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**ARE URBAN BLACK FAMILIES  
NUCLEAR? A COMPARATIVE  
STUDY OF BLACK AND WHITE  
SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILY NORMS**

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# Are Urban Black Families Nuclear? A Comparative Study of Black and White South African Family Norms

It has been repeatedly argued that black South Africans are in the process of transition from an extended lineage-based consanguinal family system to a Western style nuclear conjugal system (for example, Nzimande, 1987; Clark and van Heerden, 1992; Steyn, 1993a; Amoateng, 1997). To date, most of the debate over this supposed transition has focused on household composition (see, most recently, Ziehl, 2001). Another way of assessing this supposed transition is to examine the strength of verbal commitment to Western conjugal family norms. This Working Paper reports on research into such commitment. A set of thirteen statements about appropriate family behaviour was devised (see further Russell, 1999) and used to compare the responses of three groups of South Africans: urban whites, urban blacks and rural blacks. The implicit hypothesis of the exercise was that urban blacks would respond like rural blacks rather than like urban whites: that, in matters of family and kinship, urban blacks are more likely to share norms about appropriate behaviour with rural blacks (on the basis of a shared distinctive African cultural approach to kinship) than with urban whites (on the basis of a shared urban experience).

## Two Contrasting Family Systems

An eventual transition throughout Africa to a Western style nuclear conjugal family system was taken for granted by many twentieth century theorists. Goode in the sixties anticipated 'that the next decade will witness an accentuated move away from tribal family patterns [sic] and towards a conjugal system', not least because new African political leaders would want to undermine 'tribal traditions' in order to bolster new nationalisms (Goode, 1970:202). Goody saw new civic and state institutions in Africa proliferating to take over many of the functions of wider ties of kinship, and anticipated 'a process whereby kinship relations shrink largely, but not entirely, to the compass of a man's [sic] family of birth and family of marriage' (Goody, 1972:119). Even Laslett, who must be credited with discovering the uniqueness of the nuclear family to western Europe in times past, acknowledged that 'the Western family pattern no longer singles out Western European culture as it once did' (Laslett, 1977:12). More boldly, the Caldwells (1990), contemplating world trends in fertility, identified the spread of 'the European social system' as 'the central feature of our time'.

The convergence thesis rested on the argument that the conjugal nuclear family was uniquely compatible with the demands of globalising industrial capitalism. The assumption, that capitalism had *created* the conjugal nuclear family from a prevailing extended family, was challenged by the work of historical demographers working initially on English parish records which were exceptionally extensive, reaching back to 1574. Their research showed that, contrary to popular assumptions, 'There is no sign of the large co-residential family group of the traditional peasant world giving way to the small, nuclear, conjugal household of modern industrial society. In England, in fact, as was suggested elsewhere now almost a decade ago [see Laslett, 1965] the large joint or extended family seems never to have existed as a common form of the domestic group at any point in the time covered by known numerical records' (Laslett, 1972:126). Macfarlane, looking at wills, taxation records and maintenance contracts, pushed the date back still further: 'It now seems impossible to argue with any confidence that there were anything but nuclear households [in England] from the thirteenth century onwards' (1978:138; see also Hajnal, 1965). In response, some scholars (Hajnal, 1965; Goode himself in his second edition, 1970; MacFarlane, 1978:198) tentatively suggested that capitalism might have taken hold in Europe because of the nuclear family. Goody (1972) found the idea 'tempting'. This rather detracted from the notion that a transition from one kinship system to another was inevitable, for without the English example there was no ready evidence that such a change had ever occurred before. Yet the notion

of the unique compatibility of the conjugal family with industrialism has persisted, and not without reason. As Goode (1963) has demonstrated, many industrializing societies – perhaps influenced by Europe's assumption and expectation that its 'extraordinary family pattern' (Lesthaeghe, 1989:21) was normal – show signs of the disintegration of their traditional family patterns. History teaches us that no set of social arrangements is immutable. Social solutions are unlikely to outlast for long changes in the conditions that produced them. The social conditions under which descent emerged as the ordering principle for African domestic life are rapidly disappearing, nowhere faster than in southern Africa. Change is to be expected. But change to a particular kinship system with its origins in pre-industrial Europe is quite another matter.

Intimate studies from several parts of Africa found no trace of this predicted transformation (Pauw, 1963; Spiegel, 1994; Spiegel *et al.*, 1994; Spiegel and Mehlwana, 1997; Page, 1989; Lesthaeghe, 1989). Spiegel describes the nuclear family as 'a pipe-dream construct that has almost never been realised in the context of South Africa's black working population' (1994:11). Lesthaeghe draws attention to the evolutionary notions behind the predicted decline in the traditional African kinship system. Despite a 'more general weakening of lineage control' as a result of 'integration into the capitalist economy ... at this juncture it is difficult to imagine individuals rejecting the supportive potential of the traditional kinship system completely' (1989:241). There is no *a priori* reason for supposing that ideas of lineage, although rooted in a pre-industrial social order, should not persist to organise and shape domestic groups among people whose livelihood rests on industrial employment (Russell, 1994). The leap from African to Western family practice is implausible. The contrast in the two systems goes well beyond household size and composition. Jeater's work on the confrontation between lineage and the 'profoundly individualistic' concept of sexual morality of the settlers in colonial Zimbabwe confirms this contrast (Jeater, 1993:260). African ideas about family are more deeply rooted, more resilient and more flexible than is assumed by the many commentators whose uncritical anticipation of convergence tends to brush aside this African reality as some kind of evolutionary dead end in the inevitable march to the universal nuclear family.

What is the essence of this conjugal nuclear-family-based kinship system, typical for so long of societies of northern Europe and their diasporas? If one element had to be singled out it would be bilateral descent:<sup>1</sup>

1. Because descent is bilateral (or, with remarriage, multilateral), no one *side of the family* takes precedence over the other. A married couple are constrained to treat one another's families of origin with impartiality, according favour to neither. A certain distance is maintained from both sets of relatives. They are referred to by the same kinship terms.
2. The system consists only of conjugal families; there is no more inclusive group of kin.
3. Everybody (with the exception of unmarried siblings) has a unique constellation of kin.
4. In theory everybody belongs to two such families: the one into which they are born (as children) and the one they create at marriage (as adults).

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<sup>1</sup> This *ideal type* is 'a one-sided exaggeration ... of certain aspects observable in the real world, to form a coherent intellectual construction. It is hypothetical' (Abercrombie *et al.*, 1988:117). It draws on Laslett (1965, 1972, 1977) and Parsons (1949).

5. No one person's kin coincides with that of any other person.
6. The conjugal couple must set up an independent household segregated from both pairs of parents. This too is implicit in bilateral descent; no one side should assimilate them into an existing household.
7. An independent household involves accumulation. Hence marriage is delayed until such time as the couple have the independent means to maintain their own household (for example, through savings or education or security of employment). They tend to marry only when both are mature.
8. Marriage is usually between people of approximately the same age.
9. Since nobody else is involved in the menage being created, the choice of partners is left to the contracting couple alone.
10. Mutual responsibility for emotional and material wellbeing is confined to and concentrated in this menage.
11. The marriage is only as durable as the mutual satisfaction of the contracting couple, especially the mutual sexual satisfaction. If being *in love* is the sign for marriage to take place, not being *in love* is the sign for marriage to end.
12. The family household experiences a predictable developmental cycle from *establishment* (the couple), through *consolidation and expansion* (the bearing of children) to *fission* (adult children leave home to acquire independent means of subsistence while they also search for a mate). At this juncture *decline* sets in. The original household diminishes, until ultimately only a single person is left (who may remarry). The range of household types is shaped by this cycle.

By contrast, the defining characteristic of the patrilineal kinship system common to black South Africans is unilineal descent:

1. Descent is through the father. The idea of a patrilineally linked descent group<sup>2</sup> informs people's house-holding behaviour, determining who may and may not live together, marry, bear children together, expect reciprocity etc.
2. Women must never bear children from, or marry, men with whom they share patrilineal descent. Sometimes this taboo is extended also to the mother's patrilineal kin. Whatever the particular proscriptions and prescriptions, descent is always the touchstone to define who is or is not an appropriate sexual partner.
3. Identity is defined by descent. The children usually belong to the patrilineage (or patriclan)<sup>3</sup> of the man who impregnated their mother, but they may belong to their

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<sup>2</sup> I have tended to use the term 'lineage' rather freely to refer to what Hammond-Tooke (1984:13-14) would rather call an 'agnatic cluster'. He says 'genealogy is no more than a construct that allows members of agnatic clusters to define their relationship to one another and to related clusters'. He depicts these descent groups (agnatic clusters) as having 'only' [sic] two functions amongst the Xhosa in South Africa: they constitute the *imilowo* or authoritative segment council for the arbitration of disputes, marriage negotiations etc; and they are the 'effective cult group', the 'ritual congregation in the ancestor religion'.

mother's husband regardless of impregnator. Disowned children of unmarried girls will be attached to the patrilineage of their mother's father.

4. An *illegitimate* child is one whose patrilineal identity is unknown. This is rare. Even an absconding father usually leaves his patrilineal identity behind. Unmarried women can (and usually do) have legitimate children.

5. The deceased (the ancestors, the shades) continue to be powerful active members of their lineage. They must be informed of, and introduced to, new lineage members. If neglected they will cause trouble. Children who are not formally introduced to their appropriate ancestors will have no supernatural protection and will be vulnerable to all kind of misfortune.

6. Marriages are arrangements between kin groups within different lineages. Bridewealth from one is exchanged for a bride from another.

7. Brides who are infertile should be freely replaced by their kin, since what is acquired is the right to a woman's fertility.

8. Marriages are ideally between mature men and younger women.

9. Because polygyny is the ideal form of marriage, as exemplified in the marriages of the rich and the powerful, it is always legitimate for men to be courting potential new wives.

10. Because women bear children for their husband's lineage, it is important that they live with his kin, in order that the children be brought up properly.

11. Parental roles are segmented (Page, 1989:403). Child rearing is rarely the exclusive responsibility of parents (Bledsoe and Isiugo-Abanihe, 1989: 442).

12. The sexes are asymmetrically differentiated (Fortes, 1970:260).

The two kinship systems are radically different. Each has a long history. Conjugal family households have characterised north-west Europe for at least five hundred years (Laslett, 1972). Landholding lineages have been presumed the characteristic form of domestic social organisation amongst southern Africans for even longer.

## Convergence: Ideological Considerations

In any stable society common rules emerge about who is counted kin, who amongst these who is counted close kin, and who should live with whom. Such rules persist as long as they continue to serve the interests of the people practising them, and sometimes longer; for they are amongst the more enduring social norms, learned as they are in earliest socialisation from emotionally significant parental figures and other close kin. In many small-scale agrarian societies these rules of kinship were elaborated to become the political backbone of society itself. In rural areas of southern Africa, strongly enunciated rules about kin, responsibility and co-residence are still to be heard, especially from the elderly, or from those who stand to gain

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<sup>3</sup> The Xhosa, speaking English, choose to describe this as group as a clan; clan name, *iziduko*, is a vital part of identity.

from perpetuating what is left of the old rules – potential heirs of land rights, of livestock, and of traditional political office.

