operate to reinforce the many disabilities of African women. However this is not to deny the extra dimension of 'ultra-exploitation' of male domestic servants, whose occupational role violates traditional gender role definitions.

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124. Preston-Whyte, 1973: 260.

125. W.E.B. Du Bois, Darkwater. Voices from within the Veil (London: Constable, 1920), p.116.

126. Weinrich, 1976: 242.

127. Ibid., p.243.

128. Ibid.

Overall, a number of factors - both economic and social - contribute to the low status of domestic service. As Burnett has written of domestic servants in nineteenth-century Britain,

> Material disadvantages were no doubt important - the limited opportunities for promotion, the large degree of mechanical repetition in the work, the length and irregularity of working hours, the lack of free time and the ineffectiveness of labour organisations. Yet it was the social disabilities which ultimately weighed more heavily: the isolation of the servant, both from his employer and from the community outside, the virtual absence of a private life, the degree of control exercised by the employer, the use of the term 'servant'. [129]

Yet Burnett also suggests that "the fundamental reason for the low social status of domestic workers must...have been the degrading, and sometimes inhuman conditions under which many of them worked."[130] In both nineteenth century Britain and contemporary South Africa, it is the extreme vulnerability and powerlessness of domestic workers, their 'ultra-exploitability', that is at the root of this. It is their extremely weak bargaining position in relation to their employers, that enables them to command only very low wages and poor working conditions. Their weak bargaining position reflects their deprivation of critical rights as workers.

7. Deprivation of Worker Rights

The domestic worker is deprived of critical rights as a worker, especially the 'right' (defined as such in advanced capitalist societies) to collective bargaining and legal protection. Domestic workers are located in a legal vacuum. There are no laws stipulating the minimum wages, hours of work or other conditions of service. They are not covered by the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation Act (28 of 1956) nor by the Wages Act (5 of 1957). The latter authorises statutory boards to fix minimum wages, but does not apply to farm and domestic workers, the two largest categories of African women wage-earners. In South Africa's industrial laws the domestic servant is

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129. Burnett, 1977: 172.

130. Ibid., p.170.

excluded as a worker. Wages, conditions of service such as hours of work, rest periods, paid holidays and other benefits are fixed for other workers in South Africa in terms of the Shops and Offices Act (75 of 1964), and the Factories, Machinery and Building Work Act (22 of 1941). For domestic workers these are drawn up arbitrarily by the employer. Domestic workers are excluded from the benefits of the Unemployment Insurance Fund and the Workmen's Compensation Act.[131] Concomitantly, both domestic and agricultural workers do not qualify for maternity benefits. As domestic workers are often the sole supporters of their families, the loss of earnings during pregnancy is an extreme deprivation.

Even the repeal of the Masters and Servants legislation is a mixed blessing. Under this legislation, desertion by a servant was a criminal offence, as was refusal to obey a lawful order. In the Cape, wages could be held back by an employer to pay off debts by the servant to him, but unless prior agreement had been entered into, deductions for breakages were illegal unless the employer could successfully prove 'dereliction of duty' in court. Deductions for breakages are now sometimes threatened by employers.[132] Loaded as the Master and Servants Act was against the domestic worker, since its repeal she has no legal protection at all.

The lack of disability and unemployment insurance, pensions, maternity benefits and paid sick leave mean that domestic workers are an extremely insecure group of workers. This insecurity is illustrated by the fact that instant dismissal is frequently resorted to by some employers who often fail to observe the common law provisions relating to the issuing of notice and payment in lieu of notice. The insecurity of domestic workers and their vulnerability to instant dismissal on unreasonable grounds is illustrated by the following case from a Grahamstown Advice Office report:

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131. At the time of writing the R10,50 a week wage 'floor' below which workers may not contribute to or receive benefits from the Unemployment Insurance Fund, would operate to exclude many domestic workers anyway. The Unemployment Insurance Amendment Bill, about to become law, scraps this wage 'floor', but agricultural and domestic workers are still excluded from the Fund, irrespective of what they earn. Financial Mail, 16.2.1979.

132. See below, p. 191.

> Mrs D was employed by a family living in Grahamstown. She had worked for Mrs H for a period of 3 years and her salary was R31 per month. She was dismissed because she was 'hopeless'. Dismissal was with immediate effect. We phoned Mrs H to ask whether she would consider paying Mrs D notice money. She said she was not prepared to. She felt she was well within her rights because Mrs D had broken her 'contract'. According to Mrs H, Mrs D was an unsatisfactory 'girl' and she told us the following to substantiate her claim:
>
> Mrs H had gone out one cold wet afternoon leaving the children in Mrs D's care. When she came home she found that Mrs D had allowed the children to play outside and they had got wet. The children developed colds and a doctor was sent for and he prescribed medication. Mrs H deducted the doctor's bill from Mrs D's salary because she claimed Mrs D had been negligent and irresponsible in allowing the children to play outside. [133]

In such cases of instant dismissal the Advice Office directors report that

> unfortunately we are unable to push very hard since the employers often assert that the employee was drunk, dishonest, 'cheeky', or in some other way abused the agreement between employer and employee. It is then the white madam's word against the domestic worker's, and we often do not succeed in obtaining the normal considerations surrounding termination of employment. The common law is just not enough. [134]

The writer's own experience of working in the Advice Office confirms this. This threat of instant dismissal illustrates a further dimension of the domestic worker's vulnerability.

Domestic servants lack critical rights as workers, to a negotiated wage and favourable working conditions, membership of an effective workers' organisation, to have their families living with them, to rent or purchase accommodation in a place of their choice, to respectful treatment; to the further acquisition of knowledge and skills; to opportunities and scope for advancement; to sell their labour in the place of their choice; to an acknowledgement of their contribution to society and the dignity of their labour.

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133. Grahamstown Advice Office Report for the period 1 June to 10 December, 1977. K. Satchwell and R. van Wyk Smith.

134. Ibid.

Some efforts to improve the situation of domestic workers are being made under the direction of DWEP (Domestic Workers and Employers Project) established in 1970. The aim of DWEP is to support domestic workers, to help them to change the conditions of their lives. Their chief focus at present seems to lie in organising Centres of Concern where domestic workers may come to socialise and acquire skills. There are now over 200 Centres of Concern in South Africa. More importantly, DWEP aims to organise domestic workers into unions.[135]

The difficulties in organising such atomised workers into organisations for collective bargaining are formidable. Organising domestic workers into unions, even in less coercive and exploitative societies than South Africa, presented difficulties. Burnett points out that in Britain,

> unlike most major occupations in the nineteenth century, domestic service was almost untouched by the growth of trade unions, which might have ameliorated the conditions of employment, improved wages and ultimately raised the status of the occupation. Effective unions would, in any case, have been difficult to organise among workers who were so scattered and widespread, and in this respect domestic servants suffered from the same disadvantages as agricultural labourers. Working normally only with one or two other employees, under the employer's own roof and constant supervision, with no regular free time, and with a work-force predominantly female, the conditions of effective association were all lacking for the domestic servant. Moreover in an occupation so rigidly authoritarian and hierarchical there was little sense of common purpose or even common injustice... [136]

The last point does not apply to domestic workers, at least according to the evidence from the Eastern Cape study.[137] Moreover reports from the recent strike of Eveready workers in Port Elizabeth hardly suggests that a predominantly female work force is necessarily a conservative factor.

In Britain between 1891 and 1914 there were three separate attempts to unionise domestic servants, all largely unsuccessful. In 1910 the

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135. Reported in the Daily Dispatch, 17.9.1976. Also interview with Sue Gordon, July 1979.

136. Burnett, 1977: 169. Similarly in industrializing America "numerous attempts were made at unionization, but with servants isolated, each working alone, problems involved in organizing them were insurmountable." Katzman, 1978: 183.

137. See below, Chapter 4, 'The Self Imagery of Domestic Workers'.

Domestic Workers Union of Great Britain was formed to demand "higher wages, two hours free time each day and regular rest days each month." The scale of the demands is indicative, but its membership had only reached 245 by 1912, and it petered out during World War I when more and more domestic workers took up employment in munitions factories. Clearly, domestic workers will always be difficult to organise. Their low pay makes union dues expensive, their isolation in scattered workplaces makes communication and collective action problematical. These difficulties are amplified by the political restraints operating against trade union organisation in South Africa at present.

The domestic worker's low wages, long hours of work which involve considerable levels of deprivation of family and social life, her lack of job satisfaction, low status in the community, and marginal position as a worker, all suggest a situation of 'ultra-exploitation'. While the evidence supporting these seven levels of exploitation have been largely drawn from the Eastern Cape study, it is impossible to 'cordon off' domestic servants in this area, from the wider society. Thus evidence has been drawn on from studies of domestic workers in other areas of Southern Africa to support this thesis.

Isolated and impotent, the only weapon of a dissatisfied domestic worker who finds her situation intolerable, is to 'vote with her feet', to withdraw her labour and try to find a more congenial place. This is not always easy, and is an individual rather than a collective response.

Domestic service in Britain was an extremely mobile occupation involving a very high labour turnover. Domestic servants frequently moved for promotion or simply a change of scene. Many women servants regarded the occupation as almost casual and migrated easily into various trades, shop work, and, later, factory work. In the Eastern Cape, however, domestic service is not a very mobile occupation for two obvious reasons: firstly the labour controls on Black movement generally; secondly the high levels of unemployment in the Eastern Cape. In Port Alfred, for instance, only 1 800 of the town's Black population of 9 000 have jobs.[138] In Grahamstown, while population and employment

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138. Eastern Province Herald, 7.11.1978.

figures are notoriously unreliable, there are said to be 4 707 Black men and 4 920 Black women in employment, the women mainly in domestic service. A further 1 895 men and 747 women are in employment outside Grahamstown, mainly in the Port Elizabeth - Uitenhage areas. Official figures on unemployment registered 1 547 men and 4 864 women against a total population in Grahamstown and the surrounding area of 52 004 Blacks.[139]

Given these high levels of unemployment, despite their low wages and long hours, those women in domestic service are in a sense 'the lucky ones'. Poverty and lack of employment alternatives, which propel Black women into domestic service, mean that legislation coercing them into domestic service is not necessary. Such legislation is not unknown in other societies.[140]

In South Africa other forms of coercion operate to propel almost 800 000 Black women into an occupation none of them would choose. Given this coercive pattern, the work histories of most domestic workers show a marked stability.

Work Histories of Domestic Workers

The great majority of the workers in the Eastern Cape sample, 80 per cent, had been domestic workers for most of their working lives, between 20 to 35 years. They all stressed that they had had no alternative choice.

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139. Abalizi Civic Action Committee. Ds. J.A. Venter, reported in the Eastern Province Herald, 29.8.1978.

140. For example in Elizabethan England there was an enactment giving power to the Justices of the Peace and the Mayors

> to send out to service, at fixed rates of remuneration, any unmarried women between the ages of 12 and 40 whom they shall think fit.... If any woman shall refuse to serve it shall be lawful for the Justices to commit such women to ward until she shall be founden to serve.

Quoted in G. Hill, Women in English Life from Mediaeval to Modern Times (London: Bentley, 1869, 2 vols.), p.221.

Table 17. Length of Service of a Sample of 50 Domestic Workers

Years in domestic service	Number of workers
3	1
10 - 15	3
15 - 20	4
20 - 25	23
25 - 30	9
30 - 35	8
35 - 40	1
40 - 45	1

Most workers (90 percent) had started their first jobs as 'young girls' of 18 and under; some started at the ages of 11 and 12 as 'nannies' looking after small White children. In answer to the question, "At what age did you start your first job?" one woman replied

"I don't know. I've been a slave for a long time."

In many cases their first jobs were 'nannies' in White households and in others it was helping relatives who were domestic workers. Most of these workers (90 percent) had held jobs with between three and six different employers.

Table 18. Number of Jobs in Domestic Service of a Sample of 50 Workers

Number of jobs	Number of workers
1 - 2	4
3 - 4	24
5 - 6	21
9 - 10	1

Many domestic workers feel trapped in their present jobs. Eight farm domestic workers said their particular job was obligatory through marriage to a worker on the farm.

> "The boss told me that I must stop working with chicory. They want me to work inside the house but I was told I must not steal sugar."

This obligatory domestic service appears to be a fairly common practice. In her study of Black communities on European farms in the districts of Albany, Adelaide and Bedford, Hunter found that

> the earnings of a man employed on a farm are usually supplemented by the earnings of his wife or children. In the districts visited, a family is never hired as a whole; each member is hired and paid separately; but it is understood that if a man is hired, his wife and children must work if, and when, they are needed. On one farm two families, in which the men were quite satisfactory, were dismissed because their wives and daughters refused to work in the house. On another there were only 2 or 3 hands because the lady of the house could not get on with maids, and when she quarrelled with a maid the whole family had to go. It is usual for the mistress, when she requires a maid, not to wait for applications for the post, but to send for whatever woman or girl on the farm she wished. [141]

Twenty years later Roberts found that in the Eastern Cape,

> many farmers emphasize that one of the conditions of employment of an African family is that the dependants of the head of the household shall make themselves available to the farmer whenever they are required.[142]

Another twenty years later, working in the same area, I came across several instances in which families were dismissed because their wives either refused to work in the house, or were not regarded as 'satisfactory' workers. In one case this was a bone of contention between a farmer and his wife. She wanted her husband to dismiss a family including two males whom the husband regarded as satisfactory agricultural labourers, because their female relatives refused to work in the house.

Thus domestic workers on farms appear to be trapped by a web of constraints whereby they are often coerced into domestic service. Resistance may mean that the entire family is left without a place to live, or the means to do so.

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141. M. Hunter, Reaction to Conquest. Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1936, Second Edition 1961), p.515.

142. Roberts, 1959: 25.

Most of the domestic workers in the depth sample (84 percent) said they chose this particular job because there were no other jobs available. A few said they had tried various 'informal sector' activities such as hawking vegetables, sewing, dressmaking, brewing, liquor dealing, selling pinecones collected from the forest, selling acorns for pig food, but had been unable to make a living.[143] In answer to the question "Have you ever done any other kind of work?" one woman replied

> "I never had that chance. My mother died when I was a day old so other people brought me up. They never bothered even to send me to school. So how could I learn any other kind of work?"

In both the towns in the Eastern Cape study domestic workers are extremely easy to obtain. Whites frequently complain about the stream of women coming to their doors asking for work. One newcomer to Grahamstown asked an estate agent how she could obtain a domestic servant and was told

> "Oh, here it's easy. We just pick them up off the streets."

The main mode of recruitment in fact appears to be a personal contact. Of the 42 urban domestic workers in the depth sample most (70 percent)

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143. 'Informal sector' is a term coined by Hart in his typology of urban income opportunities in Ghana. K. Hart, 'Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana', Journal of Modern African Studies, II, 1973, p.69. It is one of the characteristics of the informal sector that it includes women in disproportionately high numbers.
It is interesting that prostitution was not mentioned at all by respondents. According to Willsworth, there are only 25 prostitutes in Grahamstown's Black community. (Willsworth, 1979: 108.) This is surprising. In nineteenth century Britain, domestic servants were one of the major sources of prostitution. As Davidoff comments, "that the loneliness and privations of the life of a woman in a small household might make even prostitution look attractive, was never considered." (L. Davidoff et al., 'Landscape with Figures: Home and Community in English Society', pp.139-175, in J. Mitchell and A. Oakley (eds.), The Rights and Wrongs of Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p.168.) Weinrich found that many prostitutes had been domestic servants in the past. (Weinrich, 1973: 109.) The very position of domestic servants - low wages, poor accommodation, no possibilities of promotion - lends itself to projecting these underprivileged women into prostitution. A link between the two occupational categories seems plausible, but would need to be tested by further research.

found out about their present job through a connection of kinship or friendship with the previous or present servant in the house. Only seven did so through approaching their employer directly themselves.

The majority of domestic servants had worked for the same employer for a considerable period.

Table 19. Length of Service with Present Employer of a Sample of 225 Domestic Workers

Period of service with present employer	Number of workers
Less than 6 months	25
6 months - 1 year	22
1 year - 1 year 11 months	7
2 years - 2 years 11 months	7
3 years - 3 years 11 months	20
4 years - 4 years 11 months	9
5 - 10 years	49
10 - 15 years	29
15 - 20 years	33
25 years and over	24

The length of service with the present employer ranged from less than 6 months to 37 years. The majority (135) had worked for the same employer for between five and 25 years.

In the depth sample of 50 domestic workers various reasons were given for having left their last job: five said they moved from the area; 14 because their employers moved; two because of marriage; seven because they fell pregnant; 18 of their own choice; and four were dismissed by their employers. Their answers to the question, "Why did you leave your last job?" are revealing:

> "I had a baby and nobody to look after it."
>
> "My husband died so I had to leave that farm. Some farmers don't keep widows, especially if the children are too young to work on the farm."

> "I had a baby. I could not keep it because I had to sleep in."
>
> "I had a baby. My husband said I can't get home so late because of the baby, but when he came across a better woman he never thought about me. He just went off with Miss Better."
>
> "I got sick. They don't want you to be sick. You must be as strong as iron."

As pointed out earlier, dismissal is usually with immediate effect. Many of these women appear to be caught up in a cycle of poverty, with a lack of education and employment opportunities which continues from generation to generation. This vicious circle effect leads one to suspect that domestic work may involve a degree of ascription in a quasi-caste status. The mother of two out of every three respondents in the depth sample had also been a domestic worker. In eight cases the mother was a farm labourer. Only in 11 cases had their mother ever been to school.

This pattern contrasts with the development of domestic service in Britain during this century. As new employment opportunities opened up to women by the 1920s and 1930s domestic service was no longer the 'natural' outlet for women's employment that it had been in Victorian times. This process of dispersal from domestic work into other occupations has occurred among Black men in South Africa, but is only slowly beginning to occur among Black women. In Cape Town, Whisson and Weil report that domestic servants largely comprised "the less educated, less capable and less organised sections of the working population."[144] This is confirmed by Meer's Durban study which found that "they had been pushed into the occupation because of their poverty-stricken backgrounds and they were trapped in it because of their low educational qualifications."[145] This process is amplified in the Eastern Cape where the majority of Black women are poor and ill-educated, with heavy family responsibilities. They remain largely trapped within domestic service.

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144. Whisson and Weil, 1971: 11.

145. Meer, 1975: 38.

Age, Educational and Sex Characteristics of a Sample of Domestic Workers

All the domestic workers in the sample of 225 households were females.[146] The majority, 58 percent, were Xhosa; 40 percent were Mfengu and two percent 'Coloured'. The majority were middle-aged women.

Table 20. Age Range of a Sample of 50 Domestic Workers

Age range	Number	Percentage
25 - 29	3	6
30 - 34	1	2
35 - 39	11	22
40 - 44	9	18
45 - 49	17	34
50 - 54	3	6
55 - 59	2	4
60 - 64	3	6
65 - 69	1	2

In the short questionnaire sample of 125 domestic workers, age was not asked for, but the sample included one 15 year old girl earning R4 a month for a working week of 59 hours.

This age distribution contrasts strongly with the pattern in pre-industrial Europe. Laslett has shown that

> Western servants (between 1574 and 1821) were to a very large extent, young, unmarried persons - indeed, sexually mature persons waiting to be married.... Service in England and the West was a stage in the life cycle for large numbers of people.[147]

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146. The situation in the Eastern Cape is similar to that in the old American South where "'domestic servant' was synonymous with 'black woman'." Katzman, 1978: 24.

147. P. Laslett, Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p.34.

Laslett describes these as 'life-cycle servants'. By contrast, in contemporary South Africa domestic workers are 'life-long servants'.

The great majority of domestic workers in the Eastern Cape study had only a minimum amount of formal education. Over three-fifths (63 per cent) had been to school, but the vast majority had not progressed beyond Standard V.

Table 21. Educational Attainment of a Sample of 110 Domestic Workers who had been to School

Educational standard	Number of workers	Percentage
Sub A - Std I	14	12,7
Std II	24	21,8
Std III	19	17,3
Std IV	20	18,2
Std V	22	20,0
Std VI	8	7,3
Std VII	1	0,9
Std VIII	2	1,8
	110	100,0

Three quarters had not progressed beyond Standard V. No one in the sample had progressed higher than Standard VIII. Only six percent of the depth worker sample, as compared with 64 percent of the employers, had any other education or was going to classes of any kind. One was going to Red Cross classes, and the other two were attending night school.

Many of the domestic workers in the Eastern Cape sample expressed a deep sense of hopelessness and despondency about their own lives. Their hopes for the future focused on their children, and education was seen as the means whereby their children could escape to a better life. Education was stressed as "something nobody can take away from you", and was sometimes considered a kind of insurance policy for their own future.

> "I would like to educate my children so when they are finished they can give me money. If they work as domestics they will not be able to give me money and see to themselves."

For these reasons many domestic workers invest a considerable portion of their incomes in the education of their children. With their low wages, this involves a considerable amount of self-sacrifice.

Given their own extremely deprived educational backgrounds, their educational aspirations for their children were pitched very high. In 90 percent of the answers in the depth sample there was a sex difference in the occupations they would choose for their cleverest sons and cleverest daughters. All wanted their children to become white-collar workers. The four occupations chosen for their cleverest daughter were nurse (28); teacher (16); social worker (3) and dressmaker (1). The occupations chosen for their cleverest sons covered a wider and more prestigious range. They were teacher (18); doctor (12); farmer (10); lawyer (5); radio announcer (1); clerk (1); minister of religion (1).

Many stressed the importance of education for their daughters so they could avoid having to be domestic workers. None wanted their own children to become domestic servants. Reasons given included:

(i) the low status of the occupation:

> "We get no respect."
>
> "You are not counted as a woman."
>
> "Educated people look down on us domestics."
>
> "A domestic is not counted as an important person."

(ii) lack of appreciation by employers:

> "Your employer looks down on you. You have to keep on saying, 'Remember that I am a woman too.'"
>
> "Our employers look down on us, but our job is important because we do a lot for them."
>
> "It lowers your dignity to be a domestic. Your employer's child can swear at you and you have got to laugh. There is nothing you can do. The parents say nothing."

(iii) low wages:

> "You work very hard and earn very little."

"It's hard work, very little money and makes you tired."

"Specially on the farm we work hard for nothing."

(iv) long hours:

"You have no time to see your friends."

"We have to leave our own children early in the morning and look after our madam's children. We have no time to look after them even when they are sick."

(v) lack of pension rights or job security:

"You work for years and get nothing at the end. Not even thank you."

"You can be dismissed at any time."

"No matter if I work here for one hundred years I can be dismissed for breaking a cup and get nothing. Not even a thank you. I will be classified as stupid. They will forget the years I worked and worry about the cup."

"You can't complain or you might lose your job. If you complain your employer tells you about all the girls coming to the door looking for work."

(vi) the monotonous and tiring nature of the work:

"It's hard work."

"It makes you tired and you do the same things every day."

"As a domestic you have to do everything. You wash walls, clean windows, clean, tidy, cook and look after the children. I think the employers are just scared of saying go and do gardening as well. You do all that for little money."

"I even have to look after the dogs and cats. The employer thinks about them more than they think about me."

"It's not an interesting job. You don't learn from it. It just makes you tired and think you are going to do the same thing every day. That is why I have all my children at school."

"You learn nothing useful, you get bossed around too much. I have to be at work before sunrise in winter. It's hard."

The attitudes towards their jobs expressed in these statements underline the pathos of the situation in which many domestic workers are trapped. The irony is that they are driven into domestic employment in order to

support their dependants, and then have to neglect their own families in the process. Many domestic workers are also migrant workers who have left their families and friends behind them. As in nineteenth-century Britain, domestic service is a route of access to urban-industrial society. It is an occupational role that allows for movement into an urban setting, a different class context, and at least the possibilities of social mobility as well.

The most common route to survival for men in the Eastern Cape involves migration to the mines; the most common route for women involves migration to domestic service. In studies of migrant labour this is frequently neglected. Certainly the distance covered is far shorter for women. All the domestic workers in the depth sample had been born in the Eastern Cape; 26 percent on farms and 10 percent in Grahamstown. Seventy-two percent had lived in their present location for between 15 and 20 years. Seventeen percent of the total worker sample lived in the rural areas in the Eastern Cape. Farm people often come into Grahamstown unofficially and illegally. As unregistered domestic workers, they are in an especially vulnerable position. Regular inspections by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development involve a considerable risk of being caught as an unregistered domestic worker.[148] Mayer found that

> There is a competitive advantage in willingness to accept lower wages and longer hours; a combined effect of what people were used to on the farm and their illegal situation in town. Town women complain openly that farm women spoil the local domestic labour market. 'They will work from morning till night for R20 a month.'[149]

While many women come into Grahamstown as migrant domestic workers, many women also leave the area. In Grahamstown about a quarter of the

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148. In terms of the Bantu Taxation Act employers have to register their domestic workers and pay a tax on any Bantu whose wage exceeds R30 a month. On a monthly wage of R30 to R40 a tax of 10c is payable. Tax payable on monthly wages in excess of R40 increases on a sliding scale. The employer is meant to deduct this tax from the wages of the employee, and is liable to a fine of R400 or to imprisonment for a period of six months or to both, for not doing so.

149. Mayer, 1979: 75.

2 800 work contracts currently registered for other cities are for women, mostly for domestic jobs in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage.[150] Willsworth reports negative responses from domestic workers returning from jobs in Port Elizabeth. Things there were 'different', 'too fast', "the madam didn't understand me"; "the madam talked too fast"; "the madam was cold". Most of them said they preferred being "home"[151] even though women in domestic employment in their home areas made many of the same comments about their employers. Relationships with employers are a crucial aspect of the domestic worker's situation. As perceived by the workers, these relationships are not generally as warm, close and supportive as many Whites apparently believe them to be.

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150. Mayer, 1979: 18. From 1974 there was a change in the influx control regulations so that for the purposes of labour movement the Cape Midlands region is now seen as one unit.

151. Willsworth, 1979: 115.

CHAPTER 3

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DOMESTIC WORKERS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS

"Solange: Nobody loves me! Nobody loves us!
Claire: She does, she loves us. She's kind!
Madame is kind! Madame adores us!
Solange: She loves us the way she loves her armchair. Not even that much! Like her bidet rather. Like her pink enamel toilet seat..."

- Jean Genet, The Maids.[1]

"I do not know a more agreeable sight than to see servants part of a family."

- Mary Wollstonecraft.[2]

The family analogy is a major leitmotif in the literature on domestic servants. It is widely believed by whites throughout the Eastern Cape that domestic workers are treated as "one of the family." A newspaper report on a talk I gave, captioned 'Domestics an exploited group, says lecturer', was printed juxtaposed with a story captioned 'Tearful farewell to "nanny" of 41 years.'[3] The story tells of a "tearful farewell at the Port Elizabeth railway station" when a white employer waved goodbye to her maid after 41 years service. The employer was quoted as saying, "It was like losing one of the family -

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1. Jean Genet, The Maids and Deathwatch (New York: Grove Press, 1962), p.52.

2. Quoted by Claire Tomalin, The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft (Harmonsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p.105. While Wollstonecraft was writing and involved in the London intellectual scene in the 1780s, her maid took care of domestic chores. "In 1788 she...was dependent on her maid for the basic organisation of her life, the sweeping, washing, and fire-lighting; probably she fetched what food was needed too." She was "a necessary fixture who remained in the shadows and was never named in any letters..." (Tomalin, 1977: 105). It would be interesting to know how many eminent women have employed other women to do their domestic work. Certainly this applied to even some radical women such as Colette and Kathie Kollwitz.

3. Eastern Province Herald, 3.8.1978.

a very sad affair." However, in no case in the Eastern Cape depth sample did the domestic worker consider herself as "one of the family."

However, most relationships between domestic workers and their employers were highly personalized. This is a central characteristic of domestic service and sets it apart from other occupations.[4] Nevertheless in this study relationships between domestic workers and their employers showed considerable variation. In a few situations "the mistress and servant are practically strangers meeting on the footing of employer and employed, with nothing between them but work and wages."[5] Nevertheless, much of the nature of the work involves an intimate contact with the employer: an exposure to stained underwear and family quarrels. In some cases the relationship was characterised by formality and rigidity. Servants were treated with extreme reserve, and personal interaction was strictly limited to the work situation. In other cases, the relationship showed a genuine human feeling on both sides, a mutual trust and caring structured on a daily intimacy. However, most relationships were highly personalized and showed a degree of paternalism, with a sense of superiority on the employer's part, and an intense sense of dependence on the side of the workers.[6]

The great majority of the employers investigated in the Eastern Cape sample were English-speaking. In her Durban study Preston-Whyte reports an important difference in the general treatment of servants in English- and Afrikaans-speaking homes.

> On the whole Afrikaans-speaking employers tended to be less formal and rigid and more warmly personal in their relationships with employees than were English-speaking employers. [7]

She suggests that an important factor which contributed towards this was the ability of many Afrikaners in all income groups to speak Zulu.

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4. Katzman writes, "The distinctive structure of domestic service centred on the unique personalized mistress/servant relationship between women...that intense personal interaction...had no comparable counterpart in any other occupation." Katzman, 1978: 107.

5. Hill, 1896: 225.

6. 'Maternal benevolence' might be a more apposite term than 'paternalism'.

7. Preston-Whyte, 1969: 145.

In the Eastern Cape study less than half of the workers interviewed in depth said their employer had some knowledge of their home language which was Xhosa. The majority (40) communicated with their employers in English; only ten in Afrikaans. Preston-Whyte points to the opinion, common amongst African servants,

> that, taken all in all, it is better to work for Afrikaans-speaking families than for English-speaking households. The former have the reputation of understanding Africans and treating them well. [8]

No evidence of this emerged from the Eastern Cape study but then the question was not directly asked. As it is a largely English-speaking area, the workers may have limited experience of Afrikaans-speaking employers.

Only 14 percent of the depth sample said they did not get along well with their employers. Almost a quarter said they did not like their employer, though several qualified this by saying

> "I have to like her to earn a living."

Eighty-six percent thought they were liked by their employers though this was also often qualified with comments such as

> "Because she can't do without a slave like me."

The remaining 14 percent either did not know or believed that their employers did not like them.

When asked "What are your feelings towards your employer?" a considerable range of answers were given:

> "I have no feelings. I am useful to her, that's all."
>
> "I like her but her daughter is a spoilt pudding."
>
> "I like her because I'm used to her." (This from a worker who had been with the same employer for 20 years.)
>
> "They are rude. They don't like us to enjoy ourselves. One time we had a party. Our madam saw us eating. She said 'You Blacks are eating like dogs.'"
>
> "I have good feelings towards her because she treats me like a person."

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8. Ibid.

"I find it easy to communicate with her."

"When she was ill I was really worried about her."

"I have no feelings for her because she has none for me."

"I don't like her but I have to work for her."

"I would be sorry if anything happened to her."

"I have to fit myself into her."

"I feel sorry for her when her children shout at her."

"I feel pity for her and try to comfort her when she is upset."

When asked, "What do you think her feelings are towards you?" the answers again showed a considerable diversity. Often the feeling of being cared for was rooted in some concrete, practical expression. This convinced the domestic worker of the employers' concern.

"She has no feelings for me. I am of use to her, that's all."

"She thinks I am not fully grown. She treats me like a baby."

"She does not see me as a woman. She looks down on me."

"I think she likes me. She once knitted my children some jerseys."

"I think she feels for me although it's difficult to be sure. It's not something that you can see and touch."

"She doesn't care for me. I remember when my mother died she didn't want to give me off although she knows I am the eldest of the family."

"I don't know. But she won't get another woman who works like a slave like I do."

"She doesn't care for me. I was involved in a bus accident and she took no notice."

"She cares about me. When my husband was in hospital she asked me how he was every day."

"I think she likes me because she said I could bring my baby to work until I could find someone to look after it."

"She has no feeling for me. She doesn't let me go to bed even when she can see I have a cold and she doesn't even give me any medicines so I could get better."

"She feels sorry for me when the master shouts at me."

"She knows she can cheat me because I am a farm girl."

"She doesn't consider me. She doesn't give me time off to see my children or my friends."

"She cares for me. When my husband died she helped with the funeral expenses."

> "She likes me. When my children come to see me she allows them to sleep here."
>
> "I don't know. She does not like me to tell her about my problems."
>
> "She doesn't care for me. When my maintenance order goes through (the court) she says she will reduce my wages from R7 to R6,50 a month."
>
> "If she cared about me she would not pay me so little." (R25 a month).
>
> "She pretends to like me. She keeps on saying I am part of their family."
>
> "She thinks she owns me like she owns her motor car."

The notion of 'ownership' is not restricted to employers. An advertisement in the Grahamstown newspaper under 'Situations Wanted' reads as follows:

> A.N., cook/general seeks work as owner transferred.[9]

When asked "What sort of person do you think your employer is?" the most frequently mentioned qualities were: changeability and inscrutability. For instance,

> "She wears a mask with me."
>
> "She changes like a chameleon."

Several employers felt they had to convey an air of competence and authority in order to maintain the proper degree of social distance between themselves and their servants. Sometimes this was done with difficulty. For instance, one employer told the writer that when teaching the servant a new recipe she would memorise it in her bedroom beforehand. If she forgot a step in the recipe she would pretend she needed a handkerchief and retreat to the bedroom where she could look it up privately. This employer felt strongly that one should not reveal any vulnerability to a servant.

There was a considerable range of answers to the question about the sort of person the servant thought her employer was:

> "She's a horrible person."
>
> "Moody. Sometimes she gets up on the wrong side of the bed."

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9. Grocott's Mail, 16.2.1979. I am grateful to Virginia van der Vliet for pointing this out to me.

"Horrible."

"She is a devil."

"She's a good person. She considers me." (This from a married live-in worker who said the worst thing about her job was never being able to sleep at home with her husband and children.)

"A nice person - I don't call her madam, I call her aunt."

"She's a difficult person, not easy to get along with."

"An easy person, she tells me if she does not like what I have done."

"She is lazy. She sits a lot on the stoep outside while I have to rush around."

"She is not easy to know."

"She does not want to talk. She is a really white woman."

"A peculiar person."

"Hard."

"She is a very nice person. I think she knows that she pays me very little (R20 per month) so she tries to cover it up by not bossing me too much."

"She does not want me to know her."

"She is a horrible person. I am sorry to say that because you have to give this to a white person to read, but that's how she is."

When asked about the qualities domestic workers liked the most about their employers, the answers were revealing:

"If she has lost something as soon as she finds it she tells me. She does not let me look for it for ever."

"She lends me money."

"If I have no food at home she buys me some and takes it off my salary (R22) at the end of the month.

"She takes me home sometimes because we have no buses here." (Port Alfred.)

"If she makes tea she gives me some too."

"She gives me a loan when I need it."

"She helps me with the housework and we have tea together."

"She speaks out if she's not happy with me."

"She lends me money but she always wants to know what I am going to do with it."

"She swears at me in a polite kind of way."

"She helps with her children when she is at home."

"When we have a quarrel she doesn't tell the master about it."

"She does not keep things inside her. If I upset her she tells me."

"She does greet me in the mornings."

Answers to this, and to the following question, "What do you like the least about your employer?" reveal very clearly the average domestic worker's sense of powerlessness and vulnerability (indignation over the accusation of theft was the most frequent theme):

"She forgets a lot. She can give you her dress as a present but after a while she searches all over for it."

"She likes to accuse us of stealing if she can't find something. When she finds it she doesn't tell us. It's bad."

"She loses things and accuses me of stealing them."

"Their children don't respect us. They swear at us and the parents say nothing."

"The whole family is rude to us."

"She always takes her children's side when they are rude to me."

"Sometimes she looks at me in a sour way."

"When she goes away I have to look after her dogs."

"Nothing, because she hides her feelings when she is angry."

"She forgets a lot. When she can't find things she says they are walking out of this house."

"I have nothing to moan about."

"When she loses her purse she shouts at me. When she finds it she doesn't tell me or apologise."

"She tells me to look for her purse. If I don't find it she says her purse has feet. But if she finds it she doesn't tell me."

"When we fight about something she threatens that she will tell the master."

"She gets up late in the mornings."

"She gives me 'hot chips' (a scolding) for nothing."

"She gives her old clothes to her daughter who gives them to her maid."

"She always looks at her watch when I come in the morning."

"She treats me like a stupid child."

> "She checks up on me at night. She rings this bell until I wake up. As soon as I put the light on she shouts that it is all right."
>
> "She tells stories to the master about me."

Many of the domestic workers' comments show that they feel that employers perceive them only in their occupational role. This one-dimensional perception is seen to involve a denial of their human feelings and needs. Memmi has suggested that this depersonalisation is characteristic of the colonizer's stereotype conception of the colonized.[10] Such depersonalisation is illustrated by the fact that only ten percent of the employers in the depth sample knew their domestic workers' full names. In Victorian England servants were deliberately depersonalised and often called by standardised names, whatever their real names might be.[11] In the Eastern Cape Black women are generally called 'Sissy', which indicates something of the same depersonalisation mechanism at work.[12] In a few instances the domestic servant was called 'Cookie'; however, most employers knew their servants' English first names and addressed them by such. The importance of knowing their Xhosa first names is illustrated in Ezekiel Mphahlele's short story, 'Mrs Plum'. The narrator, a domestic servant, writes:

> What did the girl next door call you? Mrs Plum asked me the first day I came to her. Jane, I replied. Was there not an African name? I said yes, Karabo. All right, Madam said. We'll call you Karabo, she said. She spoke as if she knew a name is a big thing. I knew so many whites who did not care what they called black people as long as it was all right for their tongue. This pleased me, I mean Mrs Plum's use of Karabo. [13]

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10. A. Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized (London: Condor, Souvenir Press, 1974), p.85.

11. L.Davidoff, The Best Circles. Society, Etiquette and the Season (London: Croom Helm, 1973), p.88.

12. In the Eastern Cape Black people are termed 'Kafs', 'Afs', 'wogs', 'coons', 'Kaffirs', 'munts', 'natives' and 'Bantu', as well as the less derogatory terms of Blacks and Africans. In the rural areas Black people are sometimes termed 'Wilbies'. The most plausible explanation of this extraordinary nomenclature that has been suggested to me, is that they were championed by Wilberforce in the last century. This explanation brings the slave analogy to the forefront.

13. Mphahlele, 1967: 166.

Most relationships between employers and their domestic servants showed a degree of social distance. In only 24 percent of the cases in the depth domestic worker sample did the employer discuss her problems with her servant. However, 80 percent of the domestic workers said they discussed their personal and family problems with their employer. One proud worker was the exception:

> "She is a woman. If she doesn't tell me her problems how can I tell her mine?"

Often these problems relate to legislation affecting Blacks and Black township life. Frequently the domestic worker is dependent on the expertise and good will of employers in untangling the complex skein of restrictions in which Black people's lives are enmeshed. Only twelve of the domestic workers said their employers ever discussed political events or Bantu Area Affairs Board policy with them. Only six said they knew any secrets about their employer's family or family members.

Many workers complained that their employers did not appreciate them. Eighteen percent said their employers never praised or thanked them for the work they did. One worker whose employer has never praised or thanked her during 20 years of service, and who is presently earning R7 a month, commented.

> "Sometimes I feel ashamed of myself for wasting all those years when they don't appreciate me."

Over half (54 percent) of the depth sample were extremely appreciative of such praise and gratitude.

> "I feel good and want to do more."
>
> "I feel very important especially when she decided that rather than go to hospital I would look after her."
>
> "It makes me happy."

However, two workers said they were indifferent and 12 were cynical.

> "I feel good but I also feel angry because I know she just wants me to do more."
>
> "I just laugh."
>
> "I feel she just wants me to work hard for nothing."
>
> "I take it as a joke because I don't know whether she means it or not."

> "Sometimes I feel like a fool. It's like giving a sweet to a child."

Overall, the relationship between domestic workers and their employers is coloured by the dramatic difference in living standards between the two groups. It has been suggested that in nineteenth century Britain,

> Domestic service is full of anomalies. The servant grows accustomed to a style of living which is beyond her means if she returns to dwell with her own class.[14]

In contemporary South Africa the problem is not becoming accustomed to a higher standard of living, but being exposed to one at very close quarters. This generates a powerful sense of deprivation.

In the depth sample, domestic workers were asked "Is there a great difference between the living standards of yourself and your family and your employer and her family, for example in the kind of clothes you can afford to buy, the kind of house you live in and the kind of food you can afford to eat?" All the domestic workers said there was a great difference. The great majority, 80 percent, thought this difference was unjust; two said it was a matter of indifference to them, and eight thought it was a question of luck.

None had any idea of their employer's household income. However, 66 percent thought their employers were 'very rich', and 34 percent thought they were 'rich'. One said 'very rich' because "the master has his own garage and the madam is a nurse at the hospital." This domestic worker was paid R20 a month for a 66-hour week.

Several said that very rich people were the worst to work for because "they are greedy".

> "They don't know how to share."
>
> "Rich ones always want more for themselves."
>
> "Ordinary employers pay better because they know how we struggle with a little money."

Many of the domestic servants' 'deficiencies' in their employers' eyes derive from this difference in living standards, and the extremely simple home conditions of most Blacks in South Africa. Often the

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14. Hill, 1896: 225.

elaborate cooking, eating and household arrangements of their white employers are quite outside their own social experience.

When asked "What does your employer do when you have done something wrong or badly in your job?" some answers were:

> "She shouts at me."
>
> "She deducts from my pay if I break things. If you work with things they can break but she does not care about that."
>
> "She shouts her lungs out."
>
> "She shouts at me and says she does not know what kind of person I am."
>
> "She says nothing but then one of the children will say 'My mother is cross because you did that', so you know that she does talk when you are not around."
>
> "She sulks."
>
> "She pulls a long face for a few days."
>
> "She shouts a lot and says that if she sacks me I will be sent to the Ciskei where there are no jobs."
>
> "She just tells me to concentrate on my job and not think about other things."
>
> "She talks to me as if I was a stupid child."
>
> "She tells her friends over tea. That embarrasses me."
>
> "She shouts at me like...I don't know what. I won't say like a dog because she likes her dogs and cats."

These answers contrast sharply with the employers' answer to the same question.[15]

While domestic workers are subject to a good deal of psychological violence, physical violence is rare. The literature on domestic servants in pre-industrial Britain contains many accounts of servants being subjected to physical punishments. Sometimes the perpetrators are respected historical figures. For instance, the diary of Samuel Pepys includes an entry on 19th February, 1665 which describes how the enraged master forced his wife "to the disturbance of the house and the neighbours, to beat our little girl and then we shut her down in the cellar and there she lay all night."[16] Several colonial

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15. See below, Chapter 5, 'The Employers of Domestic Workers'.

16. S. Pepys, Diary, 19.2.1665. Quoted by L. Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), p.167.

twentieth century societies made provision for the physical chastisement of domestic servants for 'cheekiness' and other wrongdoing.[17] A number of farm workers told Roberts that "twenty or thirty years ago beating was the recognised punishment for all workers on farms" but was at present exceptional.

> It appears that most farmers punish their adult male workers either by remonstrating with them verbally, or by docking small privileges or one or more of the subsidiary rations like tobacco. Many of them punish the youths by beating them but most said this practice is dying out. [18]

No instances of physical punishments were recorded in the Eastern Cape sample. I was told of two cases where domestic workers had been severely beaten by their employers in the Eastern Cape but these could not be verified. I was also told of an employer who put ground glass in the sugar to stop her servant from stealing it. The employer who reported this thought it was rather a joke.

It is difficult to make generalisations about physical cruelty to domestic servants. The main source of difficulty is the hidden, or 'masked' nature of domestic crime generally. One such case 'surfaced' during the period of fieldwork. A man was found guilty in the Supreme Court (Transvaal Provincial Division) of murdering his fifteen year old housemaid by beating her with a 'sjambok'. Among the extenuating circumstances found by the judge in the man's favour were

> his heavy drinking on the day of the murder and the fact that he had honestly believed the girl had stolen goods. (Emphasis mine.)

His counsel claimed that the couple "had beaten the girl to get the truth out of her about the goods she had allegedly stolen, and not to kill her." It was found that the man

> and his wife assaulted the girl repeatedly with a sjambok on April 29th, 1978, after suspecting that she had stolen a camera and hairdryer belonging to Mrs Botha.

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17. For instance in Papua, New Guinea, early this century. See A. Inglis, The White women's protection ordinance. Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Papua (Sussex: Sussex University Press, 1975), pp.21-22.

18. Roberts, 1959: 70.

The judge rejected Botha's evidence that

> When he had told one of his employees to bring him barbed wire to tie up the girl, it was just to frighten her.

Botha was jailed for ten years; his wife was found guilty of culpable homicide and jailed for three years.[19] This sentence provoked a letter of protest to the local newspaper entitled 'Ten years is not enough'. It ended

> Botha will be free at the age of 42, and the house-maid will be dust in an early grave, guilty or not guilty.[20]

The masked nature of intra-familial violence generally suggests that only a small proportion of such cases will 'surface' to be processed through the courts.

Domestic service in South Africa is largely a Black female institution. Monica Wilson points out that the historical "importance of this has been overlooked."[21] The social implications have also been neglected. First, there is the possibility that female domestic workers are open to sexual exploitation. The literature on domestic service in Victorian Britain contains many instances of this.[22] While no instances of sexual exploitation were encountered in the Eastern Cape depth sample of 50 domestic workers, instances have been reported from other studies. For example, Preston-Whyte found that "in Stamford Hill there was evidence of sexual relationships between European males, both residents and lodgers and the female servants."[23] Although "no instances were encountered from within the unit studied, at least two

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19. Reported in the Eastern Province Herald, 16.9.1978.

20. Eastern Province Herald, 5.10.1978.

21. M. Wilson, The Interpreters (Grahamstown: 1820 Settlers' National Monument Foundation, 1972). Dugmore Memorial Lecture No.3, p.13.

22. See Chapter 6, 'Historical Overview'. Ironically, Marx himself may have been guilty of this. In 1851 he had a son by Helena Demuth, the family's German maid. McLellan, 1975: 18. For Blacks in the American South, "white sexual exploitation was a major problem" compounded by domestic service. Katzman, 1978: 216.

23. Preston-Whyte, 1969: 140.

cases were reported of African women workers for single men in the nearby block of flats of whom sexual favours were demanded along with their normal domestic workload."[24]

From this perspective, it is arguable that the one piece of legislation which operates to 'protect' domestic workers is the Immorality Act. Andreski has pointed to this 'positive aspect' of the Act. He suggests that under the circumstances of great inequality of power and wealth in the servant/employer relationship, this Act

> protects the women of the burdened races from sexual exploitation by their masters, of the kind to which domestic servants were exposed even in Puritan England, and which remains commonplace in most poor countries of Latin America. [25]

The second implication of domestic service being a predominantly female institution is that it avoids the particular tensions generated by racist stereotypes where domestic servants are predominantly male. This tension is illustrated in Inglis's account of the White Women's Protection Ordinance passed in Papua in 1926. One source quoted by Inglis explains the agitation for the legislation as follows:

> There has been a number of cases of assault on white women by native servants and others; some serious, others quite trivial. Public opinion, spurred by feminine resentment rose to a high pitch. The white women of Port Moresby, many of them quite new to tropical conditions, did not seem to understand that the native servants are human... There were many of them inclined to be careless about their dress, and unduly familiar with their native servants - far more careless than they would think of being with men of their own colour, and the natives reacted as might be expected from people barely removed from savagery. [26]

The kind of behaviour refers to instances such as a white 'madam' in the shower, finding she had no towel, and calling to the 'houseboy'

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24. Ibid., p.143.

25. S.Andreski, 'Reflections on the South African Social Order from a Comparative Viewpoint', in H. Adam (ed.), South Africa, Sociological Perspectives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.28.

26. Inglis, 1975: 85.

to bring her one. However, Inglis questions any explanation of this Ordinance that rests mainly on the behaviour of the white women, whether on their harsh exclusiveness or on their lax familiary towards their servants. She accounts for this ordinance in terms of the sexual anxiety generated by racist stereotypes.

> Sexual self doubts might easily worry the minds of husbands and fathers confronted daily by totally unfamiliar black male servants, and these doubts when added to a belief in the greater potency of black men, provided the basis for fear of sexual attack. [27]

She shows how this legislation was extremely harsh and discriminatory by the standards of the time. It involved savage sentences until it was repealed in 1958. The death penalty for attempted rape was the core of the Ordinance.

Overall, the relationship between domestic workers and their employers is intensely paternalistic. This has two implications: it consigns the workers to a dependent and powerless position, and it generates a sense of power and superiority in the employer.

Clearly, in many white South African families, household maintenance depends largely on the skill and hard work of domestic servants. Yet domestic servants are in no real sense members of the households they serve. They are dependants, for whom employers assume differing degrees of responsibility, in various combinations of authority and affection. They are given privileges, but not rights, and have no sense of job security.

Within this framework, with its connotation of employer power and worker dependence, the feelings of workers ranged widely. In the best relationships the employer is viewed as a source of strength and support, especially in helping the servant untangle herself from the mass of laws and restrictions which bind the lives of Black people. In the works relationships, the employer is viewed as an exploiter whose indifference is characteristic of White people generally. This dependence both reflects and reinforces the structural location of

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27. Ibid.

Black women in South African society.[28]

Most relationships showed some degree of social distance, and some level of depersonalisation. As the chapter on the employers will show, servants are not expected or required to have thoughts, opinions, feelings or identities beyond those necessary for the discharge of their duties. The 'correct' performance of their duties often involves a degree of obsequiousness. This is a general characteristic of 'greedy institutions', a term coined by Coser which describes domestic service.[29]

Greedy institutions make total claims on their members, seeking exclusive and undivided loyalty and attempting to "reduce the claims of competing roles and status positions on those they wish to encompass within their boundaries. Their demands on the person are omnivorous."[30] As Coser points out there are overlaps between such greedy institutions and Goffman's notion of total institutions. However, they operate through different mechanisms. Greedy institutions "though they may in some cases utilize the device of physical isolation, tend to rely mainly on non-physical mechanisms to separate the insider from the outsider and to erect symbolic boundaries between them... Nor are greedy institutions marked by external coercion. On the contrary, they tend to rely on voluntary compliance and to evolve means of activating loyalty and commitment."[31]

Payment in kind is an important mechanism by which the employers of domestic servants promote this personal loyalty and commitment from their employees. It has been shown above that payment in kind is often of a fairly haphazard nature. Contributions towards children's schooling expenses, clinic fees, presents of clothing, and extra money, clothing and food at Christmas are given as gifts from the employer to her servant.

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28. See below, Chapter 7, 'Discrimination on the Basis of Race and Sex'.

29. L. Coser, Greedy Institutions (New York: The Free Press, 1974), p.69.

30. Ibid., p.4.

31. Ibid., p.6.

The importance of such 'gift relationships' has been recognised in anthropological studies. Mauss has noted how they help to reinforce the social hierarchy by promoting feelings of loyalty, faithfulness and gratitude. He writes

> to give is to show one's superiority, to show that one is something more and higher, that one is magister. To accept without returning or repaying more is to face subordination, to become a client and subservient, to become minister. 32

Thus the gifts given by employers to their domestic servants help to cement their loyalty and reinforce the hierarchical nature of the relationship between them. This is not to deny the often sincere generosity of employers. It is simply to focus on the status-enhancing properties of such gifts which operate to secure the loyalty of the servant within an extremely hierarchical, unequal relationship. Such gifts operate to maintain some kind of equilibrium. As expressions of the employer's generosity and benevolence they effectively contain tensions and disguise the conflict of interests inherent in the relationship. But this kind of paternalistic relationship is entirely demeaning for the dependent servant.

> The recipient of a tiny wage, second hand clothes, food and lodgings, 'holidays with the family', medical care and school fees for her children, is most completely demeaned. The manner of payment implies that she is unable to organise her life properly in almost every direction, whether choosing her clothes or saving for her children's schooling. 33

The implication is that the domestic worker is a perpetually irresponsible child. Rex comes to this conclusion by a different route. He points out that

> Just as the system of plantation slavery was accompanied by a growth of the domestic institution, so is the South African labour system accompanied by an elaborate development of the institution of domestic service. In South Africa, of course, as in any other country, domestic service is one of the least free forms of labour, in that the servant is thought of as participating only indirectly in the market, relying for his income and

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32. M. Mauss, The Gift (London: Cohen and West, 1970), p.72.

33. Whisson and Weil, 1971: 42.

> welfare to some extent at least on the benevolence with which his master administers his private household. [34]

> The sociological key to the domestic servant's situation is that a good part of his real income is provided in kind. This means that, instead of being able to engage directly in the rational calculation of market opportunities, which is of the essence of modern social order, he participates only indirectly through his master's... household... He will receive a token wage, but this wage has to be understood as akin to the pocket money which the master might give his child. The essence of the domestic servant's position indeed is that he is a child. And the essence of the master's position is that he is the paterfamilias of a household which includes more than simply kin. [35]

The domestic workers' 'childlike' status within this extremely unequal relationship might be expected to reduce them to a kind of degrading sycophancy. However, the researcher was struck by the forceful personalities of many of these women. Writing of domestic servants in Britain, Clapham suggests that

> relations (between masters and servants) were not always unequal, and there were possibilities of retaliation. Dickens's servants, with their cockney elasticity, and repartee, knew when the scales were inclining their way. [36]

In South Africa the situation of domestic servants has been described with insight by Mphahlele, who stresses the complete absence of real communication between master and servant, "the non-commital ant-like way in which Blacks serve Whites"; the employer's helplessness against his servant's "cheerful incompetence"; the servants' determination not to be known by their employers:

> This non-commital attitude of the silent servant is his most effective weapon against the white master who has all the instruments of power on his side. Both of them know this. [37]

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34. Rex in Leftwich, 1974: 53-54.

35. Rex, 1970: 53-54.

36. Clapham, in G.M. Young (ed.), Early Victorian England 1830-1865 (London: O.U.P., 1934), p.32.

37. E, Mphahlele, The African Image (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p.140.

The domestic servants' silence, and mockery of employers, might thus be viewed as muted rituals of rebellion. They are a crucial mode of adaptation, a line of resistance that enables the servant to maintain her personality and integrity intact. Petty pilfering, too, might be viewed as an expression of situational rebellion. However, given the average domestic servant's low wages, and the high number of dependants, it seems that, at least in the Eastern Cape sample, this is more a strategy of survival than a private revolt.

The evidence given in the following chapter suggests that the domestic worker's main mode of adaptation is the adoption of a protective disguise, 'a mask of deference'. This is deliberately cultivated to conform to employer expectations, and to shield the worker's real feelings. It is generated by the powerlessness of her situation which blocks any overt expression of dissatisfaction. The 'deference' often attributed to the domestic worker is a protective device, rather than a psychological reality.

CHAPTER 4

THE SELF-IMAGERY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

> "There is no class less open to democratic ideas than a contented servant class." [1]

> "A master and a servant can never be friends. Never, so put that out of your head, will you! You are not even sure if the ones you say are good are like that because they cannot breathe or live without the work of your hands. As long as you need their money, face them with respect. But you must know that many sad things are happening in our country and you, all of you, must always be learning, adding to what you already know, and obey us when we ask you to help us." [2] (Emphasis mine.)

The objective deprivation of the domestic worker compared to other sections of the work force in South Africa in terms of wages, working hours and conditions, is very clear. Yet the domestic worker displays few overt signs of dissatisfaction: her voice of complaint is rarely heard, she does not go on strike, and does not appear to indulge in much absenteeism. Consequently, she is often viewed as a 'deferential worker'. This implies an acceptance of the legitimacy of her own subordination in the social order. The deferential worker

> does not identify himself with his superiors or strive to reach their status; he defers to them socially as well as politically. [3]

Thus Lockwood refers to the domestic worker as the working class's "most socially acquiescent and conservative element."[4]

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1. William Clarke. Quoted by Burnett, 1977: 172.
2. The advice of Lilian Ngoyi to a group of domestic workers. Quoted by the narrator in Ezekiel Mphahlele's short story, 'Mrs Plum'. Mphahlele, 1967: 174-5.
3. D. Lockwood, 'Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society', The Sociological Review, Vol. 14, No. 3, November 1966, p.252.
4. Ibid., p.250.

The image of the obsequious, deferential domestic servant is widespread in the Eastern Cape. However, the most significant facet of her overall situation is her relative powerlessness to obtain better wages and working conditions, owing to the constraints operating upon domestic workers specifically, and Blacks and women generally, in South Africa. The key to understanding the domestic worker's situation is dependence. The difference between deference and dependence is crucial. It implies that while the domestic worker does not endorse her own social subordination, she recognises her powerlessness in the social formation.[5]

The predominant pattern in the Eastern Cape is 'the maid of all work' or 'cook-general'. Her work situation is thus characterised by a relative isolation and self-containment. She is an atomized worker. In the work place, the disparity in income and life-style between worker and employer is highly visible. The work situation clearly acts as a model of the wider society as a whole in the minds of many workers. The inequalities of power, wealth and income that they experience at work at the micro-level, are reflections of general inequalities.

Evidence presented in this chapter will show that most domestic workers reject the legitimacy of such inequalities. This has three implications: they recognise their dependence in the existing structure; they reject the legitimacy of the distribution of power and control within the existing structure; and they then adopt a 'mask of deference' as a way of 'coping' with their situation.

This explains why the majority of domestic workers in the sample tended to view their relationship with their employer as generally a co-operative and harmonious one. These perceptions mainly concern the daily transaction of worker-employer relationships. They do not extend to an acceptance of the legitimacy of the white employers' power over them. Thus while they have a sharp consciousness of exploitation, they generally remain on good terms with individual employers.

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5. For this chapter I found Howard Newby's insightful analysis of agricultural workers extremely suggestive. See especially Chapter 7, 'Images of Self and Society', pp.366-413 in H. Newby, The Deferential Worker. A Study of Farm Workers in East Anglia (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books Ltd., 1977).

While this pragmatic acceptance of their role seems to me to be the predominant mode of adaptation, different servants' relationships with their employers move off in two directions from this position: some shade into a purely instrumental set of attitudes. Having no personal feelings for their employers, they barely disguise their instrumentality. Other relationships shade off in the opposite direction, and are expressed in a considerable loyalty towards employers whom they perceive as kind and thoughtful. However, all employers expect some degree of deference from their domestic servants.[6]

The evidence that follows suggests that the deference of the domestic worker is more apparent than real. Deference is a mask which is deliberately cultivated to conform to employer expectations, and shield the workers' real feelings. The widespread image among employers of the domestic servant as the deferential worker par excellence, is due to two factors: first, the ease with which it fits into the paternalistic racial stereotype - the equation of 'black' with 'child' provides an ideological space for turning domestic workers into family dependants - secondly, the powerlessness of the worker's situation, which blocks any overt expression of dissatisfaction with her subordinate position in society. Thus the deference attributed to the domestic worker rests largely on a fallacious inference made from her largely passive social behaviour.

This passivity and acquiescence in the social order must be understood to result from the domestic worker's dependence on her employer. This dependence is considerable - for employment, food, sometimes housing, and even in some cases permission to live on a white-owned farm or in the prescribed urban area. Such dependence militates against any overt expression of dissatisfaction other than changing jobs. Even this is not always possible in terms of influx control, and high levels of Black unemployment. In general, therefore, the domestic worker acknowledges her powerlessness, and tries to make the best of her inferior situation, while rejecting the legitimacy of it.

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6. See 'deference obligations' on p.87 above.

Domestic workers' perception of their role as workers

Only 32 percent of the workers interviewed said that they were satisfied with their present job. Most stressed the scarcity of jobs and the lack of any alternative. Sixty percent said they would prefer to stay at home and not work. This contrasts strongly with the pattern that emerged from the employer sample, where 62 percent would ideally choose to be doing part-time work. Many domestic workers stressed that this was not possible for them.

> "What can I do? My daughters are just sitting at home having babies every day. They are like chickens laying eggs."

Most have sense of being exploited, which hinges on what they consider to be their low wages and a lack of appreciation by their employers. Regardless of their perception of their employers' financial circumstances, all the domestic workers in the depth sample thought they should be paid more. Twenty-two thought they should be getting twice as much as they were; seven thought three times as much; ten thought four times as much; four thought five times as much; and seven said they didn't know but thought they should be paid more. Reasons given include the following:

> "I have been working for these people for a long time (19 years) but am still earning R22 a month. But I am working for rich people. My master is a teacher at Rhodes, my madam teaches at DSG."
>
> "I have brought their children up."
>
> "I do all the work. I even make the fudge and pineapple juice they sell in that shop."
>
> "I do all the work in the house and I also have to feed the pigs and the chickens."
>
> "Because I have to do the work of two people."
>
> "If you could see my baking you would be surprised. It looks like a hotel."
>
> "Because I work every day. I never have a day off to enjoy myself with my family."
>
> "Because I do all the housework and cooking, look after the dogs, help with the gardening and even wash the cars."
>
> "Because I have been with them a long time." (This from a worker who after twenty years with the same employer was earning R38 a month).

> "Because I work hard. I look after the house and even the dogs, cats and chickens. I have to sort the eggs very carefully and check if they are first grade."
>
> "Because I do everything."

Many mentioned the high cost of living:

> "We are really struggling."
>
> "Because everything is so expensive. We have to buy on HP because we have no money to pay."
>
> "Because everything is so expensive. I can hardly buy myself a pair of panties. I don't talk about shoes. They cost my whole month's pay. (A worker earning R16 a month for a 66-hour week).
>
> "We would like to eat the same food and wear the same clothes as them."

All this suggests that a sense of relative deprivation is high among the poor, ill-educated women who form the vast majority of domestic workers in the Eastern Cape. This sense of relative deprivation might be even higher than among some Black industrial workers. Fisher quotes a study carried out in East London in January 1974 which "confirms the impression that relative deprivation is high among Black industrial workers":

> Workers interviewed were asked what wage they thought they should be getting. Most workers named a figure approximately double their current wage. Those on R10 suggested R20; those on R20 suggested R40.[7]

The majority of domestic workers in the Eastern Cape study thought they should be paid more than double their present wage.

All the employees in the sample thought that domestic workers as a group were, on the whole, "badly treated." When asked what could be done to improve the situation of domestic workers, 38 mentioned improved wages; three an organisation of domestic workers; five suggested better communication and more respectful treatment from their employers; two mentioned a written contract; one a pension after 25 years service, and five said they did not know. Some consciousness of a community of

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7. F. Fisher, 'Class Consciousness among Colonised Workers in South Africa', in L. Schlemmer and E. Webster, Change, Reform and Economic Growth in South Africa (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978), p.216.

interests emerged. For example, one worker said "We are all singing one song. We need the same help with low wages and bad treatment." Other comments were:

> "Our employers should be told how important we are."
>
> "We should be counted as people."
>
> "If we could have some organisation where we could complain without fear of being dismissed."
>
> "Our employers should take us as people not as animals."
>
> "Our employers should treat us like people and not like slaves."
>
> "If we could get together with our employers and talk openly about our problems on the table, without worrying about losing our jobs, that might help."
>
> "It would help if our madams could be interested in knowing their servants' circumstances. Many madams don't know how many children their maids have."

Another made the same comment and added,

> "If they knew these things perhaps they would give us better pay."

Domestic workers' perception of themselves as Blacks

Genovese has suggested that "all forms of class oppression have induced some kind of servility and feelings of inferiority in the oppressed; failure to induce these, means failure to survive as a system of oppression."[8] A high percentage of the sample, 46 percent, thought that Blacks are generally inferior to Whites in their personal qualities. However, many of their answers show some confusion between personal and positional or structural inferiority. For example

> "The whites are sitting on our heads, so we are inferior."
>
> "Whites have everything under the sun...we have to be lower than them because we have no money."
>
> "Whites have all the power. They just tell us what they want to do to us."
>
> "We don't have money. The whites are sitting on our necks."
>
> "Yes, but given time we could improve ourselves."

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8. E. Genovese, The World the Slaveholders Made (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), p.6.

> "We are lower than whites because that is where they put us."

A number thought that because Blacks and Whites are equal in their personal attributes and capacities, Whites deliberately keep them down by not paying them enough.

> "We can cope. You can put a Black person in the forest and just leave water with him or her. We can manage because there is a lot we can do. But now we are chained without money."
>
> "We are equal but we don't have money so we have to beg."
>
> "If we had money we could be more than them."
>
> "We are more capable than Whites. That is why they try by all means to keep us under their feet."
>
> "We are potentially equal but we don't have the opportunities to develop ourselves."

All the domestic workers in the depth sample thought that Black people are not treated fairly in this country. This contrasts with 44 percent of the employers. The examples of unfair treatment most frequently cited involved passes and influx control. Others involved the lack of employment opportunities, the cost of education, unjust treatment by whites generally, pensions, prison conditions, the lower standard of living of Blacks generally, low wages, transport facilities, poor housing, lack of dignified treatment, ill treatment by the police, inadequate health services... the list covers an extremely wide spectrum:

> "There are so many laws that chain us."
>
> "There are very few Whites who consider us. They look down on us. When you go to town with your madam she puts you at the back of her van."
>
> "Educated Blacks have difficulty finding jobs but you will never see an educated White jobless."
>
> "We pay for school books and White children don't."
>
> "We suffer from many sicknesses because of poverty."
>
> "Low wages. These days people like my husband are paid R7 a month and some mealie meal." (A farm worker.)
>
> "We are slaves in our own country."
>
> "We are not allowed to join our men when they go and work under contract."
>
> "Look at me. I am still working hard at my age (63). But White old ladies don't have to work hard."
>
> "The trains that we travel in are not clean."

"We don't have comfortable beds like Whites have."

"We are starving."

"What can we do? We are slaves."

"Look at how Black people are treated at the hospital. If White people were treated like that there would be a big fuss."

"Our old people only get their old age pension every second month, but Whites get it every month. It's because South Africa is bad."

"There are not enough jobs."

"We die in jail like flies."

"There is no White woman who would do the work I do for so little money."

"We are dying like flies because of poverty."

"The Whites are standing on our necks with their boots."

"If you apply for a pension it will take a year to come. In the meantime you have to live on the Holy Spirit."

"You have to get permission to go where you want to go."

"We are pushed all over the place."

"We live in houses that we don't like."

"The jails are full of Black people. Because we are starving we have to go and steal. We have to steal to live."

"On pension days our old people are packed like bags of mealies queueing for their money."

"We earn less just because we are Blacks."

"One day I visited my husband who is working in Port Elizabeth. I didn't know he was living in single men's quarters. I could not sleep with him. He had to contact a friend so I could have a place to sleep. That would never happen to madam."

"Even if Whites swear at you, you just have to laugh because you might lose your job."

"We are not allowed to join our husbands."

"We are not counted in this world."

Such discrimination to which Blacks are subject in South Africa, was the focus of the Black Consciousness movement founded by Steve Biko. During the period of field work almost the entire leadership of the Black Consciousness movement were detained without trial in Grahamstown prison under Section 10 of the Terrorism Act. Before the banning of the Black People's Convention and the Black Community Programme the previous year, the movement had been very active in the Eastern Cape. Four buses and at least two private car loads of people travelled

from Grahamstown to King Williams Town to attend Biko's funeral in 1977 and were part of the crowd of 30 000. However, only 44 percent of the depth sample said they had heard of the Black Consciousness movement. (Eleven of these still thought that Blacks were generally inferior to Whites in their personal qualities.)

When asked what they thought of the Black Consciousness movement some answered:

> "I am afraid when my children talk about it. I don't want them in jail."
>
> "It's a good thing but we all end up in jail. Our leaders die. They hang themselves with trousers and fall out of windows."
>
> "We are scared because we hear that Black people will be killed if they don't agree with the government."
>
> "Very good, but where do we end? Not just in jail, but we die in jail without any charges being brought."
>
> "My children keep on telling me about it but I tell them they must please keep away because I don't want them to die young."
>
> "I don't want to talk about that. My heart breaks when I think about it. Where are our leaders? Six feet under the ground."
>
> "It's a good thing. What we really need is the chance to kill these Whites."
>
> "Good, but some die in jail; others get banning orders."
>
> "I am scared of it. I hear there is a boy that fell from the building in Port Elizabeth."
>
> "We are forgetting that some Whites feel sorry for us. We just tie them with one belt."
>
> "It would be a good thing if we could turn this world upside down."
>
> "We could take over this country. That is why we are put in jail."

Several women said they did not want to talk about the topic. Here it should be emphasised that research among Blacks on political attitudes is extremely difficult in the present climate of fear and police harassment in South Africa. Other studies have been unable to obtain much information on political attitudes. For example, Weinrich found that

> Although domestic servants spoke readily about their religion and education, they were most reluctant to express their political attitudes, and I doubt the reliability of the responses we recorded. Many servants

> were suspicious of any question dealing with politics and often reported these back to their employers. The fact that the interviewers were Europeans, not Africans...greatly contributed to the servants' reluctance to speak. [9]

For this reason the researcher employed a Black field worker to interview the domestic workers. This chapter pays tribute to her skill. The answers reveal the remarkable extent of trust and confidence she inspired in the respondents.

Domestic workers' perceptions of themselves as women

Only a small proportion, 16 percent of the sample of domestic workers interviewed in depth, thought that women are generally inferior to men in their personal qualities. This contrasts with 24 percent of their employers. Many seemed to have a sense of personal superiority to men, but a structural inferiority. For example:

> "We are the same, the problem is that we are women. Otherwise I have more power than my husband. Once he gets into difficulties at home he gives up. Anything difficult...he thinks it's the end of the world."

Many women seemed to attribute this sense of superiority to the fact that they had more difficulties to cope with than men, and generally were better able to cope:

> "We are more capable than men. Men can't face problems. They think it's the end of the world."
>
> "We are equal but my husband couldn't manage things without me."
>
> "We are far better than men but we have to respect them so we don't lower their dignity."
>
> "Every woman knows we are stronger than men. I don't know about White women if they think the same."
>
> "We are more than them."
>
> "Men's dignity has gone into a bottle of wine."
>
> "Men have lost their dignity in drink."
>
> "Our girls are stronger than men these days."
>
> "We are stronger than men but we have to respect them although they don't deserve that respect."

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9. Weinrich, 1976: 233.

"Men are just rubbish."

"Men have lost their dignity in many ways. They don't want to look after their families any more."

"We give them respect but they are not entitled to it."

"We just have to respect our husbands although they don't deserve it. They don't give us enough money to care for our children."

"We are stronger. We stand things that our husbands could never stand."

"There are some women in detention."

"Men are useless these days, they spend all their money on drink."

"Our men cannot cope with the responsibility of being the head of the family."

Their husbands' 'irresponsible' handling of money was a common theme:

"My husband got a gratuity when he left the BAAB. He wouldn't tell me how much it was. He thought he was a king. He forgot that money will be finished. Now I am the only one who pays the rent, food, everything."

All the domestic workers thought that women are not treated fairly in this country. This contrasts with 28 percent of their employers. However, many of the instances of discrimination they quoted referred to discrimination against Blacks generally and Black women specifically. For example:

"We have to carry passes."

"We have to have a permit to visit our husbands."

"We are not allowed to join our husbands."

Others implied a feminist consciousness in that they referred specifically to discrimination against them as women:

"We work hard like men, but we are paid less."

"We are badly treated. Our husbands are making it worse because they don't help us with their own children."

"Our men won't tell us what they earn." (This was a common complaint.)

"No White woman would work for R9 a month as I do."

"A White woman can tell you to move a wardrobe. Because you are Black she does not think that you are a woman."

"Some men don't want to listen to us women."

"We get no maternity benefits."

"We don't get accommodation of our own."

"We have two families to look after, our employer's and our own. The men just go to work and come home. They do not worry about children and other things."

"I don't know what my husband earns. I am the one who tries to educate our children. The father does not care."

