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BLACK URBAN COMMUNITIES, SOCIO-POLITICAL  
REFORM AND THE FUTURE

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## I. INTRODUCTION: THE CRITERION OF EVALUATION

Since the urban disturbances in 1976 and various subsequent initiatives by public and private bodies to improve conditions in black urban areas, the concept of "the Quality of Life" has become well-established in business, government and some academic circles. The more it is used, the more general its imputed meaning has become. It is more suggestive than the word "reform", and more acceptable than the term "stabilisation". This is its danger; it can, theoretically, serve to enhance the image of more or less charitable projects, deepen the image of piecemeal reform measures and disguise cynical attempts to stabilise situations where a potential for unrest may still exist.

The term quality of life, however, was not necessarily superficially or cynically chosen by bodies like the Urban Foundation and therefore it is appropriate to consider broadly what it is supposed to mean in technical and sociological literature.<sup>1)</sup> Although the discussion which follows might make the concept sound unnecessarily complicated to some, it is essential to warn against oversimplification.

1-1 Quality of life does not rest only on material rewards and satisfactions. As a matter of fact the quality of life of affluent communities can exhibit great deficiencies and it has been suggested that in societies where high standards of living prevail, the most salient basis of "social class" or inequality between groups may have shifted from material means to non-material satisfactions. Under non-material satisfactions one may include comfort, health, convenience, status, social esteem, self-esteem, interpersonal rewards, sociability, kin-support and social support, community or group identification, entertainment and diversion, autonomy, group or individual and self-determination, participation in public affairs, aesthetic rewards, personal growth, self-actualisation, the quality of "identity" or individual or group self-evaluation,

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1) The description which follows is based in a general sense on the writings specified below although the authors have employed a certain amount of judgement in providing emphasis and in specifying the content of less well-defined aspects of the broad concept:

Frank M. Andrews and Stephen B. Withey, *Social Indicators of Well-Being*, New York/London: Plenum Press, 1976; Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Willard L. Rogers, *The Quality of American Life*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1976; T.R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton University Press, 1970; W.G. Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

sense of meaning and location, religious rewards and even power rewards.

One may also identify certain collective needs which may be important even though they may seldom be articulated by individual rank-and-file members of communities. One major example is concern with the environment or the urban ecology.

1-2 This bewildering array of possibilities means that, for the analyst, the field is wide open to choices based on preferred theories or assumptions of various kinds. Therefore it can be misleading to leave the business of deciding on criteria of quality of life to supposedly well-informed spokesmen whose points of departure may be rooted in their own preferences or in particular interests. The only people who can specify the priorities in quality of life are the community members whose quality of life is at issue. This implies finding out from people what they feel to be important, usually by way of research or systematic investigation of various kinds.

1-3 A fairly obvious complication in this regard, however, is the fact that people's perception of what is rewarding often is limited by constraints to which they have become accustomed. A group existing at a low level of need-fulfilment cannot be expected to articulate any more than their immediate needs to escape the pressure of day-to-day privation. A balanced perspective on their longer-run needs for an adequate quality of life can only be assessed on the basis of research among similar groups which have escaped the pressures of extreme privation.

1-4 In this context it is also very important to note that improvements to the quality of life cannot be expected to flow only from the reduction of the tensions associated with need-deprivation. Tension-reduction is one basis of human satisfaction; what is called "capacity fulfilment" is at least as important. The term capacity can embrace ideas, images and expectations; motives which people construct in their day-to-day social lives. Hence the fulfilment of a given set of needs can create a social climate in which new expectations arise and new motives flourish. Maslow indicated the possibility that the "higher-order" needs for personal and group status satisfaction and self-actualisation will tend to become operative after "lower-order" survival and security needs are gratified. Many authors argue that no typical or common pattern of needs should be assumed to exist at any given level of satisfaction but that the nature of needs is determined by complex ways in which cognition

(thoughts and perceptions) is organised.<sup>2)</sup> The readily grasped implication of this is that an objective improvement in quality of life very often (perhaps more often than not) changes the way perceptions are organised or raises the threshold of satisfaction and can even lead to a deterioration in the overall subjective or felt quality of life in the affected group. Hence intervention in the quality of life must be more than piecemeal inputs; it must be a continuous process, and a carefully monitored one at that.

1-5 Adding to this difficulty is the further obvious fact that the subjective or felt quality of life (which is, after all, what finally counts) is mediated most powerfully by a framework of expectations. As an aggregate of people shift from one level or type of need-pattern to another, the extent of satisfaction within that type of need-pattern will depend on what they expect. Expectations, as we will note again presently, are determined by what people consider they are entitled to, and/or what they feel could possibly eventuate within a reasonable time and/or whether or not the pace of positive changes is matched to the intensity of their desires.

1-6 In short, in dealing with the most telling aspect of quality of life, the subjective, one is dealing with the quality of "consciousness". Consciousness can be very unpredictable; a single event can sometimes "illuminate" new possibilities for people, creating new expectations. Assessments of what people expect in terms of quality of life therefore should never be merely descriptive. They must be analytical and frequent. The evaluation of the quality of life is most problematic once established thresholds of perception have been shifted by social or political change of various significant kinds. Rising expectations can alter political or social consciousness very rapidly.

1-7 Finally, the limits in the range of quality of life need to be discussed. The upper limit is a purely hypothetical postulate since no group, however privileged, ever attains a "maximum" quality of life - desires will always be ahead of rewards to some extent. Drewnowski argues that need gratification at very high levels is wasteful of resources since improvements in objective conditions tend to produce minimal increases in subjective satisfaction.<sup>3)</sup> One could expect much debate about what an optimal level of need gratification may be but it is irrelevant for our purposes. The lower limits

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2) For a discussion, see Marvin E. Shaw and Philip R. Constanzo, *Theories of Social Psychology*, New York: Mc Graw Hill, 1970. part 4.

3) Jan Drewnowski, *On Measuring and Planning the Quality of Life*, The Hague, Paris, Mouton, 1974.

are of critical importance however.

We may postulate three kinds of lower limit, very different in character but singularly relevant to the situation in South Africa. The first would be a situation in which expectations have been constrained by unchanging circumstances over a long period, subjective concerns are focussed on a day-to-day struggle to meet basic subsistence needs and in which life anxieties are blunted by apathy and fatalism. We may simply term this condition one of apathetic deprivation. It is usually found in a situation in which both objective and subjective measures of rewards and satisfactions are very low.

A second form of lower limit in the quality of life occurs when people have no alternative but to become accustomed to exchanging certain highly important rewards for other important rewards. The latter may be subjectively no more important than those sacrificed but would be objectively necessary for survival. An example would be the migrant worker who has to become accustomed to the emotional costs of separation from his family because of the need to earn a living in town, and, who has no hope of resolving his conflict. One may term this condition adaptation deprivation.

The third lower limit in the subjective quality of life need not be associated with the severe material wants at all. This is an active response and it may apply particularly to situations of potential unrest or violence. It is where the subjective deprivation is stimulated to a critical level by raised or rising expectations. This is usually called relative deprivation.

Relative deprivation is complex and it is also only one component (albeit an important one) in situations preceding violent demonstrations. Gurr<sup>4)</sup> gives a very systematic and comprehensive framework of propositions with which to understand collective violence, and a very brief exposition of his propositions would be appropriate (Gurr's theory is presented selectively in the crudest and simplest terms below).

Gurr proposes that the potential for collective violence varies positively with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation, with the strength of justifications for violence in the community (justifications can be both normative and utilitarian or material in nature), with the scope of collective

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4) Gurr, *op.cit.*

violence generally (i.e. anti-social violent crime, etc.) and with the extent to which dissident groups can coerce people to support them and have gained control of organisations and institutions in the community. His propositions also include interconnections between some of the factors given above.

Relative deprivation becomes stronger as the discrepancy between average expectations of rewards and perceived capability of realising the expectations increases. Therefore an increase in expectations or a decrease in perceived ability to meet expectations can increase relative deprivation. Relative deprivation also increases with the number of types of values which are frustrated and the salience of the values. The salience of a value increases with the extent to which the value is seen as a base for other values, as the perceived possibility of its realisation draws closer and with the effort invested in attaining or maintaining that value. Relative deprivation is also increased by perceptions of possible interference in the attainment of a value.

Rising expectations are associated with symbolic exposure to a new mode of life (particularly if relative deprivation was high prior to the symbolic exposure), with the perceived availability of means to realise the expectations, with gains by another group perceived to be similar, with the rate and duration of past value gains and with marginal increases in the groups' actual means of realising its values.