But the social circumstances under which those rules emerged and were sustained have of course changed dramatically as the people of South Africa have been for the most part steadily deprived of the land which sustained their social order and lured them into the expanding world capitalist economy, mostly as poorly paid labourers of one kind or another. The conditions of their incorporation as the subject people in a racist settler society have been particularly harsh, setting in motion an unusually sharp ambivalence to social change: on the one hand lured by the cornucopia that capitalist industrial society seemed to offer, and on the other repulsed by a system that for so long offered them so meagre a share in its bounty; sometimes wanting to assert and preserve their cultural distinctiveness, sometimes wanting to be an invisible assimilated part of the brave new world.

Social scientists' writings about black South African kinship and family structures have likewise been affected by negative or positive evaluations of the changes afoot. Long before the phrase 'political correctness' was coined, it was politically correct, in enlightened intellectual circles, to anticipate the eventual absorption (the root of this word is the Latin *sorbere*, meaning to suck in) of South African blacks into the cultural practices of what was then called *Western civilisation*. The black elite showed every sign of acculturation, from university degrees to ballroom dancing. Acculturation was not always spontaneous. Family and householding practices were pressed into the Western mould by, for example, the provision in towns, for some, of nuclear-family-sized houses, each in its own nuclear family-sized yard. In Durban in the 1950s, the regressive habit of keeping goats or growing maize in the yards was curbed by an annual municipal competition for the best-kept flower garden, preferably around a well-trimmed lawn. Weekly, in hundreds of packed churches, well-indoctrinated pastors inveighed against polygamy, levirate, premarital sex, and, above all, against the acknowledgement of ancestral spirits, those capricious powerful patrons of the older order.

Liberal academics in mid-20th century approached this issue of the convergence of family patterns in a campaigning spirit. Oblivious of the charges of cultural imperialism which would later be laid at their door, they were eager to assert how misguided white racism was in the light of the evident willingness of the black urban elite to adopt Western norms. They seized on all evidence of cultural convergence. The astute young Monica Wilson, for example, observed in the Eastern Cape in the mid-1930s that: 'In towns it is smart to be as Europeanised as possible. In their dress men and girls like to follow European fashions ... Houses, furniture and food are all as European as earnings permit' (Wilson, 1961:437). Tennis parties and tea parties were common. 'Tea is served with cake in European fashion. The guests sit around on stiff chairs, and the hostess is particular to have lace doilies on her plates and an embroidered tray cloth' (*ibid*: 468).<sup>4</sup> In family matters too, European custom prevailed. She described 'the usual household group in town' as consisting of 'man, wife and their minor children' (*ibid*: 459), though her vivid encompassing text makes plain her awareness of how often this was *not* the case; for in the same paragraph children are being sent to live with their grandmothers, or their mothers' brothers, or their fathers' sisters; brides are being taken to live with their husband's father or eldest brother; men are fathering children with their concubines; wives and children are being left in the countryside with husbands' relatives. But

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<sup>4</sup> Some twenty-five years later, after a decade of *apartheid*, Wilson was struck by the unexpected 'resuscitation of traditional forms which were first abandoned by the more educated a hundred years ago and condemned by the school people as pagan or uncivilized' including 'the somewhat self-conscious celebration of traditional rituals, such as sacrifices to the shades and marriage feasts and dances' with African Christians unsure whether this was 'proper national revival' or 'paganism' (Hunter, 1961:xvi).

nonetheless 'the standard group is that of parents with their own children' (*ibid*: 460). As a consequence of municipal regulations requiring sons over eighteen to pay a lodger's tax, people were living in small, dispersed household groups where children's sense of traditionally important kinship distinctions was being lost. She detected in the terms of address for kin a blurring of the traditional sharp distinction between maternal and paternal relatives, and in the practice of serving each child's food into a separate plate, a growth of individualism.

Keen liberal analysts like Kuper (1965) took such eventual assimilation for granted and bitterly criticised the proponents of apartheid for their retrograde attempt, *inter alia*, to inhibit the process. As apartheid policy hardened, as black access to towns was limited to *bona fide* employees, as black women were increasingly banned from towns, so the impact was interpreted in enlightened circles as 'destroying' black families, as though families were necessarily constituted in the Western mould, structured around the fragile conjugal bond, as though children had only one mother and one father (Murray, 1981, Wilson 1972:189).

It is apparent that a value-free approach to family in South Africa is particularly difficult. The (black, elite) students who assisted in this project were divided into those who impatiently embraced the thesis that universal convergence in a nuclear family system was desirable and inevitable and that any attempt to look for evidence to the contrary was probably racist, and those who succumbed to the suggestion that the cultural convergence thesis is a particularly insidious piece of Western cultural imperialism. It is against this background that we approach the issue of contemporary urban black families and ask what use, if any, is made of the old rules of kinship in these changed circumstances? Which rules are preserved and which quietly forgotten? What patterns of co-residence prevail? Who now usually lives with whom? Are there shared norms for the ordering of domestic life or is there, as various commentators have lamented, chaos?

## **The practical importance of understanding households**

Properly identifying the prevailing urban family system is more than a matter of academic point-scoring, for the nature and place of households is very different in the two systems. Whereas 'family' suggests a rather cosy peripheral area which is best left to social workers, marriage guidance counsellors or journalists writing for women's magazines, 'household' has always been at the centre of the very practical business of modern states and modern marketing. The essential information about populations which enables rulers to plan and control, politicians to win elections, and corporations to make profits, is typically collected by household, not only because the household is deceptively easy to identify, sample and access, but because, in the West, it is the customary and effective income-sharing and consuming unit into which the population may conveniently be seen to be divided.

For at least a century and probably longer, this strategy has proved wonderfully effective. From population censuses to income and expenditure surveys, household heads have obligingly furnished information of all kinds to enumerators, from the number of their children to their weekly expenditure on beef or beer, thereby allowing civil servants, sociologists, entrepreneurs and demographers to determine, with ease and accuracy, all kinds of facts about communities and populations. Sound empirical bases for governments have thus been established, as well as data of interest to not only entrepreneurs but also academics constructing theories about the nature and structure of Western societies and their transformations and transitions over time.

The underlying reasons for the success of the household survey have not been sufficiently considered. Census-takers have lulled us into an unthinking acceptance of 'the household' as

universal. We have too easily assumed that everywhere people spontaneously organise themselves on the basis of kinship or friendship or marriage into comparable discrete dwelling-sharing, commensal groups. The Western bias in this choice of unit has been slow to surface.

The success of such surveys in the West has rested on the peculiar characteristics of Western households. The household is an (a) discrete and (b) bounded, (c) residential unit with (d) an unambiguous membership (e) centred about a conjugal couple and (f) for a while, their minor dependent offspring. It is (g) invariably a unit of consumption in which (h) all income may be shared but some pooling of income *must* occur. Such a household is the product of a particular kinship system. It is this unique coincidence of the co-residential household unit with the exclusively interdependent group of kin ('the family') which makes the collection of complex data through Western household surveys work.

However if the residential group is not the income-sharing group, then households, identified on the basis of a shared residence, may be inappropriate units for the collection of some data. As long as the data sought is of a simple descriptive kind (age, sex, occupation), and as long as the information is asked of only the *de facto* members of 'households', few problems arise, as shown by the international success of population censuses. The moment data of a more complex kind are sought – distributions of wealth, income, flows of expenditure, differential patterns of consumption – household-based surveys outside the West are likely to run into trouble. Unhappily this trouble is likely to go undetected; for once a unit has been selected for a survey, 'the resultant distribution of data in terms of inappropriate units, becomes "empirical evidence", from which theoretical arguments of significance will be constructed and defended' (Russell, 1993: 760).

Serious academic debate on the nature of household was uncommon before the 1980s, when a spate of papers suddenly pushed the problem into prominence, driven in part by new feminist concerns, in part by the realisation that households in the West were experiencing seismic shifts, and in part by the recognition of the distortion that the export of this reified unit was imposing on data collection outside the West (Wallerstein and Martin, 1979; Harris, 1981; Whitehead, 1981; Peters, 1983; Arnould, Wilk and Netting, 1984; Vaughan, 1985; Evans, 1989; Guyer and Peters, 1987; Martin and Beittel, 1987; Murray, 1987; Laurie and Sullivan, 1991; Wallerstein and Smith, 1992). It has taken time to assimilate that it is common for people in Africa to lay claim to several households simultaneously, or that households, defined as those who share house and hearth, may embrace any number of quite distinctive domestic groups, many far removed from the conveniently discrete compact conjugal family households which were found in Europe.

We need, then, to understand South African households. Despite all that has just been said, this is not *terra incognita*. Between 1930 and 1970 several scholarly monographs contained vivid careful descriptions of black urban domestic life (amongst others Hunter, 1938; Schapera, 1940; Hellmann, 1949; Pauw, 1963; Mayer, 1964; Kuper, 1965). Several useful papers have since illuminated aspects of black family structure, usually through small scale studies (Jones, 1992; Oliver-Evans, 1993; Kanjo, 1994; Moore, 1994; Motshologane, 1987; Niehaus, 1994; Sharp, 1994; Sharp and Spiegel 1985; Spiegel 1994; Spiegel and Mehlwana 1997; van der Waal, 1996). Some scholars have looked at large data sets (Steyn, 1993a; Ziehl, 2001).

The exercise reported here attempted to combine the advantages of face-to-face engagement with a large-scale<sup>5</sup> sample. Instead of using household composition as an index of kinship system, as did Steyn, the kinship system itself as the object of study with a view to understanding household. We wanted to know what was going on in people's heads. Are urban

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<sup>5</sup> Although the actual sample selected was limited (n=400), the technique was in principle large-scale.

people so under the sway of new conjugal norms that a Western-style use of household in data collection is now justified? Or are they still informed by older lineage principles in which co-residential households play a very different part?

## Data collection, Stage One: Focus Groups

The first stage of the project was a four-week period of immersion in two rural areas, northern KwaZulu-Natal and Swaziland, where, because of the continuing access of people to land, patrilineal norms were presumed to be most robust. Thirteen focus group discussions were tape-recorded and scrutinised for statements that embodied lineage assumptions, i.e. assumptions that would be unacceptable to people operating with conjugal family values. Twenty-eight such statements/propositions were extracted. They addressed topics like relationships between husbands and wives, child rearing, mother's and father's roles, responsibility for other kin, and the importance of biological paternity (see Appendix A).

It was initially envisaged that questions would be clear cut behavioural questions of the kind, 'Did you clean your teeth yesterday?', the answers to which, 'Yes' or 'No', would automatically assign the interviewee to this or that family system. On closer reflection it became clear that behaviour is  to specific categories determined by age, sex and marital status, etc., and that to attempt to administer such questions would require a sophisticated stratified sampling, with separate questions for each stratum. The simpler expedient, of soliciting people's *normative* perceptions, was adopted.