"Men (and Coloureds) are paid more than us for the same job."

"Look at me. I am just like a man who goes to the mines. I only go home at the end of the year."

"Our men treat us badly. Our marriages end like paper fires."

"While we are at work our husbands find other women."

"Men don't want to pay maintenance for their children."

"Black men say a woman is a tail."

"I am coping with nine children. My husband does not pay a cent."

"Our men beat us when they are drunk."

"They can take other girl friends even if they are married. We can't do that."

"We have to manage our children. You seldom see a man trying to cope alone with his children."

"We cope with more. I am coping with my mother and four children on R25 a month. This husband of mine does nothing to help."

Under a quarter (24 percent) had ever heard of the Women's Liberation Movement. This contrasts with 86 percent of their employers. Interestingly, all of these domestic workers, as opposed to only six percent of their employers, thought it was a good thing. However, several stressed that their daily lives were consumed by other problems:

"It's a good thing but I don't have time to liberate myself."

"It's good but I worry about my children. What are they going to eat tomorrow?"

Compared to their White, mainly middle-class employers these women have a much greater 'feminist consciousness' or insight into discriminations against women.[10] This is clearly related to their location in the social structure. The widespread disruption of family life that the

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10. See below, Chapter 5,'The Employers of Domestic Workers'.

system of migrant labour entails, has resulted in the burden of family responsibilities being placed upon Black women. Their sense of grievance against what they see as Black men's irresponsibility, particularly their drinking habits and secrecy about their incomes, came through very strongly in many interviews.[11] But their indignation about discrimination against women is clearly overshadowed by their consciousness of discrimination against Blacks.

Domestic workers' perceptions of inequalities in living standards

When the domestic workers were asked what they felt about the difference in living standards between themselves and their employers, 90 percent expressed anger or indignation and 10 percent sadness. All felt strongly about the difference in living standards between Blacks and Whites generally.

> "The Whites are really sitting on our necks."
>
> "We are slaves."
>
> "The Whites are greedy. They only think of their own stomachs."
>
> "They live a life of luxury."
>
> "South Africa should be ashamed of itself for the way they treat non-Whites."
>
> "I feel angry when I look at his sheep and goats and we are not allowed to keep any." (A farm worker. None in the rural sample were allowed cattle, sheep, goats or any grazing animals. A few were allowed to keep pigs and chickens.)
>
> "It makes me angry especially when I have to serve her tea in bed and she is younger than I am." (A 65 year old domestic worker.)
>
> "Sad - our people are suffering like anything."
>
> "Angry - but I'm sure that there are some other Whites, like your madam, who also feels strongly about the difference."

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11. This is also reported by Yawitch from her research on women who live in the Winterveld squatter area in BophutaTswana. "Women tell with extreme bitterness that they do not know how much their husbands earn. For this is a crucial factor in maintaining their powerlessness." J. Yawitch, 'Sexism and the Sexual Division of Labour in South Africa', Africa Perspective, No. 13, Spring 1979, p.31.

> "It makes me angry to look at their gardens and the food they buy for their dogs. It is better than they buy for us. And the dogs eat off their dishes but we don't."
>
> "The whole government is very bad."
>
> "South Africa needs to be taken over by the English people and go back to pennies not cents. In those days we were not struggling as much."
>
> "I wish the madams would take their maids home and see the kind of houses we are living in."
>
> "I hear that in England it's not so bad. Whites work for other Whites."
>
> "It makes me angry. That is why our children just want to destroy and burn things. They are tired of seeing us suffer."
>
> "It makes my heart break. They say things are so expensive but we shop at the same shops. The money she gives me is not even as much as her pocket money."
>
> "If God could change it all and turn all the Blacks into Whites and all the Whites into Blacks, most of the Whites would shoot themselves. They couldn't live with our difficulties."
>
> "I don't think our employers must give us all they have, or even half, they must just consider us."
>
> "It makes me angry. We are also God's people."
>
> "I feel sorry for the Whites who care for Blacks. We tie them with one rope because we don't know them."
>
> "It makes me angry. On rainy days you will stand at the bus stop getting wet and when you get to work your employer tells you how late you are."
>
> "It makes me angry. I wish Idi Amin was nearer."[12]

This is unmistakably the language of disaffection; a far cry from T.S. Elliot's conception of "the damp souls of housemaids."

Expectations of Change

All the domestic servants interviewed in depth expect the difference in living standards between Blacks and Whites to change, though to many domestic workers this change will only come about at some remote time in the future. Almost half, 48 percent, thought that although change would come, it was impossible to predict when; 28 percent thought change

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12. Such statements contrast sharply with the political conservatism of Winterveld women reported by Yawitch. She relates this to their isolation and dependence on men. Yawitch, 1979: 32.

would come about in their children's lifetime; 10 percent thought it would come about in their grandchildren's lifetime; and 14 percent in their own lifetime.

> "It might take a long time, but whether you like it or not, it is going to change. It might change by means of war but it has to change."
>
> "It will change despite Vorster. He is a rubbish."
>
> "It will change but it will take time. It is not easy to take a piece of meat out of your mouth and share it."
>
> "It will not be easy for Whites to give up."
>
> "I wish we could fight it out."
>
> "It will not change easily. There's going to be a war."
>
> "I hope it changes in my lifetime. I would like to see the Whites suffer the way we do."
>
> "It will take time because even if Whites decide to change we will still want to fight them because of the things they have done to us."
>
> "It might change in my lifetime, but by then I will be too old to enjoy it."

When asked, "How do you think you would feel if you had to change places with your employer?" most answers expressed a mixture of incredulity and delight at the prospect.

> "I would feel good to have a farm of my own and my own slaves."
>
> "Oh, I know that will never happen but if it did I would feel proud and would not like to give her her house back."
>
> "I would like to have slaves to look after my dogs and cats."
>
> "I would feel very important. All my problems would be little ones which could be solved."
>
> "I would feel very happy. My mother would be comfortable and I wouldn't have to worry about leaving her to go to work."
>
> "I would feel very good. My children would have their own room."
>
> "Very good. I would have a car and my employer would have to work every day."
>
> "I would not like to change places, because I do not want to be like Whites."
>
> "I would enjoy employing my madam for R22 a month and sitting in my study while she looks after my Black child and does the ironing at the same time."

"The whole world would be mine."

"I would smile all day."

Many workers envisaged this change to mean that they would lead "a life of luxury."

When asked whether the domestic worker would behave differently from her employer in any way, answers often combined feelings of revenge with compassion:

"I don't see why I should behave differently. I have to do the same to her."

"I would behave the same to start with and change later because I couldn't treat another person like she treats me."

"I would behave the same. When she is sick I will tell her that my house is not a hospital. That is what she said to me when I was sick."

"I would behave the same to start with and loosen the strap later."

"I would behave differently. I would be ashamed to treat people like slaves."

"I would also give her soup with no meat, beans or vegetables."

"What for? I would also ignore the doctor's certificate."

"I would give her a lecture."

"I would behave the same because she has no heart for me."

"I would behave the same and let her suffer like I have done for 15 years."

"I would behave the same way. Later I would change after giving her a lesson."

"Yes, I would show her that people must not be treated like animals."

"I would behave even worse than she does because some White people think they are made out of white paper and we are made out of steel."

"I would not do what she does to me to anybody."

"The trouble is that when people have everything they forget about Jesus Christ, our Lord."

"I would also make her eat in the toilet when it rains."

"I would be even worse and see how long she could take it for."

"I would be even tougher than she is."

The resentment expressed in many of these comments suggests an important difference between domestic servants in contemporary South Africa and

in nineteenth-century Britain, in which many servants seem to have been contented with the status quo. Social inequalities were largely unquestioned, especially among the upper servants in large households, many of whom appear to have identified with their employers and bathed in a kind of reflected glory.

> In their autobiographical accounts such servants rarely voice resentment or discontent; on the contrary, they stress the responsibilities of their positions, their satisfactions from work well done and the enjoyment to be derived from the community of the servant's hall. In the conflict between social aristocracy and political democracy they were unquestionably on the side of the former. 'There is no class less open to democratic ideas than a contented servant class' wrote William Clarke. 'Compared with them, their titled and wealthy employers are revolutionists. They cannot bear change, their minds are saturated with the idea of social grades and distinctions, they will not even live with one another on terms of social equality.' [13]

Such 'contented' servants are likely to be a rarity in South African society. At least the servants interviewed in depth in the Eastern Cape study expressed considerable resentment and discontent, and look forward eagerly to change.

While servants in nineteenth century Britain may have been 'deferential workers' who accept the legitimacy of their own subordination in the social order, this is clearly not true of domestic workers in contemporary South Africa. In Britain,

> the relationship between master and servant depended upon the acceptance of a social 'apartheid', sanctioned by the law of God, and on an economic system which justified sweated labour on the argument of providing work for those otherwise unemployable. When other, more satisfying forms of work became available to women, when religious beliefs waned and when the 'natural' obedience of one class to another came to be widely disputed, this kind of relationship no longer carried with it public approval or private acceptance. [14]

In South Africa the relationship between master and servant depends largely on a racial apartheid. Within this pattern the oppression of

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13. Burnett, 1977: 172.

14. Ibid., p.174.

Blacks assumes a more coercive, direct and visible form than class inequalities ever did in Britain. Among servants themselves there is a far more widespread rejection of their subordination in the social order. Unlike nineteenth century Britain, the 'deference' of domestic workers is a mask, a protective disguise, rather than a psychological reality.

The religious beliefs of these women could be an important factor. It seems possible that their Christian faith could operate in contradictory ways. Christianity could bind these workers and their employers together in a universal communion. On the other hand, their religion also sets them apart from Whites in that it involves a distinctive style. Perhaps their Christianity fires them with a sense of their own worth and provides them with a set of standards by which to judge their employers. On the other hand perhaps their Christianity curbs their anger, leaving them free to hate the institution in which they are trapped, but not necessarily their individual employers - fellow sinners before God. These are large questions and their resolution lies outside the scope of this study.[15]

Overall, the multiplicity of images that domestic servants have of themselves as workers, as Blacks, as women, and of social relations generally in South Africa, suggests that it is an oversimplification to regard domestic workers as representing a broadly uniform group. However, it would also be incorrect to infer that no generalisations are possible, or that domestic workers do not share certain characteristics of self imagery which can be related to their location in the social structure.

The key to understanding the domestic workers' situation is her dependence. The difference between dependence and deference is crucial. It implies that while the domestic worker does not endorse her own social subordination, she recognises her powerlessness in the social formation. Of course subordinate groups within society do 'accept' their position to some extent. But Mann distinguishes between two types of acceptance: "pragmatic acceptance, where the individual complies

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15. Genovese points to these contradictory effects in his discussion of Christianity in the slave-holding American South. See Genovese, 1975: 282-3.

because he perceives no realistic alternative, and normative acceptance, where the individual internalizes the moral expectations of the ruling class and views his own inferior position as legitimate."[16] Evidence from the Eastern Cape research suggests that domestic workers show a 'pragmatic acceptance' of their subordinate role in society, but their occupational socialisation involves the adoption of a mask of deference in order to conform to employer expectations and manipulative practices. What are the political implications of this?

Fisher has analysed Mann's notion of 'revolutionary class consciousness' as involving at least four different dimensions:

> (1) We may say that the individual is objectively deprived, but to what extent does he or she perceive this deprivation? This is the problem of relative deprivation on the individual level.
>
> (2) To what extent does the individual who feels deprived perceive a community of interests with other individuals?
>
> (3) To what extent does the individual understand the situation in structural terms?
>
> (4) To what extent does the individual perceive him/herself or the group as having the power to change the situation?
>
> (5) To what extent is an alternative society conceived or conceivable? [17]

Fisher writes, "The first four dimensions involve answers to the following questions: To what extent am I exploited? With whom am I expoited? ...and by what mechanisms am I exploited?"[18] To generalise from the self imagery of the domestic workers interviewed in depth, they would appear to answer these questions as follows: I am grossly exploited; I am exploited with other domestic servants specifically, and with Blacks generally; I am exploited by the structures of White dominance. Fisher quotes Leggett who uses the term 'class-race' consciousness "to refer to those who see themselves as belonging to an economically exploited group (a class) which they nevertheless define in racial terms."[19]

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16. M. Mann, 'The Social Cohesion of Liberal Democracy', American Sociological Review, Vol. 35, No. 3, June 1970, p.425.

17. Fisher in Schlemmer and Webster, 1978: 199.

18. Ibid.

19. J.C. Leggett, Class, Race and Labour (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968). Quoted by Fisher in Schlemmer and Webster, 1978: 209.

Giddens has referred to this in suggesting his theory that under certain conditions ethnic characteristics offer a strong source of 'class structuration', the formation of a self-conscious class.[20]

The evidence from this study suggests that domestic workers possess such a 'class-race consciousness'. Their consciousness appears to involve a high level of relative deprivation as domestic workers, a perception of community of interests with other domestic workers specifically - "we are all singing one song" - and with Blacks generally; and an understanding of the situation in structural terms - "It will change but it will take time. It is not easy to take a piece of meat out of your mouth and share it." This understanding involves a deep-seated recognition of powerlessness, and little conception of an alternative society, so that a high level of perception of relative deprivation is combined with a sense of impotence.

Earlier I referred to Coser's view of domestic service as 'a greedy institution'. Greedy institutions "tend to rely on voluntary compliance and to evolve means of activating loyalty and commitment."[21] Essentially the greedy institution promotes deference relationships which reinforce the legitimacy of the employer's authority. Both the isolation of the domestic worker and the personal and particularistic nature of her relationship with her employer operate to limit access to alternative definitions of the situation. However, the domestic worker is incorporated in domestic service 'from above', not 'from below'. Her real life, rooted in the family obligations which propel her into domestic service in the first place, are outside it. The evidence given in this chapter suggests that this degree of distance gives the domestic worker access to alternative definitions of the situation; definitions which involve a denial of the legitimacy of her subordination within the existing social order.

However, their lack of any clear conception of an alternative society is significant. Giddens has argued that 'revolutionary consciousness' involves not only "a perception of the existing socio-economic order

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20. Giddens, 1973: 111-112.

21. Coser, 1974: 4.

as 'illegitimate'", but also "a recognition of modes of action which can be taken to reorganise it on a new basis."[22] "The experience of deprivation...is simply one element in the picture; feelings of resentment of a diffuse nature only take on a revolutionary character when they are fused with a concrete project, however vaguely formulated, of an alternative order which can be brought into being."[23] It is extremely debatable how far the militancy of some statements ("What we really need is the chance to kill these Whites") are evidence of such 'concrete projects' or 'modes of action'.

In this study the image most frequently used by domestic workers to describe their situation was that of 'slaves', 'amakhoboka':

> "I have been a slave all my life."
>
> "We are slaves."
>
> "We are slaves in our own country."
>
> "Our employers should treat us like people and not like slaves." [24]

Rex has pointed to three aspects of the domestic servant's situation in colonial contexts which are "suggestive of slavery."

> There is a tendency to tie him to his job through the introduction of penal sanctions against the servant who decamps. There is a considerable limitation on his own family life, since very often he is required to live in single quarters, and there is considerable similarity very often between the way in which a master talks of his servant or is permitted to punish his servant, and what occurs under the slave system. [25]

While there is much in the domestic servant's situation which is 'suggestive of slavery', this study suggests that domestic servants are most accurately to be viewed as 'trapped workers'. They are 'trapped' in a condition of subjugation and immobility within which they are subject to intensive exploitation.

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22. Giddens, 1973: 116.
23. Ibid.
24. The image of slavery echoes the self description of several domestic workers quoted by Katzman, 1978: 25, 31.
25. Rex, 1970: 54.

Such exploitation is evident in their low wages, which ensure physical survival, but little more; their long working hours and lack of paid holidays; their deprivation of family and social life; their low status, lack of job satisfaction; unsatisfactory relationships with their employers; absence of legal protection; and lack of collective bargaining and worker rights. This objective exploitation is expressed in the workers' sense of being 'slaves', of relative deprivation, of leading wasted lives which they are powerless to change.

Their dependence on their employers is total. The next chapter will attempt to show what kind of women these employers are. In his novel, Vanity Fair, Thackeray suggests that "the worst tyrants over women are other women." It appears that the institution of domestic service allows a measure of domestic tyranny. However, it is not individuals this study is attacking.[26] These domestic 'tyrants' are also, in a very real sense, victims of structures.

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26. As Marx wrote, "My standpoint...can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he remains, socially speaking, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them." Marx, 1976: 92.

CHAPTER 5

THE EMPLOYERS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

> ...She is never ashamed of her house: a stranger could walk in and open any closet, any drawer, and she would have nothing to be ashamed of. You could even eat off her bathroom floor, if that should ever become necessary. ...She sews, she knits, she darns - she irons better even than the schvartze, to whom, of all her friends who each possess a piece of this grinning, childish black old lady's hide, she alone is good. "I'm the only one who's good to her. I'm the only one who gives her a whole can of tuna for lunch, and I'm not talking dreck, either. I'm talking Chicken of the Sea, Alex. I'm sorry, I can't be a stingy person.... Maybe I'm too good," she whispers to me, meanwhile running scalding water over the dish from which the cleaning lady has just eaten her lunch, alone like a leper, "but I couldn't do a thing like that." Once Dorothy chanced to come back into the kitchen while my mother was still standing over the faucet marked H, sending torrents down upon the knife and fork that had passed between the schvartze's thick, pink lips. "Oh, you know how hard it is to get mayonnaise off silverware these days, Dorothy," says my nimble-tongued mother - and thus, she tells me later, by her quick thinking, has managed to spare the colored woman's feelings. [1]
>
> Two women placed together makes cold weather.[2]

The pivotal point of the institution of domestic service is a dependency relationship which encompasses both parties. Employers are dependent upon their servant's labour, though with rising black unemployment an individual servant is easily replaceable; servants are dependent upon their employers for many of the necessities of life. This chapter will show that many of these employers are involved in a different dimension of dependence that is expressed in their definition of the wife's role within the marital relationship.

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1. P. Roth, Portnoy's Complaint (New York: Random House, 1969), pp.11-13.

2. W. Shakespeare, Henry VIII, Act i, Sc. 4, 1.22.

Profile of a Sample of 50 Employers of Domestic Servants

The employers in the sample covered a wide range of class positions, ages, educational attainments and aspirations, occupational roles, experiences and attitudes, family arrangements and life styles. This hetereogenous group shows three common characteristics: all were English-speaking, which is predominantly true of the sample area. Many of the employers interviewed, and all of the farmers' wives in the study, are descended from, or related to the 1820 Settlers. This is also true of the writer and was an important point of contact in the interview situation. All of them acknowledge their British ancestry and traditions with some pride. This is 'Settler Country' par excellence. All were Whites, and this partly defined the sampling frame. All enjoyed a fairly high standard of living, as do most Whites in South Africa today. The majority (84 percent) live in the two urban areas in the sample, Grahamstown and Port Alfred, the remaining 16 percent on farms.

Some of its White inhabitants see this areas as "a little unsuspected paradise, where all is peace, rusticity and happy poverty."[3] Grahamstown is noted for its cathedral, its famous schools, tree-lined streets, white-washed 'Settler' homes, the 1820 Settler Monument, and its 'English' atmosphere. The White area presents a sharp contrast to the Black township marked by extreme poverty, slum housing, overcrowding, eroded roads, overflowing refuse bins, and noise.

The other urban area in the district investigated, Port Alfred, is noted for its golf course, 17 miles of navigable river, beautiful lagoons and swimming beaches. It is a popular holiday resort, accommodating something of the order of 5 000 visitors every Christmas in its various hotels, holiday homes, caravan and camping sites. Its Black township is noted for its extreme poverty and poor housing. The contrast between White and Black living conditions is amplified by their physical proximity.

The Whites' standard of living in the area must be located in the context of the high standard of living of Whites generally in South Africa

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3. A comment by the poet Thomas Gray on Grassmere.

today. In 1970 the median income of White families was R3 774 with an average family size of 3,7 persons. In Grahamstown Willsworth has calculated that 81,3 percent of the White population earned more than R2 000; 63,3 percent more than R3 000, and 4,7 percent earned plus R10 000.[4] Since 1970, most White incomes have risen.

The majority of the white employer sample, 96 percent, live in houses, rather than flats. The sizes of their homes varied a good deal.

Table 22. Size of 48 White Households

Number of rooms excluding bathroom and kitchen	Number of households	Percentage
3 - 4	12	25,0
5 - 6	19	39,6
7 - 8	13	27,1
9 - 10	4	8,3

Most are substantial and on the whole pleasant and comfortably furnished. All the employers owned at least one expensive consumer item such as a television or Hi-fi set or refrigerator, and at least one motor car. The houses ranged from the small, suburban, comfortably furnished dwelling, to extremely luxurious homes set in beautiful gardens with swimming pools, large lawns and colourful flower beds, and furnished with Persian rugs, Sanderson linens and antiques.

Age and Marital Status

The ages of the employers in the sample ranged from 20 to 75 years. Most (43), are married, with three unmarried and four widows. The occupations of their husbands showed a considerable range, from university lecturer, doctor, teacher, attorney, estate agent, school teacher, business executive, bookkeeper, museum assistant, commercial salesman,

4. Willsworth, 1979: 16. Calculated from Table A4 of the 1970 Census.

market agent, dentist, pharmacist, shopowner, civil servant, farmer, works supervisor, retired electrical engineer and accountant, to male nurse. The vast majority fall within various gradations of middle-class status as defined by occupation and income.

All the 47 married women in the sample had children. On average each had one child under 16 years of age, and two over 16 years of age. The average household size was 3,3 persons. (This contrasts with an average household size of 6,7 persons among the Black domestic worker sample.)

Education

Their educational attainments show a considerable range. Only just over half of the sample (58 percent) had passed Standard 10. Of the remaining women, 16 had passed only Standard Eight and five had passed only Standard Six. However, 64 percent had some other training or education, such as a secretarial course 14 percent; nursing 12 percent; teacher training eight percent; while 20 percent had a university degree. Like their Black employees, their educational aspirations for their children are high, though there is an extreme sex differential. While only 20 percent ideally would choose a profession for their daughters which involved a university education, 60 percent chose it for their sons. These figures and comments made in the interview, indicate clearly that education for sons is considered more important.[5]

Work Histories

The majority of the married women, 89 percent, had worked before they were married. The range of jobs covered is that of traditionally female dominated occupations. The largest occupational category was bookkeeping or secretarial work which covered 38 percent of the married women in the sample. Others had worked as nurses (eight), florists (one), salesladies (six), teachers (eight) and librarian (one). All had been satisfied with their jobs. The most common reasons they gave for leaving their jobs were to get married (12) and to be with their children or when they fell pregnant (12).

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5. See Chapter 8, 'Education for Domesticity' for the implications of this.

Only just over a quarter (26 percent) of the currently married women and only one of the widows were employed outside the home. All the three women in the employer sample who had never been married were currently employed. All gave as their reason for continuing to work, their need for the monetary income.

Attitudes Towards Women Working

Attitudes towards women working outside the home showed a good deal of variety. Twenty-four percent of the respondents felt that as a general rule women should work outside the home; 24 percent thought they should not, and the majority of 52 percent thought it depended on circumstances. It was frequently stated that mothers with young children should not work. Just over half of the 43 presently married women with children thought their children either would suffer or would have suffered if they had worked; 11 percent thought their children would have benefited, largely from the extra income this would have brought into the family; and the remainder, 36 percent, thought it depended on circumstances. Many employers fail to realise that their domestic workers are often themselves mothers with young children.

Many stated that women's prime role was a domestic one. Some comments were:

> "A woman's place is in the home."
>
> "A wife's first job is her house and husband."
>
> "There is enough valuable work for women to do in the home."
>
> "When women work they lose their femininity and get stroppy. That makes for unhappy marriages."

The writer had expected to find some divergence between the attitudes of the married women in the sample and those of their husbands towards women working outside the home. However, the majority, 84 percent, said that their husbands had the same view as themselves on this topic. Only nine percent said their husbands had different views. Sometimes this is a source of discontent:

> "I would like to work but my husband won't allow it."

A small number, seven percent of the married women said they did not know their husband's views on this question.

> "I don't know. We've never discussed it."

The majority of the women interviewed, 62 percent, would ideally like a part-time job outside the home. Only 26 percent would ideally choose to be housewives, and only 12 percent would ideally choose to be doing a full-time job. Of the 15 women in the sample presently employed, a third would ideally prefer to be housewives. The vast majority, 98 percent, thought most of their friends felt the same way. The only respondent who thought they felt differently ideally chose part-time work for herself, but thought most of her friends would prefer to be housewives.

Many voiced their objections to the fact that there are so few opportunities for part-time work. Several felt strongly that some extra-domestic role was important, not only as a source of income but for social contacts and "an opportunity to get out of the home." Some comments from housewives were:

> "I feel very flat when everyone else goes off to school or to work, and I'm left alone at home (except for the maid)."
>
> "I feel left behind."

The Home Industries Association, now established in both Grahamstown and Port Alfred, appears to fulfil an important need here, especially among farmers' wives. Several said that their lives seemed fuller and richer and they had "got to know more people" and "felt part of things more" through their common involvement in this enterprise. In both towns Home Industries sells home-made produce such as jams and cakes, handcraft products, and fresh fruit and vegetables. The irony here is that in many cases it appears that the domestic workers do most of the baking and cooking of the products offered for sale.

Despite the fact that the majority of women interviewed said they would ideally like a part-time job outside the home, the majority, 80 percent, also said that they were not bored at home. Only 14 percent of the women not currently working said they were bored at home, and a small proportion, six percent, said they were bored sometimes. This attitude can perhaps best be understood in terms of the diverse pattern of leisure activities they enjoy.

Leisure Activities

In sharp contrast to their Black women employees, the White employers in the sample engage in a variety of leisure activities. Many of them

lead varied, rich and interesting lives.[6]

Their level of involvement in voluntary organisations is very high. Over half (27) belong to voluntary associations such as church groups like the Catholic Women's League, the Methodist Women's Auxiliary and the Anglican Women's Guild. They also belong to various social and interest groups such as Pistol Clubs, Coomb Social Club, the Bathurst Reading Circle, Diaz Cross Bird Club, the Women's Agricultural Association, the Grahamstown Amateur Dramatic Society, the National Council of Women, Settlers' Club in Grahamstown, Rhodes University Women's Association, the Bathurst Horticultural Society, the Kowie Trust and the Port Alfred and Grahamstown Home Industries Association. In addition several are involved in community work through associations such as the Grahamstown City Council, the Port Alfred Ratepayers' Association, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Child Welfare, Red Cross, Rotary Annes, the Bathurst Agricultural Show Committee, school feeding schemes in both towns, the Bathurst and District Welfare Society, and so on. On average each of these women belong to 2,7 voluntary associations.

The majority, 94 percent, belong to a Christian church. The two largest denominations were the Anglican Church to which 36 percent of the sample belonged and the Methodist Church to which 32 percent belonged. The frequency with which they attended church varied a good deal: 36 percent said they went to church two to three times a month, 26 percent went to church four or more times, 16 percent once a month and 22 percent said they went to church "seldom". Most of those who said seldom expressed guilt that they did not go more frequently. This contrasts strongly with the 'regret' expressed by many domestic servants that their working hours did not give them the opportunity to go to church more frequently.

Many of the employers, 58 percent, said they had regular sporting or social activities such as tennis, golf, bridge and bowls. Several of

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6. They are thus in a very different position to housewives in other societies where "the lack of contact with other people coupled with the almost non-existence of a social life or leisure activities ...presents a depressing picture." D. Hobson, 'Housewives: isolation as oppression', Women's Studies Group, 1978: 87.

the older employers said they had enjoyed regular sporting activities when they were younger.

Most, 66 percent, said they spent their evenings watching television. The item on the employer questionnaire which asked them to state two of the programmes they enjoyed the most, took up a good deal of time in the interview. This was one of the most important vehicles in establishing a relationship of warmth, trust and rapport with the respondent. Most of the employer sample, 74 percent, said they watched television sometimes; the vast majority of these, 84 percent, said they watched daily. Most employers, 88 percent, listened to the radio and the majority of these said they listened daily. Most had access to a number of other media. The great majority, 70 percent, said they read a daily or weekly newspaper. Most of these, 83 percent, read the Eastern Province Herald. The majority, 68 percent, also read one or more magazines, with an average of 2,2 magazines each. The most frequently mentioned were Fair Lady, Scope, Farmers' Weekly, Your Family and The Reader's Digest.

In addition, 98 percent said they enjoyed a number of hobbies or special interests, many of which were home centred: sewing, knitting, gardening, reading, baking, making jams and preserves, tapestry, painting, drama, tennis, golf, bowls, dressmaking, writing letters, photography, music, singing in a choir, and listening to the radio and watching television. Weekends were spent on these hobbies and in a variety of other leisure activities such as going to the beach, visiting friends, playing sport or watching their husbands and children doing so, and entertaining. The amount of entertaining varied a good deal; the largest category, 46 percent, were those who said they entertained only occasionally; 14 percent said they entertained on average three times a week, and 24 percent on average once a week, often on weekends only. Sixteen percent said they did no entertaining at all.

The vast majority, 92 percent, took holidays in another place. Of these 42 percent said they did the domestic work themselves when they went on holiday; 16 percent said the family shared the domestic work, and 10 percent said they usually stayed in a hotel. Almost a third, 32 per cent, said a domestic servant did the domestic work when the family went on holiday, and often this was their own servant. She accompanied them to their holiday house (rented or owned) and this was considered her

'holiday'. In twelve cases this was the usual practice. One employer explained

> "She does get an hour or so on the beach in the afternoons."

It seems clear that the employment of domestic workers frees these women, in a number of ways and on a variety of levels, from the constraints their domestic role would otherwise impose. How do they relate to their domestic workers?

Relationship with Employees

Many employers described their servant as "one of the family." This implies that she is seen in a role-specific dimension; her life is viewed as totally enmeshed with that of her employers. The implication is that she has no life of her own outside this role. It is significant that not one of the domestic servants in the sample saw herself as "one of the family" and some voiced cynicism about their employers' use of this phrase. In no case in the entire sample was there the sharing of power and resources that authentic family membership might be thought to involve.

The majority of the employers said they liked their servants as people, and got along well with them. When asked to describe their feelings towards their servants 30 percent said they were "one of the family", and a further 28 percent said they felt fondness or friendship for their servants. Six percent described their predominant feeling for their servants as "pity" and another six percent said their predominant feeling was "irritation". Thus while the structure of the worker-employer relationship is extremely hierarchic and unequal, in terms of content it is often coloured for the employer with emotions of kindness, affection and generosity. It is precisely the unequal nature of the relationship and the mutual recognition of such inequality that allows the relationship to be described so often as a close and friendly one.

The pervading tone of interaction does not appear to be one of mistrust, watchfulness or suspicion on the part of the employers. The majority (42) said their servants were trustworthy, five thought they were not, and three said they were not sure. Some commented,

"You can never tell with them."

"Blacks are all kleptomaniacs nowadays."

"Yes, she's trustworthy...as far as native girls go."

"As much as any of them."

"I trust her completely. I never lock anything away."

The employers' answers to the questions "How would you describe your feelings towards her?" and "What sort of person is she?" showed a great variety. Some comments were:

"She's very raw...just out of the kraal."[7]

"An impossible thing. Very self-willed. She's the first girl I've had that's gone to school. The difference is fantastic. She insists on doing things her own way. The completely raw ones are better." [8]

"She's a raw farm girl." (Of a woman aged 58.)

"She's like a child of ours."

"One of the family."

"Very clean."

"The good old type."

"Pleasant and reserved."

"She doesn't have much to say, but I prefer them that way."

"She's a gem of a girl." (The 'girl' in this case was a middle-aged woman.)

"She's very reliable and responsible. She ran the whole house for two months while I was in hospital."

"I suppose my main feeling for her is one of aggravation. She is absolutely stupid. Like a child mentally. She needs a lot of supervision."

"We have a good understanding. I told her if anything is missing from this house, you are to blame. I told her that when I first employed her and I've had no trouble."

"She's a bit cheeky."

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7. 'Rawness' was a frequently mentioned attribute. It is commonly used in the Eastern Cape to indicate the low level of incorporation of a Black into 'White culture'.

8. This woman echoes the feelings of Mr Tomlinson in George Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life. "Give me a servant as can nayther read nor write, I say, and doesn't know the year o' the Lord as she was born in." G. Eliot, Scenes of Clerical Life (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1932), p.183.

"We don't talk much. I have no feelings for her really. I haven't made a friend of her. I keep her at a distance."

"Raw of course, but we're very fond of her. She's one of the family."

"I love her and I think she loves me."

"She's a dear old thing."

"You must keep them in their place...not get too friendly. That's why I don't let her listen to the radio. If we listened to the radio together she'd start getting familiar. Some people make a big mistake...they make friends of their servants. Take my neighbour here...she lets her servant bath in her bathroom. I think that's shocking."

"Quite a good girl." (Of the mother of six children.)

"She's a proper old farm girl. Not at all insolent. A rare thing nowadays."

"Our servants are our responsibility. We have to be their doctors, lawyers and do everything for them."

"She's all right so long as she doesn't drink out of my cups."

"She's a friend. I'm very fond of her."

"She's a warm, generous, loving person."

"We are both Christians and both women. That gives us a common bond."

"We have an easy, relaxed kind of relationship based on mutual trust."

When asked "What do you think her feelings are towards you?" some answered:

"She thinks I'm her mother."

"We are her family."

"She adores us."

"She must be fond of me after 14 years."

"She enjoys working for us."

"She's very fond of me and adores the children."

"She loves us all."

"I'm a mother to her."

"I'm like a sister to her."

"Completely indifferent. Its very different to the old days."

"She's a closed book."

"Respect and affection."

"She's very happy here. She lacks for nothing."

"I don't know." (The servant had been in her employment for 15 years.)

Some elderly women living alone seem to depend a good deal upon their domestic workers for company. One said plaintively that she feels "very alone in the world" when her servant goes off at 5 p.m. Another described how she felt nervous living alone, with the current spate of burglaries and derived considerable comfort from the fact that her maid "sits in the kitchen making her grass mats at night, while I sit here (the lounge) sewing." This illustrates Katzman's insight that "many mistresses hired servants to fulfil psychological needs independent of the work involved."[9]

When the employers were asked "What quality do you like the most about your servant?" some answered,

"Her sense of humour."

"She's prepared to do anything."

"Twenty people can walk in here and she'll produce dinner for them without any grumbling."

"Her loyalty."

"Her happy nature."

"She's steady and honest...the old fashioned type."[10]

"If you say lunch for seven at 12.30 it's there."

"Very willing and obedient."

"She's open. I feel we understand each other."

"She's quick and efficient."

"Very civil."

"Quiet and retiring."

"She never gets cross."

"She loves the children."

"She comes to work whether it rains or storms."

"She's very clean...one of the old type."

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9. Katzman, 1978: 270.

10. Employers' perceptions of this 'type' are beautifully encapsulated in a painting by the Eastern Cape artist, Dorothy Kay, of 'Annie Mavata' (oil on board, 1956).

> "She's very polite. After she gets a phone call she comes to tell me who it was from, what its about and to say thank you."
>
> "She's very good with children. She brought all mine up."
>
> "Quite a good girl...she doesn't answer back."
>
> "Very willing...she works in the garden as well."
>
> "Polite...not cheeky at all."
>
> "She's a smiling, happy person."

When asked what quality employers liked the least about their servants, some said,

> "She has a tendency to get depressed...she's not a happy worker."
>
> "She smells." (When the researcher asked this farmer's wife whether she had access to water at home, the reply was "I don't suppose so...the dam is quite far away.")
>
> "She can sulk."
>
> "Her movements are too quick...she breaks things."
>
> "She's inclined to be rough with my crockery."
>
> "Her sourness...an unwillingness to be corrected."
>
> "She insists on wearing shoes in the house and I find the noise very irritating."
>
> "She sometimes comes late in the mornings."
>
> "She hurries through her work on Sundays."
>
> "I wish she'd talk to my youngest more so he could learn Xhosa."
>
> "A lack of thoroughness."
>
> "She boozes a bit...I've told her it must stop."
>
> "She's a slow worker."

'Laziness' was frequently mentioned here. For instance,

> "She's lazy...she sweeps the dust under the carpet."

This is paradoxical in view of the amount of work domestic workers appear to get through in many households. Laziness of course is a common trait in racist stereotypes generally, and especially in colonial societies.[11]

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11. Memmi points to the significance of the trait of 'laziness in the stereotypical conception of the 'colonized'. It is commonly used as a rationalization for the payment of low wages and

These women's relationship with their servants must be located in a tangled skein of attitudes towards Blacks generally. Here, a technique of depersonalisation often operates, a technique Memmi has termed "the mark of the plural. The colonized is never characterized in an individual manner; he is entitled only to drown in an anonymous collectivity." Relations with individual servants are submerged in this anonymous racial sea.

> If a colonized servant does not come in one morning, the colonizer will not say that she is ill, or that she is cheating, or that she is tempted not to abide by an oppressive contract. He will say, 'You can't count on them.' It is not just a grammatical expression. He refuses to consider personal, private occurrences in his maid's life; that life in a specific sense does not interest him, and his maid does not exist as an individual. [12]

The extent of this depersonalisation is illustrated by the fact that only ten percent of the employer sample knew their servants' full Xhosa names. Several habitually called their servants by standardised names such as 'Cookie' or 'Sissie'. The fact that this relationship is both highly personalised, involving an intimate personal interaction between employer and worker, and at the same time includes various techniques of depersonalisation, is one of the contradictions encompassed within the institution of domestic service in this society.

Overall, employers do not know as much about their servants as their length of employment might warrant. The majority, 84 percent, knew whether their servant was married or not. Most, 82 percent, also knew how many children their servants had, and 62 percent knew roughly how old the children were. Only 40 percent knew what level of schooling

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inequality in colonial societies: "Nothing could better justify the colonizer's privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized's destitution than his indolence. The mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness, and that of the colonizer, a virtuous taste for action. At the same time the colonizer suggests that employing the colonized is not very profitable, thereby authorizing his unreasonable wages." Memmi, 1974: 79.

12. Ibid., p.85.

their servant had and 44 percent did not know whether or not she had children attending school. The vast majority, 82 percent, did not know the cost of Black children's schooling. Overall, only two employers of those who knew their servant had school-going children, knew the cost involved.

Less than half (48 percent) of those with live-out servants knew where they lived, and three-quarters of the employers did not know how much rent their servants had to pay. The vast majority, 80 percent, communicated with their servants in English and found their knowledge of English 'satisfactory'. One employer commented here:

> "It's too good. We find her reading anything we leave lying around."

Only 12 percent said they had difficulty communicating with their servants.

Of a total of 31 out of the 46 employers who knew their servants had young children, 67 percent did not know who looked after the children while she was at work, and most of these did not know whether or not she had to pay anyone to look after her children. Half the employers said their servant discussed her personal problems with her, though only 16 percent said this was reciprocal. Some commented,

> "I don't want to know too much."
> "I don't want to get involved."
> "We're not at all intimate."

While the pattern of interaction between employers and their servants clearly varies a good deal, the employers' ignorance of their servants' lives and identities outside the work situation is startling. Clearly these women see their servants in 'role-specific' terms.[13]

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13. As Katzman has written of the old American South, "Few whites knew much about their black servants except for the stereotyped views which they held about the nature of all blacks. Many black servants spent most of their lives in white homes, while mistresses never entered their servants' homes. Blacks acquired encyclopedic knowledge of white communities and knew the intimate details of white lives, while whites remained ignorant of black lives." Katzman, 1978: 201.

While the great majority, 98 percent, said they were satisfied with their present servant, they were sharply critical of servants in general. The prevalent view was that they are incompetent workers, who are well treated by their long-suffering employers. The subordinate status of the servant was unquestioned. The qualities most commonly attributed to them are irresponsibility, secretiveness, an inability to work without close supervision, laziness, dishonesty, ingratitude and a lack of initiative. In short, they are indubitably inferior.

Employers' Attitudes towards Domestic Servants in General

Most employers, 60 percent, thought that on the whole domestic servants as a group are "well treated." Other opinions ranged from eight percent who thought as a group servants were "exceptionally well treated", ten percent who thought they were badly treated; six per cent thought they were treated only satisfactorily, and 16 percent thought that the treatment of domestic servants varied too much to be able to generalise. Some commented,

> "You can only get so much out of them and no more."
>
> "They take no pride in their work."
>
> "In Rhodesia a boy does three times the work these do."
>
> "Servants are treated too well. That's the trouble. They don't want to work."
>
> "You never see any thin servants."
>
> "A girl in a good home in Grahamstown is extremely well off. She gets good pay, food and clothing." (Wife of a senior lecturer at Rhodes University.)
>
> "They give what they get."
>
> "No, employers expect far too much from them. They forget that their girls are also people."
>
> "I can only speak from my own experience. I treat my girl well and so do most of my friends."
>
> "Yes, we pay good wages." (Wife of a lecturer at Rhodes University paying R40 a month.)
>
> "It's really wonderful that they're willing to work for such low wages."
>
> "They're well treated. Some are filthy, lazy and unreliable...especially those from across the (Fish) river."

> "Port Alfred servants are very bad, especially the young ones. I had eight in my first year here... they're dirty and unreliable."
>
> "They're well treated, considering what poor workers they are."
>
> "They're treated as well as servants anywhere, but there's room for improvement."
>
> "It varies a great deal. Some treat them like they're one of the family. But a friend of mine has had 40 maids in five years. It varies a lot."
>
> "They are taken too much for granted."
>
> "They're usually treated as one of the family."
>
> "This is a political question. I'd rather not answer political questions. Our government is given to us by God."
>
> "Some employers I know lack compassion towards their servants. They work them at Christmas and Easter and let them walk home late at night."
>
> "They're well treated, especially as they are not good workers. They're very deceitful on the whole."
>
> "Black people now are more difficult to get on with. They're becoming more demanding and therefore more irritating to employers."
>
> "Farm natives are unreliable. They have no interest in their work...most employers here have endless trouble, especially those who do the most for their natives."
>
> "Servants here are shocking. A lot of farmers are selling up because of staff problems. In the old days the youngsters were given a jolly good hiding if they did something wrong. Now parents seem to be afraid of their children."

The question "What could be done to improve the situation of domestic servants?" often provoked a lot of complaints about servants generally.

> "Everyone is complaining about their increasing cheekiness."
>
> "They don't take any pride in their employers' houses."

Only one employer mentioned the need for more jobs and four the need for better pay:

> "I get hot under the collar when I hear what people pay."

Another employer believed that more training for servants was necessary, and three thought they should be better treated by their employers.

> "Employers should realise that servants are people, not animals."

Overall, attitudes towards domestic servants in the Eastern Cape may be categorised into five main types:

"Embarrassment". A small number feel embarrassed at having any servants at all, and think that being waited on by another human being is degrading. Many of these make small gestures towards self-reliance such as washing their own underwear.

"Moral responsibility". An equally small number feel that one has a moral obligation to provide employment to Blacks through the institution of domestic service. They express considerable concern over Black poverty and give generously to local charities.

"A necessary evil". A small proportion "just cannot keep a servant." Several respondents in the sample reported this about various neighbours. They find fault with everything their servants do, nag them constantly, and are generally antagonistic to Blacks.

"One of the family". These employers pride themselves on their "luck" in having such good servants, say they are "one of the family" and have employed them for many years. They look after their servants when they are sick and allow them favours such as watching television in the lounge.

"I know the native". These employers often know their servants' language. They think they understand "the native" well and appreciate their traditional customs. They are patient, willing to overlook minor faults in their servants' work and treat them, in their view, kindly but firmly. They are critical of those who "spoil" their servants.

The most typical viewpoint is that servants are like children. Thus, the core characteristic of the relationship is a paternalism which involves a dependence on the part of the servant and confirms the employers' sense of superiority. Certainly these women do not see themselves as exploiters. A press report on this research which appeared under the headline "Servants, an exploited group says lecturer", provoked some resentful letters addressed to me personally,

one of which specifically stated "I resent being called an exploiter." Perhaps Genovese's view of slaveholders in the old American South applies equally to some of the employers of domestic workers described in this study. They had

> expected more than obedience from their slaves; they had expected faithfulness - obedience internalized as duty, respect and love. They had had little choice, for anything less would have meant a self-image as exploitative brutes. This insistence on the slaves' constituting part of the family and these expressions of belief in their loyalty lay at the heart of the master's world-view and...embraced little insincerity.[14]

Given this image of themselves, how then do these women organise their homes; what part do servants play in the domestic economy, and how are they treated from their employers' point of view?

The Organisation of the Home

The key recognition here, is that domestic servants are a deeply entrenched part of the White South African life style. All the employers in the sample employed a domestic servant, on either a full-time or part-time basis. In the widespread employment of domestic servants, contemporary White South African society resembles the Stuart period of English history where, as Laslett points out, "a quarter or a third of all the families in the country contained servants...and this meant that very humble people had them as well as the titled and the wealthy."[15]

Of course this changed, and by Victorian times the employment of domestic servants was the prerogative of the upper and middle classes. The large family, the large, over-furnished house, the entertainment of guests at lavish dinner paries and large functions,

> all of which were essential attributes of the institution of the Victorian middle class family, required the employment of domestic servants on a vast scale. By their number, dress and function they proclaimed in an outward and visible way, the degree of success in life that their employer had attained. [16]

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14. Genovese, 1975: 97.
15. Laslett, 1965: 12.
16. Burnett, 1977: 136.

While this may still be true of the larger urban centres in South Africa, in the Eastern Cape study most households employed only one domestic servant.[17] The predominant pattern here appears to be the 'maid of all work'. Most employers, 92 percent, said their servants did general domestic work, while only eight percent were employed in specialised roles such as washing, cooking or ironing.

Given the traditional connection between the employment of servants and the white "South African way of life", the employment of servants does not generally confer status on their employers. However, a considerable amount of labour-time goes into feeding the employer's family, and into the provision of services which may enable him or her to live in a style which indicates a high social position. Such services include waiting at table at elaborate dinner parties, and serving coffee to bridge guests at a late hour.

Mode of Recruitment and Length of Service

Servants are obtained in three main ways: recommendation by a friend of the employer: 32 percent of the employer sample obtained their present servant through this route; recommendation by the previous servant (14 percent); and through domestic servants coming to the employers' door and asking for work (18 percent).

Most employers had had the same domestic servants for several years. The length of employment of their current servant ranged from two months to 37 years, and included in addition to the servant with 37 years' service, one who had worked for the same employer for 32 years and another for 30 years. The average length of service with their present employer was seven years. One employer who had had her present servant for 13 years and her previous one for 49 years, pointed out that her servant's mother and two sisters had together served the family for just over 100 years.

Over a third of the employers, 38 percent, had dismissed their previous servant. One farmer's wife said, "My husband sacked the whole family." Other reasons were:

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17. Only nine employed two domestic servants; one employed three, and one employed four.

"She was playing up."

"She went off her head so I got rid of her." (This woman had worked for her employer for 40 years.)

"She was sacked for stealing."

"I sacked her when she got sour."

"I sacked her because she became a hypochrondiac." (After 12 years service.)

"She got spoilt. She was demanding more and more and doing less and less, so I got rid of her."

"I sacked her for cheekiness. I've had to sack many for this."

"She was sacked for not playing the game."

"I had to sack the last three because they got pregnant."

Only in 22 percent of the cases had the servant left the job of her own choice, for personal reasons.

"She did a bunk in the night the way they often do."

"She walked out. She said she didn't want to work on Sundays. She said she had to go to church and feed her own children. She didn't think about us."

"She died just after she left me after 50 years service."

Involvement of Employers in Domestic Work

The amount of domestic work actually done by the employers themselves varied. A small proportion, 20 percent, said they did no domestic work at all themselves, and 12 percent said they did "very little". In one case this seemed to involve only "tidying drawers". Another mentioned "baking cakes occasionally" and another: "I make our bed. I don't fancy letting them do it...they're too dirty." However, 44 percent said they enjoyed domestic work.

Involvement of Husbands in Domestic Work

Most of the women in the sample saw themselves as solely responsible for the organisation of the home. The involvement of their husbands in domestic organisation was often fairly minimal. Just over 60 percent of the married respondents said their husbands never helped with the domestic work. Only 19 percent said their husbands helped regularly, and 21 percent said their husbands helped occasionally. I had expected to find a considerable generational difference in the involvement

of men in domestic work, but this was not borne out by the research. Sixty-one percent of the married women said their husbands were very similar to their fathers in this respect. However, 30 percent said their husbands helped in the house more than their fathers had done. Nine percent said their husbands helped less.

This role differentiation is sometimes at variance with the women's own attitudes. The majority of the married women (62 percent) thought that men should help in the house; six percent thought that there was no general rule, that the degree men should be involved in domestic work depended entirely on the family situation; 32 percent thought this was definitely a woman's sphere and men should not help in the house at all. I often had the impression that the respondents had not thought about this question before, since their answers often involved a good deal of hesitation and uncertainty. It was also very apparent that the role of servants is a pivotal aspect of this question. Several commented,

> "Men should help in the house if there are no servants."
>
> "Men should help if there are no servants. On farms here we usually have lots of servants, so it's not necessary.

Other comments were:

> "Yes, occasionally he should cut himself a slice of bread or pull up a chair."
>
> "Men should help occasionally with little things."
>
> "No, men get under your feet in the kitchen."
>
> "Yes, he'll do unusual things like pour the tea out but he won't make it. He's never made tea in his life."
>
> "I don't know. We've never discussed it."
>
> "Yes, why should a man sit from 12 p.m. on Saturday until Monday morning when the wife can't sit down for a minute? I don't expect him to put on an apron though."
>
> "I don't know...my husband was the only son. He was never taught to help in the house."
>
> "No, men have got their own work to do."
>
> "Yes...I think so...younger people expect more of their husbands today."
>
> "No, men would get in the way."
>
> "Nice if they do, but we shouldn't expect it."

> "No, men have to cope with tension at work. They need to relax when they get home."
>
> "Why shouldn't men help with the housework? Some people think the man is a king in the household and treat him like a visitor. At least men should help with the heavy work."
>
> "No, I don't like a man to be a sissy."
>
> "It's changing now...in the past when we had umpteen servants men did nothing in the house. Now men should give you a hand sometimes if you have no maid."

The employment of domestic servants in many households clearly absolves men from any involvement in domestic chores at all, and lessens the burden on many White women.

Reasons for Employing Domestic Servants

The employers interviewed gave a great range of reasons for employing a domestic servant. Of two who said it was for "security reasons", one said, "I don't feel safe on my own during the day", and the other, "I'm on my own here so I have to have someone to sleep in." Others said,

> "So I can give my children all the attention they need."
>
> "It means I can go out. When I go out my husband is looked after. Otherwise I'd be completely tied down."
>
> "I work for Home Industries. I need help with making jams and cakes."
>
> "To give me more free time."
>
> "To give me more time to look after my children."
>
> "I couldn't manage without... we haven't got electricity."
>
> "To run the house and look after the children while I'm at work."
>
> "I hate housework, it's never finished."
>
> "It frees me to do things of more value like needlework and dressmaking."
>
> "It makes life easier."
>
> "For health reasons...I have diabetes and arthritis."
>
> "I teach and so she does everything. She gets the children up in the morning, gives them their breakfast, walks the youngest to nursery school, has our lunch ready for us when we return...everything really."
>
> "It frees me to work in the Advice Office and do other useful things in the community."

"Housework is monotonous...you don't achieve anything."

"I don't know...I couldn't imagine not having a servant."

"To help her out. She's got seven children."

"My husband doesn't like me to scrub the floors and do heavy work."

"I would prefer to be independent and do my own work. I only keep four because I feel sorry for them."

"I would prefer one servant who earned R40 a month. But they don't want that...they prefer to be part of a group." (Employer of three servants.)

"I have a vast home and four sons. I'd be a martyr to the house if I didn't have servants."

"I couldn't manage without."

Altogether, 30 percent said they could not manage to run their homes without a domestic servant. Clearly they have an acute awareness of their dependence on their domestic servant's labour. How, then, do these employers treat their domestic servants in terms of working hours, duties and remuneration?

Employers' Account of the Working Conditions of Domestic Servants

Although all the 225 households in the sample employed domestic servants, only 22 percent employed 'live-in' servants. The majority of employers said their servants started work early in the morning.

Table 23. Employers' Account of Hours of Starting Work of a Sample of 50 Domestic Servants

Starting time	Number of servants	Percentage
6 - 7 a.m.	25	50
7 - 8 a.m.	21	42
8 - 9 a.m.	2	4
9 - 10 a.m.	2	4

The hours at which they stop work for the day shows more variation.

Table 24. Employers' Account of Hours of Stopping Work of a Sample of 50 Domestic Servants

Stopping time	Number of servants	Percentage
12 p.m.	2	4
1 p.m.	1	2
2 p.m.	12	24
3 p.m.	8	16
4 p.m.	6	12
5 p.m.	11	22
6 p.m.	4	8
8 p.m.	5	10
9 p.m.	1	2

Just over half of the employers said their servants had some time off during the day, though one employer said this was only "for going to the toilet."

Table 25. Employers' Account of Rest Periods of a Sample of 50 Domestic Servants

Duration of rest period	Number of servants
Nil	23
½ hour or less	7
½ - 1 hour	12
1 - 2 hours	4
2 - 3 hours	3
3 - 4 hours	1

The last case in the table started work at 6 a.m. and went off around 9 p.m. six nights a week.

Over a quarter of the employers' servants, according to their account, worked less than a 40-hour week, and may thus be considered part-time workers. Their working week ranged from 39 to 3 hours. The full-time workers' week ranged from 42 to 84 working hours with an average of 57,9 working hours a week.

The majority of the employers of 'live-out' servants, 52 percent, did not know how long their employees spent travelling to and from work. Seven said their servants spent about half an hour; three said they spent between half to one hour, and three said one to two hours. Of the 39 employers in this category, 25 said their servants walked to and from work, and 14 said they travelled by bus.

Less than half the 36 employers of full-time servants (44 percent) gave their servant one day off each week; 22 percent said their servants got no day off; 11 percent said their servant got a half day off; 14 percent gave their servant one and a half days off; and eight per cent gave their servants two days off a week.

The great majority of employers required their domestic servants to work on public holidays. Only 12 percent said their servants do not have to work on public holidays.

In her Durban study, Preston-Whyte reported that "all employers acknowledged that their servants should have a holiday each year."[18] In the Eastern Cape study, the majority of the employers, 68 percent, said their servants were given an annual holiday. Yet the situation is ambiguous. As noted earlier, 12 employers said they took their servant with them to their holiday house on the coast. This they define as their 'holiday'. The servants, of course, have a different definition. In several other cases the servant had to come to work to water pot plants, air the house or feed the pets while her employer was away on holiday. This situation is similarly open to different definitions on the part of employers and servants. Because of a suspicion that a 'lie factor' may have been operating here, the employers' answers have not been included in the overall calculations.[19]

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18. Preston-Whyte, 1969: 108.

19. For this reason the domestic workers' answers were given separately in Chapter 2, while the employers' are given here. In addition, it is possible that employers were sometimes lying

According to the employers' responses, 16 gave their servants two weeks annual holiday; 11 gave three weeks; six gave one week; and one employer gave her servant six weeks holiday a year. Ninety-one per cent of the 34 employers who gave their servant an annual holiday said they paid them during this period.[20]

The general pattern seems to be to give the servant some time off on Christmas day. Twenty-six employers said their servants spent some of Christmas day with their own families; eight said it varied, but 16 said their servants spent none of Christmas day with their own families.

Wages

According to the employers, the average wage paid to full-time workers (who numbered 36 plus one woman who refused to answer this question) was was R24,62 a month. The average cash wage paid to full-time workers calculated from the domestic servants' responses was lower - R22,46.

Less than half (40 percent) of the employers decided to pay this amount themselves; 28 percent said their husbands decided, and 32 percent said that they and their husbands had decided together. Only in 10 percent of the sample had there been any discussion between the employer and the domestic worker over the starting wage. Sometimes this was of a surprising nature. For example, one employer who was asked "How was your starting wage arrived at?" replied

> "I asked her how much she wanted. She said R10 a month and I said that was too little." (Employer pays R13 a month.)

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about working hours; in five cases the servant was present later than the time at which the employer said she stopped work. For example, one served tea at 4.30 p.m. but was said to stop work at 2 p.m.; about uniforms: in three cases the employer said the servant was supplied with a uniform but was observed not wearing one; in addition to which the question on wages was often answered defensively: once the employer got up to close the door between the lounge and the dining room where the servant was working before answering.

20. See above, p.72 for the domestic workers' answers to this question.

Fifty-eight percent said their current wage was not their servant's starting wage; however, 42 percent said it was. In only 10 percent of the cases was this wage increased annually. The remaining 24 employers who had increased their servants' wages said they did so irregularly.

Payment in Kind

Many employers were somewhat shamefaced about the wages they paid and were eager to point out the amount they paid in kind. These payments were not as large or comprehensive as the researcher expected. In all they covered five aspects of the workers' needs:

(i) Food. All employers provided at least one meal a day. Both the quantity and quality of food given seem to vary a good deal. Six percent of the employers only provided breakfast, usually mealie meal porridge, or bread and jam with tea. Sixty-four percent provided lunch and breakfast, one provided lunch only, and 28 percent provided all meals. Lunch often consisted of mealie meal or samp, beans and other vegetables and, in a small proportion of cases, meat.

Eighteen percent gave both servant's rations and food from their own table, which was often, but not invariably, 'left-overs' that would otherwise have been thrown away. One employer commented:

> "I don't like to throw anything away so I give it to her rather."

Another said,

> "I give her what the dogs wouldn't like."

Thirty-eight percent gave their servants the same food as they ate themselves, and 44 percent gave servants' rations only. Forty percent said they gave their servants no meat at all. Eighteen percent said they gave their servants meat once a week; 12 percent gave 'servant's meat' daily; 28 percent gave their servants the same meat they eat themselves either daily or almost daily, and one gave 'servant's meat' three times a week.

Despite the fact that 40 percent of the employers gave their servants no meat at all, the great majority, 94 percent, consider that they provide their servants with a balanced diet. The juxtaposition of these two figures would be less surprising if employers provided

their servants with other sources of protein such as fish or eggs, but in no case was this done. Clearly, what the employers consider 'a balanced diet' for their servants is very different from what they would consider adequate for themselves. This double standard is a familiar theme in the literature on Blacks in South Africa generally. Two of the employers were remarkable for their candour in admitting that they did not provide their servants with a balanced diet, and another said she had not thought about it.

The majority, 96 percent, said their servants were satisfied with the food they received. But only 16 percent of the domestic workers interviewed said they were satisfied with the quantity and quality of the food they received. Most employers (78 percent) rationed the quantity of food given while others did not and simply trusted the servant to help herself to a reasonable amount. The majority of the 39 employers of 'live'out' servants (78 percent) allowed them to take food home. Though most employers, 72 percent, said they only provided sufficient food to feed the servant herself, the remainder said they provided enough to feed some of her family as well as herself. The majority of the employers, 62 percent, thought their servants did not ever take food without asking; 32 percent thought they sometimes did, and six per cent said they didn't know.

(ii) Clothing. Most of the employers (82 percent) said they provided their servants with a uniform, though this was sometimes only an apron. Seventy-two percent said they also provided their servant with other clothing, usually their own or their family's old clothing. Another twenty-eight percent either gave their servants no other clothing, or else sold their old clothing to them. Some comments:

> "It's better to charge them. Then they appreciate it more."
>
> "I never give them anything which I cannot use."
>
> "Yes, I used to give her overalls. But she said they were pinched off the washing line. I think she sold them to get money for drink."
>
> "Anything that's too old and shabby for me, she gets."
>
> "I give her old clothing rather than throw things away. I hate waste...but I must say I often cut things up for floor cloths."

(iii) Medicines. The majority of employers, 76 percent, said they provided medicines for their employees when they were ill. Some paid the fee for them to visit the clinic, and in a few cases the employers paid doctors' bills as well.

(iv) Children's schooling expenses. This is a major item of expense in most Black families' budgets. However, only four percent of the employers said they helped on a regular basis with their servants' children's schooling expenses. Eighty-eight percent said they did not, and eight percent said the question was not applicable as they were certain their servant did not have children attending school.

(v) Other resources. Some employers also provide access to other resources including the use of the telephone, the use of a radio and occasionally the privilege of watching television with the family, the use of the stove to cook for herself or her family, a room in the case of 'live-in' servants, and the use of the employer's facilities to do her own and her family's laundry. Employers seem sometimes to be quite unaware of the difficulty they impose upon their servants when the latter facility is denied. For instance, one Bathurst employer told me how her live-in servant did her washing in a washing machine, but the servant had to send her own washing home to her mother in Bathurst location. It is laundered in the weed-filled pond at the side of the road into the town. Some farm workers are given milk, 'damaged fruit' and the use of a plot to grow vegetables. Only in one case in the farm employers investigated were the workers allowed to graze a limited number of stock, but that meant that they lost a 'bonus'.

The picture that emerges from this sample is that payments in kind are of a far lower order than is generally believed. They certainly fail to take account of the fact that all the domestic servants in the sample had dependants, with an average of 5,5 dependants per worker.

Domestic workers have three other possible sources of a cash income besides their wages: overtime pay; tips from guests; and Christmas presents. In this sample the amounts paid were very small. Only 12 percent of the employers said they paid overtime for work done outside of normal hours; half said they did not pay overtime, and 38 per cent said the question was not applicable as their servants never

worked overtime. Twenty percent said they paid their servants extra if there were guests in the house; 62 percent said they did not - though it was often mentioned that they expected their guests to tip, and 18 percent said they never had guests to stay. The majority, 60 percent, said they gave extra money at Christmas. The gifts ranged from R30 to R1, with an average of R8,13. This is higher than the average calculated from the workers' responses: R7,63.

Over half (56 percent) of the entire sample said they gave Christmas presents other than cash. Christmas gifts commonly consist of either food or clothing or both. Of the 28 employers who gave Christmas presents, 19 gave food. This varied from a packet of sweets to a fairly substantial box of groceries. Four employers gave clothing, sometimes their own clothing, sometimes new articles; three gave both food and clothing; one gave her servant a dress length; one gave a towel, soap and a washcloth. Another gave "a petticoat and a towel". Sometimes the servant's uniform constituted her Christmas present.

Other sources of cash income are exceptional. Only one employer in the sample pays into a savings account for her servant and only one had any kind of pension scheme. One employer commented here,

> "I try to keep them young."

A small number of employers deduct from their servants' wages in the case of illness (three cases) and for breakages (one). When asked "Do you deduct breakages from her pay?" one employer replied with a good deal of self satisfaction:

> "No...I don't have any. I've worked out a way of coping with that. The first time she chips a plate or a cup I call her out to the stoep. I take that plate or cup and tell her to watch. I then drop it on the cement floor so it smashes. Then I deduct the cost from her pay. You only have to do it once."

There was a stunned silence from the interviewer who, for once, was at a loss and unable to offer the usual smiles (albeit strained) and nods of assent to whatever her informant was saying. The informant continued:

> "You have to do it. Otherwise they chip things on purpose because then they think you will give it to them. You only have to do it once."

When asked "What do you do when your servant does something wrong or badly?" most employers said they reprimanded her.

> "I give her hell."
>
> "I get annoyed...often it's because I'm upset about something else and I'm letting off steam."

The extent to which employers controlled their servants' work routines and contacts varied a good deal. Visitors to the domestic servant at her place of work seem generally to be discouraged. Sixty-four percent did not allow members of their servant's family to visit her at work, and 70 percent did not allow friends or other servants in the neighbourhood to visit her at work. But when asked "Do you think she ever feels lonely during the day?" all the employers said "No."

This data suggests that the white employers in the sample exploit their domestic servants. The employment of domestic servants frees them from a great many of the constraints of their domestic roles, and enables them to engage in a variety of social and occupational activities and interests outside the home. The importance of domestic servants in these women's lives is not reflected in the way they are treated, especially not in the wages they are paid, both in cash and in kind, and the long working hours and arduous duties expected of them. While the domestic servant's dependence on her employer is considerable, her employer is frequently in an extremely dependent situation herself. She is often the 'victim' of an increasingly authoritarian society in which all relations are hierarchically defined, and specifically of a set of attitudes and structures which maintain all women in a subordinate position. Even so, the relationship between black and white women within the institution of domestic service presents a challenge to any feminist notion of 'sisterhood'.

Control of and Satisfaction with their Domestic Role

These employers frequently have rather a nebulous power in the home. Although the majority of the currently married informants, 65 percent, know what their husbands' income is, a surprisingly high proportion of 35 percent said they did not know. When asking this question the interviewer stressed that she was not going to ask what that income was, but simply whether they had access to the information or not. Financial arrangements varied a good deal. Almost one third of the

currently married women among the employers said their husbands gave them a regular allowance; the same number said they had to ask their husbands for money whenever they wanted it for any reason. In four cases the wives themselves controlled the family income; in six cases there was a joint bank account from which the wife could draw freely, and five employers did not want to talk about financial arrangements. Some comments were,

> "He gives me pocket money if he's not short."
>
> "He gives me my housekeeping allowance in pineapples which I sell at Home Industries."
>
> "He never lets me look at his books. I've never been able to find out his income. I have to ask him for money." (A farmer's wife.)
>
> "I should have taken more interest in money from the beginning. I have never been able to find out his income. If I had, I could have organised my life better. As it is, he never lets me see his books." (A farmer's wife.)

Of the 11 currently married women who were employed outside the home, 73 percent said the money they earned was their own so far as their husbands were concerned, they could decide what to do with it. All these women said they spent the money they earned largely on the household. One commented,

> "What I earn has become the housekeeping money. We don't quarrel about it but now and again I would like something of my own."

The majority of the married women in the sample, 60 percent, said their husbands made all the financial decisions in their household. Twenty-eight percent said they shared the financial decision-making with their husbands, and 12 percent said they made most of the financial decisions themselves.

When asked, "If you wanted to increase your servant's wages what would you do?" almost half, 47 percent, of the married women said they would ask their husbands to do so, three said they would do so and inform their husbands, 16 said they would discuss it with their husbands and come to a joint decision, and three said they would do so out of the housekeeping money and not tell their husbands.

When asked, "Who decided to buy or rent this particular home?" 49 per cent of the presently married women said their husbands did so; in one case the wife decided herself, and in 49 percent of the cases the husband and wife decided together. In the vast majority of cases the title deed of the home is in the husband's name - 88 percent.

The really significant fact in all this is that when asked, "Overall, do you feel you have enough say in things to do with the household and family life?" the vast majority (91 percent) of the currently married women in the sample answered "Yes". Many of these women clearly define their role in purely domestic terms. For example,

> "The husband is the breadwinner. Therefore it's right that he makes all the decisions about money."
>
> "Yes, I'm not frightened of him."
>
> "Yes, my husband never interferes in anything to do with the housekeeping."
>
> "The household is mine...I think so. I'm never interfered with unless I don't mend his clothes or serve food he doesn't like. But everything I do is for him. Especially over the hunting season. I slave for two months so he can enjoy himself. But if I want to go to East London and buy plants at the nursery, it doesn't happen."

Another said, in a whisper,

> "I would like to have more say with money matters."

These responses have to be located in the context of the subjective meanings these women attach to sex, race and class. How do they see themselves as women, as Whites, and what do they feel about the difference in living conditions between Blacks and Whites generally in South Africa? Their attitudes reflect a cultural order that is intensely racist and sexist.

Race, Sex and Class Attitudes

Almost a quarter (24 percent) of the employers believe that women are generally inferior to men in their personal qualities. Seventy-five percent thought they were not inferior, and one did not know. This contrasts with the views of the women domestic servants in the sample, only 16 percent of whom thought that women are generally inferior to men in personal qualities. Some comments:

> "Men are better balanced. Women are too emotional and bitchy to each other."
>
> "A woman is a womb - her primary function is to be a good mother."
>
> "The man should be the head of the family."

One woman dropped her voice to a whisper, presumably so that her husband sitting in the next room could not overhear,

> "Between you and I we're equal mentally. Though we do have different viewpoints...we look at things differently."

Others said,

> "Women today seem to be doing a lot in the world. Whether its good or bad I can't say. But one thing I do know, men should always have the final say."
>
> "We lack something. We can't do the top jobs."
>
> "We're different. We've got our jobs and they've got theirs."
>
> "Yes, women are less intelligent."
>
> "No, we're equal, but a man should stay boss."
>
> "A woman shouldn't outdo a man."
>
> "We're equal but some women make a big mistake in trying to demonstrate how equal they are. Our role is as homemaker."
>
> "Women are superior. We work harder than men."
>
> "No, but a woman needs a man to look after her and protect her."
>
> "We're equal, but we must keep our femininity."
>
> "No, but the husband must always have the final say."
>
> "No, we're equal. I don't feel inferior to my husband, but he's the head of the family."
>
> "Yes, women are different. We can't cope in a man's world."
>
> "Yes, the man should be the ruler in the house. Women shouldn't wear the trousers."
>
> "Yes, our submission to men is God's law."

While five said they did not know whether women were treated fairly in South Africa, the majority (62 percent) were sure they were. Some said,

> "Yes, all the women I know are fairly happy."
>
> "I've been treated fairly...I've no complaints."

> "Yes, women are spoilt in this country."
>
> "Yes, women have an easy time here compared to overseas, because we all have servants." (An English immigrant.)
>
> "Yes, South African men are much better than English ones. They like to be with their friends in the pub until 8 or 9 p.m. It's lonely. Here the men come home earlier."

Those twenty-eight percent who thought women were not fairly treated mentioned a number of instances such as sexist attitudes, unequal pay, and lack of access to abortion:

> "I've heard that women don't get equal pay for the same work."
>
> "It's a woman's right to decide on abortion."
>
> "When you marry in community of property you lose control of your own affairs."
>
> "In this family we all know what he (husband) says is law."
>
> "Men think they are superior. We are treated as inferiors...as lesser people. We are pushed down and domineered. Men make all the decisions. Decisions should be shared...women should have more say. I've got a very dominating husband. Women are not listened to...their wants are completely ignored. I'm treated like an imbecile child and I resent it terribly."
>
> "A man would be paid double what I am paid."
>
> "Attitudes which put women down."
>
> "This is a strongly male chauvinist society. The predominant feeling is that women should stay at home while their husbands go off and play rugby all day and get drunk afterwards."

While the Women's Liberation Movement has received fairly wide coverage in recent years in magazines and newspapers these women often read, 14 percent had not heard of it. Only three in the entire sample gave a positive response to the Women's Liberation Movement, and one qualified her answer:

> "It's a good thing, I suppose, but I don't think too much about it."

Most thought it was "kinky", extremist, "they go too far", or the preserve of frustrated women. They said,

> "It's a lot of frustrated women who either haven't been able to get a man, or else they can't keep him."
>
> "A lot of nonsense."
>
> "I don't know much about it and I don't want to know any more."
>
> "All the women I know are already liberated."
>
> "I'm totally opposed to it. Women are castrating men. It's against God's will."
>
> "I'm not a Women's Libber...there are differences."
>
> "I don't believe in demonstrating and trying to prove you are equal."
>
> "I'm satisfied to carry on as I've always carried on."
>
> "Perhaps I'm old-fashioned but I don't agree with it."

One woman married to a wealthy farmer, who has a beautiful home, a regular clothing allowance, and frequent overseas trips, commented,

> "My life is too good for me to want to join them."

