

SOUTH AFRICA: POVERTY AND INEQUALITY
INFORMAL DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES

19891
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**Violence and Poverty
in South Africa:
Their Impact on Household
Relations and Social Capital**

Caroline Moser



**WORLD BANK
COUNTRY DEPARTMENT I
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FOREWORD

This paper is one of a series of informal discussion papers on poverty and inequality issues in South Africa, which were produced as contributions to the Poverty and Inequality Report (PIR). The PIR was commissioned by the Deputy President's Office of the Government of the Republic of South Africa (and was published in 1998 by Praxis Publishing, South Africa). As these papers were written at different times over the years 1996-1998, the analysis in each paper covers different periods; however, for ease of reference, they are now being disseminated in one series.

A complementary report, which gathers the views of the poor themselves, was written by a team of South Africans and also published by Praxis Publishing. "The Experience and Perceptions of Poverty in South Africa" (1998) gives voice to the poor, who describe what poverty is to them, how they get trapped in it, and how they might escape from it. This study was initiated and funded by the World Bank (through a Dutch Trust Fund) and by the Overseas Development Administration of the U.K. Government.

The papers in this series were written under the direction of Ann Duncan (Task Manager) and under the overall guidance of Pamela Cox (Country Director) and Ruth Kagia (Sector Manager). The series was edited by Barbara Koeppel, and the final presentation was managed and executed by Lori Geurts.

Country Department I
The World Bank
February 1999

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This is an informal study by World Bank staff, published for discussion purposes. It is not an official World Bank document.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was written by Caroline Moser, Lead Specialist, Social Development, Latin American and Caribbean Region. A large number of people in South Africa shared their ideas, knowledge and documentation for this review. As a newcomer to research on South Africa, this paper could not have been written without their tremendous generosity for which I am deeply grateful. In particular I would like to thank the following: Wendy Anneke, Debbie Budlender, Pregs Govender, Lulu Gwagwa, Francie Lund, Julian May, Milla McLachlan, Sue Parnell, Edgar Pieterse, Marnie Piggot, Eleanor Preston-White, Mamphela Ramphele, Chris Rogerson, Mark Swilling and Vanessa Watson. I would also like to thank Debbie Budlender, Julian May, Mamphela Ramphele and Chris Rogerson for insightful comments on the draft document, and to Lynn Bennett and Deepa Narayan for reviewing it in Washington

The views expressed in this study are those of the author and should not be attributed to the World Bank, members of its Board of Executive Directors, or the countries they represent

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DAG	Development Action Group
FS	Free State
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PIR	Poverty and Inequality Report
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment (“The Experience and Perceptions of Poverty in South Africa”)
SALDRU	Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (University of Cape Town)
SPP	Surplus Peoples Project
UDF	United Democratic Front

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

	<u>Rand/US\$</u>
1990	2.6
1991	2.7
1992	3.1
1993	3.4
1994	3.5
1995	3.6
1996	4.7
1997	4.9
1998	5.9

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Analytical Framework: A Nexus Linking Poverty, Violence and the Apartheid Legacy

Today's twin problems of poverty and inequality, and the dramatic growth in crime and violence, are legacies of the past 30 years of apartheid that confront South Africa. They affect social and economic development, nationwide: Investors are reluctant to risk their capital, health and police costs are high, and mortality and morbidity rates are greater than they would otherwise be. As elsewhere, violence deepens the poverty of the majority, African population because it erodes their assets, as did apartheid's spatial and labor policies, for three generations.

This paper examines the complex interrelationship between the violence-poverty-apartheid nexus. Using secondary data, it provides a brief historical analysis of how apartheid policy, as well as the struggle against it, affected the assets of the poor--particularly household relations and social capital. The paper's recommendations are intended to assist in designing interventions that promote opportunities, as well as remove constraints that prevent the poor from using their assets more productively, and thereby reduce levels of violence and poverty.

Over the long-term, apartheid systematically imposed a range of labor, welfare and spatial policies: Under the guise of 'separate development,' it not only discriminated against the Black population economically, politically and socially, but also produced and reproduced severe levels of poverty and violence.