People were asked to choose between sets of paired *normative* alternatives. For example, instead of the strong behavioural question, 'Have you ever fostered your son's children?' (a question suitable only for a grandparent) or, 'Have you ever sent any of your children to live with your parents?' (a question suitable only for people with children and parents), a weaker, more general, normative question was asked: 'If a married couple living in town have parents who are living in a rural area, is it better (a) to send their children to live with grandparents or (b) to bring up the children themselves?'

A major constraint in devising the questions was that they also had to be suitable for a white urban sample. To this extent they had to be non-culture-specific. We could not, for example, ask a direct question about ancestor veneration, since this would have been beyond the experience of a white sample. Instead we tapped into beliefs about ancestral spirits indirectly, by asking people whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, 'A child who is deceived about who its actual biological father is, is likely to get sick or worse'.

The efficacy of the statements/propositions as possible *indicators* had to be established statistically by comparing the responses elicited from rural black and urban white samples. Those statements that elicited the most disparate responses from these two groups were to be selected as *indicators* for the next stage.

## Stage Two: The Survey Sample

The black rural sample came from the catchment area of a high school some eighteen kilometres from the administrative centre of Nqutu in the north-west part of KwaZulu-Natal. Nqutu is a ramshackle settlement of small shops, unmade roads, taxi ranks, a magistrate's court and a prison, which has developed around a large provincial hospital. It is situated in desiccated, eroded highveld, in a typically poor rural area. In KwaZulu-Natal as a whole, only

19% of black rural households in 1995 had clean running water on site, 63% of the black rural population had a pit latrine and another 24% had no latrine; only one quarter of rural black households lived in 'formal brick structures', with the rest in traditional dwellings; one-third of rural black men and 48% of rural black women were unemployed (CSS, 1995: 24-48).

The sample (n=110) was selected by the simple expedient of asking each member of a standard nine class in the rural high school to put the questions to their four closest neighbours. Training lasted two hours and took the form of the class discussing the questions one by one and then answering them themselves. Was the black sample truly rural? Half (46%) had lived in an urban area at some time in their lives, for an average of seven years. They are probably as rural as any sample of blacks in a rural area in South Africa, given that migration to denser settlements for work is part of the pattern of survival.

Further details about the people in the sample were as follows: 40% had never achieved more than some primary schooling; only 18% had matriculated; two-thirds were less than 40 years old, with the youngest aged 21 and the oldest aged 71. Under half (43%) were men, and over half were women; half had never married, but only 16% had never had any children (with an average number of children per fecund informant of 3.5); most (84%) were active members of churches, evenly divided between independent Africanist<sup>6</sup> and more orthodox Western denominations; one-third was Sotho-speaking, and the rest were Zulu.

A similar procedure was followed one month later at a state high school some six kilometres from the centre of Cape Town a month. In this case, however, not all members of the standard nine class co-operated. Some had no white neighbours, and some found the financial incentive insufficient. Fifty-nine completed questionnaires were returned for the white sample.

Of the whites in the sample, only 2% had not gone beyond primary school, 82% had matriculated and as many as 25% were university graduates; ages ranged from 19 to 87, with one half aged under forty; 40% were men; 32% had never married and the same percentage were childless; the average number of children amongst the fecund was 2.3; 62% were active members of a church; all spoke English.

## Comparing Rural Blacks' and Urban Whites' Responses

Responses to each of the 28 propositions (listed in Appendix A) served to identify those which showed the starkest contrast between rural blacks and urban whites. The discriminating power of each question was judged by the different proportions of whites and blacks agreeing to or rejecting the options. Only those questions producing significantly different responses from the two samples were retained (as confirmed by chi squares).

Half the twenty-eight items were rejected as insufficiently discriminating (see Appendix B). Some were misconceived, mis-phrased or misunderstood. Others, more interestingly, had to be rejected because the difference in responses from the two samples was statistically insignificant. These rejected items reveal the extent to which both blacks and whites diverged from expectations. For example, contrary to expectations, very few whites (22%) took the nuclear option of preferring a pregnant girl to stay with her boyfriend rather than her parents (A17). In same vein, 32% of whites took the unexpected option of thinking it more

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<sup>6</sup> The proliferation of independent Africanist churches forces inventive names. We encountered amongst others the *Blue Train in Zion*, the *Damascus*, the *Gospel Church of Power*, the *Twelfth Apostolic* and the *Order of Ethiopia*.

important that wives respect than love their husbands (A2). Contrary to conjugal stereotype, 40% of whites thought that married men had a continuing responsibility to their parents after marriage (A5).

The rural black sample likewise displayed some unexpectedly non-patrilineal attitudes. As many as 40% asserted that a married man had no responsibility to his parents (A5), 71% said that who you married was your own, rather than your family's, affair (A12), and 76% thought that mature offspring should be discouraged from staying on in their natal home (A20). Judged by these responses, the norms sustaining a patrilineal system are not widely shared, even in a rural community where people are living on communal tenure land.

### The Selected Indicators

Thirteen items with the highest demonstrated power to discriminate between rural black and urban white answers<sup>7</sup> were selected as the *indicators* for the next phase of the project (see Appendix C). They are presented below (in rank order of chi squares). Informants were asked to express agreement or disagreement with each statement.

*A child who is deceived about who its actual biological father is, is likely to get sick or worse. (C9)*

This statement produced the sharpest contrast between rural black and white views. Only 5.5% of rural blacks disagreed with the statement, compared with 83% of whites.<sup>8</sup> The question was designed to tap into black supernatural beliefs about the power of ancestral spirits to safeguard descendants. Children who have not been properly, ritually, introduced to this powerful set of patrilineal forbears, are believed to be vulnerable to all sorts of dangers, including physical, social, spiritual and material dangers. The rules for determining paternity (which may vary from group to group, but are increasingly focussed on genitor), are accordingly highly charged. Legitimacy of any birth is conferred through acknowledged paternity rather than marriage. This leads to the whole set of practices among black people across Southern Africa concerning births to unmarried women, including the payment of damages in the form of livestock, whose sacrifice assures the child's membership in its patrilineal clan (see Preston-Whyte and Zondi, 1992:229-230).

*A husband should see his child as soon as it is born. (C6)*

All the whites agreed with this statement, compared with 18% of rural blacks.<sup>9</sup> Contemporary nuclear family values stress not only the father's active role from the start of the child's life, but also his emotionally supportive role as a husband at what the couple should regard as a most significant moment: the birth of the child, upon which their care, attention and material goods will be lavished for the next eighteen years. A contrasting view of the husband's role at this time is found in the tradition of many black South African communities, which observe a period of seclusion for women during confinement and exclusion of all male visitors. The practice is associated with a belief in witchcraft. Amongst the urban Xhosa, as amongst the Swazi, newborn children are particularly vulnerable to 'the harmful smells of medicines carried by certain men' (Pauw, 1963:83).

<sup>7</sup> A chi square of at least 20, where the critical value at 99% level is 6.6

<sup>8</sup> Yielding a chi square value of 104.05, where the critical value at 99% level was 6.6.

<sup>9</sup> Yielding a chi square value of 99.21, where the critical value at 99% level is 6.6.

A striking difference between rural black and urban white opinion was thrown up by the rather longer form in which this question was originally put. People were asked whether a father should be present at his baby's birth and, if not, how soon thereafter he should see his child (A27). Almost all (95%) of whites said that fathers should be present at their babies' births, compared with only 9% of rural blacks. The remaining whites said that the father should see his baby straight away. Rural blacks presented an amazing array of opinions on the appropriate lapse of time. A quarter said that he should see it within a week and 37% thought he should wait for at least one month (the mean waiting period amongst this conservative group being 56 days). The overall average waiting period for the rural black sample was 27 days.

*A married woman should put her mother-in-law before her mother. (C2)*

No whites agreed with this statement, although it was accepted by 76% of rural blacks.<sup>10</sup> This statement tapped into a traditional patrilineal principle that upon marriage a wife is expected to transfer her loyalty, along with her reproductive rights, from her natal kin to those of her husband. It stands in sharp contrast to nuclear family principles which privilege the bonds between nuclear family members above all others, with the mother-daughter bond being believed to be particularly close and never to be rivalled by any relationship which a lucky daughter-in-law might establish (on purely personal grounds) with her mother-in-law. There is of course no argument about where the loyalty of black men should lie. Goode lists the high emotional significance of the mother-son relationship as the first of only five family patterns that 'distinguish the African region' from the rest of the world (1970: 165).

*A couple should resume sex within weeks of a baby's birth. (C8)*

Most (70%) whites agreed with the statement, compared with only 3% of rural blacks.<sup>11</sup> Post parturition abstinence, as the demographers like to call it, is famously the traditional device by which African communities have ensured the health of mother and baby through allowing each child a generous period of undisturbed suckling between well-spaced pregnancies (Lesthaeghe, 1989; Caldwell and Caldwell, 1981). It is part of a broader set of social arrangements including polygyny and concubinage that ensure that husbands suffer no sexual deprivation during this time.<sup>12</sup> By contrast, the wife in a conjugal union in a nuclear family is under some pressure to resume sex as soon as possible after childbirth, lest her husband turn to somebody else for sexual gratification and thereby threaten the fragile foundation of the marriage itself. In a neat phrase, Caldwell and Caldwell (1977) argue that the post-partem taboo prevents 'emotional nuclearization' between spouses: they take the reduction in this period of abstinence in West Africa as evidence of transition to a nuclear family.

This topic was originally put as a more open question about how long a couple should wait after a birth before resuming sex. White responses reflect the entirely personal nature of this decision. Less than half of the respondents gave any specific length of time, giving instead responses such as 'It depends on the couple', 'It's up to them', 'When you both feel it's right' or, deferring to the woman's inclination, 'Whenever she feels ready'. A small proportion (15%) said that sex should take place 'as soon as possible', 'Why wait?' or 'On the first night'. Despite two people who thought couples should wait for a year and seven months

<sup>10</sup> Yielding a chi square value of 82.47 where the critical value at 99% level is 6.6.

<sup>11</sup> Yielding a chi square of 78.46 where 6.6 is the critical value at the 99% level.

<sup>12</sup> But see Schapera (1940: 178) for different practice in the 1930s amongst the Kgatla of Botswana.

respectively, the average abstinence expected by those whites who gave a number was 5.6 weeks.

Rural blacks' answers, in their readiness to state a fixed period of abstinence, suggested conformity with a public rather than a set of private standards. 44% said three months, 25% said six months and 5% said one year. The average expected abstinence for blacks was four months.

*All women should eventually marry. (C7)*

Most (76%) rural blacks agree with this statement, compared with just 10% of whites.<sup>13</sup> African demographers have written at length about the effective way in which women's fertility is used to maximise the reproduction necessary to ensure the continuity of a labour-intensive agrarian society with a very high death rate (Lesthaeghe, 1989). Traditionally, two rules have been invoked: all women should marry and they should marry early. Western nuclear-family based society evolved two contrary rules: a notable minority of women will never marry, and women should marry late (Laslett, 1965:81ff; Macfarlane, 1978:155ff).

White women in our sample were particularly dismissive of the idea of marriage as the desired goal of all women: fewer than 3% thought that all women should marry.