Others said,

> "A lot of frustrated women...fortunately I'm not one of them."
>
> "There's no need to shout so loud."
>
> "They're too aggressive."
>
> "There's no need for all this fuss. Women are equal in our house."
>
> "Pshaw...I don't like to see girls without bras."
>
> "They're going about things the wrong way. Women mustn't try and demonstrate that they are the same as men. They throw away their assets and influence by doing so."

Clearly the majority of these women accept their subordinate position in society. They are trapped in an ideology of domesticity which accepts as natural and inevitable the relations of male domination and female subordination.

The majority of these women are also 'domestic workers' in that they do some work in the home. Those who do not engage in paid employment outside the home are separated not only from the means of production, but also from the means of exchange. They are therefore dependent upon the redistribution of their husbands' wage which is conducted in private between them. Their position thus involves an economic dependence.

Bell and Newby suggest that this economic dependence promotes deference. They argue that "the relationship between husband and wife is a deferential one in that it is traditionally-legitimised and hierarchical. It appears both natural and immutable.[21] "Deference stabilizes the hierarchical nature of the husband-wife relationship" which "is embedded in a system of power."[22] This power is moral and physical as well as economic. Thus both domestic servants and their employers are in a dependent situation, and the employers are themselves caught up in a different dimension of 'the deferential dialectic'. The difference between paid and unpaid domestic work is reflected in the differing consciousness of the two types of domestic workers. The paid domestic worker is dependent on her employer but does not accept the legitimacy of her own subordination in the social order, she is not a deferential worker. The unpaid domestic worker, on the other hand, is dependent on her husband, but usually accepts the legitimacy of her own subordination and is a deferential wife.

Most of these employers accept the subordinate role of Blacks in South African society. Their attitudes towards their domestic servants is only comprehensible in terms of a general racial inferiorization. The majority, 68 percent, believed that Blacks are generally inferior to Whites in their personal qualities; 30 percent thought they were not inferior, and one said she did not know. Some commented:

> "They haven't the same standards as us."
>
> "Yes, they're inferior in every way."
>
> "I only know farm natives. They are all stupid and irresponsible. In short, very raw."
>
> "The standards of farm natives are so low. They don't seem to want to improve...they're most unreliable and they're becoming worse. The old faithfuls are dying out. The younger ones have no respect for anyone."
>
> "You have to battle to teach them...they slide back again after three days."

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21. C. Bell and H. Newby, 'Husbands and wives: the dynamics of the deferential dialectic', pp.152-168, in D.L. Barker and S. Allen, Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage (London: Longmans, 1976), p.164.

22. Ibid.

"It's not a fair question...they haven't progressed far enough for us to compare."

"If they're away from work for two or three weeks they don't worry...they have no sense of responsibility."

"They are very mentally inferior. They don't think like us...you only get the odd one with a bit of intelligence."

"They need guidance all the time."

"They do such stupid things...but I suppose some are coming up quite nicely."

"Yes, even the educated ones are different to us."

"Yes, they're stupid and irresponsible."

"Yes, they've just come out of the trees. (laughs) I mean, they are at a lower stage in the evolutionary ladder."

"Blacks have a different attitude to life. They don't believe in hard work."

"They are potentially equal, but it will take two to three generations."

"A native is a funny thing...they're lazy. They don't want to do extra work...so they sometimes pretend to be stupid."

"They're different...they love running around."

"On the whole they're stupid...raw. They've got no brains."

"No, but they need a lot of help. They don't understand about modern life."

"They've got a long way to go in evolutionary terms. Putting them in European clothes doesn't make them civilized."

"No, but we've got thousands of years of civilization behind us which Blacks haven't got."

"It's a stupid question. You can't compare whites and natives. We have centuries of education and decent home living behind us."

"They're not inferior but they're not equal to us."

"I don't look down on them. They can't help being what they are."

"No, they're not inferior but the outside world is causing trouble for us."

"Yes, I feel very sorry for them most of the time. They don't have the opportunities in life to better themselves."

"They're Black and we're White...you can't compare us."

"They do terrible things but I don't hate Blacks... they are also God's creatures."

> "I treat them fairly but I have my reserves. I can't get myself to want to share a table or anything else with them."
>
> "No, if only they all kept themselves clean. We can't be expected to sit in a bioscope (cinema) with such smelly people."
>
> "Yes, they're irresponsible...they don't think of the future. Drunkenness among the men is the main trouble. They spend R4 000 on drink in this location every week-end. Then the women and children don't get enough to eat. Many women abandon their babies. At least one a month is found in the rubbish bins at Kingswood College. They throw them away because they can't feed them."

Although the majority of these women believe that Blacks are inferior to Whites in personal qualities, only 48 percent think that Blacks are treated fairly in South Africa. Forty-four percent think they are not treated fairly and eight percent said they did not know. Several expressed their disquiet at discussing this topic:

> "We're getting into deep water now."
>
> "I hope I'm not going to have the Special Branch after me (nervous laughter) but no...the list of their grievances is endless."

Job reservation, low wages, lack of political rights, unfair taxation, inferior education, lack of opportunities generally, poor housing, restrictions on ownership and undignified treatment, were cited as instances of their unfair treatment. Others said,

> "Yes, but they must work for what they get. The more they get the more they sit and wait for it. I don't mind seeing a well-dressed, well-educated native - one who's clean and well behaved."
>
> "Yes, I've always treated my servants well." (The equation of Blacks and servants in this employer's mind is obvious.)
>
> "They're treated fairly."
>
> "We must understand that they're different from us. They look at things in a different way."
>
> "They should have more to say in the running of affairs."
>
> "The Group Areas Act is bad. My daughter couldn't take her farm girl up to the Transvaal with her to look after her children."
>
> "No, they don't get equal pay for equal work."
>
> "They lack political rights."

"No, they're not fairly taxed...proportionately they pay more than Whites."

"Yes, take education. Few of them make it to Matric. ...but you have to spend more on Matric than on Standard I pupils."

"Yes, their schools look inferior but its the parents' fault. Their parents don't get behind them and push."

"Yes, the government does a lot for the natives."

"I don't know how they can complain...it's all nonsense."

"I don't know."

"I've never thought they were treated too badly."

"They can't own anything...not their houses or any land."

"I don't know anyone who treats Blacks unfairly."

"No, why must they pay for school books?"

"They're not given sufficient opportunity in any field."

"Yes, they're well treated...especially compared to other African states."

"No, what about job reservation?"

"No, people treat them like animals."

"No, not always. I know I treat mine well but I have heard of people just walking up to a native and slapping or kicking him for no reason."

"Yes, but they're getting spoilt...they want everything now."

"No, not always...they are pushed under and not given a fair deal in many ways. They live in hovels...but until they lift themselves up we can't love them. There's so much disease and ugliness..."

A surprising number (17) had never heard of the Black Consiousness movement. One commented, "You mean the Black Sash?" This attitude is surprising in view of the fact that during the period in which these interviews took place almost all the leaders of this movement were being detained without trial in Grahamstown prison. There had been several items in the local newspapers about them. None of these women made a positive comment about the Black Consciousness movement. Some were:

"Horrible...these people are coming up too fast and expecting too much."

"It's a great pity."

"Inevitable, it had to come...there must be more of it percolating than we realise."

Most were reluctant to discuss the topic and were uninterested in it.

When these women were asked what they felt about the difference in living conditions between Blacks and Whites generally in South Africa, 24 expressed no disquiet. Of these 17 specifically expressed no disquiet, four actually felt anxious to see Black living conditions improving, and thus the gap between Black and White living conditions closing, and three denied the existence of a great difference in living conditions. On the other hand, 26 of the employers expressed disquiet and many felt the difference was wrong or sad. A response which appeared in many different forms centred on the notion that "They have different needs to us",

> "They don't think and feel like we do."
>
> "There's a difference but it doesn't hurt them. They are used to it. They wouldn't know what to do with our standards...but they're improving all the time. They never used to wear bloomers for instance. A pair of bloomers was not heard of in this district."
>
> "You can't compare natives and us."
>
> "We can't compare town and farm natives. Farm natives wouldn't like to live as we do. They would hate to sit at a table to eat."
>
> "They don't think like we do."

Some comments blamed Blacks for their poor living conditions:

> "They would make pigstyes of nice houses."
>
> "Many are desperately poor here. But they could improve their own living standards by growing their own vegetables."
>
> "They all need bathrooms." (laughter)
>
> "Those who live in town and earn these fantastic salaries don't live any better. They spend it all on their backs and on liquor."
>
> "The trouble is that today natives try to be like white people...then they get into debt and are full of complaints. But it's all their own fault."
>
> "They don't know how to use their money. My gardener spends all his wages on drink."
>
> "The better type natives should improve their living conditions. Others you can't help...they will always live in hovels."
>
> "They should improve matters themselves. If you're not happy at home how can you be happy at work?"
>
> "The over-breeding is the problem."

"Their living conditions are very bad. The trouble is they can't save. They spend their money as they get it."

"They spend their money badly. They buy flashy furniture and butter rather than margarine."

Other comments were:

"Most of them are happy as they are."

"Those who are ready for it are moving forward."

"I feel a bit sorry for them sometimes."

"They shouldn't be held back...I would dearly like to see the difference in living conditions narrowed."

"It must be terrible for them to be in such a low state."

"Education in the younger ones is making them discontented...maybe their education is indoctrination."

"I've recently come here from Britain and the difference is striking. It makes me very uncomfortable."

"It makes me feel sick with guilt."

"Sometimes I think we have too much...especially when it rains. If they had better housing it would help."

"Some natives and coloureds have a better home than I have."

"Our locations are bad, but compared to the Far East, their houses are palatial."

"It's bad but we can do nothing."

"They've got their place and we've got ours...the difference in living conditions doesn't really worry me."

"There's a great difference but I can see no way of solving this problem."

"Some Blacks live well...better than us even. They have big cars and expensive clothing."

"I could be put in jail for saying this, but I'd like to see a more open society where there are fewer controls and restrictions."

"Some Blacks live in expensive houses."

"Bad...they should have electricity and tapped water."

"I try to push it to the back of my mind."

"They're coming close to living like us. They're getting cheeky, they want to wear fancy clothes and they don't take their hats off when they speak to you any more."

Only 16 percent said they felt strongly about the difference between Black and White living conditions. One of these said she would "commit suicide" if she had to change places with her servant. However, the majority, 68 percent, said they expect the difference in living conditions between Blacks and Whites generally in South Africa to change. Expectations as to when this change would come about varied a good deal. Only six percent thought change would come about in their own lifetime, eight percent thought it would come about in their children's lifetime, 54 percent thought that although change was inevitable some time, it was impossible to predict when, and 32 percent said they did not know or felt confused on this issue. While most of these women, 66 percent, expressed apprehension about the future, 34 percent expressed none, and nine of these thought no change was likely to occur in the future. Some said:

> "I'm worried about the future...servants make bad masters."
>
> "I'm very pessimistic about the future. We've missed the opportunity to have peaceful change. This country could have been utopia...violent change is not going to be good for Black or White."
>
> "I'm an optimist by nature...I live each day as it comes."
>
> "I'm not afraid for the future, but my husband is. We are on the frontier here...he wants me to join the Pistol Club."
>
> "I'm scared we'll be ruled by natives."
>
> "I'm petrified for my children. I wish the world would leave us alone...we're being pushed too fast."
>
> "I'm worried about the future...we don't know what's going to happen to these people."
>
> "Many people are terrified. The cards seem to be stacked against us...all this military build up."
>
> "Change is inevitable...but I'm very apprehensive about the future if it involves Black rule. Servants will turn on us."
>
> "South Africa will go the same way as Rhodesia."
>
> "The natives are getting greedy."
>
> "Every woman with children is worried about the future. They're pushing down on us from the north."
>
> "I feel confused mainly...all through history people have had nasty situations to cope with and they've survived."
>
> "I'm worried about the future for my children because of the Bantu problem. The Bantu are not satisfied... they want more and more."

> "I'm afraid for my sons. The government is power crazy. It will push the Blacks into revolt."
>
> "The present situation can't go on but I try not to think about it too much."
>
> "The future will work itself out."
>
> "Sometimes I feel desperate. I'm afraid that changes will come too late and that we Whites won't be able to live in this country any more."
>
> "They're dangerous now...the trouble is their having so many children."
>
> "Sometimes I worry...in the old days there wasn't the hatred there is today."
>
> "I'm apprehensive...I would hate to have to work for a Black."
>
> "We're sitting on a powder keg...the whole thing will blow up in our faces."

This last comment illustrates something which struck me very forcibly, that these women are living with fear. The affluence and outward complacency of their lives contrasts very sharply with this deep-seated sense of strain, tension and insecurity. This fear could be illustrated in countless ways. Many homes I visited had elaborate security precautions: burglar bars, security gates, alarm systems and guard dogs. During the period of field work, the crime rate and 'the Bantu problem' were common topics of conversation outside academic circles. In Grahamstown people were warned by the Commandant of Police not to open their doors to people begging for bread.[23] In Port Alfred the local paper advised that children should be instructed in the use of fire-arms.[24] The purchase of firearms has soared since 1976 and many people talk about emigration. In psychological terms this is a 'siege society'. In political terms South Africa is increasingly becoming a 'garrison state',[25] and in this atmosphere Black servants may come to

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23. Grocott's Daily Mail, 7.7.1978.

24. The Kowie Announcer, December, 1978.

25. A garrison state is one in which the institutions and the agents who hold military, economic and political power have become closely interdependent, and the boundaries between military and civilian spheres are increasingly loose and amorphous. The movement towards a garrison state is evidenced by, for example, a defence budget which increased to over R2 000 million in 1980; an increasing call-up for military duty, nearly 60 000 civilians in 1977; the increasing militarisation of schools in

be viewed with increasing suspicion.

Mphahlele has focused on this image of 'the menacing servants'. In a penetrating discussion of the white man's image of the 'non-white' in fiction, he shows that in the work of both Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing servants are viewed as subtly and ironically menacing. Both writers

> in their image of the African - the servant in particular - bring out clearly this one fact: that the whites in Africa live in fat feudal comfort which the servant class affords them. And even although they do not pay these workers well, the whites lose heavily: their humaneness. A kind of moral corrosion has set in in this privileged society. And what is more, they are never sure, by virtue of this master-servant relationship, what goes on in the mind of this seeming Black automaton. But it is a menacing automaton. [26]

This notion of 'menace' is reminiscent of the relations between Blacks and Whites in this area one hundred and fifty years ago.

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cadet corps; increasing interest in civil defence, there are now over 700 civil defence organisations; the increase in Defence Bond sales; increased sales of war games and toys, and so on. See The Financial Mail, 23.6.1978.

26. Mphahlele, 1962: 145.

PART II: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

CHAPTER 6

DOMESTIC SERVICE AS A REFLECTION OF CHANGING PATTERNS OF DOMINATION

> "The Bible and spade for the boy; the Bible, broom and needle for the girl; the female must make clothes and cook, the male must bring in the money and food." [1]

This chapter attempts to draw on historical insights in order to explain social change.[2] It suggests that the development of domestic service as a social institution in South Africa reflects changing patterns of domination. Domestic service thus has a special significance - as Raphael Samuel has written,

> No subject in history is intrinsically 'micro' or 'macro', mainstream or marginal, big or small. Everything depends on the way it is studied. The local study may be myopic, but then it is possible to hold eternity in a grain of sand. [3]

Domestic service as a social institution shows common characteristics within both contemporary White South African society and nineteenth century Britain. In Britain domestic service was fundamentally a form of class subjection. Marx observed that the vast increase in the numbers of domestic servants, of whom there were well over a million in 1861, showed clearly the growing divergence between the classes, with wealth and luxury concentrated at one extreme, poverty and

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1. Letter from Edward Brenton praising the emigration of boys and girls from England to the Cape. Graham's Town Journal, 11.4.1833.

2. It draws on both direct traces of historical events (records and statistics) and the indirect traces found in contemporary narrative documents, such as newspapers, settler diaries, letters and notebooks. Many of these are unpublished. See Chapter 1, Part 2, 'Events and their Traces', pp.87-106 in G.J. Renier, History : its purpose and method (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950).

3. R. Samuel (ed.), Village Life and Labour (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1975), History Workshop Series. General Editor's Introduction: people's history, p.xix.

servitude at the other.[4] The survival of the institution shows how firmly the relations of class domination were established.

Changes in domestic service as an institution partly reflected changes in class relationships. Writing in 1879 Herbert Spencer suggested that the increasing independence of servants implied "an elevation of the large regulated classes."[5] The disappearance of domestic servants in the middle years of the twentieth century reflected the increased power of the working class.[6] Professor Bottomore has suggested that "this elimination of the class of domestic servants" in Britain "is one of the greatest gains which the working class has made in the twentieth century", because it is "a particularly onerous form of subjection to another class."[7]

While domestic service in Britain reached its peak in the mid-nineteenth century and subsequently declined, as the power of the working class increased, domestic service in South Africa is at present after agriculture the largest single occupational category of Black women. Viewed over the last two hundred years of South African history it is a kaleidoscopic institution. It has involved slaves, San, Khoikhoi, 'Coloureds', Indians, Europeans and African men as well as women. Its development reflects changing patterns of both racial and sexual domination. This chapter attempts to describe the process whereby domestic service was transformed into a predominantly Black, female institution. It is suggested that domestic service involved a level of exploitation; that because of the low wages and poor working conditions it involved, Whites escaped from it as Blacks were increasingly coerced into it.

Evidence to support this argument is presented in three main sections:

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4. K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I. Quoted by T.B. Bottomore, Classes in Modern Society (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1966), p.36.

5. H. Spencer, The Study of Sociology (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co.Ltd., 1879. Second edition, 1908), p.255.

6. Clearly the spread of labour-saving devices, and a diversity of employment opportunities were also important here.

7. Bottomore, 1966: 36.

(1) The period of initial contact between Dutch settlers and the indigenous population in the Eastern Cape 1770-1820.

(2) The period of transition in which domestic service included a significant number of Europeans, Khoikhoi and slaves.

(3) The initial incorporation of African women into the colonial economy, through the institution of domestic service. The main factors propelling them into domestic work were direct coercion, economic compulsion, and extra-economic compulsion. By 1890 domestic service had been transformed into a predominantly Black, female institution. It is suggested that a pattern of 'ultra-exploitation' marks these early relationships, that has continued until the present.

1. The Period of Initial Contact : 1770-1820

Within South Africa the 'Zuurveld' or 'Sour Grass Plains', as it was called, is essentially colonial country.[8] Xhosa people had lived and farmed there for at least one hundred years before regular relations with white settlers began in the eighteenth century. By 1778 there was common occupation of the Zuurveld, involving both co-operation in trading and employment and periodic conflict between the Dutch settlers and the Xhosa.

Dutch farmers with Xhosa servants are reported as early as 1777. Xhosa women were employed as domestic and agricultural servants,[9] usually serving for a year at a time, but frequently remaining longer and, after a home visit, returning to the same employer. They "were generally paid for their services in beads, brassware and brass plates, and sometimes in articles of clothing."[10] Mrs Gardner reported that Xhosa servants were "generally trustworthy and faithful to their employers", especially "the women [who] were disposed to work very hard from being accustomed to it."[11] Similarly, Mrs Maretz maintained that

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8. Dr I. Mayer has described it as "colonial country par excellence." Mayer, 1979: 2.

9. Mrs Jane Gardner (statement of 13.1.1825), Parliamentary Papers, 1835, XXXIX (50), p.174.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

the women were "very laborious", and overall the Dutch farmers "derived great advantage from their service."[12] The Dutch appeared "such rich people" that the Xhosa were glad to work for them.[13]

Peires suggests that in this eighteenth century pattern, "we see the beginnings of a permanent class of wage labourers."[14] It is significant that women as domestic and agricultural workers were part of this class from the earliest times. It is also clear that these labourers were not always employed on terms of fair exchange. The Xhosa

> at first gave their cattle and labour without knowing its value; but a little experience having opened their eyes on these points, altercations between them and the farmers were a necessary consequence. [15]

Similarly Maynier asserted that the wars between the Dutch settlers and the Xhosa were caused by "the improper treatment" of the Xhosa when in Boer employment.[16] Successive governments, therefore, tried to prohibit the employment of Xhosa, but this had little effect until 1812 when all Xhosa were cleared from the Zuurveld.

There is evidence that these labour relations sometimes involved duress, including the kidnapping of Xhosa children.[17] At the May 1803 meeting between the Governor, General Janssens and the Xhosa chiefs, the latter asked that "all Caffre children which have fallen into the

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12. Statement of Mrs Maretz, 13.3.1835. PP, 1835, XXXIX (50), p.174.
13. H. Lichtenstein, Travels in Southern Africa. Reprint by Anne Plumtre (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1928), Vol. I, p.386.
14. J.B. Peires, 'A History of the Xhosa, c 1700-1835'. Unpublished M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1976, p.170.
15. Collins, in D. Moodie, The Record or a series of official papers relative to the condition and treatment of the Native Tribes of South Africa (Cape Town: Balkema, MDCCCCIX), Part V. Journal of a Tour to the North-Eastern Boundary, the Orange River and the Storm Mountains, by Colonel Collins in 1809. p.10.
16. Maynier, 1794. Reported by Collins, in Moodie, p.56.
17. Peires, 1976: 170.

hands of the colonists shall be given up."[18] This suggests that the capture of Xhosa children had "already become common practice."[19] Peires quotes the case of a boy, a member of Ndlambe's tribe, who "at an early age...was captured by Dutch farmers during one of the numerous incursions they were at that time making among the tribes with the object of recovering stolen cattle."[20] There is no reason to suppose that only Xhosa boys were abducted in this way. From the north there is the case of

> Mrs Rachel Malele who died at the age of 112 years...a daughter of Chief Malebogo, whose country is 70 miles north of Pietersburg. She was taken a slave during a war between her people and the Dutch. [21]

Maynier, appointed Landdrost of Graaff Reinet in 1792, had been ordered to encourage the taking of Xhosa prisoners "who were to be either distributed among the Boers as servants or to be sent to the slave lodge in Cape Town." He told the Commissioners of Enquiry that "a considerable number of prisoners, men, women and children had been taken by the [1793] commando." But as he feared the Boer women would receive similar treatment from the Xhosas he set them free, to the Boers' displeasure.[22]

In addition it is clear that the employment of San women and men involved various levels of coercion. San women and children were captured by both Xhosa and Dutch farmers who wanted servants.[23] San adults

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18. Lichtenstein, 1928: 385.

19. M. Donaldson, 'The Council of Advice at the Cape of Good Hope 1825-1834. A study in colonial government.' Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Rhodes University, 1974, p.341.

20. L. Fynn, The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn (eds. J. Stuart and D. Malcolm. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1950), p.180. Quoted by Peires, 1976: 101.

21. T. Skota, African Yearly Register (Johannesburg: R.L. Esson, 1931), p.39.

22. G.M. Theal, Records of the Cape Colony (Government of the Cape Colony 1897-1904), Vol. XXV, pp.386-7.

23. V. Forbes (ed.), G. Thompson, Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1968), Part II, p.7. After the 1792 war "captive women and children were distributed among the farmers.... This was the normal condition of things throughout the district of Graaff-Reinet" which then included the Zuurveld. G. Theal, History of S.A. under the administration of the D.E.I. Co., II, p.220. Also see T. Pringle, Narrative of a Residence in South Africa, pp.238-9.

sometimes 'apprenticed' their children to Dutch farmers when they were "in a famished state."[24] At any rate the services of San were "readily procurable in return for food and an occasional blanket."[25]

Similarly, the Khoikhoi were caught in the middle between the Xhosa and the colonists. They had "much to suffer from the Caffres", therefore they were eager to hire themselves to the colonists as their "herdsmen and house servants."[26] However, Stuurman later told the Governor of the "gross ill-treatment which he and his people had suffered from the Dutch colonists."[27]

The majority of servants, both agricultural and domestic, employed by the Dutch stock farmers, were Khoikhoi. By 1809 most of the Khoikhoi were in the colonists' service, having lost access to the land they had enjoyed as nomads.[28] According to one source, on average thirteen Khoikhoi were employed in each household.[29]

> The children of the family were handed over at a tender age to the care of the female domestics. These dependants both male and female, though not slaves, could hardly be described as free agents. Their wages were paid, not in money, but in kind - they were fed, they were given cast-off clothing or received payment in livestock for the year's service. They were almost completely at the mercy of the farmer for whom they worked, since if he withheld their wages they had no means of enforcing payment, if they were ill-treated they had no means of securing redress, if they left his service, they were treated as runaways. [30]

Their wages were meagre, "An ox, or a couple of cows, or a dozen sheep

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24. Evidence of Mrs Maretz. Ibid., p.175.

25. A. Hattersley, An Illustrated Social History of South Africa (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1969), p.104.

26. Stuurman to General Janssens. Reported in Lichtenstein, 1928: 304.

27. Ibid.

28. J.S. Marais, The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937 (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1968), p.121.

29. J. Barrow, Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 2 vols., 1806), Vol. 2, p. 83 and p.120.

30. I.D. MacCrone, Race Attitudes in South Africa (Oxford: O.U.P., 1937), p.113.

worth 40 or 50 shillings, are the usual wages of a whole year."[31] Several contemporary sources assert that the Khoikhoi servants were more dependent and pitiable than slaves "for whose support even when old, crippled, and incapable of service, their masters were obliged to provide."[32] They were a 'tied' labour force without any of the protection that the obligations of ownership provided.[33]

While some Khoikhoi servants may have been well treated by their Dutch employers, there is clear evidence that there were "flagrant abuses."[34] Barrow writes of the "barbarous treatment of the boors towards the Hottentots in their service", and describes a Khoikhoi woman found badly beaten near Algoa Bay.[35] At least eight of the Europeans charged during the 'Black Circuit' were convicted of crimes of violence against servants, several of them Khoikhoi.[36] In one case,

> ten witnesses gave evidence that a Hottentot servant girl, aged fourteen and a half had been stripped, laid on the kitchen floor, held there and whipped until the blood ran. Her offence was taking a bowl of victuals before it was given to her. [37]

Clearly, the employment of Khoikhoi, San and slaves was widespread

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31. Barrow, 1806: 97. According to one of Pringle's informants, "their wages were generally a few strings of glass beads in the year." Pringle, 1835: 250-251.

32. Report of the First Circuit Commissioners, Records, Vol. III, p.301, quoted by W.M. Macmillan, The Cape Colour Question: a historical survey (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1927), p.161. Pringle said they were treated "more like brute beasts than human beings." Pringle, 1835: 250-251. Lichtenstein believed that the situation of the slaves "is happier than that of the servants hired from among the people of the country." Lichtenstein, 1812: 316.

33. However, Marais emphasises that the labour laws of 1809-19 marked a distinct advance in the status of the Hottentots. "After 1809 Hottentot servants were no longer to be subject to the mere caprice of their masters." Marais, 1968: 121.

34. Macmillan, 1927: 90.

35. Barrow, 1806: Vol. I, pp.396 and 401.

36. Macmillan in The Cambridge History of the British Empire (Cambridge University Press, 1929 -), Vol. II, p.285.

37. E.W. Smith, The Blessed Missionaries (Cape Town: O.U.P., 1950), p.48; G. Cory, The Rise of South Africa (Cape Town: Struik, 1965), Vol. I, pp.215-216. Several cases alleged the ill-treatment of female slaves. See Cory, Vol. I, Chapter VII, pp.212-217.

among the Dutch colonists and they did much of the household work. According to Barrow, Boer women led a life of "the most listless inactivity."[38] This fits the description given by Montgomery of the Boer and his wife "seated comfortably with a young slave girl fanning them with ostrich feathers."[39] Or Teenstra's comment that

> the farmer's beautifully dressed daughters attended to nothing, even having their children suckled by the female slaves. [40]

This picture could not have been entirely accurate in respect of the Dutch households in the Eastern frontier districts, where they lived in difficult and dangerous conditions. The Zuurveld was disputed territory. Dutch stock farmers living there had cattle stolen and servants murdered. The Governor informed the Colonial Secretary in 1817 that, of the 105 Boer families who had settled in the Zuurveld during the last 18 months, 90 were forced to forsake their land on account of Xhosa depredations.[41]

Thus the 1820 Settlers were brought into a critical situation. By the time they arrived two crucial themes had already been established in South African history: economic relations involving co-operation, labour exploitation, coercion and conflict between the colonists and the indigenous peoples; and successive government attempts to prohibit those relations, which finally involved the indigenous peoples being dispossessed of their land. This was the context to which the 1820 Settlers came.

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38. Certainly Barrow was a biased observer. His antagonism to the Dutch colonists generally is intense. They are "an inhuman and unfeeling peasantry." Barrow, 1806: Vol. I, p.31.

39. Quoted by G.B. Dickason, Irish Settlers to the Cape; A history of the Clanwilliam 1820 Settlers from Cork harbour (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1973), p.45.

40. Teenstra, 1825. Quoted by Hattersley, 1969: 104.

41. I. Edwards, The 1820 Settlers in South Africa. A study in British Colonial Policy (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1934), p.29.

2. The Period of Transition 1820-1890

Emigration from Britain to the Cape

The 1820 Settlers were the colonial solution to the frontier problem. They were pawns in the colonial design; duped pawns in that they were ignorant of the defensive role that the Colonial Office intended them to play in securing the Eastern Frontier.[42] However, emigration was both a political and a personal solution to the poverty, unemployment and distress in Britain at the time.

The five thousand settlers who came out in 1820 were mostly drawn from the lower classes of British society. A small number was drawn from the upper middle classes. There were ten parties in which the capital for the government deposits was put up by the head of the party, who then bound his labourers to his service by acts of indenture. The majority of the parties, however, were 'independent' which meant that each settler paid his own deposit and that of his wife and family.[43] Some settlers brought their own domestic servants out with them and for the next 50 years domestic service included a significant number of Europeans.[44]

It was during the 1840s that the emigration of domestic workers from Britain was most popular. The shortage of labour and assisted immigration schemes to the Cape resulted in an influx of 14 000 immigrants,[45]

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42. However, Maxwell suggests that among the 90 000 applications received by the Colonial Office were "men who were prepared to move from the fire to the frying pan." W.A. Maxwell, Reconsiderations, 1970, First Dugmore Lecture (Grahamstown: 1820 Settlers' Monument Foundation, 1971), p.7.

43. Edwards, 1934: 56.

44. e.g. Parker, McCleland, Stubbs, Pigot, Philipps. There is a problem of reliability here in the falsification of embarkation lists. There could have been several instances of single women domestic servants being entered as the wife of a male settler in order to avoid paying the extra deposit for a single woman. For example, Parker did this twice: Elizabeth Coyle, governess, had been entered in Parker's embarkation list as a Mrs Taylor, the wife of John Taylor, a bachelor clerk, to avoid paying the extra deposit for a single woman, Bridget Murphy, Parker's domestic servant, was entered as the wife of Kavanought. Dickason, 1973: 37.

45. N.G. Garson, 'English-speaking South Africans and the British Connection 1820-1961', pp.17-41, in A. de Villiers (ed.),

many of whom were domestic servants.[46] For example, the first immigrant ship included four male and 13 female domestic servants, this being the second largest occupational category after agricultural labourers.[47] The immigrant ship 'Eclipse' included 42 single women, all of whom gave domestic service as their occupations.[48] The 'Tory' included 24 single women, 15 of whom were domestic servants, and so on.[49]

In the Cape there was a large demand for European domestic as well as agricultural labour. The regulations for the selection of emigrants stated:

> The emigrants to the Cape must be chiefly agricultural labourers, shepherds, herdsmen and female domestic and farm servants. [50]

As it turned out, for many emigration was the first stage of a route of escape from domestic service. It is important to appreciate why this was so.

All the British immigrants to South Africa in the nineteenth century were accustomed to a society which was hierarchically organised along class lines in which domestic service was a familiar social institution.[51] Throughout the nineteenth century domestic service constituted the largest single source of employment for British women.[52]

English-speaking South Africa Today: proceedings of the national conference (Cape Town: O.U.P., 1976), p.18.

46. Hattersley, 1969: 88.

47. Graham's Town Journal, 7.2.1846.

48. GTJ, 8.12.1849.

49. GTJ, 29.9.1849. The others listed occupations such as milliner, farm servant, straw bonnet maker and dress maker.

50. Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette of 9.8.1849.

51. "The practice of employing female domestic servants extended far down the social and economic scale." L. Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), p.28. See also Dorothy George, London Life in the Eighteenth Century (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1925), pp.112-113.

52. The Census of 1851 (the first attempt to count occupations in any detail) gave a total of 905 000 women in domestic service, not including 145 000 washerwomen and 55 000 charwomen as well as 134 000 men, giving a total of 848 251. Thus, one in four of all females in employment worked in full-time domestic service

Yet it is a largely unknown occupation. No Royal Commission investigated it; no trade union activity publicised it. Clapham wondered why

> A government which inquired repeatedly and in detail into the labour of women and girls in factories and mines, and agricultural gangs and workshops; into the conditions of handloom-weavers, nailers and framework knitters, and of the navvies...did not collect any facts about the servant girls. The chief reason no doubt, was that the very idea of making such a tiresome and almost indecently intrusive inquiry never crossed the governing mind. Inquiry up the backstairs or into the maid's attic! Not the most prurient outside reformer had even suggested it. [53]

Kitteringham suggests that inquiry into this area of female employment "would have been viewed as an attack and questioning of the accepted and expected pattern of social and sexual differences (inequalities) that were inherent to that society and time, and upon which the entire social order was based."[54] Nevertheless, it is possible to sketch certain characteristics of domestic service as a social institution in nineteenth-century Britain which are relevant firstly, to understand the emigration of domestic servants to the Cape (as well as to Canada, Australia and the U.S.A.), which gave a European content to the South African institution at least during the period 1820-1890; and secondly, because those characteristics generally apply to the institution of domestic service in contemporary South Africa.

Domestic service in Britain

Women had not always dominated domestic service in Britain. The main change in the pattern that developed in the eighteenth century and

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throughout Britain as a whole. The Census of 1871 showed a 54,5% increase to a total of 1 310 222 domestic servants, both male and female. Burnett, 1977: 136-9.

53. Clapham in Young, 1934: 33.

54. J. Kitteringham, 'Country work girls in nineteenth century England', pp.73-139 in Samuel, 1975: 133. Resistance to the Eastern Cape research described in Chapter One may have a similar source, certainly the neglect of research into domestic workers generally can be explained in the same way.

persisted throughout the nineteenth was a changing sex ratio.[55] Generally servants were 'status symbols', but by the nineteenth century the employment of male domestic servants had become a badge of higher social status.[56]

Throughout the nineteenth century, to go 'into service' was, outside the great industrial areas, the natural destiny of the working-class girl,[57] who was constrained by lack of education, lack of alternative occupational opportnities and by the class-based definitions of femininity that were current at the time. Domestic service was regarded as the ideal occupation for working-class girls because servants

> do not follow an obligatorily independent and therefore, for their sex, an unnatural career - on the contrary, they are attached to others and are connected with other existences which they embellish, facilitate and service. In a word, they fulfil both essentials of women's being: they are supported by and they administer to men.[58] (Emphasis mine.)

There were obvious inconsistencies in nineteenth century definitions of femininity. Middle-class women were characterised by qualities of delicacy, refinement and helplessness. But, heavy physical work in a domestic setting was not thought degrading to working-class girls

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55. "Women were latecomers to domestic service. In the middle ages noble households were controlled by men...and there were relatively few women servants.... Even menial tasks in kitchen and bedchamber, and most of the more complex, such as cooking, were performed by men; they washed up, they cleaned the floors, they served at table." F.E. Huggett, Life Below Stairs, Domestic Servants in England from Victorian Times (London: John Murray, 1977), p.7.

56. "Whereas in the eighteenth century one or two male staff were common even in quite modest households like that of Parson Woodforde, by the nineteenth century the possession of even one manservant was a mark of distinctly higher social status, serving to separate the middle from the lower middle classes." Burnett, 1977: 143-144. According to Mrs Peel, "Persons who aspired to make any show of gentility kept a male servant." Young, 1934: 146.

57. At a 'micro-level' this is beautifully illustrated in F. Thomson, Lark Rise to Candleford (London: O.U.P., 1973).

58. W. Greg in 'Literary and Social Judgements', London, 1863, pp. 73-4. Quoted by Davidoff et al in Mitchell and Oakley, 1975: 168.

in the way that agricultural work was.[59] "Far from it, it taught her to be feminine, a modest, respectable girl."[60]

Given these different factors propelling working class girls into domestic service, generalisations about the occupation must be tentative. Conditions varied enormously in different areas and situations. In a formal sense a clear hierarchy existed: housekeeper, followed by lady's maid or chambermaid, head nurse, cook, housemaid, nursemaid, laundry maid, kitchen maid and scullery maid. Wages, working conditions and prestige differed according to a servant's position in the hierarchy. In large households, employing up to 20 domestic servants, roles were highly structured and authoritarian. In small households many roles had to be combined.[61]

Overall domestic wages were extremely low. In the mid-century most domestic servants seem to have earned between £4 and £8 a year.[62] While wages were low, even in contrast to factory work, the domestic servant received board and lodging. Of course the quality was whatever her mistress thought appropriate, and often such lodgings were not very comfortable, being airless, cramped and sparsely furnished. As in other occupations women were paid less than men.[63]

The hours of work were long and often irregular. It appears that 15 to 18 hours a day, six and a half days a week was not unusual. The work was often monotonous drudgery, with very little aid from machinery until late in the century. In addition to the drudgery and isolation, the strict regulation of domestic workers was also resented. There

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59. This was defined as unwomanly. Kitteringham in Samuel, 1975: 97; and 'Moralities', pp.127-133.

60. Ibid., p.97.

61. We can learn much of the one-maid household from Mrs Gaskell's Cranford; and from Arnold Bennett's The Old Wive's Tale (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1948).

62. Huggett, 1977; Peel in Young, 1934: 144. Branca suggests that in England "a factory worker could earn as much as £35 annually compared to the £14 of the maid-of-all-work." P. Branca, Women in Europe since 1750 (London: Croom Helm, 1972), p.37.

63. Kitteringham shows that in nineteenth century Britain women's pay at common farm work, for instance, was about half that of a man. Kitteringham in Samuel, 1975: 91.

was a degree of control which involved a minute regulation of duties, extending into 'free time' and often involving a lack of privacy and independence. This is illustrated by the case of Arnold Bennett's character in The Old Wive's Tale, Maggie, domestic servant at Baines's:

> Maggie had been at the shop since before the creation of Constance and Sophia. She lives seventeen hours of each day in an underground kitchen and larder, and the other seven in an attic, never going out except to chapel on Sunday evenings, and once a month on Thursday afternoons. 'Followers' were most strictly forbidden to her; but on rare occasions an aunt from Longshaw was permitted as a tremendous favour to see her in the subterranean den. Everybody, including herself, considered that she had a good 'place' and was well treated. [64]

Burnett points out that

> by the early nineteenth century 'servant' had generally come to mean domestic servant, and had sunk in connotation as being associated with lack of independence, subservience and servility; if not quite the status of slavery, it was not far removed from it. [65]

Throughout the century domestic service was increasingly considered a low-status occupation fit only for 'country bumpkins.'

Servants were predominantly recruited from rural areas. Branca, therefore, describes domestic service as "a route to modernization in nineteenth-century Britain."[66] It was an occupational role that allowed for movement into an urban setting, a different class context, and at least the possibility of social mobility. Of course, servants' predominantly rural backgrounds generated difficulties with urban middle-class employers. Tension arose on both sides as the servant was confronted with unfamiliar routines and domestic arrangements. Overall, domestic servants were an extremely insecure group of workers. They were "frequently dismissed without either notice or a reference",

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64. Bennett, 1948: 8.

65. Burnett, 1977: 165. Macpherson asserts that the word 'servant' in eighteenth century England meant anyone who worked for an employer for wages. 'Servants and Labourers in eighteenth century England', pp.207-223 of C.B. Macpherson, Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

66. Branca, 1978: 34.

and there was a high labour turnover.[67]

The crucial component in nineteenth-century domestic relations was the employer's assumption of superiority. The subordinate status of the servant was unquestioned and it was a matter of continuing concern to the employing classes to inculcate the correct attitudes of obedience and subservience. In speaking to her 'betters' the servant was exhorted to keep her voice low and respectful, and never to reply without saying "Sir" or "Madam" or "Master".[68] The social distance between employer and worker was expressed in numerous strictures defining appropriate behaviour and underlined

> by the physical layout of many houses with the back-stairs uncarpeted and unlit, giving the servants access to the tiny attic bedrooms in which they slept, and the basement in which they spent most of their working hours. [69]

Under the influence of these strictures the recognition of a common humanity was improbable. In fact

> It was all too easy for servants to be regarded as members of a separate race of people, whose only contact with their superiors was through their daily chores. (Emphasis mine.) [70]

Within this structure of inequality the nature of the relationship between employer and domestic worker varied from kindly paternalism[71] to extreme brutality.[72] Both sets of attitudes and treatment involved a denial of human dignity. The most typical viewpoint was that servants were like children and should be treated with kindness and firmness.[73]

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67. J. Dunbar, The Early Victorian Woman, Some Aspects of Her Life, 1837-57 (London: Harrap, 1953), pp.50-51.

68. Horn, 1976: 111.

69. Ibid., p.112.

70. Ibid.

71. This is illustrated by the case of the 11 year-old girl described by Flora Thompson, ibid.

72. Horn, 1976: 119; Stone, 1977: 167.

73. Burnett suggests that "in the Victorian attitude to servants there was much in common with the attitude towards children, dumb animals and the feeble-minded; as God's creatures, all deserved kindness and consideration, but above all, they required firm authority, discipline and the direction of their natural superiors." Burnett, 1977: 173.

The child-like qualities most commonly attributed to them were irresponsibility, secretiveness, an inability to work without close supervision and frivolity. In addition, they were generally perceived to be lazy and dishonest (at least inclined to petty theft), often stupid, lacking in initiative, ungrateful and indubitably inferior. These class-based attitudes were transposed to the South African scene and quickly incorporated into a racist ideology which then operated to legitimize a system of domination.

Much of this brief outline of the nature of domestic service as an institution in nineteenth century Britain could apply with equal truth to domestic service in contemporary South Africa. At this stage in the argument, however, it is important to appreciate two points. Firstly, how domestic service shaped European attitudes in South Africa. All the British settlers who came to South Africa brought with them experiences and attitudes, either as an employer of domestic labour, or an employee, perhaps best described as 'typifications' in the Schutzian sense.[74] In a colonial setting these class-based typifications soon assumed a racial form in which the employer's sense of superiority and power over his workers was amplified. Secondly, this outline of the nature of domestic service in nineteenth century Britain indicates some of the reasons why emigration to the Cape, as well as to Australia, Canada and the U.S.A., was so common among domestic servants.[75] The primary

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74. The 'phenomenological sociologist' Alfred Schutz has argued that the individual's commonsense knowledge of his everyday world is "a system of constructs of its typicality." His essay 'The Stranger' illustrates this by showing how a visitor to a foreign country can only understand it according to the typifications or 'recipes' of his native land. Schutz's notion of "cook-book knowledge" as he terms it, clearly has a special appropriateness here. A. Schutz, Collected Papers, 3 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962, 1964, 1966).

75. Huggett points out that in the decade 1878-1888 over 21 000 female servants went out to Queensland alone. (Select Committee on Colonisation, p.483 (1890), Vol. XII.) Generally on the emigration of domestic servants, see Huggett (1977), 'New Ways - New Hopes', pp.133-146. Domestic service remained a widespread social institution in Britain until well into the present century. In 1901 it still accounted for 40% of all employed women. (Burnett, 1977: 140.) However, two world wars brought fundamental changes in the occupational opportunities of women generally. Domestic service became increasingly the refuge of a small proportion of the poor and ill-educated. During World War I patriotic and personal interests merged to bring thousands of

'push' factor was their negative work experiences combined with a lack of alternative occupational opportunities. The primary 'pull' factor was the shortage of labour in the colonies. The result was that at least during the period 1820-1890 domestic service in South Africa included a significant number of Europeans.

The Period of Transition: (a) European Domestic Servants 1820-1890

A number of European settlers who came to South Africa in 1820 and later brought European domestic servants out with them. For example, John Stubbs brought out a servant girl of 18, Betsy whom they called "Black Bet, as she had dark rings round her eyes"; Major George Pigot brought at least one domestic servant, Lucy Pankhurst; Thomas Philipps brought several. When George Impey came out in 1843 he brought two English domestic servants with him. Sophy Gray arrived in 1848 with "her personal maid and general factotum", Elizabeth (Bessy) Simpson, as did Harriet Ward with her maid in 1843.

A number of settlers later became domestic servants. For example, Susan Jarman was employed by Thomas Shone. Shone's daughter Ann, "one of my best hands", went to 'Xhosaland' in 1839 as a domestic servant in Rev. Ayliff's household. But the largest number of European domestic servants came to South Africa as independent immigrants in that capacity. They were attracted by the comparatively high rate of wages that prevailed throughout the Cape between 1820 and 1860.

Until 1834 in the Western Cape most domestic servants were slaves. After emancipation, they were largely replaced, in wealthy homes, by Europeans. Sir James Alexander, who visited the Cape in the year

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domestic workers into the munition factories and the public service. This is illustrated by the moving autobiography of Rosina Whyatt, pp.125-132 of Burnett, 1977. Domestic service was not wiped out by the war. After the Armistice many had to return to it. In 1918, A.J. Ayer's family "did not consider ourselves rich enough to keep a motor-car, but we had two servants, a cook and a housemaid, so that my mother was spared any household drudgery." A.J. Ayer, Part of my Life (London: Collins, 1977), p.18. The second world war completed the process of diffusion the first had begun. Of the 1 330 000 women indoor domestic servants of 1913, only 724 000 remained in 1951. Burnett, 1977: 142.

following the slave emancipation, found that domestic servants in affluent families were mostly white and were paid about £4 a year.

> In 1850 white domestic servants [in Cape Town] were paid anything from £11 to £3 a year. Sir John Hall thought them 'extravagantly dear and very bad.' Ten years later European housemaids were receiving 35s a month which compared favourably with a London wage of from £6 11s to £10 per annum, though the London maid would have her allowance of tea, sugar and perhaps beer. In the middle decades of the century, perhaps because so many domestic servants were among the assisted immigrants wages tended to fall. In January 1861 the wages of white servants were said to be 25s to 30s a month for female cooks and housemaids and 40s to 50s for male cooks. [76]

Throughout the Cape there was a strong demand for domestic servants. In September 1825 a large number of settlers engaged themselves to employ a number of "female servants at £6 a year, with rations." This is considerably less than was specified for mechanics at £18 5s; labourers at £11 5s, and boys of 16-18 years at £7 10s, all with rations.[77] Advertisements in the Graham's Town Journal for European domestic servants were common. In 1826 the printer Bridekerk announced the opening at 31 the Hereengracht, of a domestic servants' register office in Cape Town.[78] Hattersley suggests that "in the towns few European families, even those without pretensions to gentility, were without at least one domestic servant."[79] In the forties, the shortage of European labour was especially acute. Chase urged European emigration to the Cape on a large scale. The whole Colony in his estimation required 5 000 labourers. Agricultural labourers should form the majority, but "among the female immigrants, a small number of governesses, well qualified, neither extravagant in their demands, nor with too high-flown notions of their own importance, and a large proportion of dairy

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76. Hattersley, 1969: 180. It is significant that male cooks could be paid double the females.

77. E. Morse-Jones, The Lower Albany Chronicle I (Port Alfred: Lower Albany Historical Society, 1968), p.96.

78. The S.A. Chronicle, 4th October 1825 and 9th May 1826. Quoted by Hattersley, 1969: 154.

79. Hattersley, 1969: 253.

and house servants would be highly acceptable."[80]

Chase implies that only females were suitable house servants but domestic service had not yet become entirely a female institution. An advertisement in the Graham's Town Journal states:

> Wanted, a servant as House Boy, preference will be given to a member of the Temperance Society. [81]

Another advertisement offered "liberal wages" to a European man or woman as house servant.[82] However, women servants were clearly cheaper.

According to Chase, the following rates of wages were payable to domestic servants in the Eastern Cape in 1843: males £20 to £27 per annum, females £9 to £12 or £15 per annum. Again it is significant that men were to be paid double the amount of women for the same work.[83] Similarly, the Emigration Commissioners give the following rates of pay for domestic workers:[84]

Table 26. Rates of Pay for Domestic Workers (1850) (European)

District	Males (monthly)	Females (monthly)
Swellendam	12-20s	7s6d-12s
Beaufort	6s11d	3s8d
Graham's Town	25-45s	18-30s
Graaff Reinet	10s	9s
Colesberg	18s	7s6d

80. J.C. Chase, The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1843), p.250.

81. Graham's Town Journal, 13.1.1832.

82. GTJ, 10.2.1832.

83. See below, Chapter 9, 'Discrimination on the Basis of Sex'. Precisely the same wage gap between the sexes exists in South Africa today.

84. Abstracted from H. Ward, The Cape and the Kaffirs: a diary of 5 years residence in Kaffirland (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1851), p.15. Figures abstracted by her from the Colonization Circular issued March 1850. The table here lists the districts which specify rates of pay for both males and females.

These figures indicate variations, but in all districts female domestic servants were paid considerably less than men, and in one case (Colesberg) less than half as much. The wages specified for farm workers are in most cases higher.

In the Eastern Cape advertisements for European domestic servants continue to appear until at least 1871. In that year, the following notice appeared:

> Wanted. A servant girl, for general household work, Age, from 14 to 16, not coloured. Good character. [85]

But they appear with diminishing frequency, and from the 1830s they seem largely (though not exclusively) directed towards child care:

> "WANTED a respectable young Female to take charge of two children and otherwise make herself useful;"
>
> "wetnurse: one without a child would be preferred;"
>
> "two English females - one as House servant, the other as Nursery Maid;"
>
> "A European servant as Housemaid and to assist in the Nursery. She must be well recommended for steadiness and sobriety. Liberal wages given;"
>
> "steady middle-aged, respectable Female to take charge of three children;"
>
> and so on.

This indication of 'specialization' in domestic roles, together with the diminishing frequency of advertisements for domestic servants generally after 1840, indicates the changing racial composition of the institution. In 1845 the advertisement appears:

> Cook wanted. A steady person, European or Coloured, as plain cook. [86]

For the next forty years or so, domestic service may be viewed as in a stage of transition during which it was transformed from a predominantly European to a predominantly Black institution. The crucial factors behind this transition were an increasing demand for domestic labour and a decrease in the supply of Europeans willing to work as domestic servants.

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85. Grocott's Free Paper, Vol. 2, No. 51, 3.5.1871.

86. GTJ, 1.5.1845.

During this transitional period many households seem to have had a 'mixed' domestic establishment. In some cases this worked fairly well. For example Thomas Duthie writes:

> The most expensive person in our present establishment is our Cook, to whom we pay 15s a month. He is a West Indian...a good cook and very handy at everything... I have a Herdsman and a Hottentot boy, who each receive 4/6 a month...My two English boys and the Girl, we still have, they have yet 4 years to serve, and are doing very well...a Hottentot woman washes and her little daughter assists in the house, that is all we have and all we want with the exception of an older person with the children. [87]

In other households this heterogeneity of domestic servants generated particular problems. For example, in Sophy Gray's household they gradually "acquired 'blackies' as servants", but "the North country servants were at a loss to deal with them."[88] The Gray's cottage in Wynberg around 1850 contained two English servants and two 'coloured' youths. "The less formal environment of a colony" soon left its mark on the demeanour of the two English servants, who are no longer at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Lucy complained that Edith, one of their English servants "has sadly lost her modesty and respectful manners."[89] Once the Grays set up home in Cradock, "Fingoes...came one after another to offer their services." Lucy describes them as a "light-hearted, merry sort of people", but "their odour is shocking." An engagement of one as domestic servant was unsuccessful. Edith "begs to have none of them Black people. We are glad to do a little ourselves to be without them, for they do very little."[90]

This preference was not shared universally. In 1845 George Impey's household in Salem contained the two English domestic servants they had brought out in 1843, "an African English girl (sic), one native woman

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87. Thomas Duthie in U. Long, An Index to Authors of Unofficial, Privately Owned Manuscripts Relating to the History of South Africa, 1812-1920 (London: Lund Humphries, 1947), p.116.

88. T. Gutsche, The Bishop's Lady (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1970), p.62.

89. Quoted by A. Hattersley, A Victorian Lady at the Cape (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, undated), p.24.

90. Ibid., p.48.

and three native men."[91] The following year, however, Ann Impey wrote to her aunt:

> The two servants we brought out with us are still with us but Mother is exceedingly anxious to procure a place for one of them or to send her back to England under proper care for she has been nothing but a source of trouble and uneasiness ever since she came to us... In addition to them we have two native men and two native women and Mother finds them very good and industrious servants. Generally speaking indeed we are often surprised to see how quickly the native people learn the method of doing anything and how well they remember what they are taught. [92]

A year later George Impey expresses a very different view:

> One of our greatest difficulties [at the time his establishment consisted of the family of seven, forty three pupils, one white servant and seven native servants] arises from a want of suitable servants. Good English servants are not to be had but at very exorbitant rate of wages and then they soon get married and settled... The Native girls are very stupid, generally very idle and so fond of rambling and changing that they seldom stay in any place many months together. In our establishment when so much depends upon order and regularity this is a great evil. No sooner does a girl become a little acquainted with her duty and accustomed to our ways than she leaves and another has to be taught the same lessons. They are only hired from month to month. [93]

Gradually, the expense of European domestic servants and their increasing scarcity necessitated a change of attitude. Writing in the Cape Monthly Magazine in 1861, "S.G.B." reports that

> a good many ladies rail against their servants, and here, as in England, mistresses get much trouble out of their 'followers'; but after all, they are a great deal better suited than they will admit. The native servants at all events don't drink; they are extremely

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91. Letter from George Impey to his sister from Salem, 18.8.1845. MS 866. Cory Library, Rhodes University.

92. Letter from Ann Impey from Salem, 24.6.1846. MS 866. Cory Library, Rhodes University.

93. Letter from George Impey to his sister from Salem, September, 1847. MS 869. Cory Library, Rhodes University.

> civil and are very much attached to their young charges...their chief fault seems to be forgetfulness of order; and they are very fond of holidays.[94]

The treatment of European domestic servants varied enormously. In some households they were highly prized. For example, Thomas Duthie described MacKenzie whom they brought back with them to the Cape in 1833, as "a most invaluable creature...about 40 years of age, and a most respectable person...a perfect treasure."[95] In others they were adopted and brought up "as one of the family." Philipps maintained that due to the labour shortage it was "a very common practice" for Dutch farmers to adopt motherless English children who

> are immediately divided, in many cases humanity is not always the leading principle, the great want of labouring population is the inducement, satisfied that although the child is young, yet food is cheap and in time they will be repaid by the assistance they will receive. The children so taken are brought up as their own and not the smallest difference made. [96]

In some households there was the intimacy of shared leisure time activities. For example, Lucy Gray in describing their daily routine in Cradock in the 1850s writes how "after tea (about 7 p.m.) we sat at work or writing and have just begun to bring Edith into the room and read Pierre and his Family [a romantic Victorian best seller]."[97]

In other households there might have been an intimacy of another kind. For example, Thomas Shone, while a widower living near Clumber, employed a young white domestic servant, Susan Jarman with whom he very likely had sexual relations, or so one speculates, since he was frequently troubled with "evil thoughts" and feelings of "sin" while she was in his employment.[98] These feelings were often experienced on Sundays

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94. "S.G.B.", 'Life at the Cape', pp.99-111, in The Cape Monthly Magazine, ed. by A. Noble. Vol. I, 1870, p.110.

95. Duthie quoted in Long, 1946: 110.

96. Philipps, 16.8.1828. MS 7612 Vol. V, Cory Library, Rhodes University.

97. Hattersley, 1969: 50.

98. Shone papers. MS 10548. Cory Library, Rhodes University. Transcribed by Penny Silva who kindly made them available to me.

when the rest of the family were at church. For instance, one Sunday in December 1838 the children went to chapel; Shone sent his daughters Sarah and Ann off to borrow a horse. "I staid at home all the day and I find that I have wilfully sinned again against my God."[99] Certainly the sexual exploitation of domestic servants was common in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain.[100] Many domestic servants were in a very precarious position when it came to resisting the master because a character reference was often indispensable to getting another job. However, there is no way of establishing the level of coercion in this particular relationship. There does not seem to have been the usual social distance between Shone and Susan Jarman: both were British settlers who came out in the 1820s, and Shone's own daughter Ann became a domestic servant in the Rev. Ayliff's household.[101] Susan Jarman seems to have had a variety of duties, including washing, helping Shone's daughter Sarah with the housekeeping and care of the children, shopping and accompanying Shone to Bathurst "to carry the things he might purchase." In addition, she helped a good deal with such agricultural work as cutting barley, planting potatoes, weeding the Indian corn and cleaning the cowshed.[102] She was in Shone's employ at least during 1838 and 1839 though he makes obscure references to her going "begging" during this time. She left in April 1839 but seems to have been temporarily induced back by Shone buying her a new gown in Grahamstown. After her Shone seems to have employed Black female

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99. Shone papers. Entry for 2.12.1838.

100. See Huggett (1977), pp.117-119; also Stone, Chapter 11, 'Gentlemanly Sexual Behaviour: Case Histories', pp.546-602. For instance, Stone quotes the case of Robert Hooke who engaged a resident maid "who looked after him for board and lodging and a salary of £4 a year, plus extra for the sewing she did for him. She also slept with him about three times a month, for which she was not paid." Stone, 1977: 561.

101. Susan Jarman was the daughter of the Rev. William Boardman. She was 21 when she came out in 1828 and four years later married Thomas Jarman who had come out in William Cock's party. (Communication from Penny Silva.)

102. In short she lived much as a 'live-in farm servant' in Britain at that time. As such she was much less free than other women farm workers but was probably better fed, clothed and housed. Kitteringham in Samuel, 1975: 95.

labour for domestic tasks.[103]

Most of the complaints about European domestic servants were of a traditional kind. For example, Sophia Pigot's diary has entries such as "Lucy [Pankhurst] very saucy, putting the silver teapot in the hot oven", or "Lucy very impertinent."[104] In cases of disobedience discipline was sometimes harsh. A Port Elizabeth magistrate sent a European servant girl to prison in 1863 for eight days for refusing to obey the orders of her mistress.[105] However, it was rare for cases of domestic disputes involving female domestic servants to appear in court, and it was even rarer for cases of ill-treatment of domestic servants to surface and be processed through the courts. Most domestic crime had a 'masked' or hidden quality for obvious reasons. One case is especially alarming in the duration and brutality of the treatment to which a European domestic servant was subject.

The case involved Harriet Polack, a thirteen year-old English domestic servant brought to South Africa by Lieutenant Peshall in 1838. She was subjected to a two-year course of harsh treatment by her employer and his wife. When they appeared in the Circuit Court, Grahamstown in March 1840 on a charge of assault, Harriet Polack's evidence (most of it substantiated by witnesses) revealed that she had been severely beaten on numerous occasions. On one occasion for taking some bread she got 20 blows with a 'sjambok'; on another she was beaten for allegedly stealing some sugar. After ten blows she felt compelled to admit to having stolen it. On another occasion she was beaten and handcuffed for taking a little butter. She spent almost the entire day handcuffed; the handcuffs were only removed for her to wash and dress her employer's children, and were then replaced. On another occasion

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103. A woman named Yanneka was his washerwoman and also did odd jobs. During 1850 his diary records various payments such as 3d to Yanneka for "cow dunging my house", 6d for cleaning his house on another occasion; 6d for washing his clothes. By 1852 his washing cost him 9d and a piece of tobacco, in March, 1s4d. June 1856 finds Shone reduced to living on bread and coffee and washing his own clothes.

104. M. Rainier (ed.), The Journals of Sophia Pigot (Cape Town: Balkema, 1974), p.18.

105. Graaff Reinet Herald, 29.7.1863. Quoted by Hattersley, 1969: 253.

she was handcuffed and put in the guard house all night for taking some salt; on another for mislaying the child's shoes and stockings. "The floggings I received caused black and blue marks and sometimes produced blood from various places." On another occasion she was put in handcuffs and, thus manacled, sent out to walk with her employer's children. On a charge of having stolen half a pound of salt she was sent off on foot, bareheaded and manacled, on a journey of 25 miles to Grahamstown.[106]

If nothing else, this case certainly belies Calderwood's suggestion that ill-treatment of servants was non-existent in the Cape:

> masters in the colony, independent of any law to prevent them, cannot oppress their servants. Labour is far too scarce to admit of the oppression of servants of any class, whether English, Caffre or Hottentot. If there be oppression at all there, the employers suffer it, while the servants are to a great extent the masters. Masters and mistresses must mind their manners, else servants very soon leave them, and let them help themselves. [107]

However, Calderwood's statement does highlight the great demand for domestic labour. While many European domestic servants were indentured to their employers - for example, Philipps and Duthie both brought indentured European domestic servants out to the Cape - female domestic servants, not tied to their employers in this way, seem often to have left their jobs after a few months. Frequently this was in order to marry.[108] The 'ambition' to make a 'good' marriage may have been a motive of some importance in European female emigration.

> From the old world, where seduction ruled and all 'followers' were banned, these young girls entered a

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106. GTJ, 12.3.1840; 9.4.1840. Harriet Polack does seem to have been a particularly unfortunate child. After leaving the Peshall's employment she was assaulted, stripped and abused in a Grahamstown boarding house by George Lardner on the strength of an unjust suspicion of having stolen Lardner's keys. Lardner was found guilty of assault in the Magistrate's Court. GTJ, 13.2.1840.

107. H. Calderwood, Caffres and Caffre Missions: with preliminary chapters on the Cape Colony as a field for emigration, and basis of missionary operations (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1858), p.60.

108. Hattersley, 1969: 154.

> very different world, where they were besieged by offers of marriage. [109]

Chase warned that

> the worst effect of these importations as far as the employer is concerned, is that they too soon exchange 'single blessedness' for the uncertain charms of married life. [110]

John Stubbs's servant, Betsy, married the butcher, Dan Wood, before the Stubbs family had left Algoa Bay for their location and "turned out an honest woman."[111] In September 1820, four months after they had landed at the Cape, the Pigot's servant, Lucy Pankhurst, asked leave to be married. In December her daughter Ann was born. Frequently domestic servants seem to have married fellow employees. Philipps writes in August 1822 that one of his men, Matthews, "married one of our maid servants and is gone to live near Cape Town at about £36 a year and board."[112] Duthie's treasured servant, MacKenzie, married his batman, Soutter, whom he had impressed with "the necessity of choosing a wife that will be useful in the settlement at 'Belvedere'."[113] Mrs Smith in a letter home from Woodford near Sidbury in October 1841 reports that her nursemaid, "a young Dutch girl", is "leaving to be married to one of the men her husband brought out from England with him."[114]

The trials of married European indentured servants is illustrated by a court case heard in Grahamstown on 2nd October 1820. Mr D. Sullivan complained that his 'master' Mr T. Mahoney, had sent him to Grahamstown to work for Mr Deitz. He asked if his pregnant wife could join him but this was refused. Mr Mahoney said he could not "afford to keep your wife without receiving her labour." In the ensuing altercation

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109. Huggett, 1977: 143. Huggett is writing of Australia. In the Cape while domestic servants might not have been 'besieged' with offers, they at least had considerably more opportunity than in Britain.

110. Chase, 1843: 250.

111. R.T. McGeogh, 'The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs: 1820-1877', M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1965, p.1.

112. A. Keppel Jones (ed.), Philipps, 1820 Settler. His Letters (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1960), p.131.

113. Duthie must have regretted his advice. Quoted by Long, 1946: 109.

114. Long, 1946: 250.

Mahoney hit Sullivan with a plough and insulted him, calling him "a baboon" and calling Mrs Sullivan "a bitch, damned whore", a "big arsed bitch" and "told the Khoi soldier to take her into the woods where she would not be heard."[115]

As European domestic servants moved out into other occasional roles, their places were taken by members of the indigenous population. Slowly the institution of domestic service was transformed, in both its racial and its sexual character. The shortage of domestic labour provided the main impetus to the transformation of domestic service into a predominantly Black, female occupation. This process of transformation may be illustrated by a case history - that of the Philipps household, who farmed first at Lampeter, near Bathurst, and then at Glendower near what was then Port Francis (now Port Alfred).

Philipps brought several European "maid servants" out from Britain with him. They soon moved away. One, Mary, only three days after they arrived at their location, "quarrelled with one of the men and walked off, she was so worthless that I did not stop her. I learnt afterwards she had absolutely hired herself whilst we were at Graham's Town." For a time they employed an 1820 Settler couple but this arrangement did not last long:

> The man and his wife (a nice steady couple) have resolved on leaving us and returning home to their location where they now think they shall be able to do well. They will be a very great loss, and I am trying to get a female servant to take her place which is a most difficult thing, almost all who come out are married, and the young girls are wanted at home to assist their parents. All our enquiries have been fruitless. If we can succeed in getting one girl as upper servant, we shall have Hottentots under her, there are some very active and very clean and much cheaper than the English who are so scarce and so sought after that they hold their heads very high and think themselves of great consequence.[116] (Emphasis mine.)

They must have had some success, for in October 1823 Philipps writes from Lampeter that one of their domestic servants

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115. Cape Archives C.O.2692. I am grateful to Jeff Peires for drawing my attention to this.

116. Mrs Philipps to Mrs Harris, 28.5.1823. Philips Letters (unpublished), MS 14,264. Cory Library, Rhodes University. This letter was brought to my attention by Jeff Peires.

> is a girl of seventeen years of age, the daughter of a respectable tradesman who came out in the same ship with us. [117]

Increasingly the Philipps' domestic servants are drawn from the indigenous population who are both cheaper and more readily procurable than European servants. By 1825 Mrs Philipps writes,

> Our servants consist chiefly of Hottentots. The latter all live in a straw hut erected by themselves, at a little distance but concealed from the house. For one family consisting of father, mother and three girls we pay 10 rix dollars a month and feed them, they only require meat and milk and now and then a pumpkin or a little rice. [118]

These Khoikhoi servants were soon to be replaced by Africans, specifically by Bechuanas who were brought into the area by the government and distributed among the settlers in the district as servants.

> Accordingly a great many were sent into Graham's Town and all who wanted servants and had not slaves were allowed to have a family, taking care not to divide them from each other, for fear of making them discontented or unhappy. They seem so much attached and are a most interesting people, mild in their manners and naturally good humoured and happy dispositions. [119]

The Philipps' household had a Bechuana family consisting of a father, his two wives and two daughters and an old woman whom they had taken under protection.

> They can scarce speak a word of Dutch or English but we make them understand by signs, and they are so quick and so desirous of doing everything we wish, that they really do very well already, and I am sure will make valuable servants.... After a few months they are to be bound to us for five or seven years. [120]

For at least some time in 1826 the Philipps family seem to have employed both Khoikhoi and Bechuana servants, although the latter were considered

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117. Philipps in Keppel-Jones, 1960: 183.

118. Mrs Philipps, 27.6.1825. One rix dollar was then worth 1s6d. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 248.

119. Mrs Philipps, 27,11.1825 from Glendower. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 252.

120. Ibid.

"very different and very superior." In October of that year Mrs Philipps wrote "if we could have some good English servants with them we should be comfortable indeed."[121]

Mrs Philipps thus illustrates a hierarchy of racial attitudes in which the English, followed by the Bechuana, followed by the Khoikhoi make the best servants. Her household illustrates the process whereby domestic service was slowly transformed in its racial character. By the end of the century domestic service was an institution wherein Black women predominated.

The Period of Transition: (b) Khoikhoi and Slave Domestic Workers

> To hire, an African Slave girl, who can make herself generally useful in a family. Apply at the office of this paper. [122]

In accounting for the large component of Europeans during the transitional period (1820-1890) it was suggested above that the primary 'push' factor in the emigration of domestic servants from Britain in the nineteenth century was largely their negative work experiences and lack of alternative occupational opportunities. The primary 'pull' factor was the shortage of labour in the colonies. The shortage of both agricultural and domestic labour was one of the more serious problems of the Cape Colony in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is indicated by a wide variety of comments in private and official documents. In the Eastern Cape this shortage was experienced most intensely during the 1820s and 1840s.

Soon after his arrival at Glen-Lynden, Pringle records that his party "feel severely the want of female servants."[123] The general result was that "in the first four or five years of the settlement every task

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121. A marked change from Mrs Philipps' attitude three years earlier. Perhaps then she was more concerned with impressing Mrs Harris than anything else. The motives of diary and letter writers are difficult to reconstruct. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 315.

122. GTJ, 21.2.1833.

123. T. Pringle, Narrative of a Residence in South Africa (London: Edward Moxon, 1835), 14.7.1820, p.43.

on most farms was done by the family."[124] Even 'genteel' settlers were obliged to perform menial domestic tasks. Sophia Pigot, whom Butler suggests we should understand as "one of Miss Jane Austen's young ladies", writes in December 1821 that she was "obliged to lay aside the accomplishments of the Drawing Room, for those of the kitchen and farmyard."[125] Miss Pigot liked to spend her time sketching, reading poetry, going for walks, but was obliged to do quite a lot of domestic work herself such as rubbing bran for starch, cutting meat for sausages and pork pies, picking and chopping herbs and making puddings.

Various solutions to this problem of labour shortage were proposed. The two most common were: immigration (at public meetings in Grahamstown, for instance, a government aided "white labour policy" was urged),[126] and the employment of the indigenous population, especially Khoikhoi, Xhosas (at first surreptitiously) and refugees, such as Bechuanas or Fingoes.[127] This involved ambivalent feelings. For example, "W.G." in the Graham's Town Journal of 1833 described "the scarcity of labour" as "the cause of all our troubles." Yet, he adds, "Kaffirs are not to be trusted as servants in the Colony."[128] This view was shared by the colonial government who, until 1828, largely opposed the introduction of Xhosa labour.

While there were restrictions in both the Cape and in Natal on British settlers owning slaves, from an early time the 1820 Settlers "seemed to expect that they would be allowed to make drudges of the Hottentots."[129] Philipps describes visiting a Mr Biggars who lived

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124. G. Butler (ed.), The 1820 Settlers. An Illustrated Commentary (Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1974), p.293. Butler suggests that "this pattern continued right on into the thirties in some cases, as the diaries of Thomas Shone makes clear." However, Shone employed domestic servants at least intermittently.

125. Entry on 3.12.1821. Rainier, 1974: 93.

126. Macmillan, 1927: 111.

127. W.M. Macmillan, Bantu, Boer and Briton. The Making of the South African Native Problem (Oxford: Clarendon Press, second edition, 1963), pp.87-88.

128. GTJ, 14.2.1833.

129. John Bird, quoted by D. Welsh, 'English-speaking whites and the racial problem', pp.217-241 in de Villiers, 1976: 219.

about twenty miles from Bathurst in February 1822: "in the evening a Hottentot which they had hired as a servant played on a string instrument which they called a gona."[130]

According to Pringle, by July of that year the several settler families in the Glen-Lynden settlement had all obtained Khoikhoi servants.[131] For some time Khoikhoi formed the great majority of the labouring population of the Cape, especially in the eastern frontier districts.[132]

They were not always fairly treated. Drawing on his own experiences on tour in 1830 Dr Philip commented that "in Albany a civilized Hottentot is content to work without wages, or for any trifle, without complaining."[133] Certainly wages were low: John Mitford Bowker paid his Khoikhoi 6 dollars a month while his neighbour, Willem Nel, paid his ex-slave 4 dollars a month.[134] Pringle reported that as a group he found the Khoikhoi "generally more decently clothed and better fed" than was apparently the case in 1798. But there was no general consensus on this view. He quotes Commissioner Biggs to the effect that the English settlers were not better employers than the Cape-Dutch as regards the Khoikhoi.[135] Pringle also quotes a source who suggested that until 1828 Khoikhoi "were decidedly in a more degraded position that the slaves in every respect."[136] Others, such as Thomson, maintained that "very little distinction appeared to exist

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130. Emphasis mine. Perhaps the use of the impersonal pronoun was accidental.