The paper analyzes a nexus linking poverty, violence and the legacy of apartheid policy. An understanding of each of these three issues and the way they are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, is necessary to design interventions capable of breaking the cycle. In examining the links, it must be recognized that poverty relates not only to income, but also to 'vulnerability,' and both are closely tied to ownership of assets: The more assets held by individuals, households and communities, and the better they are managed, the less vulnerable they are. Conversely, the more the assets are eroded, the greater the level of insecurity and poverty.

The paper's two main sections focus on the two less familiar, intangible assets--household relations and social capital--and highlight their links to other assets such as labor and human capital. The paper does not include primary data; nor does it aim to be a comprehensive review of the present situation. Rather, in drawing on secondary sources from the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, as well as the recently completed Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA, 1997), the paper seeks to join the complex current debate about the most effective way to reduce poverty. Both sections aim to:

- Identify the importance of each asset in reducing vulnerability and poverty;
- Describe historically how the legacy of apartheid consolidated or eroded each asset;
- Depict how violence has either consolidated or eroded each asset;
- Outline potential interventions to help the poor strengthen their assets.

B. Household Relations as an Asset

1. Why household relations are important

Over the past 30 years, the structure and composition of poor households has fundamentally changed, both due to and as a response to the broader political and socio-economic environment.¹ In the current period of political transition, a number of ‘family-focused’ pro-poor policies--with respect to housing, infrastructure, child welfare and pensions--are being designed. The way that households operate will determine the success of such policies which, themselves may influence future household types. Thus, it is important to understand household relations as economic assets--identifying the current structures, composition, intra-household relationships and obstacles to household cohesion resulting from decades of discriminatory policies.

Recommendations to reduce poverty that target poor African households begin by acknowledging the tremendous diversity in their structure and composition. Differences exist between rural and urban areas, as well as among regions; structures of inequality even vary within rural communities. Two aspects of apartheid, in particular, fragmented the so-called ‘traditional’ households. These were:

- The migrant labor system and influx control measures that separated workers (mainly men), from their families for long periods, which led to double-rootedness;
- ‘Separate development’ spatial policies that forcibly dispossessed households of their land and livestock and relocated them in ‘Bantustan homelands.’

Although ‘fragmentation’ was primarily caused by these policies, it was exacerbated because households also restructured proactively as a way to retain as much normalcy as possible (wherever loopholes in the system allowed it) and to cope with extreme poverty.

¹ In the period prior to 1948, three clusters of African rural household ‘types’ were identified as (i) the cash-cropping household; (ii) the labor-exporting household; and (iii) the labor tenant or share-cropping household (Martin and Beittel, 1987)

Because of the marginalized location of most African households within the economy, local economic and social resources were inadequate to guarantee residential stability. Thus, case studies from different parts of the country confirmed that besides men being absent from rural domestic units, women and even some children are periodically away. These fluctuating, open-ended, social networks were and are a widespread response to a narrow, vulnerable economic base. Since access to outside resources from wage labor is achieved only with long absences from home, fluid residential arrangements continue to be experienced by many African poor. Further, tensions relating to the contradictory requirements between staying home to care for children and the elderly and leaving to acquire the income to maintain family members deepens the intra-household conflict. In turn, this intensifies household instability.

2. Conclusions: The social and economic costs of 'fluid' household relations

Case studies also reveal that what began as a comprehensive system of influx control and 'separate development,' which prevented black migratory workers from bringing their families to cities and from owning either land or housing, fundamentally changed the concept of households, families and parent-child relationships. Thus, many Black South Africans have experienced two or three generations of 'split,' doublerooted, or 'fluid' households. Indeed, elastic household boundaries, complicated and varied structures, and short-term 'marriages' for both men and women have become a way of life. Many children experience a life of residential instability, which is reinforced from one generation to the next. Parents accustom children to relatively fluid non-exclusive filial bonds, and relationships with fathers are often superficial because of the long periods they are working away from home; frequently, children do not know their fathers. Further, if mothers obtain jobs, return to school or become involved in new relationships, child care can become problematic. Like their parents, children eventually have to accept regular absences from home, long-distance traveling, residential instability and lack of economic security.

At the same time, case studies highlight the population's resourcefulness and determination to survive by managing household relations as assets over space and time, in a climate where violence and poverty reinforce each other in eroding intra-household trust and reciprocity. The following four interrelated characteristics systematically categorize the way in which household relations as assets are mobilized as effectively as possible.