*It is natural and to be expected that a man will never be content to restrict sex to one woman. (C5)*

Less than one in four (22%) whites agree with this statement, compared with 76% of rural blacks.<sup>14</sup> This statement challenged the conjugal expectation of sexual fidelity. Societies that practise polygyny implicitly accept the propriety of men having more than one sexual partner. The social reality, that only the most successful men in such a society are likely to achieve this polygynous goal, makes this behaviour all the more acceptable as an ideal. No matter how rare the practice – and its practice in South Africa is lower than in the rest of Africa (van den Berghe, 1978) – its official legitimacy permeates the relations between the sexes. Men's sexual infidelities can always be presented as the legitimate search for further marriage partners, and wives have no legitimate cause for complaint nor any legal recourse. Women rarely have reciprocal sexual freedom (but see Pauw, 1963:130-135 and Schapera, 1940:181-190 for extensive documentation to the contrary for the urban Xhosa and the Kgatla).

Our results confirm Goode's claim (1970:188) that because of the polygynous ideal 'the [African] male has greater freedom to participate in sexual unions outside legal monogamous marriage ... to a degree not tolerated in European society'. The rural black sample is very tolerant of the proposition that men are promiscuous. Whites, especially the women, say they expect sexual fidelity. Exclusive sexual access of spouses to one another is a central part of the conjugal family marriage contract. At some level the institution of monogamy rests on a theory of human sexuality that assumes that only one sexual partner is necessary. Adultery is grounds for divorce. The high divorce rate in many Western societies reflects both the frequency of adultery and the seriousness with which it is viewed. Within the nuclear family system, this expectation attaches equally to men and women. Control, at

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<sup>13</sup> Yielding a chi square of 66.55, where 6.6 is the critical value at 99% level.

<sup>14</sup> Yielding a chi square of 45.30, where 6.6 is the critical value at 99% level.

least, in principle, over their husbands' promiscuity is one of the attractions of marriage by Christian or civil rites for black women (Nhlapho, 1985).

*A working man who provides all the necessities for his child but seldom sees it, is better than an unemployed man who spends time playing with and teaching his child. (C13)*

A much higher proportion (87%) of rural blacks than whites (41%) agreed with this statement.<sup>15</sup> This item faced respondents with a stark choice, between an unemployed but nurturing father and an absent provider. Those who agree with this statement elevate the role of father as material provider over his nurturing role. In traditional black patrilineal households, women are both nurturers and material providers, but men, as fathers, are exempt from nurturing. Instead they are disciplinarians. Since they often also embody political power as heads of homesteads or clans, attitudes towards them are deferential and behaviour is ritualised. For example, Swazi children usually kneel when addressing their fathers. A formal social distance preserves rural fathers from the kind of intimacy with their children that Western conjugal family norms now encourage. Polygyny intensifies this social distance. In Swaziland in the 1980s, fathers were frequently unable to name all their children, yet wives described such men as 'good fathers' if they made adequate material provision for the children.

The black rural sample confirms that they rate a good male provider above a good male nurturer. Only 13% disagreed with the statement. Their response is very different from that of the white urban sample, 59% of whom prefer (and it is a stark choice) the unemployed man *provided* he is a caring, nurturing father. There is a significant difference between white men's and white women's answers to this question. White men are more inclined to view a man's prime task as material provider than are women: 64% of women expressed a preference for the unemployed, nurturing father compared with 52% of the men.

*A married man should avoid taking his wife to live with his in-laws. (C1)*

All the whites agreed with this statement compared with 58% of the rural blacks.<sup>16</sup> Traditional patrilineal practice is for a woman upon marriage to become part of the patrilineal household of her husband's parents (patrilocality). Although support for this practice would seem already to have been considerably eroded in rural areas, the question significantly differentiates rural blacks from urban whites who, with their nuclear family expectations of a separate household for each married couple, all agreed with the proposition. This insistence of a separate household for each conjugal couple is central to the operation of the nuclear family system. Parsons argues that it is an integral consequence of the rule of bilateral descent. Its implications are far-reaching. Hajnal (1965:69) makes it a central point of distinction in his typology of household formation systems. The young married couple who start their married life in a household of which an older couple are in charge are worlds apart from the couple in charge of their own household.

*If a couple are infertile, artificial insemination from an anonymous donor is an acceptable solution. (C11)*

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<sup>15</sup> Yielding a chi square of 39.02, where 6.6 is the critical value at 99% level.

<sup>16</sup> Yielding a chi square of 33.9 where 6.6 is the critical value at 99% level

A high 82% of rural blacks rejected this statement, compared with just 39% of whites.<sup>17</sup> As long as biological paternity is considered the decisive act in conferring identity on a child, the anonymity of artificial insemination will render the practice quite unacceptable to blacks. People said, 'How will that child know who she may or may not marry?'<sup>18</sup> This question therefore probed pre-occupation with patrilineal descent and implicitly amongst the rural blacks, its associated supernatural implications. White opinion was predictably divided over a new technology and its implications.

*When your parents are old and helpless it is best to send them to an institution where they will be cared for till they die. (C12)*

Half (51%) of whites agreed with this statement compared with 14% of rural blacks.<sup>19</sup> Traditionally black parents have counted their descendants as their source of sustenance and security throughout their life. The resultant pattern, where offspring support parents, rather than parents supporting offspring, has been recognised as a major factor differentiating black from white families in South Africa (Russell, 1995:23-27). The esteemed place of older people in black pastoral and horticultural society rested on the relevance of their accumulated wisdom in an illiterate community as well as the supernatural power they were soon to exercise as spirits. Under these circumstances it was counted an honour to live with the aged.

But, in a secular, nuclear-family society, the aged constitute a social problem. When parents become old and infirm, reunion in the household of one of their adult children is a possible solution, but not necessarily one that either they or their children would choose. Institutional care has long been a feature of Western society for people in this predicament. The whites' response to this proposition shows their ambivalence.

*It is better for children to be brought up by grandparents than to remain with parents in town. (C10)*

All the whites disagreed with this statement, compared with 63% of rural blacks.<sup>20</sup> The important role of grandparents, especially *rural* grandparents, as child-carers has often been noted in descriptions of the domestic arrangements of black migrant workers. Some have seen in this the remnants of traditional practices (Spiegel *et al.*, 1994: 12). Such accounts have stressed the useful role of such children as domestic helpers for the grandparents, and the beneficial effects for child socialisation of this environment, which is also the traditional social environment for all patrilineal children. Our rural sample, as the receiving group, express rather limited approval of such arrangements: 63% of rural informants say that is better that children be brought up by their parents, in town if necessary (with a significantly higher percentage of women (70%) taking this position than men (53%). Against this should be set the 100% disapproval of the proposition by whites.

*Ideally a husband and wife should be about the same age. (C4)*

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<sup>17</sup> Yielding a chi square of 31.8 where 6.6 is the critical value at 99% level.

<sup>18</sup> Some fieldworkers elaborated in notes people's reasons for, and qualifications of, their answers.

<sup>19</sup> Yielding a chi square of 27.22 where 6.6 is the critical value at 99% level.

<sup>20</sup> Yielding a chi square of 26.03 where 6.6 is the critical value at 99 % level.

Over one-third (37%) of the whites agreed with this proposition compared with only 6% of rural blacks.<sup>21</sup> Laslett and Hajnal identified the similarity of ages of spouses as a defining characteristic of northern European type marriages, as compared with the big age gap between older husbands and younger wives in African and Asian societies. Laslett found that, in historic Europe, husbands were often a few months *younger* than their wives.

Originally we asked, as a fixed-choice question, what the *worst* age gap was between spouses. The contrast between white and rural black views emerged sharply with 47% of blacks saying that *same age* was the worst age gap, compared with 5% of whites.

*If a married couple have a disagreement, they should keep it as a private matter between themselves. (C3)*

Almost all (85%) whites agree with this proposition, compared with 48% of rural blacks.<sup>22</sup> The nuclear family couple with their exclusive, emotionally charged bond between two freely contracting individuals, is expected to resolve all problems between themselves. In desperation they may consult an outside marriage specialist. The expected patrilineal norm is for a young wife to 'report' all disagreements to her mother-in-law, not only because the marriage is of concern to the husband's wider kin group amongst whom she would by tradition have been living and who would have contributed cattle to make the marriage possible, but because the husband's mother is in a unique position to understand both sides of the dispute: she is very close to her son (Goode, 1970:166) and she has herself, in her time, come into this same household as an outsider, and learned to live in it.

The rural black sample response shows a community clearly divided. The traditional rule wins by a whisker. White urban opinion, though not unanimous, shows a much readier compliance with this proposition.

The chi squares confirm that the indicators effectively capture differences in normative expectations between urban whites and rural blacks. But we should not overlook something else the responses tell us, namely, the lack of normative consensus in each group. Levels of 80% consensus were reached on just over half the items (7 of 13 items) by each group (see Appendix D). Rural blacks were evenly divided on whether or not wives should live with in-laws (C1), on whether or not urban children should be sent to live with their rural grandparents (C10) and on whether or not marital squabbles should be referred to elders (C3). Whites were evenly divided over the best age gap between spouses (C4), on the desirability of sending one's parents to old-age homes (C2), on artificial insemination (C11), and whether the important role of a father was as provider or nurturer (C13). We return to this array of opinion in the last section of this paper, where it shapes the conclusions reached.

## **The Urban Black Sample**

Nobody would seriously challenge the notion that rural blacks in South Africa, for all their incorporation into the world market, conduct their daily domestic lives along principles derived from a very different set of circumstances than urban whites. Our thirteen indicators suggest how easy it is to tap into these differences. The more teasing problem is presented by urban blacks. They, on one hand, are often linked by ties of kinship, descent and

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<sup>21</sup> Yielding a chi square of 24.99 where 6.6 is the critical value at 99% level.

<sup>22</sup> Yielding a chi square of 20.98 where 6.6 is the critical value at 99% level.

domestic responsibility to rural communities, so much so that Spiegel and Mehlwana (1997) and Murray (1981) suggest we define black households in terms of shared resources rather than shared domicile. How much of such a pattern can be attributed to *apartheid*, and how much to a more continent-wide caution about abandoning rural resource base, is moot. On the other hand, blacks are now visibly settled as the majority in almost every South African town, spilling beyond the administrative confines of *apartheid's* peripheral locations into overcrowded apartment blocks in city centres, into clumsily contrived shacks and shanties on vacant plots and in other people's back yards, even into the leafy green suburbs. Some black families, for all *apartheid's* machinations to unsettle them, have been urban for over a century. How, if at all, has urbanisation changed the way people say they think about family and household?