131. Pringle, 1835: 167.

132. In 1825 there were some 30 000 Khoikhoi in the Colony. C.A. C.O. 5967, Blue Book, 1825. Population Returns.

133. Quoted by Macmillan, 1927: 224. Philip points out that they were not always paid the wages they agreed to work for. J. Philip, Researches in South Africa (London: James Duncan, 1828), 2 vols., Vol. 2, p.440. He considered the Hottentots in a worse condition than the slaves. Vol. 1, p.183.

134. Letter to J. Montagu, English Secretary to the Governor, 25.11.1844. Speeches, Letters and Selections from Important Papers of the Late John Mitford Bowker (Grahamstown: Godlonton & Richards, 1864), p.130.

135. Pringle, 1835: 265.

136. Pringle, 1835: 261-262.

between the habits of the mode of treatment of the slaves and the Hottentots."[137]

Until 1834 slavery was an important institution at the Cape. The slave population was mainly concentrated in the western areas of the colony, where they provided most of the domestic labour.[138] The largest occupational category of slaves in the classification made by the Assistant Commissioners of Compensation were "inferior domestics" totalling 9 860. It is significant that they rated the lowest when it came to average compensation figures: £29.7.6. per head.

Table 27. Cape Slave Compensation[139]

Number of slaves	Class	Average per head £	s	d
	Praedial unattached			
399	Head people	65	0	4
297	Tradesmen	64	2	5
132	Inferior tradesmen	49	0	10
5 671	Field labourers inferior	54	11	0
5 333	Field labourers	35	17	1
	Non-Praedial			
1 195	Head tradesmen	61	13	3
953	Inferior tradesmen	41	13	5
20	Head people employed on wharfs	40	3	10
23	Inferior people employed on wharfs	41	2	6
5 239	Head domestic servants	47	4	3
9 860	Inferior domestics	29	7	6

137. Evidence of Mr Thompson to the 1823 Commission, quoted by Edwards, 1934: 183.

138. Pringle became "personally acquainted with the state of the slaves during my residence in Cape Town, where most of my household servants were of that class, engaged on hire from their owners." Pringle, 1835: 229.

139. GTJ, 23.6.1836.

Slaves were also found in the Eastern Cape. In 1825 the slave population of the vast frontier district of Graaff Reinet was 3 011 slaves. The slave population of the eastern frontier district of Albany, within it, numbered 414.[140] Slaves were largely owned by the Dutch colonists. Shaw found on his arrival in Albany in 1820 that "happily there were very few slaves in the district, and these belonged chiefly to the Dutch farmers."[141]

Some were women employed in domestic capacities. The wife of Frederick Opperman was kept by her master as his cook when her husband was sold in Graaff Reinet in 1825.[142] In May 1834 Buys of the farm Doornkom on the Bushman's River advertised for two agricultural slaves to be sold along with:

Lea	housemaid	53 years old
Katryn	housemaid	43 years old
Spasie	housemaid	41 years old with her 4 children.[143]

Gledhill has suggested that "it was not uncommon custom at the time for the housewife to have her personal slave sleeping close by [her]."[144]

The grants of land made to the Settlers of 1820 carried a prohibition against slave labour,[145] which was possibly intended by the British

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140. C.A. C.O.5967 Blue Book, 1825. Population Returns.

141. W. Shaw, The Story of my Mission in South Eastern Africa (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1860), p.271. Commissioners Colebrook and Bigge sent to the Cape in 1823 acknowledged that the Dutch farmers in the Eastern Cape were employing slaves.

142. The account by A.K., 'Case of Frederick Opperman: Cape slave', pp.41-50, in Wilson and Perrot, 1973. This describes the pain of separation very movingly.

143. GTJ, 20.3.1834.

144. E. Gledhill, describing the "quaint, small boarded room at the head of the stairs near the main bedroom which to this day is known as 'the Slave Room'" in R. Reynolds and B. Reynolds, Grahamstown from Cottage to Villa (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1974), p.82.

145. Bathurst instructed Donkin that all grants of land both immediately on the borders of Caffreland and north of the district of Uitenhage were to be cultivated by free labour. Edwards relates this to "the humanitarian interest in native races and in the abolition of the slave trade which had made itself felt during the Congress of Vienna." Edwards, 1934: 62.

government to be inclusive in two senses: firstly, it was intended to apply to both Dutch and British frontier residents. Duly argues that,

> it was not Bathurst's intention that the restriction apply only to the English settlers in Albany. He assumed that all land titles in the frontier districts carried the stipulation. After two years had gone by, he decided it was time to check on the results of the prohibition on slave labour in the colony and to see if the restriction could be broadened to include domestic slaves as well as field hands. Governor Somerset acknowledged the dispatch but did nothing. [146]

Secondly, Edwards suggests that the original prohibition was intended to apply to both agricultural and domestic slaves.

> The establishment of this fact is of some importance, for the Albany settlement was conceived as the first district in a colony of settlement where slavery would be abolished. [147]

She goes on to say that such a claim has been obscured by the belief that while settlers in Albany were forbidden agricultural slaves they were allowed to employ domestic slaves. She traces this misapprehension to a speech by Wilberforce in July 1822 in which he complained that the measures instituted at the Cape to prevent the extension of slavery were inadequate and anyway, "the conditions attached to these grants [in the Albany district] applies only to praedial and not to domestic slavery."[148]

There is some evidence that the 1820 Settlers did employ slaves in domestic capacities.[149] This is an aspect of 1820 Settler history that has been overlooked. The evidence is of two kinds: court records and advertisements for runaway slaves. "William, a slave, the property of John Norton" worked in his kitchen and was the victim of an assault charge which came before the Grahamstown Magistrate's Court in

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146. L. Duly, British Land Policy at the Cape 1795-1844. A Study of Administrative Procedures in the Empire (Durham: Duke University Press, 1968), p.89.

147. Edwards, 1934: 76.

148. Hansard, 25.7.1822. Quoted by Edwards, 1934: 76.

149. Despite Mr Francis's information to the 1823 Commission of Inquiry that "he does not believe that slaves have been employed by the settlers, not having the means of purchasing or paying hire for their services." Quoted by Edwards, 1934: 184.

January 1832.[150] In October of that year the Graham's Town Journal reports a case before the Circuit Court, Uitenhage, involving "Frances, a slave of John Wyat of Port Elizabeth." In December, Jephita, "a person of colour", gave evidence as the slave of the defendant, Benjamin Grayson, ordinance storekeeper at Graham's Town. In the Circuit Court, Grahamstown in May 1834, "Sophia, slave of Mr Ogilvie appeared." An advertisement in the Graham's Town Journal offered "Five Rix-dollars reward" by J. Bertram for the return of a female slave.[151] And there are others. While the prohibition on slavery irritated some,[152] and was circumvented by others, there were 1820 Settlers who found the institution of slavery offensive on humanitarian grounds. Afflicted by the sight of a female slave put up for auction at the Grahamstown market in 1830, Kidwell bought her for £7.10.0. intending to free her. "Liberty had no value for her as she had nowhere to go. She followed Mr Kidwell and served the family faithfully for many years, dying without ever having experienced an unkind word."[153]

Dr Philip has exploded the myth of the alleged 'mildness' of slavery at the Cape. Pringle described it as "continually overflowing with misery, cruelty and debasement."[154] Was the situation different in the Eastern Cape? While Philipps observed that slaves "are very rare in this part of the country, but uniformly I have observed them treated well,"[155] one should note that he had only been in the Eastern Cape for eight days when he made this observation.[156] Several cases of cruelty of colonists

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150. The evidence shows how the pejorative meaning of words change. William alleged assault by Joseph Cato, servant of Mr Wright. In his sworn statement William reported that the argument arose when William warned Cato not to cross the ground of Mr Norton. "He called me a slave and told me to go and clean the room. I said if you call me a slave, I call you a settler, and other language passed." GTJ, 13.1.1832.

151. GTJ, 10.2.1832.

152. Pigot pointed out that as the Dutch farmers were allowed to employ slaves they were able to undersell the settlers in agricultural produce.

153. D. Rivett-Carnac, Thus Came the English in 1820 (Cape Town: Timmins, 1961), p.112.

154. Pringle, 1835: 229.

155. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 51.

156. His other observations about slavery are often extremely perceptive. For example, he points to "one of the very worst

towards their slaves are reported in the Graham's Town Journal and other sources.[157]

A case history which exposes such cruelty is that of Sophia, a slave belonging to S.C. Bosch who farmed in the Grahamstown district. Sophia, a domestic slave, lost some clothes in the river while washing them during a thunderstorm. She recovered them later in the day but they were torn. For this she was beaten by her mistress. After receiving about twenty blows and a head wound she ran away. On apprehension she was returned to her mistress who punished her by placing her in the stocks so as to cause extreme discomfort and a wound on her spine. At time she was made to sit on 'doubeljees' (small thorns); at other times she was placed in a position so as to expose her genitals whereon the other slaves were called to look at her. She was kept in the stocks during the day from Monday to Saturday and at night was tied to a beam by means of a wagon chain. During this period she had no provisions except on Wednesday and Saturday when she received a small quantity of rice water. While in the stocks her master beat her on the feet and hands with a piece of stick and her mistress beat her when she screamed. This poor woman eventually managed to escape but was recaptured and driven home by her master with a whip while he was on horseback. After another week of beatings and periods in the stocks she escaped to Grahamstown and her case came before the Resident Magistrate.[158]

Clearly this case was unusual in the level of cruelty it involved. However, it illustrates the abuse to which the institution of slavery was open. Unfortunately, the abolition of slavery in 1834 did not bring such ill-treatment to an end. The next section will attempt to

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effects of the system of slavery" among the Dutch: "in proportion as they tyrannize over their domestic slaves, in the same ratio they degradingly crouch at the feet of their ruler." Keppel-Jones, 1960: 155.

157. See, for example, GTJ, 26.9.1833 when Meurant was found guilty of ill-treating his female slave in the Grahamstown Circuit Court; also the punishment of a slave boy reported by Eli Wiggall in Butler, 1969: 68.

158. GTJ, 21.2.1833.

show that initially domestic service constituted a point of incorporation of Xhosa and other African women into colonial society. It will be suggested that a pattern of ultra-exploitation marked these early relationships that has continued until the present.

Domestic Work as an Initial Point of Incorporation of African Women into the Colonial Economy

Domestic work constituted an initial point of incorporation whereby the conquered population were absorbed into the colonial economy. This economy was structured by the capitalist mode of production. Throughout the nineteenth century in South Africa the Europeans transformed the structure of ownership of the means of production to their advantage. This involved not only the appropriation of the means of production (notably land) but also the integration of the conquered as workers into a new system of production, the men into agricultural labour on White farms, the women into domestic as well as agricultural labour. This involved the separation of Africans from ownership of property in the means of production and a consequent dependence upon employment by the owners of such property, as wage labour.[159]

There was nothing glamorous about this process of proletarianisation:

> the stuff of legend is not easily found in a process which turned Ama-Xhosa, Zulu or Basuto into farm labourers, kitchen servants or messengers.[160]

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159. Domestic work was also a point of incorporation whereby the conquered population were integrated into the Settler economic system in the feudal mode of production. Under the feudal mode, rent, in various forms, functions as the primary mechanism of extraction of surplus labour. In some cases domestic work was part of the labour service form of feudal rent. For example, under the squatter system non-wage quasi-feudal relations were the rule; in return for residence, the right to cultivate a piece of land and graze a few cattle, the White landowner required the services of the tenant and his family in the fields and his women in the household. However, this has gradually been supplanted as the capitalist mode became dominant.

160. C. de Kiewiet, A History of South Africa, Social and Economic (London: O.U.P., 1957), p.48.

Nguni disintegration was a slow, uneven and painful process. Leftwich points out that they were more numerous, their economy more resilient, and their capacity to withstand military defeat greater than that of the nomadic Khoikhoi and San people.

> Even when 'defeated' in war and brought within the formal political system of the colony, their economic independence was not, at first, significantly undermined. A 'horizontal social pluralism' endured shakily until the discovery of diamonds and gold and the consequent industrialization in the twentieth century. [161]

After that most South Africans were progressively involved in a common economic system structured on the dominant capitalist mode of production.

In this nineteenth century process of proletarianisation the main factors initially propelling Nguni women into domestic and agricultural service with colonists all involved degrees of coercion. They may be briefly outlined as follows:

1. Direct Coercion

Until at least 1823 (the year a trading fair was instituted at Fort Willshire), segregation was the official solution to frontier conflict. This segregation was less rigid in practice than in theory. According to Davenport, van Plettenburg's rigid fixing of the Fish River as a border not to be crossed in 1780 had been largely ignored.[162] Governor Macartney softened the approach slightly in 1797 when he ordered farmers who had engaged Xhosa as servants to discharge them within a year. At the same time he authorised the Landdrost of Graaff Reinet to issue 'passports' for crossing the border to individuals. Nevertheless, officialdom made occasional attempts to enforce their segregationist policy, and secure a cheap labour force at the same time, as the following extract describing Pringle's visit to the Khoikhoi settlement of Bethelsdorp in 1820 illustrates:

> While tea was preparing and before twilight had yet closed in, my host was called out to speak to another

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161. A. Leftwich, 'The Constitution and Continuity of South African Inequality: some conceptual questions', in Leftwich, 1974: 142.

162. T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa - a Modern History (Johannesburg: Macmillan South Africa, 1977), p.36.

> stranger. This was a Caffer woman, accompanied by a little girl of 8 or 10 years of age and having an infant strapped on her back, above her mantle of tanned bullock's hide. She had come from the drostdy, or district town of Uitenhage, under the custody of a Black constable, who stated that she was one of a number of Caffer females who had been made prisoner by order of the Commandant on the frontier for crossing the line of prescribed demarcation without permission, and that they were to be given out in servitude among the white inhabitants of this district. The woman before us, he added, was to be forwarded by the missionary, under the charge of one of his people, to the residence of a certain colonist, about 20 miles to the westward. [163]

The imprecations of this woman moved Pringle to write,

> For my own part I was not a little struck by the scene, and could not help beginning to suspect that my European countrymen, who thus made captives of harmless women and children, were in reality greater barbarians than the savage natives of Caffraria. [164]

There is further evidence of the direct coercion of Xhosa women into the colonists' service. Thomas Stubbs, who had been located near the Xhosa clay pits[165] on the Kap river, relates an incident which involves coercion of a different kind:

> One morning, at about ten o'clock [in 1822], my mother saw about a dozen Kafirs coming towards our tent, apparently all well armed. (I may mention that we had not seen any Kafirs before.) My mother told me to call my brother and cousin, who were working in the garden, about 500 yards from the tents, and sent my younger brother to our neighbour's to ask assistance. Our neighbour lived about a mile and a half off, while the Kaffirs were only 200 yards distant from the tents. My Mother told my cousin to go and meet them, and said 'I have loaded the guns, but we will not let them see them until we find out whether they are enemies or not.' My cousin, not liking the look of them hesitated, when my mother told him that if he was afraid to go he should say so, and she would go herself. Feeling rather ashamed, he went to meet them, when they called 'morrow, morrow.' He

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163. Pringle, 1834: 15.

164. Ibid., p.16.

165. The clay pits had traditionally been a source of clay used as a dye and for cosmetic and ritual purposes.

> brought them to the tents, when my mother motioned them to sit down, and then we saw they were all women, with long stocks in their hands. We gave them a lot of Settler's bread, i.e. hard biscuit. It was not long before a lot of men arrived from our neighbours, and made all the women prisoners. They then searched the clay pits and found a lot more. They were all taken to Grahamstown, and we were given to understand, were hired out to farmers. This we learned some time afterwards from one of them who had run away and got safe back to Kafirland. This woman came with about 500 others who brought a pass from the officer at Fort Willshire to get clay. [166]

This incident illustrates the mutual incomprehension of both settlers and indigenous people. It has a particular pathos as their different gestures of good will end so tragically for the Xhosa women. Stubbs writes, "This was the first piece of injustice done to the natives by the Government, and this we had to suffer for afterwards."[167]

2. Economic Compulsion

The most important factors which operated to propel men and women into wage employment were, increasing pressure upon land as the Europeans appropriated more and more, and displacement and dispersal because of war. Two groups, the Mantatees and the Mfengu, are especially significant here.

In 1823 a group of refugees from the north, later known as the Mantatees, came into the area near the confluence of the Vaal and Orange rivers. They were routed by the Griquas and Bechuanas, but many women and children were left behind. The missionaries attempted to save some. Melville arranged for 13 women and children to be sent to the frontier district of Graaff Reinet suggesting that they "will make good servants."[168] Before Stockenstrom could receive a reply from the governor at Cape Town he received a further communication from Melville informing him that there were hundreds of starving women in the area

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166. Appendix II of The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs, 1820-1877. McGeogh, 1965. Press cutting pasted by Thomas Stubbs into the MS of his Reminiscences. Date etc. not established.

167. Ibid.

168. C.A. C.O.2649 No. 134, Melville to Stockenstrom, 20.7.1823, quoted by Donaldson, 1974: 346.

who, "horrid to relate are living upon one another for want of other food."[169] Melville urged that they be taken into service. "I doubt not they will be acceptable servants to every class of people in the colony." For the Cape Town government,

> the question involved the reversal of a long-standing policy of non-intercourse between colonists and tribesmen. The acceptance into the colony of a handful of needy women and children in 1823 was to have far-reaching consequences, culminating in a decisive change of policy in 1828. [170]

Somerset arranged for the original 13 Mantatee women and children to be apprenticed for seven year periods in Graaff Reinet. Other refugees drifted into the frontier districts and were similarly apprenticed to colonists. "By March 1825 there were nearly 50 adult Mantatees apprenticed in the district of Graaff Reinet" and probably more wandering about or in informal service.[171] Some were apprenticed to the 1820 Settlers in Albany, including Philipps,[172] who called their family 'Bechuanas' and described them in favourable terms. The Council of Advice drew up terms of apprenticeship for the Africans and an indenture form with a seven-year period was approved. "Thus by April 1826 landdrosts were able to proceed with the indenture of tribesmen willing to remain in service with the colonists."[173] By 1828 a "great many" of these refugees had been sent to Grahamstown and "all who wanted servants and had not slaves were allowed to have a family..."[174] This went some way towards meeting the need for domestic and agricultural labour.

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169. John Melville, who was government agent at Griquatown wrote to the Landdrost of Graaff Reinet, "I wish it were possible for you to permit some farmers to come and take away the women that have been left behind by the two tribes that have been defeated. I have lately heard that there are hundreds at Old Latakoo and on the road to New Latakoo, as well as at Nokunning, a place 15 miles to the east of Latakoo." 31.8.1823. Moodie, p.226.

170. Donaldson, 1974: 346.

171. Ibid.

172. See above; Keppel-Jones, 1960: pp.251; 252-4; 257; 301; 314-5; 335.

173. Donaldson, 1974: 356. They included 'tribeswomen' as well as 'tribesmen'.

174. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 26.

Thus a small group of African women provided the impetus to the reversal of the long-established official policy prohibiting intercourse between colonists and the African people. This was to have important results. Within five years,

> The idea of encapsulated white communities settled in isolated 'locations' had given way, under economic pressure, to trade and interaction with the very people against whom the settlers were supposed to be the buffer. [175]

However, it was an interaction of unequals, in which Africans were incorporated into colonial society because of the demand for labour. This process was accelerated by the Mfecane or dispersal of the African tribes westwards by the rising Zulu state, which provided the Cape with significant numbers of Black agricultural and domestic servants.

In this process of disintegration and dispersal the remnants of the shattered Zizi, Hlubi and Bhele people settled among the Xhosa. They were later collectively known as the Mfengu (Fingoes): "we are wanderers seeking service." After the Frontier War of 1835 approximately 17 000 were settled in the neighbourhood of Fort Peddie, between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers.[176] The area was insufficiently large or fertile to support them, so deprived of access to the means of subsistence, they were forced into the Colony as agricultural and domestic wage labourers. Their need was so intense that it led some to offer their children as servants in order to secure their survival. Somerset wrote to the Governor that the scarcity of food and the desperation it caused was leading

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175. F. Wilson, 'An Assessment of the English-speaking South African's Contribution to the Economy - Another Point of View', pp.153-171 in de Villiers, 1976: 161.

176. D'Urban intended them to perform a hazardous role in the future defence of the Colony but military policy was disguised as philanthropy. The Fingoes were rescued "from the most abject and cruel slavery under the Kafirs." (Chase, 1843: 237.) "The rescue of the Fingoes from their captivity ..." "was a worthy act of English philanthropy." (Ward, 1851: 66.) However, the Mfengu did have a marginal status among the Gcaleka, and were in a state of cultural disorder, which made them much more receptive to missionary influence. This was to have important consequences. See below, Chapter 8, 'Education for Domesticity'.

> several of the Fingoes...[to offer] their children to the farmers to be brought up as servants which the farmers would willingly avail themselves of provided they could be indentured to them until eighteen years of age. This is most desirable... [177]

Clearly it was 'desirable' because it secured a source of cheap and reliable labour. The government permitted Mfengu children to be indentured and contracts similar to the apprenticeships designed for Khoi and 'Coloureds' during the Caledon governorship were approved. An individual Mfengu could be apprenticed until he or she reached 18 years of age as long as acceptable food, lodging, clothing and education (instruction in English and Christianity) were provided. Mfengu settled among the colonists as far west as Uitenhage where

> they have made themselves extremely useful, especially in the management of the cattle and in the tending of sheep, but seldom as domestic servants. 178

This pattern changed as increasing numbers found employment in frontier towns like Grahamstown.[179] Employment was not always on favourable terms. Mfengu who came into the colony as wage labourers after 1834-5 were often employed at lower wages than the Khoikhoi. "A Report from Theopolis cited the case of a neighbouring farmer who habitually refused to pay more than 1s a day for harvesters instead of the normal 1s6d because he could get all the Fingoes he needed for the lower price."[180] As Macmillan wrote,

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177. Quoted by R.A. Moyer, 'A History of the Mfengu of the Eastern Cape 1815-1865', London University, School of Oriental and African Studies. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1976, p.269.

178. Chase, 1843: 237. It is not clear whether they were not employed in that role or failed to perform that role adequately.

179. Shaw commented on the enormous increase in the Black population of Grahamstown between 1830 and 1833. Shaw, 1860: 283. The GTJ estimated that 6 000 or 7 000 Fingoes had been absorbed in Albany in the last 10 years. (28.2.1846). By 1856 there was an established Mfengu population in Grahamstown. It was during that year that the British in return for the considerable help of the Mfengu during the frontier wars issued the title deeds for an area of land adjacent to the town designated 'Fingo Village'.

180. Macmillan, 1927: 256.

> The old labour shortage on the Eastern Frontier was sensibly relieved by the coming of the Fingoes and other natives and labour has continued to be an unduly cheap commodity in those areas unto this day. [181]

The Cattle Killing of 1857 which followed the Xhosa defeat in the 1850-53 war provided a further impetus to Xhosa employment. It has been suggested that perhaps something of the order of 20 000 Xhosa died of starvation and 30 000 survivors sought sustenance as labourers in White employment.[182] At the time Sir George Grey was vigorously promoting a dual policy of land expropriation and civilization, by which he intended the rapid creation of a distinct small-holding class and of a wage-earning class who would be "useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue, in short, a source of wealth and strength to this colony."[183] The contribution of the Cattle Killing to this policy has raised the cynical question of whether Grey's agents were responsible for Nongqawuse's vision.[184]

The extent of the hardship involved is appalling. According to one source the Xhosa stole the dogs of King Williams Town and ate them, and there was some incidence of cannibalism involving mothers eating their own children. A domestic servant employed by Goldswain's daughter provides us with a case history illustrating how the hardship created by the Cattle Killing induced Xhosa women into domestic service.

> During the famine her master's home "became crowded from morning until Night with starving Kaffirs begging for food... I was afraid the Kaffirs would kill me for refusing them food as I had not food to give them. They said I was in the white man's house and could not refuse them food." Eventually she left her job "but was afraid to stay in Kaffirland for fear they would eat me: so I got a Pass to come here for work. [185]

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181. Macmillan, 1927: 253. Fifty years since Macmillan wrote, the position is unchanged.

182. C. Bundy, 'The Emergence and Decline of a South African Peasantry', pp.369-88, African Affairs, Vol.71, No.285, 1972, p.374.

183. Sir George Grey quoted by N. Majeke, The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest (Johannesburg: Society of Young Africa, 1952), p.66.

184. Ibid., pp.72-76.

185. U. Long (ed.), The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain, Albany Settler of 1820 (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1949), Vol.2, 1838-1858, Grahamstown, 23.12.1858, pp.193-194.

Many did so and have remained in the area ever since. For instance, Wilson found in 1932 when she was studying farm labour in the Eastern Cape that "some grandfathers of the farm workers had come with the famine that followed the Cattle Killing in 1857 and the families had remained ever since."[186] Twenty-five years later Roberts found the same pattern.[187]

As with the influx of Mfengu in 1834-5, the influx of Xhosa into the colony in 1857 naturally involved a lowering of wages. Labour was now a cheap and easily obtainable commodity. However, in some cases Xhosa labour was obtained for humanitarian rather than economic reasons:

> An African woman with an emaciated baby arrived at Lombards Post where the Fords were living to ask for work. Mrs Ford offered the woman 2/6 a month to do housework in the morning and hoeing in the lands in the afternoon, as well as food and lodging. She did not really require more help but felt sorry for the poor soul. The baby was called Cupani and grew up almost as one of the family. [188]

There were other periods of economic hardship induced by natural disasters such as drought, especially in 1876-78, and rinderpest epidemics, especially in 1896-97, that in some districts killed off 80 percent of the Africans' cattle.[189] The effect was to propel increasing numbers of Xhosas into wage labour.

3. Extra-economic Compulsions

Among the important factors here is the system of individual land tenure and taxation laws. Referring to the first poll tax, introduced in 1848 by Sir Harry Smith, Macmillan wrote,

> For the Xhosa and in the long run for most of these tribes, the effect of the tax was to leave them only

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186. M. Wilson, The Interpreters. Third Dugmore Memorial Lecture (Grahamstown: 1820 Settlers Monument Foundation, 1972), pp.13-14.

187. Roberts, 1959: 133.

188. D. Stirk, Southwell Settlers (Southwell, the author, 1971), p.22.

189. Bundy, 1971: 381.

> a stark choice: either they must subsist as best they might on their own remaining land; otherwise, and more immediately, they must undertake the only paid employment then offering, poorly paid service on a colonial farm. [190]

The tax established by the Glen Grey Act (1894) was imposed on every adult male, but the pressure to leave the subsistence economy and become a wage labourer was on the whole family unit. There was, furthermore, the role of the missionaries and traders.[191] The mission schools were a 'civilizing influence' which taught habits of industry, the necessity for wearing European clothes, and for following European mores in ways which stimulated the need for a cash income.[192] These factors accelerated the employment of Xhosa men and women. Peires suggests that initially

> the number of Xhosa employed by the Colonists does not appear to have been proportionately very great. The Colonists preferred the Tswana, Mfengu and Bhaca who had been brought on to the market by the Mfecane disturbance in the interior, and who, being more uprooted and more distant from their kin, were less likely to desert or to steal their employers' cattle. [193]

The numbers of Xhosas in the colonists' employment increased throughout the nineteenth century. In the initial area of contact, the Eastern Frontier, employment of Xhosas continued through the Frontier Wars of the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s. All pretence of a segregated frontier had been abandoned by officialdom in 1828 when Lieutenant-Governor Bourke's Council gave authority for the issue of passes to Nguni migrants who wished to enter the service of colonial farmers. Thus the incorporation of Nguni women into colonial society was first regularised in this Ordinance 49, a key piece of labour legislation which in many ways has a decidedly modern ring.

Ordinance 49 was "an attempt to regulate the flow of labour."[194] Its

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190. Macmillan, 1963: 303.

191. See below, Chapter 8, 'Education for Domesticity'.

192. Macmillan, 1963: 303; Macmillan, 1972: 373.

193. Peires, 1976: 179.

194. Macmillan, 1963: 88. Donaldson shows how Ordinance 49 was one of three complementary ordinances planned to effect a new labour policy in the Colony. Ordinance 50 introduced measures to

stated objective was to

> augment the amount of disposable labour, by affording the greatest facility compatible with the public safety, to the admission of Foreigners from the Tribes beyond the borders of the Settlement, who may be desirous of migrating to and sojourning in the Colony as Herdsmen, Field Labourers, House Servants, or in whatever capacity may be most suitable to their several inclinations and abilities. [195]

The ordinance not only provided for the admission of Nguni into the colony, but attempted to regulate the terms of admission and of employment through contract regulations and a pass system. The contracts obliged the employer "to provide the Foreigner...and such of his or her family as may be present with him or her sufficient food and decent clothing" during the period of the contract. Wages would be paid in money or cattle.

Donaldson shows that the efficient operation of the ordinance required an administrative machinery which was lacking especially in the frontier districts. Consequently there are gaps in our knowledge of the number of Nguni entering the colony.[196] It is clear that entry into the colony proved more popular than had been anticipated. "Many more Caffres came into the frontier districts of Albany and Somerset than could be absorbed into the labour market."[197] It is important to note that Nguni women entered the colony in terms of this ordinance both as dependants and as independent workers.

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ameliorate the condition of the Khoikhoi was to be followed by a general vagrancy ordinance, which was never passed. Viewing the two consecutive ordinances as complementary she suggests that the labour policy introduced by Bourke in 1828, "aimed at creating a free labour force within the colony, protected by law and enjoying equality before the law with all other inhabitants of the colony." Donaldson, 1974: 378.

195. Donaldson, 1974: 370. Tribes listed in Clause 2 of the Ordinance were "Caffres, Gonaquas, Tambookies, Griquas, Bosjesmen, Bechuanas, Mantatees and Namaquas or other Natives of the interior of Africa." In addition, Donaldson has found passes or contracts for persons described as Fingo, Fetcanie, Masouta, Zoolah, Mackwana and Masee.

196. This is exacerbated by the fact that the Ordinance was partially suspended at different areas at different times.

197. Donaldson, 1974: 402.

Between 1828 and 1833 a total of 488 passes were issued throughout the colony for 613 persons.[198] During that period in Albany 261 passes were issued, and 383 contracts.[199] Some of these permitted the entry of Nguni women as dependants. Between July and December 1828, 84 passes were issued in Albany for 137 persons, including 28 wives and 25 children. During this time seven passes were issued to women in their independent capacities: in Albany, Cishe aged 44, Sarah aged 40 and Kaatjie aged 37 from Gaika's tribe; Catarine aged 40, Leentjie and Male aged 32 from Eno's tribe; Jamula aged 30 from Botman's tribe. During the period July to December 1829 in Albany, four passes were issued to women in their independent capacities: Zumba aged 30 and Hugiva aged 23 from Eno's tribe; Aliena aged 13 a 'Masutu' and Sibaku aged 20 a Bechuana. There is a similar pattern in the other districts.[200]

Unfortunately neither the passes nor the contracts issued in terms of Ordinance 49 specified whether these Nguni women did agricultural or domestic work. It is evident from other sources, however, that increasing numbers found their way into domestic service. While the contracts of service show a considerable diversity, a clear pattern emerges of women usually receiving the lowest wages.

Table 28. Some 1828 and 1829 Female Contracts of Service[201]

Name and age	District	Tribe	Employer	Date	Monthly cash wage	Completion of Contract
Sarah (40)	Albany	Gaika's	D.Boyers	21/11	2/6	10 goats worth 3/- each
Kaatjie (37)	Albany	Gaika's	D.Boyers	21/11	2/6	10 goats worth 3/- each
Catryn (40)	Albany	Eno	J.Prinsloo	13/12	1/3	5 goats worth 3/- each

198. Donaldson, 1974: 420.

199. In January 1829 Thomas Philipps wrote, "The number of Caffres who have come into this part of the Country under the 49th Ordinance have proved of the greatest service and generally their conduct is excellent." C.A. C.O.2713 No.258, Philipps to Bell, 29.1.1829. Quoted by Donaldson, 1974: 420.

200. C.O. 2712-130. Cape Archives.

201. C.O. 27-2-129. Cape Archives.

Name and age	District	Tribe	Employer	Date	Monthly cash wage	Completion of Contract
Male (32)	Albany	Eno	J.Prinsloo	13/12	1/3	5 goats worth 3/- each
Jamula (30)	Albany	Botman	J.Delport	18/12	1/3	5 goats worth 3/- each
Candaas (16)	Uitenhage	Mantatee	C.Meyer	22/12	1/6	-
Sabina (32)	Worcester	Mantatee	J.Viljoen	31/7	No cash wage. Lodgings, clothing and "good and wholesome food."	
Mary (16)	Beaufort	Bushman	J.Harris	21/8	No cash wage. Clothing: "2 suits, 1 gown, 1 spencer, a petticoat of common chintz, a shift of linen and a handkerchief."	
Griet (16)	Beaufort	Bushman	J.Oosthizen	27/8	"6 rix-dollars, 3 she goats, a gown of common chintz and a handkerchief."	
Sibuku (20)	Albany	Bechuana	H.Ulyate	7/7	9d	-
Peggy	Albany	-	J.Atherstone	13/7	4/-	-
Catie	Albany	-	J.Maynard	13/7	No cash wage. 10 goats.	
Jane (18)	Graaff Reinet	Bechuana	F.Ernest	12/6	1/6	-
Lea (17)	Somerset	Mantatee	P.Smit	17/11	No cash wage. 2 goats.	

These are the lowest wages recorded in service contracts in Albany.[202] Some men were now earning as much as 5/- a month, though the average monthly cash wage was 2/5. However, only women in Albany were paid exclusively in goats on the completion of their contracts. The men

202. C.O. 51/15, A5, Copy of the Register kept in the district of Albany of contracts for service executed from 4/7 to 3/12/1828 between inhabitants of the Colony and Caffres or other foreigners under the provision of Ordinance 49. Cape Archives.

mostly got cows worth 10/- or £1 12s 6d, or heifers worth 15/- each. If the men were given goats it was in addition to cows. In 1831 Peggy, employed by J. Atherstone, earned 4/- a month, but many men working for a cash wage earned almost double that amount; 7s 6d was common. Also it should be noted that this 4/- was the wage at which Peggy started working for Atherstone two years previously.

There were some husband-wife combinations which involved joint payment. For example, Jan and Mary went on contract (20/12/1828) to Piet Retief for one year at wages of 3/4 a month. At the expiration of the contract, they were to receive two cows worth £1 2s 6d each. Sometimes such combinations involved separate payment. Andries and his wife, Marie, from Jongas tribe, went on contract (10/12/1828) to J.A. Ferrara in the Uitenhage district to work for one year for no cash wage but food, clothing, and at the expiration of the contract he was to receive a heifer, a cow and a calf, and she was to receive five she-goats.

These contracts of service raise several questions. What, for instance, was the real value of these cash wages and completion of contract payments? Philipps states in 1828 that he pays his Blacks "no wages, only food, dwelling, clothing and a cow or two at the end of the year. The latter accumulate, so that they are much better off in every respect than the cottager in Britain."[203] The comparison between a British cottager and a Xhosa migrant worker is hardly convincing.[1] The question must also arise as to whether servants actually received these terminal payments. Certainly Mfengu frequently brought complaints before the British courts concerning employment. Moyer reports that,

> when Mfengu completed their periods of service whites frequently refused to pay them the agreed sums or attempted to compel them to remain in service. They also complained of beatings by their employers.[204]

Maxwell has pointed out that one of the points of contention was that the Mfengu took the month to be the lunar month of 28, not 30 or 31 days.[205] Clearly these workers and their employers were operating in

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203. Philipps, 23/11/1828, p.39, Vol.V, MS 7612, Cory Library.

204. Moyer, 1976: 281.

205. W.A. Maxwell, personal communication, March 1979.

two different cultural universes. Africans served in one but thought in another. The possibilities for mutual misunderstanding were enormous.

Finally, it is extremely difficult to estimate the real as opposed to the purely cash earnings of these domestic and agricultural workers. Board and lodging seems to have been an important inducement, but it is difficult to put a monetary value on this. However meagre the payments may appear, they were sufficient to attract considerable numbers of wage labourers. By August 1829, military officials estimated that there were over 1 000 foreigners from various tribes in the district of Albany alone, as well as many who had entered illegally. "Clearly," Donaldson writes, "many Xhosa were eager to regain admission to the Zuurveld area from which they had been removed in 1812."[206] But where they had then been cattle herders with access to water and grazing, they were now returning as wage labourers, not at all the same thing.

As wage labourers they were subject to a hierarchy of wages structured according to racial and sexual status. Black women were located at the bottom, as the following tabulation shows:

Table 29. Wages in the Eastern Cape (Unskilled) 1821-1862[207]

Date and area	Racial and sexual status	Type of work	Payment
1821 Lower Albany	Europeans	Labourers	3-4s a day
1822 Bathurst	Europeans	Labourers	2s a day plus board
1823 Eastern frontier	Xhosa	General	3d a day paid in beads, cottons, brass wire, cotton handkerchiefs and pieces of iron

206. Donaldson, 1974: 423-424.

207. This tabulation is drawn from a variety of sources of varying reliability. For example, 'Hottentots contract of Hiring and Service in Albany 6/2/1841.' MS 2219, Cory Library; Settler diaries and notebooks such as those of Joseph Stirk, MS 7,334, Cory Library; Charles Bell, MS 7287, Cory Library; the Harman Papers, MS 14773-5, Cory Library; etc.

Date and area	Racial and sexual status	Type of work	Payment
1824 Albany	Europeans	Servants	£12 a year with subsistence
1825 Albany	Khoikhoi	Servants	1s6d a day plus board
1825 Barville Park	Khoikhoi	Servants	Married couple 10s3d per month
1828 Albany	Bechuanas	Servants	2s6d per month per couple
1828 Albany	European men	Agricultural labourers	£18 p.a.
1828 Grahamstown	European men	Servants	£36 plus board and lodging
1828 Albany	Xhosa	Servants	3s9d per couple per month
1828 Albany	Xhosa	Servants	1s10½d per month
1830 Albany	Europeans	Domestic servants	£2 5s per month with board and lodging
1832 Albany	European males	Agricultural workers	£2 per month with board and lodging
1832 Albany	European females	Domestic workers	£1 12s6d per month
1832 Grahamstown district	European females	Domestic servants	£1 10s - £1 15s per month
1832 Grahamstown district	'Non-European' 'girls'	Domestic servants	10s to £1 per month
1833 Lower Albany	Europeans	Domestic servants	50s per month with board and lodging
1833 Grahamstown	Khoikhoi women	Housemaid	6s a month with food and lodging. 12-month contract with Eksteen Wienand
1838 Clumber district	Khoikhoi male	Agricultural	15s per month for adult and son

Date and area	Racial and sexual status	Type of work	Payment
1840s Eastern Cape	'Bantu labour'	General	5s - 7s6d per month
1840 Port Elizabeth	Mfengu males	Longshore-men	3s a day
1840 Grahamstown area	Mfengu	Day labourers	1s6d a day. (Appealed to Magistrate for 2s6d a day, as sufficient to support themselves.)
1841 Eastern Cape urban areas	European 'women, girls and boys'	Domestic servants	£20 - £36 each p.a. plus maintenance and lodging
1841 Grahamstown	Khoikhoi woman	Washer-woman	6s payable monthly without food. Under 12-month contract to District Surgeon, J. Atherstone
1841 Albany	Khoikhoi male	Farm servant	12s a month with food and lodging. 12-month contract
1841 Albany	Khoikhoi male	General servant	16s a month without food, clothing or lodging
1841 Albany	Khoikhoi male	General	7s6d a month plus food and lodging. 12-monthly contract with William Cockcroft
1841 Grahamstown	Khoikhoi male	Wagon driver	£1 1s a month with food and lodging
1841 Albany	Khoikhoi	General servant	19s6d a month plus food and lodging
1843 Eastern Cape	European males	Domestic servants	£20 - £27 p.a.
1843 Eastern Cape	European females	Domestic servants	£9 - £12 - £15 p.a.
1843 Albany	Mfengu women	Agricultural workers	9d - 1s a day
1848	Xhosa male	Herding	Between 5, 6 and 7 dollars a month

Date and area	Racial and sexual status	Type of work	Payment
1848	Khoikhoi	General	4s6d a month, "very seldom more than 10s"
1848	Khoikhoi	General	1s6d a month
1849 Waterloo Bay area	Xhosa	Reapers	1s a day
1849 Waterloo Bay area	Mfengu	'Clearing fields'	2s6d per week
1850 Grahamstown	European males	Domestic servants	25s - 45s
1850 Grahamstown	European females	Domestic servants	18s - 30s
1851 Albany	Mfengu	Ploughing	£5 to plough a field which was done in 7 days
1851 Albany	Mfengu male	Herding	£6 for 8 months work
1858 Albany	Xhosa female	Agricultural work	9d - 1s a day
1858 Albany	Xhosa female	Domestic servant	2s6d a month plus board and lodging
1862 Albany	Xhosa male	Herding	2s6d a week
1862 Albany	Xhosa	Agricultural	2s8d a week plus pumpkins

These rates of pay can only be appreciated if set against the backdrop of the following tabulation of some skilled European wages in the Eastern Cape during the same period.

Table 30. Skilled European Wages in the Eastern Cape, 1820-1855[208]

Date and area	Occupation	Payment
1820 Bathurst	Provisional Medical Officer	£45 p.a.
1821 Grahamstown	Deputy Landdrost	£130
1821 Bathurst	Farmers (Philipps)	£300 p.a. (income)
1821 Towns	Masons and Carpenters	5s - 10s a day
1821 Bathurst	Postmaster	£22 10s p.a.
1821 Port Kowie	Harbourmaster and Pilot	£45 p.a.
1825 Port Kowie	Magistrate	£90 p.a.
1826	Male Shop Assistant	£2 12s6d per month plus board and lodging
1826 Port Francis	Customs Officer	£97 10s p.a.
1827 Port Francis	Schoolmaster	£50 p.a.
1828 Grahamstown	Resident Magistrate	£500 p.a.
1830 Port Francis	Postmaster	£18 p.a.
1830 Grahamstown	Market Master	£22 p.a.
1830 Bathurst	Constable	£33 p.a.
1830 Bathurst	Missionary	£75 p.a.
1833 Bathurst	Schoolmaster (European)	£60 p.a. with £15 for house rent
1834	Schoolmaster ('Native')	£4 - £12 p.a.
1836 Bathurst	Resident Magistrate	£100 p.a.
1838	Schoolmaster (European)	£80 p.a.
1848 Bathurst	Chief Policeman	£40 p.a.
1855 Bathurst	Resident Magistrate	£300 p.a.

208. This tabulation and the prices which follow has been abstracted from Settler diaries, notebooks and letters in Cory Library. Morse-Jones, 1964-1968 was especially useful.

During this period in Albany the cost of basic foodstuffs and livestock seems to have varied enormously. In Grahamstown in 1821 tea cost between 7s and 10s per lb.; in Bathurst in 1850 it was 3s a lb.; sugar cost 9d per lb. in Grahamstown in 1821, 4¼d in Bathurst in 1850. While mutton was 1d per lb. in Grahamstown in 1831, it was 3½d per lb. in Bathurst in 1850, and 2½d per lb. in Kaffirs Drift in 1824. Clearly it is impossible to try and establish any kind of consumer price index against which to evaluate these wages.

The prices of livestock varied even more widely. In 1820 cows were worth £1 6s to £2; goats were worth 6s to 8s each. In 1827 draught oxen fetched £1 17s6d, sheep and goats £3 7s6d per score. In 1838 a cow was worth about 15s, an ox 30s and a sheep from 1s6d to 2s. In 1850 oxen were sold for sums varying from £2 3s6d to £4 per head; this rose in 1851 when cows were worth £6 each, and again in 1852 when cows were worth £10 each.

Three points emerge clearly from this extremely crude tabulation: wages for unskilled work were extremely low; the wage differential was extremely wide; and there was a clear hierarchy of wages structured on racial and sexual status so that 'Non-European' women are paid the lowest wages.[209] Such women came to dominate domestic service.

Low cash wages were justified then, as now, on two grounds: firstly, that the value of board and lodging given was considerable; and secondly, that domestic service was an unskilled occupation. The value of board and lodging was determined entirely by the employer. While this clearly allowed for a good deal of variation, it was often at a fairly low level. As regards the level of skill involved, domestic service similarly incorporated a good deal of variation. This ranged from Merriman's domestic servant who, while he was at Cradock, was "a hulking Fingo woman, the extent of whose abilities were to light the kitchen fire, boil the kettle and milk the goats",[210] to Mrs Mary Taylor's Mfengu servant, Annie, who "now does many things I used to do.

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209. This is true of South Africa today. See Chapter 7, 'Discrimination on the Basis of Race and Sex'.

210. Merriman, September 1852. The Cape Journals of Archdeacon H.J. Merriman, 1848-1855 (Cape Town: The Van Riebeeck Society, 1957), p.196.

[Healdtown in 1872.] She makes excellent sponge cakes as light as any pastry."[211] Mrs John Ross in a letter to her mother of September 1825 from Incehre states that she has two domestic servants:

> The older one has been with me since I came to this country except for seven months. She is a tall, fine young woman...I have taught her to do everything for me. She makes candles, salts meat, churns, bakes bread, cooks, washes and dresses, sews, knits stockings and darns them well. When I was confined she did everything without any oversight...Strangers have taken notice how well they set and serve the table...I had most trouble in teaching them to stand when washing clothes in a tub. [212]

However, after this impressive recital, Mrs Ross ends, "still a Scotch girl will work more than the two," and complains of their laziness.[213]

It seems that at the time Mrs Ross was unusual in her employment of "Caffre servants":

> Mrs Thomson and I are the only persons that have wrought away with Caffre servants. The Methodist missionaries wives have English servants, besides Hottentots from the colony. [214]

The Ross family employed

> a man to herd the cattle and milk the cows. He gets food and clothes and two axes in the year. We have two girls for the house. I have given them three dresses each. [215]

Mrs Ross seems to have been somewhat ambivalent about her domestic servants. From her letters she appears to be a warm, compassionate and responsive person. She went to great pains to teach her servants sewing and literacy. Yet the Caffres generally, and servants specifically, are perceived to be lazy, often stupid, lacking in initiative, grasping, careless and ungrateful. The one quality lacking from the conventional

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211. Mrs Mary Taylor's Journal, MS 15,163. Methodist Archives. Cory Library, Rhodes University.

212. Mrs John Ross. Letter to her mother between September and end of 1825. Long, 1947: 220.

213. Ibid.

214. Mrs John Ross. Letter to her husband's mother, 9th July 1827, from Lovedale. Long, 1947: 227.

215. Mrs John Ross, after August 1824. Long, 1947: 214.

domestic servant stereotype is dishonesty.[216]

> The Doctor's lady was astonished that I could entrust them with everything. There is nothing locked up and I have missed nothing. [217]

The Philipps family at Glendower similarly found their servants scrupulously honest, but their attitude was exceptional. Then, as now, complaining about the dishonesty of servants was a fairly constant theme. Mary Moffat writing from Griquatown in 1820, complains of servants thieving. Africans "seem to count all Europeans stingy."[218] No doubt they often appeared so because, as Mary Taylor realised,

> self denial is very remarkable in a Fingo or Kafir as they usually think there is no end to the riches of the white people. [219]

Colonial housewives were constantly warned to be on their guard:

> The keys of the tantalus and store cupboards must be strictly guarded and every precaution taken for the safety of money and trinkets. There are native servants who are skilful, temperate and honest, but, unless you are very sure that you possess such a treasure, it is well to be careful. [220]

The Philipps family of Glendower are the prime example of benevolent employers. Mrs Philipps writes very affectionately of their Bechuana family whom they made clothes for and generally treated as "one of the family": "They appear quite happy and contented," though she finds it

> astonishing they should immediately place such confidence in us, from the first moment they did not seem to have the least fear, but to think everything we did

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216. It was pointed out above how quickly class-based typifications were transposed into a racist ideology.

217. Mrs John Ross, 1825. Long, 1947: 220.

218. Mary Moffat, August 11th 1820. MS 6,027, Cory Library, Rhodes University.

219. Mary Taylor writing from Healdtown, 1872. MS 15,163. Methodist Archives. Cory Library, Rhodes University.

220. Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives (Durban: Robinson and Co., 1916), pp.15-16. This is full of charming advice, such as: "White mistresses should remember that native male servants cannot be relegated entirely to the plane of domestic animals." p.17. (Emphasis mine.)

> was right and for their good. We have taken the little girl into the House entirely, she is really a sweet Child, so extremely clever and good humoured, full of spirits and real fun, and behaves so well. A word or a look is sufficient to keep her in order. [221]

A few months later Mr Philipps writes:

> Our new servants, the Bechuanas go on extremely well and are exceedingly attached. When I come home after a few days absence they all rush to see me and express their pleasure. What a noble race of People all the neighbouring Blacks are. 222

Philipps brings them presents, such as "a little snuff box each." The two youngest girls

> are daily improving in English and make themselves extremely useful.... Our little Sabina is everything to us, she waits at Table and her remarks and cleverness in repartee is a source of amusement to all. She is a most uncommon child, talks English perfectly, and neither in word nor action has ever betrayed conduct unworthy of the daughter of a British subject. She is genteel in her appearance and was everything from the first. Her mother is a very superior person and now that we can understand her, we find her possessing extraordinary sentiments of right with an abhorrence of wrong. [223]

Several months later,

> Our Bechuanas continue to improve greatly and nothing of the Savage remains, a milder set of People I never saw from the beginning and they are strictly honest. They appear to have as great a horror of stealing or speaking an untruth, as we would have and punish it very severely in their children. [224]

While there is a simple affection in these letters that is appealing, the key qualities the Philipps family admires in their servants are

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221. Mrs Philipps writing from Glendower, 27.11.1825. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 253.

222. Mr Philipps from Glendower, 15.1.1826. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 257.

223. Mr Philipps from Glendower, 13.6.1828. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 335.

224. Mrs Philipps from Glendower, October 1826. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 314-15.

their faithfulness, trust, obedience and loyalty. These are par excellence the qualities of subordinates.

There is evidence of affection and concern in the relations of other Eastern Cape families with their domestic servants. The relationship between Mrs Mary Taylor and her Mfengu domestic servant, Annie, or that of Charles Bell with his servants, who seem often to have accompanied the family on excursions into town and on picnics.[225] Still, the relationship is one of highly structured inequality, with none of the intimacy sometimes found between domestic servants and their employers in other cultures.[226] A corollary of this is that domestic servants were probably less exposed to sexual exploitation. While Barrow suggested that "Hottentot girls in the service of the colonists are in situations too dependent to dare to reject the preferred embraces of the young [Boer] peasantry", social distance and racial prejudice sometimes acted against this.[227] In his private journals, Livingstone remarked that he could not imagine any European being so attracted to an African woman "as to covet criminal intercourse." He had never met "a beautiful woman among the Black people." A few were "passable", but "none at all to be compared to what one may meet with among English servant girls."[228] (Emphasis mine.)

Xhosa 'girls' integrated into a Settler family could be subjected to considerable cultural conflict. This is illustrated by the account of the Cattle Killing as it was told to Goldswain's daughter by her Xhosa servant, who experienced an intense conflict between her father who came to fetch her to accompany him to witness the great event, and her master:

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225. Charles Bell's diary, MS 7287 (1882), Cory Library.

226. For example, that described by Fielding in Tom Jones between Sophia and her maid Mrs Honour, who is a valuable source of information, if not advice. However, here too, the intimacy is carefully structured in terms of the social distance between them.

227. Barrow, Vol. I, 1806: 97.

228. Livingstone private journals, p.272. Quoted by H.A. Cairns, Prelude to Imperialism. British Reactions to Central African Society. 1840-1890 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p.52.

> My master was verey angrey with my Father and told him how fulish it was for him as he would see nothing. I was verey willing to go altho with the white man talking so much about it I youest to lath at my Father and he would cale me a mad English girl and say he could not cale me his child if I was so fulish [a] girl. [229]

This kind of conflict emerges from a measure of loyalty and affection towards one's employer. Again there is extreme variation here. Hattersley suggests that "servants were civil and their treatment, in general, conspicuously considerate,"[230] although the treatment of Harriet Polack belies this. Of course, most cases of ill-treatment of domestic servants would have been largely 'masked', so that only a small proportion would have 'surfaced' and been processed through the courts. Certainly, the law was quick to impose sanctions in case of desertion and breach of their indentures, insubordination and disobedience.[231] A case was tried in Cradock in 1832 whereby a servant who was charged with desertion was sentenced to 14 days hard labour, followed by eight days on spare diet.[232] Such oppressive treatment did not stop Mrs Smith complaining in 1839 from Wood Farm, near Sidbury, that

> The laws here are much too lenient, if a servant transgresses the only punishment they get is probably two or three months imprisonment on rice water which they do not at all care for as an indolent life is just what they enjoy. [233]

In February 1859 a coloured servant in Cape Town was sentenced to 48 hours confinement on rice and water for replying when roused by her employer: "I'll get up as soon as it is convenient."[234] It would be interesting to know what hours she was expected to work.

Hours were long, but conceivably shorter than at present. At least Mrs John Ross wrote,

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229. Long, 1949: 192.

230. Hattersley, 1969: 253.

231. Macmillan describes the last two as "highly characteristic South African offences." Macmillan, 1927: 156.

232. GTJ, 23.3.1832.

233. Long, 1946: 250.

234. Cape Monitor, 23.2.1859. Quoted by Hattersley, 1969: 253.

> All the servants here must have some time to themselves and when at work they have very frequently some of their companions with them. They do nothing after dark. [235]

The employment of 'live-in' servants who cooked the meals and waited at table was not uncommon.[236] But it appears that the usual practice was for servants to live out. George Impey wrote to his sister from Salem that since their English servant left them,

> we have had native servants who do not sleep on the premises but come in the morning and leave directly after tea. This is a very usual practice here, a few people incline to find lodgings for the natives they in general being far from cleanly in their persons and habits. [237]

While the 'native servants' were not considered clean enough to live in the house, they were clean enough to do most of the work inside it. The risk of 'contamination' was high:

> One of the great drawbacks to the employment of raw natives is the fact that they are dirty. Many of them swarm with vermin. [238]

Overall there seems to have been little difference between the British settlers and the frontier Dutch colonists as regards the treatment of African people. In fact there is some evidence that the frontier Dutch treated them better than did the British settlers. A Bethelsdorp missionary told the 1823 Commissioners of Inquiry that,

> the Hottentots are much influenced in the question of wages by the character of the masters with whom they serve, as well as the mode in which their wages are to be paid. They are found to prefer the service

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235. Long, 1947: 220.

236. For example, the evidence of Aurora Windvogel in the trial of John Curtis (GTJ, 18.10.1832); Samuel Impey boarded with a lady in Grahamstown who had a 'live in' "native servant girl." (Letter of George Impey to his sister, 18.8.1845), MS 866, Cory Library.

237. George Impey from Salem, 20.9.1849.

238. Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives, 1916, p.17.

> of the Cape boors to that of the English settlers, who pay them better wages than the former, but exact more labour. [239]

In 1851 Merriman wrote that he had

> learnt to modify much my ideas of Dutch harshness towards the coloured people who serve them...there is much in kindness exercised towards them in a way that English masters and mistresses seem incapable of. [He] ceased to wonder at the preference which coloured people frequently show for living in service with Dutch people rather than English. There is less of awful distance kept up between the parties in one case than the other. The Dutchman will allow the coloured man to have all his relations and belongings come and live with him, which an Englishman rarely will. Moreover he acts preemptorily, but speaks kindly and less haughtily to the natives than an English gentleman is used to do to his inferiors; nor has he, like the latter any drawing room in which himself and his wife are secluded. [240]

A hundred and twenty-two years later, Preston-Whyte reported the same finding.

The treatment of African labour has to be understood in terms of the administrative framework whereby such labour was tightly controlled and regulated. Ordinance 49 was the key piece of legislation, but even here our knowledge is incomplete. It remained on the statute book until 1867, but had been partially suspended ten years previously, when the Xhosa Cattle Killing resulted in a large-scale influx of Africans into the colony necessitating new regulations. Much about the incorporation of African women workers is unclear. On 2nd January a proclamation issued by the Governor, Sir Harry Smith (legalised in an ordinance dated 27th June 1848), provided for the employment of 'Kaffir youths' in the Cape Colony. Each youth was to be apprenticed by indenture. An

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239. Quoted by H.M. Wright, The Burden of the Present: Liberal - Radical Controversy over South African History (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1977), p.38. Wright suggests that the liberal assumption that right-wing Afrikaner tradition lies at the root of South Africa's contemporary racial problems is still widely held. However, he points out that there is substantial evidence about the Afrikaners which the liberal interpretation has not taken fully into account, for instance, their treatment of their indigenous labour.

240. Merriman, 1957: 174.

apprentice under the age of 15 might enter a trade, or become a farm or domestic servant, until he was 18. An apprentice of 15 or over might not be indentured for more than three years. In March 1848 Smith told Earl Grey (Secretary for the Colonies) that several hundred 'Kaffir youths' had accepted service in the colony and he hoped that many more would do so. The proclamation is apparently intended to refer only to 'Kaffir' males. However, from Goldswain's evidence it is clear that females also became apprentices. In September 1849 Goldswain wrote to thank Mackinnon (Chief Commissioner of British Kaffraria) for his trouble concerning four indentured 'Kaffir' servants who had absconded before the end of their contract with Goldswain, and asked for five men as sheep and cattle herders and two women about 16 years old as domestic servants.[241]

Indenture contracts and 'Pass' regulations then, as now, imposed constraints on the mobility of African labour.[242] Despite this tight administrative framework it seems that domestic work in the Eastern Cape was a fairly mobile occupation, involving frequent changes of jobs,[243] though it was not as mobile as in Britain where in the rural areas the hiring of domestic servants took place at hiring fairs such as that described by Hardy in Far from the Madding Crowd.

For the first half of the nineteenth century the Eastern frontier was highly unsettled. Clearly, the movement of 'foreigners' was intensified during periods of war, but what happened to Nguni servants is problematic. Sometimes Xhosa servants were imprisoned during war time, though it seems unlikely that this included women. In 1851 Merriman found that upwards of seventy African men were in jail in Grahamstown, many of them servants.[244] Naturally the dependants of these men were in

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241. Long, 1949: 106-107.

242. Ordinance No.2 of 1837 required 'foreigners' to carry passes on pain of being returned to the service of their master, or of being assigned, with their own consent to the service of some 'creditable inhabitants', failing either alternative they were to be removed beyond the limits of the Colony. (Macmillan, 1927: 254). In more contemporary language, they were to be 'endorsed out.'

243. See Impey, September 1847, MS 869.

244. They had been shut up for three months, heavily ironed "with only ½lb of bread and ½lb of meat per diem to each man,

a difficult position. Joseph Stirk writes in January 1851,

> 55 Kaffir women arrived here from Grahamstown on their way to Kaffirland, all their men having been put into the Prison for conspiracy. [245]

Travelling to Kaffirland must have been hazardous, since the British did not always extend the same chivalry towards women that the Xhosa did.[246] Sometimes Nguni servants deserted their employers. Shone in February 1851 reports, "the news here [Clumber] is that all the Kaffir servants at Bathurst, both men and women, are leaving their masters."[247] In June it was rumoured they "plan to join the war party." Others stayed in their employment.

> In spite of the hostilities during 1835 and the persistent suspicion and mistrust of the years after the war, there is evidence that considerable numbers of tribesmen, including Caffres, remained within the Colony during and after the hostilities. [248]

Shone and Stirk reported that they had Mfengu men and women in their employment right through 1851. Other African servants were protected by their employers. When Fort Peddie expected an attack in April 1846, all the women were removed to the barrack room: "All go with the exception of Mrs Maclean, she however sends her servants and children."[249] In Grahamstown in 1851, Harriet Ward describes military wives fleeing with their servants and children to the Drostdy barracks. Overall it seems difficult to generalise about what happened to African servants during the Frontier Wars.

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together with a pint of greasy water, which with a cruel mockery was called soup." Merriman, 1957: 150.

245. Stirk, 28.2.1851.

246. See, for example, entries in the diary of Thomas Shone, October 1851, "4 Kaffirs shot dead and 1 woman wounded severely"; entries in Joseph Stirk's diary for 3rd August 1851 and 4th October 1851; according to Pringle, after the battle of Grahamstown Xhosa "women and helpless old people were often slaughtered indiscriminately." Pringle, 1835: 301. Professor Maxwell has pointed out to me that Pringle gives no authority for this statement and she knows of none. (Private communication).

247. Shone, 25.2.1851.

248. C.A. L.G.7, Return of Native Foriegners in the different field cornetcies of the frontier districts, 1838. Quoted by Donaldson, 1974: 433.

249. Letter from Rev. Davies Long, in Long, 1946: 103.

Clearly the conflict which occurred on the Eastern Cape frontier between 1779 and 1879 intensified and sharpened racial attitudes. It has been claimed that racism was generated 'in toto' by the frontier situation.[250] However, this notion has been effectively criticised, in terms of the primacy of labour relations.[251] Clearly, the 1820 Settlers came to a society in which racial domination was established, and to which they brought their own racial stereotypes and hierarchical notions of social class.[252] The two cultural sources fused in a racialist ideology, so that English settlers joined the Dutch colonists in the outcry against Ordinance 50 of 1828, and Pringle was distressed that some settlers

> appear to have imbibed, in their full extent, the same inhuman prejudices towards the natives of the soil [as characterised the Dutch].[253]

These prejudices were amplified by the social distance generated by a rigid system of stratification.[254]

The frontier variant of racism was articulated by people such as Robert Godlonton who saw the Xhosa as "hordes of robbers, crafty, faithless, debased and cruel,"[255] and John Mitford Bowker in his famous 'Springbok'

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250. In the idealist tradition that claims a racialist ideology as the key explanatory factor in South African history, the frontier has a special importance. See MacCrone, 1937, 'Race Attitudes and Colour Prejudice', pp.125-126.

251. Race by itself explains nothing. The importance of racism lies in its function as an ideology which legitimises exploitation. See Cairns, 1965: 235; Johnstone, 1976: 6-7; Fanon, 1970: 41; Simson, 1973: 427; Freund, 1976, etc.

252. They came from "a society in which racial stereotype had already been quite strongly formed," (Welsh, in De Villiers, 1976: 218). Bolt shows that "by the Victorian period the word 'black' had come to evoke evil, sin, treachery, ugliness, filth and degradation." C. Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p.131. In fact, racism was already established in late sixteenth century British society to the extent that Queen Elizabeth could write that there were "alreadyie here to manie" Black people and they should be "sente forth of the land." J. Walvin, Black and White, A Study of the Negro in English Society from 1555 to 1945 (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1973), p.8.

253. Pringle, 1835: 302.

254. See Merriman, p.270 above.

255. Quoted by McGeogh, 1965.

speech to a meeting of frontier farmers in 1844.[256] Welsh suggests that "this was an extreme point of view, uttered no doubt in the heat of provocation."[257] However, the Graham's Town Journal during the 30s, 40s and 50s is steeped in racialist sentiments. The Mfengu were "a poor, spiritless, weakminded race of people", "completely devoid of intelligence." The Xhosa character has "all the baser qualities... without anything either noble or generous or possessing one spark of honour or integrity." The Khoikhoi are characterised by "fickleness and ingratitude." Racist attitudes reach a peak in the writings of Harriet Ward. The Kaffir has "neither generosity nor graditude." He is "a liar, a thief and a beggar." Although less than human,

> the Kaffir, at the first onset, is perhaps less ferocious than cunning, and more intent on serving his own interests by theft than on taking life from the mere spirit of cruelty; but once roused, he is like the wild beast after the taste of blood and loses all the best attributes of humanity.

But whether roused or not,

> a Kaffir skin more resembles the hide of some powerful animal than the skin of a human being. In the early part of this war [1846] some persons procured the entire skin of a Kaffir, and had it treated in the same way that leather is first prepared for tanning. I am told that the texture is at least three times the thickness of a white man's and I see no reason for doubting the assertion. [258]

Harriet Ward was an army officer's wife, and her racial attitudes were coloured by the experience of war. Macmillan writes,

> The settlers can hardly be blamed if they were absorbed in their own task of reclaiming a new district from barbarism - with little sympathy or attention to spare for the neighbouring barbarians - the Bantu being indeed dangerous and hostile neighbours. [259]

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256. Bowker compared the Xhosa to the springbok which had vanished before the face of the white man, much to the country's great benefit. J.M. Bowker, Speeches, 1864: 125.

257. Welsh in De Villiers, 1976: 220.

258. Ward, 1851: 165, 158, 98 and 165.

259. Macmillan, 1963: 120.

But what if the Bantu were servants of long standing service rather than 'dangerous and hostile neighbours'?

Jeremiah Goldswain maintains that

> there is a few wich you may trust (of the Kaffer) but few.... I have had them more or less for the last 25 years and the more you give them the more they want: in fact they are never sitified and all the most of thous Kaffers - wether men or women - that as been in my service would gladly return into my service and will acnolige that I ham a good Master yet I know but one family... But if thear was an another war they would be the firs to rob me and if possible to murder me and all my family. This is thear carreter. [260]

Even good relations with individual African servants who are experienced as loyal and faithful, did not always undermine negative racial attitudes. Calderwood declared that

> among Caffres and Hottentots, there are many excellent servants. We have had of both these classes in our house as good and faithful servants as could possibly be expected. But I fear this cannot with truth be represented as the general experience. [261]

Thus 'typifications' are entrenched and often are not shifted or re-defined even by contradictory personal experience.[262]

Sometimes personal experience operated to reinforce such typifications. For example, Frederick Rex wrote to his father from Grahamstown in August 1835 that he had brought about ten men and ten women Mfengu as far as Fort Willshire whom he intended sending on to his father at Knysna. He saw them as

> an ugly, dirty looking set of people more especially the women who are too filthy to look at, however I have not a doubt that having them driven to the Island and back again once a day may have a good effect upon their scabby old legs. [263]

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260. Long, 1949: 127.

261. Calderwood, 1858: 61.

262. In the Eastern Cape today negative images of Africans generally are frequently contradicted by an individual employer's experience of their own domestic servant, but the negative image remains intact. See Chapter 5, 'The Employers of Domestic Workers'.

263. Long, 1946: 177.

Rex himself had two servants from Pato's people who "make most excellent servants." A Mfengu servant had behaved very well in his employ for about a month, "but he appears to be in want of flogging now that his belly is full." Later he wrote to his father "you are right about the Fingoes they are a good for nothing set."[264]

Even in the best servant-employer relationships - those containing most concern and kindness, such as those in the Philipps family - the African is implicitly viewed as a child. The child analogy involves a very fundamental denial of equality. It is often a component of racist, sexist and classist ideologies. There is a clear analogy between attitudes towards Africans and those towards the lower classes in Britain: qualities of irresponsibility, immaturity, excitability and emotionalism are attributed to both. Cairns points to a consequent "Tendency for race relations to be patterned after class relations."[265] The institution of domestic service thus represented a vehicle in which class-bound attitudes assumed a racial form. On the Eastern frontier where domestic work was done by Xhosa women rather than men, servant-employer relations were also structured by notions of female inferiority.[266] As domestic service was increasingly transformed into a Black female institution, these different definitions of inequality converged.[267]

The involvement of Xhosa women is significant. Wilson points out that

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264. Long, 1946: 197.

265. Cairns, 1965: 92-96.

266. See below, Chapter 8, 'Education for Domesticity'.

267. Of course extreme racial animosity precluded employing Black domestic servants at all. For example, "My Mother, Mathilda was full of fun...even though she had to work hard in her home as her Mother refused to have any raw Kaffirs in the house and this left the three girls to run the household of nine." Mabel White, writing of her grandfather William Wallace who came to Grahamstown around 1835. Mabel White, 'Tilly and the Bellows. Eight Years at Junction Farm', in J.B. Bullock (ed.), Peddie: Settlers' Outpost by Donald Kirby et al. (Grahamstown: Grocott and Sherry, 1960), p.51. Despite the fact that both George Rex and his son Frederick maintained that the Mfengu women are "more orderly and more manageable", Mrs Rex refused to employ them. Long, 1946: 197.

> in Xhosa country, as nowhere else in Black Africa, women as well as men took employment with whites. Sometimes this was under duress, but often it was by choice. From the early nineteenth century domestic work was done on the frontier by Xhosa women rather than Xhosa men. [268]

Thus, Wilson indicates in another source, "one of the characteristics of the frontier was the interaction between women."[269] She stresses that "the importance of this has been overlooked." Certainly the intimacy of the relationship did sometimes yield insights into a common humanity. Wilson points, for example, to the close relationship between Mrs Ross and her Xhosa domestic servant. But it is debatable how far this intimacy went in breaking down racist stereotypes. Mary Taylor, writing from Healdtown in 1872, learned from her domestic servant Annie, that Africans are capable of deep feelings. The young man to whom Annie was engaged hanged himself.

> Poor Annie was in quiet trouble which contradicted what I have heard many say, and even Fanny saying, that the natives know little of what we call love.

But then perhaps Annie is the exception:

> Annie is rather a singular girl for a Fingoe, so reserved that it is difficult to approach her in order to comfort. She is a clean servant and I value her very much. [270]

Because on the frontier women did a great deal of domestic work themselves, there was a situational intimacy between colonists and their servants. Mrs Trollop and her mother at Dagga Boer employed several servants in the house but had their time fully occupied

> for candles and soap, both had to be made and needed personal supervision. Often during the evening they would roll and knot wicks in preparation for candle-making next day or cut the 'Boerseep' into handy household squares for washing purposes.

The ironing of the white starched collars and boiled shirt fronts of the

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268. M. Wilson, 'Co-operation and Conflict on the Eastern Cape Frontier', in M. Wilson and L. Thompson, The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol. I (Oxford: O.U.P., 1969), p.262.

269. Wilson, 1972: 12.

270. Mrs Mary Taylor's Journal, MS 15, 163. Methodist Archives, Cory Library.

men took a great deal of time "for such particular work could not be entrusted to the Native servants who did the plain ironing."[271] While there was a physical proximity between housewife and servant in the home there was also considerable social distance between them, which acted against any recognition of a common womanhood.[272]

Wilson admits that "interacting with people is no guarantee that you will regard them as human", but it may help.[273] However, the quality of interaction between African and European women which took place on the Eastern Frontier in the nineteenth century within the institution of domestic service, was structured in terms of extreme inequality. Such interaction generates a sense of superiority in the employer, which may be expressed in either patronage or abuse.

While the employment of domestic servants seems to have been widespread in colonial society throughout the nineteenth century, it did not free European women for extra-domestic roles as it does now. In the colonies, as in Britain, there was a lack of occupational opportunities for women. By custom and training they were constrained to enter a much narrower range of occupations than men. The Directory of Grahamstown for 1843 shows the following occupations followed by women: seamstress, laundress, bonnet-maker, shop keeper, dress-maker and housewife.[274] Some women ran small schools but teaching was not always

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271. A.M. Ralls, Glory which is Yours. A Tribute to Pioneer Ancestors (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, undated), p.82. Of course during this period domestic work was labour-intensive. Meals and other household articles such as soap and candles had to be prepared from scratch, few commercially prepared items being available.