If this presentation of theory is seen as being academic, it is appropriate to note briefly its broad relevance to the 1976 disturbances among Soweto youth and young adults. Let us consider the following possibilities:

a) The political culture of Soweto (and other townships) is redolent of "protest" about the low standards of living, poor urban amenities, services and housing and the absence of meaningful political rights. The protest is also seen to have been ineffective in significantly altering the system which has produced the discontents. Hence the dissident group could find ample justifications for violence, both normative (political) and utilitarian (standards of living, housing and educational services).

b) Black townships generally, simply by virtue of having to accommodate large numbers of unemployed people and members of underclasses for whom few social constraints on the use of violence exist, have become accustomed to high levels of anti-social violence.

- c) Relative deprivation was high among better-educated young people who saw little reason why they should not be entitled to the same rewards as other educated people in South Africa.
- d) The saliency of education as a value is hugely increased by the fact that it is seen to be a base for other social rewards (jobs, social status, lifestyle, etc.).
- e) The saliency of education as a value is high because of the tremendous effort invested in attaining success at school.
- f) The saliency of education as a value was increased by the fact that the system had improved in objective terms and more and more young people saw themselves as potential matriculants and university students.
- g) Also, expectations had risen as a consequence of the above.
- h) Expectations had risen over the years from 1973 to 1975 when economic boom conditions created improved job opportunities for school-leavers and wages and salaries for blacks rose fairly rapidly. The schoolgoing youth and unemployed saw age-mates making significant advances.
- i) Expectations had risen because of symbolic exposure to alternative systems as a result of changes in the overall political climate (mainly political developments to the North).
- j) Expectations had risen because of symbolic exposure to the idea of liberation espoused and propagated very widely by the Black Consciousness Movement.
- k) The rising expectations in themselves increased the extent of relative deprivation.
- l) Relative deprivation was sharply increased by perceived "interference" in the attainment of the salient value: educational success (the insistence on Afrikaans as a medium of instruction).
- m) Relative deprivation was sharply increased by the impending independence of Transkei which for the generally very politically aware Xhosa-speaking youth in Soweto meant an "interference" in their rights to



opportunities in the urban areas (decrease in value capabilities).

n) Relative deprivation was sharply increased by signs available to all schoolgoers that the educational services were overstressed and/or that youth unemployment was increasing more rapidly with the onset of the recession in early 1976 (decrease in value capabilities).

o) The fact that the collective violence was generally limited to youth and young adults was due to the fact that the dissident groups could not coerce employed adults to participate and could not gain control of all community organisations.

With the facility of hindsight, therefore, it can be argued that South Africa has experienced the consequences of one "lower limit" in the quality of life — acute relative deprivation among younger people in Soweto and other black urban areas. Against a background of this knowledge and equipped with the three postulated lower limits to the quality of life, we turn to consider aspects of the consciousness of black people.

## II. TRENDS IN CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG BLACKS AT THE PRESENT TIME

The theoretical framework of Gurr suggests that a baseline of relative deprivation acts as an amplifier of grievances and frustrations, with potentially disruptive consequences. Unfortunately few attempts have been made to operationalise and measure the extent of relative deprivation among blacks in South Africa. The fact, however, that inequality of racial status is entrenched in a caste-like system that is fairly impervious to educational and occupational achievements by blacks means that we must expect feelings of relative deprivation to be widespread. Another way of stating the problem is to say that our system of segregation creates what is called status inconsistency — a black person cannot escape his lower racial status despite whatever his efforts and costs have been in achieving progress. There is, admittedly, a category of blacks who, by virtue of low education and lack of literacy have few status pretensions and who may not make invidious comparisons between their circumstances and those of whites. These are blacks who either have never had or have relinquished claims to any broad equality with whites.

This consciousness, where it is discussed, will be referred to as "neofeudal"<sup>5)</sup> — the basic acceptance of membership of a lower racial "estate". We must remember throughout this analysis that Apartheid or segregation, particularly as manifested by Group Areas legislation, Influx Control laws and the homeland policy generally incorporates the implicit assumption of a "neofeudal" consciousness among blacks. For our purposes the opposite of neofeudal consciousness is a lesser or greater degree of relative deprivation. (With the possible exception of a small category of very wealthy blacks whose luxuries allow them to insulate themselves from socio-political realities.)

One basic requisite for feelings of relative deprivation is envy of whites. Hanf *et. al.*, found in their study among Africans in Soweto, Durban and Pretoria that over 90 per cent of their respondents seemed to feel entitled to broadly similar rights and privileges as whites.<sup>6)</sup> Another basis of relative deprivation is a perception that conditions and circumstances (value capabilities) are poorer than what they should be as assessed in terms of elementary conceptions of social justice. As long ago as 1970, the first author, on the basis of three hour semi-depth interviews among a representative sample of urban Africans in Durban found that roughly 78 per cent felt strongly that their circumstances were unjustly poor.<sup>7)</sup>

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- 5) The use of the term neofeudal follows the usage of one of the co-authors, Valerie Møller, following Heintz: *Asynchronous Development and the Case of the Migrant Labour System*, Centre for Applied Social Sciences (forthcoming). More specifically the term denotes submission to and acceptance of a model of society in which major emphasis is placed on status positions legitimated by ascription as opposed to achievement. This constitutes a situation found in traditional societies of a feudal type, carried over into certain modern industrial societies, hence the designation *neo-feudalism*. A typical example of neofeudalism is ethnic stratification occurring as a consequence to urbanisation. Neofeudal adaptation and submission on the part of in-migrants involves low or non-existent aspirations for status advancement because they see themselves as belonging to an estate, caste or society not part of the modern urban milieu. This neofeudal submission thus tends to suppress perceptions of discrimination.
- 6) Theodor Hanf, *et. al.*, *Sudafrika: Friedlicher Wandel?* München/Mainz: Kaiser/Grünwald, 1978, p. 346.
- 7) L. Schlemmer, *Black Attitudes: Reaction and Adaptation*, Durban: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, 1975.

The basic neofeudal response which would be compatible with Apartheid and differential racial status is a minority phenomenon. The fact that Africans generally are so compliant in the situation is not to be explained by any normatively-based acceptance of the system but rather in terms of a form of alienation --- a view of the system as being so granite-like, impervious and immutable that a political "withdrawal" occurs.<sup>8)</sup>

The comments made in the first section suggest, however, that the kind of alienative consciousness can change very rapidly where political reality perceptions shift and expectations rise. Therefore, the surface calm is less dependable than it appears to be. The underlying reality of the black situation is better assessed on the basis of estimates of relative deprivation.

#### 2-1 General Socio-Political Consciousness

In the absence of any research which has involved sophisticated attempts at assessing relative deprivation, we have to use a surrogate measure --- a simple index of socio-political contentment-discontentment. In 1977 Hanf *et.al.*<sup>9)</sup> devised a scale illustrated with five faces with varying expressions of such discontentment:

"Here is a picture of how African people can feel about life for Africans in South Africa" (Interviewer read and point to faces) "a) The face at the top is of African people who are very happy with life as it is ...", "... just happy but not very happy ...", "... not happy but also not unhappy ...", "... unhappy ...", "... angry and impatient...".

The results proved remarkably useful in Hanf's analysis and were congruent with other findings. They seemed very valid. It is not suggested that this index has an absolute validity; i.e. we cannot measure the true nuances, meaning and subtleties of socio-political feeling with it. Its utility lies in the trend comparisons it allows.

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8) See, inter alia, Verity S. Cubitt and H.W. van der Merwe, "From Normative to Alienative Involvement: Compliance Relations among Coloured People", Paper presented at the 4th Congress of Sociologists of Southern Africa, Roma, Lesotho, July 1973; L. Schlemmer, "Political Adaptation and Reaction among Urban Africans in South Africa", *Social Dynamics*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 3-18.

9) Hanf *et.al.*, *op.cit.*

TABLE 1

TRENDS IN SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG URBAN BLACKS: 1977 to 1979: RESPONSES TO SCALE ITEM ON HAPPINESS—ANGER WITH PRESENT SITUATION OF BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA

April 1977 (Hanf <i>et. al.</i> )	March 1978 (Schlemmer)	August 1979 (Schlemmer)	October 1979 (Schlemmer)
<u>Reef/Soweto/Tvl Male Adult Cross Section (all ethnic groups)</u>			
	(n=592)	(n=422) <sup>1)</sup>	
Happy/Neutral	36%	38%	
Unhappy	25%	17%	
Angry	39%	44%	
<u>Reef/Soweto Xhosa-speaking (men)</u>			
	(n=70)	(men and women) (n=700) <sup>1)</sup>	
Happy/Neutral	29%	27%	
Unhappy	33%	15%	
Angry	38%	57%	
<u>Reef/Soweto/Durban Zulu men</u>			
	(n=378)	(n=225)	
Happy/Neutral	34%	22%	
Unhappy	26%	21%	
Angry	39%	56%	
<u>Durban Zulu men</u>			
	(n=191)		(n=88)
Happy/Neutral	30%		19%
Unhappy	26%		24%
Angry	44%		55%
<u>Middle-Class White-collar/Professional/Std. 8 + men (Cross section in all areas)</u>			
	(n=395)	(n=150)	(n=72) <sup>1)</sup>
Happy/Neutral	29%	28%	24%
Unhappy	26%	32%	17%
Angry	45%	40%	58%

1) Includes a minority of Western Cape respondents.