Four urban sub-samples were selected: in Mamelodi, Pretoria (n=100); in KwaMashu, Durban (n=100); in Gompo, East London (n=99); and in Khayelitsha and Gugulethu, Cape Town (n=59). Fieldworkers were instructed to select in each town a settled black neighbourhood rather than an area of recent townward migration in order to *maximise* the chances of uncovering evidence of a putative *shift from the extended to the nuclear family*. In this we were following Spiegel *et al.* (1994:16), who had suggested that the extent of linkages between kinsmen would vary with socio-economic status and with the stage in the domestic development cycle, factors which they associated with particular types of housing in Cape Town. Linkages would be at their minimum amongst people in new formal brick-built houses who display an *apparent individualism* and an *eagerness to be free of networks of reciprocity* which is probably temporary, but which contrasts with the behaviour of both the more established residents and with the less established residents who *invest in social relations* by taking in dependants (*ibid*: 16-19). Our data was collected in the main from people in new formal brick-built houses. We assumed that if we did not find evidence of a drift from lineage in these households, it is probably extremely rare.

Within each neighbourhood, a random sample of plot clusters was drawn. On each plot in the selected cluster, the main or most substantial house was selected. Informants within houses were self-selected, though fieldworkers<sup>23</sup> were instructed to try to work to a quota in which men and women, old and young, were equally represented. Given these loose guidelines, the unemployed<sup>24</sup> and the housebound were inevitably over-represented; this meant that women were over-represented, with only 38% of the informants being men. The mean age of informants was 42 years. Some 47% were married, 44% had never married, and the remainder were no longer married (mostly being widows). Few (16.5%) were childless, with an average of 2.6 children per informant. One-fifth was very poorly educated, going no further than primary school; but 42% had completed high school, and many of these had post matriculation diplomas of various sorts (especially nursing and teaching qualifications) and 6% had university degrees. There was a predictable strong link between age and education, with older informants having got less far in school than younger informants.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> My thanks to Liz Qangule, Phindile Sibiyi and Trevor Noko for the collection of data in East London, Durban and Pretoria. Information from the Cape Town sample was collected by a group of 21 third year sociology majors at the University of Cape Town as part of their course requirement.

<sup>24</sup> Due to an oversight as the questionnaire went into translation, data on informants' current employment status was collected from only East London and Durban, where only 36% of informants were themselves in employment (but invariably part of a household where somebody else was employed).

<sup>25</sup> Chi square 40.0 where 11.3 is significant at 99 % level.

Were they truly urban? We asked how many years of their life they had spent living in a rural area. Only the Pretoria sample looked convincingly urban: 68% of them had never lived in a rural area, compared with a third in Durban, and a quarter in East London and Cape Town. Although for the sample as a whole 41% had never lived in a rural area, the average number of years spent in a rural area was a high twelve years, with a range from 0 to 68 years.

## Urban Blacks' Views

The most striking feature of urban black opinion is how divided it is. We have drawn attention to the lack of consensus within the urban white and rural black communities sampled. But in comparison with the urban blacks we would have to regard rural blacks and urban whites as each being of one mind. More interestingly, respondents from each of the four geographically dispersed and linguistically distinct urban samples show the same array of divided opinion, as though it is the urban situation per se which is responsible. They are split right down the middle on two of the thirteen indicators (C7 and C9), with one half choosing the conjugal and the other half the patrilineal options. On only four items do opinions begin to approach consensus, with almost three-quarters of respondents in agreement that husbands should be older than wives (C4) and that artificial insemination is unacceptable (C11) (both patrilineal choices), that fathers should see babies as soon as they are born (C6), and that grandchildren should not be fostered to their rural grandparents (C10) (both conjugal choices).

Overall there is slightly more support for conjugal than for patrilineal norms. On eight of the thirteen indicators, urban blacks make more conjugal than patrilineal choices:

- 79% think a husband should see his baby as soon as it is born (C6)
- 72% think that it is better for children to remain with their parents in town than to be sent to rural grandparents (C10)
- 65% think a married woman should not put her mother-in-law before her mother (C2)
- 60% think a man should avoid taking his wife to live with his parents (C1)
- 57% think that marital squabbles should be settled without parental intervention (C3)
- 57% prefer an unemployed but nurturing father to an absentee provider (C13)
- 56% think that a man should be content to restrict sex to one woman (C5)
- 51% think it acceptable for some women never to marry (C7)

We can read into the responses to questions C1, C2, C3 and C10 a distinct current of rejection, shared by two-thirds of the sample, of the rural tradition of multi-generational domestic groups. Rather, couples should live apart from their in-laws and with their children. The same preference for conjugal intimacy is expressed by some 60%, who choose faithful husbands and nurturing fathers (C5, C6 and C13). Most respondents also express an intolerance of polygyny in their rejection of male promiscuity, favour a greater involvement of men as husbands and fathers, and show a surprising preference for the materially unproductive but present and nurturing father over the absentee provider.

But we should not exaggerate the strength of this current of opinion. There is another current, running in a different direction, seen not only in the substantial minorities who do not share the above views, but also in the answers to some of the other questions asked. On the remaining five indicators, urban blacks make more traditional choices.

- 52% think that a child who is deceived about who its actual biological father is, is likely to get sick or worse (C9)

- 60% think that you should not send your old infirm parents to an old age home (C12)
- 65% think you should not resume sex within 6 weeks of a baby's birth (C8)
- 71% think artificial insemination is an unacceptable solution to the problem of fertility (C11)
- 73% think a husbands should be older than their wives (C4)

For most, marriages are still preferred between older men and younger women (C4). Paternity is still seen as the transmission of vital identity (C9). The old are not yet the discards of a materialist economy but ancestors-in-waiting (C12). But once again we stress the diversity of opinion of the urban respondents. Substantial minorities distance themselves from these views.

Despite pockets of similarity to both rural blacks and urban whites<sup>26</sup>, we conclude that, overall, urban blacks are significantly different from both these groups.<sup>27</sup> Something of this difference is captured in the measure, score, which we calculated by the simple addition, for each informant, of every answer in which patrilineal principles were rejected. The highest possible score is 13, for a respondent choosing the conjugal response to each indicator. The lowest is zero, for somebody rejecting all conjugal options. The average score for whites was a high 9.6, showing a predictable rejection of what we conceive as patrilineal principles. For rural blacks, the average score was 3.2, and for urban blacks, 6.75. This score is a very crude measure, for its components are thirteen unweighted, arbitrary items, with no proven equivalence as indicators. The addition or deletion of extra items would change the score. Nonetheless a comparison of the distribution of scores of the three groups throws into visible relief the distinctive sets of opinions expressed by them. The rural informants cluster at a score of 3, the urban blacks at a score of 7, and the whites at a score of 10.

What demographic and social variables are associated with these black urban opinions as elicited by *indicators* and measured by *score*? We found that the rejection of patrilineal precepts, as measured, however clumsily, by *score*, bore no significant correlation to the sex of the informant, to religious involvement, to the type of church attended, to the amount of time they had spent living in a rural area or to whether or not they were in paid employment (See Appendix G). Two factors bore some feeble correlation<sup>28</sup> with *score*: age and the closely associated marital status. The over-forties are slightly more conservative (*score* 6.5) than the under-forties (*score* 7.1) and the married (mean *score* 6.5) are more conservative than the never married (mean *score* 7.1).

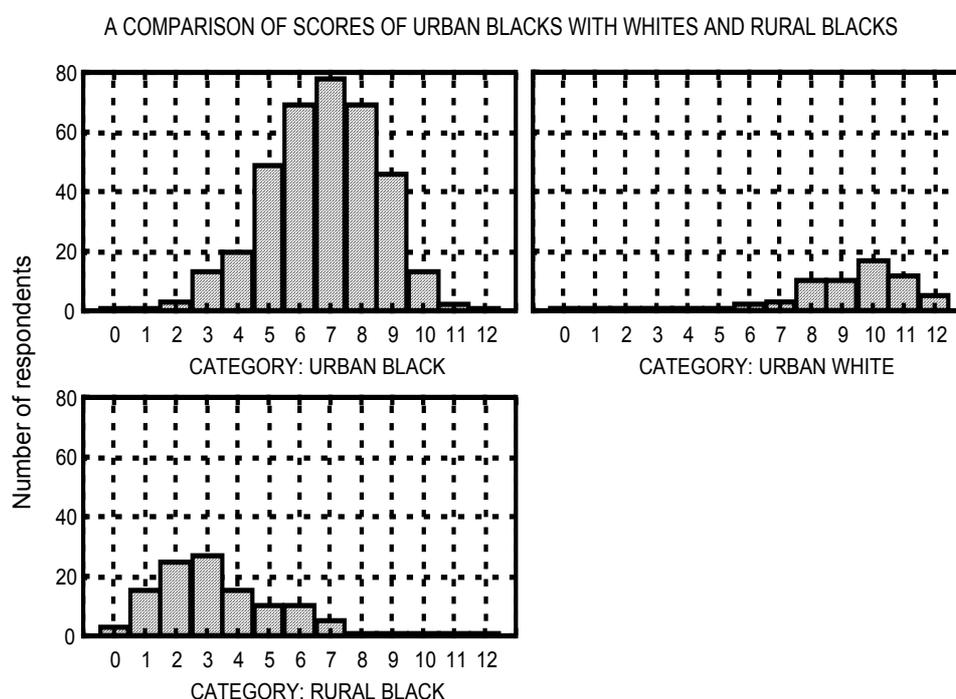
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<sup>26</sup> Chi square calculations (significant at 99% level) suggest they are indistinguishable from rural blacks on four indicators: a tendency to dislike the practice of living with in-laws, to wish to keep marital squabbles private, sending children to grandparents and artificial insemination. They are indistinguishable from urban whites on three indicators: age gap between spouses, old age homes and preference for nurturing fathers.

<sup>27</sup> With chi squares well above the critical value for all other indicators. See Appendices E and F.

<sup>28</sup> At 95% level.

FIGURE ONE: The different range of scores obtained by the three groups



Only one factor was found to significantly affect score, namely education.<sup>29</sup> The mean score rises steadily at each educational level: 6.2 for those with no more than primary education, 6.7 for those who had attended but not completed secondary education, 7.1 for those who had completed secondary school and 7.7 for university graduates.

## Indicating What?

The ambition of the project was to find some way around the clumsy alternatives we seem to face if we want to understand black urban households. On one hand there are the marvellously fine-grained studies of a handful of black households (e.g. Spiegel, 1997), the representativeness of which is a matter of guesswork. On the other hand, there are social surveys that, for all their scope, never seem able to penetrate the carapace of co-residence to tell us about linkages with other households, about the incidence of the fluidity, mobility and instability which we anticipate from the social anthropologists' accounts, or about the fission and fusion that apparently characterise contemporary black urban householding experience. The intention of the *indicators* was that they be just that: accessible items that would indicate economically the extent to which people had retained or abandoned principles of lineal descent in ordering their domestic life. If indicators were to have any application, their correlation with householding practices had to be established. Only then could they be used, if not as a proxy for, then as an intelligent supplement to, the laborious fact-finding which the social anthropologists undertake so well, albeit so infrequently.

<sup>29</sup> Chi square 51.046 with critical value 50.89 at 99% level.