272. An honest account is given by Mrs Donald Fraser who felt very isolated among African women in West Africa. "My mode of life was outwardly so different from theirs that common womanhood failed to provide a point of contact." (My emphasis.) Presumably there was the same feeling of difference among the African women. Some of the old women persisted in calling her 'Baba' (father) which surely expressed this sense of difference. "Even those who realised my sex noted the difference between us rather than our common womanhood..." D. Fraser, The Teaching of Healthcraft to African Women (London: Longmans, 1932), p.3.

273. Wilson, 1972: 15.

274. Prostitution seems to have been quite common according to the legal proceedings reported in the GTJ of the 1830s and 1840s, although this may have incorporated mainly African women.

considered a valid occupational role.[275] Marriage and motherhood were the core attributes of women's role in society.[276] The implication of this is that European women were in an extremely dependent position.[277] On the whole, this dependence was unquestioned, and its domestic routines went unrecorded.

One of the difficulties in coming to any other than the most tentative conclusions about the level of intimacy, concern and insight in nineteenth century domestic servant-employer relations on the Eastern Frontier, comes from the paucity of direct accounts. As Butler points out, "reminiscences by women of this period are much rarer than reminiscences by men."[278] How do we account for this? Perhaps women were too caught up in domestic chores; perhaps they were too self-deprecatory; perhaps they felt their world and experiences were trivial, insignificant and not worth recording. The organisation of domestic life being defined as the preserve of women meant that some of the most vivid settler diaries do not mention domestic details at all. Settlers such as Charles Bell and Joseph Stirk give fascinating details of busy,

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275. Dr John Philip warns his daughter Eliza in a letter of 10th February 1830 from Hankey, that paid employment as a school teacher is beneath her dignity and will impair her chance of making a good marriage. Long, 1946: 149-151. Middle-class resistance in a different cultural context is beautifully illustrated in Arnold Bennett's novel, The Old Wives Tales in Mrs Baines's opposition to her daughter Sophia's desire to become a teacher.

276. "A female's real existence only begins when she has a husband." Statement of the author of a book on feminine perfection published in 1840 and quoted by R. Edgecombe, 'The Letters of Hannah Dennison 1820 Settler 1820-1847', M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1968, p.92. A column in the GTJ gives some insight into the definitions of the wife's role. "Wife: What a word. There is the creaking of shoes and the rustling of silks in the sound; the rattling of keys...the scolding of servants and the squeaking of children." The columnist talks of how irritating it is to visit a friend and be interrupted by his wife offering tea. GTJ, 2.3.1832.

277. The letters of Hannah Dennison reveal both her courage and enterprise, as well as her difficulties in trying to make a living as an independent woman, first as midwife in Graaff Reinet, then as milliner, haberdasher and midwife at Colesberg. Edgecombe, 1968.

278. Butler, 1969: 115.

productive lives, but the domestic aspect lies in the shadows. This is less true of Thomas Shone, perhaps because as a widower his domestic life requires some organisation, so we hear about how much he paid to have his washing done and his house cleaned. But overall, as Macrone perceived, "the frontier woman...remains a vague though substantial figure."[279]

The difficulties involved in trying to clothe this vague figure is a problem germane to women's history. It is extremely difficult to explore the world of women when they have left us with few direct accounts. "Women's history is in essence the history of the inarticulate."[280] Attempts to redress the balance are marked by an over-correction, as dangerous in intellectual life as in driving. Women are treated as one single social group. Clearly women shared common social experiences, but even in something as basic as motherhood, these experiences were very differently defined and coloured in different cultures and social classes. These differences were intense in the interaction of Xhosa women with their European employers on the Eastern Frontier in the nineteenth century.

Obviously, African and European women were located in different cultural universes. However, domestic service did provide a point of contact between the two.[281] It was an entry point into the colonial economy for African women, and at the same time a potential route of escape. Domestic service, however exploitative and onerous an occupation, must

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279. Macrone suggests that "Frontier society is a predominantly masculine society, not merely because the men, as a rule, outnumber the women, but also because the activities and attitudes usually associated with men are at a premium. Women are less prominent because they play their role in the background rather than in the foreground of frontier life. An occasional exploit by a woman may bring her into the limelight, but we hear little of the activities of women and still less of what they thought and felt. The marriage of both sexes took place at an early age, so that the bearing and rearing of numerous children was the main preoccupation of a married woman." Macrone, 1937: 109-110.

280. Branca, 1978: 14; see also, Sheila Rowbotham, Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It (London: Pluto Press, 1973).

281. Thus Brandel-Syrier writes, "the nannies, the cook girls (sic) - they were the true culture carriers." Brandel-Syrier, 1962: 86.

be appreciated in terms of various cultural meanings. It did imply the possibility of earning a living, however meagre, and, therefore, offered at least the potential for independence to Xhosa girls who were unmarried and economically dependent. Sometimes it was an escape from the coercion to which a woman could be subject in traditional Xhosa society. For example, the case of Hena, a daughter of the then paramount chief, Gaika, who refused to marry a 'heathen' and polygamist, and fled into the colony to work first for an LMS family and then at Lovedale as a domestic servant.[282] Similarly in eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain, domestic service could provide a route of escape from rural poverty.[283]

Clearly there are characteristics of the institution of domestic service that are common to both societies. For example: the extreme inequality of the participants; its meaning as an occupational role that allowed for movement into an urban or colonial setting; the stereotypic attitudes of employers - class-based in one context, race-based in the other; the exploitation of the domestic servant, whether measured in terms of wages, hours, dignity of treatment, or lack of fundamental securities and rights.[284] However, there are also important differences.

In the last analysis, in South Africa, labour was controlled by force, either through the legal apparatus of enslavement, apprenticeship or indenture, or through the existence of ties of dependence binding workers with no property to the owners of such property in the means of production. But the difference between nineteenth-century Britain and South Africa in this respect is one of degree. In a capitalist society "all labour-power is in some way and in some degree unfree, the type,

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282. R. Young, African Wastes Reclaimed. The Story of the Lovedale Mission (London: J.M. Dent, 1902), pp.125-126.

283. Either escape to the wealthy households in the village, or to the 'great houses' beyond the village, e.g. Susan Fake in The Biography of a Victorian Village. Richard Cobbold's account of Wortham, Suffolk, 1860 (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd.), p.31.

284. It is debatable whether some of the most exploitative features were amplified in a colonial setting. As Marx wrote, "the profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeoise civilization lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home where it assumes respectable forms to the colonies where it goes naked." K. Marx, New York Daily Tribune, 8.8.1853.

gradation or continuum of degrees of unfreedom 'merely' affect the intensity of exploitation and not its mode."[285]

Again it is a difference of degree, but domestic service in nineteenth century South Africa did not allow for the same level of mobility as in Britain, either geographical (in terms of labour controls) or social. Racist attitudes and legislation blocked the possibility of the 'rags to riches' or 'maid to madam' 'success' stories one comes across among domestic servants in Britain. To take two widely disparate examples: Thomas Coutts, the banking millionaire who married his maid servant, or Henry Fielding who married his wife's maid, Mary Daniel, four years after his wife's death. There are 'success' stories in the biographies of a few South African domestic servants of the last century, but they are of a far less spectacular variety. For example, Catherine Eckhardt, a Khoikhoi woman, had been a domestic servant in the employ of Thomas Pringle and Mrs Govan among others; on her death in 1863 she bequeathed her savings amounting to £300 to bursaries for Khoikhoi, Xhosa and Fingo students.[286]

Whatever the points of comparison between the institution of domestic service in nineteenth-century Britain and South Africa, the crucial factor is that in the two societies it followed an entirely different pattern of development. As the disappearance of domestic servants in the middle years of the twentieth century in Britain reflected the increased power of the working class, in South Africa the transformation of the institution of domestic service into one dominated by Black females reflected the extension and elaboration of white domination.

By the end of the century, the majority of domestic servants were Black women. This may be illustrated by a table from the 1891 Census though the picture that emerges is somewhat distorted by a different basis to classification.[287]

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285. Wolpe, 1976: 203.

286. R. Shepherd, Lovedale, South Africa. The Story of a Century, 1841-1941 (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1940), p.166.

287. The 1891 Census Suborder 2i 'Domestic Servant' includes Grooms and Coachmen, as well as Hotel, Inn, Club-house, and eating house servants. This classification accounts for the large number of Europeans especially European males. Cape of Good Hope Census, 1891 (Cape Town: W.A. Richards, 1892), p.316.

Table 31. Numerical Distribution of Domestic Servants in the Cape Colony by Race and Sex, 1891

Race	Total	Females	Males
Europeans	4 834	3 602	1 232
Malays	724	393	331
Hottentots	7 004	5 531	1 473
Fingo	2 812	2 141	671
Kafir and Bechuana	16 831	11 733	5 098

While the end of the nineteenth century was a turning point, the Depression in the following century provided something of a hiatus in this process of racial and sexual transformation. The problem of 'Poor Whites' reached considerable proportions. By 1929 it was reliably estimated that there were approximately 300 000 who should be classed as 'Poor Whites'.[288] Economic necessity meant that "in recent years European girls have shown increased willingness to enter domestic service."[289] However, by this time it was largely defined as 'Kaffir work'. The Carnegie Commissioners stated that this was the main reason why European girls were resistant to the occupation. The European woman offered an even "more strenuous objection to entering domestic service if she has to work together with non-European servants."[290] The Commissioners found this regrettable because

> Domestic service provides the girl from the poor family with an opportunity of being trained in the duties of a housewife; it also suits the nature of most girls. Domestic service forms a wholesome field of employment for the European girl, and it is desirable that attempts be made to regulate the

288. Report of the Carnegie Commission, The Poor White Problem in South Africa (Stellenbosch: Pro-Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932), Vol. I, p.vii. Brought to my attention by Marion Lacey.

289. Ibid., pp.56-59.

290. Ibid., p.58.

> conditions of work in a more satisfactory manner than is now the case. (Emphasis mine.) [291]

Similarly, Macmillan refers to

> the alternative [for white women] of domestic service at from 20/- or 25/- to £3 a month with keep. I can only say that without radical changes in the conditions of service there are insuperable difficulties to its providing a real solution; one is a social pride of class which must be respected and is quite as fundamental as the native trouble; the other is the exaction by employers of impossibly long hours without really adequate leisure. [292]

As domestic work became increasingly transformed into a predominantly Black institution, no attempts whatsoever were made to improve conditions of work.

This chapter has suggested that domestic service is a social institution that reflects changing patterns of domination. It has been argued that domestic service was always characterised by a level of exploitation: because of the low wages and poor working conditions it involved, Whites escaped from it as Blacks were coerced into it. The following chapter attempts to document the increasing controls to which Black labour was subject, as capitalist penetration went forward. The Depression formed a brief hiatus in this process. Thus, while in 1926 there were 823 European males who were domestic servants (indoor) and 11 432 females, this was a fairly short-lived phenomenon.[293]

This chapter has also suggested that domestic service as a social institution shows common characteristics within both contemporary White

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291. Recommendations of the Carnegie Commission No.51, p.xvi. Afrikaner women spearheaded the movement to towns, and domestic work was often a stage in this route to 'modernization'. However, it absorbed a much smaller proportion of women than did the textile industry. For example, in data collected on poor white families who had moved to towns in 1929, of 212 daughters, only 4.2 percent were "in domestic service" or attending domestic schools. Ibid. Working conditions in the textile industry were also appalling. See E.S. Sachs, Rebel Daughters (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1957).

292. Macmillan, 1915: 14.

293. Census of the European Population, 1926. U.G. Union of South Africa Blue Books, 22 - 31, 1930. Part XI, Occupations (European).

South African society, and British society before 1950. By that date, in South Africa domestic service was almost entirely a 'Non-European' institution, while in Britain it had largely disappeared. It would be an interesting extension of this argument to know whether 'Coloured' immigration to Britain in the post-war period has resulted in the same process of racial transformation with increasing numbers of immigrant women doing 'charring' and other domestic work. There is some evidence that many migrant workers are issued work permits for domestic work, and that they, together with 'au pairs', are extremely exploited groups.[294]

A report on migrant domestic work in contemporary Britain echoes many of the domestic workers' experiences in South Africa.

> Apart from the long hours and low pay, the monotony of the housework takes its toll, any possible satisfaction in looking after children is denied by the isolation and by the woman's lack of control over her work situation. There's often verbal abuse, racial prejudice and even assault from employers and agents. One Persian woman considered that she was treated worse than the dog; the dog was at least given meat whereas she had to survive on soup and toast. She also wasn't allowed to use the washing machine, as "women from her country can't manage machines." If a domestic worker complains she is easily sacked.[295]

Differences in the trajectory of domestic service in the two societies might be thought to revolve around the fact that in South Africa domestic service was an important institution of colonialism. The core of the colonial social structure lay in the relationship between the owners of capital and labour on the one hand, and the workers on the other. But this relationship was the core of nineteenth century British society as well. In short, domestic service in both these societies was a fundamental institution of inequality, reflecting a form of class domination which, in South Africa, increasingly assumed a racial form.

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294. 'Home not so sweet home', Spare Rib, 7, 1978, p.40.

295. Ibid.

PART III: THE ULTRA-EXPLOITABILITY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

CHAPTER 7

DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF RACE AND SEX

> It is necessary to situate the individual in a social context, to be able to say something about that context in terms of its internal structure and dynamics, the opportunities it makes available and the constraints it imposes, and at the same time to grasp that essential individuality and uniqueness of man that evades any total categorization. [1]
>
> - Sharp and Green, 1975.

Domestic workers and their employers are not free and equal participants in interaction. Their interaction is shaped and coloured by the structures which control the distribution of power and resources in South African society. These structures define the relationship between Whites and Blacks as

> ...a master-servant relationship in all spheres, enforced through a variety of effective controls and sanctions. It is a system in which the Africans are forced to work for the Whites at bare subsistence wages (perhaps not even that), deprived of all basic rights to assert their interests freely and legally, and subject to some of the most draconian and tyrannical labour controls ever developed in modern industry. The enormous power and prosperity of the Whites in South Africa is thus based on the systematic exploitation of African labour. [2]

This exploitation is highlighted in the relationship between domestic workers and their employers. In a very real sense this relationship is a microcosm of the exploitation and inequality on which the entire social order is based.

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1. R. Sharp and A. Green, Education and Social Control (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p.17.

2. F. Johnstone, 'White Prosperity and White Supremacy in South Africa Today', African Affairs, Vol. 69, No. 275, April 1970, p.136.

DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF RACE

The powerlessness, vulnerability or ultra-exploitability of domestic workers derives largely from the system of racial domination to which Blacks in South Africa are subject. This system has been conceptualised as consisting of various measures of racial discrimination serving to maintain Blacks in a subordinate position, and legitimised by a racist ideology.[3] These measures operate at five critical levels: political rights, property and residence rights, employment, education and income. The system of racial domination is the most conspicuous feature of the extreme inequality existing in South Africa. Racial domination is not intrinsic to the capitalist mode of production. It both predates the development of capitalism and exists in some socialist societies. Nevertheless in contemporary South Africa this system must be related to the capitalist system of production and class structure of which it is a part, if it is to be explained contextually.

It has been argued that racial groupings cut across Marxist conceptualisations of property relations as the axis of the class system. A number of writers argue, for instance, that the White and Black working class constitute two distinct classes, each occupying a different place in the relations of capitalist production. Others argue that they are merely differences between fractions within a single class. Rex insists upon the need for a more sophisticated conceptualisation of class than is afforded by the "crude reference to property relations." Thus "the basic distinction which has to be made...is that between free and unionized labour on the one hand and labour which is subject to a variety of restrictions on the other..."[4] This is the axis along which he divides the working class in South Africa into two categories - a White labour aristocracy and African workers.

Johnstone argues that historically the White owners of property in the means of production in South Africa developed their system of

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3. Johnstone, 1976: 23. While this section draws from Johnstone, his analysis is not without its problems. See the review of Class, Race and Gold by R. Davies, Review of African Political Economy, No.7, September-December 1976, pp.129-31.

4. J. Rex, Race, Colonialism and the City (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p.264.

class domination as one of racial domination. This, by restricting the property ownership and political rights of 'non-Whites', and "subjecting them to various forms of extra-economic compulsion and domination, served specifically to perpetuate the economic dependence of the non-White population and to secure the ultra-exploitability of their labour."[5] Thus Johnstone views the system of racial domination as the specific form of the system of class domination erected by the White property owners. He conceptualises the system of racial discrimination in terms of "class colour bars." These consist of the exploitation colour bars which generate both property colour bars and employment colour bars. The latter are generated by the structural insecurity of the White working class.

Johnstone relates the structural insecurity of the White workers to two conditions: firstly, proletarianisation - the condition of being separated from ownership of property in the means of production and consequent dependence upon employment by the owners of such property whose concern is that of profit maximisation. For some time this insecurity was greater than that of the African workers who retained some ownership of limited means of subsistence in the homelands. Secondly, the forced labour system which secured the ultra-exploitability of the Black majority of workers.[6] This ultra-exploitability created the ultra-cheapness of 'non-White' labour generally. This ultra-cheapness constituted a very great incentive to employers to maximise profit by maximising the utilisation of non-White labour and minimising the utilisation of expensive White labour.

The structural insecurity of the White working class generated the employment colour bars. These consisted of a job colour bar which restricted all skilled work to Whites; and a "White labour policy" which restricted certain unskilled employment in the public sector, notably the railways, harbours and postal services, to White workers at higher than prevailing unskilled wages.[7] Thus, Johnstone's argument is that the structural insecurity of the White workers generated by the

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5. Johnstone, 1976: 23.
6. Ibid., pp.57-58.
7. Ibid., pp.64-71.

particular mode of capitalist development in South Africa led to their involvement in the system of racial discrimination.

The job colour bar could be said to have four components: first, statutory, originating in the Mines and Works Act of 1926 and elaborated in 1956 when Section 77 was added to the Industrial Conciliation Act to safeguard "against inter-racial competition." Under it a Minister may, after an Industrial Tribunal investigation, apply a legally enforced colour bar to any sector of the economy. Such colour bars have applied in the following industries and occupations: building, clothing, footwear, furniture, liquor and catering, motor assembly, motor vehicle driving and so on. However, there has never been anything sacred about any particular job category and they are constantly changing.[8] Another set of restrictions on Blacks operates through the Environment Planning Act (which superseded the Physical Planning Act). Permission has to be obtained for an increase in the African workforce or for the ratio of Africans to other workers to rise beyond a certain level. According to a study done by Gottschalk of the effects of this legislation between 1968 and 1972, the Government refused permission for 52 000 Africans to be employed.[9] Secondly, labour agreements providing that the most skilled jobs are available only to members of recognised and registered trade unions. The third component of the barriers in access to employment is that in general the African labour force is less educated and less skilled than Whites. Lastly, Blacks are excluded from certain jobs by a racist ideology. The job colour bar thus reinforces the exploitability of 'non-White' labour, and protects the class interests of White labour. Johnstone emphasises that the job colour bar is a symptom; it is a response to the White worker's condition of structural insecurity which is itself a product of the capitalist system of production.[10] Thus, in Johnstone's

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8. See 'The Floating Colour Bar' in R. First, J. Steele, C. Gurney, The South African Connection: Western Investment in Apartheid (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), pp.59-80.

9. K. Gottschalk, 'Industrial Decentralisation: Jobs and Wages', South African Labour Bulletin, Vol.3, No.5, March-April 1977, p.51.

10. Johnstone, 1976: 74-75. It is frequently treated, not as a symptom, but as a cause. For example, it is said to create unemployment, African unemployment then existing side by side with unfilled vacancies (47 000 in 1975) in jobs reserved for Whites. Financial Mail, 16.7.76.

formulation the job colour bar is ultimately a product of exploitation colour bars of the employers.

The exploitation colour bars similarly generated property colour bars, which served to secure and maintain the separation of non-Whites from ownership of property in the means of production. These racially discriminatory property laws constituted the economic basis of the capitalist system of production established by the new dominant class of White owners of property. The key piece of legislation here was the Native Land Act of 1913 which defined 87 percent of the territory of South Africa as 'White areas' in which Africans were not allowed to purchase or otherwise acquire land. This separation of Blacks from the means of production constituted a form of economic compulsion impelling them into provided wage labour for the new owners. Legassick argues that the Act can be interpreted as an attempt to remedy the shortage of African labour on White farms.[11] Similarly, Wilson and Bundy maintain that the pressure behind the Act came almost entirely from those who wished to ensure a cheap supply of labour by reducing squatters and sharecroppers to the level of labour tenants.[12] In terms of the 1936 Land Act an additional 6,2m ha - the so-called 'released areas' - were added to the Reserves, thus maintaining the grossly unequal division of land.

The conquest of Blacks and the appropriation of their land is at the basis of the migrant labour system, whereby a cheap labour supply is secured. The migration of Black workers is primarily controlled through the pass system and the contract system.

The pass system is "a system of movement control and labour regimentation, serving to strengthen the hold of white property owners over non-white workers, by controlling and directing the movement of non-whites generally and of non-white workers in particular."[13] Infringement of the Pass Laws is a criminal offence in terms of which thousands have been arrested.

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11. M. Legassick, 'The Dynamics of Modernization in South Africa', Journal of African History, 1972, XIII, 1.

12. F. Wilson, 'Farming, 1866-1966', in The Oxford History of South Africa, Vol. 2 (1971), p.130; Bundy, 1972: 71.

13. Johnstone, 1976: 37.

Arrests numbered 197 670 (of whom 24 719 were females) in 1976; 173 571 (of whom 22 955 were females) in 1977; and 272 887 (of whom 47 977 were females) in 1978.[14] The pass system is secured by a complex legislative framework, in which the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 was crucial, as it enabled municipalities in White areas to restrict Africans entering their areas to the numbers required by employers. The Act was frequently amended and each amendment made it more difficult for Africans to enter urban areas and settle there with their families. In 1930 the Act was amended to give the local authorities power to exclude African women from towns unless they had a certificate to the effect that there was accommodation available for them. Previously African women had practically free access to urban areas and this, said the Minister of Native Affairs, often led to "an undesirable state of affairs."[15]

In 1952 the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act introduced the 'reference book' which was to be issued to all Africans (men and women) and made it an offence not to possess one. An amendment to the Natives (Urban Areas) Act in 1952 ensured that all urban areas were automatically proclaimed and influx controls operated in them. It also established that no African could remain in a proclaimed area for more than 72 hours unless he or she complied with certain qualifications.

Subsequent amendments have made these qualifications - birth, fifteen years residence or ten years continuous employment by the same employer - more rigorous. Since the Riekert Commission recommendations the government has tightened up the operation of influx control. This is now being more efficiently applied. It has deepened the division of interests

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14. G. Mare, 'Relocation and Riekert: attempts at rural and urban stabilization', South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 4, November 1979, p.44. Sheena Duncan attributes the incredible increase in the number of female pass law 'offenders' from 1977 to 1978 to unemployment in the homelands and the tightening up of influx control. Reported in the Rand Daily Mail, 5.3.1979. Savage points out that between 1966 and 1975 there were 5,8 million prosecutions of Africans under the pass laws - or 1 589 prosecutions a day. M. Savage, 'Costs of Enforcing Apartheid and Problems of Change', African Affairs, Vol. 76, No. 304, July 1977.

15. Quoted by Welsh, in Wilson and Thompson, 1971: 198.

within the Black community between those Blacks legally in urban areas who have access to the wealth of the economy in the capitalist core and whose incomes are already four times as high as those who are unemployed in the Bantustans on the periphery of the capitalist system.[16]

Within this pattern the Bantustans function partly as labour resevoirs for the centres of capital accumulation. Outside the Bantustans Blacks are largely reduced to the status of rightless migrants or aliens.[17] This rightlessness serves the interests of the White property owners. It means that labour is kept cheap and unorganised and the formation of an urban proletariat is restricted.

Migrant labour "is brought into the centres of industrial production under contract, according to the needs of capital."[18] The contract system is perpetuated through a system of national labour bureaux, whereby the government wields very wide powers over Black workers. Under the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964 and the Bantu Labour Act of 1964 no African may leave the Bantustans unless he has obtained a contract of employment through the government labour bureau, and no such contract may be valid for more than a year, though it may be renewed. This increases labour turnover, and ensures a contract worker's vulnerability: when he is fired he has to return to his rural area.

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16. According to the Financial Mail, "What is happening now is that those whose rights are secure (for the moment) are coalescing into a stable and indeed relatively affluent middle-class at the expense of those being packed off to the homelands - and, willy, nilly, it is in the interests of this class to see influx control further entrenched..." Financial Mail, 25.1.1980.

17. This is complicated by the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act (1970) which states that every 'Bantu' person in the Republic must be a citizen of one or other 'territorial authority area' (Homeland).

18. Innes and O'Meara show how this is in distinction to the normal capitalist pattern: "...proletarianised agents are prevented by the state from moving permanently from the rural areas to the urban slums. Instead of being located on the fringes of the industrial cities, the reserve army of labour is located by the state in rural areas, and brought into the centres of industrial production, under contract according to the needs of capital." D. Innes and D. O'Meara, 'Class Formation and Ideology: The Transkei Region', Review of African Political Economy, No. 7, September-December, 1976, p.70.

Regulations dating from 1968 provide that every Black man domiciled in a homeland in the area of a Tribal Labour Bureau must register as a work-seeker within one month of becoming unemployed, from the time he is 15 years old until the age of 65. Women are not compelled to register in this way unless they wish to obtain employment. When a man first registers he is placed in a category of employment, such as agriculture, mining, forestry, manufacturing, and so on.

> Once a man has been placed in a category he may not change out of it for the rest of his working life unless given permission to do so.... If he is classified as a farm, mine or domestic worker he has very little hope of ever being able to change his type of employment. [19]

In prescribed areas (in practice this means every town in the Republic outside the homelands) every black man must register at the Labour Bureau as a workseeker within 72 hours of becoming unemployed, but whether the Labour Officer will agree to register him depends on his position in terms of Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act. This is the core of the immobility of Black labour:

> It means that no Black workers can come to any town or city to look for work. In theory he can do so provided he finds a job within 72 hours of arrival but in practice this is not so. The Labour Officer will not register such a man, or woman, in the job he has found and the employer may not submit an application to employ him except if the job is a domestic one. [20]

In non-prescribed areas (the remaining largely rural areas of the Republic outside the Homelands) a man must register as a workseeker at the District Labour Bureau if he is unemployed and desires to be placed in employment.

> Once he is registered as a workseeker he has no real choice as to where he will work or what kind of work he will do. His chances will depend on the labour supply in the area in which he lives. If the farmers in the area are short of labour he will have an endorsement made in his reference book saying "for farm labour only." It does not seem to matter what

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19. S. Duncan, 'The Central Institution of South African Labour Exploitation', South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 9, November 1977, pp.3-4.

20. Ibid., p.7.

> educational qualifications they have obtained. If farmers need labour they cannot do anything else. [21]

The purpose of the contract system and the pass system which control migrant labour is to secure the extreme powerlessness of Blacks in general, and the extreme exploitability of Black workers in particular. These controls amount to a system of forced labour.[22]

A further dimension of this exploitability is the denial of free and equal access to education which has resulted in Blacks lacking scarce and valued skills. The most obvious inequality in Black education is in the huge expenditure gap in state spending. In 1970 Africans who then constituted 70,9 percent of the population received 11,4 percent of educational expenditure, whereas Whites who constituted 17 percent of the population received 74,8 percent of the educational expenditure.[23] In 1976-77 the following per capita expenditure on school pupils of the various population groups has been quoted:

Whites	R 654,00 per capita
'Coloureds'	R 157,59 per capita
Africans	R 48,55 per capita [24]

in the "common area"

As there is no compulsory education for Blacks, there are proportionately fewer in school. In 1970 practically the whole age group between the ages of seven and sixteen of Whites, that is, 98 percent, was actually in school, but only 64 percent of African children.[25] The drop-out rate among African schoolchildren is dramatic. By Standard Three one in two have dropped out, and one in five drop out in the very first year.[26] Out of a total school population of 4,5 million only two percent reach

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21. Ibid., p.11.

22. See the United Nations-I.L.O. Ad-hoc Committee finding in 1953. 'Free Wage Labour and the Labour Bureaux System', South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 9, November 1977, p.1.

23. E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, Vol. II, 1923-1975 (Cape Town: Juta and Co., 1977), p.654.

24. SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1978 (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1979), p.399.

25. Malherbe, 1977: 265.

26. R. Tunmer, quoted in the Eastern Province Herald, 18.10.1977.

Standard Seven and only two in 1 000 reach matric.[27] These figures reflect the grossly inadequate conditions in African schools, which is illustrated by high teacher-pupil ratios (in 1979 it was 1:47,6 in Black schools, but 1:19,6 in White schools);[28] poorly qualified and poorly paid teachers (not more than ten percent of the 68 000 African teachers in 1975 had a matriculation certificate).[29]

Consequently an African's access to skilled employment is restricted by educational discrimination. However, this must be located in terms of the other constraints operating upon the mobility of Black labour. For instance, it has been established that

> The unemployment rate is highest among the higher qualified (Africans). (Matriculation in the case of men, J.C. and Matric in the case of women.) This suggests that they are too well qualified for the job opportunities open to them. [30]

African rates of unemployment have risen dramatically. South Africa is subject to 'structural unemployment', that is, an unemployment rate that rises despite the expansion of the economy. Simkins shows that,

> there has been an increase in unemployment during the entire period 1960-1977, the number almost doubling from 1,2 million in 1960 to 2,3 million in 1977. The trend rate of unemployment was stable from 1960 to 1968 at around 19 percent, but has shown a tendency to rise since the latter date and now lies above 22 percent. [31]

Unemployment levels are highest among African women. In October 1977 9,4 percent of African men were unemployed, as a percentage of the economically active, and 19,4 percent of African women.[32]

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27. 'Black Advancement', Financial Mail, 9.12.1977.

28. SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1979 (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1980), p.487.

29. Financial Mail, 7.1.1977.

30. J. Maree, 'The Dimensions and Causes of Unemployment and Underemployment in South Africa', South African Labour Bulletin, Vol.4, No. 4, July 1978, p.23.

31. C. Simkins, 'Measuring and Predicting Unemployment in South Africa, 1960-1977', in C. Simkins and D. Clarke, Structural Unemployment in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1978), p.33.

32. N. Bromberger, 'South African Unemployment: a survey of research',

Finally, a racially discriminatory franchise and system of government has left African workers without meaningful political rights. They are denied both a vote in the central parliament, and trade union rights. A long history of repressive legislation has sought to exclude African workers from the collective bargaining process and to suppress the activities of trade union orficials. The fear is that powerful African trade unions with the right to strike could force higher wages, and serve as bases for political action. At present Africans are placed in a weak bargaining position enabling them to command only low wages and poor working conditions.[33] Thus the denial of the vote and of trade union rights such as workers in other capitalist societies have secured, serve to secure the extreme powerlessness of Blacks and the ultra-exploitability of their labour.

Of course the White working class in South Africa shares with non-White workers the general class conditions of separation from ownership of property in the means of production. Johnstone terms the former "politically free" workers in the sense of

> not being subject to the system of forced labour, of being free from extra-economic restrictions on mobility in the labour market, and free to organise and act collectively through such means as trade unions and strikes, and political parties and the vote. [34]

Davies points out that any notion of a politically free working class in capitalist society is foreign to marxist analysis.[35] It also neglects the force and scope of repressive state action that applies to Whites as well as to 'non-Whites'.

In the elaborate system of state security now established in South Africa no one has security of political rights and all are subject to

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in C. Simkins and C. Desmond, South African Unemployment: A Black Picture (Pietermaritzburg: Development Studies Research Group, Agency for Industrial Mission, 1978), p.4.

33. The situation has been changed by the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act No.94 which came into operation on 1.10.1979. See Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1979, pp.279-282 for a summary of its main features.

34. Johnstone, 1976: 50.

35. Davies, 1976: 129.

arbitrary banning, arrest, detention and torture.[36] However, this system obviously acts most coercively upon 'non-Whites', for instance all the deaths in detention have occurred among 'non-Whites'.

The result of these measures is that Black labour is rightless, powerless, unorganised, and ultra-cheap. Employers assume an absolute authority over Black workers. The underlying assumption is that the employer has the absolute right to set wage rates and other conditions. The result is low Black wages and a wide gap between Black and White wages. This situation is sometimes ascribed to 'market forces' but 'the market' always operates within politically-defined parameters. The wage gap is thus a political creation, serving the interests of the White property owners, and requiring a political solution. Its extent is illustrated by the following.

In 1973 the Financial Mail calculated the average monthly per capita incomes of the various race groups to have been: Whites R184, Asians R37, Coloureds R29 and Africans R10. The ratio of annual White to Black average per capita incomes was 14:1, while the average gap in average annual incomes per head was R2 050 (Whites R2 207, Blacks R157). Whites, although constituting only 17 percent of the population received almost 70 percent of the total income. The richest 10 percent of South Africa's population received an estimated 58 percent of the total income.[37]

The low standard of living of Blacks is illustrated by the Poverty Datum Line, Minimum Effective Level, or Household Subsistence Level calculations. Household Subsistence Level figures are updated by Potgieter every six months to take account of rising living costs. These vary between areas as the following table shows:

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36. As at 30.11.1979 there were 152 banned people in South Africa. SAIRR, 1980: 137. Between 1.7.1977 and 30.6.1978 501 people were detained. Ibid., p.143.

37. SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1975 (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1976), p.163. South Africa has the most unequal income distribution of 66 countries around the world for which statistics are available. Reported in the Rand Daily Mail, 16.2.1980.

Table 32. African Household Subsistence Levels, 1976[38]

	Rands per month	Percentage increase Oct.1975-Oct.1976
Benoni	127,44	10,4
Bloemfontein	126,63	4,4
Cape Town	146,47	9,2
East London	129,13	11,0
Johannesburg	134,67	12,5
Peddie	110,43	12,1
Port Elizabeth	124,95	4,9

Comparison of Potgieter's figures with official earning statistics shows that average African earnings in practically every industry are well below the family breadline. For example, African monthly earnings in June 1976 were R109 in manufacturing and construction, R91 in the motor trade, R84 in the wholesale trade and R70 in the retail trade. Local authorities paid an average of only R78, and the hotel industry R51.[39] According to one survey, conducted by Market Research Africa, in 1976, 63,5 percent of African households had less than R80 a month on which to live, 25,4 percent between R80 and R149, and only 11,1 percent more than R150. Staggeringly, nearly a quarter, 22,5 percent had less than R20.[40] Potgieter maintains that his HSL is an absolute minimum providing only for the barest of necessities for a family of six. He has stated that 50 percent should be added to his HSL in each area to get a

38. Institute for Planning Research, University of Port Elizabeth, The Household Subsistence Level in the major urban centres of the Republic of South Africa. Quoted in Financial Mail, 19.11.1976.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

"decent" living standard.[41] The most recent estimates available from Potgieter are as follows:

Table 33. African Household Subsistence Levels, 1979[42]

	Rands per month	Percentage increase over October 1978
Benoni	164,50	9,9
Bloemfontein	170,56	14,3
Boksburg	165,88	11,3
Brits	164,30	18,5
Cape Town	181,83	9,5
Durban	172,41	16,8
East London	172,72	14,4
Germiston	166,83	12,8
Johannesburg	172.56	9,3
King William's Town	166,37	17,5
Kimberley	164,65	5,8
Krugersdorp	167,25	9,9
Peddie	149,91	12,5
Port Elizabeth	168,86	13,9
Pretoria	164,04	5,8
Queenstown	167,55	14,4
Springs	165,80	11,7
Uitenhage	169,18	13,5
Umtata	148,28	10,8
Vaal Triangle	164,84	8,4

41. Ibid. Potgieter's figures have been challenged. For example, the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce fixed the household subsistence level in Soweto at R152 (Potgieter had estimated it to be R135). Adding 50 percent would push this minimum up to just over R200. Financial Mail, 27.5.1977.

42. Professor J.F. Potgieter, Director of the Institute for Planning Research, University of Port Elizabeth. SAIRR, 1980: 190.

The payment of low wages generally is sometimes legitimised in terms of the lower 'needs' of African workers, the postulation of which is an important component of a racist ideology, as is the prevailing characterisation of unskilled labour as 'Kaffir work', both serving to rationalise the status quo. 'Racist ideology' refers to those attitudes and beliefs that define Blacks as inferior, and conversely Whites as members of an innately superior racial group. Johnstone points out that

> by so defining non-Whites and by thus attributing their respective class positions of white property owners and non-white workers to membership of innately unequal racial groups, this ideology serves to legitimise and to mystify the system of class domination, racial discrimination and labour exploitation established by the white property owners. [43]

This exploitation is highlighted in the relationship between domestic workers and their employers. In a very real sense this relationship is a microcosm of the exploitation and inequality on which the entire social order is based.

This section has drawn on Johnstone's analysis to show how the system of racial domination is the specific form of the system of class domination erected by the White property owners in South Africa. It has been suggested that this system consists of various measures of racial discrimination serving to maintain Blacks in a subordinate position, which are legitimised by a racist ideology. This system has been briefly shown to operate at five critical levels - property, residence and political rights, employment, education and income. Many other levels are important and have not been mentioned.

The lack of social security rights is of special importance. Factors such as discriminatory and totally inadequate old-age pensions, inadequate employment insurance, the lack of a national minimum wage and inadequate health services place enormous burdens on the Black population. As Savage has pointed out, the bulk of the burden of disease and ill-health is found among the Black population.[44] Differences

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43. Johnstone, 1976: 24.

44. M. Savage, 'The Political Economy of Health in South Africa', South African Outlook, October, 1978, Vol. 108, No. 1288.

between Whites and Blacks at all these levels come together and are reflected in the different life expectancies. Between 1970-1975 the figures were White males 65,08 years; females 72,96 years; 'Bantu' males 52,05 years; females 59,39 years.[45] This shows dramatically how Blacks are deprived not only at various critical levels of their life, but even of life itself.

The powerlessness, vulnerability or 'ultra-exploitability' of domestic workers derives largely from the system of racial domination which this section has outlined. This section presents only an outline sketch because there is a good deal of published material on the position of Blacks in South Africa. By contrast there is almost a complete dearth of material analysing the position of women in South Africa. Given that domestic service is largely a black female occupation, a central tenet of this study is that one cannot understand the situation of domestic workers without some analysis of the situation of Black women in South Africa today. The following section outlines the system of sexual domination operating in South Africa, and attempts to show that the two systems of domination converge to amplify the disabilities of Black women generally.

DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX

Domestic workers and their employers are very differently located in South African society. Many White women are free to enjoy a considerable amount of leisure, or to lead economically productive lives outside the home, because of the availability of cheap, Black domestic labour. Thus while both Black and White women are subject to discrimination on the basis of sex, the system of racial domination provides White women with mechanisms of escape from this structure of constraints.

Discrimination on the basis of sex is extremely widespread. It predates

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45. Estimates for 'Bantu' by Professor J.L. Sadie, 'Projections of the South African Population 1970-2020' (Johannesburg: Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa Ltd., 1973).

the development of capitalism and exists in many socialist societies.[46] Capitalism in South Africa inherited a sex-based division of labour and sex relations of property and authority, together comprising a system of sexual domination. However, these remnants were incorporated and reshaped within the capitalist system of production in South Africa and became active components of it. Regardless of its pre-capitalist origins, therefore, the system of sexual domination in South Africa must be seen as generated and determined in its specific forms and functions by the system of production and class structure of which it now forms a part.

This system has two components: various measures of sexual discrimination serving to maintain women in a position of dependence; and a sexist ideology serving to legitimise this dependence. One may perhaps conceptualise this system of discrimination operating against women as a system of 'sex bars'. These form a structure of constraints effectively limiting women at the levels of legal rights, employment, reproduction and education.

1. Legal Rights

Legal systems were used by Durkheim as an index of a type of social solidarity.[47] Simons suggests that legal capacity is an important index of "status and power; the measure of a person's ability to take decisions and perform acts that a court will recognize and uphold or penalize."[48] A person has full legal capacity when, without assistance,

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46. As Poulantzas writes, "Capitalism is not the source of all evil." (Poulantzas, 1978: 24). For evidence on discrimination against women in socialist societies see B. Jancar, Women Under Communism (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978); G. Lapidus, 'Occupational Segregation and Public Policy: A comparative analysis of American and Soviet Patterns', in M. Blaxall and B. Reagan (eds.), Women and the Workplace (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); M. King, 'Cuba's Attack on Women's Second Shift, 1974-1976', Latin American Perspectives, 4: 1 and 2, Winter and Spring, 1977; D. Davin, Woman-Work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China (London: O.U.P., 1976).

47. E. Durkheim, The Division of Labour (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1949).

48. H.J. Simons, The Legal Status of African Women (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1968), p.187.

he or she independently can make contracts, acquire and own property, sue and be sued, and enter into other legal transactions.

Women have no legal capacity in African law. For instance, they cannot own property in their own right, enter into contracts without the aid of their male guardian, or act as the guardians of their children. Women are perpetual minors in that, irrespective of their age or marital status, they are always subject to the authority of men.[49]

As Simons stresses, African customary law must be seen in its social context. In South Africa, "common law notions such as ownership, contract and status itself are saturated with an individualism that is alien to traditional African culture."[50] In traditional African culture the rights of both men and women were submerged in the group. Thus the family, rather than any single individual, had full legal capacity. Within this unit each member had a clearly defined position with recognised rights and obligations. Simons writes:

> Patriarchal rule, male tutelage, male primogeniture, polygyny, arranged marriages, the sororate and levirate, are strands in a single cultural complex. It provided women with a fair measure of protection and secured their rights when they belonged to self-sufficient households in peasant communities. [51]

However, the discrepancy between the pre-capitalist and capitalist systems creates a special edge to the disabilities of Black women.[1] Simons suggests that they are worse off, in terms of the modernised customary law, than they were before industrialisation. He regarded the law concerning women as being badly co-ordinated, inconsistent, often obscure, reactionary and "grossly deficient in the qualities of certainty, uniformity and flexibility that characterizes a sound legal system."[52] This may be related to two factors: firstly, the courts, imposed by an

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49. "Women according to Native law and custom are perpetual minors, in that no women can own property, nor can she decide affairs relating to her home kraal." Mr Ndleleni. Transkeian Legislation Assembly Debates, 1976: 227. "This system has been responsible for a good social order." Mr H. Pamla. Transkeian Legislation Assembly Debates, 1976: 227.

50. Simons, 1968: 187.

51. Ibid., p.9.

52. Ibid.

alien colonial power, have interpreted the law to women's disadvantage. Secondly, as the capitalist mode of production has become dominant and as women have been incorporated into the capitalist system, they have outgrown the status assigned to them in the traditional pre-capitalist society.

The special edge to the disabilities of Black women created by the discrepancy between the two legal systems is illustrated in the Natal Code of Law, Law No. 19 of 1891, "Originating in an avowed attempt to free women from the tyranny of patriarchal power, the code imposes disabilities greater than those they endured in the old society."[53] This Code applies to African women in Natal. Section 27(2) states that an African female "is deemed to be a perpetual minor and has no independent powers save to her own person.... No matter how mature or educated, they are placed under male guardianship. This guardian is usually the father or husband but can be an unknown relation in a rural kraal, or even the woman's own son."[54] Women may not leave home or seek employment without the consent of their guardian. All their earnings are regarded as their guardian's property and are at his disposal. Here Simons comments,

> The code makes mention of the earnings of a medicine woman and midwife, but not of a university graduate who is a qualified medical practitioner or teacher, or of a hospital nurse, clerk, domestic servant or factory operative. These classes did not exist in the old society; yet have no greater legal claim to their earnings than the housewife in a peasant community.[55]

Under this code African women in Natal cannot sign contracts or institute legal proceedings without the assistance of their guardians. Whatever their age, they must have their guardians' consent before they can

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53. Ibid., p.202. This code has been described as "a violation of womanhood, the most flagrant unabashed expression of male domination. It shows contempt for the humanity, intelligence and integrity of womanhood." "Every South African woman should stand shamed because of this assault on her own sex right on her doorstep." Quoted in 'Women in Action', Womanpower (1975), p.99. For the recommendations of the Select Committee appointed by the Kwa-Zulu Legislative Assembly to investigate the legal disabilities of Zulu women, see M.L. Lupton, 'The Legal Disabilities of Zulu Women', Reality, November 1975, pp.9-11.

54. 'Women in Action', 1975: 99.

55. Simons, 1968: 205.

marry.[56] They cannot be the guardians of their own children. If the male guardian decides a child must leave school to work, the mother need have no say in the decision. Section 28 makes provision for emancipation, but only an unmarried woman can apply for emancipation from the Natal Code. Further, Simons suggests that a woman's prospects of gaining relief in this way appear to be remote because of a conservative administration and rapacious guardians.[57] This is a clear illustration of the systems of racial and sexual domination converging into a situation of extreme 'exploitability'. This exploitability is amplified by the convergence of two legal systems, part of two cultural orders, generated by different modes of production.

The marriage laws in South Africa similarly illustrate the incorporation of the indigenous legal system into the dominant capitalist one, to Black women's disadvantage. There are three marital proprietary regimes in South Africa: community of property, exclusion of community of property by antenuptial contract, and customary union, in terms of Bantu law. All involve a legal dependence for women. More than half of White South African marriages are under community of property whereby the husband acquires guardianship of the wife and she is considered a minor even if she is over 21. He holds the 'marital power', which means, for example, that a wife cannot enter into any binding contract, even a hire purchase agreement, or open a credit account without the prior permission of her husband. The Matrimonial Affairs Act, No. 37 of 1953 greatly alleviated the legal disabilities of married women. Since then the woman's earnings are protected, but her husband may still take possession of anything she may have bought with the money, unless she gets a court interdict against him. Also her husband's creditors can claim on her earnings for his debts, with the exception of liquor bills.

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56. Recently this clause was extended to the Transvaal, so that an African woman, even if over 21 years of age, must obtain the permission of her father or guardian to marry.

57. Simons, 1968: 206. An example of the latter, quoted by Simons, is the court's refusal to emancipate an unmarried girl, 21 years old, who had qualified as a teacher and who wished to become a nun. "Her father opposed the application mainly because he objected to being deprived of her lobolo. The court while praising her industry and ambition 'to raise herself above the standard of the ordinary tribal native' would not come to her aid. For she might be 'unfitted or unable to take the final vows.'" Simons, 1968: 207.

A woman married by antenuptial contract which excludes her husband's marital power is a major and has full legal capacity in most matters. But this form of marriage has some defects from the woman's point of view. For example,

> it makes no provision for the housewife and mother who has no income of her own, and is in fact grossly inequitable to the non-working wife; it does not permit the wife to claim any remuneration for her contributions in looking after the home and the children. [58]

Also the circumstances of a married couple are usually vastly different when the marriage ends by death or divorce, from when the contract was signed. A realistic settlement at the time of marriage may be quite inadequate at the time of its dissolution.

Another complaint focuses on the guardianship of children. Under both these marriage systems the father is legal guardian. This creates particular problems in divorce, when in most cases the wife gets custody but the husband retains his power as legal guardian. Despite the relative advantages of antenuptial contracts many women, especially among the poorest sections of the community, do not enter antenuptial contracts either because of ignorance or the expense involved in having the contract drawn up by a lawyer.

In customary unions the woman must have parental consent and the marriage is validated by lobolo - the transfer of cattle and/or money by the husband to the wife's father. While a husband may repudiate his marriage unilaterally, simply by forfeiting his lobolo rights, an African woman has no equivalent right, as this would require the return to the husband of cattle that do not belong to her but to her father. An African woman married by customary union is considered a minor under the tutelage of her husband. She has no contractual capacity and cannot own property in her own right. If she earns wages these become the property of her husband.

Many Africans go through at least two forms of marriage - customary union and then a civil marriage. In addition, others go through a church

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58. A. de Kock, 'Matrimonial Property and Women's Legal Disabilities'. Paper given at the 1976 National Convention to Advance Women's Legal Rights.

marriage as well. African men and women are presumed to be married out of community of property when they are married in civil rites, unless they sign a special declaration in which they declare their wish that community of property should apply. In marriage out of community of property the wife has no claim on her husband's estate against her husband's male heir.[59]

Simons argues that the gap between legal status and social reality is greater for customary union wives than it is for other women.

> The gap grows bigger as women enter the exchange economy, obtain employment outside the home, earn and acquire property as independent workers. They acquire property but cannot own it, for tribal law lags behind economic and social change. Indeed the proprietary capacity of customary union wives is probably smaller now than it was in the old society.[60]

Simons maintains that African courts, if left alone, would adjust the tribal law to the new circumstances as they are doing in other parts of Africa. But the courts, administered largely by White judicial officers belonging to an alien culture, have lacked this flexibility and operate in terms of a narrow stereotype which operates to women's disadvantage.

Simons points out that this rigidity set in at an early stage in the Transkei where the appeal court refused to uphold

> a custom followed in some tribes that allowed a wife's patrilineal group to claim fees earned by her as a diviner or herbalist. To qualify as an 'inyangikazi' (doctor of divination) a woman must undergo a rigorous course of instruction and initiation known as 'ukuthwasa', which enables her to diagnose diseases. If she qualified before marriage, the fees she earns belong to her relatives, who bore the cost of instruction. But the court insisted that fees earned after marriage belonged to her husband, 'whatever Pondo custom may be.' [61]

In another case quoted by Simons, the plaintiff sued her husband for cattle earned by her in doctor's fees. The assessors agreed that:

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59. M. Horrell, The Rights of African Women: Some Suggested Reforms (Johannesburg: SAIRR, Second edition, 1975), pp.9-10.

60. Simons, 1968: 194.

61. Ibid., p.197.

> If a woman according to native custom makes a mat or a basket it is the husband's property, the same as the children. Even if she acquires a knowledge of medicine, the medicine belongs to her husband's kraal. She cannot claim cattle earned by her during the subsistence of the marriage. [62]

Simons stresses that this

> overstates a man's right in property acquired by his wife and cannot be regarded as a general rule of African law, but on such a slender basis the courts came to the conclusion that a married woman has no proprietary capacity. [63]

The implication is that the African woman ends up with the worst of two worlds. In the case of customary law in South Africa there is the expression of an ideological level generated by a pre-capitalist mode of production. This remnant of a pre-capitalist mode is then incorporated into the capitalist mode and reshaped by it. It is the articulation of these distinct 'levels' within the South African social formation that creates the particular disabilities of the African woman. These disabilities are amplified in the urban setting.

Influx control is the core of the structure of legal constraints experienced by African women. In terms of the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (No. 25 of 1945), African women as well as men were made subject to the restrictions of influx control. Here an African woman's rights as a dependant are not clear-cut and unambiguous. In South Africa African women do not have what are considered basic rights throughout the world: that is, the right to live with their husbands and lead a normal kind of family life. Any African who was born in the homelands who marries a man who is qualified under Section 10 of the Bantu Urban Areas Act of 1964 to live in an urban area, may not normally live with her husband. [64] She may apply for permission to visit him, which is sometimes granted, and her husband can visit her during his annual leave. If, on the other hand, she is qualified to live in an

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62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Section 10 governs the right of an African to be in a prescribed area and the conditions under which he or she may remain there. See above.

urban area under Section 10 and she marries a man who is not qualified to live in the same urban area, then she may be endorsed out to the homelands. The government policy is that the African migrant labour force "must not be burdened with superfluous appendages such as wives, children and dependants who could not provide service."[65] Many women fail to qualify for residence in urban areas under Section 10 in their own right because they have spent disqualifying periods elsewhere. For example, many women return to parents in rural areas for the birth of their children. Only a small minority of all Black women have Section 10 rights.

Obtaining housing is frequently difficult.[66] A woman living in an urban township may lose her house and be endorsed out if she is widowed or divorced. Officials have been known to arrive at a house where the father has died in order to issue an eviction notice even before the body has been buried. A great deal depends on the discretion of the local authority, often simply an official such as the Township Manager or Location Superintendent; extreme insecurity of tenure is the result. Moreover, rented accommodation for single women is both expensive and insecure.

Africans living in a prescribed area are compelled by law to take out a reference document (pass book) at the age of 16 and men have to register as workseekers at the local labour office, if qualified to do so under Section 10. When a workseeker finds employment his prospective employer is obliged to return a form on which details of his contract are recorded. The employer is obliged to notify the labour office when the contract is terminated.

In terms of the Bantu Labour Act (Act No. 67 of 1965), and the Bantu (Urban Areas) Act (No. 23 of 1945), as well as the Bantu Labour Regulations, African women from certain rural areas or townships may only work

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65. Mr Froneman, who later became a Deputy Minister. House of Assembly Debates, 23.5.1969. Quoted by H. Bernstein, For their Triumphs and for their Tears (London: International Defence Aid Fund, 1975), p.12.

66. In Grahamstown BAAB-owned houses are leased only to a married man who must produce a certificate of civil marriage from the Bantu Affairs Commissioner.

in certain areas. That is, women have no freedom to choose the area in which they would most like to work. A woman can also be prevented from being transferred with her employer.

In these circumstances labour is extremely immobile, and the worker's dependence on her employer is intense. This dependence is particularly onerus if, for whatever reason, a woman is illegally in the area. A domestic worker, illegally employed in a prescribed area, will be totally dependent on her employer, and has little opportunity of finding alternative kinds of work. A Durban study found, as regards attitudes towards various categories of occupations, that domestic service was the least attractive; it was "only for people...with little or no education", or "for desperate people who do not have a reference book."[67]

This dependence of the domestic worker on her employer has been intensified by the government's recent decision to strengthen influx control by increasing the maximum fines from R100 to R500 on employers of illegal Black workers. The Black Sash in the Western Cape reported that many domestic workers were dismissed. "These women had no alternative but to return to Transkei or the Ciskei where there is no work - the reason they come in the first place - and where their families are dependent on their earnings."[68] On the Rand thousands of illegal workers flooded to pass offices to be registered. After near panic the Minister of Co-operation and Development announced a three-month moratorium until October 31st, 1979 to enable employers to 'regularise' their position. What was widely hailed as a reprieve was in fact a "mere stay of execution."[69]

The concession applies only to people who have worked for one employer for at least a year, or for more than one employer over three years. Before workers can be registered proof of accommodation has to be presented. This is a major obstacle in view of the desperate shortage of Black housing in most townships. Applicants must prove that they have a hostel bed or are on a lodger's permit before they can be

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67. A. Perry, African Secondary School Leavers (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1975), p.33.

68. Reported in the Eastern Province Herald, 19.6.1979.

69. Financial Mail, 20.7.1979.

registered, though domestic workers can be accommodated on their White employers' premises. Excluded from these concessions are Blacks in the Western Cape, and foreign Blacks including many Rhodesians, Zambians and Malawians, as opposed to citizens of independent Bantustans. But even those Blacks who do qualify for registration do not gain permanent residence rights. They will be registered under Section 10 1(d) of the Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, thus becoming migrants on one-year contracts.[70] As long as they remain in the same job their contracts may be renewed annually. As with other migrants, changing jobs requires that the new employer make a special application to the administration board proving that no local labour is available. Thus the effect of the new legislation is effectively to bind workers to their present employers. As Sheena Duncan points out the concession should not be seen as any change in policy. "It is a concession which will help many people to be registered in the jobs they already hold.... It is very welcome in the present unemployment crisis, although one must realize it ties workers to their present employers."[71] In the case of domestic workers these ties may be especially onerous.

An unemployed Black woman is especially vulnerable. The definition of an 'idle Bantu' in Section 29 of the Urban Areas Act includes any African woman other than a 'bona fide housewife' who is between 15 and 60 and who, even if supported by her parents, is normally unemployed though capable of working unless she is a student. It also includes women who refuse jobs offered by the labour officer, or are fired too frequently. A person held to be an 'idle Bantu' is ordered to be removed from the urban area. Thus the Black woman in urban areas is caught particularly tightly in a structure of constraints which considerably restrict her life, work and movements. Conversely, influx control and the migrant labour system places on the woman in the homelands a considerable burden of responsibility for the reproduction of labour power.[72] As Wilson

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70. Permanent residents are only those who qualify to be in a particular prescribed area in terms of Section 10 (1) (a), (b), or (c) of the Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, i.e. birth in the area, 10 years service with the same employer, or continuous lawful residence for 15 years.

71. Reported in the Sunday Times, 22.7.1979.

72. See below, Chapter 9, 'Conclusions: Domestic Service as a Strategy for Survival.'

writes,

> The disabilities of African women in the Republic are many, but it seems to me that their disabilities are far more because they are part of a disenfranchised community than because they are women. There are disabilities peculiar to women but these are much less than the disabilities of the Black community as a whole.[73]

It is where there is a convergence between the system of racial domination and sexual domination, however, that the disabilities of African women are greatest.

All women in South Africa are subject to the system of sexual domination which is reflected in legal institutions. Van der Vyver points to a number of respects in which South African law differentiates between men and women for various purposes, where differentiation amounts to discrimination against women. For instance, by virtue of Section 14 (7) of the Public Service Act 54 of 1957, a female public servant automatically loses her job on getting married.[74] However, the system of racial domination provides White women with important mechanisms of escape from the structure of constraint generated by the system of sexual domination. In other words, White women secure rights and freedoms at the expense of Black women. One example of this is the vote.

When White women were given the vote by the Hertzog government in 1930 after a campaign led by Bertha Solomon, it was partly to secure racial domination. The dilution of the African franchise was one of Hertzog's prime considerations. Linton points out that as a result of the Women's Enfranchisement Act of 1930, which granted European female adult suffrage to all the provinces, "a mere political manoeuvre" legitimate "within the rules of the political game", the Cape African vote was diminished from a proportion of 7½ percent in 1929 to a little more than three

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73. M. Wilson, The Changing Status of African Women. Bertha Solomon Memorial Lecture (Cape Town: National Council of Women, 1974), p.8.

74. Van der Vyver also points out that sex differentiation in South African law amounts in some instances to discrimination against men. See J.D. Van der Vyver, 'The Legal Status of Women', in Seven Lectures on Human Rights (Cape Town: Juta and Co., 1976), pp.21-34.

percent in 1931.[75] Nevertheless, the debate in parliament was long and heated. "Women's place is in the home", was repeated endlessly. One opponent stated, "The experience of centuries has taught the farmer that it is impossible to inspan mixed teams of males and females unless the sex instinct has been completely eradicated. I am convinced this policy will lead to the degeneration of the race...to a hermaphrodite state of mannish women and effeminate men." Another speaker prophesised that "modern democracy will collapse...nobody can deny that as a result of this Bill the government of the country is being handed over to women", and so on.[76]

The suffrage campaign between 1920 and 1930 mainly involved White, educated, middle-class women whose goal was to extend the franchise to themselves. Their numbers were small. According to Walker, it seems unlikely that the membership of the Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union ever exceeded around 4 000. Essentially this was a reformist group. They wanted a place in the established political structure, and did not challenge its basis.[77] The suffrage campaign in fact illustrates the racial base to the involvement of White women in the system of sexual domination. This becomes even more apparent when it is compared with the other women's campaign in South African history.[78]

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75. A. Linton, 'The Native and Coloured Franchise', Presbyterian Churchman, November 1933, p.236. Quoted by Marion Lacey, 'Land, Labour and African Affairs, 1924-34'. Unpublished M.A. thesis, Rhodes University, 1979, p.40.

76. For example, Senator Dr Visser opposed the Women's Enfranchisement Bill on the ground that "a woman's brain does not develop nearly as long and as far as a man's." The Times, 15.5.1930. Quoted in From Women, Number 13, August, 1978. In her autobiography Bertha Solomon recommends the debate "to anyone in search of sardonic amusement." B. Solomon, Time Remembered. The Story of a Fight (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1968), p.72.

77. See C. Walker, 'The Federation of South African Women, 1954-1962'. Conference on the History of Opposition in Southern Africa. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, January, 1978; 'Suffrage and Passes - two South African Women's Campaigns'. Paper presented at the Women's Seminar held at Stutterheim, September, 1975.

78. Walker, 1975: Ibid.

The Anti-Pass campaign of 1955-56, which involved an estimated 50 000 African women united by their opposition to carrying passes,[79] not only involved considerably more women but also ones drawn from a completely different class base - being mostly working-class and peasant women. They were far more militant, prepared to break laws if necessary, be arrested, go to gaol. One of their songs expresses this militancy:

> Strijdom, you have tampered with the women:
> you have struck a rock.

The role of these women in white South African society is illustrated by the headline in The Star when almost 2 000 women were arrested in Johannesburg in October 1958 while protesting against the issuing of reference books, "No Nannies To-day."[80]

An honest analysis of the historical response to South African women in these two campaigns seems to indicate that sex is an insubstantial point around which to unite the variformed interests of women. The different class interests involved in those campaigns are very clear, and evoked very different responses. While the Anti-Pass campaign was totally unsuccessful, the success of the suffrage campaign is perhaps more limited than it may appear. One wonders, after all, how effectively white women here use their political rights. Many appear to be 'male dominated' in their voting behaviour, following the lead of their husbands and fathers, but this would need to be verified by research. There is some historical evidence to show how prevailing definitions of femininity can prevent their exercising political rights. Van der Vyver points out that the Orange Free State Republic was probably the very first western state that did not expressly exclude women from the right to vote.

> This was probably due to an oversight on the part of the drafters of the Free State Constitution. It is also believed that no women in the Free State ever availed herself of this casus omissus to perform what would in the days of the Republic have been regarded as a most unfeminine and sinful act. [81]

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79. For a moving account of this campaign see M. Benson, The African Patriots (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), pp.217-239.

80. The Star, 12.10.1958. Quoted by Walker, 1975: Ibid.

81. Van der Vyver, 1976: 26.

In theory, women today have political choices; in practice, their choice is limited: the political candidates are almost invariably men. There have been some notable exceptions to this pattern in female parliamentarians, but there has never been a woman cabinet minister in South Africa and only one woman senator. But this may change with the shifting pattern of women's participation in economic production outside the home.

2. Employment

"The only useless life is a woman's."
- Disraeli.[82]

According to the sexual division of labour in capitalist societies women are seen primarily as domestic, non-productive workers, within the context of the nuclear family. The two crucial characteristics of their position were the isolated nature of their work as housewives and their economic dependence on male breadwinners. However, the extent of this isolation and dependence has declined to some extent. The large-scale entry of women into the labour force is a dominant characteristic of all advanced industrial societies since World War II.[83]

In most advanced industrial societies a little more than one-third of the labour force are now women.[84] In South Africa 32,7 percent of all women, and 46 percent of Black women, are economically active outside their homes.[85] The numbers of economically active women have increased dramatically. This is true of White women who in 1936 constituted 18 percent of the labour force; by 1960 this percentage had increased to

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82. Benjamin Disraeli, Coningsby, Book IV, Chapter 15.

83. See S. Kammerman, 'Work and Family in Industrialised Societies', in Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society, Vol. 4, No. 4, Summer, 1979.

84. In the U.S.A., 38 percent of women, in France 39,4 percent, and in Britain 40 percent of women are economically active outside their homes. V. Mickleburgh, 'The Role of Women in the Work Situation', Road Ahead Conference, Grahamstown, July 1978.

85. L. Mvubelo, 'Women in Industry', South African Outlook, February 1976, Vol. 110, No. 1257, p.26. See also Simkins in Simkins and Clarke, 1978: 41.

21 percent and in 1975 to 34 percent.[86] But the largest growth in employment between 1951 and 1970 was amongst Black women workers who increased by 230 percent.[87]

However in South Africa, as in all capitalist societies, women's labour force participation differs markedly to that of men. They are still mainly limited to occupations of lower training requirements, lower job security, lower pay, and lower prestige.[88] In fact, the occupational structure of South Africa is segregated by both sex and race. There is a considerable degree of occupational segregation in the concentration of Black women in domestic work. Nevertheless, the changes that have occurred are significant.

The period 1945-1970 was one of rapid economic growth. Building on the export of gold to world capitalist markets, the white minority government has, in the years after 1945, successfully brought about growth of manufacturing industry at one of the highest rates in the western world. During this period women generally and Black women specifically, have moved into the towns and played an increasingly important role in economic production. In 1946 the three largest areas of employment for Black women were: domestic service, 437 358; agricultural labour, not taking into account peasant farming, 235 509; and teaching, 6 448. For 'Coloured' women domestic service (63 282) and agricultural labour (5 598) were followed by 'factory hand' (4 032).[89]

Since then the occupational structure reflects successive movements of women from different racial groups, away from the agricultural and service sectors of the economy into industry. The movement of Black women has covered the shortest distance in this pattern; it has been largely from the agricultural to the service sector. Domestic service is now

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86. Mickleburgh, 1978.

87. Mvubelo, 1976: 26.

88. As Scharf writes, women "by law and custom are constrained to enter a much narrower range of occupations than men." B. Scharf, 'Sexual Stratification and Social Stratification', British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 28, No. 4, December 1977, p.460. Theories of the 'dual labour market' focus upon the fact that women workers are concentrated in unskilled, low-paid and insecure jobs.

89. 1946 Population Census, UG 41-54.

the second largest occupational category of African women, engaging 38 percent of all employed Black women in 1970. The low level of African women's participation in the industrial sectors of the economy is significant.

White women have generally left the agricultural and service sectors and are increasingly employed in industry, largely in clerical capacities. In 1970, 54 percent of all economically active white women were employed in clerical occupations, a concentration that is typical of industrialized countries generally.[90] It involves a low ceiling of occupational mobility. The number of white men in the clerical section is roughly half that of white women, yet these men hold 83,7 percent of the supervisory posts.[91] White women in the professions are also concentrated in jobs which are extensions of women's domestic role, specifically teaching, nursing, social work and librarianship. In South Africa "white women are 65 percent of the teachers (but only 18 percent of the Inspectors of Education). They are 95 percent of the nurses, 85 per cent of the social workers, and 85 percent of the librarians."[92] They are under-represented in important professions; they comprise only 10 percent of the doctors, two percent of the dentists, three percent of the lawyers, three percent of the architects and townplanners, and 0,4 percent of the engineers.[93] Although women represent a large percentage of the work force, they are very poorly represented in management. In 1977 there were 125 000 men in management positions and only 2 800 (0,04 percent) women.[94]

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90. E. Boserup, Women's Role in Economic Development (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970), p.130.

91. Human Sciences Research Council. Manpower Survey No. 12 of April, 1977.

92. The Study Group on Women in Employment 1978. Memorandum on Women in Employment. Appendix III, p.3, calculated from the 1970 Census.

93. Ibid., p.3.

94. Mickleburgh, 1978. Clearly many different factors are involved in this but an American study reports that "the behaviors and policies of employers are much more important in the restriction of females from positions of authority" than either women's qualifications or the attitudes and behaviors of the women themselves. W. Wolf and N. Fligstein, 'Sex and Authority in the Workplace: The Causes of Sexual Inequality', American Sociological Review, Vol. 44, No. 2, April 1979, p.250. They report that "many employers feel that women are too emotional and are therefore unfit to be in supervisory positions.", Wolf and Fligstein, 1979: 237.

In general, African women are excluded from the two categories of jobs commonly filled by women - clerical work and shop assistants. The Public Service, banks, building societies and industry employ many women in administrative and secretarial jobs, but nearly all of them are white.[95] The training of some Coloured women as typists, telephonists and other office workers is a fairly recent phenomenon. African women are also excluded from many skilled trades and industrial occupations. In general, Africans are not apprenticed in skilled trades, but men can qualify as building and mining artisans' assistants, electric wiremen, woodworkers and surveyors' assistants. The system of both racial and sexual domination coalesce to exclude African women from many professions.

This pattern of differential incorporation of women into the economy is not haphazard, but is related to a racial and sexual hierarchy. With changing labour needs, successive waves of women have entered the labour market and generated an occupational mobility for those above them in the racial hierarchy. African women are located at the bottom of both the racial and sexual hierarchies operating in the occupational structure.

The sexual hierarchy has an impetus of its own. The 'femininization' of occupations is by implication a corollary of economic development.

> As economic development gets under way, women tend increasingly to enter the non-agricultural labour market. This growing number of young women cannot indefinitely be accommodated in the occupations which were first considered to be appropriate for women. As a result, women spill over into other occupations, entering reluctantly at first, but with increasing enthusiasm as the new occupations become more 'feminine'. [96]

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95. An interesting line of speculation is the reason for the exclusion of women from the mining industry (except in white collar capacities). Definitions of 'femininity' were sufficiently class exclusive to allow the extreme exploitation of female and child labour in the coal mines in early nineteenth century Britain. Why was the pattern so different in the gold mines in the early twentieth century in South Africa?

96. Boserup, 1970: 216-7.

Boserup compares the effect of this to the phenomenon of 'tipping' in the residential areas of multi-racial communities where 'white' districts are only reluctantly opened to and entered by 'coloured' groups. She fails to show how the 'reluctance' of the invading group is often parallelled by a resistance from the displaced group, but the analogy is a vivid one.

> After an occupation is invaded by the sex considered inferior a stage is reached when it is deserted by the sex which considers itself superior, just as an urban quarter invaded by 'coloured' is deserted by its white inhabitants when the 'density' of 'coloured' has reached a certain level. In both cases prejudice is reinforced by economic considerations: a sudden increased supply of labour for a given occupation exerts a downward pressure on wages, just as the sudden entry of a new group of tenants tends to raise the level of rent. In both cases, the superior group - sex or race - finds the occupation or locality less attractive and tends to leave the field open to the inferior sex (or race). [97]

Femininization is sometimes accompanied by deskilling. For example in Europe clerical work underwent a process of deskilling when it shifted from being a male occupation in the nineteenth century to become a female occupation in the twentieth century. Women have been largely excluded from skilled occupations.[98]

In South Africa racial and sexual hierarchies fuse to create the concentration of Black women in domestic work. The pattern of employment of domestic servants in South Africa is at variance with the occupational structure of both industrialised and non-industrialised societies in two significant ways. Firstly, this pattern contrasts with that of other non-industrial societies. Boserup shows that the percentage of women in private domestic service as a percentage of all adult women (12 per cent), and all women in non-agricultural occupations (52 percent), is highest in South Africa compared to 21 other countries in Africa, Latin America and South and East Asia. At the same time, the South African

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97. Ibid.

98. On the relation between deskilling and clerical work see J. Singelmann and M. Tienda, 'Changes in Industry Structure and Female Employment in Latin America 1950-1970', Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 5, No. 4, July, 1979.

figure of women in private domestic service as a percentage of the total labour force in private domestic service is lower than many other countries.[99]

Secondly, the widespread employment of domestic servants in South Africa is at variance with the pattern in other industrialised societies. Boserup relates the number of domestic servants to stages of economic development. She asserts that a high number of domestic servants is a characteristic feature of countries at an intermediate stage of economic development.

> By contrast in countries at very early stages of development, domestic tasks like cooking, serving of meals, washing, etc. are done within the family, usually by the women. At the intermediate stages of development, many such services have become commercialised, being performed for wages by either male or female domestic servants. And at still higher levels, some of these services have become commercialised outside the household by men or women specialising in one or other of these service activities, as owners and employees in bars, cafeterias, restaurants, laundries, house and office cleaning services, etc. In industrialised countries, the number of people employed in such service establishments is large, whereas domestic servants are few; these two domestic service groups taken together seem to account in the typical industrialised country, for from 4-6 per cent of all adults, 60-70 per cent of them being women. [100]

Thus, if domestic service is an index of 'modernization', the prevailing pattern, and specifically the high number of domestic servants, presents a sharp contrast to the occupational structure of other advanced industrialised societies.