Using the same interviewing team and exactly the same item, Schlemmer repeated the 1977 operation subsequently among similar samples.<sup>10)</sup> In Table 1 results for 1977, 1978 and 1979 are presented. The "very happy", "happy and neutral" categories have been combined.

The results presented suggest that currently Xhosa- and Zulu-speaking Africans are the most "political" and the most highly discontented: when the results for the inter-ethnic cross-sections in Soweto/Transvaal are inspected the proportions indicating "anger and impatience" drop significantly in the 1979 results. The main purpose of the Table is to reveal trends since 1976, however. On the evidence it would seem that the proportions among Zulu/Xhosa-speakers feeling more or less intense political discontent has increased from well below half to well above half of the populations. The causes, we would say, are not difficult to assess. After the urban disturbances there probably was a relaxation in political consciousness and a climate of optimistic short-run expectation. General reforms with widespread impact have been slow to materialise, however, and government promises and innuendo have fanned expectations without delivering tangible rewards hitherto experienced by the majority. Political fluidity had been suggested by the internal settlement in Zimbabwe. Inflation remained high and unemployment or threats to employment deepened for many until into 1979. Against this possible background, attempts to create a climate of optimism by private enterprise may have been overshadowed by other processes. Whether these reasons are valid or not, the fact remains that there is no evidence of generally meliorative trends in political consciousness. At base, the socio-political situation in the urban black townships remains potentially very challenging to the system.

In all the research mentioned above, the same scale of socio-political discontent was repeated, asking the respondents to estimate how they thought they would feel in 10 years' time. Excluding Durban respondents, the decreases in proportions ("now" versus 10 years hence) endorsing the "angry and impatient" categories were as follows:

1977	1 to ,37
1979	1 to ,48

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10) L. Schlemmer, "Political Alternatives for the Ciskei: Political Attitudes and Values among Xhosa-speaking Africans of Ciskeian Origins or Residence", Appendix to the *Report of the Ciskei Commission*, Pretoria: Conference Associates, 1980; also forthcoming publications.

Tentatively, the suggestion from these results is that there was more hope for short-run change immediately after the urban disturbances than there is now. This, if true, would bear out some of the reasons advanced for the deterioration in degree of satisfaction with the present political dispensation.

"Political" consciousness, however, is only an aspect of a more complex phenomenon. Some very suggestive trendline results with a broader scope over a longer time-perspective are available. These are presented in Table 2. These results are drawn from the regular "Socio-Political Barometer" surveys conducted by the firm Markinor and from results given by Henry Lever.<sup>11)</sup>

The results in Table 2 show a remarkable sensitivity to objective events and circumstances. For example, the negative effects of the destruction of the A.N.C., the township disturbances and the bannings and detentions of black leaders and one black newspaper can be seen in the perceptions of race relations in 1962, November 1976 and November 1977. The tightening of the economic squeeze during the peak of the recession seems evident in the perceptions of economic circumstances in late 1977, and the high rate of inflation and fuel and transport cost increases have maintained the fairly negative division of responses subsequently.

Confidence in the future seems to have improved over recent months, and seems closely related to confidence in political leadership. The latter two indices provide us with one of the few rays of light in our array of data.

According to Mr. Nick Green, Managing Director of Markinor, there is a close interrelationship between perceptions of economic circumstances and perceptions of race relations. Furthermore, as already mentioned, he suggests that the perceived performance of the Prime Minister is an important variable mediating responses on other dimensions, particularly general confidence in the future.

Bearing these probable inter-connections in mind, and considering the results in Table 1 and 2 together leaves us with a confused picture. The broad trends can perhaps best be summarised as follows. Perceptions of socio-political deprivation (Table 1) are sharpening while at the same time general confidence in the future and faith in the political leadership in the country is improving under the impact of promises of reform and change.

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11) Henry Lever, *South African Society*, Johannesburg; Jonathan Ball, 1978, p. 204.

TABLE 2

INDICES OF VARIOUS FORMS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SATISFACTION/DISSATISFACTION AMONG BLACKS AT VARIOUS POINTS IN TIME

Date and Research Co.	Durban 1962 v.d.Berghe	M A R K I N O R									
		Soweto 1973 (Quotso) 2)	M A J O R U R B A N A R E A S								
			1974 2)	1975 (Quotso) 2)	Nov. 1976 2)	May 1977 2)	Nov. 1977 2)	May 1978 2)	Nov. 1978 2)	May 1979 2)	Nov. 1979 2)
1) Black-White Race Relations: improving <sup>1)</sup>	7%	32	13	10	9	12	6	18	32	35	35
	deteriorating	81	26	9	13	52	37	51	36	32	31
2) Economic Circumstances: <sup>1)</sup> improving	-	28	-	-	22	17	9	14	18	21	17
	deteriorating	-	32	-	-	28	39	60	47	51	46
3) Confidence in Happy Future for All: very/fairly confident	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	37	37	50	61
	not confident	-	-	-	-	-	68	54	55	47	35
4) How Well Prime Minister is Leading the Country: very/fairly well	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	14	22	35	57
	not/not at all well	-	-	-	-	-	71	72	69	45	32

1) In all results for the sake of brevity the "neutral" and "don't know" categories have been omitted.

2) Women only polled. Results obtained elsewhere show that women give broadly representative responses.

Perceptions of race relations tend to be maintaining a consistent balance between positive and negative (in the absence of any disturbing events) while perceptions of economic privation are equally consistent but much more negative in content. We should perhaps regard the economic perceptions and views on race relations as fairly basic responses to day-to-day circumstances and interaction. The fact that perceptions are stable is not encouraging. The contradiction between political consciousness and faith in political leadership and the future may contain one very important danger signal. The latter denotes rising expectations and the former very possibly a response to these very expectations: mounting relative deprivation. A comment made by Mr. Green of Markinor deserves emphasis: the rising faith and hope in the system can have dire consequences if basic conditions and rewards do not improve or if the faith in the future cannot be sustained by powerful "myths" of progress. In most social attitudes one must expect tendencies toward congruence of perceptions in the longer run. At present the black urban population seems to be holding certain important contradictions in their perceptions in suspension while seeking confirmation of expectations in the political domain. The expectations are highly unlikely to become affectively lowered in the present Southern African political climate, hence the trend one might expect is for them to become altered in popular meaning content, and to shift their effect onto the dimension of politically coloured relative deprivation. Such a development could very well influence the evaluation of day-to-day circumstances and relationships negatively.

This discussion, admittedly, is highly speculative. Suggestive indications, however, are forthcoming in the results of a special investigation conducted for this exercise: a survey among 800 African respondents in the Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Vereeniging complex conducted only last month. The research concerned the image of current circumstances and developments for urban blacks in the Transvaal and can be called a study of socio-political "morale". The results are presented in Table 3.

The profile of the socio-political morale inventory is disturbing. The method employed encouraged spontaneous responses and this is evident in the large number of items selected. One might argue that the method encouraged facile responses and that the pattern is not one of hard conviction. This is certainly true. It is a political mood profile more than anything else. There is no doubting the imbalance in mood however, with no single positive item achieving more than one-third endorsement and virtually all the items reflecting negative perceptions being selected by 50% of the population and above.



TABLE 3.

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MORALE AMONG URBAN BLACKS IN THE TRANSVAAL<sup>1)</sup>

(Please listen to/read through these items quickly and select those which are like your own personal feelings about life today)

	TOTAL	SEX		AGE				SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP		
		MALE	FEMALE	16-24	25-34	35-49	50+	UPP/ U.MD	LOW. MID.	LOWER
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Everything done for whites, own problems overlooked	66	66	67	65	71	64	65	64	68	65
Have to struggle harder to live as want to	63	63	62	58	66	64	63	62	62	65
Feel angry/impatient about way things are	55	55	55	55	57	57	49	48	55	63
Changes taking place mean so little	52	55	48	49	55	56	44	46	53	57
We know our life will be hard in future	51	50	52	58	50	47	45	38	52	61
Time coming closer when there will be serious trouble for whites	49	52	44	50	50	52	35	47	48	53
World outside will help blacks	39	39	40	45	39	38	33	25	43	43
Feel hopeful about changes	34	36	31	35	32	33	38	26	36	37
Govt. is succeeding well in helping blacks	31	28	36	32	27	30	39	25	31	38
My standard of living will improve	30	33	25	31	27	28	35	20	30	40
None appropriate	3	3	4	2	5	4	1	2	4	3
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	800	476	324	224	226	230	120	173	475	152

1) Fieldwork conducted by IMSA.