The third stage of the project was thus a series of searching interviews<sup>30</sup> with two sets of black urban informants at each of the four urban sites: the first set comprised the respondents who gave the *fewest* patrilineal-type answers to the thirteen questions; the second set comprised those who gave the *most* patrilineal-type answers. The interviews were aimed at getting a detailed description of resident household composition, with attention to generational structure and kinship relationships, together with an account of the people who, although absent from the household, had various kinds of close ties with it (absent parents of the household's children, absent children of the household's adults, people who relied on household members for support, or who regularly gave the household support). We wanted to establish how in fact their households were constituted. Were their householding practices guided by principles of descent or were they structured, as in the West, on principles of conjugality?<sup>31</sup> We compared conservative low scorers with modernising high scorers.

We found no correlation at all<sup>32</sup> between people's opinions and attitudes, as reflected in their answers to the thirteen *indicators*, and their practice and experience of householding. The scores are unrelated to the household's size, or the number of generations in the household, or the absentees, or the extent of transfers to or from other households. They are unrelated to the resident household structure, whether of apparently conjugal or apparently consanguinal type. They are unrelated to people's identification of *home* as an urban or a rural place. They are unrelated to marriage rites, as shown quite strikingly, for example, in Figure Two below. Figure Two shows, paradoxically, that married people who paid *lobola* are less patrilineal as measured by scores than are those who married exclusively by church or civil rites. The difference is, however, statistically insignificant: not all informants were married, and the question was answered by less than half the sub-sample.

The only significant factor was the number of wage earners per household.<sup>33</sup> The more conservative respondents lived in households in which more people were in wage work, a correlation which we cannot immediately account for, since household size is insignificant.

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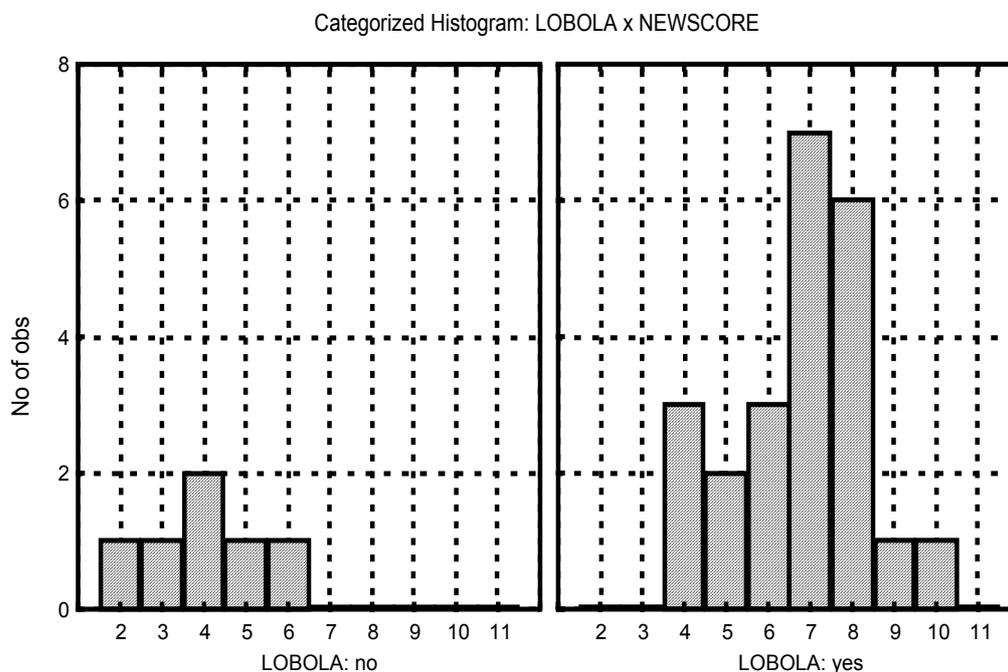
<sup>30</sup> Less searching than they should have been. Predictably, poorly trained field assistants and students both inevitably skimmed, wasting valuable opportunities. See Russell (1995).

<sup>31</sup> This is the subject of a separate paper in preparation.

<sup>32</sup> As measured by chi square test. See Appendix I.

<sup>33</sup> Chi square 50.32 where 43.77 is critical at 95 % level.

FIGURE TWO: Comparing the scores of married respondents who had married with and without lobola



Our study confirmed what psychologists have been trying to tell us for years: there is no necessary connection between what people say they do and what they do. There is even less between what they say they do and what they say they think ought to be done, which is what our indicators amount to.

## Discussion

Although the *indicators* – admittedly a rather arbitrary assemblage – fail entirely as predictors of householding practice, the responses are of interest. Significantly, they reveal an unanticipated gap between rural and urban respondents in matters of what is considered proper family behaviour. The hypothesis that urban blacks would respond more like rural blacks than like urban whites is proved false; black urban answers are marginally closer to those of urban whites than to those of rural blacks (though, as shown in Figure One, they occupy their own range, neatly between the two, leaning neither to the conjugal left nor to the lineage right of the graph).

Does this lend support to the assertion that urban blacks are experiencing a transition to a nuclear system? The dispassionate answer, based on this evidence, can only be a tentative 'maybe'. Indeed Goode argues that norms are the bases for predicting future family change (Goode, 1970:xiii). We might then interpret the gap between what people say and what they do as the consequence of their limited options. Many of the black student fieldworkers in the project favoured this interpretation, drawing attention to the impeded urbanisation imposed by *apartheid*, which severely limited housing options, and restricted movement. They argued that the non-nuclear householding patterns we found were the

forced outcome of powerless people. These students are the 'young', 'intellectual' and 'trained in Western schools' whom Goode singles out as particularly attracted to conjugal family ideology which he describes as a 'beguiling alternative' to those who 'feel their family ties bind them too harshly' (Goode, 1970:19).

'The ideology of the conjugal family is a radical one, destructive of the older traditions in almost every society... Its appeal is almost as universal as that of 'redistribution of land'... It asserts the right of the individual to choose his or her own spouse, place to live, even which kin obligations to accept... the individual is to be evaluated, not his lineage. Finally it asserts that if one's family life is unpleasant, one has the right to change it.' (Goode, 1970:19)

But before drawing this conclusion there is an alternative explanation to be considered.

Goode's thesis is so persuasive because it is nearly right. He was certainly right in detecting a destabilising current, but wrong in identifying the nuclear family as the model. He mistook certain contemporary elements in the nuclear family – its cultivation of individualism, its disregard for ascription – as its essence, rather than as recent manifestations of its own adaptation to changing conditions. Historically, the nuclear family has been, at times, as rigid, authoritarian and oppressive as any other 'traditional' kinship system. The notions that it uniquely embodies individual freedom and is the foundation of modern democracy (Goode, 1970: 20-21) mistakes its present evolving ethos for an inherent persisting structural feature. In its contemporary collapse, it reveals itself as intrinsically no more 'modern' than any other family system. It is just one amongst many possibilities, no more compatible with Twentieth Century England than it was with Fourteenth Century England. Its ability to weather the Twenty-first Century is suddenly less certain. As the historian Hobsbawm observed, 'basic and long-lasting arrangements' of the European nuclear family began to change 'with express speed' in the second half of the Twentieth Century (Hobsbawm, 1995:321). He describes this 'cultural revolution' as 'the triumph of the individual over society' which can be 'traced across the entire modernizing globe'. There is a 'fraying and snapping of old social textures and value systems' as the 'network of mutual obligation and custom comes under increasing strain' (*ibid*: 368). The demise of the nuclear family in the West is now a confident assertion in mainstream textbooks (for example Allan and Crow, 2001).

A system that originated in the Fifteenth Century cannot in itself uniquely be suited to contemporary post-industrial capitalism; it has simply proved itself resilient and adaptable. Far from being the stable endpoint in an evolutionary sequence, it has begun to show unmistakable signs of fragility. The cause is clear: reliable contraceptive techniques have released women from prolonged and unpredictable procreation, and thereby propelled them into the labour market alongside men, thoroughly upsetting what had become the accepted sexual division of labour and power. As a consequence of the introduction of this revolutionary contraceptive technology, marriage and birth rates have fallen since the 1960s, divorce has become common, and unmarried cohabitation has become acceptable (not only amongst divorcees but also amongst the nubile young). Unmarried pregnancy is no longer a threat; now judged voluntary, it has lost its stigma.<sup>34</sup>

Figures for England and Wales exemplify this remarkable change. In 1996, a third of all births occurred outside marriage, compared with only 5% in the 1950s (Coleman, 2000:51). In 1996, only 19% of women between the ages of 25 and 34 were married, compared with 39% who were cohabiting. The figures for men for that year are more extreme: only 15% were married

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<sup>34</sup> For reasoned arguments to deplore this tolerance see Morgan (1998).

compared with 48% cohabiting. The divorce rate in England and Wales is the highest in Europe, with one in four marriages contracted in 1983, for example, dissolved within ten years (*ibid*: 64). Figures confirm the low commitment of cohabiting couples to one another: the break-up rate is three to four times higher than the divorce rate, even when children are present (*ibid*: 60-61). The proportions of British children being brought up in 'historically unconventional family backgrounds' – lone-parent families, co-habiting couple families, step-families – are the highest in Europe (*ibid*: 80; Haskey, 1998:44).

Beck and Beck-Gernschein (1995) anchor their analysis of this process in the changing power relations of men and women. Antagonisms now surface 'in the very heart of the private sphere' because of disputes over who does what and whose choices prevail. Both men and women now feel impelled to plan their individual lives around employment, which offers the freedom of economic independence. They are socialised to put themselves first. But 'interlinking two such centrifugal biographies is a feat, a perilous balancing act, which was never expected so widely of previous generations'. The outcome is 'the negotiated family, the alternating family, the multiple family, new arrangements after divorce, remarriage, divorce again, new assortments from your, my, our children, our past and present families' as people repeatedly couple and recouple in the quest for meaning (*ibid*: 2-6). Rules about who is or is not a member of your family are unclear (Coleman, 2000:81). Underlying this phenomenon lies the capitalist market economy with its demand, not for nuclear families, as had been previously argued, but for unattached, mobile single persons (Beck and Beck-Gernschein, 1995:145).

There are echoes, in this description of the West, of the predicament of contemporary black South Africa, where unmarried motherhood, absent fathers and female-headed households have been misinterpreted as temporary stress resulting from an incomplete and imperfect transition towards the nuclear family. These are, rather, responses to the *same* pressures that are now causing the nuclear family to crack. They arise from participation in the modern market economy, albeit under conditions of apartheid and migrant labour, albeit with limited freedom to choose how or where or with whom one could live, albeit with limited purchasing power to participate as consumers in the avaricious market. Like nuclear families in the West, blacks are an integral part of the world market, and have been, with growing intensity, for at least a century. They too respond with a growing self-centredness, a growing hedonism, a growing sense that one should have to be responsible to nobody but oneself.