While the majority of African women are still employed in agriculture and domestic service, they are also beginning to move out into new occupational areas. The numbers of African women in manufacturing and commerce are increasing. In 1951, 7 000 Black women were employed in manufacturing; in 1970 the number had increased to 70 000: in commerce

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99. Table 15, 'Women in private domestic service', Boserup, 1970: 102.

100. Ibid., p.103.

the number increased from 2 000 to 50 000.[101] It can be expected that these numbers will increase further, following the pattern in the U.S.A. where until 1940 the occupational structure showed a similar sexual and racial differentiation. During the period 1940-1970

> Black women in ever larger numbers have broken out of the prisons of domestic service or unskilled forms of labour to which they were largely confined in 1940 and have, for better or worse, come to largely share the occupational fate of white women.[102]

The overall pattern of development in capitalist societies is that women are increasingly incorporated in widening areas of economic production. Nevertheless, they are mainly found at the lowest levels in terms of pay, prestige, skill or working conditions.

The particular vulnerability of women workers in the capitalist system of production must be related to the hierarchy of labour power and the corresponding scale of wages which this system of production creates.[103] In all societies of the advanced capitalist world, women's wages have ranged from around half to nearly three-quarters of the equivalent male wages.[104] In South Africa, in all population groups, employed men earn

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101. Mvubelo, 1976: 26.

102. D. Treiman and K. Terrell, 'Women, work and wages - trends in the female occupational structure', in Kenneth C. Land and Seymour Spilerman (eds.), Social Indicator Models (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1975), p.166. In the U.S.A. in 1920, 71 percent of all employed black women were domestic workers or laundresses. Katzman, 1978: 245-6; the far-reaching changes in women's work wrought by World War II brought an end to domestic service as a significant employer of women. In the U.S.A. the proportion of black women in white-collar positions nearly doubled between 1964 (22 percent) and 1974 (42 percent). However, most of these women were employed in clerical capacities. W. Allen, 'Family, Roles, Occupational Statuses and Achievement Orientations among Black Women in the United States', Signs, Vol. 4, No. 4, Summer 1979, p.678.

103. As Westergaard and Resler write, "Sex inequality in pay... reinforces class inequality: it strikes hardest at the lowest levels of the occupational hierarchy." J. Westergaard and H. Resler, Class in a Capitalist Society. A study of contemporary Britain (London: Heinemann, 1976), p.101.

104. For example, in the U.S.A. the median income in 1974 for men aged 25 and older working year-round and full-time was $12 786; the comparable income for women was $7 370 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1976, Table 58). Thus, "in 1974 full-time year round

twice as much as employed women. The 1970 median income per annum for whites was R3 124 for males and R1 430 for females. In fact, the income of a white woman is only 48 percent that of a white man having the same educational qualifications.[105] Race is also an important stratifying line in this hierarchy of wages. The income of white females is twice that of 'non-white' females with the same educational qualifications. Once again there is a fusion of the system of racial and sexual domination so that Black women are the lowest paid workers. Twice as many women as men earn less than R100 a month, and less than one out of 300 employed women earns as much as R500 a month.[106] A survey of the wage structure of highly qualified white employees in 1971, undertaken by the Human Sciences Research Council, showed median salaries of women in the private sector to be half that of men and 35 percent lower in government service. Where African women are employed in industry or in the professions, their wages are invariably lower than those of men or Whites doing the same work. Among teachers and nurses Black women are the lowest paid. Among nurses the salary scale per annum for White qualified diploma nurses gives a top possible salary of R4 830, for Blacks it is R3 210. For White trainee nurses the top possible salary is R3 210, for Blacks R1 794. Apart from lower wages, women are often denied housing loans, medical aid for their families, pensions or death benefits, expense accounts, company cars, bonuses and other 'perks' available to men.

To justify the payment of low wages it is argued that women are merely secondary providers, either wives or daughters for whom husbands or fathers are the main providers. The implication is that women work for pocket money. Thus the sale of women's labour power is mediated through

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male earnings were 1,73 times the comparable female earnings." Sell and Johnson, 'Income and Occupational Differences between Men and Women in the United States', Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 62, No. 1, October 1977, p.1.

105. Malherbe, 'Table of Median Incomes at different levels of vocational as well as academic training 1976', in Malherbe, 1977: 64. Simkins refers to "the fairly widespread practice of paying women less than men for the same job designation; 80 per cent is not infrequent. Simkins in Simkins and Desmond, 1978: 59.

106. Women in Action, 1975: 57.

their dependence on men as husbands or fathers.[107]

In contrast to the pattern that is emerging in the rest of the capitalist world, the wage gap between men and women in some areas in South Africa is actually widening. In the Cape Department of Education's new salary scales for teachers, for example, the gap between men and women has widened. A male high school teacher will start off with R720 a year more than a woman teacher with the same qualifications.

The Statutory Wage Board and Industrial Councils consistently lay down lower wage rates for women doing the same work as men or comparable work. Many industrial agreements are to women's disadvantage. In the liquor and catering trade the monthly minimum pay for a manager is R313, for a manageress R243. A full-time head waiter must earn more than R41,80 a week. For his female counterpart, the minimum is R26,95. In the clothing industry a traveller in his first year must earn between R184 and R202 a month. The figures for a woman are R120 and R132. In the textile industry, industrial agreements have stipulated that females could be employed at a rate of remuneration much less than the minimum wage prescribed by the agreement for male workers. The latest Wage Board agreement for the Light Cotton Textile Manufacturing Industry makes provision for a 20 percent wage differential between the wages of adult men and women.[108]

In South Africa some officials justify the wage gap on both sexual and racial lines in various terms. For example, when he was the Administrator of the Transvaal, Mr Sybrand van Niekerk argued that if there was a high demand and short supply of members of a particular group in any profession, that group would have a stronger bargaining position than any other. They could command a higher price on the market, in accordance with 'sound economic principle', and thus "there is justification for women's and men's salaries not being the same...some people may say this is exploitation, I do not."[109] He applied the principle to

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107. As Beechey writes, "female wage rates...can be lower because of the assumption that women are subsidiary workers and their husbands' wages are responsible for the costs of reproduction." Beechey, in Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978: 185.

108. Westmore and Townsend, 1975: 21.

109. Reported in The Garment Worker, 16.6.1978.

male and female teachers, to Black and White nurses, and traffic police.

It appears that women's increasing role in economic production does not involve their total emancipation. Entry into the labour force implies a potential emancipation in that it allows a measure of status and economic independence. However, four characteristics of the female occupational structure indicate how far emancipation has to go. Women are concentrated in a narrow range of occupations, which are often extensions of their domestic roles; such occupations rate low on ratings of occupational prestige; women in such occupations are usually subordinate to men; and they are concentrated in the lower income levels, which often involves a partial economic dependence on male breadwinners. All four characteristics fuse in the institution of domestic service. Thus within this pattern of differential incorporation Black women are concentrated at the lowest levels.[110]

In addition, many women workers have a double workload because while they are increasingly engaged in paid employment outside the home, their responsibilities for domestic work within the home have remained almost intact.[111] This dual shift as waged and domestic workers is clearly especially onerous for domestic servants because of the replication of work tasks involved.

The system of sexual domination operating against women has been conceptualised as a system of sex bars. In employment these form a structure of constraints effectively limiting both the nature of the work women do and the rewards they receive for it. These constraints are most severe for Black women situated at the convergence of two structures of dominance: those of race and sex. Now both these structures of dominance must be seen as generated and determined by the specific capitalist system of production and class structure of which they are part.

The sex bars operating against women in employment are fundamentally generated by the same structural insecurity that generates the colour

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110. This pattern is not unique to South Africa. For an account of how Black women in the United Kingdom constitute a pool of unskilled labour, see 'Black Women and Work' by H. Harris in M. Wandor (ed.), The Body Politic (London: Stage 1, 1972), pp.166-175.

111. For instance, see S. Sharpe, Just Like a Girl (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p.222.

bar. The differentiation of wages along both sexual and racial lines means that

> South Africans suffer from far too many fears.... Black workers are used in jobs at lower rates of pay and the fear exists that Whites and Coloureds may be ousted from their jobs - hence the reason why the government introduced the obnoxious 'job reservation' provisions in the Industrial Conciliation Act. It is well known that these fears do not only exist on a racial basis, but it exists equally on a sexual basis. In the clothing industry and other industries, males have been ousted from certain jobs by females who earned lower wages or salaries. The process was painful for the males and open hostility existed while the process was taking place. [112]

In Scheepers' view the wage levels at which women are employed constitute a definite threat to male workers. She proposes a solution within the capitalist framework; South Africa should follow the example of other industrial societies and introduce legislation that would protect men against replacement by women at lower wage levels. At present, within the Industrial Council agreement operative in the textile industry, provision is made to prevent the male worker from being undercut by the female worker in this way. "No male person employed on any particular class of work shall be replaced in his class of work by a female person at a lesser rate of remuneration than that payable to the male." By implication this provision operates to protect male workers of various levels of skill. Women workers do pose a considerable threat to unskilled and semi-skilled African male workers as they constitute a reserve army of labour willing to work for low wages. Thus this sexual division of labour among the working class amplifies the structural insecurity of workers separated from ownership of property in the means of production. It facilitates basic divisions between workers, keeping them in competition and disorganised as a class. Sexism, like racism, operates as a divisive force.

Appeals to definitions of 'femininity' to protect vested male interests are heard throughout the labour force. They show considerable variations in different historical periods. In Europe in the nineteenth century

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112. Senator A. Scheepers, 'Women and Employment'. Paper given at the 1976 National Convention to Advance Women's Legal Rights.

male secretaries put up great resistance to the intrusion of women into offices. Alexander Dumas who, before becoming a playwright and novelist held a secretarial post, warned women that "if they ever put one foot inside an office they would lose every vestige of femininity."[113] In South Africa the revered Senator C.J. Langehoven maintained that a woman who occupied a professional post "kept a man out of a position, shirked the responsibility of marriage and prevented a man from marrying because he did not earn the income which would make it possible for him to marry."[114] On another occasion he implied that such a woman had an even more sinister role: "The woman who repudiated the function and denied and refused the sacrifice of womanhood and motherhood was the type of woman who, in the long run, ultimately worked for the destruction of the State."[115]

Male hostility from an African source is illustrated by the discontent at Kwazakele High School in Port Elizabeth in 1976 which apparently derived from "the resentment of men teachers working under a woman principal.... Woman's lib plays no part on the African scene. A woman's place is still in the kitchen. Kwazakele's head Mrs Vera Gundwana is most eligibly qualified but men teachers resent her superior position," a source said.[116] Male hostility and the manipulation of a sexist ideology appear to increase with the structural insecurity of the working class.[117]

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113. Quoted by C. Stone, 'Industrialization and Female Labour Force Participation', pp.4-17, South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1976, p.15.

114. Quoted in The Sunday Times, 2.2.1977.

115. Langehoven, May, 1930. Quoted in From Women, No. 13, August, 1978.

116. Quoted in the Eastern Province Herald, 2.9.1976.

117. For example, studies in Britain indicate that the division of labour between male and female tasks is more rigid in working class families. The Newsons comment that the roles played by working class parents in Britain tend to be much more rigidly allocated on grounds of sex than those of middle class parents, especially in relation to childcare and domestic labour, which are seen by many working class men as 'women's work'. They write, "it seems to be generally the case in our society that as one proceeds down the social scale, the sex roles become more sharply defined and more rigidly typed." J. Newson and E. Newson, Patterns of Infant Care in an Urban Community (London: Allen and Unwin, 1963), p.207. See also E. Bott, Family and

It is important to appreciate the class base to the structural insecurity which generates male hostility to women workers.

> Even that opposition often made by males to the entrance of women into the new fields of labour, of which they at present hold the monopoly is not fundamentally sexual in its nature...the male would oppose with equal, and perhaps even greater bitterness, the opening of its doors to numbers of his own sex who had before been excluded and who would limit his gains and share his privileges. [118]

It is the protection of class-based privileges that is really at issue here.

Thus definitions of femininity are manipulated by class interests within the capitalist system of production in a number of ways. First they are used to create an insecurity among wage-earners which is a deflecting and dividing force. Secondly, a number of discriminations practised against women workers are ideologically justified by appeals to women's domestic functions. For example, management frequently argue that they cannot put women workers on educational or training courses for more skilled classes of work because women's childbearing function implies that they are intermittent workers. Clearly,

> the sexual stereotype is being manipulated here...the reproductive function of women is used as a rationalisation for keeping women among the unskilled and low paid workers. [119]

Other attributes in sexual or gender role stereotypes are similarly manipulated to serve male interests. For example, women are taken to have a particular propensity for boring work. A news item which appeared recently is headed "If you can't get a monkey take an older woman." It describes how a machinist's job in a British company was so boring "that a monkey could be trained to do it." Therefore, the job

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Social Network (London: Tavistock, 1964); F. Dennis et al., Coal is our Life: an analysis of a Yorkshire mining community (London: Tavistock, 1969), pp.62-63. Research is needed to establish whether this is true for white South African working class families.

118. O. Schreiner, Women and Labour (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911), p.274.

119. Westmore and Townsend, 1975: 24.

was given to an older woman instead of to a young boy.[120]

These definitions of femininity are closely related to what Oakley has termed "the ideology of gender",[121] which equates femininity with passivity and domesticity. Oakley points to two 'myths' which provide the rationale for the ideology of gender" firstly, the myth of the division of labour by sex whereby the relegation of women to a domestic role in the family is portrayed as natural, universal and necessary; and secondly, the myth of motherhood which asserts that motherhood represents "the greatest achievement of a woman's life" and "the only true means of self realisation."

The latter is incorporated in both the main cultural orders operating in South African society. In both traditional African culture and the European one, the maternal function is the basic or pivotal attribute of women's role.[122] A lecturer at a youth camp run by the Transvaal Education Department told his charges, "A woman's job is to produce babies and keep the home-fires burning for those on the border."[123] However, the division of labour by sex varies between the two cultural orders. In traditional African culture the division of labour is often very unequal and involves women doing a great deal of the heavy physical work.[124] The division of labour could also be said to be unequal in

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120. The Garment Worker, 7.7.1978.

121. Oakley, 1976: 156-221.

122. In most pre-capitalist African societies to be childless is regarded as a terrible misfortune. (See Evans-Pritchard, The Position of Women in Primitive Societies and other Essays in Social Anthropology (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), p.46.) Marriage is too important to be left to individuals and is usually arranged by the senior men. Among the Xhosa this is provoking some opposition. For example: "It is time that Black women stood up and said loudly and boldly I believe I have the right to choose my marriage partner." Mrs Margaret Stamper at the Road Ahead Conference, Grahamstown, July 1978.

123. Reported in the Rand Daily Mail, 13.4.1976.

124. R. Dumont in False Start in Africa (1967) suggests that "the African woman experiences a three-fold servitude: through forced marriage, through her dowry and polygamy, which increases the leisure time of the men and simultaneously their social prestige." Quoted by J. Mitchell, Women's Estate (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), p.103.

another sense, in that the prestigious work such as hunting and war, and among the Xhosa the herding of cattle, are often restricted to men. This is, however, an extremely controversial area.[125] Various judgements are flawed by the fact that they operate largely in terms of static generalisations,

> from the area of 'the traditional woman', the idea of the essentially unchanging existence led by African women before or outside the transformations of Christianity and urbanisation. [126]

Such notions have to be discarded for a dynamic analysis that is rooted in historical processes and specific structural relationships. Given these qualifications,

> it is a crude generalization, but perhaps it needs to be said, that African society is a male society, in which women have a defined place and role; the place is subordinate and the role is to carry the routine daily burdens of life. [127]

The crucial point is that in South Africa, women's labour force participation differs markedly to that of men because it is structured on their reproductive role within the family. There is an obvious contradiction between women's increasing role in the work force, and an ideology that excludes them from economic production and restricts them to the home. At this level the system of sexual domination is more than a product of a specific system of capitalist production and class structure. It is at the same time a projection of contradictions within this system.

In advanced capitalist societies, while every woman is subjected to the system of sexual domination, her experience of it depends on her

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125. For example Hunter, writing of pre-colonial Pondo women suggests that on the whole the division of labour "seems to have been fairly equal." M. Hunter, 'The Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Status of Pondo Women', pp.259-276, Africa, Vol. VI, 1933, p.260.

126. S. Young, 'Fertility and Famine: women's agricultural history in Southern Mozambique', in R. Palmer and N. Parsons, The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa (London: Heinemann, 1977), p.66.

127. Commission for Technical Co-operation in South Africa of the Sahara (CCTA) Labour: Inter African Conference 5 meeting, Lusaka, 1957. Secretariat Report I.5, p.123. Quoted by Boserup. 1970: 219.

location in the class structure. Her class position may provide her with 'outs' from the structure of constraints generated by this system. For example, the upper middle-class woman with a private income will not experience the employment sex bars which limit the kinds of work and wages women can expect, in the same way as a working-class woman. Further, she can 'buy' her way out of domestic roles by employing domestic labour. While in all advanced capitalist societies this is the prerogative of a small minority of upper-class women, in South Africa, because of the system of racial domination, most White women can obtain 'outs' in this way. Frequently, this involves divesting themselves of a considerable part of domestic work and responsibilities, including the care of young children. Thus cheap, Black domestic labour is the instrument whereby many White women are freed to lead not only an economically productive, but also a more socially varied, life. This study has attempted to show how much of the affluence of White South Africans is dependent on the ultra-exploitation of the mass of Black workers. It is important to recognise that a large part of our leisured and hospitable lifestyle rests on the specific exploitation of the Black domestic worker.

3. Control of Reproduction

At the level of control of reproduction this class structure also provides women of the dominant class with important mechanisms of escape from sexual discrimination. Degrees of availability of contraception and abortion differ in advanced capitalist societies. But in none of them are they the automatic right of every woman. In many of them access to contraceptive technology and abortion is the privilege of middle-class women who can purchase expensive and illegal operations.

The contraceptive technology developed since the nineteenth century has led to important demographic changes. The most important of these is the decline in the birth date, a steady trend in advanced industrial societies since about 1870. The married woman of today thus has a much longer period of active life, not involved with child-birth or child-rearing.[128] The latter need no longer be the sole or ultimate vocation

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128. According to Gravron in the U.K. for example, at the beginning of this century the "average woman could expect to spend one third of her life producing children. Today the figure is

of women, but one option among several. It could be argued that it is only as a deliberate, conscious choice that child-bearing becomes a truly creative act, purposive and responsible. In these terms access to contraception and abortion is of critical importance.

In South Africa contraception is theoretically available and free to all women. However, this will only become a reality when there are enough clinics to serve all parts of the country equally effectively. Despite 3 000 state-run clinics, this is far from the situation at present, and women in the remote, rural areas are at a disadvantage. Needless to say, this applies mainly to African women. In 1976/77 an average of 954 000 women per month were protected from falling pregnant through clinical methods and by voluntary sterilisation. However, the numbers of different population groups who were actually sterilised in that year total 33 Whites, 16 Asians, 25 Coloureds and no Africans. Yet Africans form 70,6 percent of our population and have the highest birth rate.[129] The numbers of medical abortions show the same pattern.

In terms of the Abortion and Sterilisation Act of 1975, abortion is illegal unless there is a threat to the permanent mental or physical health of the mother or the child, or if the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest, or the mother is an imbecile. The law demands that

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nearer to one-fifteenth." H. Gavron, The Captive Wife (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p.27. However, Mitchell argues that as woman's reproductive role has declined, her role in the socialisation of children has received increased emphasis. Hence her argument that the liberation of women can only be achieved if all four structures in which they are integrated (production, reproduction, sexuality and socialisation) are transformed. At present they are "oppressively fused" and a modification in any one area can be offset by the reinforcement of another. Mitchell, 1976: 120.

129. 40,5 per thousand for Blacks between 1970-75, compared to 23,9 for Whites during the same period. Professor J.L. Sadie, 'Proceedings of the Conference on the Effects of Population Growth in South Africa', Trans. Royal Society of South Africa, 43, Part I, March 1978. Obviously limited access to state-run clinics is only part of the explanation here. There is also a resistance to modern contraceptive technology which derives from a different set of cultural meanings. A recent Human Sciences Research Council study claimed 38 percent of African men prefer a family of six to eight children, while a third will not allow their wives to use any kind of modern contraception. Financial Mail, 2.9.1977, p.871.

approval be obtained from at least three doctors, one of whom must be a state-employed psychiatrist in the case of the mental health clause. As there are only 27 state-employed psychiatrists in the country this makes access difficult for many. In the twelve-month period following the 1975 Act a mere 570 legal medical abortions were performed throughout the country; 487 were on White women, 54 on Coloureds, 8 on Asians and 21 on Blacks.[130] These proportions suggest that the law is discriminating against Black women in practice. As in the case of employment, there is again a convergence of the system of racial and sexual domination which amplifies the disabilities of Black women.

At the same time illegal abortions are extremely frequent and just as dangerous. Figures of illegal abortions are difficult to obtain,[131] but a professor of law has estimated that as many as 100 000 illegal abortions occur annually in South Africa.[132] It has been reported that in Soweto there are 20 abortion cases a day.[133] At King Edward VIII Hospital in Durban, approximately 4 000 abortion cases were treated in 1972.[134] During the ten-month period from March 1 to December 31, 1978, 19 818 women were admitted to South African hospitals for incomplete abortions. Many of these cases would be due to illegal abortions. By contrast, during the entire twelve months of 1978, only 541 women obtained legal medical abortions.[135] As a result of illegal abortions there is a high turnover of sick women in gynaecological hospital wards throughout the country, and not infrequent deaths. During 1972-75, 112 deaths from post-abortal infection were recorded in the 255 hospitals that participated in the Maternal Mortality Survey of South

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130. Abortion Reform Action Group National Newsletter, No. 11, September 1976.

131. Figures of illegal abortions, which must under Section 7 (3) of the Abortion and Sterilisation Act, be recorded in all hospitals, are apparently being suppressed. June Cope, ARAG National: President's Report, 1977. ARAG Newsletter, No. 12, May 1977.

132. Women in Action, 1975: 41.

133. Stated in parliament by Helen Suzman, MP, on 1.6.1977, and reported in the Eastern Province Herald, 2.6.1977.

134. Women in Action, 1975: 41.

135. ARAG Newsletter, No. 18, October 1979.

Africa.[136] It has been suggested that as many as 70 percent of the deaths in gynaecological wards in 1976 were due to incomplete abortions.[137] Clearly, the system of sexual domination establishes a structure of constraints that severely limit a woman's control over many aspects of her life, including control of her own body and reproductive functions. Once more it is the Black woman who is most severely constrained, and particularly the millions of Black women living in rural areas.[138]

Since there is often no paid pregnancy leave in South Africa, falling pregnant may mean losing one's job. Nor is there any obligation on an employer to retain the services of the new mother. At present, in terms of both the Shops and Offices and the Factories Acts, a woman may not work for four weeks before the expected birth date of the child, nor for eight weeks after its birth. As a contributor to the Unemployment Insurance Fund, she would be entitled to maternity benefits paid by the state. These benefits can only be claimed if she has been a contributor for at least 18 weeks during the year before the pregnancy, and would amount to 45 percent of her normal earnings. Domestic servants, however, are excluded, along with agricultural workers, from maternity benefits specifically and unemployment insurance generally. Falling pregnant may also mean interrupting one's education. Several domestic servants thought they would be in a better position if it were not for an unwanted pregnancy which had disrupted their education. Clearly, as in the case of employment, there is a convergence of the systems of racial and sexual domination which amplifies the disabilities of Black women.

Domestic workers, like all Black women in South Africa, suffer acutely from the absence of day-care provisions for their children. Wessels reports that for Whites in South Africa in 1975 there were 412 registered creches providing day-care for 20 228 children; 82 creches for 5 926

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136. J.V. Larsen, South African Medical Journal, 27.5.1978. Quoted in ARAG Newsletter, No. 15, June 1978.

137. Van Rensburg. Stated in parliament on 1.6.1977 and reported in the Eastern Province Herald, 2.6.1977.

138. Hence Dr Trudi Thomas advocates 'abortion on request.' She found that in the Ciskei, "rejected hungry and anxious African infants abound, no less neglected by society than by their mothers." T. Thomas, Their Doctor Speaks (Cape Town: Mary Wheeldon, 1973), p.22.

coloured children and only 81 creches for black children.[139] "The poorest population groups which cannot afford professional private placements in day care clearly suffer the most from the lack of facilities."[140]

Finally, the long working hours of domestic workers often makes them particularly vulnerable to that most extreme expression of the system of sexual domination - rape. Few employers seem to realise the danger to which they expose their servants by keeping them at work after dark. The incidence of rape is highest in South Africa's urban Black townships. Out of a total of 14 953 reported rapes 14 242 were rapes of 'non-whites' by 'non-whites', making up 95 percent of the total in 1977.[141] What is more, reported rapes represent a small proportion of the total. As in other countries court procedures usually involve further embarrassment and humiliation for the rape victim; therefore it is grossly underreported. According to the National Director of NICRO only one in twenty rapes are reported in South Africa,[142] and rape has been said to have "the lowest conviction rate of any crime of violence in South Africa."[143]

This chapter has tried to document the system of sexual domination operating in South Africa. This system has two separate cultural sources: European culture and the indigenous African traditional culture. The particular vulnerability of Black women is amplified by the contact of these two cultural orders and the consequent splintering of traditional African culture under the impact of conquest and capital accumulation. This is most clearly illustrated at the level of legal rights where the convergence of two legal systems creates a special edge to the disabilities of Black women.

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139. Table I. D. Wessels, 'A review of existing pre-primary educational facilities for South African children', Human Sciences Research Council, 1977. Quoted by the Study Group on Women in Employment, 1978: 33.

140. Ibid.

141. ARAG Newsletter, No. 15, June 1978, p.10.

142. Quoted by Anne Mayne in South African Outlook, September 1976, Vol. 106, No. 1224, Letter to the Editor, p.138.

143. Women in Action, 1975: 54.

It has been tentatively suggested how the constraints established by the system of sexual domination operate to reproduce the capitalist order, and how a woman's experience of these constraints depends on her place in the class structure. It has been argued that this system of sexual domination has two components: firstly, various measures of sexual discrimination serving to maintain women in a position of dependence. This has been conceptualised as a system of 'sex bars' which form a structure of constraints, effectively restricting women's rights at three critical levels - legal status, employment and reproduction.

These sex bars are 'social facts' which have not only an external, institutionalised existence, but are internalised in men's (and women's) minds. This leads into the second component of the system of sexual domination, a sexist ideology, serving to legitimise these measures of sexual discrimination.

By 'sexist ideology' is meant those attitudes and beliefs that define women as secondary, inferior and dependent. There are several points of similarity between racism and sexism: both are justificatory ideologies, serving to legitimise a system of domination. They have been used to justify both economic exploitation and the denial of political rights. In terms of content there is a great deal of similarity between the conception of the female in a sexist ideology[1] and the 'Sambo myth' which defines Blacks as irresponsible, child-like and incompetent. This conception commonly includes qualities such as passivity, stupidity, or at least a deficient ability for abstract thought and logical argument. Sexist definitions of 'femininity' commonly include all these qualities. In addition, the female has a special emotional capacity for sympathy and compassion. The most striking point of difference regards sexual propensities - while the female is 'under-sexed' the African is 'over-sexed'. Both racist and sexist conceptions variously emphasise the dependence of the Black and the Woman. Both include a set of beliefs about the inferiority of the group in question, its incapacity to perform certain roles and to exercise authority because of certain innate qualities, and various ideas about the desirability of social distance. Both racism and sexism are deterministic belief systems. Incapacities and inequalities are attributed to innate genetic differences. Both have a dual ascriptive

basis - in biological science and in theology. In the case of sexism this involves arguments drawn from biology - women's 'maternal instinct' 'lesser physical strength' and so on, as well as justifications from theological texts.[144] Both racist and sexist ideologies are ubiquitous in the South African social formation and are elaborated and inculcated in such institutions as churches, educational institutions, media and the family - the site of both the primary socialisation of children, and the stabilisation of adult personalities.

The parallels between racism and sexism are significant. Rex defines the sociological field of race relations in terms of three constitutive elements, which could equally well define the sociological field of sex relations: "a situation of differentiation, inequality and pluralism as between groups; the possibility of clearly distinguishing between such groups by their physical appearance, their culture or occasionally by their ancestry; and the justification and explanation of this discrimination in terms of some kind of implicit or explicit theory, frequently but not always of a biological kind."[145]

The system of sexual domination operates not only on a structural, but also at a psychic level. The notion of female inferiority and dependence has been deeply internalised by many women. This 'cultural colonisation' renders them open to manipulation in a variety of ways. In the sexist stereotype 'femininity' implies a high level of concern with personal adornment. This is manipulated by the advertising industry to promote endless consumption - one of the more obvious ways in which the system of sexual domination operates to reproduce the capitalist order.

Definitions of femininity are class-bound. Attributes of passivity, helplessness and delicacy, can only apply to a comparatively small number of females of the dominant class, the mass of women beneath them being compelled to undertake many forms of strenuous and 'unladylike' activity. Olive Schreiner terms this "the phenomenon of female parasitism." She speaks of women, "clad in fine raiment, the work of other's fingers,

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144. For an exposition of male dominance in the Judaic-Christian tradition, see E. Figes, Patriarchal Attitudes: Women in Society (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp.35-65.

145. Rex, 1970: 30.

waited on and tended by the labour of others, fed on luxurious viands, the result of other's toil", seeking "by dissipation and amusements to fill up the inordinate blank left by the lack of productive activity."[146] Schreiner recognised that the basis of female parasitism was exploitation:

> Behind the phenomenon of female parasitism has always lain another and yet larger social phenomenon: it has invariably been preceded...by the subjugation of large bodies of other human creatures, either as slaves, subject races, or classes; and as the result of the excessive labours of those classes there has always been an accumulation of unearned wealth in the hands of the dominant class or race... Without slaves or subject classes to perform the crude, physical labours of life and produce superfluous wealth, the parasitism of the female would in the past have been an impossibility. [147]

Thus Schreiner showed that 'exploitation' has a price: sexist definitions of femininity are more coercive and restricting for women of the dominant class. This is symbolised in the small, smooth, unused, lily-white hands and long unbroken fingernails which indicate upper class membership. The hands of those who are, as Mary Wollstonecraft expressed it, "reduced to the status of birds confined to their cages with nothing to do but plume themselves and stalk with mock majesty from perch to perch."[148]

The phenomenon of 'female parasitism' is apparent in the situation of employers of domestic labour in South Africa today.[149] The domestic servants they employ are among the most exploited groups of workers. In this study it is argued that domestic workers are situated at the convergence of three lines along which social inequality is generated: sex, class and race. It is suggested that their 'ultra-exploitability' partly derives from a system of sexual domination. This has been conceptualised as a set of 'sex bars' which form a structure of constraints, effectively limiting women's rights and opportunities at the levels of legal status, employment and reproduction. It has been shown

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146. Schreiner, 1911: 81.

147. Ibid., p.98.

148. Wollstonecraft (1792). Quoted by Gavron, 1973: 21.

149. See above, Chapter 5, 'The Employers of Domestic Servants'.

how these 'sex bars' operate to reproduce the capitalist order, and how women's experience of these constraints depends on their location in the capitalist system of production and class structure. It was also shown how the system of racial domination generated by the South African variant of capital accumulation links to this class structure to provide members of the dominant, largely White class of women with important 'outs' from this set of constraints. Therefore, this study has tried to explain both the systems of racial and sexual domination by reference to the wider society in which they are situated. Specifically, it has tried to show how the specific forms of both racial and sexual discrimination were generated and determined by the specific class interests of groups differently located in the capitalist system of production. These systems of domination it is suggested, have created a situation of 'ultra-exploitability' of both Blacks and female workers. This ultra-exploitability results in the 'ultra-exploitation' of domestic workers, one of the largest occupational categories of Black women.

The next chapter will attempt to show that an important level of this 'ultra-exploitability', on which both systems of sexual and racial domination 'surface', is education.

CHAPTER 8

EDUCATION FOR DOMESTICITY

> The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honoured by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them and to make life sweet and agreeable to them - these are the duties of women at all times and what should be taught them from their infancy.
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> - Rousseau.[1]

> the best women...are recognised chiefly in the happiness of their husbands and the nobleness of their children ...[Thus] all such knowledge should be given [to women] as may enable her to understand, and even to aid, the work of men...
>
> - Ruskin.[2]

PART I: SEX DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

One cannot understand the situation of domestic workers without some analysis of the general situation of Black women in South Africa. Education is a critical level at which both the systems of racial and sexual domination operate, and the site of many contradictions. Without exaggerating the role of education (as Illich has done[3]) it has a two-fold importance: firstly, in the allocation of occupational roles, and secondly, in the elaboration of appropriate ideologies to reinforce such roles. In capitalist society education is an important agency of social control, and a crucial means of maintaining class relations.[4]

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1. J.-J. Rousseau, Emile (London: J.M. Dent, 1950), p.328.
2. Ruskin, 1868: 114.
3. L. Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).
4. Althusser has argued that education is the dominant ideological state apparatus in capitalist social formations. See 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', pp.121-177 in Althusser, 1971. See also P. Bourdieu, 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction', in R. Brown (ed.), Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change (London: Tavistock, 1973).

The convergence of both the racial and sexual systems of domination is evident in the educational experiences of black women. Historically, schools institutionalised not only the dominant female gender role which equated femininity with domesticity, but also the dominant racial role which equated blackness with subordination. The effect was to locate black women mainly in domestic roles - either in their own, or in the colonizer's households.

There is a strong consensus about the differing characteristics of men and women in modern industrial society.[5] These characteristics are reified in the dominant definitions of appropriate gender roles. Women are perceived as relatively less competent, less independent, less objective, less analytical, less logical, and less resourceful than men. Such gender role definitions form the core of a sexist ideology which equates femininity with passivity and domesticity. This notion is incorporated in the European cultural tradition, the hegemonic tradition operating in South Africa.

Traditional African culture contains different gender role definitions. There is not the same stress on dependence and passivity; women's role in economic production calls for higher levels of competence; qualities of activity, self-reliance, stoicism, courage, unsentimentality and emotional control are demanded from Black women. However, the history of the education of Black women shows that the authorities ignored this contrasting cultural pattern, and in doing so, amplified the disabilities of Black women.

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5. Broverman et al., suggest that at least in the U.S.A. this consensus cuts across differences in sex, age, religion, marital status and educational levels. Despite the apparent fluidity of gender-role definitions in contemporary society, compared to previous decades, gender role stereotypes are pervasive and persistent. They found that male-valued items in dominant gender role stereotypes reflected what they term a 'competency cluster'. Included in this cluster are attributes such as being independent, objective, active, competitive, logical, adventurous, self-confident, ambitious etc. The female-valued items reflect what they refer to as 'the warmth and expressiveness' cluster. This included attributes such as being gentle, neat, quiet, able to express tender feelings and so on. V. Broverman et al., 'Sex Role Stereotypes: a current appraisal', Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1972, pp.59-78.

Western gender role definitions form the basis of the different educational ideologies that have traditionally informed different state policies. In Western society the predominant notion has been an 'ideology of domesticity'. This is the set of beliefs centering around the notion that men and women should occupy separate spheres of activity, with men engaged in a variety of roles in the outside world and women in the home or related domestic roles. The ideology of domesticity reinforces a particular view of women. They are not seen as direct participants in economic production or political processes. This ideology is internalised and becomes part of how women see themselves. Thus, the ideology of domesticity operates to reinforce women's subordinate position in society, by securing their acceptance of this subordination.[6]

This ideology of domesticity has been elaborated in different educational policies which allow women differential access both to educational institutions and to educational knowledge. This may be expressed in sex-specific schools or in sex-specific curriculum programmes. However, class conceptions may cut across definitions of femininity.

Both Ruskin and Rousseau were concerned with the education of middle-class women. The explicit aim of nineteenth century middle-class female education was to produce 'ladies' - 'accomplished' rather than educated women.[7] Thus Delamont writes that for the first half of the nineteenth century at least most of the daughters of upper and middle-class families "received an education which was specifically designed to be

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6. Only very recently has there been any attempt to analyse and examine the strength and pervasiveness of a domestic ideology in the education of women in Britain. See C. Dyhouse, 'Good Wives and Little Mothers: Social Anxieties and the Schoolgirls' Curriculum, 1890-1920', Oxford Review of Education, Vol. 2, No.1, (1977), pp.21-35, and 'Social Darwinistic Ideas and the development of women's education in England, 1880-1920', History of Education (1976), Vol. 5, No. 1, pp.41-58; A.M. Wolpe, 'The Official Ideology of Education for Girls', in M. Flude and J. Ahier (eds.), Educability, Schools and Ideology (London: Croom Helm, 1974), pp.138-59; S. Delamont, 'The Domestic Ideology and Women's Education', in S. Delamont and L. Duffin, The Nineteenth Century Woman. Her Cultural and Physical World (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp.164-187.

7. Miss Pinkerton's report in Thackeray's Vanity Fair on Amelia Sedley after seven years at her school is significant.

useless."[8] The stress was on 'feminine' accomplishments, such as singing, painting (preferably water colours and flower studies), embroidery, dancing, playing the piano, entering a drawing-room, and getting into a carriage without showing one's ankles.[9]

It has been suggested that one of the implications of this is that femininity had to be achieved, cultivated and preserved while masculinity could be left to look after itself.[10] However, this is refuted by evidence from the English public school system where a good deal of emphasis, in both the content of educational knowledge, and in sport and ritual, was given to inculcating those qualities of public-spiritedness, courage, altruism, stoicism and so on, that defined the 'gentleman ideal'.[11]

On the whole, nineteenth century British education for women was shallow and trite.[12] This was the source of ideas on the education of women in the Cape, and that was specifically offered to white women. Mrs Cranny's advertisement for a school for young ladies in King William's Town offered "the usual branches of a polite education; also French, Music, Drawing, Flower Painting, the use of the Globes, Maps, Fancy Work etc."[13] Mrs Eedes's boarding school for young ladies in Grahamstown offered much the same curriculum plus 'Landscape Drawing'.[14]

The notions of femininity operating here are class-bound. Feminine refinement and delicacy imply both an inordinate amount of leisure and a social position whereby someone else does the dirty work. Thus the education of working-class girls in nineteenth century Britain was

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8. Delamont, 1978:135.
9. Ibid., p.137.
10. P. Marks, 'Femininity in the Classroom:an account of changing attitudes', in J. Mitchell and A. Oakley (eds.), The Rights and Wrongs of Women (Harmondsworth:Penguin Books, 1976), pp.176-199.
11. See for instance, J.A. Mangan, 'Play up and play the game', British Journal of Educational Studies, October, 1975.
12. Though there were exceptions;for example, George Eliot seems to have been excellently taught at her Coventry school.
13. GTJ, 5.1.1858.
14. Ibid., 9.1.1858.

primarily vocational and became increasingly directed towards their roles as domestic servants and housewives.[15] This is parallelled in South Africa in the education of Black women.

The twentieth century has seen a growing commitment to an 'integrationist ideology' rooted in the democratic belief in equality of educational opportunity, regardless of sex, race and class. Despite this shift, and the opening up of education to women, educational attainment remains heavily determined by social class,[16] and sexual status is progressively important as one moves up the educational hierarchy.[17] Superficially, there is little difference in the educational attainment of boys and girls until they reach a critical level: matriculation and its equivalent in the case of capitalist societies and among Whites in South Africa, and at Form III, two years earlier, in the case of Black females. The critical level for whites is seen in the following table:

Table 34. Higher White Education in South Africa (1970)[18]

	Males	Females
Standard 10	305 705	279 808
Bachelors Degrees	51 822	21 671
Masters Degrees	6 156	1 253
Doctors Degrees	3 335	334

15. See S. Sharpe, 'Just Like a Girl'. How Girls Learn to be Women (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), pp.11-16; R. Deem, Women and Schooling (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p.8.

16. On Britain, see A.H. Halsey, Educational Priority: Reports of a Research Project (London: H.M.S.O., 1972). D. Byrne, et al., The Poverty of Education: A Study in the Politics of Opportunity (London: Martin Robertson, 1975).

17. As Sharpe points out, "This century has undoubtedly produced a great increase in girls secondary and higher education, but this has still largely benefited the middle class..." Sharpe, 1978: 22.

18. Republic of South Africa. Department of Statistics. Population Census 1970. Report No. 02-05-02 (Pretoria: The Government Printer, 1975), Tables A2, pp.66-71.

In terms of raw numbers, for every one female Bachelor degree there are 2,39 male Bachelor degrees; for every one female Masters degree there are 4,89 male Master degrees; for every one female Doctorate there are 9,98 male Doctorates. However, increasing numbers of White South African women are continuing their education and participating in higher education.[19]

A much smaller proportion of Black women participate in higher education. Overall at Black universities in South Africa women constitute only about 25 percent of the student body.[20]

Table 35. Black University Education in South Africa (1976)

	Males	Females
Fort Hare University	1 110	541
University of the North	1 315	587
University of Zululand	1 169	482
Total	3 594	1 620

The crucial point is that among Blacks in South Africa the sex differences in educational attainment appear at a much earlier stage than in the case of Whites, and generate a much wider sex ratio. While the total number of Black pupils in school in 1976 shows an apparent parity (1 663 325 boys and 1 656 195 girls), there is a widening gap in educational attainment after Form III.[21]

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19. Malherbe gives a table showing the percentages of Standard 6 boys and girls reaching Standard 10 in the four provinces in 1959 and 1969. While in 1959 in the Cape 42,3 percent of Standard 6 boys reached Standard 10, in that year only 34,6 percent of girls did so. But in 1969 while 51,3 percent of Standard 6 boys reached Standard 10, the percentage of girls increased to 42,1 percent. Malherbe, 1977: 288.

20. Republic of South Africa, Blue Books RP 6-31, 1977. Department of Bantu Education, Annual Report, 1976. RP 22/1977, p.87.

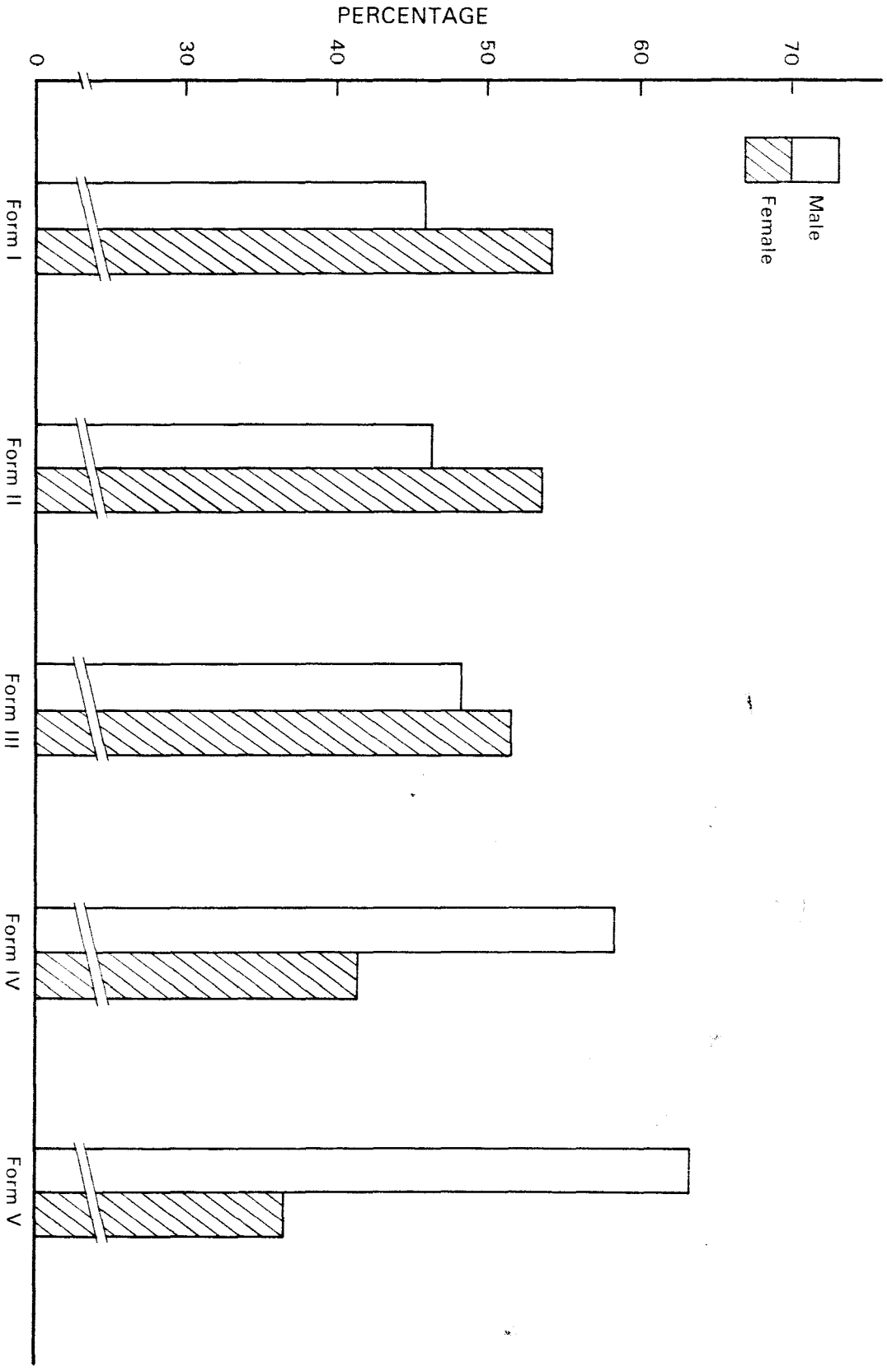
21. Republic of South Africa, Blue Book, 27/1977, Table 3.3.3., p.225.

Table 36. Level of Educational Attainment among Africans in South Africa (1976)

	Male	Female
Form I	98 413	116 041
Form II	44 431	51 587
Form III	24 438	26 193
Form IV	11 119	7 869
Form V	5 677	3 298

An analysis of pupil enrolments gives a total of 16 796 boys in senior secondary school and 11 167 girls.

Figure 3. Level of Educational Attainment among Africans in South Africa in 1976



This disparity in educational attainment is even more dramatic at a micro level.

Table 37. The Percentage of African Male and Female Secondary School Pupils in Durban in 1970 [22]

	Male	Female
Form I	46	54
Form II	44	56
Form III	49	51
Form IV	61	39
Form V	62	38

This illustrates the change in sex ratios after Form III. Perry found that 42 percent of the males and 70 percent of the females in the study either failed Junior Certificate or obtained only school-leaving passes, and whereas 12 percent of the males attained Matriculation, only three percent of the females did.

A decade ago sex differences in educational attainment were even more dramatic.[23]

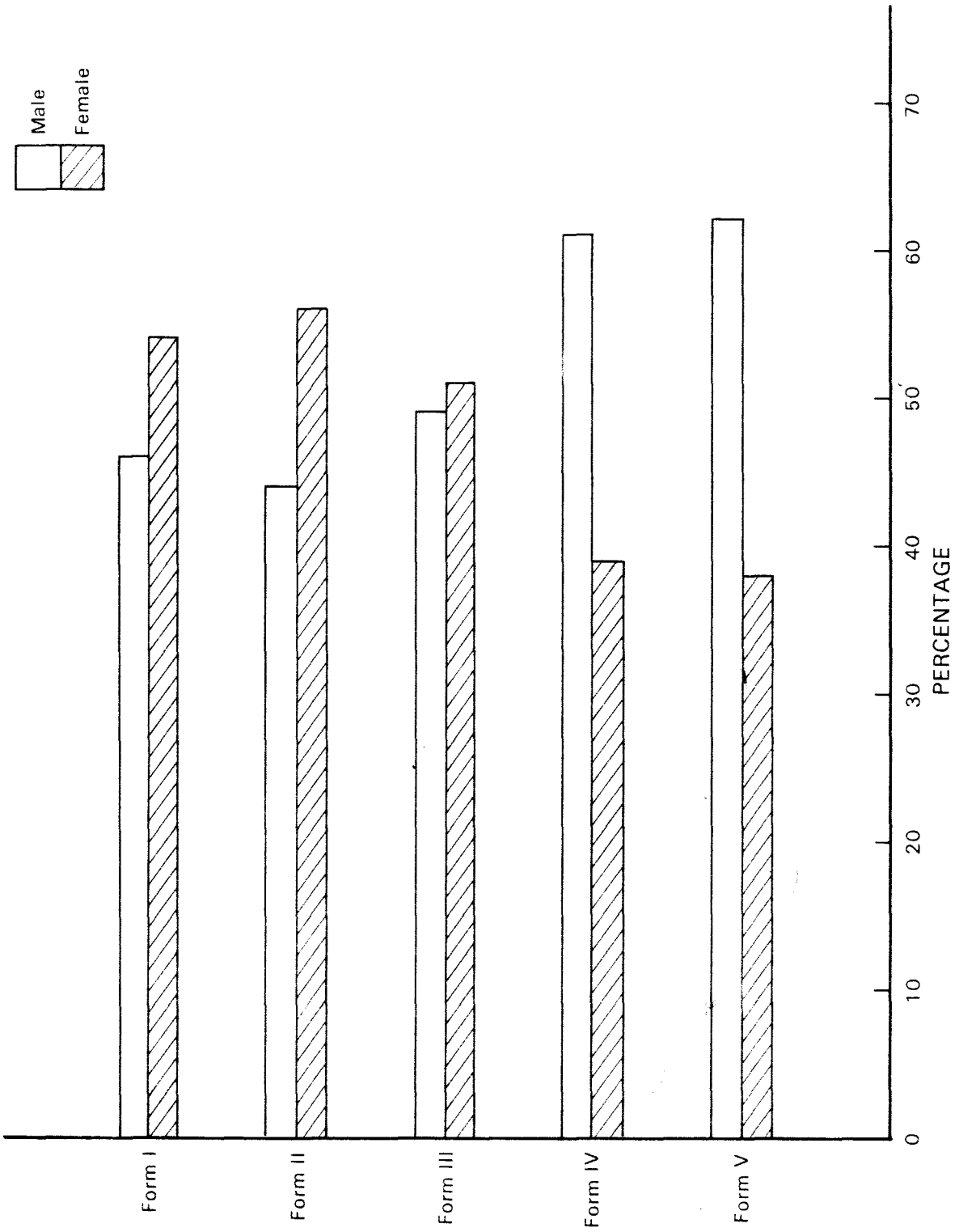
Table 38. Number of Black Pupils in Post-Primary Government and Government-aided Schools

	Male	Female
Form I	13 420	15 867
Form II	10 351	10 979
Form III	7 035	6 665
Form IV	2 104	782
Form V	1 211	417

22. Perry, 1975: 11.

23. Department of Bantu Education. Annual Report for the Calendar Year 1967. RP 44/1969 (Pretoria: The Government Printer, 1969), Table X(b), p.38.

Figure 4. The Percentage of African Male and Female Secondary School Pupils in Durban in 1970



Given historical changes, the crucial point is that this pattern is widespread. In all capitalist societies there is a dramatic shrinkage in the number of women as one moves up the educational ladder. For example, in Great Britain in 1970, 30 percent of undergraduates were women. But the proportion of women among postgraduates falls to 16 percent, and the proportion of university teachers who are women drops to nine percent.[24] Few women at the top of the educational system means few models of educational success for those lower down. However, sex ratios of this kind are only the crudest index of sex inequalities in educational attainment. Equally important is sex differences in access to educational knowledge.

There is a similar pattern in all advanced capitalist societies as regards subject specialism. In Britain in 1970 more than four times as many boys as girls took '0' level Physics, nearly three times as many boys took Chemistry, and of all those taking '0' level Mathematics, 40 percent were girls and 60 percent boys.[25] Blackstone points out that "these last figures are especially significant because it is considerably easier to get a university place in pure or applied science than in arts or social science. Therefore, subject specialism in the last years of secondary school must have an effect on the destination of school leavers aiming for higher education."[26]

The same pattern exists in contemporary South Africa where "many more boys than girls take Mathematics and Physical Science."[27] A Human Sciences Research Council study identified 7 135 white pupils from the Talent Survey of 1969 who had passed Standard Ten with matriculation exemption as well as the subjects Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. The great majority of these were boys - 72,7 percent - and only 27,3

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24. T. Blackstone, 'The Education of Girls Today', in Mitchell and Oakley, 1976: 207.

25. Ibid., p.205. In Britain the Crowther Report (1959), the Robbins Report (1963) and a 1971 survey all noted with concern the tendency for girls to specialise in arts subjects rather than sciences. Deem, 1978: 58-64.

26. Ibid., p.206.

27. 'Female Potential', Human Sciences Research Council Newsletter, No. 103, August, 1978.

percent were girls.[28]

This has important implications for employment. An opinion survey among 50 employers indicated that while the demand for white female labour in industry is almost exclusively for clerical work, employers would be ready to develop and utilise 'womanpower' if more girls would study mathematics and science and show an interest in technical work.[29]

Differential access to educational knowledge is most obvious in sex specific vocational training, which is especially restrictive for Black women in South Africa. In 1977 there were only 22 schools offering post-primary vocational training for African females, including five in the Transkei.[30] While vocational training for males includes courses related to a variety of industrial roles, vocational training for girls is limited to dress-making, domestic science and home management. Clearly this reinforces the constraints women experience as regards access to highly paid and prestigious occupations.

A tentative explanation of sex differences in educational attainment - 'sex bars'

Educational attainment is a complex process influenced by many factors in the home, the school, and the wider society. Any attempt to explain sex differences in educational attainment must of necessity be extremely tentative and exploratory.[31] It may be useful to conceptualise the obstacles females come up against at the level of education as a number of 'sex bars' which form a structure of constraints effectively limiting

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28. H. Urtel, Potensiaal vir Natuurwetenskaplike Opleiding by Standerd Tien-Meisies en Faktore Wat Hul Beroepskeuses Beinvloed. Report No. MM-71 (Pretoria: Instituut vir Mannekragnavorsing, 1978). Calculated from Table 3.5, p.30.

29. D. Wessels, 'Manpower Requirements and the Utilisation of Women: the view of 50 employers in nine major industry groups', Institute for Manpower Research, S.A. Human Sciences Research Council, 1975, MM-25.

30. SAIRR, A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1977 (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1978), p.512.

31. Of course, "the most common [explanation] is that these differences are related to the innate and overall superiority of males over females." Boserup, 1970: 214.

women's opportunities to achieve their full potential. These 'sex bars' operate in four areas: the home, access to control of reproduction, influx control and education itself.

There is a mounting body of evidence about the importance of parental attitudes in educational attainment.[32] This suggests that sex differences in parental interest and encouragement in their children's education could be extremely important. Research among white South Africans indicated that "generally speaking, parents consider the occupations of their sons to be of more importance than the occupations of their daughters, and more pressure is brought to bear on sons than on daughters to continue their studies."[33] This is supported by the sex differential in educational aspirations for the children of the employers in this study. While only 20 percent would ideally choose a profession for their daughters which involved a university education, 60 percent chose it for their sons.[34]

This appears to be an important factor in other African societies. Mbilinyi, in a survey of the factors that determine the household head's decision to enrol his children in Standard I in the rural areas of Tanzania found that "educational opportunity in the rural areas investigated depends on the child's sex, the strata level to which the child's household belongs, as well as on the community of residence."[35] She also found that a majority of the half of the school-age population actually enrolled in school were boys, which she relates to the fact that "the decision to educate is an economic one, particularly for lower and middle level full, and or part-time peasants."[36] "School

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32. For example, The Plowden Report (London: H.M.S.O., 1967); J. Douglas, The Home and the School (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1969).

33. 'Female Potential', Human Sciences Research Council Newsletter, No. 103, August, 1978. Also see Urtel, 1978: 73. This is the pattern found in George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss where the father crams a stupid, reluctant son with classics and denies a solid education to his clever and eager daughter.

34. See above, Chapter 5, 'The Employers of Domestic Workers'.

35. M. Mbilinyi, 'Education, Stratification and Sexism in Tanzania: Policy Implications', The African Review, Vol.3, No.2, 1973, p.327.

36. Ibid., p.328. Marvin queries this. In 'Economic Baba' - Is this a Satisfactory Explanation of why African Parents Value Schooling' The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 13, No. 3, September

fees and other school expenses, such as uniforms, represent one cost; the loss of the child's labour input another. The parents will balance such costs against the desirability and possibility of several different outcomes: getting a job, getting into secondary school, getting pregnant if a girl," and so on.[37] Clearly, the differential occupational structure thus operates against girls in a vicious circle. Mbilinyi concluded that "education operates as an agent of stratification in rural Tanzania and reinforces sexism..."[38]

The loss of the child's labour input in the division of labour by sex may be one factor explaining why, at the elementary level, girls predominate over boys in South Africa. Among the Nguni, boys were frequently kept out of school to herd stock. Writing of the Mpondo, Hunter points out that "normally herding is done by boys who begin at about six years old to go out with the goats and sheep. Later they are promoted to be cattle herders...usually they cease to herd at 17 or 18."[39]

The system of racial domination operating in South Africa and, more specifically, the immobility of farm labour adds a further dimension. Roberts points out in her study of farm labour in the Eastern Cape that "since education for Africans is not compulsory and since farmers assume the right in employing a worker to call upon any of his family to work when he needs them, there is no obligation on the part of farmers to allow the children of their workers to attend school either on or off their own farms."[40] Several farmers she interviewed said that they allowed the children to go to school only if their labour was not required on the farm. Many farmers said that there were more literate women on the farm than literate men. Roberts relates this to

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1975, pp.429-445, he points out that there is no conclusive research which substantiates the supposed economic motivation of parents.

37. Mbilinyi, 1973: 328.

38. Ibid.

39. M. Hunter, Reaction to Conquest. Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa (London: International Africa Institute, 1961), p.66.

40. Roberts, 1959: 73.

the fact that "female children are more frequently free to attend school than male children who are more often required to work on the farms at an early age."[41]

This was also the prevalent pattern in nineteenth century Britain. In both cultures, girls and boys of the labouring classes were expected to participate in the economic existence of the family unit. Consequently, education had to be fitted in around economic duties.[42] Kitteringham shows that

> various log book entries from Essex and Kent show explicitly that girls were expected to contribute indirectly to the economic maintenance of the household by acting as 'little mothers' to those children younger than themselves who did not go to school or who could not be left or tended by the mother. Non-attendance at school by girls was often given the explanation 'their mothers want them' and 'home causes'. [43]

She analyses this pattern as follows:

> The mother's two economic roles as wage earner and as housewife frequently conflicted, and when the demands of outside work had to be put first, her female children automatically took over the household duties, which involved not only the housework and cooking but also the tending and care of the younger members, as well as nursing the sick members of the family. Thus to allow the mother to go to work, the elder female children frequently had to relinquish the opportunity of going to school and stay home. [44]

The same pattern exists among urban Black families in South Africa, and was reported by several domestic workers in this study. A cycle of

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41. Ibid. Antrobus reports great progress in children's access to schooling in the Eastern Cape since 1957. G. Antrobus, 'Farm Labour in the Eastern Cape 1950-1973' (August, 1976. Unpublished paper.)

42. Writing of nineteenth century Britain, Kitteringham declares "Employers were often opposed to schooling for the labouring classes, and made it difficult for farm girls or boys to attend lessons, for instance, by making the working hours so rigid that they were not able to finish early enough to get to night school." J. Kitteringham, 'Country work girls in nineteenth century England', pp.73-139, in Samuel, 1975.

43. Ibid., p.84.

44. Ibid.

poverty and educational deprivation is perpetuated, and many Black women are trapped into domestic service.[45]

Pointing to a similar pattern in her Tanzanian study, Mbilinyi suggests that one possible explanation for the poorer school performance of girls may be that they are expected to carry out household duties before and after school. Both the schoolgirls and the others in her research sample did exactly the same number of chores. By contrast, their brothers, both in and out of school, did hardly any household or farm chores. Hence the schoolboys had far more opportunity to read or do homework outside school hours. A similar pattern may exist among Blacks in South Africa, but this would have to be tested.

Overall, at the level of the home, the sex bars operate coercively against the children of labouring classes. They operate unevenly and inconsistently as regards sex differentiation. The domestic chores of the Xhosa female child are overshadowed, in the rural areas, by the herding chores expected of the Xhosa male child. However, the female child is still frequently blocked by parental attitudes, and specifically by the view that it is 'wiser' to educate boys. Reasons parents have given include the fear of pregnancy among schoolgirls, the belief that boys are more intelligent than girls, the belief that women's place is in the home, and that a boy's education is more important. There is obviously a complex interplay between cultural and biological factors involved here.

The second area in which the sex bars operate against women is physiological and concerns women's lack of access to a level of control over reproduction, specifically to abortion and contraceptive technology. The extremely high rate of premarital pregnancy among African school-going girls is an important factor in explaining their high drop-out rate in South Africa. According to one account, 37 percent of the African girls who left school early in 1976 did so because they were pregnant.[46] In this respect the Black women in the rural areas experience the most intense disabilities, since family planning clinics are

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45. See above, Chapter 2, 'The Experiences of Domestic Workers'.

46. Horace van Rensburg, MP. Stated in parliament and reported in the Eastern Province Herald, 2.6.1977.

often distant and inaccessible. Against this should be offset the fact that traditional rural people had their own contraceptive methods, especially 'ukumetsha', which protected unmarried girls against pregnancy.[47]

This leads into the third area which concerns the location of the majority of Black women in the rural areas. Here there is an interlocking of the systems of racial and sexual domination in the operation of influx control, which effectively ties Black women to the rural areas where there are fewer opportunities for higher education.

The fourth area in which the sex bars operate against women is education itself. Specifically, we need to look at the contribution the educational process itself makes to this pattern of differential educational attainment. Three aspects of this are important: access to educational institutions; access to educational knowledge as that is defined in the curriculum; and the organisation of the school and specifically the expectations of teachers.

Many of the institutions from which women are excluded by statutory definition are concerned with vocational training; for electricians, motor mechanics, skills allied to the building trades, welding, metalwork and so on. Discrimination is also obvious in arrangements such as quotas for female students in medical schools which are unrelated to the proportion of women in the population. Male students have considerably more bursaries and scholarships open to them. In South Africa the prestigious Rhodes and Smuts scholarships were limited to males until very recently.

Women's access to educational knowledge is frequently blocked by a sexually differentiated curriculum. Here we need to distinguish between 'sex specific' courses, from which members of one sex are excluded by legal definition, and 'sex related' courses, which may be followed by either sex but which in practice are more common to one sex than the other.[48] In most advanced capitalist societies girls have tended to

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47. Personal communication from Dr Iona Mayer, March 1979.

48. This distinction is taken from Smart who applies it to female crime patterns. C. Smart, Women, Crime and Criminology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), pp.6-13.

follow a curriculum which excluded a whole range of subjects, particularly mathematics, physical sciences and vocationally oriented subjects related to the trades.[49] Clearly, there is an interweaving of 'sex specific' and 'sex related' constraints here, but within many girls' schools science (particularly physics and chemistry) and mathematics are often either eliminated from the curriculum or given a subordinate place within them.[50] This exclusion is clearly generated by a particular notion of femininity which often includes the assumption that girls lack reasoning power, are unable to give clear and logical explanations, or have "a weaker non-verbal ability."[51] Marks points out that "the assumption that girls dislike and are bad at science and mathematics has been consistently held throughout the twentieth century."[52]

A sex differentiated curriculum which involves girls spending extensive time on domestic subjects has important implications. Blackstone points out that it is an inferior education in two important ways:

> firstly, it is likely to limit choices available to girls at the post-secondary stage, and secondly, it concentrates on activities related to domestic roles, which have diminishing status and little or no material rewards in cash terms. [53]

Delamont and Duffin similarly argue that the stress on domestic skills "produce a pool of unskilled labour whose talents are untapped."[54] On the whole, the stress on domestic subjects generally supports a

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49. Wolpe, in Flude and Ahier, 1974: 140.

50. Marks in Mitchell and Oakley, 1976: 192.

51. C.J.S. Coetzee, Geslagsverskille in Tersiêre Onderwys en Beroepstoetrede. Report No. MT-44 (Pretoria: Instituut vir Mannekragnavorsing, 1979), p.187.

52. Marks in Mitchell and Oakley, 1976: 192.

53. Blackstone, in Mitchell and Oakley, 1976: 202. See also Deem, 1978: 19.

54. They conclude that "as it is, domestic education for women is a denial of their human rights." Delamont and Duffin, 1978: 19. Some of the more subtle ideological pressures in domestic science teaching are examined by B. Wyn in 'Domestic Subjects and the Sexual Division of Labour', pp.27-35, in Open University, E202 14-15, School Knowledge and Social Control (London: Open University, 1977).

home-oriented role for women, and thus reinforces traditional gender-role stereotypes.

Another aspect of the curriculum which is important when we look at the contribution the educational process itself makes to the pattern of differential educational attainment, concerns the 'sexist' content of educational knowledge. This knowledge tends to reinforce traditional gender role stereotypes in two main ways. First, in several series of books from which children learn to read English, girls and women are portrayed as subordinate to men in a variety of ways. They are shown as less active, having less initiative, resilience, and so on. Women are usually portrayed as mothers and wives whose lives revolve around domestic chores. Males are portrayed as superior in everything except the ability to cook, dust, clean, and smell flowers. One study of such books found that only one percent of the central characters were women.[55] In another, the only adult woman who was shown engaging in activities that vaguely resembled a career was a witch.[56] Furthermore, since women are generally invisible in history, there is an extensive and deep-seated neglect of their role in the shaping of the world.[57] "The presentation to girls of models of achievement generally associated with men undervalues any which might be associated with women, and conveys male dominance as inevitable."[58]

The effect of these distortions is to limit the educational and occupational aspirations of girls and in view of the increasing proportion

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55. Quoted by C. Adams and R. Laurikietis in The Gender Trap: A Closer Look at Sex Roles, Book I, Education and Work (London: Virago, 1976), p.46.

56. See Children's Rights Workshop, Sexism in Children's Books (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, 1976); also SHREW, Vol. 5, No. 4, October 1973. Children's Books Issue, Children's Rights Workshop. Newsletter No. 1, December, 1974. Also for an elaboration of how reading primers socialize girls into "the conforming passive role, quiet shadows besides lively brothers", see Sharpe, 1976: 92-95.

57. Samuel points out that "women have been virtually excluded from working class history in much the same way as the lumpen-proletariat and for very much the same reason: they were not 'organised'." Samuel, 1975: xvii. Also see Rowbotham, 1973.

58. J. Okely, 'Privileged, Schooled and Finished: Boarding Education for Girls', in S. Ardener, Defining Females. The Nature of Women in Society (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p.136.

of women in employment outside the home, to give them a false impression of what their future lives will be.[59] Thus today in Britain in a modern, sexually mixed comprehensive school which offers a wide range of subjects to everyone, girls and boys still choose to follow those which are traditionally expected of them.[60] It is difficult, however, to establish how far children are able to make genuine choices based on their own interests, and how far they are channelled into certain subjects which teachers consider appropriate to their sex. This leads to the third aspect of the sex bars generated by the educational process itself - teachers and their expectations.

There is a great deal of evidence about the importance of teacher expectations in educational attainment.[61] Certainly the teacher has a central place as a 'reality definer' in the classroom. However, we need to know much more about teacher 'typifications' (in the Schutzian sense) and whether notions of 'ability' are linked to notions about gender in the same way that some studies have suggested they are linked to notions of social class. Furthermore, we need to ask questions about whether there is a discrepancy between teachers' notions about sex and ability in the educationalist context of staff meetings and discussions, where they might affirm that boys and girls are equal intellectually, and the notions that are operative in the classroom context. Here the same teachers might act on the latent assumption that girls are less intelligent than boys, or that their education is less important, and consequently give them different kinds and levels of encouragement.[62] What is crucial here is the concept of femininity

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59. Much of the media to which children are exposed outside the school also reinforces the traditional gender role stereotypes. See B. Deckard, The Women's Movement, Political, Socio-Economic and Psychological Issues (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

60. Marks, 1976: 176. See also Deem, 1978: 46.

61. See R.L. Rosenthal and L. Jacobson, Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectation and Pupils' Intellectual Development (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968) and D. Hargreaves, Social Relations in Secondary Schools (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

62. A discrepancy between educationalist and classroom contexts in notions of ability and social class, showing how they are held separate in the former, but linked to the latter, has been documented by N. Keddie, 'Classroom Knowledge', pp.133-161, in M. Young, Knowledge and Control (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971).

which is operative in the classroom. We know very little about how teachers see the difference between boys and girls or about how their attitudes actually affect and alter behaviour. But it has been suggested that teachers "transmit the traditional values of society with respect to sex roles."[63] They expect boys and girls to behave differently and give them different kinds of encouragement.[64] It could be that diligence and conformity are the core qualities that are expected of girls, and this may well explain why girls sometimes do better than boys in primary schools where the basic skills are taught.[65] Grammar, spelling and arithmetic are tasks that depend upon a great deal of memorising and demand little independence, assertiveness, analysis, innovation or creativity. A stress on diligence and conformity might also help to explain why girls do less well at the top end of the educational pyramid where critical and imaginative abilities are required.[66]

The changing pattern of sex ratios in educational attainment is rooted in secondary school, paralleling the onset of puberty. It has been suggested that adolescence involves a shift from achievement to the establishment of successful relationships as the basis of self-definition.[67] For girls, when this shift occurs in the later years of secondary school, personal qualities such as independence, aggression

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63. T. Evans, 'Creativity, Sex-Role Socialization and Pupil-Teacher Interactions in Early Schooling', The Sociological Review, Vol. 27, No. 1, February 1979, p.140.

64. Blackstone, 1976: 210-211; Deem, 1978: 94; Sharpe, 1976: 152.

65. Deem suggests that girls are socialized into "docility and subservience." Deem, 1978: 18. In the U.S.A., Frazier and Sadker argue that "girls are reinforced for silence, for neatness and conformity - and in this dispensation of rewards, the process of learning is thwarted." N. Frazier and M. Sadker, Sexism in School and Society (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p.93.

66. Sharpe writes, "From the beginning girls are seldom allowed to develop the autonomy and independence that is associated with analytic thinking and ability, and the confidence and initiative that combine to facilitate academic success." Sharpe, 1976: 155.

67. It is argued that until puberty femininity is ascribed rather than achieved. With the onset of puberty femininity becomes an attribute that must be earned. J. Bardwick, E. Douvan, M. Horner and D. Gutmann, Feminine Personality and Conflict (Belmont: Brooks Cole, 1970).

and competitive achievement, are seen to threaten successful social relationships, particularly relationships with the opposite sex. Consequently, those qualities are muted. There is some evidence that while boys are often afraid of failing, girls are, in addition, afraid of succeeding, because academic success is viewed as antithetical to femininity.[68] Bright women then have to develop strategies for coping with this role conflict, the easiest of which is submission to gender role expectations which emphasise motherhood as the central vocation of women.[69] Further, as Sharpe points out, "for girls the pursuit of 'femininity' leads to a multitude of distractions, such as attending to physical appearance, fashion, boyfriends,..." and so on.[70]

It has been tentatively suggested that sex differences in educational attainment may be explained in terms of a number of sex bars which form a structure of constraints effectively limiting women's opportunities. These have been shown to operate in four inter-related areas: the home, women's physiology, rural-urban variations in educational resources, and the educational process itself. These sex bars are themselves generated by the system of sexual domination which is embedded in the wider society. For this reason, in her Tanzanian study, Mbilinyi focuses on sexism as the main obstacle to women's education. She suggests that "obstacles to the education of girls can

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68. On the basis of Sharpe's Ealing research she suggests that girls "experience a 'fear of success' which hinders their performance, and interacts with the reinforcing belief that academic success is unimportant for a girl anyway." Sharpe, 1976: 136. This fear of success has been documented in Horner's study of male and female undergraduates in the USA. The women were asked to write a four-minute story about Anne, who at the end of her first term at medical school, was at the top of her class. Over 65 percent wrote stories about Anne losing her friends, or feeling guilty and unhappy - stories "high in fear of success imagery." Only nine percent of the male subjects wrote negative stories about John (the counterpart of Anne) being at the top of his class.
M. Horner, 'Femininity and Successful Achievement: A Basic Inconsistency', in Bardwick et al., 1970: 63-64.