The possibility of overly facile answers, however, is counter-indicated by the very remarkable consistency of patterns across groups. However facile, political mood acts as a filter for experience and perceptions, and the value of the climate revealed in Table 3 possibly accounts in part for the mounting consciousness of relative deprivation which results in Table 1 suggest.

Indeed the three items of highest average endorsement are in themselves indices of relative deprivation. They reveal "relativity" vis-a-vis whites and vis-a-vis the maintenance of living standards and the consequence of perceived injustice — impatience. The faith in the future reflected in Table 2 is certainly not substantially present in perceptions of the present order since lower proportions endorse present changes and government efforts. This, once again, suggests that the faith in the future is a consequence of promises rather than present developments, indicating that this meliorating faith could shift over to heightened relative deprivation if the vaguely anticipated rewards do not materialise.

Faith in the effects of external action and pressure is fairly high judged against informal impressions in previous studies, but it was expected that 16 to 14 year olds would endorse this item more than others since this sentiment seemed to be vaguely operative as a passive strategic hope during the Soweto disturbances.

2-2      Variation between Groups: Sections of the Black Communities evincing heightened consciousness of deprivation

The pattern of results in Table 3 shows that the young adults of 25 to 34 years have the sharpest political consciousness. It also dispels the notion that the working class blacks in urban areas are the least politically conscious group. The notion is still held in many quarters that the black worker is what we have called neofeudal, accepting of his basic position, not making claims for status and progress but basing whatever labour or political action he may engage in on narrowly material considerations. The black working man in the results given above may have more faith in the future than others and be less cynical, but his present discontents are sharper than those of other groups.

The potential militancy of the working class is mirrored in the results pertaining to migrant-workers in the investigation conducted on behalf of the Ciskei Commission,<sup>12)</sup> from which it appears that significantly more

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12) Schlemmer, 1980, *op.cit.*

migrant workers than Ciskeian Xhosa generally are "angry and impatient" (55% vs. 37%). The neofeudal response is no longer typical of migrant-workers, as we will note again in due course.

Other groups who evince particularly high degrees of relative deprivation are the upper status professional and administrative employees; people who cannot translate occupational achievement into social and status gains, pinned as they are to "township ghettos" as the black urban areas are often called.

Much space could be occupied in describing further differences in findings but the general pattern suggests that critical levels of discontent are not limited to any particular group: the youth, the rising middle class, men; the manifestations of relative deprivation are widespread throughout the sample.

#### 2-3 Domains of Greatest Discontent

In the studies conducted for the Ciskei Commission by Schlemmer, the same index of satisfaction-dissatisfaction referred to in Table 1 was used to provide an index of feelings about different major aspects of current circumstances. In Table 4 overall results are presented in abbreviated form.

The results in Table 4 show that the most ameliorative group are the North Sotho-Pedi group which does not have the long historical background of militancy and quite the same history of massive inter-nation conflict between Africans and settlers.

The results otherwise cannot be regarded as unexpected. The Xhosa-speakers are more intensely frustrated by education than others. Incomes are a universal grievance of high order. The very strong feelings about the legal system as it applies to blacks, particularly among the urban Xhosas among whom it dominates frustrations, indicates to what extent what we may call "unfreedom" is felt. This type of frustration is almost automatically politicised in the most radical terms, and herein lies the gravest of significance.

What is perhaps telling commentary on the present situation is that, majorities or near majorities, at the very least feel like telling the world that present changes in policy, through lack of results, actually create discontent.

Table 4. Proportion of Different Samples Indicating "Anger and Impatience" as over a range of Major Aspects of Current Circumstances: 1979.

Major Aspects	Migrant Xhosa Workers N=83	Proportions indicating Anger and Impatience			
		Urban Xhosa Tvl and West Cape N=100	Soweto Zulus N=75	Eastern Cape Urban Xhosa N=218	Soweto Pedi N=75
	%	%	%	%	%
Political Situation	43	52	47	47	35
Wages and Incomes	48	51	51	47	40
Educational Opportunity	20	42	19	28	13
Recreation and Entertainment	19	23	N/A	8	N/A
Law and Justice	48	69	N/A	44	N/A
Housing	36	55	N/A	52	N/A
Present changes in Govt. Policy ("angry" and "unhappy")	59	61	48	47	35

Note: In regard to the last item, because it is not a substantive issue but a process, it does not as readily produce direct frustration, therefore adding the category "unhappy" makes the response more comparable.

Here again we find some evidence that movements which are raising optimism for the future may be creating impatience during the waiting period.

### III. THE ROOTS OF DISCONTENT AND THE PRIORITIES FOR ITS ALLEVIATION: A STUDY OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

A long and complex study involving interviews of longer than 4 hours each in multiple sessions among Africans, Asians and Whites is nearing completion in Durban. The study is aimed at providing careful empirical estimates of priorities for reform and improvements to the quality of life, as

well as guidance in housing development programmes. For present purposes the results for Africans are most useful in the insights they provide into the issues, concerns and problems which have most impact on overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the quality of life. In that sense the results also indicate indirectly in which way the problems of feelings of relative deprivation can most effectively be counteracted if practical strategies are available. The brief picture presented here does not concern the housing aspects which co-author Møller is currently documenting in some detail.

Summarised results are presented in Table 5, which includes not only the priority of choice of issues and levels of satisfaction but the extent to which each item relates to two complementary but independent measures of overall life satisfaction (two criterion measures were employed to increase reliability in the findings).

Table 5 has to be perused in detail and no systematic comment need be made here. What is important to note, however, is that taking into account item priority, present level of satisfaction and significance of correlations with overall life satisfaction, the following issues emerge as being of the very highest priority for intervention and reform:

Rank and File Africans:

Wages and Incomes	(expected result, action problematic)
Prices	(expected result, action problematic)
Rentals	(expected result, action problematic)
Space within Houses	(action and assistance possible)
Strongly built Housing	(action problematic)
More Housing	(expected result, action difficult but possible)
Privacy in Homes	(action possible)
Better/safer Roads in Townships	(action possible)
Provision for Family in case of ill health	(action possible)
Health Services	(action possible)
Sufficient Schools	(action possible)
Job Security	(action problematic)
Provision for Old Age	(action possible)
Police Protection	(action problematic)
Reasonable Educational Expenses	(action possible)

"Middle Class" Africans:

Equal Wages	(action possible)
More Housing	(action possible)
Sufficient Schools	(action possible)
Choice of Schools	(action possible)
Privacy in Home	(action possible)
Space within Home	(action possible)
Better/safer Roads in Townships	(action possible)
Provision for Old Age	(action possible)

In assessing the results in Table 5 and the issues of key priority isolated above it should be borne in mind that the items appearing in the table are in themselves the top priority items emerging empirically as priorities from a much more comprehensive array of over 140 items. Therefore the whole of Table 5 should be taken seriously.

Many of the issues of key importance listed above are of obvious importance. The benefit of the research undertaking, however, is that they have been demonstrated to be of critical importance more often than not in relation to overall life satisfaction.

People who are not academics, poets and politicians often have great difficulty in articulating and even identifying more subtle issues which can impart a vitally important effect to overall life satisfaction. For this reason certain covert relationships were explored between less obvious, less utilitarian life concerns and overall life satisfaction. The results appear in Table 6.

From the results in the table we may take note of very powerful correlations with overall life satisfaction. It is clear that sociability, social adjustment, social skills and a sense of community and trust are very important in determining quality of life. Similarly we note that diversion and variety in leisure time are also important, as are social status and esteem and dignity and meaning in work.