Because some of those pressures are common to whites and blacks, there are some superficial resemblances: some family features appear to converge. For example, there is a shared pressure to reduce family size as child labour becomes taboo and as bringing up children becomes expensive and difficult to manage with an increasing proportion of women in work. There is a shared pressure to own furniture, clothes, gadgets, a car, from a shared barrage of advertising. There is a shared realisation by women that it is possible to bring up a child without a husband. In this way similarities may occur. But to leap from evidence of such scattered similarities to a theory that one is being *transformed* into the other, and more particularly, that *they* are becoming like *us*, is evolutionary dogma or ethnocentricism, or both. Despite some two hundred years of Western crusading (the image is not used lightly; see Chiwome, 1994, for an interesting analysis of the single-minded opposition of Christian missionaries to traditional black family practice), South African black families retain their distinctiveness, which is rooted in a different past and a different set of inherited household practices and shaped by a different experience of history. They become modern in a distinctive way. Parallels with the nuclear family – unstable marriages, no marriages, extramarital sex, premarital pregnancies – should be seen as just that: parallels. Any convergence is a long way off, and the shape of the emerging new domestic order uncertain.

Black households cannot yet be understood outside the notion of descent. The black family system, adaptive to changed economic realities, no longer prescribes one particular pattern of co-residence, once essential to cultivator livelihood in rural areas. Instead it permits a range of what for simplicity I call households, within the rubric of the golden rule of patrilineal descent and patrilineal obligation. There are nonetheless in those rural areas least disrupted by apartheid's forced migrations, still to be found rural homesteads shaped by that older order, where sons still hedge their bets by building their own separate houses beside those of their father, where they and unmarried daughters send their children, if not for schooling, if not forever, then for school holidays, where weddings and funerals take place, where small fields are annually cultivated. Half of all black South Africans still live in rural areas<sup>35</sup>, many in such homesteads, which are increasingly propped up by cash contributions from absent members. Others form a more impoverished landless rural sector.

The politics of acculturation and urbanisation in South Africa are very complex. It was the urbanisation of blacks that transformed the state's somewhat haphazard policy of segregation into the elaborate architecture of apartheid. Urban areas had in principle been set aside for white residence only, as early as 1923, with blacks tolerated only for the essential labour they provided. From the start, exceptions had been made for the black elite, though even they had to carry papers to prove their exemption from the burgeoning administrative orders that attempted to limit black urbanisation. Acculturation to the dominant white culture through education or capital accumulation was the determining criterion for exemption from all this; the family housing provided and controlled by local authorities was accordingly shaped by conjugal nuclear family norms. The standard provision was a living room, a kitchen, and two bedrooms. Most urban migrants fended for themselves in more congested temporary and makeshift accommodation in other people's backyards and the growing shanty towns that sprang up beyond the town boundaries. Such shanties have been part of the landscape for a century. A government commission of 1914 described the majority of urban dwellings as 'mere shanties, often nothing more than hovels, constructed out of bits of old packing-case lining, flattened kerosene tins, sacking and other scraps'.<sup>36</sup> This history is well known and the story has been told in many places<sup>37</sup>: the increasing pace of black townward migration in the 40s, the rejection of the more tolerant proposals in 1947, the white electorate's vote for *apartheid* in 1948, and the start of the forty years' regime of racist Afrikaner nationalism, with its fanatical intolerance of black urbanisation.

The impact was to elevate urbanisation as an economic, political and personal goal, despite the squalid conditions that urbanisation frequently entailed. Rights to permanent urban residence depended on severing ties with rural areas, since to return home was to risk being forced into the chronic oscillation of migrant labour. Stark choices had to be made. Permanent urbanisation was invested with a glamour and sophistication well beyond the reality of the lifestyle on offer, but the alternative was attachment and possible confinement to the impoverished rural bantustans, where all custom was tainted by co-operation with the apartheid dream. Whereas in the United States of America blacks could (and in the 1980s did) defiantly invent an African past, with rituals to celebrate in order to underline their separateness from the dominant whites, in South Africa such a separation and a reinvention

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<sup>35</sup> Between 1985 and 1991 the percentage of blacks living in urban areas rose from 40% to 43% and is now estimated to be about 50% (*RSA 1985 Population Census Report, No 02-85-01*, and *RSA 1991 Population Census Report, No. 03-01-02*). The probably unreliable *1994 Provincial Statistics Report, No 00-90-10*, shows a decline in the proportion of blacks urbanised to 35%. Figures from the 1996 census, not available by race group, show 54% of the population (which is 77% black) to be urban, i.e. living in an area with some form of local government (*1996 Census in Brief. Report 03-01-11*).

<sup>36</sup> The 1914 Tuberculosis Commission cited in Hellman (1949), p.232.

<sup>37</sup> Never more vividly and with greater attention to fine detail than in Hellman (1949) and Kahn (1949).

of tradition was enforced by the dominant whites. Little wonder that attitudes to received culture are ambivalent. To embrace a distinctive culture was to capitulate to the oppressors, yet not to do so was to mimic them.

There are no economic grounds for expecting a residence pattern driven by the labour needs of subsistence production to be repeated in town. To the contrary, there have always been strong external disincentives to any such attempt. The hostility of white authorities to permanent black urban settlement meant a denial of urban space. Where space was permitted, occupancy was always under rigorous control. The expectation was that urban families would resemble conjugal households, not only in size but also in composition. On the other hand, the authorities had no compunction about dispersing such family members. Under the Children's Act of 1937, maintenance grants, designed 'to prevent the family being broken up by destitution', were available to black urban children 'only if the children cannot be repatriated to relatives in the reserves' (Jones, 1949:428- 430).

The black patrilineal system has responded to modernising pressures with notable flexibility. In some ways, with its spread of familial responsibility amongst a wide group, it seems better able to absorb new economic demands than the nuclear family. Its response to the demand for single, mobile, unattached workers, has not been disintegration but adaptation. The migrant labourer, geographically mobile and effectively single, comes close to the employer's ideal. The moral outrage with which the institution of migrant labour is generally held in the West springs directly from conjugal family ideology. The release of young men from rural homestead obligations for a spell in paid employment melded well with the agrarian economy. Had this not been so the institution of migrant labour would never have become so widespread throughout Africa. For, far from being the emotionally pivotal father/husband figure in a close knit conjugal entity, migrant workers were often single men, economically dispensable by the extended family homestead for most of the year, though perhaps not to the chief to whose service they might otherwise have been drafted. In Swaziland at the turn of the century, the royal family took advantage of their right to such service to attach the earnings of migrant workers, whom they encouraged down the mines, to establish a fund for the re-purchase of land alienated by settlers (Russell, 1990). The manipulation of migrant labour by young men to wrest authority from their elders, by pitting against this traditional gerontocracy their economic weight from earnings, is a well-documented theme. Migrant labour ironically confers on people in the consanguinal system an enviable, and a very *modern*, independence. The conjugal bonds of the nuclear system would be unlikely to withstand the frequent and prolonged absences of married people from one another. The consanguinal system with its more formal expectations is much more tolerant of the resulting marital infidelities that occur. Premarital pregnancies are absorbed into 'tradition', problems of legitimacy settled with rituals of compensation.<sup>38</sup>

Never saddled with the 20th century nuclear family notion that wives were housebound economic parasites, the consanguinal system has allowed women's incorporation as wage-earners with little disturbance to received notions of appropriate sex roles. There is a reaffirmation of dispersed responsibilities amongst scattered kin, to be seen in the fostering of children, the constant transfer of earnings to dependants, the shuttling of packed buses between town and country. Strategic separations between working mothers and their children are similarly absorbed. As Page (1989: 402) reminds us, the model in which the child bearer is the child-carer is 'quite inappropriate for most of sub-Saharan Africa'. Other kin have joint rights and responsibilities for children to a degree that is 'almost unimaginable' to

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<sup>38</sup> The rural nature of these rituals – still based on the exchange of cattle, the sacrifice of a goat – suggest that Southern African families have been coping with such births for a long time.

people from other cultural regions, affecting parent-child relationships fundamentally rather than marginally, promoting a precocious independence, which Western nuclear systems handle rather poorly in a protracted rebellious adolescence.

Wallerstein, Beittel, Martin and Smith have suggested that households are the *creation* of the world capitalist system (Wallerstein and Smith, 1992; Wallerstein and Martin, 1979; Martin and Beittel, 1987). Their approach is much more daring and engaging than most dull accounts of household size and composition. They locate the household at the centre of our understanding of international inequalities. They argue, for example, that in changing household size we can see the impact of the expansion and contraction of the world economy: when the going is good, households contract; but in bad times and in bad places, like the capitalist periphery, they expand to spread the gains and losses amongst the greatest number of kin.

Unhappily, they choose to define household as that group of people – not necessarily kin, not necessarily co-resident – who pool resources over a life-time. Spiegel and Murray have both made similar suggestions. Indeed the reality of this dispersed network of dependants is so taken for granted in southern Africa that *absentees* may feature in household enumerations without further definition.<sup>39</sup> Such a *household* is easy to conceptualise but difficult to capture in a routine census or survey. And it is this latter 'household', this simple, accessible, co-residing group, that we must understand if we are to make proper sense of the masses of social data available to us.

The idea that black South African domestic life is in the throes of some kind of transformation is persuasive, but the idea that this transformation is an incomplete transition to a Western nuclear system is poorly grounded empirically and philosophically. Harden's notion that the foundations of the extended family across Africa are cracking 'like a bridge that has borne too much high-speed traffic for too many years' (Harden, 1991:67) overlooks people's ingenuity at making lasting repairs to a system whose flexibility has been consistently underrated.<sup>40</sup> The golden age of the nuclear family has passed. The global economy relentlessly shapes a more individual-centred pattern for domestic life. This pressure has been felt in southern Africa for the past century, and nowhere more cruelly than by blacks. The descent-based consanguinal system has proved as adaptable to the new demands as any. In the process it has produced a flexible array of householding arrangements, which must be examined on their own terms. The doctrinaire assumptions of the universality of discrete household must be laid aside. The practical consequences for social scientists are very challenging.

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<sup>39</sup> See Seekings (1990:15) for an account of a survey in Cape Town in which 'what precisely constituted a household was not... defined...but...included people not sleeping under the same roof.'

<sup>40</sup> Spiegel *et al.* (1994, 1997) show how these extended kin networks are differentially manipulated: some people work to be free of networks of reciprocity; others spread risks by deliberately investing in dependants.

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## APPENDIX A

The following 28 questions were asked of the rural black sample (n=110) in KwaZulu-Natal and the urban white sample (n=59) in Cape Town. A comparison of the responses of the two groups yielded the 13 items on which there was greatest disagreement between the two groups. These (marked \*) became the basis for the indicators.

- \* A1. If a married couple have a disagreement or argument should they:
  - tell their parents about it and seek advice and intervention?
  - keep it as a private matter between themselves?
- A2. Which is better?
  - For a woman to love her husband
  - For a woman to respect her husband
- A3. Should a married woman
  - Stay at home and look after her young children?
  - Get a job in order to support her children?
- \* A4. If a married couple are living in town and their parents live in a rural area, is it better:
  - To send their children to live with their grandparents?
  - To bring up the children themselves?
- A5. Once a man marries, his duty is:
  - Only to his wife and children?
  - Also to support his parents although he has new responsibilities?
- \* A6. A married woman should
  - Put her mother before her mother-in-law
  - Put her mother-in-law before her mother
- A7. A married man should
  - Put his mother before his mother-in-law
  - Put his mother-in-law before his mother
- \* A8. Which do you think is the better father?
  - An unemployed man who plays with his children and teaches them
  - An working man who provides all the necessary money but who seldom sees his children
- A9. Which is more unfortunate?
  - A child who does not know who its true mother is
  - A child who does not know who its true father is
- A10. Which is more desirable?
  - A respectful child
  - A clever child
- \* A11. When a man marries, should he
  - Make sure he and his wife have an independent place to stay?
  - Make his wife to live at his parents' home?