69. For a statement of this see Coetzee, 1979. Motherhood is a woman's "traditional calling which may be regarded as her duty and privilege", p.187; "By becoming a mother she wants to give expression to what she is, namely a woman," p.184.

70. Sharpe, 1976: 140.

be attributed to the interaction between several factors: the traditional expectations for adult female roles; the general attitudes towards women, as less intelligent or less responsible; the values attributed to education, which are incompatible with role expectations; the financial cost of schooling and therefore the socio-economic status of the families concerned."[71] Similar research needs to be done in South Africa. The importance of sex differences in educational attainment requires that such research should be undertaken.

In the case of South Africa, the problem of sex differences in educational attainment is a tangled skein which needs to be teased out into three different strands: sex differences in educational attainment generated by the system of sexual domination which is common to advanced capitalist societies; sex and race differences in educational attainment generated by the interweaving of the system of sexual and racial domination that operate in South Africa and focus on Black women; and sex differences in educational attainment which contrast sharply with the predominant pattern throughout Africa. What is significant here is that in the earliest stages of the educational process Black girls predominate numerically over boys in South Africa, and are involved in later stages of education to a much greater extent than is true of elsewhere in Africa.[72]

The explanation of this unique pattern lies in historical antecedents, and hinges partly on the role of the missionaries on the Eastern Frontier in nineteenth-century African education. The missionaries also may provide a key to understanding another pattern unique to this part of Africa - that of female Xhosa employment. Wilson points out that "in Xhosa country, as nowhere else in Black Africa, women as well as men took up employment with Whites. Sometimes this was under duress, but often it was by choice. From the early nineteenth century

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71. M. Mbilinyi, 'The "New Woman" and Traditional norms in Tanzania', pp.57-72, The Journal of Modern African Studies, 10, 1, 1972, p.62.

72. See Wilson and Mafeje, 1968: 71; United Nations Organisation, 1976 Statistical Yearbook (New York: U.N.O., 1977), p.838; I. Tinker, 'The Adverse Impact of Development on Women', in I. Tinker, M. Bransen and M. Buvinic, Women and World Development (New York: Praeger, 1976), p.28.

domestic work was done on the frontier by Xhosa women rather than Xhosa men."[73] The following section asks whether these two patterns are connected: whether the unique involvement of Xhosa women in employment is related to their unique involvement in education, and whether both patterns may be traced to the origin of African education in the missionary activity in the Eastern Cape in the early nineteenth century. It is a bold question, to which I give only a tentative answer.

PART II. THE ROLE OF THE MISSIONARIES ON THE EASTERN FRONTIER, 1820-1880

> Instruct only the [Kaffir] boys in reading, writing and arithmetic, and train them to manual labour. Do not teach the girls any English reading, and very little Kaffir.... Give them as little education as possible. The system of cramming is too much for the intellect of Kaffir girls. My experience is this: the more that Kaffir girls learn in School, the less they are inclined to work, and the more insolent and dissatisfied they are.
>
> - The Abbot of Mariannhill in 1889.[74]

The missionaries on the Eastern Frontier were themselves unique in at least two senses: the missionary effort here was on a larger scale than anywhere else hitherto in Africa - it involved more missionary societies and more personnel than elsewhere - and they were accompanied by a large scale settler community.[75] The significance of this as regards African women was twofold: the scale of missionary effort implied that Xhosa women were at least potentially more involved in education than was elsewhere the case, and the settler community offered at least the possibility of employment.

It will be argued that Xhosa women were initially incorporated into missionary educational institutions, which were the crucial point of transition in the incorporation of Xhosa women into colonial society

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73. Wilson in Wilson and Thompson, 1969: 262.

74. Quoted in The Christian Express, April, 1889, p.49.

75. Moyer, 1976: 498.

proper. The missions elaborated occupational skills and an occupational ideology which then found expression in the employment of Xhosa women largely as domestic workers. An ideology of domesticity rooted in European gender roles was linked to an ideology of domestication or pacification generated by the problems of controlling a colonial frontier. Thus the incorporation of Black women had two aspects: cultural incorporation and here the early missionary educational efforts played a crucial part; and institutional or economic incorporation largely through employment in domestic service.

From this point of view education was an important agency of social control, but it would be a chronic oversimplification to present this as the whole picture. Majeke argues that the missionaries played a crucial role in securing white dominance, and certainly they did help "to build up a whole system of new ideas, new needs, and desires, new allegiances, new authorities and a new morality, all leading to an acceptance of the new civilization by the Africans."[76] But they also generated pressures which would in time challenge white dominance.[77] Thus missionary education operated in a complex and contradictory way, tying women to subordinate roles but at the same time liberating them from the subordination of tribal society by introducing them to new occupational roles. These roles implied a revolutionary new level of independence and earning capacity. Domestic service, as well as teaching and nursing offered something of an escape route from rural poverty and the constraints of traditional society. And for a minority, missionary education involved an exposure to ideas which questioned the fundamentals of both tribal and colonial inequality.

Throughout Africa, Black women had differential access to educational institutions and educational knowledge. This was expressed in both sex specific schools and sex specific curriculum programmes. Both sets of restrictions were generated largely by European gender role definitions which were imported into a colonial context. Thus much of the thrust of the initial missionary educational effort in the

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76. Majeke, 1952: 69.

77. The relationship of the missionaries to imperialism is a complex one, which in this brief space is impossible to treat adequately.

Eastern Cape was directed towards the training of African schoolmasters and catechists who were 'necessarily' men. The need was for 'Native agents' who could play a useful auxiliary role in evangelisation. Thus the Watson Institute was established in Grahamstown in 1833, "for the purpose of training young men for Schoolmasters and Native assistant missionaries."[78] This was the dominant motive behind the establishment of the Lovedale Seminary in 1841, which opened with Rev. William Govan as Principal with 20 boy pupils, 11 Africans and 9 Whites. At Healdtown, established in 1857, the focus was on training young Fingo men as teachers and preachers - "useful agents of the missionary enterprise."[79] Later in 1860, the Kaffir Institute, a theological college for training candidates for Holy Orders was started in Grahamstown.

While the main focus of the initial missionary educational effort was on men and their role in evangelisation, the education of Black women was not entirely neglected. They were included in some of the earliest missionary schools; for example, that of Dr van der Kemp on what was later the site of Pirie Mission in 1799. When Lovedale School was first opened by Bennie in 1838 there was initially a preponderance of girls: 132 pupils by 3rd April 1839, of whom 94 were girls and 38 boys. An early report quoted by Shepherd declares "Were it not for the more regular attendance and greater proficiency of the girls our schools might also be closed."[80] Shepherd explains this differential sex ratio in terms of the boys being kept away "through herding and other causes", and the inducement of the print cloth sent out from Scotland by means of which the girls were taught to make and wear European clothes. However, a more fundamental factor could lie in the initial resistance of traditional tribal society to education.

While the missionaries on the Eastern Frontier generally respected Africans according to Christian notions of universal brotherhood, they

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78. W. Shaw, The Story of my Mission in South Eastern Africa (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1860), p.297.

79. L. Hewson, 'Healdtown, a study of a Methodist experiment in African education.' Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Rhodes University, 1959, p.108.

80. Shepherd, 1940: 88.

were hostile to traditional African culture. They grossly underestimated the involvement of Africans in their culture, and failed to realise how the denial that African culture contained anything of value, stripped and impoverished Africans as human beings. The early missionaries attacked 'ancestor worship', witchcraft, 'lobolo', polygamy, initiation and so on. Their schools were the focal points of pressure on those aspects of traditional African culture which they understood to be obstructing the advance of Christian civilisation. Thus education threatened to change deeply rooted traditional relationships and rituals. The initial response from the independent Xhosa was to resist strenuously such threats to their distinctive pattern of social life. In the context of this resistance "mission educational effort, for the first half of the century was directed largely towards the Mfengu, the Gqunukhwebe and refugees from tribal society such as people accused of witchcraft."[81] What these groups, especially the Mfengu, had in common was their marginality to the main axis of power, and it was as a marginal group that women similarly offered less resistance to Christian civilisation.

The outcome of the missionaries' contempt for the traditional culture and their importing of European definitions of appropriate gender roles into a non-European context, was a particularly sharp response to the disabilities of women in traditional society. They were perceived by the missionaries as in a position of subordination that bordered on slavery.

> The condition of the female Kaffirs in their heathen state is one of peculiar hardship. Working in the fields, carrying home the crops, doing whatever requires to be done of a laborious nature, they are practically slaves to the other sex, and in very many cases are subject to much persecution. [82]

Shepherd, the last missionary principal of Lovedale, wrote of African women:

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81. M. Ashley, 'African Education and Society in the Nineteenth Century Eastern Cape', in C. Saunders and R. Derricourt, Beyond the Cape Frontier. Studies in the History of the Transkei and Ciskei (Cape Town: Longmans, 1974), p.202. For reasons for this resistance, see Peires, 1976: 144-145.

82. Young, 1902: 123.

> They were subordinate. They were beasts of burden. They were exposed even at a tender age to customs that brutalized. And after maturity they were disposed of in marriage often without their consent and frequently as minor wives to polygamous husbands.[83]

The missionaries found a number of customs involving women particularly offensive. Shaw classed polygamy amongst other "vicious practices",[84] and John Philip regarded it as "one of the greatest obstacles to the success of missionaries."[85] Govan argued that "the evils of polygamy ...are so great and varied, and it is in such manifest opposition to the whole spirit of the Bible that we could not see our way to any middle course."[86] Change was essential.

> One of the works of Christian missions is to change root and branch, Kaffir ideas about marriage, and to introduce an order of things in which polygamy with its attendant evils shall have no place, and woman's sphere as the helpmeet and no longer the slave of man, shall be universally acknowledged. [87]

The custom of 'bride price' or lobola was equally abhorrent to the missionaries. Besides expressing women's 'subjection' it had the effect of subverting the Christian ideal of marriage as a personal relationship between two individuals. James Laing wrote that "this custom of buying wives" brought females into a state of "most revolting slavery",[88] and Shaw stressed that,

> as practised among the Kaffirs this custom exhibits the gross and barbaric character of their minds, and no doubt it tends in some degree to rob the women of their self-respect and thereby to degrade the general condition of the female portion of the community.[89]

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83. Shepherd, 1940: 470.

84. Extract from Shaw's Journal, 11th August, 1827. Quoted by D. Williams, 'The Missionaries on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony 1799-1853', University of the Witwatersrand, Ph.D. thesis, 1959, 2 Vols. Vol. 2, p.306.

85. He was referring to the Griquas. Philip, 1828: 57.

86. Govan in 1857. Quoted by Shepherd, 1940: 471.

87. Young, 1902: 127.

88. G.M.S. Summer Q.I. 1839, p.7. Quoted by Williams, 1959: 306.

89. Shaw, 1860: 424.

This "truly barbarous custom of buying and selling wives" was "one of the greatest barriers in the way of the gospel and consequently of civilization." It "induces to theft and must consequently demoralise society. It degrades the position and character of all females."[90]

Other Xhosa customs involving women that the missionaries found offensive were the marriage ceremony, the levirate, and the initiation ceremony for young girls, the 'intonjane' and specifically 'upondhlo'. Soga describes 'upondhlo' as "one of the most evil and immoral customs of the Bantu."[91] This custom was restricted to the 'intonjane' when the initiate was placed in seclusion apart from the attendance of her girl friends.

> If a chief attended an intonjane he might and often did order the collecting together of the girls attending the intonjane and they were taken to a hut set apart for the chief and his attendants. Here they were compelled to submit to the desires of their temporary husbands. [92]

Or, as one informant told Moyer, the girls "would be happy with the chief and his councillors during the night."[93]

The social significance of these customs was lost upon the missionaries.[94] Clearly this involved a level of cultural insensitivity and over-simplification that was characteristic of nineteenth century colonial contacts. Cairns is struck by the "chronic oversimplification" which nineteenth century Britons brought to the discussion of almost all of the complex problems of existing and potential race relations

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90. Calderwood, 1858: 198.

91. See J.H. Soga, The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1931), pp.222-223; Williams, 1959: 307-9.

92. Soga, 1931: 222-223.

93. Moyer, 1976: 600.

94. Their meaning once located in a cultural context is documented by many anthropologists and indigenous sources. For example, on lobola as a custom which protects rather than degrades women, see Soga, 1931: Ch. xiii, pp.263-285. Evans-Pritchard writes, "on the whole the findings of modern anthropologists are in agreement that women's status among primitive peoples has been misunderstood and underestimated. For example, that payment for a bride constitutes a sale is now recognized to be a gross distortion of the facts." Evans-Pritchard, 1965: 37-58.

and social change. He points out that,

> to some extent this was inherent in the initial and groping stages of culture contact. [But] the inadequacy of this as a complete explanation is readily seen, however, from the fact that these simplifications consistently placated British conceit and indicated, in diverse ways, African recognition of British or white superiority. [95]

The missionaries' cultural insensitivity must, of course, be seen in the context of their often very inadequate intellectual training and lack of any anthropological background. As Cairns points out in his perceptive study:

> for his important and onerous task as an explicit agent of social change the missionary had only a theological training mingled with conventional stereotypes about savages and tribalism. [96]

Most missionaries had a sense of religious, racial and sexual superiority.

> ...polygamy, bride-price, marriage ceremonies, intonjana and circumcision were condemned and attacked by the missionaries with a patent dogmatism rooted in the early Victorian morality of the Evangelical Revival as well as from the standpoint of the superiority of Western European civilization. [97]

Theirs was a confidence generated by being adherents of "a cause commanded by God and backed by divine assurance of success."[98] As Cairns points out, their cultural and racial pride was

> the point of origin of British attitudes and conduct ...[and] reflected the dominant global position of Britain and the white race.... Indeed, the nineteenth century witnessed the apogee of white hegemony in the world. [99]

Their sense of sexual superiority was rooted in Victorian conceptions of women's role in society. Kenneth Clark describes the Victorian

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95. Cairns, 1965: 160.

96. Ibid., p.163.

97. Williams, 1959: 311.

98. Cairns, 1965: 154.

99. Ibid., p.147.

ruling class as "masterful, courageous and aggressively masculine."[100] This tone saturated Victorian culture, and infected the colonies.[101] Hammond and Jablow describe the dominant male ethos among British officialdom right through Africa:

> Most colonial officials had been reared in a patriarchal system where the segregation of the sexes began early in public school, was extended to men's clubs and generally persisted throughout life.

The exclusiveness of male society was

> inevitably accompanied by a sense of masculine superiority to which women give assent.... The generally masculine tone of the English ethos tends to devalue women and to set them apart. [102]

Of course, the converse of the sense of Christian superiority was a hostility to heathen practices; the converse of the sense of racial superiority was the assumption of the inferiority of African culture; and male chauvinism implied the inferiority (or at least lack of parity) of women.

From this highly coloured viewpoint, the missionaries' solution to the problem of women's subordinate status in traditional society was evangelism. It was the means whereby these "poor degraded females" could escape from 'tribal' customs and be restored to a human dignity sanctioned by God. Through evangelism and Christian civilization the missionaries

> hoped to raise the female character above mere animal propensities and brute labour and make them

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100. Epitomized in his view by Landseer's painting, 'The Monarch of the Glen'. K. Clark, Animals and Men (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p.102.

101. Cairns implies that gender role definitions assumed a special rigidity in the colonial situation. He writes, "The pride of a dominant race with its associated fear of effemininancy... placed a disproportionate emphasis on the masculine virtues of courage and vigour." Cairns, 1965: 38.

102. D. Hammond and A. Jablow, The Africa That Never Was. Four Centuries of British Writing about Africa (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), p.191.

> acquainted with their high destinies in another world and so give them a sense of self respect. [103]

This commitment to evangelism as involving the liberation of African women was reinforced by women's greater receptivity to Christian education.

> Though generally speaking, the females are more degraded than the males, there is on the other hand more immediate prospect of improvement, because of their greater readiness to receive instruction. They show, too, on the whole, more docility and proficiency than the male scholars. No small encouragement this for those who seek their elevation. [104]

The missionaries hoped not only to 'liberate' African women, but also hoped that such women would have a 'civilizing influence' on their menfolk. Calderwood saw "the improvement of the females as a most urgent necessity", because "the female influence" was the means to Christian civilization. Every day he saw "male converts being dragged backwards and downwards by their heathen wives."[105] Such wives must be converted for

> who is so likely as a pious, judicious, educated and good tempered woman to create and foster those very amenities which are at once the fruits and the means of civilization. [106]

Yet there was disagreement on how much the education of women could achieve. Whiteside argued that education was relatively unimportant for "the little learning gained is overborne by the habits and superstitions of generations."[107] He referred to an instance where the daughter of a Gcaleka chief was educated in England but returned to her original "barbarous surroundings":

> A few years later she greeted a Wesleyan minister in the purest English, but she wore a Kafir blanket,

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103. Glasgow Missionary Society Summer Quarterly Intelligence, 1839, p.7. Quoted by Shepherd, 1940: 472.

104. Young, 1902: 128.

105. Calderwood, 1858: 206.

106. Ibid., p.209.

107. J. Whiteside, History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa (London: Elliot Stock, 1906), p.281.

> had bead bangles on wrists and ankles and was the wife of a polygamist. Until natives can create improved social conditions by their own labour, school education will fail largely of its purpose. [108]

Thus the missionaries' opposition to the subordination of women in traditional society, as they perceived it, was a complex response shaped by a number of different cultural themes. Overall, it led to an emphasis on the education of African women, which was valued in both intrinsic and instrumental terms not only as a means of liberating women and indirectly 'civilizing' all Africans but also, later, as a means of converting Africans into productive workers.[109] But in the type of educational knowledge to which African girls were given access, the western gender role definitions predominated. Thus, for example, while agriculture was the traditional role of women, agricultural colleges were 'sex specific' and excluded women. Thus the importing of western gender roles into a colonial context relegated women to typically 'female' occupations. This created a contradiction which amplified the disabilities of Black women.

To the missionaries, women's core role was a domestic one - it was their influence as wives and mothers that was important.[110] The different cultural meanings attached to this domestic role were overridden. Adequate role performance required Christian education:

> A Caffre or Fingoe woman brought to a knowledge of the truth, yet uninstructed in the management of a household and the training of children, is utterly incapable of making her home comfortable. (Emphasis mine.) [111]

Thus Christianity and civilisation were linked and the 'civilisation' of African women involved their socialisation into western definitions of domestic roles.

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108. Ibid.

109. For example, the Native Economic Commission of 1930-32 stated, "Education of Native girls presents the most promising means of bringing about a rise in the Native's standard of living, which will give the required incentive towards a higher production by the Natives in their labour." (Quoted by Shepherd, 1940: 481.)

110. Young, 1902: 141.

111. Calderwood, 1858: 206.

These views were often rooted in a class bias, so that there is an important parallel in the education of working-class girls in nineteenth century Britain. James Booth, writing about the education of the working-class girl in 1835, asked

> ...why should she not be taught to light a fire, sweep a room, wash crockery and glass without breaking them, wash clothes and bake bread? [112]

The philanthropic members of the middle-class in Britain - from which most of our missionaries emerged - also wanted to educate working-class women to run homes well.

> As a result there were many schemes to include the domestic arts in the curricula of elementary schools. Those who provided a vocational education for working class girls worked on the assumption that girls would first become servants and then housewives. [113]

This assumption was imported into a colonial context. In the same way that the education of working-class girls in nineteenth century Britain became increasingly vocational and directed to their domestic roles as servants and housewives, the education of Black girls was linked to their subordinate class position. Education thus largely aimed at socialisation into domestic roles, both in their own homes and as servants in other people's. This fitted an ideology of subordination which some saw as appropriate to all Blacks, male as well as female.

At least three different educational ideologies were operating in the nineteenth century in the Eastern Cape.[114] The Integrationists, of whom Govan is representative, held that Africans are potentially equal

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112. James Booth, 'Female Education of the Industrial Classes', Bell and Daldy, 1855. Quoted by Marks, in Oakley and Mitchell, 1976: 190.

113. Ibid.

114. R. Williams, The Long Revolution (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961) distinguishes between four different educational ideologies which rationalise different emphases in the selection of the content of curricula. He relates these to the social position of those who hold them and suggests that curricula changes have reflected the relative power of the different groups over the last 100 years. Quoted by M. Young, 'An Approach to the Study of Curricula as Socially Organised Knowledge', in Young, 1971: 29. This has important implications for the sociology of the curriculum in South Africa.

to whites and should have access to the same educational knowledge. Thus Lovedale, in Govan's day, provided what Calderwood has described as "a very superior English classical and mathematical education."[115] There was a stress on 'character'. The goal was the educated man, shaped by classical notions of the pursuit of excellence, wholeness and balance. The model of education in this tradition is exclusively male. Initially, Govan's aim was equality of education but he later accepted Grey's model of industrial training, in which subordination was an implicit assumption.

The Segregationists, of whom Stewart is representative, recognised the right of Africans to develop, but believed that such development must be a gradual process and take place along different lines.[116] This generated a racially differentiated education that was primarily vocational for Africans. Stewart's opinion of the education appropriate to Africans was rooted in a rejection of elitism. As he saw it, the classical curriculum was linked to an elitism that might be appropriate to Victorian Britain but not to the needs of a developing society. Thus the education he advocated was broad and practical.[117]

A third educational ideology operating in the nineteenth-century Eastern Cape was supremacist, rooted in the view that the African is inferior and cannot escape from that inferiority. This was expressed in Langham Dale's Report of 1868 and institutionalised in the Education Act of 1865. It established the primacy of European education and

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115. Quoted in Shepherd, 1940: 147.

116. C. Loram, The Education of the South African Native (London: Longmans Green, 1971). He distinguished this view in his three schools of thought on "the Native problem", pp.17-25.

117. Ashley points out that he did not permanently exclude Africans from higher education and played an important part in the eventual establishment of the South African Native College which opened at Fort Fare in 1916. Ashley in Saunders and Derricourt, 1974: 206. However, Stewart's views of African dignity are open to question from the following: "I never liked to see a grey haired African. In old men this feature always gives them an uncommon resemblance to the baboon. That the grey head may become a crown of beauty and of glory as well, it needs the setting of a contented, good humoured English countenance." J. Wallis (ed.), The Zambesi Journal of James Stewart 1862-1863 (1952), p.250.

the subordinate nature of African education, which was expressed in the stress on elementary and industrial education to provide trained labour.[118] This view could easily fade into the repressionist viewpoint that the African was primarily useful as a source of cheap, unskilled labour and needed no education at all.

An important aspect of these educational ideologies was the differential access to educational knowledge they envisaged. Educational knowledge is stratified by certain criteria, in terms of both property (access) and prestige, which reflect relationships of power and control in society.[119] Thus classical knowledge was 'high status' knowledge and operated as a point of access to powerful and prestigious occupational roles.[120] For this reason African elite aspirations were expressed in their demand for a classical education from the 1880s onwards. Only the integrationist ideology gives a place to classical knowledge in the curriculum appropriate to Africans; in the others it is inappropriate and even grotesque. For example, Ross tells of a party of Dutch Reformed ministers with some elders

> who visited Lovedale and were taken to see the class of the great Andrew Smith. It happened that a Native boy had been called on to go over a problem of Euclid on the board. A venerable Dutch elder looked at the board, then looked at the Xhosa, and a more and more puzzled look settled on his face. Again he looked at the board and looked at the Xhosa and burst out, "Good God, what is it that this black baboon is now doing?" 121

Clearly, he would have found a Xhosa girl going over a problem of Euclid even more surprising.

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118. See Ashley in Saunders and Derricourt, 1974: 206-7.

119. M. Young, 'An approach to the study of curricula as socially organised knowledge', in Young, 1971: 19-46.

120. See Wilkinson, 'The Gentleman Ideal and the Maintenance of a Political Elite', in Musgrave (ed.), Sociology, History and Education (1963); Campbell, 'Latin and Elite Tradition in Education', British Journal of Sociology, September, 1968, Vol. XIX, No. 3.

121. B.J. Ross, Brownlee J. Ross: His Ancestry and Some Writings (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1948), p.102.

Where all these diverse views came together was in the core belief that the civilisation of the African required the inculcation of a work ethic. "The British race, in all its great branches, is noted for its restless activity. Its life motto is work, work and work!"[122] Conversely, the deepest contempt is reserved for those who will not thus exert themselves. At this level Africans evoked at best a generalised disapproval. Govan maintained that the 'Kaffir's' 'carnality' was "aggravated by barbarian ignorance, indolence and deep moral degradation."[123] Stewart repeatedly stressed that the objects of Lovedale were "Godliness, cleanliness, industry and discipline," and he maintained that "Christianity and idleness are not compatible."[124] Africans

> needed to be taught to work, for as a rule, the barbarous natives have no higher ambition than to live at the side of their huts and cattle-folds, basking in the sun and enjoying the savage luxury of utter laziness. [125]

The work ethic must be related to labour requirements. The crucial factor operating in the colonial economy was the demand for labour. Parallels with nineteenth century Britain suggest that this work ethic, as a core component of 'civilization', was fundamentally generated by problems of class control. Writing of Britain, Johnson has shown that an ideology of social control actually lay behind much of the educational rhetoric of the early Victorian period. Johnson suggests that mass education in Britain originated in a conception of the school as a means of 'civilizing' the working class as a whole through its children. Thus in the period 1790-1803, "the typical education form was the 'school of industry' where working-class people were to be taught their duties." However, this remained a relative rarity,

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122. Editor of The Christian Express, November 1891. Cairns describes this as "a work fetish". Cairns, 1965: 80.

123. J. Laing, Memorials of the Rev. James Laing (1875), p.12.

124. Quoted by M. Wilson in 'Lovedale, Instrument of Peace', Wilson and Perrot, 1973: 5.

125. Young, 1902: 82.

> as training for particular occupations was most often applied to girls (as housewives but especially as domestic servants) and to children... (my emphasis).[126]

The monitorial schools of the 1830s and 1840s saw a stress on the language of teaching self discipline, obedience and industry: 'steady habits of industry', 'obedience under control', 'restraint', 'order' and 'habit'.[127]

This view of education as a means of 'civilizing' the working-class in nineteenth century Britain implied a contempt for working-class culture that parallels the contempt for African culture displayed by the missionaries and colonial administrators. Johnson shows that the images of the village labourer of this period stigmatise him as stupid, idle, dependent, irresponsible, and so on. The images of the African stigmatise him in terms of the same qualities. What is in fact stigmatised in all this literature is

> a whole way of life. If one lists those aspects of the working class that meet with censure it is the comprehensiveness of the indictment that is striking. The attack covers almost every aspect of belief and behaviour - all the characteristic institutions, folklore, 'common sense', and mentalities of the class, its culture in the broad anthropological meaning of the word. [128]

Within traditional African culture many of its most essential social arrangements were those involving the 'degradation of women'. It was these that evoked the most hostile response.

Thus in Britain, education originated as a means of cultural reproduction, as a mechanism of social control. It was fundamentally coercive and

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126. R. Johnson, 'Notes on the Schooling of the English Working Class, 1780-1850', pp.44-54, in Dale, Esland and McDonald (eds.), Schooling and Capitalism. A Sociological Reader. Open University, 1976.

127. Johnson in Dale, 1976: 47. Halsey points out that as late as 1904 "with a confidence now unimaginable, the Elementary School Code delineated in exact terms the morality to be inculcated by schoolteachers. They were to 'implant' in the children 'habits of industry, self control, and courageous perseverence in the face of difficulties." A.H. Halsey, Reith Lecture No.3, The Listener, 26.1.1978.

128. Johnson in Dale, 1976: 49.

regulative rather than liberatory, concerned with regulating and controlling behaviour rather than developing innate abilities, potentialities or skills. This overall pattern reflecting dominant class interests was transported into a colonial context with its demand for labour, and thus assumed a racial form.

The connection between education and the demand for domestic labour is illustrated by Mrs Philipps, writing from Glendower on 14th July, 1825. She states that she was better pleased with the missionary establishment at Theopolis than she had expected.

> The school for the children must eventually be of advantage to us, as they teach them to speak, read and write in English. They will, if taught industrious habits, be useful as servants...it was altogether an interesting sight, so many little black creatures brought into a state of civilization and improvement. (Emphasis mine). [129]

Writing somewhat later, Harriet Ward regrets that the connection between education and domestic labour is not more explicit. She finds the idleness of the Mfengu 'almost incredible.'

> The missionaries are indefatigable in teaching them their catechism; but no attempt is made to fit the women for service. Idle they are, and idle they will be. (Emphasis mine). [130]

The role of the missionaries in the colonial authorities' strategy for the domestication of Africans was evident as early as 1815 in Colonel Cuyler's expressed hope to the Colonial Secretary that "by good management on the part of the missionaries, the Kaffirs may be in time brought to that station to be quiet and useful neighbours."[131] Missionary acquiescence is evident in Thomson's statement that his task was not only to Christianise but also "to introduce among the natives, a knowledge of the useful arts of civilized life, and to

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129. Keppel-Jones, 1960: 250.

130. Ward, 1851: 66.

131. Cuyler to Colonial Secretary, 25th May, 1815. Quoted by D. Williams, When Races Meet. The Life and Times of William Ritchie Thomson, Glasgow Society Missionary, Government Agent and Dutch Reformed Church Minister. 1794-1891 (Johannesburg: A.P.B. Publishers, 1967), p.18.

train them to habits of industry."[132] The linking of the civilizing role of the missionaries to the government role of social control is most apparent in Grey's programme of industrial education, for which he drew on rich (if brutal) experience in Australia and New Zealand in the pacification of the native inhabitants. The purpose of his intended industrial education was to "civilize races emerging from barbarism" by turning them into "a settled and industrious peasantry." The first industrial school was established at Salem and the results, Shaw suggested, "will prove highly valuable in promoting civilization among the native tribes and thereby securing the safety and welfare of the Colony."[133] Lovedale eventually became the model par excellence of industrial education. In 1856 departments in masonry, carpentry, wagon-making and blacksmithing were established. In 1861 Govan added to these printing and book-binding. Through a system of indenture of apprentices, Lovedale thus began producing relatively skilled workers for the South African labour market. Government support led to the establishment of similar industrial departments after 1855 at the missions of Healdtown, Lesseyton and D'Urban.

In the same way that this programme of industrial education illustrates the convergence of evangelisation and civilization with domestication or social control, it also illustrates how European definitions of appropriate gender roles were imported into a colonial context and institutionalised. Industrial education for women focused on domestic skills. Again Lovedale was the model. In 1871 an Industrial Department opened at the Lovedale Girls' School, in which "women and girls were trained as domestic servants or seamstresses."[134] This course continued until 1922 when it was changed. One of its difficulties had been that it tried to straddle two aspects of 'education for domesticity', or as Shepherd put it, "it tried to keep in view a two-fold aim", preparing the African girls for domestic life in their own culture and preparing them for domestic service in European homes.

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132. C.O. 142/44, Thomson to Colonial Secretary, 31st July, 1821. Quoted by Williams, 1959: 238.

133. Shaw, 1860: 533.

134. Shepherd, 1940: 475.

> The course referred to has tried to keep both possibilities in view. Reconciliation of the two, however, presents difficulties. Whereas a training for domestic service requires instruction in European methods employed under European conditions, the essence of a preparation for Native home life consists in acquiring a knowledge of how to make effective use of the very meagre resources available. [135]

Thus while boys were given access to a variety of industrial skills which opened up all kinds of employment opportunities, industrial education for girls institutionalised the dominant European female gender role which equated femininity with domesticity. The effect was largely to locate black women in domestic roles - either in their own or in the colonizers' households.

Lovedale was the first institution to offer advanced education to African girls.[136] Isabella Smith opened a girls' department at Lovedale in 1846 but it closed a few weeks later for the 'War of the Axe'.[137] In 1868 Jane Waterston opened a Girls' Boarding School which commenced with ten boarders. She was Lady Superintendent of the Girls' School until 1873 and under her, "many Native girls came to be housed at Lovedale and trained for all kinds of domestic work."[138] The chief subjects of instruction during that time were "housekeeping, cooking, sewing and laundry work." Shepherd tells us that "the same subjects have had a large place in the curricula for girls down to the present day."[139] Miss Waterston's explicit intention was domestic rather than academic.

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135. Ibid., pp.475-6.

136. Monica Wilson's account of Lovedale (surely herself one of its most worthy products) is very impressive - in its academic standards, its Christian principles, and the relations of teachers and pupils who lived in an atmosphere of Christian commitment and mutual understanding - as she says, "Maquoma's granddaughter sat next to me in class and none could remain unaware that there were two viewpoints about the 100 years war." See M. Wilson, 'Lovedale: Instrument of Peace', pp. 4-12, in Wilson and Perrot, 1973: 11.

137. Shepherd, 1940: 474.

138. Ibid., p.425.

139. Ibid.

> I have tried to give the Institution not so much the air of a school, as of a pleasant home. I reasoned after this manner that homes are what are wanted in Kafirland, and that the young women will never be able to make homes unless they understand and see what a home is. [140]

This fitted neatly into Stewart's largely evangelical intention:

> We have not taken these young women from their smoky hovels to spoil them with over-indulgence, or nurse them into fastidious dislike of their future fates... [141]

> We may fairly believe that great good will come out of the establishment of this training school for young women. Cleanliness, industry and application are some of the lower ends of the Institution, and the more common virtues which the inmates must practise while they remain there; the training of their hearts and the conversion of their souls to God are the higher and real aims of the place. [142]

Industry and application were to be expressed largely, but not exclusively, in domestic roles. As Ross writes of Lovedale in his 'Preliminary Report on the State of Education' published in 1883, "the girls receive the most suitable kind of instruction that those of their class and race will receive."[143] In other words, educational objectives were defined, and evaluated in terms of their appropriatedness to a colonized race, subordinate class and female sex. The products were often aesthetically pleasing:

> The clean, coloured print dresses of the pupils [of the Girls Institution] their upright bearing, graceful carriage, and general look of intelligence, seldom fail to impress the casual observer as in striking contrast to the condition of the native females in their heathen state. [144]

The juxtaposition of two photographs in Whiteside makes the same point. One photograph entitled 'Raw material' shows three young black girls scantily clad in animal skins. Facing it is a photograph entitled

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140. Quoted by Shepherd, ibid., p.474.

141. In both Waterston and Stewart, the implication is that a traditional 'hut' or 'hovel' cannot be a 'home.'

142. Quoted by Young, 1902: 132.

143. Quoted by Shepherd, 1940: 200.

144. Young, 1902: 141.

'Civilization' which shows three young black girls posing with self-conscious dignity, wearing long dresses and turbans.[145]

Academic education for Black girls also opened up other employment alternatives. The growth of the Lovedale Girls' School is indicated by the number of girl boarders at the institution. They numbered

66	in	1873
67		1883
137		1893
156		1903
210		1923
281		1939

The last two dates listed included a number of student nurses. Lovedale initiated the training of Black women as nurses and it was a matter of special pride when Cecilia Makiwane, a Lovedale product, became the first African nurse in 1907. Shepherd points out:

> When the Victoria Hospital commenced the training, there was not a single trained Native hospital nurse in South Africa. More than that, the opinion was then almost universally held, as one doctor expressed it, giving evidence before a Government Commission, 'it is impossible for a Native girl to be a hospital nurse.' The idea was that no native girl could be trusted to do such work, unless she was under the immediate supervision of a white nurse. [146]

Nursing, teaching and domestic work - these were the occupations suitable for women - each represented an extension of their domestic role. In all three areas Lovedale was a pioneer.

At its nineteenth-century peak, Lovedale contained between 600 and 800 students. It was the most prominent mission school in Southern Africa and served as a model of numerous other missionary institutions. At Lesseyton, Peddie, Blythswood, Butterworth, Healdtown, Salem and

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145. Whiteside, 1906: 296.

146. Shepherd, 1940: 356. The convergence of disabilities generated by racism and sexism is illustrated by the difficulties in establishing nursing as a valid occupation for Black women. Shepherd points out that "To the Black it appeared unseemly that a young unmarried woman should perform the duties a nurse must undertake. To the White it seemed an invasion by the incompetent on a sphere requiring mental aptitudes which only centuries of civilization could produce." Ibid.

St.Matthews, education for girls followed much the same pattern. The focus was on education for domesticity. At the Lamplough Training Institution for Girls (established by Mr Hacker in Butterworth) the "girls are carefully trained in domestic work - cooking, baking, sewing, ironing and tailoring - in addition to the usual school instruction. The aim is to prepare the girls to make good housewives and mothers, and to lift them and their families to a higher plane of living."[147] At Lesseyton the Industrial School for Native Girls was established under the Rev. G. Chapman and in 1906 contained 100 girls, "who are instructed in household work."[148] The focus was on teaching cooking, needlework and dressmaking. Rev. Gedye established the Ayliff Industrial Institution for Girls in 1883 at Peddie. "His chief aim was to impart a plain school education up to Standard V and combine with it a thorough acquaintance with household work."[149] The same pattern was followed at the Wesleyan Institution, Salem, opened in 1855. Its initial goals were to provide an education similar to that "in the majority of respectable English day schools", to instruct the boys in a trade or agriculture and the girls in housework. Between 1855 and 1862 152 students (104 boys and 48 girls) attended the school. Twenty-nine boys were trained in shoemaking, 21 in tailoring, 18 in carpentry, four in masonry, 30 in agricultural work, and 48 girls in domestic work.[150]

The same pattern of sex specific vocational training was institutionalised at St. Matthews, which became the principal Anglican training school for Africans in the Ciskei and by the end of the century ranked with Lovedale and Healdtown as one of the three best African schools in the Eastern Cape. Until 1927 St. Matthews focused on primary education, teacher training and industrial education. The programme of industrial education which flourished after 1879 offered a diversified vocational training for boys in building, carpentry, tanning,

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147. Whiteside, 1906: 291.

148. Ibid., p.285.

149. Ibid., p.287.

150. Cape of Good Hope. Report of the Superintendent-General of Education on the Industrial Institutions and Schools (Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1863), p.3. Cape of Good Hope Annexures, 1864/1.

tinsmithing, wagon-making, blacksmithing, printing and farming. The girls received domestic training in simple cookery, cleaning, laundry work and sewing. As at Lovedale, domestic training was important even in the academic courses for girls offered at St. Matthews.

> Even for the relatively small proportion of girls whose 'profession' or 'trade' will lie in activities outside the home, participation in some of the major activities of the home is inevitable, and the contingency is high that sooner or later every woman will be the central figure controlling the destinies of the home and family. [151]

> For the girls, therefore, the secondary school found a place for domestic economy in the teaching of domestic science, laundry-work, needlework, cookery and home nursing. [152]

Similarly, the emphasis was on occupations appropriate to European gender role definitions, especially domestic service, nursing and primary school teaching. Up until 1936 probationer nurses were trained for a 'Hospital Certificate', but by that time the hospital had developed into a recognised training centre for the Government Certificate. After 1938 candidates were accepted for training for the South African Medical Council Certificate examinations. Between 1895 and 1959 over 500 men and women students were admitted to teacher training courses at St. Matthews Training School. However, women were encouraged to train for the lower levels.

> As experience taught from year to year that women tended to make better teachers than men for children in the lower classes of the primary school, preference was given to them in the Primary Lower Teachers Course while the men were encouraged to follow the Primary Higher Course. Ultimately admission to the Lower Teachers' Course was restricted to the women. [153]

Of course, this implied restricted access to positions of higher pay, prestige and authority within the educational hierarchy.

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151. Ingles, quoted by P. Fihla, 'The development of Bantu Education at the St. Matthews Mission Station, Keiskamma Hoek, 1853-1959', unpublished M. Ed. thesis, University of South Africa, 1962, p.159.

152. Fihla, 1962: 159.

153. Ibid., p.144.

At Healdtown there was the same pattern of sex specific vocational training which restricted the access of women to all but domestic roles. Begun as a mission station for Fingo refugees in 1853, it was transformed by John Ayliff, under Grey's policy, into an Industrial Institution. While the boys studied building, carpentry, quarrying, brickmaking, agriculture, blacksmithing, wagon-making, boot and shoe making, tailoring and wheelwrights work, the girls were trained in "various domestic duties." In 1856 they "produced 600 pieces of needlework during the year, consisting mostly of clothes and bed-linen."[154] The Industrial Institution socialised African girls exclusively into domestic roles, either in their own, or their parents' homes, or as domestic servants in settler homes. Ayliff's report for 1859 states:

> Since the Industrial Institution had been in operation (5 years) upwards of 40 boys and girls had left, going out either as apprentices to learn trades, as houseservants, or to be useful to their parents, while the same number continued in the house. [155]

Increasingly, however, girls were involved in primary education and later in teacher training. Throughout the period 1867-1880 Dale and his inspectors reported very favourably on the work of Healdtown. However, Kilner charged that Healdtown had failed to produce the African teachers required. Yet, in his section, 'Work among the Native women of S.A.', he praised Healdtown as follows:

> The School at Healdtown is a very efficient one... The girls taught there are sure to become a power in the land. I rejoiced greatly over the school. [156]

Hewson finds it

> difficult to understand how these remarks could have been made by the same man at the same time, and about the same place, as the verdict on the failure of Healdtown. It is inconceivable that Healdtown could have been so remarkably a success with its girls and a failure with its boys. [157]

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154. Hewson, 1959: 169.

155. Ibid., p.178.

156. Quoted by Hewson, 1959: 268-269.

157. Hewson, 1959: 269.

But it is perfectly conceivable that in view of the definitions of gender roles current at the time, and the neglect of female education generally, Kilner applied different criteria of evaluation to boys than to girls. What was a failure for boys, would be a success for girls.

The pattern in all these educational institutions was that boys were given access to a variety of industrial skills which opened up all kinds of employment opportunities, while girls were restricted to education specifically for domestic roles, or to occupations such as teaching and nursing which were extensions of those roles. European definitions of gender roles were paramount in this process. The consequent restriction of agricultural training to boys, while women were, in terms of the traditional division of labour among the Xhosa, responsible for crop-production, illustrates how the importing of European role definitions amplified the disabilities of African women.

The different social evaluation of the two types of vocational training is underlined by the Report of the Superintendent General in 1863 which placed government aid on a more permanent footing. A maintenance grant of £15 per annum was made for each male apprentice, and £10 for each girl receiving industrial training. Certain conditions were also laid down concerning the type of work and the length of training. The boys were to have a probationary year followed by an apprenticeship of two to four years, while in the case of girls the probationary period was to be three months followed by a one to two year course of household training.[158] After Grey left office there was a shift in educational policy both in terms of redirecting educational funds to Whites, and in modifying the objectives of African education.[159] Yet the education of African girls continued to focus on domestic

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158. Superintendent General's Report, 1863.

159. Moyer suggests that missionaries resisted this change of emphasis only minimally because they had become dependent upon the government for financial support and had changed their attitudes "about the capacity of Africans to learn and the desirability of training them to assume a position of equality with whites." Moyer relates this change partly to the missionary's disenchantment "when they measured their rate of success during the previous decades and attributed their perceived failure to the inability of Africans to learn or sustain a

skills. The Superintendent-General of Education's Report for the year ending 30th June, 1880, states under 'Aborigines':

> The training of boys and girls in the various native institutions in the Colony, Transkei, Tembuland and Basutoland, has been systematically carried on. The boys receive an elementary education and are trained to general industrial habits, gardening, etc. The girls are taught to do domestic work including cooking, washing, mending, making and cutting out clothes etc. [160]

Similarly, the Superintendent-General's Report of 1906 reported a total of 208 African girls in industrial schools and industrial departments attached to schools learning five subjects: cooking, dressmaking, housework, laundry and needlework. There were double the number of industrial schools and industrial departments catering for African boys, where they learned a variety of industrial and agricultural skills.[161] By 1919 domestic education was firmly entrenched in the primary school. The 1919 Commission which inquired into the state of Native education found that

> the popular criticisms that school education is too 'bookish' and trains too exclusively for clerical or teaching occupation, has a solid base....[This has] had lamentable effects on the attitude of Natives towards education and subsequent vocation.... A prime object is to afford greater facilities for vocational and practical training in all classes of schools. [162]

The concrete proposals were

> that at every Native school teaching above Standard IV, facilities for agricultural training (in the

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suitable level of civilization." (Moyer, 1976: 482). Stigmatizing the African in this way is doubtless related to the missionary's increasing incorporation into the dominant settler ethos.

160. Report of the Superintendent General of Education for the year ending 30th June, 1880 (Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1881), pp.8-9. Cape of Good Hope Annexures, 1881/1.

161. Report of the Superintendent General of Education for the year ending September, 1906 (Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906), p.79(a). Cape of Good Hope Annexures, 1907/1.

162. Departmental Commission on Native Education. Superintendent General's Report, 1919, p.54.

> case of boys) and practical domestic economy (in the case of girls) should as far as possible be provided. [163]

According to Dodd, by 1931 domestic economy in Standards V and VI was being extended to more and more of the mission schools.[164] Thus the move towards a segregationist educational ideology structured around notions of African subordination was established long before 1948.

The differential access of Black women to educational knowledge and educational institutions was rooted in an ideology of education for domesticity. This was generated by the convergence of notions of the education appropriate to a specific sex, race and class. This differential access was expressed in two main ways: first, the restriction of Black women to industrial and vocational training which focused on domestic skills and the limited employment opportunities such training implied; and the shrinkage in educational attainment reflected by the much smaller proportion of girls in higher education. The sex ratio here implied access, albeit access restricted to a minority of women, to jobs of higher pay, prestige and power.

Sex differences in the later stages of the educational process is best illustrated by an analysis of Lovedale's pupils. In 1845 when Govan was teaching such high-status educational knowledge as Algebra, Mathematics, Greek and Latin, girls were excluded, but in 1879 Lovedale for the first time entered girls for the Cape University School Examination and four of them passed.[165] A "sensation" was caused in educational circles in Cape Town in the 'nineties when it transpired that a "Bantu girl" - a pupil of Lovedale - had come first in the Colony in Mathematics in one of the lower university examinations.[166]

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163. Ibid.

164. A.D. Dodd, Native Vocational Training (Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1938), p.39.

165. Govan's own priorities regarding the education of African women is shown by his bequest of £600 "two thirds to aid the education and for the encouragement of male scholars of the Kafir or other African race, and one third to be similarly applied on behalf of female scholars." Quoted by Young, 1902: 118.

166. Shepherd, 1940: 476.

Attendance at Lovedale's academic courses in 1939 reveals the following very marked sex ratios among the largely Black pupils:

Table 39. Lovedale Pupils (1939)

	Boys	Girls
Senior Certificate Final year	32	1
Form IV (first year of Senior Certificate course)	32	3
Junior Certificate Final year	53	20
Forms I and II (preliminary years of Junior Certificate course)	92	46

At the same time, the proportion of girls in school overall was higher than that of boys. Government educational statistics for 1930 give a total of 78 487 girls to 59 317 boys attending school in the Cape Province.[167] This sex ratio had persisted for close on one hundred years. Writing of the Pondo, Wilson relates this discrepancy to three facts: that "boys are more difficult to spare in summer when cattle must be herded"; that "it is more 'the done thing' among girls to attend school than it is among boys"; and that it may perhaps be due to the fact that "more women are Church members or adherents than men. Christian mothers are prepared to sacrifice a daughter's services that she may go to school, while the pagan husband may insist on boys herding."[168] These last two factors raise more questions than they answer.

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167. The General Schedule of 1844 shows the total number of scholars at Methodist mission stations as totalling 1 892 boys and 2 516 females. A. Slee, 'Some Aspects of Wesleyan Methodism in the Albany District between 1830 and 1844'. Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of South Africa, 1946, p.147.

168. Hunter, 1969: 177.

At the same time these educational statistics are deceptive. They disguise important differences in the educational experiences to which African boys and girls had access. Raphael Samuel warns "that there is an enormous amount of value to be gleaned from the Blue Books but only if the historian works against the grain of the material."[169] One should take into account the shrinking proportion of girls in academic education generally and higher education specifically; and the concentration of girls at the lowest levels of the education process, in primary school; in industrial schools in sex-specific vocational courses which focus on domestic skills; and in teacher training institutions.

The Educational Return for 1853 showed a total of 6 917 males and 7 034 females in school in the Cape.[170] A close look at the educational institutions in the division of Albany, however, shows that the apparent preponderance of females in the total school attendance conceals important differences in the content of educational knowledge and quality of educational experiences to which boys and girls had access. The only educational institution in the Division of Albany in which girls considerably outnumber boys in that year was the Grahamstown Wesleyan Mission School of Industry and Infant School which included 15 male and 56 female pupils. The academic institutions were frequently not only sex specific but race specific, so that African girls were doubly excluded. For example, the Graham's Town Government School with 100 male pupils who studied Geography, British History, Physical Science and other examples of 'high status' educational knowledge. Or the Grahamstown St. George's Diocesan Grammar School modelled on an English public school with 30 male pupils.

Broadly speaking, the same picture is given in the Educational Returns for 1840.[171] The total number of scholars was then 1 219 males and 1 321 females, but we find the same disparate sex ratios in academic institutions, rather than elementary and vocational ones. For example,

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169. Samuel, 1975: xvi.

170. Cape of Good Hope Blue Book, Educational Return for 1853 (Cape Archives).

171. Cape of Good Hope Blue Book, Educational Return for 1840 (Cape Archives).

the Free School at Grahamstown contained 120 male and only 80 female scholars. In 1861 the only Class I school in Albany, the Government School under F. Tudhope, contained 75 males only.[172] Yet the total for the Colony in that year was 9 854 male scholars and 9 275 females. The Educational Returns for 1870 show the same apparent parity in the numbers of male and female scholars but they totalled 713 males and 413 females in Albany, and boys outnumber girls in the five Class I schools in the Albany district. At St. Phillips Kafir School in Grahamstown under the Rev. W. Turpin in 1870, for instance, there were 69 males and 39 female scholars on the roll.

In 1880, in the undenominational public school in Grahamstown in Class I there were 122 boys on the roll and no girls.[173] Even among the Class II undenominational public schools the sex ratio was wide; for example, at Salem 38 boys and seven girls. But in that year and district the elementary schools contained a higher proportion of girls. Thus, men and women had access to different kinds of educational knowledge which was differently stratified and itself provided access to different occupational levels.

The differential access of African girls to academic institutions and their concentration at the elementary levels of the educational process and in vocational and industrial education placed considerable restrictions on the employment opportunities open to them. This is illustrated by an analysis of the Lovedale register drawn up by Stewart in 1887 which gives information about 1 520 young men and only 538 women and shows clearly that there were only three main occupational alternatives open to women: as domestic servants, teachers and housewives. Lovedale products were frequently employed in domestic service in missionary and other White homes. Those listed as having been in service at some stage of their lives total 85 out of a total of 838 (15,8 percent).[174] By 1900, out of a total of 6 000

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172. The Class I academic curriculum included English, Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra, Higher Mathematics, Physical Science, Geography, History, Latin and Greek.

173. Superintendent General's Report (Cape of Good Hope Annexures 1881/1 Table III).

174. Stewart's analysis only lists 53 in domestic service, the discrepancy probably being due to Stewart's using present employment as his criterion.

Africans who had been at Lovedale, there were 500 in domestic or household service, either in their own or an employer's home.[175] Stewart also gives a total of 158 teachers and sewing mistresses. Those listed as teachers were often employed in the Industrial Department at Lovedale teaching subjects such as sewing and laundry, or as sewing teachers in other mission schools. In other words, they were often teachers of domestic knowledge and skills.

By contrast, the African men who graduated from Lovedale entered a variety of occupations such as ministers, teachers (of all kinds), interpreters, magistrates' clerks, store clerks, carpenters, wagon makers, blacksmiths, masons, native policemen, printers, book-binders, law agents, transport riders, and so on. Stewart pointed out that those who work at trades learned at Lovedale "can easily earn from 20 to 30 shillings a week." In general, women were restricted to occupations of lower pay, power and prestige. By all three criteria, the bottom of the occupational hierarchy was domestic service.

However missionary education operated in a complex and contradictory way. It tied women to subordinate roles but at the same time liberated them from the subordination of tribal society by introducing them to new occupational roles. These roles implied a new level of independence. Domestic service, as well as teaching and nursing, offered something of an escape route from rural poverty and the constraints of traditional society.

For a small minority, missionary education was the route to elite membership in Southern African society. Hunter points out that Skota's African Yearly Register, an African "Who's Who', includes 29 women in

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175. James Stewart, Dawn in the Dark Continent (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1906), p.189. The most extraordinary story behind a number of Lovedale domestic servants is that of the Gallas. In 1888 a British warship captured some Arab dhows in the Red Sea with a cargo of 213 slaves from Gallaland near Abyssinia. Most of the slaves were women and children in pitiable condition. All had to be lifted on board, their limbs having been so cramped by confinement that they could not function. They landed up at Lovedale via the Church of Scotland Mission near Aden. "Almost all the girls entered domestic service in European homes in various parts of the Cape Province." (Shepherd, 1940: 231).

a total of 325. Several of them were Lovedale products such as Mrs M. Majombozi, Martha Ngano, Mrs F. Skota, Frieda Bokwe, Sarah Poho and Cecilia Makiwane.[176] These were exceptional women by any standard. But few women at the top of the educational hierarchy meant fewer role models for those lower down.

In this respect the role of missionary wives and a few exceptional 'lady missionaries' is significant.[177] All too often their role is subsumed in a discussion of their husbands. For instance, Maxwell and McGeogh refer to

> the missionaries drawn from many lands who dedicated their lives and their wives to what they believed to be the cause of Africa and its peoples. [178]

Missionary wives were the crucial female element in the British contact with Africa generally in the early stages of colonialism. Writing of this area, Williams maintains that "generally the evidence is too scanty for an assessment of the role of the missionary wives", at least during the period 1799-1853.[179] Many of them must have had some influence on young African women's perception of themselves, though how far they served as role models is difficult to say.

Some were forceful personalities; women such as Isabella Smith who came out from Scotland at the age of 21 and opened the Girls' Department at Lovedale in 1846. After two years she married the Rev. W.R. Thomson but "made it a condition of her marriage that she should continue teaching at Balfour at her school for missionaries' daughters afterwards, and she did."[180] Williams tells us that she was "someone of considerable

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176. Hunter, 1933: 275.

177. They were not all as culture-bound as the Mrs Pringle who was "not a little amused to find...that no use could be made of the eggs for the want of egg cups." M. Pringle, Towards the Mountains of the Moon (London, 1883), p.233. Quoted by Hammond and Jablow, 1970: 84. Or as frail as the Mrs McLachlan to whom "the mere thought of a sea voyage of thousands of miles to a relatively unknown destination appears seriously to have afflicted her mind." (Williams, 1967: 42).

178. W.A. Maxwell and R.T. McGeogh, The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs (Cape Town: Balkema, 1978), p.19.

179. Williams, 1976: Vol. I, p.56.

180. Williams, 1967: 150.

courage as well as a resolute personality", but mentions her very little in his biography of Thomson.[181] According to her obituary,

> for full sixty years she was a spiritual force and a power working for righteousness, goodness and truth in the land where her lot was cast. [182]

Other exceptional missionary women were Miss MacRitchie who presided over the Lovedale Girls' School from 1874 to 1880; Miss Mary Dodds who came out to Lovedale in 1892; Miss Harding; Miss Thomson[183] and Miss Ogilvie. Miss Ogilvie came out in 1846 and started a sewing school at the Inquibigha station where Miss McLaren had been previously. There she laboured with 100 'heathen girls' whose "ochre-smeared skin karosses had daily to be exchanged during the hours of instruction for one or two articles of European clothing."[184] From 1861 she taught at Emgwali with the remarkable Rev. Tiyo Soga. During her 18 years there, "hundreds of girls passed...into domestic life and various kinds of service."[185]

By far the most impressive figure is the redoubtable Jane Waterston, principal of the Lovedale Girls' School for seven years and pioneer figure in several senses.[186] Her vivacity, energy and force earned her the name of Noqakata, 'the mother of activity', and Lovedale girls were known as Amaqakata for some time. Certainly, her educational ideas were class-bound: "an educated woman" was to have qualities of "refinement and delicacy", but much about her was original, especially in terms of her class position. One example is her treatment of the pupil who was malingering to avoid domestic chores. Jane Waterston announced:

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181. Ibid.

182. Christian Express, October 1st, 1905. The writer refers to an incident at the siege of Fort Armstrong to illustrate her courage. She returned to the Fort with a servant girl who retrieved an officer's prized heirloom while the Xhosa looted, and carried it back to the officer. This is an anecdote which illustrates the courage and devotion of the servant girl more pointedly.

183. Young, 1902: 129-30.

184. Christian Express, June 1st, 1881, p.14.

185. Ibid.

186. See J. Lennox, 'Noqakata' in Wilson and Perrot, 1973: 535-537; R. Shepherd, Bantu Literature and Life (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1955), pp.78-82.

> she and the girl would exchange places for the afternoon. So the girl was sent to put on her Sunday frock, and was placed in the drawing room to receive possible visitors (it being hinted that Dr Stewart was expected to call that afternoon) while Miss Waterston tucked up her dress and scrubbed the floor. [187]

These were all remarkable women, especially in the context of women's role in the society of the time. Some of these missionary women had themselves been domestic servants in Britain (for example, Elizabeth, wife of Joseph Williams and Sarah, wife of Mr Barker).[188] They were even more deficient in the anthropological training needed to become wise and effective instruments of social change than their male counterparts. Apparently their main impact was thought to derive from their 'natural' intuitive, feminine qualities. Calderwood, who stressed the education of women as the key to the civilization of the 'native races', saw European females as the best instruments of this weighty conversion:

> the affectionate influence of pious, enlightened European females, whether these be the wives of missionaries and colonists or female teachers. [189]

Missionary wives "must recognise that this great work is their special sphere."[190] Their significance lay in the fact that the missionary effort on the Eastern Frontier was on a larger scale than anywhere else hitherto in Africa, and was backed by a large scale settler community. The greater proponderance of female missionaries, missionaries' wives and women generally in this enterprise implied a potentiality for the involvement of African women greater than elsewhere.

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187. Ibid. Jane Waterston's biography needs to be written. She has been 'hidden from history' for too long. She was a pioneer not only of African education in the Eastern Cape, but through the London Medical School for Women in the whole field of medical education for women. She made an enormous contribution as a physician in Cape Town over a period of 50 years, and to welfare work generally in the Cape area. She took part in a commission of inquiry into the circumstances of the women and children in the Boer War concentration camps and was awarded an honorary LL.D. by the University of Cape Town in her closing years.

188. A. Murray McGregor, 'Missionary Women'. Talk given to the Grahamstown Historical Society, September, 1978.

189. Calderwood, 1858: 199.

190. Ibid., p.206.

No one could fail to admire the courage of these women, just as "no person not hopelessly prejudiced would deny the great value of the work done by Christian missionaries."[191] However, it is also undeniable that the effects of their work were not always what they intended. They "made fundamental contributions to the undermining of ideas that African societies had any right to a continuing existence... The missionary strengthened the attitude that cultural differences were to be eliminated rather than cherished or respected."[192] The implication is a form of cultural imperialism which focused upon the position of women in traditional African society. The conventional view is that

> Western influence has 'emancipated' African women through the weakening of kinship bonds and the provision of 'free choice' in Christian monogamous marriage, the suppression of 'barbarous' practice, the opening of schools, the introduction of modern medicine and hygiene, and sometimes of female suffrage. [193]

While there is some truth in the conventional view, the 'western influence' of the missionaries on the Eastern Frontier was not an unmixed blessing. Western influence can sometimes weaken or destroy women's traditional roles without providing modern roles of power or autonomy in exchange.[194] This is clear in the exclusion of African women from agricultural training courses and colleges, which has operated throughout Africa.[195]

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191. G. Kitson Clark, An Expanding Society, Britain 1830-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p.75. As Bolt writes, "a study of missionary literature conveys not merely an impression of pride and prejudice, but also a genuine humanitarianism, instances of heroism which are not wasted, and of genuine friendship between the races." Bolt, 1971: 128.

192. Cairns, 1965: 239-240.

193. J. van Allen, 'Sitting on a Man: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Ibo Women', Canadian Journal of African Studies, VI, 11 (1972), pp.165-181.

194. Van Allen demonstrates this in relation to Ibo political institutions. Ibid. See also Tinker, in Tinker et al., 1976: 22-34.

195. Audrey Wipper points out that in Uganda for instance, though there has been a faculty of agriculture at Makerere University since the late 1930s, the first two women in a class of sixty were enrolled only in 1967. Canadian Journal of African Studies, VI, 11, 1972, pp.143-146.

But it has also provided access to new roles for women. John Zwelibanzi, the Mfengu teacher and missionary suggested in 1866 that the missionaries devote themselves to gaining women adherents as they had more to 'gain' from Christianity than men. Moyer suggests that from a sociological perspective Zwelibanzi may have been correct.[196] Both Williams and Moyer make much of the missionaries' 'liberatory' role, and of the mission stations as places of refuge for young Xhosa girls fleeing from upondhlo and other 'unacceptable rituals', as well as unwanted marriages.[197] Obviously the missionaries introduced new values and attitudes in terms of which some rituals were defined as unacceptable. But how deep did this go? How far did the missionaries' teaching involve a redefinition of self which could generate new qualities of assertiveness and independence? Hunter has suggested that Christianity did imply a new independence for women.

> Christianity...tends to make women more independent, because when, as most frequently happens, the wife of a pagan man is converted, she is taught by the missionaries and forced by her convictions to assert herself against her husband in certain questions. For instance a man may wish beer brewed for a sacrifice to ancestral spirits, and a Christian wife refuses to do it. The backing of her religion and often of her teachers (though some of the missionaries consider that some of their women converts are in danger of becoming unduly self assertive towards their pagan husbands) gives her courage to demand an independence of judgement and freedom of action which under the old conditions she would never have dreamed of claiming.[198]

Part of the explanation of the missionaries' success in the cultural and institutional incorporation of African women into colonial society lies in the marginality of those women to the main axes of power in Xhosa society. But the loosening of these women who were educated at missionary institutions and entered new occupational roles, from traditional culture, may also be seen as an index of the degree of disintegration to which that culture was subject. The dislocation of the Mfengu, for instance, was intense. Mfengu women were the main source of domestic servants to the white settlers after 1827. The

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196. Moyer, 1976: 540.

197. Williams, 1959: Vol. I, pp.278-279.

198. Hunter, 1933: 274.

three foremost educational institutions for Africans in the Eastern Cape, Lovedale, Healdtown and St. Matthews, were all situated in areas which contained large Mfengu populations. Healdtown was begun as a mission station for Mfengu refugees in 1853; there was a large Mfengu population in the Keiskamma Hoek area when St. Matthews Mission was founded in 1855; and there were many living in the vicinity of Lovedale. Therefore, the majority of women students may well have been Mfengu. If this could be established it would tighten the suggested link between the unique involvement of Xhosa-speaking women in both missionary education and settler employment.

Overall it has been suggested that education operated in a complex and contradictory way; that while it may have operated to 'liberate' individual African women who were provided with marketable skills, it operated largely coercively as an agency of socialisation into colonial society. The ideology behind the educational policy as regards African women was shaped by the convergence of different definitions of the education appropriate to Africans, to women and to subordinate classes. The dominant stress in each case was vocational, domestic and subservient. Thus education operated largely as a crucial agency of social control and cultural reproduction, defining and reinforcing certain social roles and initiating people into those skills, attitudes and values which are essential for effective role performance. While education operates relatively autonomously, this pattern reflected dominant class interests. For many African women, it involved new roles as domestic servants. In this sense, education operated coercively, not to liberate women, but to tie them to subordinate roles in society. Domesticity merges with domestication.

This chapter has focused largely on the pre-industrial period in South African history, from 1820-1880. An 'ideology of domesticity' is not unusual for a pre-capitalist society, but it survived after 1880. Despite the process of industrialisation and increasing capitalist penetration, domestic roles for Black women have been perpetuated. Almost one hundred years later they remain largely 'trapped' within the institution of domestic service, the second largest source of employment of Black women in contemporary South Africa. Why this paradox? The answer lies far beyond the scope of this study. It involves an analysis of the tightening control and regulation of Black labour generally, as

capitalist penetration proceeded historically.

This section posed the question whether the unique involvement of Xhosa women in employment in the initial stage of colonialism is related to their unique involvement in education, and whether both patterns may be traced to the origin of Black education in the missionary activity in the Eastern Cape in the early nineteenth century. The answer seems to be that there is a connection between these two patterns in education and employment, but to suggest a connection is not the same as establishing a direct causal link. All this chapter claims to have established is that missionary education entrenched domestic roles for Black women. But this is not to exaggerate the importance of the missionaries. The key process was the incorporation of the indigenous population into the colonial economy. The missionaries were only a small cog in the colonial wheel under which Black lives were crushed.

These domestic roles were exaggerated and perpetuated in the post-industrial period. The increasing intervention of the State in education, and the gradual 'ousting' of the missionaries altogether in this process, is of crucial importance. To trace this pattern is also far beyond the scope of this study.

Later developments amplified the disabilities of Black women. Traditionally, Black women had an important role in economic production. As industrialisation advanced, the impetus was increasingly towards undermining that role with the impoverishment of the 'reserves', and to relegate Black women outside the reserves to typically western 'female' occupations. As Black men increasingly migrated to the labour centres and became wage workers, women became increasingly dependent on their remittances for food and essential household supplies. At the same time, the shrinking land base in the rural areas made the position of women more insecure and dependent. Their traditional role in economic production was increasingly undermined and they became increasingly confined to dependent domestic roles.

However, the impact of increasing industrialisation and capitalist penetration on the role of women also operated in a contradictory way. The same system provides women with some level of access to wage employment and greater independence. For most, domestic service provides this escape route. But it is an escape to an extremely dubious freedom.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION : DOMESTIC SERVICE AS A STRATEGY OF SURVIVAL

"I think I eat once in three or four days."[1]

Domestic service in South Africa is an important route of incorporation into urban-industrial society for many Black women : an 'agency of modernization'.[2] The movement of Black women from the rural to the urban areas of South Africa has been steadily increasing. In attempting to account for the urbanisation of Black women in South Africa, 'push' and 'pull' factors seem closely intertwined. Migration to urban areas is frequently a solution to situations of crisis, tension or dissatisfaction at home. Examples would be the disruption of normal marital relations, the desire to escape the shame and disgrace of pregnancy (especially severe among 'Red' people) or simply to escape from rural poverty and the subordination and constrictions on a woman's role in traditional society.

There is often considerable parental opposition to young girls coming to town. Mayer found that "neither Red nor School peasant families normally expect their young daughters, as they expect their young sons, to go to town to earn money. The daughters' role is to stay at home and then get married."[3] Town was so distrusted, Mayer found, that a Xhosa girl who was in town with parental permission was usually propelled by some emergency. In these cases the parent "usually insists that first she should stay with some senior relative or other family acquaintance, and then get herself a job as a living-in domestic servant.

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1. Widow in the Transkei interviewed in a study conducted in 1974 for the Anglo-American Corporation. Reported in the Rand Daily Mail, 3.12.1976.

2. In her study of domestic service in industrializing France and England McBride focuses on the institution as an agent of modernization enabling young girls from rural areas to move into modern urban-industrial society. T. McBride, The Domestic Revolution: The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France 1820-1920 (New York: 1976).

3. Mayer, 1961: 237.

It is fondly believed by the country mother that at both these stages there will be some control over the girl's movements."[4]

Sometimes there does not seem to have been any alternative other than movement to town. In one case Mayer was told: "I was 25 when my husband died and left me with two young children. There was nobody to support us except my own mother who works in Johannesburg. When my younger child was weaned I left both children with my mother's sister and came here as a domestic servant."[5] Often in the past, before 1952, women came as dependants, simply following their husbands.

Among the 'pull' factors the most obvious are the opportunities for earning money in towns, and a desire for a degree of independence and prestige not available in the rural context. Little gives special emphasis to this last factor underlying the various other motives.[6] Similarly, Mayer found that many of the young Xhosa women spoke of their desire for 'freedom' and 'emancipation' and believed that these could be achieved in town. "There," one Xhosa woman stated, "a woman is independent. You are free to do as you please."[7] They are 'inkazana', "free women". In Mayer's study many Xhosa women seemed to use East London as a semi-permanent escape from their subjection in rural society. Little writes, "Moving to town frees her from both the men and the senior women. Age and sex distinctions continue to be relevant in interpersonal relations, but they lie more lightly as a whole. At least, money may be earned, lodging hired and property acquired regardless of sex, seniority or marital status."[8] To a large extent, the attractions of urban life are perceived through a glamourised image derived from newspapers and illustrated magazines. Mayer found that many young Xhosa girls, like their male counterparts,

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4. Ibid. However, Mayer found that this hardly delayed pregnancies.
5. Ibid., p.242.
6. K. Little, African Women in Towns: An Aspect of Africa's Social Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p.180.
7. Mayer, 1961: 249-250.
8. Little, 1973: 21. All this is illustrated in Cyprian Ekwensi's novel which describes the fortunes of Jagua going to Lagos, the magical city, where the girls worked in offices like the men, danced, smoked and wore high-heeled shoes and narrow slacks. Jagua Nana (London: Hutchinson, 1961).

had a strong desire for adventure and excitement and complained that the countryside was too 'dull' and "old fashioned".[9]

The pattern in much of Africa, and in the 'Third World' generally, is for migration to towns to be a line of escape for women from the structure of constraints established by the system of sexual domination. In South Africa since 1952 this line of escape has been blocked because of the mass of regulations summarised in the phrase 'influx control', a policy aimed at securing the extreme exploitability of 'non-Whites' in general and 'non-White' workers in particular. There is a special edge, however, to the disabilities and constraints experienced by Black women because of the convergence of the systems of racial and sexual domination.

An illustration of the special 'edge' created by the convergence of these two systems, is that throughout Africa one of the 'pull' factors propelling young girls to towns is the desire to obtain a husband. This applies especially to the young educated girl who objects to having a husband chosen for her. The increasingly disproportionate sex ratios obtaining in the Bantustans gives added weight to this factor. The 1970 census showed that inside the Venda homeland the proportion of women to men between the ages of 25 and 39 was no less than 4,9 : 1.[10] Black women in South Africa thus experience a double disability from the migrant labour system which takes men away, and the pass system which ties them to the rural areas.

In this study both the systems of racial and sexual domination have been related to the capitalist system of production and class structure. But the system of sexual domination is more than a product of a specific system of production - it is at the same time a projection of contradictions within this system. This may be seen most clearly in the contradiction between the subordinate status of women and their independent existence.

This contradiction takes a peculiar form in the Bantustans. Wolpe describes the process of dissolution of the African redistributive

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9. Mayer, 1961: 240.

10. F. Wilson, Migrant Labour in South Africa (Johannesburg: SPROCAS, 1972), p.84.

mode of production operating in the past by the development of a single capitalist mode of production in which increasing numbers of African workers are increasingly dependent on wage labour within this mode and separated from access to productive resources in the homelands.[11] Wolpe emphasises the function of this pre-capitalist mode in supplying African migrant labour-power at a wage below its cost of reproduction.