These findings have powerful implications for urban planning policy and employment policies for blacks. One cannot create or plan for life-styles, a social or recreational milieu or job satisfaction, but, for example, with well planned, intelligent intervention, the physical infrastructure for an enriched social life, community interaction and leisure pursuits can be planned and assisted into being. At present, townships atomise and make people

TABLE 5

## PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE: AFRICAN ADULTS IN DURBAN

Life concerns selected by survey respondents from prepared catalogue in approximate order of priority

Item description	Priority %			Satisfaction %			Correlation with overall personal life satisfaction Selection of "faces" Rating: "life as a whole"					
	Total	Lower	Middle	Total	Lower	Middle	Total	Lower	Middle	Total	Lower	Middle
	sample	class	class	sample	class	class	sample	class	class	sample	class	class
Plentiful good food	65	75	42++	50	44	73+	32**	30**	0	29**	28**	13
Well paid job	65	60	77+	44	48	38	16*	14	22	33**	38**	22
Adequate provision for children	61	61	59	57	51	69	35**	39**	9	32**	39**	2
Residential security	59	64	47++	51	52	43	5	5	30	9	3	40**
Respectful children	58	60	52+	90	87	100	19*	27**	3	3	5	4
Good education for self	58	50	77++	47	43	52	22**	23*	20	40**	42**	36**
Happy, peaceful family life	57	55	63	80	92	89	30**	27**	31*	30**	30**	23
Home ownership in town	57	58	57	67	69	63++	- 1	8	0	5	6	31*
Good education for children	50	40	73++	51	55	45	24**	35**	3	33**	36**	30*
Sufficient money	50	49	52	14	13	16(+)	41**	48**	27	29**	31**	13
Reasonably priced food	49	52	44	5	7	0	9	7	2	24**	24*	22
Family living together	49	45	59	83	78	92	14	26*	- 4	14	18	- 9
Healthy family	48	53	37++	40	37	52	31**	31**	29	33**	41**	- 1
Reasonable rent	48	52	40	23	24	20	18*	25*	-19	27**	31**	10
Adequate dwelling space	48	45	54	24	20	31	30**	39**	2	41**	45**	28
Fair wages	45	42	52	44	52	31	27**	30*	38*	17	20	22
Provision for family in case of illness or death	45	45	44	40	38	46	34**	36**	44*	33**	29*	45*
More housing available	43	45	40	10	10	12	17*	32**	-12	31**	33**	22
Person to love you	41	36	53	93	92	94	9	19	- 8	15	15	16
Running water in home	41	40	42	62	56	73	18*	25*	5	31**	35**	10
Strong and solidly built house	39	40	36	21	19	29	31**	36**	28	16	14	12
Belief in God	39	37	42	95	94	96	26**	36**	16	19*	24*	14
Better roads in residential areas	39	41	34++	15	13	19	0	5	-15	16	27*	-28
Good health for self	38	42	29++	57	50	78+	20*	17	18	35**	32*	20
Adequate supervision for children	38	39	34	72	72	71	8	18	-16	8	12	- 3
Good old age pension	37	36	39	57	60	50	19	21	20	37	45**	- 1
Privacy in home	37	38	36	22	17	32	6	2	0	23*	20	21
Controlled and obedient children	35	38	27+	92	90	100	14	20	-18	28*	26*	45*

Continued/...

TABLE 5 CONTINUED

Item description	Priority %			Satisfaction %			Correlation with overall personal life satisfaction					
	Total sample	Lower class	Middle class	Total sample	Lower class	Middle class	Selection of "faces"			Rating: "life as a whole"		
							Total sample	Lower class	Middle class	Total sample	Lower class	Middle class
Safe marriage	34	32	39	96	96	95	-11	- 0	(-49*)	4	4	14
Progress at work	32	36	24+	80	76	93	21*	18	0	-15	-31*	37
Being a good parent	31	30	31	88	82	100	10	10	10	11	10	18
Ability to achieve goals	31	30	34	47	37	67+	31**	32**	30	30*	26	23
Children to provide old age security	30	37	15++	79	77	88	21	26*	14	0	1	-10
Conveniently accessible facilities and services	30	29	34	66	60	76	27*	21	60**	10	3	34
Job security	29	31	26	44	34	69(+)	34**	45**	-24	9	8	11
Sufficient schools	29	29	31	31	38	16	14	24	14	34**	43**	0
Police protection	28	26	34	45	47	40	39**	40**	48**	19	13	30
Old age provision	28	25	37	41	43	36	32**	31*	42*	15	1	46*
Choice of schools for children	27	22	37	41	55	19+	45**	61**	17	17	22	12
Access to medical attention	26	25	28	61	59	65	22	25	13	33**	34*	27
Reasonable educational expenses	24	19	36+	29	31	27	22	32	16	34**	42*	27
	N 201	139	62									

Legend: Priority: Percentage of respondents who list item among 30 most important  
 Satisfaction: Percentage of those respondents who consider item among 30 most important who are satisfied or very satisfied with concern  
 Correlations: Values for Pearson's r (multiplied by 100 to eliminate decimal point) are given for correlation of item with 2 measures of overall satisfaction with life: selection of "faces" and rating of "life as whole"  
 \*,\*\*: Correlations are significant at ,05 and ,01 level respectively  
 N: Total = 201 Note percentage base adjusted in the case of non-responses to items  
 'Lower class' = 139  
 'Middle class' = 62  
 (+),+,++: Near significant, significant (,05 level) and very significant (,01 level) class differences obtain regarding priority of or satisfaction with items.



TABLE 6

IMPORTANCE OF MORE SUBTLE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG URBAN AFRICANS IN DURBAN:

Contributor of Personal Concerns to Satisfaction with Life as a Whole

Item description in full	% Satisfaction			Correlation with overall personal life satisfaction. Selection of "faces" Rating: "life as a whole"					
	Total	Lower	Middle	Total	Lower	Middle	Total	Lower	Middle
	sample	class	class	sample	class	class	sample	class	class
Feeling self-confident when meeting people	64	56	80 (+)	26**	27**	23*	24**	24**	21*
Feeling you are able to reach your goals if you try	51	46	61 +	23**	25**	28*	28**	28**	28
Being esteemed in your community	70	66	77	25**	31**	10	31**	30**	33**
<sup>a</sup> Doing tasks at work which you feel to be important	72	65	84	20**	25*	23*	-0	-8	19
Feeling you know what to expect from life	43	39	48	36**	44**	15	27**	28**	22*
Feeling that you fit in with your peer group	64	59	77	27**	31**	15	27**	24**	38**
<sup>a</sup> Being able to work without close supervisor	72	73	72	10	16	-0	0	-3	15
Having enough things to do in your spare time to make you happy	54	54	55	27**	33**	30**	41**	45**	34**
Having a man/woman who loves you	85	84	88	1	4	0	8	10	-2
Being able to trust people around you	63	64	61	14*	21**	6	24**	29**	6
<sup>a</sup> Feeling respected by your bosses at work	62	65	58	27**	31**	27*	7	5	19
Being able to have fun in your life	60	52	74 ++	36**	37**	41**	33**	36**	13
<sup>a</sup> Having work which makes others admire you	61	50	77 ++	14*	25*	-1	15*	15	10

N : Total = 201 'Lower Class' = 139 'Middle Class' = 62 Percentages adjusted in the case of non-responses and exclusion of non-employed persons.

<sup>a</sup> Responses obtained only from employed persons

Satisfaction: Percentage of respondents who are satisfied or very satisfied with concern.

Correlations: Values for Pearson's r (multiplied by 100 to eliminate decimal point) are given for the correlation of item with 2 measures of overall life satisfaction 'faces' and 'life as a whole'

\*, \*\* Correlations are significant at the .05 and .01 level of confidence respectively.

(+), +, ++ Near significant, significant (.05 level) and very significant (.01 level) class differences obtain regarding satisfaction.

anonymous, destroying trust and opportunities for status rewards. A great challenge in the planning and creation of community-centre development lies ahead, as in the planning and establishment of decentralised social and recreational focal points. Great problems will have to be faced — problems of crime-concentration in such centres, transportation and administration for social development. These problems can and must be solved.

In the occupational sphere, the emergence of part-time and after hours career-enrichment training centres could have some effect in an important area of life satisfaction. This and results in Table 5 also indicate the importance of creative monitoring of employment codes.

#### IV. URBAN SUBTYPES: MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE CITY

Hitherto, while great concern is often expressed about the size of the migrant labour force and the conditions under which this labour force has to reside in urban industrial complexes, little systematic attention has been paid to the quality of life of this group as a semi-permanent social subtype in the black urban social environment. The potential significance of this group in any consideration of future political and economic developments in urban areas can be demonstrated with three brief examples. During the 1973 labour disturbances in Natal, it became clear that migrant workers and hostel dwellers had taken a prominent initiative in the strikes, that this group evinced sharp perceptions of exploitation and alienation and demonstrated a capacity for spontaneous organisation.<sup>13)</sup> Secondly, Kane-Berman in his comprehensive work on Soweto and the urban disturbances, points out that while hostel-dwelling migrants did not respond to the demonstrating students' calls for solidarity in mounting labour boycotts, (indeed they were in open conflict with the demonstrators), after three partly or largely unsuccessful demonstration strikes, migrant workers in some hostel complexes started to cooperate with the student activists and actually promoted a subsequent stay-away.<sup>14)</sup> Thirdly, we have already pointed out that results obtained in the research conducted for the Ciskei Commission shows that male migrants in hostels are among the angriest and most frustrated blacks in the country.

Some light on the severe contradictions and strain inhering in the

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13) See discussion in F. Fisher, "Class Consciousness among Colonised Workers in South Africa", in L. Schlemmer and E. Webster, Eds. *Change, Reform and Economic Growth in South Africa*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978.