A12. Whom you marry is

Your own private concern

A matter for deliberation by your family

A13. Sometimes a child's father is unknown. Is this worse for

A boy?

A girl?

\* A14. When your parents become old and helpless, is it better

To keep them with you and look after them?

To send them to an institution where they will receive specialist care until they die?

A15. Who is expected to take major responsibility for the material wellbeing of children?

Their mother

Their father

A16. If a child is brought up to believe a certain man to be their father who is not their biological father, which is more disturbing?

To tell them who their real father is

Not to tell them who their real father is

A17. Is it better for an unmarried pregnant girl to stay with

Her parents?

Her boyfriend?

\* A18. The important thing about a father is not whether he was the one who impregnated your mother but whether he was the one who took responsibility for you: Agree/Disagree.

\* A19. A child who is deceived about who its biological father is is likely to get sick or worse: Agree/Disagree.

A20. There comes a time when parents must urge their children to leave home and stand on their own feet: Agree/Disagree.

\* A21. All women should marry: Agree/Disagree.

\* A22. It is natural and to be expected that a man will never be content to restrict sex to one woman: Agree/Disagree.

\* A23. If a couple are infertile, artificial insemination from an anonymous donor is an acceptable solution: Agree/Disagree.

A24. The most important requirement for marriage is to be in love: Agree/Disagree.

\* A25. Which is the best age gap between a married couple? Which is the worst?

About the same age

The husband should be up to 4 years older

The husband should be 5 to 10 years older

The husband should be more than 10 years older

A26. Should a father be present to see his child's birth?

\* A27. How soon after birth should a husband see his child?

\* A28. How long after a birth should a couple wait before resuming sex?

## APPENDIX B: Rejected Questions.

Some questions were badly phrased or misunderstood and therefore rejected. Others, shown below, show far greater convergence between rural blacks and urban whites than was anticipated. Rejected as indicators, they are reproduced as evidence of a different kind. The percentage of each group making a nuclear family system choice is indicated.

A2. Which is better: (a) for a woman to love her husband? or (b) for a woman to respect her husband?

Percentage whites answering (a) 68%  
 Percentage rural blacks answering (a) 43.5%  
 Chi square value: 8.199      df=1

A3. Should a married woman (a) stay at home and look after her young children or (b) get a job in order to support her children?

Percentage whites choosing (a) 65%  
 Percentage rural blacks choosing (a) 44.95 %  
 Chi square value: 5.971      df=1

A5. Once a man marries is his duty (a) only to his wife and children? or (b) also to support his parents although he has new responsibilities?

Percentage whites choosing (a) 60%  
 Percentage rural blacks choosing (a): 40.91%  
 Chi square value: 5.289      df=1

A12. Whom you marry is (a) your own concern? or (b) a matter for deliberation for the whole family?

Percentage whites choosing (a) 86%  
 Percentage rural blacks choosing (a) 70.6%  
 Chi square value: 5.034      df=1

A15. Who is expected to take major responsibility for the material well-being of children: (a) mother? or (b) father?

Percentage whites choosing father: 66%  
 Percentage blacks choosing father: 90.9%  
 Chi square value: 22.47      df=2

A17. Is it better for an unmarried pregnant girl to stay with (a ) her parents? or (b) her boyfriend?

Percentage whites choosing (b): 22%  
 Percentage blacks choosing (b): 26%  
 Chi square value: 0.2445      df=1

A20. State whether you agree or disagree: There comes a time when parents must urge their children to leave home and stand on their own feet

Percentage whites agreeing: 85%  
Percentage blacks agreeing: 75.5%

## APPENDIX C: The Thirteen Indicators

- C1. A married man should avoid taking his wife to live with his parents
- C2. A married woman should put her mother-in-law before her mother
- C3. If a married couple have a disagreement they should keep it as a private matter between themselves
- C4. Ideally a husband and wife should be about the same age
- C5. It is natural and to be expected that a man will never be content to restrict sex to one woman
- C6. A husband should see his child as soon as it is born
- C7. All women should eventually marry
- C8. A couple should resume sex within six weeks of a baby's birth
- C9. A child who is deceived about who its actual biological father is is likely to get sick or worse
- C10. It is better for children to be brought up by their grandparents than to remain with parents in town
- C11. If a couple are infertile, artificial insemination from an anonymous donor is an acceptable solution
- C12. When your parents are old and helpless it is best to send them to an institution where they will be cared for till they die.
- C13. A man who provides all the necessities for his child but seldom sees it is better than an unemployed man who spends his time playing with and teaching his child.

**APPENDIX D: The Percentage of Whites, Rural Blacks and Urban Blacks Making Nuclear Family-style Responses to Each of the Thirteen Indicators, by Sex**

Indicator		White: % nuclear	Rural black: % nuclear	Urban black: % nuclear
Q1	Male	100	59.6	55.5
	Female	100	57.1	62.7
	Total	100	58.2	59.9
Q2	Male	100	17.1	61.3
	Female	100	28.6	67.4
	Total	100	23.6	65.1
Q3	Male	73.9	44.68	62
	Female	91.4	50.79	54.4
	Total	84.5	48.18	57.3
Q4	Male	45.5	2.13	28.5
	Female	31.4	9.52	25.8
	Total	36.3	6.36	26.8
Q5	Male	73.9	29.79	58.4
	Female	80	19.05	54.7
	Total	77.6	23.64	56.1
Q6	Male	100	10.64	73.7
	Female	100	23.33	82.6
	Total	100	17.76	79.2
Q7	Male	78.3	25.53	41.9
	Female	97.1	22.22	56.4
	Total	89.7	23.64	51.0
Q8	Male	75	0	37.2
	Female	66.7	4.92	33.9
	Total	70.3	2.78	35.2
Q9	Male	91.3	6.38	48.2
	Female	77.1	4.76	48.2
	Total	82.8	5.45	48.2
Q10	Male	100	53.19	74.5
	Female	100	69.84	70.2
	Total	100	62.73	71.8
Q11	Male	66.7	17.02	27.0
	Female	57.1	19.05	29.3
	Total	61	18.18	28.5
Q12	Male	58.3	12.77	41.6
	Female	45.7	14.29	38.2
	Total	50.9	13.64	39.5
Q13	Male	52.2	8.51	54.7
	Female	63.6	15.87	58.2
	Total	58.9	12.73	56.9

## APPENDIX E: Comparison of urban black with white responses to thirteen indicators

Chi square values where critical value for 2 degrees of freedom (at 99% level) is 9.21. \* No significant difference. \*\* 11 degrees of freedom.

Indicator	Chi square
1	35.90
2	26.31
3	15.71
4	2.99*
5	9.56
6	12.41
7	30.63
8	17.39
9	24.16
10	19.45
11	24.15
12	3.32*
13	0.82*
SCORE **	179.65 (critical value 24.73)

## APPENDIX F: Comparison of urban black with rural black responses to thirteen indicators

Chi square values where critical value for 2 degrees of freedom (at 99% level) is 9.21. \* No significant difference. \*\* 12 degrees of freedom.

Indicator	Chi square
1	0.78*
2	61.77
3	3.58*
4	22.16
5	37.18
6	139.5
7	26.42
8	46.67
9	65.64
10	4.08*
11	5.91*
12	28.78
13	69.87
SCORE **	235.72 (critical value 26.22)

## APPENDIX G: Urban blacks. Relationship Between Score and Other Variables: Chi Squares

Variable	Chi square	Degrees of freedom	P	Critical value at 95% level	Critical value at 99% level
Age	18.19	10	.05189	18.31	23.21
Sex	15.148	10	.1267	18.31	23.21
Marital status	37.38	20	.0105	31.41	37.57
Education	51.05	30	.0097	43.77	50.89
Actively religious	6.96	10	.729	18.3	23.21
Denomin-ation	29.18	30	.508	43.77	50.89
Rural years	24.87	30	.7314	43.77	50.89
Employed	26.65	40	.9477	>43.77	>50.89

## **APPENDIX H: Schedule of questions used to guide interviews with selected urban informants**

### **Section One: Resident Household Composition**

List by name all the people living in the house. Cluster them by generation. Circle the informant. Then ask in respect of each person sex, age, relation to informant, length of residence in household, Source of income including occupation.

### **Section Two: Absentees**

There are four categories of absentees. Describe each category to the informant, one at a time, and then, after discussion, list absentees

Category a: people who, although they do not live in this house, give financial support to (some) people in the house. What is their name? How are they related to household? Where are they? What support is received?

Category b: people who, although they do not live in this house, receive financial support from (some) people in this house. What is their name? How are they related to the household? Where are they? What support is given?

Category c: If absent from the house, any parent from any child under 18 living in the house. What is the name of the child concerned? Which parents are absent? Where is the parent and why?

Category d: If absent from the house, any child under 18 of an adult living in the house. What is the name of the adult concerned? What is the age and sex of the absent child? With whom is the child staying? Give details of the length and cause of the absence.

### Section Three: Attitudes

Urbanisation:

- Where is home?
- How long have they lived in the urban area?
- When did they last go home?
- Who lives at home?
- Where do they want to be buried and why?

Marriage

- By what rites did they marry, if married?
- Did they exchange lobola?
- Is lobola practice changing? In what way?

Divorce

- Is infertility good grounds for divorce?
- Is sexual frigidity good grounds for divorce?
- Is sexual infidelity good grounds for divorce?

Children

- What was their experience as a child: did they grow up with parents?
- Does it matter to a child which household it grows up in?
- Do children growing up apart from parents suffer any disadvantages?
- Do parents living apart from their children suffer any disadvantages?

### Section Four: Household Income

People nowadays get money from various sources:

Where do the people in this household get their money from?

People have different ways of organising the way they fund their daily lives. How are things organised in this household?

- Who pays for food?
- Who prepares food?
- Who pays for electricity? Paraffin?
- Who pays for children's clothes? School fees?
- If they run out of money, who helps?

How did you spend your money last month?

If you had more money, who would you help with that money?

### **APPENDIX I: Chi Squares: Urban Black Scores and Household Practices of Informant's Household**

Number	Variable	Chi square	Degrees of freedom	Critical value (95%)
1	Number of generations in household	10.14	18	28.87
2	Household type	22.65	24	36.42
3	Remittances received	21.11	18	28.87
4	Remittances despatched	28.28	30	43.77
5	Absent children	16.287	24	36.42
6	Absent parents	27.28	18	28.87
7	Number of wage earners	50.32	30	43.77
8	Household size	70.135	66	
9	Desired burial site	8.5	12	21.03
10.	Marriage rites	30.09	36	>43.77
11	Years schooling	58.12	42	