> When the migrant labourer has access to means of subsistence outside the capitalist sector, as he does in South Africa, then the relationship between wages and the cost of the production and reproduction of labour power is changed. That is to say, capital is able to pay the worker below the cost of his reproduction. In the first place, since in determining the level of wages necessary for the subsistence of the migrant worker and his family, account is taken of the fact that the family is supported, to some extent, from the product of agricultural production in the Reserves, it becomes possible to fix wages at the level of the subsistence of the individual worker. [12]

Wolpe also points to the fact that the extended family in the Reserves fulfils 'social security' functions "necessary 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'" and so on, "the Reserve family relieves the capitalist sector and its State from the need to expend resources on these necessary functions."[13] This analysis implies that women in the Homelands have an important function in the reproduction of labour power, the reproduction of the capacity for work. This operates on two levels - generational and contractual (referring to the periods of 'rest' between migrant labour contracts). It includes the three areas of physical, psychological and ideological maintenance with two important additions: food production and social security.

This system of women in the rural areas, subsidising the wages paid to men in the urban areas is not specific to South Africa. It

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11. Wolpe, 1972.
12. Ibid., p.434.
13. Ibid., p.435.

> has been institutionalized by apartheid in South Africa and increasingly in Rhodesia, but it remains a dominant characteristic of the economies of the black-ruled states of Central and Southern Africa even today. [14]

Women's role in the reproduction of cheap, migrant labour power in South Africa is changing, however. Under the joint pressures of population growth and land shortage, agricultural production in the Homelands has declined. This has transformed a situation in which women produce means of subsistence to supplement the wages earned by their menfolk under contract into a position of dependence upon these wages. The inadequacy of these wages is well known. The result is women trapped in a structure of dependence within what Bundy has described as "teeming, rural slums."[15]

There is a vast body of evidence on the extent of poverty in the Homelands or Bantustans. Professor de Vos found that in the rural district of Middledrift in the Ciskei the per capita cash income was R2,53 per month. In the neighbouring district of Victoria East, the per capita income was R2,73.[16] Over half the households investigated were headed by women. According to a survey of the Transkei conducted in 1974 for the Anglo-American Corporation, 67 percent of the rural households were headed by women; 50 percent of these people earned less than R25 a year and the inhabitants of 50 households had no cash income at all.[17] Clarke and Ngobese's study of 150 families in a Kwazulu district found that the average monthly income was R14,87 - of this R9,90 came from the remittances of absent sons and husbands.[18] Within this pattern

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14. A. Seidman, 'The Economics of Eliminating Rural Poverty', pp. 410-421 in Palmer and Parsons, 1977: 414.

15. Bundy, 1972: 386.

16. P.J. de Vos et al., A socio-economic and educational survey of the Bantu residing in the Victoria East, Middledrift and Zwelitsha areas of the Ciskei (Fort Hare: 1970). Quoted by Wilson, 1972: 100.

17. Quoted in the Rand Daily Mail, 3.12.1976.

18. They report that "a disturbing aspect of the main source of the income of the 150 families, the contribution from the migrant workers, was its irregularity and inconsistency." L. Clarke and J. Ngobese, Women Without Men. A study of 150 families in the Ngutu District of Kwazulu (Durban: Institute for Black Research, 1975), p.42.

the main contradiction regarding women is between their independent status as heads of households and their subordinate existence, as dependent on the remittances of migrant workers.

Obviously these women in the 'homelands' are crucial agents in the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. For this reason it has been suggested that they are "perpetuating the system by their apparent preparedness to tolerate its iniquities."[19] This statement shows a lack of insight into the structure of constraints within which African women living in the Bantustans are trapped. The writer would have done well to heed the words of Awori, who wrote of the suffering of African women in the rural areas:

> Perhaps we do not take a close enough look at her face to see the anxiety behind her eyes and the rapid aging of her figure. [20]

Both this anxiety and premature aging are related to the extension of the volume of work that has resulted from the absence of a large proportion of men.[21] The four million African women living in the Bantustans are trapped within a structure of constraints generated by both the system of racial domination and the system of sexual domination derived from both indigenous and colonial sources. In this indigenous African culture women occupy a subordinate position. Their role involves two dominant prescriptions: to bear children for her husband's family and to work in his fields and produce a large part of the family's food. Their lives are rigidly circumscribed. Tightly bound to her 'kitchen' and fields, she lives largely in the company of other women and children. The high degree of independence achieved by women in such roles as those of diviner, herbalist and chieftainess are very exceptional. Under African customary law women are perpetual

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19. G.D. Sack, 'The Anthropology of Development in the Ciskei'. Paper given at the I.S.E.R. Workshop on the Ciskei. Grahamstown, June 1977.

20. T. Awori, 'For African women equal rights are not enough', Reality, November 1975, pp.5-8. Reprinted from the Unesco Courier, March 1975.

21. Innes and O'Meara show that women in the reserves have become the servants of capital in a dual sense because they are forced to perform reproductionary labour and to attempt to produce the means of subsistence. Innes and O'Meara, 1976: 73.

minors, they cannot own property in their own right, inherit or act as the guardian of their children. They cannot enter into contracts, sue or be sued without the aid of a male guardian. Regardless of their age and marital condition women are always subject to the authority of men. Yet it is within this system that increasing numbers of rural households are headed by women. This contradiction between their subordinate existence and independent status further sharpens the edge of their disabilities.

In the Bantustans women suffer the land hunger that is endemic. By law, allotments of land may be made to any married person or kraalhead who has citizenship in that Bantustan. "A widow or unmarried woman with family obligations can be defined as a 'kraalhead', but the allocation of land is an administrative act that cannot be challenged in a court of law. Only a widow with children has any real chance of being allocated land and usually she will receive only half of the allocation made to a man."[22] A widow in occupation of her late husband's land forfeits her right to use the land if she remarries, or leaves the homestead, or refuses to live at another place stipulated by his family.

The importance of land rights in the Bantustans cannot be over-emphasised, especially as opportunities for wage employment within the Bantustans for women are extremely ill-paid and limited largely to domestic and agricultural work.[23] While the contradiction here might be described as that between their subordinate existence, dependent on the remittances of migrant workers, and their independent status as heads of households in the absence of their menfolk, in the urban areas this contradiction is often inverted. The opposition is between women's subordinate status and independent existence.

In the urban areas their independent existence derives from the fact that women are often wage-earners and the only supporters of the family. Fifty-eight percent of the sample of domestic workers interviewed in depth in the Eastern Cape were the sole supporters of their families.

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22. Bernstein, 1975: 21.

23. 80 percent of the 17 percent of the total female population of the Bantustans employed in 1970 were employed as domestic workers or farm labourers. Bernstein, 1975: 36.

This is supported by evidence from other studies both in the Eastern Cape and other South African areas. For example, Roux and St. Leger found in their study of Grahamstown's Fingo Village that 40 percent of the households were 'female headed'. "In this setting the woman comes to play a dual role: she is expected to care for young children, while at the same time being the main breadwinner. In this respect it is interesting to note that only 25 percent of the female-headed households received incomes from relatives working away from home."[24] The researchers found that 92 percent of the females in employment were in domestic service and their wages averaged only R8,44 per month. Similarly, Whisson and Weil found that 80 percent of female domestic workers were the sole supporters of their dependants.[25] Preston-Whyte found that a minority of the domestic workers she investigated "were supplementing low wages earned by husbands, but the majority were providing the sole support for themselves and, in many cases, for children and other dependants. Eight-six percent were either single, widowed, divorced or abandoned women who could look to no male for economic aid."[26] Nearly all those women in domestic service were working "from urgent necessity alone." A survey in Soweto showed that 1 260 out of 8 288 families had female heads.[27] Clearly a new type of 'mother-centred family' is emerging. While industrialisation has typically disrupted the extended family and replaced it with a nuclear family, the product of a considerable shrinkage both in size and scope, the pattern of industrialisation in South Africa with its structures of racial domination such as migratory labour and influx control, have disrupted this to create an atomized family, usually headed by women.[28]

For many of these Black women in towns the choice of alternative employment to domestic work is extremely narrow. There is a limited amount of self-employment in informal sector activities such as market

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24. Roux and St. Leger, 1971: 6.

25. Whisson and Weil, 1971: 29.

26. Preston-Whyte, 1973: 260.

27. Quoted by Welsh, in Wilson and Thompson: 1971: 215.

28. The effects of industrialisation on family patterns is a controversial subject. For instance, see P. Laslett, The World We have Lost (London: Methuen, 1965).

gardening, poultry rearing, hawking, dressmaking, knitting, cottage crafts such as weaving of mats and baskets, prostitution and making and selling liquor, and these afford varying degrees of independence.[29] There is also a limited amount of wage employment in industrial undertakings in various capacities, but the crucial point is that the vast majority are employed in domestic work, and it is on their earnings as domestic workers that they must often support their dependants.

In the sample of Eastern Cape domestic workers interviewed in depth, it was found that each one has an average of 5,53 dependants. They are propelled into domestic service in order to support themselves and their families. It is a strategy of survival. Because of the long hours that domestic service involves, this is survival at the price of their own family life. This is amplified in the case of women migrants.

Economic necessity is propelling an increasing number of Xhosa women and girls into leaving their country homes to seek employment in town. In 1950 in the Keiskammahoek district (in the Ciskei), 39 percent of the women of working age were away.[30] In 1977 in the village of Burnshill in the Keiskammahoek district, 46 percent of the women of working age were away.[31] For many of these women domestic service provides access to urban employment.

In the Eastern Cape the most common route to survival for men involves migration to the mines; the most common route for women involves migration to domestic service. Grahamstown is both a point of entry and exit in this process of migration. Women come into Grahamstown unofficially and illegally to seek employment in domestic service. As illegal unregistered workers they are in an especially vulnerable

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29. Perhaps in urban African life the 'shebeen queen' would be the independent woman par excellence. Certainly Mayer (1961) reported a strong pride of independence (in both sexual and racial terms) among some of these women.

30. D. Hobart Houghton and E. Walton, The Economy of a Native Reserve, Keiskammahoek Rural Survey (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, Vol. 2, 1952), p.127.

31. Personal communication from Cecil Manona, anthropologist doing research in this area. March, 1979.

position. At the same time, women also leave the area to seek employment in domestic service in other urban centres. In Grahamstown about a quarter of the 2 800 work contracts currently registered for other cities are for women, mostly for domestic jobs in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. For these women especially, domestic service is a strategy of survival.

Whatever the price of survival, they are the 'lucky ones'. Their 'luck' is illustrated by the move under way at the time of writing, to 'resettle' 1 800 Black people from two Eastern Cape areas, Kenton-on-Sea and the farm Klipfontein in the Bushman's River Mouth area, at Glenmore on the border of the Ciskei. Ninety-five families have already been moved to Glenmore which consists of 500 prefabricated houses with no shops, no clinic, no telephones, no electricity or any other services. There are no industries or factories, and no work opportunities other than building houses for the further 5 000 people it is ultimately planned to 'resettle' there. It is realiably reported that many of these people have been moved against their will.[32] Some of them had been employed as domestic workers and were the sole support of their families. The following case history has been reported:

> 30 year old Mrs Eunice Nuwele returned to her home at Klipfontein for a visit earlier this week and found it levelled and her family gone. According to her employer, Mr F.J. Prinsloo of nearby Bushman's River, Mrs Nuwele had left early on Wednesday to try to find her aged mother and two children at Glenmore. "At midday yesterday she returned to us to say that she had found her family at Glenmore and would have to leave here at the end of the month to join them. She's the only breadwinner, is legally registered here at Bushman's and doesn't have a hope of finding a job there 100 kilometres away at Glenmore. It's inhuman," he said. [33]

These removals are part of the 'grand design' of apartheid.[34] To date there have been 2 000 000 Blacks moved and it is planned to move

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32. 'A new Dump for People', pamphlet issued by Professor T.R.H. Davenport, Chairman of the Glenmore Action Group, on 6.4.1979.

33. Reported in Weekend Post, 7.4.1979.

34. Baldwin shows how mass removals are "a central part of the process of maintaining a controlled and cheap labour supply." A. Baldwin, 'Mass Removals and Separate Development', Journal of Southern African Studies, 1, 2, 1975, p.222. See also, G. Maré, African Population Relocation in South Africa (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1980).

1 700 000 more people in the coming years.[35] The Glenmore removals are the start of a 'clean up' of Eastern Cape towns and farms. It is in these terms that those Black women currently employed in domestic service are 'the lucky ones'.[36]

However, this study has attempted to show how domestic servants are very largely 'trapped workers'. They are 'trapped' in a condition of subjugation, inferiority and immobility. This condition of 'ultra-exploitation' is broadly congruent with the class interests of the dominant property-owning classes: especially with their labour demands, material goals and desired way of life. Domestic work has been treated as a form of production in which the goods and services produced are for the exclusive use of the domestic unit, are produced within that unit, and are exchanged for wages. It might be thought that domestic workers, at least in the Eastern Cape, span two economic systems - firstly, a market economy involving cash wages, and secondly, a feudal economy involving payment in kind. Callinicos has suggested that the domestic worker has a 'quasi-feudal' relationship with her employer.[37] This is difficult to incorporate into any specific formulation of the feudal mode of production.

In the capitalist mode of production the worker is separated from the means of reproduction of his labour power. Hindness and Hirst point out that this separation exists on two levels:

> "(i) from the means of production as property - the labourer does not own the means of reproduction of his labour-power, hence he must sell his labour power in order to subsist;
>
> (ii) from the capacity to set the means of production in motion - the worker has a specific function in the process of production, which is organised as a process by the capitalist. The worker is separated from the means

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35. Davenport, 1979.

36. The massive social dislocation and hardship involved in resettlement has been documented by C. Desmond, The Discarded People (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969). See also, M. Nash, Black Uprooting from 'White' South Africa (Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1980).

37. L. Callinicos, 'Domesticating Workers', South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1975, p.61.

> of production through the wage form, he relates to them only through the sale of his labour-power and by that sale he places his concrete labour, as the use value of that commodity and for the period of the wage contract, at the service and direction of another." [38]

This separation does not operate in the same way in the feudal mode.[39] At present it seems that given the primacy of the wage form and the specificity of the mechanism of exploitation in the capitalist mode of production, aspects of the domestic workers' situation (such as payment in kind) should be seen as feudal 'remnants' in the process of dissolution.

It could be argued that domestic servants are anachronistic in an industrial society. Katzman, in his analysis of domestic service in the United States of America between 1870 and 1920 characterises it as "a non-industrial occupation, rooted in servitude and not far removed from slavery."[40] The occupation in South Africa has a number of characteristics which define the difference between domestic servants and other wage workers in modern industrial society. Other wage workers sell their labour power as a commodity for a definite period of time in exchange for a money wage. Work relationships are impersonal and involve a clear separation between work place and home both in temporal and spatial terms. The domestic servant, by contrast, frequently works irregular hours, she receives part of her payment 'in kind', and the 'live-in' domestic servant is accommodated at the workplace. Employer control frequently extends into the servant's 'private life' - for example, the regulation of visitors and inspection of servant's rooms and goods. The highly personalised nature of the servant's relationship with her employer and the low level of specialization in domestic roles are both anomalous in a modern industrial society moving towards specialised and impersonal work relationships.

The large scale employment of domestic servants is also anachronistic in capitalist society. While the work they do in the maintenance and

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38. D. Hindness and P. Hirst, Pre-capitalist Modes of Production (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp.237-8.

39. The formulation of the feudal mode of production is problematic. See Hindness and Hirst, 1975: 221-259.

40. Katzman, 1978: 146.

reproduction of labour power is essential to capital, their employment as wage workers is not. Braverman writes,

> ...the multitude of personal servants was, in the early period of capitalism, both a heritage of feudal and semi-feudal relations in the form of a vast employment furnished by the landowning aristocracy, and a reflection of the riches created by the Industrial Revolution in the form of similar employment furnished by capitalists and the upper middle class. [41]

The number of domestic servants in South Africa is similarly a heritage of feudal relations, and is a reflection of the high standard of living enjoyed by most whites. Many white working class households employ black women as domestic servants.

There are two ways of looking at this: it could be argued that black domestic labour subsidizes the white working class in South Africa, enabling their necessary means of subsistence to be cheaper than it would be if creches and day nurseries were provided by the state, or if commodities had to be purchased in an immediately consumable form within the capitalist sector. The implication of this is that through her labour the domestic servant cheapens, for capital, the cost of maintaining and reproducing white labour power. Domestic servants would thus have the same function as the informal sector arguably has for the black working class. On the other hand, the widespread employment of domestic servants by the white working class could be argued to mean that the necessary means of subsistence of the white working class is more expensive than it would be if the housewife was solely responsible for domestic work. The implication is that the price of white working class labour power is increased and capital's profits are correspondingly lowered.

The question at issue is how the white worker's necessary means of subsistence comes to be defined. Since the earliest colonial penetration this has included the employment of cheap black labour. Obviously such an economic concession to white workers is a relatively small burden to capital - the wages of servants being so low, and black workers being the large majority upon whose exploitation capital is dependent.

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41. Braverman, 1974: 363.

This illustrates the point that there is no invariant relation between domestic labour and the value of labour power. It has been widely argued within the domestic labour debate that there is; that domestic labour invariably lowers the value of labour power. Molyneux has pointed out that it is only possible for women to remain in the home as housewives where the value of labour power of the male worker is sufficiently high to cover the cost of maintaining the entire family.

> The maintenance of the domestic sphere as the main site of biological reproduction under capitalism is economically possible only where the value of labour power is sufficiently high for wages to cover the cost of the family's reproduction. [42]

By the same terms it is only possible for the wife to employ a substitute - in the form of a domestic servant - where the value of white working class labour power is sufficiently high for wages to maintain the enlarged household. In the same way that the ability of a section of the working class to maintain a wife at home has come to represent a particular index of working class power, the ability of the white working class to maintain a servant is an index of their privileged position in South Africa.

Domestic servants are caught up in a pincer-like movement here. In South Africa the value of black male working class labour power is not uniformly high enough to cover the costs of maintaining a wife and family (i.e. replacement). This propels black women into wage labour largely as domestic servants. But because of the particular form class struggle has taken in South Africa, in the past, with the exception of the depression years, the wages of the white working class were uniformly high enough to cover the costs of both maintenance and replacement. This might go some way towards explaining the low participation of white women in the labour force. With the expansion of the service sector, current inflation and the increasing discrepancy between the 'needs' of family consumption and the wages of the individual male worker this is changing, so that to maintain its income the white working class family is increasingly obliged to send women into the labour force.

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42. Molyneux, 1979: 5.

While the domestic servant is an unproductive worker, the same woman put to work in a commercial laundry or restaurant would be a productive worker producing surplus value for capital. This suggests one reason why in advanced capitalist social formations there has been a progressive socialization of some aspects of domestic labour, in other words, "the transference of certain use values from private production under domestic relations, to socialised production under capitalist relations."[43] Domestic labour has been atomized and different functions mechanized in the form of the vacuum cleaner, washing machine, dish-washer, and so on. In this process "the personal and living domestic slave was replaced by the socialized and dead mechanical slave."[44] The development of labour-saving devices and services, such as laundro-mats, convenience foods and nappy services, are among the reasons why domestic work today is less arduous than one hundred years ago. However, it is arguable that standards and expectations of levels of domestic comfort have also risen so that housework remains extremely time-consuming. The crucial point is that whereas in advanced capitalist societies such as Great Britain and the USA there has been a progressive shift from the employment of full-time, 'live-in' domestic servants to the employment of 'chars' and a reliance on labour-saving devices, in South Africa this has not occurred partly because of the exploitability of black labour. Many household appliances are at present more expensive than black female labour. Thus in South Africa in 1979 only two percent of households contained a dishwasher, and two thirds of white households employed one or more servants.[45]

Yet domestic service is no longer an expanding sector of employment. Recent research reports a trend away from the employment of full-time servants whose numbers decreased by 51 000 or eight percent in 1979, over the total for 1978, and an increase in the number of part-time

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43. Mandel, 1978: 385.

44. Ibid., p.386.

45. 1979 International Research Associates Survey. Reported in the Financial Mail, 4.1.1980.
Manufacturers report a considerable increase in the demand for labour-saving devices since August 1979. Financial Mail, 11.4.1980.

servants by 62 000 or thirty percent in 1979 compared to the previous year.[46] Are full-time domestic servants becoming redundant?

DISPOSABLE NANNIES ?

It is extremely controversial how far the socialization of domestic labour can go in advanced capitalist social formations.[47] While in advanced capitalist social formations there has been a replacement of some aspects of domestic labour by state services, in South Africa the state takes minimal responsibility for the maintenance and reproduction of labour power. The inadequacy of educational, welfare, and health services for blacks is evidence of this. While the reproduction of labour power may be increasingly achieved by means of commodities and services produced by capital, this has not yet included the provision of child care on any large scale. Child care is expensive if it emphasizes child development rather than custodial care. Therefore in advanced capitalist social formations "the only large scale possibility that could bring about the socialization of child care would be for the state to expand its provision. Since this would add to the costs of reproduction of the labour force borne by capital, this would only be likely to occur in a boom situation in which there was rapid accumulation of capital and consequent productivity increases."[48] In such a situation it would be to the advantage of capital to release women for wage labour which would mean an extension in the labour force which produces surplus value. But in South Africa the availability of cheap, black domestic labour creates this flexibility whereby women can be incorporated and expelled from the labour

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46. Markinor, People and Marketing. Changes for Domestic Servants (Markinor, Johannesburg, 1979). Between 1971-77 there was a 16 percent drop in the employment of full-time domestic servants on the Witwatersrand; a 23 percent drop in Durban and a 26 percent drop in Pietermaritzburg. C. Simkins, 'African Unemployment in Rural and Urban South Africa', in C. Simkins and C. Desmond (eds.), South African Unemployment, A Black Picture (Pietermaritzburg: Development Studies Research Group, 1978), Table 9, p.82. See also Republic of South Africa, Department of Statistics, Report No. 11-03-13. Statistics of Houses and Domestic Servants, October, 1977 (The Government Printer, Pretoria, 1979), Table A9, 'Percentage distribution of houses according to number of domestic servants October 1977', p.8.

47. For instance see Adamson et al., 1976; Seccombe, 1974.

48. Conference of Socialist Economists, p.14.

force according to the pace of capital accumulation. Hence this is not a demand likely to be made on the state by the white working class. The only possible exception to this pattern is a war situation - this was the only period in Britain, for example, in which the socialization of child care occurred on any large scale.

In summary then, there are seven possible trends in the future which could affect the employment of domestic servants:

(i) The increasing militarization of the South African state.[49] In an escalation of conflict, increasing racial distrust may make white women reluctant to employ black servants, and demand the state provision of creches, day care centres and nursery schools. This would both release them for wage labour and extend the control of the state over the early ideological formation of children.

(ii) The increasing involvement of white women in an expanding service sector of the economy who remain dependent on servants for domestic work, particularly child care.

(iii) The increasing employment of domestic servants by a relatively affluent and privileged urban black middle class which the South African state and capital is committed to creating as a buffer against progressive change.

(iv) The progressive socialization of domestic labour by capital could mean the increasing employment of black women in precisely those areas of domestic production which have been socialized. However, many of these industries are highly mechanised.

(v) The spiralling inflation rate could affect consumption patterns. Women could substitute their own labour power for domestic servants and purchaseable commodities such as expensive dry and frozen convenience foods. This together with increasing unemployment could lead to an ideological offensive to convince women that their place is in the home.

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49. At the time of writing the Financial Mail asks, "After Silverton is South Africa at war? Have we been witness to a deadly escalation of the 'total onslaught' of which P.W. Botha speaks?" Financial Mail, 1.2.1980.

(vi) The organisation of domestic servants to increase their bargaining power could make their employment more expensive. However unionization is unlikely to succeed because of their atomized situation as workers, and the fact that they do not have any bargaining position from which they could launch demands. The organisation of domestic servants into co-operatives of skilled workers who corporately owned the mechanical equipment with which they worked would not cover child care.

(vii) The further penetration of monopoly capital. While historically capitalist production in South Africa has relied heavily on a mass of cheap, unskilled black labour power, monopoly capital is becoming dominant in all sectors of production. Monopoly capital relies to a large degree on the use of capital-intensive, sophisticated technology, the operation of which requires a small, semi-skilled stable work force, rather than a large, cheap, migrant labour force. This is one reason why black unemployment is rising. Simkins shows that there has been an increase in unemployment between 1960 and 1977, the number almost doubling from 1,2 million in 1960 to 2,3 million in 1977, with the trend rate of unemployment now lying above 22 percent.[50] In this situation increasing numbers of black women will be available for domestic service. Losing their jobs could mean their permanent exclusion from employment, and their location in what Obregon has conceptualised as 'the marginal pole' of the economy.[51] In the South African social formation this increasingly means forcible removal to the teeming rural slums known as the homelands.

It is this particular vulnerability which creates the domestic servant's dependence on her employer. The pivotal point of the institution of domestic service is this dependency relationship which encompasses both parties. Employers are dependent upon their servant's labour, but with unemployment rising among black women, an individual servant is easily replaceable. Servants are dependent upon the employers to whom they are bound through the state instrument of influx control, for many of

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50. Simkins in Simkins and Clarke, 1978: 33.

51. A. Obregon, 'The Marginal Pole of the Economy and the Marginalised Labour Force', Economy and Society, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1974.

the necessities of life. But for the servants this dependency imprisons them in a form of slavery.

This study has attempted to show that domestic workers comprise a group of ultra-cheap and ultra-exploited labour. Their ultra-exploitation is evidenced by their deprivation of family life, of reasonable working hours, of time to pursue social and leisure interests of their own choosing, of a just, negotiated wage, of favourable working conditions, of the ability to rent or purchase accommodation in a chosen place, to sell their labour in the place of their choice, of respectful treatment, of the acknowledgement of the dignity and importance of their labour, of legal protection, of membership in an effective worker organisation, of effective bargaining power, of regular paid leave - all of which show a great deal of variability between different areas and employers, but an extreme form in the Eastern Cape.

In the sample of 225 households investigated in the Eastern Cape, wages ranged from R4 to R60 a month. According to the domestic servant informants, full-time workers earned an average (arithmetic mean) wage of R22,77 per month. Almost three-quarters of the sample earned below R30 a month. 'Payment in kind' is generally of a haphazard nature and far lower than it is commonly believed to be. All the domestic workers in the depth sample received some food daily, but the quantity and quality varied widely. Almost half of the sample received no meat at all. Clearly these workers are paid wages below the value of their labour power.

No strong positive correlation was found between wages and working hours. Full-time servants worked an average of 61 hours per week. The hours ranged from 40 to 85 hours per week with 77,7 percent working more than a 48-hour week. Domestic servants in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape are particularly exploited. This is evident in the fact that the average wage paid to full-time workers is R11,35 per month; 82 percent earned R13 or less per month. Their average working week is 73 hours 35 minutes. Almost a third of the total sample of 175 servants work a seven-day week. Eighty-three percent have to work on public holidays and 23 percent are given no annual holiday. Only 40 percent of those who are given an annual holiday are paid during this period.

There is no government legislation stipulating their minimum wages, hours of work, or other conditions of service. Domestic workers thus exist in a legal vacuum. Most are driven into wage labour by the need to support their families. Lack of education opportunities and employment alternatives, coupled with influx control legislation restricting the movement of Black workers, all combine to 'trap' Black women generally, and in the Eastern Cape most specifically, in domestic service. Domestic workers on farms are in an especially 'trapped' situation as they may only move with their specific employer. Thus they constitute a totally tied labour force.

Among the Xhosa of the Eastern Cape, domestic work is the prerogative of women. This study has focused upon the ultra-exploitation of female domestic workers because they are overall the majority. Nevertheless male domestic servants are in a similar position and indeed could be said to experience a special 'edge' to their deprivation which derive from the traditional definitions of the male gender role. For example, the emasculation involved in taking orders from a White 'madam' and the hardship involved in saving for 'lobolo' from an extremely low wage. There is a moving case reported by Walther of a young man earning R20 a month (not having had a rise from his Illovo employers in seven years) trying to save the lobolo of R220 being asked by the parents of the girl he wished to marry.[52] However, it is argued that female domestic workers are, because of the system of sexual domination, more exploited than male domestic workers. For instance, their wages are generally lower (see above) and they usually do domestic work in their own homes as well.

It has been suggested that the 'ultra-exploitability' of Black female domestic servants is secured by the systems of racial and sexual domination which are generated by the capitalist mode of production and class structure. This study has tried to show that they are 'trapped' within a complex, tightly-woven, structure of constraints generated by these class-based inequalities. Johnstone has shown how the system of racial domination is the specific form of the system of class domination erected by the White property owners. Similarly, while the system of sexual domination operates as a series of 'sex bars' which form a structure of constraints effectively limiting women's rights and opport-

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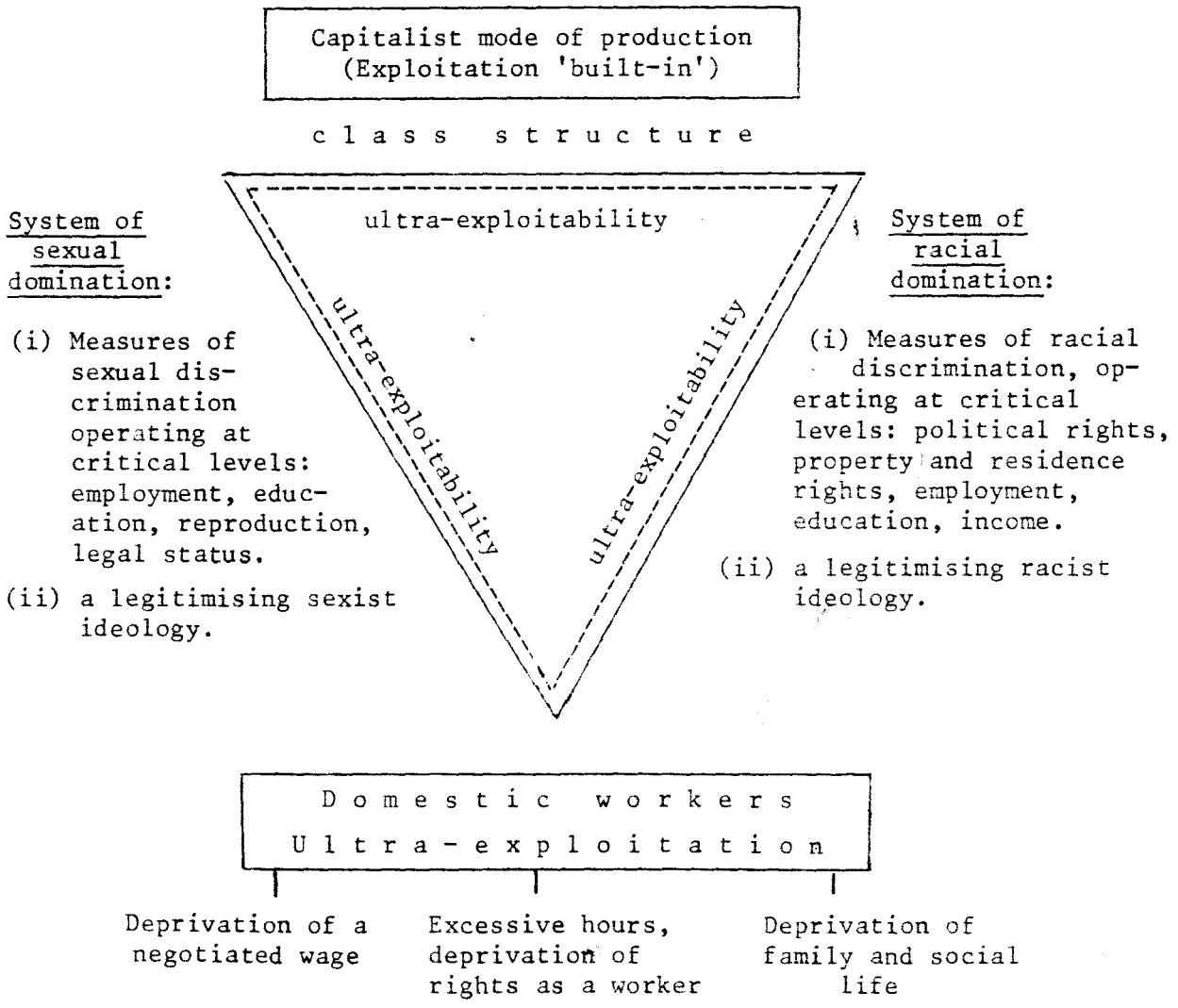
52. Illovo is an affluent, predominantly English-speaking suburb in Johannesburg. Walther, 1968.

unities at critical levels, it has been shown both how these 'sex bars' operate to reproduce the capitalist order, and how women's experience of these constraints depends on their location in the capitalist system of production and class structure.

It has been argued that these 'sex bars' are 'social facts' in Durkheim's sense, having both an external, institutionalised existence, but are also internalised in men's (and women's) minds. It has been indicated how members of the dominant property-owning class are provided with 'outs' from this set of constraints through, for example, the employment of domestic labour. The system of racial domination, generated by the South African variant of capitalism, operates to provide White women, in particular, with this escape route. Thus, we are confronted with a complex pattern of inequality, broken and splintered by cross-cutting lines. The argument might be represented diagrammatically as follows:

Figure 5. Summary of Argument



This diagram illustrates what has been argued throughout this study: that domestic workers as a group are situated at the apex of three converging lines along which social inequality is generated - sex, race and class. This work has tried to trace these lines because, in Marx's theory, "to trace the lines of exploitation in a society is to discover the key to the understanding of social relations of superordination and subordination which apply within that society."[53]

It has been shown that domestic servants play a major role in the reproduction of labour power. They do so in a double sense for they are responsible both for the reproduction of their own families and those of the dominant classes. This includes not only physical maintenance (through the preparing of meals and laundering of clothes, for example) but also ideological maintenance. Domestic service is thus an important element in the indirect production of surplus value for capital. The employment of domestic workers releases White housewives for comparatively highly-paid service jobs in commerce and industry. The 'housewife' so employed earns a salary many times the amount which she pays her domestic worker(s). Callinicos points out "with the surplus, the wife can then accumulate petty capital and consume luxury goods."[54]

It has been suggested above that the key to understanding the domestic workers' situation lies in their powerlessness and consequent dependence on their employers. The employer sets wages and conditions of work according to her own preference. These are usually decidedly disadvantageous to the worker. The predominant response obtained from the domestic servants interviewed in the Eastern Cape is a sense of being trapped; of having no viable alternatives; of living out an infinite series of daily frustrations, indignities and denials.

The dependence of domestic servants on their employers is often taken to imply that they are 'deferential workers'. Evidence from this research suggests that the 'deference' attributed to domestic servants is more apparent than real. Many domestic servants adopt a 'mask of deference' as a protective disguise. This enables them to conform to employer expectations and shield their real feelings. Domestic servants are not

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53. Giddens, 1974: 29.

54. Callinicos, 1975: 65.

'deferential workers' but 'trapped workers'. This is true of Black workers in South Africa generally, who are among the most regimented labour forces in the world. Ultimately, then, the problems of domestic servants are generated by a system which does not operate in their interests.

This study has drawn on a variety of insights from different disciplines and intellectual traditions. It attempts to integrate micro and macro levels of analysis by taking account of both the structural and the interactional aspects of the domestic worker's life. The emphasis, however, is on the significance of the system of production in any given society. Such an approach is not infallible but it is not an ideological analysis. Radical feminists, flushed with the rhetoric of 'sisterhood' argue that women already constitute an oppressed class and that this sexual oppression is the primary one and hence the priority for political action.[55] Here it has been shown how the two women's campaigns in South African history - the Anti-Pass campaign of 1955-56 and the Suffrage campaign of 1902-30 - were based on class interests which cut across any notion of 'sisterhood'. Oakley has argued that "sociology is a sexist discipline" in which "a Feminist perspective appears to be polemical because it runs counter to the accepted male-oriented viewpoint - a viewpoint which is rarely explicitly articulated."[56] But whether a sociological analysis is ideological or 'scientific' does not depend on the uniqueness of its propositions, but on how they are arrived at and how they are substantiated. In other words, the sociological project involves substantive, methodological and epistemological criteria.

This study offers an abbreviated description of the triangular structure of constraints which operate on Black female domestic labour. It attempts to locate those constraints in both a theoretical and an historical sense. The attempt has been made tentatively but is supported by research into the situation of domestic workers in the Eastern Cape. That research has been done in the belief that social scientists

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55. See S. Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), pp.1-16.

56. Oakley, 1974: 2.

in this society have a particular obligation to record the cruelty, injustice and exploitation that surrounds them and of which they are often a contributing part. Perhaps the Eastern Cape is South Africa's 'Deep South' but there is a sense in which the institution of domestic service itself constitutes apartheid's 'Deep South' in that it is the crudest expression of inequality in this society.

Inequality is not confined to South Africa, nor is it confined to capitalist societies. Speaking of the system of racial domination, Johnstone writes, "the road which passes through the South African gold mines also passes through the Siberian labour camps."[57] Analogously one could point to the discrimination currently experienced by women in the Soviet Union. But the specific nature of both systems of racial and sexual domination depend upon the system of production and class structure of which they are a part. As a variant of capitalism, the South African system is not unique, but it is "perhaps uniquely vicious in its degree of exploitation and repression."[58] This study has tried to document one particular aspect of that exploitation.

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57. Johnstone, 1976: 217.

58. Davies, 1973: 56.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (1)

THE DOMESTIC WORKER

Col. Code

1. Interview Number.....

2. Education. Have you ever been to school? 1 Yes / 2 No

3. If yes, what standard did you pass?

1 Sub A-Std I	2 Std II	3 Std III	4 Std IV	5 Std V
6 Std VI	7 Std VII	8 Std VIII	9 Std IX	10 Std X
11 Other				

4. Dependants. How many people are dependent on your earnings?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	Other												

5. Wages. How much are you paid? .....

6. Hours. How many days do you work each week for this employer?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. What time do you start work in the mornings?

1 6-7 a.m.	2 7-8 a.m.	3 8-9 a.m.	4 9-10 a.m.

8. What time do you stop work for the day?

1 1-2 p.m.	2 2-3 p.m.	3 3-4 p.m.	4 4-5 p.m.	5 5-6 p.m.
6 6-7 p.m.	7 7-8 p.m.	8 8-9 p.m.	9 9-10 p.m.	

9. How much time do you have off during the day?

.....

Col. Code

10. Do you work on public holidays? 1 Yes / 2 No

11. How long a holiday do you get each year?

1 No holiday	2 Less than 1 week	3 1 week	4 2 weeks
5 3 weeks	6 4 weeks	7 5 weeks	8 6 weeks

12. Are you paid during this time? 1 Yes / 2 No

13. How long have you worked for your present employer?

.....

APPENDIX II

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (2)

THE DOMESTIC WORKER

Col. Code

Interview Number.....

A. BACKGROUND ITEMS

1. Sex — 1 Male / 2 Female

2. Age

1 15-19	2 20-24	3 25-29	4 30-34	5 35-39	6 40-44	7 45-49
8 50-54	9 55-59	10 60-64	11 65-69	12 70-74	13 75 plus	

3. Group.

1 Xhosa	2 Fingo	3 Other

4. Education. Have you ever been to school? 1 Yes / 2 No

5. If yes, what standard did you pass?

1 Sub A-Std 1	2 Std II	3 Std III	4 Std IV	5 Std V
6 Std VI	7 Std VII	8 Std VIII	9 Std IX	10 Std X

6. Have you any other training/education, or are you going to classes of any kind? 1 Yes / 2 No

7. If yes, please specify.....

.....

Residence

8. Where were you born?.....

9. How long have you lived in your present location?

1 Less than 6 months		2 6 months - 1 year		3 1 year - 2 years
4 3 years	5 4 years	6 5 years	7 5-10 years	8 10-15 years
9 15-20 years	10 Since birth			

Family Origin — Col. Code

10. What was your mother's occupation?

.....

11. Did your mother ever go to school? 1 Yes / 2 No / 3 Don't know

12. If yes, what standard did she pass?

1 Sub A-Std I	2 Std II	3 Std III	4 Std IV	5 Std V
6 Std VI	7 Std VII	8 Std VIII	9 Std IX	10 Std X

13. What was your father's occupation?

.....

Marital status

14. Have you ever been married? 1 Yes / 2 No

15. Are you still married? 1 Yes / 2 No

16. What type of marriage did you / do you have?

1 Church marriage	2 Civil rights marriage Magistrate's Office
3 Traditional/customary marriage	4 Other

17. If yes, what is your husband's occupation?

.....

.....

18. What wage is your husband paid?

.....

Dependants

19. How many children do you have under the age of 16 years?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

20. How many children do you have over the age of 16 years?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Col. Code

21. How many of your children are still at school?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

22. How many people are dependent on your earnings?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15 plus

23. Who lives in your house?

1 Husband	2 Children	3 Sister	4 Brother	5 Mother	6 Father
7 Father-in-law	8 Mother-in-law	9 Friends	10 Lodgers		
11 Other (specify)					

24. What is the total number of persons living in your house?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15+

25. Is anyone else in your household/family employed?

1 Yes / 2 No

26. If yes, please state their occupations.

.....

.....

27. If yes, please state their wage.

.....

28. Do you send money to anyone who lives somewhere else?

1 Yes / 2 No

29. If yes, is this money sent: 1 regularly or 2 occasionally?

30. If regularly, please state the amount.

.....

31. Is there anyone employed somewhere else who sends money to you?

1 Yes / 2 No

32. If yes, is this money sent: 1 regularly or 2 occasionally?

33. If regularly, please state the amount.

.....

Col. Code

34. Are any of your children presently employed? 1 Yes / 2 No

35. If yes, what are their occupations?

.....

36. If yes, what are their wages?

.....

37. Do they give you money? 1 Yes / 2 No

38. What work would you choose for your cleverest daughter to do?

.....

39. What work would you choose for your cleverest son to do?

.....

40. If there is a difference, please state your reason.

.....

.....

41. Would you like any of your children to become domestic servants? 1 Yes / 2 No

42. If yes, please say why; if no, please say why not.

.....

.....

Religion

43. Do you belong to a Church? 1 Yes / 2 No

44. If yes, which Church? .....

45. In general, how many times a month do you go to Church?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Seldom	Once a month	2-3 times	4 or more times

B. WORK HISTORY

46. How long have you been a domestic worker?

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 6 mths	6 mths-1 yr	2 years	3 years	4 years

6	7	8	9	10
5 years	5-10 yrs	10-15 yrs	15-20 yrs	20-25 yrs

11	12	13	14	15
25-30 yrs	30-35 yrs	35-40 yrs	40-45 yrs	50 yrs+

Col. Code

47. Have you ever done any other kind of work? 1 Yes / 2 No

48. If yes, please specify.....

.....

49. At what age did you start your first job?.....

50. What was the first job you ever had?.....

.....

51. How many jobs have you had since you started working, including your present job?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17+

52. Why did you choose domestic work?

.....

Do you feel you had any real choice? Would you have preferred another kind of work?

.....

.....

53. Why did you choose this particular job?

.....

C. MODE OF RECRUITMENT

54. How did you come to find out about your present job?

.....

.....

55. How long have you worked for your present employer?

1	2	3
Less than 6 mths	6 mths-1 yr	1yr-1yr 11 mths

4	5	6
2yrs-2yrs 11 mths	3yrs-3yrs 11 mths	4yrs-4yrs 11 mths

7	8	9	10
5-10 yrs	10-15 yrs	15-20 yrs	25 yrs +

56. Why did you leave your last job?.....

.....

D. EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

57. Number of persons in employer's household:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+

Col. Code

58. Number of children under 6 years of age in the household:

1	2	3	4	5	6

59. Type of house: 1 House / 2 Flat

60. Number of rooms (excluding bathroom and kitchen).

1 1-2	2 3-4	3 5-6	4 7-8	5 9-10	6 11-12	7 13-14	8 15-16	9 17-18
10 19-20	11 20+							

61. Which of the following are available?

1 Hot water in kitchen	2 Laundry	3 Hot water in laundry or place for washing clothes	
4 Washing machine	5 Dish washer	6 Polisher	7 Vacuum cleaner
8 Tumble dryer			

62. How many domestic workers are employed here and what jobs do they do?

.....

63. What work do you do?

1 Cooking	2 Cleaning	3 Washing	4 Ironing	5 Other

64. Do you have a written contract? 1 Yes / 2 No

65. Do you 1 live in / 2 live out ?

E. WAGES

66. What is your cash wage paid weekly/monthly or daily?

.....

67. What wage did you receive when you started working for your present employer?

.....

68. Is this wage increased every year? 1 Yes / 2 No

69. If yes, by how much? .....

70. Is it always increased the same amount? 1 Yes / 2 No

Col. Code

71. Do you know how much it will be increased next year?

1 Yes / 2 No

72. How was your starting wage arrived at? Was there any discussion? Did your employer just tell you what you would be paid? Or did you wait until the end of your first month/week to find out?

.....

.....

73. Do you receive the same food as your employer or 1 servant's rations? 2

74. What food are you given to eat at work each day?

1 Meat (same as employers)		2 Meat (servant's rations)		3 Fruit	4 Vegetables
5 Tea	6 Coffee	7 Jam	8 Bread	9 Samp	10 Mealie meal	11 Mealie rice
12 Sugar	13 Milk	14 Sweets	15 Cold drinks	16 Butter or margarine		

75. Is the quantity of these foods you are allowed rationed?

1 Yes / 2 No

76. Are you allowed to take food home? 1 Yes / 2 No

77. Do you take food home? 1 Yes / 2 No

78. Do you think you get enough food? 1 Yes / 2 No

79. Do you like what you get? 1 Yes / 2 No

80. If no, say why: .....

.....

81. Are you allowed to make coffee or tea at any time? 1 Yes / 2 No

82. Is a uniform provided for you? 1 Yes / 2 No

83. Do you receive any other clothing for yourself or members of your family? 1 Yes / 2 No

84. If yes, please specify.....

.....

Col. Code

85. Does your employer provide you with the following?

1 A room or place of your own in which you can relax, have your meals, etc.		2 Use of stove to cook for yourself or your family
3 Use of radio	4 Use of telephone	5 Use of facilities to wash your or your family's clothes
6 Medicines	7 Shopping at market or wholesalers	

86. Do you use any of these without your employer knowing?

.....

87. Do you get paid overtime for work outside of your normal hours?

1 Yes / 2 No

88. If yes, please say how much.....

89. Do you get paid extra if there are guests staying in the house?

1 Yes / 2 No

90. If yes, please say how much.....

91. Do your employers regularly help you with your childrens' schooling expenses?

1 Yes / 2 No

92. If yes, please specify.....

.....

93. Do you get extra money at Christmas? 1 Yes / 2 No

94. If yes, please state how much you received last Christmas.

.....

95. Do you get Christmas presents for yourself or your children?

1 Yes / 2 No

96. If yes, please say what you received last Christmas.

.....

97. Do your employers pay into a Savings Account for you?

1 Yes / 2 No / 3 Dont know

Col. Code

98. If yes, please say how much.....

99. Is this in addition to your wages? 1 Yes / 2 No

100. Will your employers provide a pension for you when you are too old to work? 1 Yes / 2 No / 3 Don't know

101. If you are too ill to work, is the period you are unable to work deducted from your pay? 1 Yes / 2 No

102. If yes, how often has this happened?.....

103. What wage do you think you should be getting?

.....

104. Why?.....

.....

F. HOURS OF WORK

105. What time do you start work in the morning?

1	2	3	4
6-7 a.m.	7-8 a.m.	8-9 a.m.	9-10 a.m.

106. What time do you stop work for the day?

1	2	3	4	5	6
1-2 pm	2-3 pm	3-4 pm	4-5 pm	5-6 pm	6-7 pm
7	8	9			
7-8 pm	8-9 pm	9-10 pm			

107. How much time do you have off during the day?

1	2	3	4
½-1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours

108. How do you spend your time off during the working day?

1	2	3	4
Meals	Rest	Socialising	Other

109. How much time do you spend travelling to AND from work?

1	2	3	4	5
About ½ hr	About 1 hr	About 2 hrs	3 hours	4 hours

110. What form of transport do you use most often?

1	2	3	4	5
Walk	Bus	Employer's car	Taxi	Other (state)

Col. Code

111. If bus, how much does it cost you? .....

112. How many days off do you get each week?

1	2	3	4
None	½ day (work ends at.....)	1 day	1½ days

5	6	7
2 days	2½ days	3 days

113. Do you work on public holidays? 1 Yes / 2 No

114. How much leave do you get each year?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Less than 1 week (..... days)	1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks

6	7	8	9
4 weeks	5 weeks	6 weeks	Other

115. Are you paid during your holiday? 1 Yes / 2 No

116. Do you spend 1 all / 2 part / 3 none of Christmas day with your family?

G. WORK ATTITUDES

117. Do you enjoy domestic work? 1 Yes / 2 No

118. What would you say is the worst thing about your job?

.....

.....

119. What would you say is the best thing about your job?

.....

.....

120. If there was one thing about your job you could change, what would that be?

.....

121. Do you find domestic work 1 boring or 2 interesting?

122. Do you find you have too much to get through during the day? 1 Yes / 2 No

123. Do you ever feel lonely in your job? 1 Yes / 2 No

124. Do you feel that your employer supervises your work and bosses you too much? 1 Yes / 2 No

Col. Code

125. What does your employer do when you have done something wrong or badly in your job?

.....

.....

126. Do you think you are learning useful skills on the job?

.....

.....

H. WORK RELATIONSHIPS

127. Do you get along well with your fellow workers if there are any? 1 Yes / 2 No

128. Do you get along well with your employer? 1 Yes / 2 No

129. Describe how you get along with your employer.

.....

.....

130. Do you like her? 1 Yes / 2 No

131. Do you think she likes you? 1 Yes / 2 No

132. What are your feelings towards her?

.....

133. What do you think her feelings are towards you?

.....

134. What sort of person do you think your employer is?

.....

135. What do you like the most about your employer?

.....

136. What do you like the least about your employer?

.....

137. Does she ever discuss her problems with you? 1 Yes / 2 No

138. Do you ever discuss your personal or family problems with her? 1 Yes / 2 No

139. Does your employer ever praise you or thank you for the work you do? 1 Yes / 2 No

Col. Code

140. How do you feel about this?

.....

141. Do you get along well with other members of the family?

1 Yes / 2 No

142. If no, please tell more.....

.....

143. Is there a great difference between the living standards of yourself and your family and your employer and her family, for example, in the kind of clothes you can afford to buy, the kind of house you live in, the kind of food you can accord to eat?

1 Yes / 2 No

144. If yes, do you feel that this difference is:

1 Just	2 Unjust	3 A matter of indifference to you
4 A question of luck	5 Other	

145. Do you have any idea of your employer's household income?

1 Yes / 2 No

146. How would you describe your employer's financial circumstances (amount of money)?

1 Very rich	2 Rich	3 Ordinary	4 Comfortable	5 Poor	6 Very poor
7 Other					

147. Are you proud of working for your present employer?

1 Yes / 2 No

148. Why do you feel this? .....

.....

149. Does your employer ever discuss political events or BAAB policy affairs with you?

1 Yes / 2 No

150. Do you know any secrets about the family or about family members?

1 Yes / 2 No

151. Does your employer have any knowledge of your own home language?

1 Yes / 2 No

Col. Code

152. What language do you communicate in?

1	2	3	4
English	Afrikaans	Xhosa	Other

I. FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIFE

153. If you are married at present, where is your husband living?

.....

154. How often do you see your husband?

1	2	3	4
Daily	Once/twice a week	Once/twice a month	Yearly
5			
Other			

155. Live-in workers. Is your husband allowed to sleep in your room?

1 Yes / 2 No

156. Does he ever sleep over with you?

1 Yes / 2 No

157. Where are your children living at present?

.....

158. How often do you see your children?

1	2	3
Daily	Once/twice a week	Once/twice a month
5		
Other		

159. Are your children allowed by your employer to visit you at work?

1 Yes / 2 No

160. Do they visit you at work?

1 Yes / 2 No

161. Who looks after your children or cooks for your husband while you are at work?

.....

162. Do you have to pay someone to look after your children?

1 Yes / 2 No

163. If yes, how much? .....

164. How often do you see your friends and kinsfolk?

1	2	3	4
Daily	Weekly	Only at weekends	Once or twice a month

Col. Code

165. Are you satisfied with the frequency with which you see your friends and kinsfolk or would you prefer to do so more often?

1 Satisfied / 2 Dissatisfied

166. Are you friendly with other servants in the neighbourhood?

1 Yes / 2 No

167. How often do you visit them or they visit you?

1 Daily	2 Once or twice a week	3 Once or twice a month
4 Seldom	5 Never	

168. How do you spend your time together?

.....

169. Are they allowed to visit you at work? 1 Yes / 2 No

170. Are you allowed to serve them tea or coffee and talk to them inside?

1 Yes / 2 No

J. ACCOMMODATION (live-in servants)

171. Do you like your room? 1 Yes / 2 No

172. Does your room contain the following?

1 Bed with mattress	2 Table	3 Upright chair	4 Carpet	5 Table
6 Comfortable chair	7 Dressing table	8 Mirror	9 Heater	
10 Wardrobe	11 Pictures on walls			

173. Do you have access to a bathroom? 1 Yes / 2 No

174. Is hot water available for your personal use? 1 Yes / 2 No

175. If there was one thing you could add to your room what would it be?

.....

K. LEISURE PURSUITS

176. How do you spend your evenings?.....

.....

Col. Code

177. How do you spend your weekends?

.....

178. Do you take holidays in another place? 1 Yes / 2 No

179. Do you read a daily or weekly newspaper? 1 Yes / 2 No

180. If yes, state which newspaper.

.....

181. Do you listen to the radio? 1 Yes / 2 No

182. If yes, how often?

1	2	3	4
Daily	Once/twice a week	Weekends	Other

183. If yes, please state the programmes you enjoy the most.

.....

.....

184. Do you read any magazines? 1 Yes / 2 No

185. If yes, please specify.....

186. Do you have any special hobbies or interests?

.....

187. Do you belong to any of the following voluntary associations/ organisations which meet regularly?

1	2	3
Y.W.C.A.	Zenzele Women's Association	Church organisation

4	5	6	7
Ballroom Dancing Club	Sports Club	Choir	Other

L. GENERAL SATISFACTION

a) as a domestic worker

1 2

188. Are you generally satisfied/dissatisfied with your present job?

1 2

189. Are you generally satisfied/dissatisfied with being a domestic worker?

190. Ideally would you prefer to stay at home and not work?

1 Yes / 2 No

Col. Code

191. Is there another kind of work you would have preferred?
1 Yes / 2 No

192. If yes, please say what it is.....

193. Do you think domestic workers as a group are on the whole

1	2	3
Well treated	Badly treated	Other

194. What could be done to improve the situation of domestic workers?

.....

b) as a black person

195. Do you believe that Blacks are generally inferior to Whites in their personal qualities? e.g. less intelligent, less capable, less responsible?
1 Yes / 2 No

196. If yes, please say how they are inferior.

.....

197. If no, are they equal or superior? How are they different?

.....

198. Do you think Black people are treated fairly in this country?
1 Yes / 2 No

199. If no, please say how and why they are treated unfairly.

.....

200. Have you heard of the Black Consciousness Movement?
1 Yes / 2 No

201. If yes, what do you think of it?

.....

c) as a woman

202. Do you believe that women are generally inferior to men in their personal qualities? e.g. less intelligent, less capable?
1 Yes / 2 No

203. If yes, please say how they are inferior.

.....

Col. Code

204. If no, are they equal or superior? How are they different?

.....

205. Do you think women are treated fairly in this country?
1 Yes / 2 No

206. If no, please say how and why they are treated unfairly.

.....

207. Have you heard of the Women's Liberation Movement?
1 Yes / 2 No

208. If yes, what do you think of it?

.....

d) class response

209. What do you feel about the difference in living standards between yourself and your employer?

.....

210. What do you feel about the difference in living standards between Blacks and Whites generally in South Africa?

.....

211. Do you feel strongly about this difference?

.....

212. Do you expect this will change? How soon? In your lifetime? or your children's lifetime?

.....

213. How do you think you would feel if you had to change places with your employer?

.....

214. Would you behave differently from your employer in any way?

.....

Interviewer's comment. Interesting characteristics regarding personal appearance, cheerfulness or hopelessness, how informative, appearance of house etc. Please write on the back of this page.

Note: The lay-out of this interview schedule has been telescoped for printing. In the actual interview schedules used in the field work considerably more space was left to record the respondents' answers.

APPENDIX III

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (3)

EMPLOYER OF WORKER

Col. Code

Interview Number:.....

A. BACKGROUND ITEMS

1. Sex: 1 Male / 2 Female

2. Age:

1 15-19	2 20-24	3 25-29	4 30-34	5 35-39	6 40-44	7 45-49
8 50-54	9 55-59	10 60-64	11 65-69	12 70-74	13 75 plus	

3. Education: What is the highest standard you passed at school?

1 Standard III	2 Standard VI	3 Standard VIII	4 Standard X

4. Have you any other training/education or are you attending classes of any kind? 1 Yes / 2 No

5. If yes, please specify.....

MARITAL STATUS

6. Have you ever been married? 1 Yes / 2 No

7. Are you still married? 1 Yes / 2 No

8. If yes, what is your husband's occupation?

.....

DEPENDANTS

9. How many children do you have under the age of 16 years?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

10. How many children do you have over the age of 16 years?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

11. Are any of your children presently employed? 1 Yes / 2 No

12. If yes, what are their occupations?

.....

Col. Code

13. What occupation would you choose for your cleverest daughter?

.....

14. What occupation would you choose for your cleverest son?

.....

RELIGION

15. Do you belong to a church? 1 Yes / 2 No

16. If yes, which church?

1 N.G. Kerk	2 Church of England	3 Baptist	4 Methodist
5 Presbyterian	6 Lutheran	7 Congregational	8 R.Catholic
9 Apostolic Faith Mission	10 Other		

17. In general, how many times a month do you go to church?

1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Once	4 2-3 times	5 4 or more times

B. HOUSEHOLD ORGANISATION

18. How many persons are presently living in this household?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 plus

19. How many children under 6 years of age are there in the household?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

20. Type of house: 1 House / 2 Flat

21. Number of rooms (excluding bathroom and kitchen):

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18
19-20	20 plus							

22. Brief description (by interviewer) of the house, garden and locality.

.....

.....

23. How many domestic workers are employed here?

1	2	3	4	5	6 plus

Col. Code

24. In what capacities are they employed?

1	2	3	4	5
Cook	Cleaner	Washer-woman	Housemaid	Gen. domestic

25. How long have these people been in your employment?

.....

26. Why did your previous domestic servants leave your employ?

.....

27. How did you come to get your current domestic servants?

.....

28. What domestic work do you do yourself?

.....

29. D o you enjoy domestic work? 1 Yes / 2 No

30. Does your husband help with the domestic work?

1	2	3
Occasionally	Regularly	Never

31. How does your husband compare with your father in this respect? Does he help 1 more or 2 less ?

32. How do you feel about men helping in the house?

.....

33. What is the single most important reason for you to employ a domestic worker?

.....

C. WORK HISTORY

Would you mind answering a few questions about your own work experience?

(a) Not presently employed

34. Did you work before you were married? 1 Yes / 2 No

35. If yes, what was your occupation?

.....

36. Were you 1 satisfied/2 dissatisfied with your job?

Col. Code

37. Why did you stop working?

.....

38. What do you feel about women working full-time in general?

.....

39. Does your husband have the same views as you? 1 Yes / 2 No

40. If no, please specify.

.....

41. Do you find yourself bored at home? 1 Yes / 2 No

42. Do you think your children would suffer/benefit if you worked? 1 2

43. Ideally what would you like?

.....

44. Do most of your friends feel the same way? 1 Yes / 2 No

45. Comment: .....

.....

(b) Presently employed

46. What is your occupation?

.....

47. If married, have you always worked since you got married? 1 Yes / 2 No

48. If yes, has it been difficult in any way?

.....

49. Why have you continued to work?

.....

50. Are you satisfied/dissatisfied with your job? 1 2

51. On the whole do you approve/disapprove of mothers working? 1 2

52. Why?.....

53. Does your husband agree with you? 1 Yes / 2 No

54. If no, specify.....

.....

Col. Code

55. Do most of your friends feel the same way? 1 Yes / 2 No

56. Comment:.....

57. Ideally, what would you like?.....

.....

D. LEISURE AND SOCIAL LIFE

58. Do you belong to any voluntary associations? 1 Yes / 2 No

59. If yes, please specify.....

60. Do you have regular sporting or social activities? 1 Yes / 2 No

61. If yes, please specify.

.....

62. How do you spend your evenings?

.....

63. How do you spend your weekends?

.....

64. Do you take holidays in another place? 1 Yes / 2 No
Who does the domestic work when you are on holiday?

65. Do you read a daily or weekly newspaper? 1 Yes / 2 No

66. If yes, which newspaper?.....

67. Do you watch television? 1 Yes / 2 No

68. If yes, how often?

1	2	3	4
Daily	Once/twice a week	Weekends only	Other

69. Please state three of the programmes you enjoy the most.

.....

70. Do you listen to the radio? 1 Yes / 2 No

71. If yes, how often?

1	2	3	4
Daily	Once/twice a week	Weekends only	Other

Col. Code

72. If yes, please state some of the programmes you enjoy the most.

.....

73. Do you read any magazines? 1 Yes / 2 No

74. If yes, please specify.

.....

75. Do you have any special hobbies or interests?

.....

76. How much entertaining do you do?

1	2	3	4
Daily	3 times a week	Once a week	Weekends only
5	6		
Once a fortnight	Other		

77. What form do your entertainments usually take?

1	2	3	4	5
Coffee/Tea	Cocktails	Informal drinks	Lunch	Dinner
6				
Other				

E. HOURS OF WORK

78. Does your domestic servant live in or out ? 1 2

79. What time does your domestic servant start work in the morning?

1	2	3	4
6-7a.m.	7-8 a.m.	8-9 a.m.	9-10 a.m.

80. What time does she stop for the day?.....

81. Does she have any time off during the day? 1 Yes / 2 No

82. If yes, how much time does she have off during the day?

1	2	3	4	5
½ hr or less	½-1 hr	1-2 hrs	2-3 hrs	3-4 hrs

83. How does she spend this time off during the working day?

1	2	3	4
Meals	Rest	Socialising	Other

Col. Code

84. How much time does she spend travelling to and from work?

1	2	3	4	5
½ hour	½-1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	Dont know

85. What form of transport does she use most often?

1	2	3	4	5
Walk	Bus	Employer's car	Taxi	Other

86. How many days does she get off each week?

1	2	3	4	5	6
None	½ day work ending at.....	1 day	1½ days	2	2½

87. Does she work on public holidays? 1 Yes / 2 No

88. Does she get a holiday each year? 1 Yes / 2 No

89. Is she paid during this time? 1 Yes / 2 No

90. How long a holiday is she given?

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 1 week (.....days)	1 week	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks

6	7
5 weeks	6 weeks

91. Does she spend any of Christmas day with her family?
1 Yes / 2 No

F. KNOWLEDGE OF DOMESTIC SERVANT AND REGULATION OF HER LIFE

92. Could you tell me your servant's full name?.....

93. How old she is?.....

94. Whether she is married or not?.....

95. How many children she has.....

96. How old her children are.....

97. What level of schooling she has.....

98. Whether she has children attending school now.....

99. The cost of her children's schooling at present.....

100. Where she lives.....

101. How much rent she has to pay.....

Col. Code

102. What her home language is.....

103. What language do you communicate in?

1	2	3	4
English	Afrikaans	Xhosa	Other

104. Do you have any knowledge of her home language?
1 Yes / 2 No

105. How satisfactory is your servant's knowledge of your home language? 1 Satisfactory / 2 Unsatisfactory

106. Do you have difficulty in communicating? 1 Yes / 2 No

107. Do you allow members of her family to visit her at work?
1 Yes / 2 No

108. Do you allow friends or other servants in the neighbourhood to visit her at work? 1 Yes / 2 No

109. Do you think she ever feels lonely during the day?
1 Yes / 2 No

110. If she has children, who looks after her children while she is at work?

.....

111. Does she have to pay anyone to look after her children?
1 Yes / 2 No / 3 Don't know

112. If yes, how much?.....

(b) Regulation of live-in servant

113. Do you allow members of her family to visit her at work?
1 Yes / 2 No

114. Does her husband, if she has one, ever stay over with her?
1 Yes / 2 No

115. Does this bother you? 1 Yes / 2 No

116. Do you allow friends or other servants in the neighbourhood to visit her at work?
1 Yes / 2 No

Col. Code

117. Do you think she ever feels lonely after work?
1 Yes / 2 No

118. If she has children, who looks after her children while she is at work?

.....

119. Does she have to pay anyone to look after her children?
1 Yes / 2 No

120. If yes, how much? .....

121. Who cooks for her husband, if she has one, while she is at work?

.....

122. How often does she see her husband?

1 Daily	2 Once/twice a week	3 Weekends	4 Sundays
5 Once/twice a month	6 Yearly	7 Never	

123. Where is her husband living?.....

124. Where are her children living?.....

125. How often does she see her children?

1 Daily	2 Once/twice a week	3 Weekends	4 Sundays
5 Once/twice a month	6 Yearly	7 Never	

G. WORK RELATIONSHIPS

126. Do you get along well with your servant? 1 Yes / 2 No

127. How would you describe your feelings towards her?

.....

128. What do you think her feelings are towards you?

.....

129. Do you like her? 1 Yes / 2 No

130. How trustworthy, reliable, dependable is your servant?

.....

131. What sort of person is she?

.....

Col. Code

132. What quality do you like the most about your employee?

.....

133. What quality do you like the least about your employee?

.....

134. Does she ever discuss her personal problems with you?
1 Yes / 2 No

135. Do you know any secrets about her or her family?
1 Yes / 2 No

136. Do you ever discuss your personal or family problems with her? 1 Yes / 2 No

137. Are you generally satisfied/dissatisfied with your domestic worker? 1 2

138. Do you think domestic workers as a group are on the whole

1 Well treated	2 Badly treated	3 Satisfactorily treated
4 Other		

139. What could be done to improve the situation of domestic workers?

.....

H. PAYMENT OF DOMESTIC WORKER

140. What wage do you pay your domestic servant?.....

141. Who decided to pay this amount?.....

142. How was your starting wage arrived at?

.....

143. Is this the wage your servant started work at? 1 Yes / 2 No

144. If no, how much has this wage been increased and at what intervals?

.....

145. What meals do you provide?

1 Breakfast	2 Lunch	3 Morning tea	4 Afternoon tea	5 Supper

Col. Code

146. Do you give the servant: food from your table (1) / servants' rations (2)

147. What food do you give daily?

1 Meat (same as employers)			2 Meat (servants' rations)			
3 Vegetables	4 Fruit	5 Tea	6 Coffee	7 Bread	8 Jam	9 Samp
10 Mealie meal	11 Mealie rice		12 Sugar	13 Milk	14 Sweets	
15 Cold drinks	16 Butter	17 Other				

148. Do you consider that you provide your servant with a balanced diet? 1 Yes / 2 No

149. Is the quantity of these foods rationed? 1 Yes / 2 No

150. Do you allow her to take food home? 1 Yes / 2 No

151. Is your servant satisfied with the food she receives? 1 Yes / 2 No

152. If no, why not?.....

153. Is the quantity of food you provide sufficient to feed the servant alone (1), or the servant and her family (2)?

154. Do you think she sometimes takes food without asking? 1 Yes / 2 No

155. Do you provide a uniform? 1 Yes / 2 No

156. Do you provide any other clothing for your servant or members of her family? 1 Yes / 2 No

157. If yes, please specify.....

158. What else do you provide?

1 Medicines	2 Use of telephone	3 Use of radio	4 Room
5 Use of stove to cook for servant or her family		6 Use of facilities for servant's own or her family's laundry	
7 Shopping at market/ wholesalers		8 Other	

Col. Code

159. Do you pay overtime for work your servant does outside of her normal hours? 1 Yes / 2 No

160. If yes, please say how much.....

161. Do you pay extra if there are guests in the house? 1 Yes / 2 No

162. If yes, please say how much.....

163. Do you help on a regular basis with your servant's children's schooling expenses? 1 Yes / 2 No

164. If yes, please specify the amount paid this year.

.....

165. Do you give extra money at Christmas? 1 Yes / 2 No

166. If yes, please specify the extra amount (additional to wages) you gave last Christmas.

.....

167. Do you give Christmas presents to your servant or her family? 1 Yes / 2 No

168. If yes, please specify what you gave last Christmas.

.....

169. Do you pay into a savings account for your servant? 1 Yes / 2 No

170. If yes, please specify the amount.....

171. Have you any kind of pension scheme, or made any provision for your servant's future? 1 Yes / 2 No

172. If yes, please specify.....

173. If your servant is ill, is the period she is unable to work deducted from her pay? 1 Yes / 2 No

174. If yes, how often has this happened?

.....

175. Do you deduct breakages from her pay? 1 Yes / 2 No

Col. Code

176. If yes, how often has this happened?

.....

177. What do you do when your servant does something wrong or badly?

.....

I. CONTROL OF AND SATISFACTION WITH DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS

178. Do you know what your husband's income is? 1 Yes / 2 No

179. How do you divide it?.....

.....

180. If employed, is the money you earn your own so far as your husband is concerned? Can you decide what to do with it?

.....

181. What do you usually spend it on?

.....

182. Who makes the financial decisions in your household?

.....

183. If you wanted a washing machine would you:

1 Buy it	2 Ask your husband to buy it	3 Save for it yourself
4 Other		

184. If you wanted to increase your servant's wages would you:

1 Ask your husband to do so	2 Do so, and inform your husband
3 Discuss it with your husband and come to a joint decision	4 Do so, out of your housekeeping money and not tell your husband
5 Other	

185. Who decided to buy or rent this particular house?

1 Husband	2 Wife	3 Both	4 Circumstances

Col. Code

186. If the house you live in is owned or mortgaged, do you and your husband own it together, or is it in your husband's name only?

1	2	3
Husband's name	Wife's name	Joint ownership

187. Overall, do you feel you have enough say in things to do with the household and your family life? 1 2
Yes / No

188. Comment:.....

.....

J. RACE, SEX AND CLASS ATTITUDES

189. Do you believe that women are generally inferior to men in their personal qualities? e.g. less intelligent, less capable etc. 1 2
Yes / No

190. If yes, please say how and why.....

.....

191. If no, are they equal or superior? How are they different in social terms?

.....

192. Do you think women are treated fairly in this country?
1 2
Yes / No

193. If no, please specify.....

194. Have you heard of the Womens Liberation Movement?
1 2
Yes / No

195. If yes, what do you think of it?.....

.....

196. Do you believe that Blacks are generally inferior to Whites in their personal qualities? 1 2
Yes / No

197. If yes, please specify how and why.....

.....

198. If no, are they equal or superior? How are they different in social terms?

.....

199. Do you think Blacks are treated fairly in this country?
1 2
Yes / No

Col. Code

200. If no, please specify.....

.....

201. Have you heard of the Black Consciousness Movement?

1 Yes / 2 No

202. If yes, what do you think of it?

.....

203. What do you feel about the difference in living conditions between Blacks and Whites generally in South Africa?

.....

204. Do you feel strongly about the difference?

.....

205. Do you expect this will change? If so, how soon? In your or your children's lifetimes?

.....

COMMENT:

Note: The lay-out of this interview schedule has been telescoped for printing. In the actual interview schedules used in the field work considerably more space was left to record the respondents' answers.

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