14) John Kane-Berman, *Soweto: Black Revolt, White Reaction*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978, p. 130.

migrant labour system is shed by a study being analysed by Møller.<sup>15)</sup> The contract labour system carries with it the implicit assumption that migrants do not attempt to make claims for status mobility and security in the urban area, but retain the more modest criteria of achievement of their rural areas of origin and measure their urban rewards in this light. In other words a dual frame of reference is encouraged and the migrant's satisfaction is supposed to be determined by his ability to use urban work rewards to enhance his rural status. Hence it is implicitly assumed that he will be reasonably satisfied with:

- a) a socially and sexually encapsulated existence in town;
- b) ability to remit even modest but regular sums to his area of origin, which, being without a cash economy, would benefit from whatever cash-inflows materialise;
- c) long periods of absence from his family, kin group and social supports in the rural area;
- d) his basic security of tenure and social position within a rural community context;
- e) political commitments limited to issues relating to his rural community;
- f) circumscribing his aspirations in the urban area to the purely occupational sphere, and
- g) to have his physical access to the urban area and movement within urban areas circumscribed by fixed contracts in terms of influx-control recruiting procedures, and a host of other regulatory laws and administrative procedures.

In the light of Møller's analysis, the following empirical points can be made in respect of each of these implicit assumptions, based on evidence obtained from a detailed study of 510 Zulu-speaking migrant workers in Durban.

- a) Survey results indicated that only a minority (22%) of migrants in the study of their own accord chose to isolate themselves socially or encapsulate themselves in 'homeboy' groups. The majority preferred to socialise with a wider circle of friends. Boredom was in fact a major problem for some migrants (8%) living in factory compounds, who were forced to live with their workmates after hours. Eighteen per cent of the respondents reported that the conditions in which they lived caused personal and family problems for them, mainly due to

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15) Valerie Møller, *Asynchronic Development and the Case of the Migrant Labour System*, Durban: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, (forthcoming).

difficulties hostel dwellers have with receiving visiting wives. It was observed that a minority of respondents who had found lodgings outside the workers' hostels and compounds at greater expense to themselves, reported fewer problems concerning privation or personal adjustment.

b) The majority of the respondents were dissatisfied with their ability to remit to the rural areas. Less than 40% of the respondents stated they were able to send home enough money to their families. They largely attributed their inability to remit adequate sums of money to low wages, the fact that they had to support two families, and to the increasing costs of living.

c) Approximately 30% of the respondents reported that they visited their homes less often than twice per year. More significantly, 64% of the respondents felt they did not see their families enough, mainly because they could not take more time off to visit more often or to stay with their families for longer periods at one time. Eighty-one per cent of the respondents stated that working away from home caused problems for them and an equally high proportion said that this caused problems for their families. Chief problems in both cases were privation, anxiety and lack of communication especially in emergency situations. Several respondents complained of being strangers to their children and as one migrant put it "Our sex life is restricted to about something like once a year and it comes as a Christmas present!"

Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents would prefer to do the work they are doing at the moment in the rural areas. Forty-seven per cent of the respondents in the sample would like to work in the rural areas, specifically because they would be reunited with their families.

d) The fact that security of tenure in the rural areas is not available to all migrants, is evident from survey findings. Only 67% of the respondents were relatively certain that they would have land in the rural areas on which to retire. Twenty-eight per cent of the respondents felt insecure about their land holdings in the rural areas or had no access to land at all. Regarding perception of security of tenure in the rural community, the migrants in the study were most concerned about resettlement plans for the areas where they came from and land shortage and fragmentation.

e) Only a minority of the survey respondents were satisfied with their political participation being restricted to the homeland areas. The majority wished for more say in urban affairs.

Only 22% agreed with the statement: 'A city like Durban does not belong to us Africans. Our places are elsewhere in the country areas.' (vs. 'A city like Durban belongs to everyone who works in it, Africans included.')

Only 18% agreed with the statement: 'Africans cannot wish to be equal to others in the cities. They must hope for a better life in their own areas.' (vs. 'The areas given to Africans are too poor and backward. Africans must have a better life like others everywhere in South Africa.')

Only 32% agreed with the statement: 'We Africans from the country areas have our own leaders in our own 'Homelands' - we must depend on them.' (vs. 'We Africans from the country areas must have leaders in the cities to represent us about our problems.')

f) Survey results clearly indicated that migrants did not limit their aspirations only to the sphere of work. In response to a question on how progress could be achieved for Africans in their jobs and lives, the majority of the respondents referred to higher incomes and better jobs. However, a fair proportion of respondents (between 17% and 37%) also suggested that improving the living conditions of migrants would enhance the quality of life for them in town and increase their feeling of security. Smaller proportions of the sample wished for advancement in education and the removal of discrimination in general.

g) The migrants responding to the survey were extremely sensitive to the restriction on movement and choice in organising their daily lives in the way they wished. Fifty-four per cent of the sample respondents wished to qualify for urban rights, mainly because this would shield them from discrimination, harassment and restrictions in the employment process (mentioned by 58% of those wishing to qualify) and increase residential choice (10%).

#### V. URBAN SUBTYPES: THE INFORMAL RESIDENTIAL SECTOR OR "SQUATTERS"

In some areas of South Africa like the wider metropolitan regions of Pretoria, East London, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Richards Bay-Empangeni, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and other places, substantial proportions of the urban or peri-urban African and in some cases Coloured populations live in belts or nodes of informal residence or "squatter settlements". In some areas like Durban, squatters are so numerous that informal development is beginning to challenge the township as the dominant form of African urban settlement.

Research conducted in and around Durban by Stopforth, Møller and others<sup>16)</sup> has yielded certain conclusions which urgently demand attention by the authorities and by organisations such as the Urban Foundation.

The relevant points will be made very briefly and in a general form. The fringe "squatter" areas more often than not contribute very substantial numbers of regular, "legal" workers to the urban economy. Within the "squatter" areas themselves there are more than the nascent beginnings of potentially viable small-scale informal entrepreneurship (commerce, services and limited production) which holds a key to one of the ways of alleviating formal unemployment. The "squatter" settlements contain ample representation of people who, even in terms of rigid legal definitions, are entitled to be in the urban areas, either by virtue of birth, acquired urban rights or possession of fixed legal employment. The "squatter" area populations are drawn from a variety of origins and any attempt to define or stereotype squatters as being of one social category or another is futile and harmful. Some are urban overspill (people on waiting lists for township housing or adult children and relatives of established urban families) and some are migrant workers who seek to reduce some of the severe conflicts and problems referred to in the last section by moving to informal housing in fringe areas. (Our Migrant Labour Study shows that their urban adjustment and indeed probably their industrial performance is enhanced by becoming "squatters".) Some "squatters" are urban dwellers who for a variety of reasons are unable to pay the rentals for formal housing, particularly during periods of high unemployment. Others are migrant families which have been effectively "rejected" by rural areas either as a consequence of processes of forced resettlement or because of mounting landlessness in the tribal areas, and who literally have nowhere else to go short of collective suicide. Certainly some "squatters" represent what is bound to be regarded as undesirable developments (for example, township residents who accommodate additional wives in shacks or people who have worked the system to obtain a house or two in the townships, move to a squatter area and sublet the houses). Although officials tend to notice such types more than others, our research has demonstrated that they are small minorities in all settlements.

Stopforth's study in Malukazi suggests a general conclusion that up to two-thirds or more of informal residents in the Durban area, for example, are

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16) Valerie Møller, *Mobility on the Urban Fringe; Some Observations based on Seventy-two African Households in the Inanda Peri-Urban Area*, Durban: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, 1978; Peter Stopforth, *et.al.*, *Profile of a Black Population in a Spontaneous Urban Settlement near Durban*, Durban: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, 1978; as well as forthcoming publications presently in draft form by Stopforth and Møller.

firmly committed to an urban residential trajectory, with half or more of even rural-urban in-migrants desiring to move closer in to the urban system; the rural alternative is acceptable only to a very tiny minority among all squatter sub-groups.

The residential aspirations of "squatters" appear to be fairly ambitious, with most desiring either a township house or alternatives like squatter upgrading, core-housing or site and service. The results of the studies show that space and size of accommodation is of very high salience for "squatters" and for this reason some perceive the informal areas as permanent alternatives to township housing because of the flexibility of designs possible in informal areas. Proximity to convenient and cheap transport is an issue of vital and essential concern and should caution against views that squatters in some areas should be resettled further away from the cities.

In the Malukazi study, Stopforth established that less than 5 per cent of the "squatters" had a home in a rural area of their own; the four out of ten respondents having a connection with a "home" in rural areas had to refer to the homesteads of parents, brothers and other relatives. This, once again, suggests that if squatters cannot be accommodated near cities they may have nowhere else to turn to for reasonable security of tenure. The problem as regards rights to land in rural areas seems even more severe. Less than 12 per cent of Stopforth's respondents had wives in rural areas; the general conclusion being that in the Durban area movement into the peri-urban fringe is movement of entire families under duress.

The studies (both published and forthcoming) by both Stopforth and Møller show that informal residence on the peri-urban fringe is experienced by the residents as a solution to problems which neither the authorities nor private enterprise can solve in the short to medium term in any radically different way than the way that the "squatters" themselves have selected. It is a solution to severe problems of costs of formal housing, to problems of space, to the need for compatible community surroundings, to the essential need to be conveniently located to work and cheap transport, to the fact of having no access to security and land in rural areas and to the need to escape some of the constraints imposed by rigid administration in formal housing areas.

There is, additionally, evidence that, under reasonably favourable conditions, (which can be created) "squatter" housing does not tend to produce pathological densities or landlordism and exploitation, or deteriorated unsafe or harmful physical structures. The critical problems are very specific and, seen theoretically at any rate, remarkably easy to solve: clean water supplies,

some loan capital, some road maintenance and street lighting and the establishment of convenient facilities and services.

#### VI. CONCLUSIONS RELEVANT TO ACTION

Broadly, it seems appropriate to conclude that the period from 1977 to the end of 1978 has not seen an improvement in the degree of overall contentment of urban blacks. While new policy orientations promised by the Prime Minister and certain others appear to have raised expectations quite significantly and encouraged hope and optimism for the future, present attitudes seem marked by growing impatience, heightened politicization and a feeling that race relations and standards of living are not improving. While available research evidence of these trends is perhaps not utterly conclusive it is more than suggestive. Certainly matters have not improved as regards the socio-political consciousness of blacks. Relative deprivation, the aspect of the subjective quality of life which is most closely linked to unrest and open protest, appears to have deepened. The situation may even be critical at the moment. These perceptions are widespread and are not limited to either the politicised intelligentsia, the middle-class or the very poor.

A word of particular caution is required in connection with a goal for reform articulated by some government spokesmen and members of the private sector; this being a need for the creation of a "contented black middle-class". Gurr's hypothesis referred to earlier suggest that relative deprivation is increased if some members of a group perceived to be similar to the observers make socio-economic gains. If rank-and-file Africans perceive the emergent middle-class as being in the same social category as themselves (i.e. simply urban blacks) the rapid emergence of a small but visible middle-class could heighten emotionally charged discontent among others, with serious consequences. On the other hand, even within the emergent middle-class itself, if severe social impediments are seen to stand in the way of their rapidly rising expectations, even the middle-class itself (most probably the younger generation) will experience a crisis of status expectations, making it highly volatile in a political sense. We would suggest, therefore that more thoroughgoing research and analysis around the issue of socio-political consciousness should be undertaken before reforms are aimed selectively at certain groups within the black communities. The notion of the "creation of a contented black



middle-class" is often attacked for its cynicism. We would suggest, however, that it is also a dangerously superficial concept.

6-1 The Practical Tasks: Assessing the Priorities for Projects

The analysis contained in this paper suggests that in planning projects and reform a first step should be to make a careful distinction between:

- a) "objective" priorities: assessments based on clearly manifest problems and needs. Examples would be, say, a lack of water in a "squatter" area, a very poor transportation system, very low wages in a particular area, a housing shortage proved by long waiting lists and overcrowding of existing dwellings, or say, a shortage of teachers or classrooms, etc.;
- b) "subjective" priorities: assessments based on what people perceive, expect or desire, irrespective of whether or not theirs is a salient objective need. People subjectively expect and want equal pay for equal work even though, objectively, it could be argued that the greater priority should be for blacks to be given access to skilled positions, despite being at lower wage-rates than those paid to whites. Privacy in housing is important for subjective reasons whereas housing units may be more important as an objectively calculated need.
- c) "derived" priorities: assessments based on what is required in order for some other priority to be realised; i.e. if people want job-advancement, vocational and technical training is a requirement for the attainment of such advancement.

We are not suggesting that any one set of priorities is necessarily more valid than any other; we are simply stating that effective planning requires that they be understood as having different implications. Hence, a programme or project directed at a derived priority must be evaluated not on its popular appeal (because the recipients may not see its consequences) but rather on what it enables the recipients to achieve. A project aimed at a subjective priority must not be assessed in terms of quantitative achievements (like an absolute increase in housing units) but in terms of the extent to which it improves morale, mood, lifestyle, confidence or trust in the system.

Obviously, however, the three types of priorities are interrelated and sometimes superimposed. Yet it is useful to maintain the analytical distinction

for purposes of planning and evaluation. The fact, however, that the different types of priorities are superimposed or interrelated means that the perceptions and expressed needs of ordinary people can cover all three simultaneously. Therefore, part of the problem of deciding on priorities can be solved by asking people what they want. Their answers will more often than not reflect their "objective", "subjective" and even to some extent, "derived" needs at one and the same time, all experienced as felt needs.

6-1-1 The first practical task, then, is to ask people what they want. Obviously it is better to ask people who are typical of the recipient group rather than self-appointed spokesmen and women (the latter are often right but can be very wrong at times). This may be very easy in some instances but it may require more extensive research or investigation, using trained interviewers among representative samples of people.

6-1-2 The second practical task is to supplement the assessment of felt needs by attempting to uncover what sociologists for decades have called latent needs. People are not always aware of what they need; are not aware of all the things that depress the quality of their lives. One has to gain insight into hidden connections. We have given an example of one way of doing this, in Tables 5 and 6; by correlating specific issues with overall life satisfaction. There are other ways as well, but whatever the method it is an essential practical task.

6-1-3 The third practical task is to add to the priorities defined above whatever calculated objective and derived priorities may be salient in a particular group, city or region, if they are not already subsumed under felt or latent needs.

#### 6-1-4 Some Tentative Practical Priorities

Taking the evidence produced in the body of this paper as a basis and making an attempt to integrate and interrelate various indicators, including the 'latent' or hidden factors mentioned above, the following would appear to be priority issues for action and reform for the typical black township population (the order is arbitrary):

- wage and income improvements;
- more widespread services which will increase the predictability of social and economic advancement (e.g. availability of bursaries, high-quality part-time university, technical and vocational training, loan and credit facilities

- more freely available for self-improvement or home-improvement projects, etc.);
- reform in the legal system, in the administration of justice and in local laws and regulations to remove the impression of arbitrariness. Reform in Influx Control laws is a particular priority;
  - related to the above is the need to encourage a less "colonial" approach to township administration. Our township administration is marked by an extension of the tradition of the compound. There are simply too many ways in which the average resident is reminded daily that his community and housing affairs are controlled and regulated;
  - constitutional reform to give black communities meaningful participation in the political process and the opportunity to elect leaders with at least the visible power to negotiate on legislation potentially detrimental to black community interests;
  - more determined programmes aimed at black job-advancement, job opportunity and equality of opportunity in all sectors;<sup>17)</sup>
  - improved availability of housing;
  - larger houses (or opportunities for home enlargement);
  - durability of housing;
  - greater privacy inside homes (relates in part to need for larger homes);
  - health insurance and improved health facilities;
  - improved old age security and insurance;
  - improved roads, street lighting, etc.;
  - more schools;
  - choice in schooling for children and much improved quality of educational services
  - reduced educational expenses;
  - police protection and the combatting of crime in the townships;
  - job security and protection from arbitrary dismissal;

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17) In this regard we draw not only on results already presented but also on the results of a probe included in the survey very recently conducted by IMSA. The question was "what can an organisation of businessmen do for blacks in the cities?" A range of options was presented and the results gave the following order of priority: job opportunities, better wages and incomes, black job-advancement, increase in housing supplies, reform in Influx Control, ending social discrimination, combatting crime in townships, assistance to homeland blacks, family planning assistance, assistance to black businessmen, encouraging ambition among blacks, improving black political rights, and lastly, improvement in the migrant labour system. It should be noted that the respondents were all permanently urban blacks and that the low endorsement of the political option is due to the fact that the question concerned the role of a "business organisation".

- respect for dignity at work and in public;
- community development in urban areas to improve quality and variety of recreation, to enrich opportunities for social interaction, to widen scope for expressions of lifestyle and social interests and to increase levels of community trust.

To these types of priorities must be added specific issues of a manifest kind (objective concerns and obvious needs) which may exist in a particular area at a particular time. Examples have already been given in the foregoing discussion.

Needless to say, many of the priority issues listed above are already embodied in projects and programmes. Yet an important word of caution is necessary at this point. As indicated in the introduction and throughout this analysis, a major, if not an overriding concern should be that of responding to relative deprivation. Relative deprivation tends to be based on large and sweeping perceptions of a general kind. Therefore it is most appropriate that programmes addressing themselves to the priority issues outlined above be large and ambitious in scope. Small, isolated projects, no matter how useful and appropriate, either make little general impact, or worse still, may even serve to make the surrounding circumstances appear worse to the people in the community.

Very often, when projects are formulated in consultation with local community groups and welfare organisations, undue emphasis will fall on a particular need in a specific situation. We have no doubt that such projects serve a very useful purpose but small isolated projects are not necessarily at all effective in responding to relative deprivation and as just suggested could even aggravate it.

For these reasons the practical task should rather be seen as the planning and implementation of community-wide package programmes; interrelated projects which together achieve a significant demonstration effect. In this approach a few ambitious programmes of wide scope and generality will be better than many smaller projects.

Furthermore, the challenge which relative deprivation poses in South Africa today requires that as much attention be given to policy-reform as to community programmes. Policy reform, both at the governmental level and in the private sector, makes improvements of the most general kind possible

and also enables community programmes to be addressed to the most salient issues. Most of the concerns in the priority-listing given at the beginning of this section require not only programmes but policy-reform. Consultation and interaction with government and with organised industry and commerce, therefore, is of very high priority in the practical tasks which lie ahead.

In concluding these comments on practical priorities for action, therefore, it is suggested that a balanced "mix" of approaches to setting priorities be adopted: a blend of black respondents'/informants'/co-workers' own preferences, the issues emerging from systematic research and analysis, as, for example, given in Section III; and a concern with practical policy development and reform based on strategic political and economic analysis. Needless to say most of the types of programme or projects in such a mix have already been implemented to some extent over the past years.

## 7-2 The Symbolic, Political and Strategic Tasks

7-2-1 Research. It is quite clear from contradictions in empirical findings in Section II and from contrasts between Section II and other Sections that the anatomy and potential of relative deprivation among urban blacks is under-researched and ill-understood. From Hanf *et.al.*<sup>18)</sup> we know that a two-thirds majority of urban blacks morally supported the township disturbances yet at the time they had reservations about Mr. Mugabe's guerilla war in Zimbabwe. Now that Mugabe is a powerful conquering reference figure to the immediate North, how much more intense has their moral support for violence not become? Why do people hope and become intensely frustrated at the same time? What might be the consequences of sluggishness in official reform programmes? These questions require much more systematic investigation.

7-2-2 Political Tasks. The present time is a highly inauspicious one for making political forecasts. The policy-making centre of gravity of the Government is moving slowly but steadily away from normatively-based decision-making to a rational-strategic orientation under the impact of military planning. The process is slowed considerably by three sets of factors. Firstly, the right-wing of the governing party is a powerful brake on Caucus movement in a reform direction. This faction is perhaps the most powerful single impediment to the realisation of what may be called strategic conservative reform programmes

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18) Hanf *et.al. op.cit.*

at Government level. The outcomes of present tensions within the governing party are so crucial to firm forecasting, therefore, that one has to be highly speculative at this stage.

If one assumes that the right-wing is weakened or splits away from the National Party, then speedier policy change will be possible since the reactive right-wing in the white electorate at large is becoming less and less powerful and influential. Two other forms of resistance exist, however. The one is the entrenched conservative bureaucracy which, while it may soon no longer be able to block change, it may be able to retard change, making policy statements at Cabinet level appear to blacks to be more or less futile promises. This would be a highly dangerous situation.

The other resistance is the normative resistance in the governing party itself to utilising the most effective means of achieving internal solidarity and unity in the country; the resistance to accepting race integration where it really counts (residential integration and opening up of non-racial educational facilities). We do not suggest that such a process could be anything but measured and gradual, but it would be the single most effective means of reducing relative deprivation. There are compromise solutions in this regard (e.g. some "common" areas and some "common" schools). The resistance of the authorities simply has to be countered by sympathetic but persuasive overtures from far-sighted businessmen and others.

Other political tasks are of almost equal importance. Migrant workers, as we have already argued, are a source of great potential unrest in the labour field and politically as well if the discontents outlined earlier take the form of flights across the border to receive training for terrorism. It is our considered opinion that the sharp conflicts in the migrant's situation constitutes a systematic squeeze, a stranglehold of frustration which can only become worse and worse as time progresses.

The problems of "squatter" settlements on the peri-urban fringes of certain cities also reflects a form of systematic squeezing of people between the jaws of unacceptable alternatives. These two groups are both victims of large-scale "contradictions" in our society. The contradictions lie between the need for urban labour and the concentration of economic and social opportunity in the urban areas on the one hand, and the lack of a policy of balanced and sensible development and expansion for urban areas on the other. Rural areas, due to mounting population pressure on their resources, are increasingly

"rejecting" the younger groups in their populations and the urban policies cannot accommodate this process and do not acknowledge the inevitable attraction which areas of maximum opportunity hold. The people squeezed between the processes of urban and rural "rejection" are "people of no world", and their numbers are increasing. Fewer and fewer migrants are the old-style "target" workers who come to town only to accumulate savings for investment in permanent, stable and secure rural locations. Hence disaffection among migrant workers is already serious and the phenomenon of peri-urban "squattling" must increase.

These two problems simply cannot be met by programmes alone. Rural development and planning is absolutely necessary but its limitations are obvious in the light of the enormous scope of the problems in the urban areas. Government policy in regard to both problems is almost totally unable to cope constructively with the real issues. For these reasons it is a very necessary and a very practical task for those concerned about the quality of urban life to study the parameters of the problems and to make recommendations and representations about policy reform.

Among the various needs in this regard is to convey an understanding of ways of coping with the problems which are presently foreign to policy-makers and administrators. For example, the density of urban concentrations or peri-urban "squatter" concentrations, in itself, can actually solve many of the problems which are beyond formal solution. It is in loosely administered, dense informal settlements that people start to solve their own problems, create their own jobs as hawkers, small entrepreneurs, small handicraft producers, etc. It is infinitely more advantageous to be unemployed in a dense, differentiated peri-urban settlement than in an isolated rural area, simply because odd jobs and rotating work opportunities are more freely available. There are problems of social control and administration, to be sure, but community development strategies can be devised to cope with these difficulties. The exploration of these options and political representation flowing from these exercises is also a highly practical task.

7-2-3 The Symbolic Task. One critical socio-political forecast can be made: this being that while socio-economic reform will proceed apace and political reform will gradually move the country towards a form of non-proportional inter-racial "consociation", neither process will be sufficiently rapid to keep pace with rising expectations under the impact of external developments, education, job-advancement and the socio-political reforms themselves.

When systems change and modernise they enter into periods of heightened instability and indeed even insecurity among the newly mobile groups. At this stage powerful symbols of national unity, identity reassurance and goal definition are of critical importance. Because South Africa is a divided society, however, and a painful part of reform is the adaptation of identity politics, the unifying symbols will not emerge very easily. Race and ethnicity, and the frustration and relative deprivation which both amplify, will constantly threaten to abort the good effects of reform and leave only the heightened expectations that reform brings.

This analysis almost suggests that reform is dangerous. It is, but it is even more dangerous to slow it down. South Africa, at root, has a painful choice between either the status quo coupled with increasingly coercive and blanket control, (which the rest of the world will not allow), or complete geographic partition along lines perceived to be just and fair, or effective reform and change. The latter is the only practical, realistic and desirable course. But it will be a period marked by highly volatile "consciousness" among blacks.

We have already suggested that the national political culture will not produce the required symbols of unity and direction. Private enterprise, therefore, will have to attempt to step into the breach.

It may have to be the task of bodies like the Urban Foundation and other private agencies to intervene quite dramatically in the "symbolic" facade of black urban areas. With very careful emphasis on appropriate status-symbolism, style, quality and expressive design, public facilities will have to be created which will capture the imagination of the populations and meaningfully affect the social and subjective qualities of their lifestyle referred to at the end of Section III. These should not be at the cost of practical programmes in the areas of basic needs, but should be public and civic developments which complement the practical. To give an illustrative example, Soweto and Umlazi each perhaps need to have a theatre complex with the quality and interest to draw whites to those areas. Another example could be a conveniently situated large black private high school which is of such quality and standing that it ranks with the choice white schools of the country. These examples may not be immediately practical, but developments like these will do more to convince the black people that they are not second-class than myriad useful projects (not suggesting, of course, that the latter should be curtailed).

As sociologists we are convinced that blacks themselves will suffer



a great setback in their liberation struggle if their own discontents become so sharp as to abort stability and growth. To counter this, black populations, with participation by black entrepreneurship, must be helped to acquire the concepts and rewards, both symbolic and practical, which will provide a sense of sharing in the struggle to realise the potential of South Africa.

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