- Extended households--often over three or four generations--are a widespread safety net. With high dependency ratios and very low per capita incomes, these are the poorest households and provide refuge and care to particularly vulnerable members;
- In many extended households, the middle generation is incomplete or missing altogether as grandparents assume parenting responsibilities of their grandchildren, thus releasing parents to earn an income away from their place of residence;

- Where households are headed by women, they are not necessarily the children's mothers; often they are grandmothers, aunts or other female relatives taking primary responsibility of a group of children;
- Widespread foster care can be seen as a conscious strategy to more effectively pool the burden of child care in terms of the availability of resources, shelter and the presence of adults. This led the Lund Committee to conclude that many South African children, especially the poor, are not being continuously parented by either or both of their parents.

The combination of very high levels of poverty, violence and social disintegration means that a considerable proportion of blacks are constantly on the move; not only in and out of relationships, but also spatially--and this deepens the problems. For example, wives go to urban areas to extract remittances from their husbands, which causes them to incur travel expenses and lose time, thereby reducing opportunities to earn income or care for their children. Also, when children are fostered out because their labor is useful, or accompany their mothers, the long-term human capital consequences are substantial, if they drop out of school and forgo the opportunity to acquire skills.

When relationships break up or people move from dangerous areas, separation may reduce stress and violence, but the households are left with fewer assets--say, of those who could contribute to household income and chores.

3. Policy implications

The paper explores three policies with respect to consolidating household relations as assets:

- **Defining, monitoring and measuring 'fluid' households during the post apartheid transition.**

If poverty reduction strategies are to succeed, they must define, monitor and measure aspects relating to households, families and father/mother-child parenting relationships. The limits of household surveys to measure the fluidity of household composition has been recognized and the advantages of more participatory techniques have been identified. The importance of integrating such information into broader survey results is critical.

Identifying implications of different household structures

The sector specific implications of the complex household types need to be identified, with the results integrated into policies, programs and projects. This has already been noted in some recent policy recommendations, particularly in relation to welfare:

Child support grant. Recent recommendations from the Lund Committee that a flat-rate grant should be introduced and that 'it should be paid to the primary care-giver of a child,' stemmed from the recognition that primary care-givers are frequently neither father nor mother.

Old age pensions. Recommendations for continuing old age and disability pensions are important, given their distributional aspect. Although awarded to elderly individuals, they are largely consumed as household assets and shared with children or grandchildren, where the elderly live in three generation families.

Housing policy. Recent research has highlighted the limitations of self-help housing policies that require fluid, low-income households to incrementally consolidate their housing. Such efforts require a degree of domestic stability, and vice versa, not the least because they assume a relatively long-term commitment of resources.

Identifying the effects of poverty and violence on attempts to rebuild household relations

If households are to manage their assets successfully, interventions that can break the cycles that sustain poverty and violence need to be integrated into all sector planning. What to do and how to do it are critical questions that ultimately can only be answered by Black South Africans themselves. Nevertheless, a multitude of entry points are needed. For instance, the prioritization of services that address domestic violence, and its impact on women, children and men is not simply a welfare issue. Equally the impact on human dignity and the lack of a sense of self-worth - resulting from degrading physical and social environments (Ramphela, 1993,8) - will not necessarily change overnight by a coherent housing policy.

Also problematic are the highly complex questions concerning women, men and children's perceptions of relationships in the post-apartheid context. While the return to the so-called 'traditional' (i.e. nuclear) family is not an option, nor is future of the new types of families and households clear.

Within such a context, the issue is to design policies that can facilitate greater levels of inter-personal trust and promote greater stability in household relations. The entry point many well be less difficult at the community than the household level. For this reason, social capital and its links to household relations should be considered as an asset.

C. Social Capital as an Asset

Because two PIR background reports separately address the importance of both violence and social capital in poor rural and urban communities, this paper focuses on the nexus linking the apartheid legacy, poverty and violence in repeating cycles. Despite considerable documentation on community level struggles and protest during the 1980s

and early 1990s, these have not yet been analyzed from the perspective of social capital. As in other contexts where work on social capital is still experimental, indicators do not exist to 'measure' whether these 'stocks' of social capital have been consolidated or eroded. Despite this limitation, even a descriptive account can provide guidelines to policy makers--given the importance of social capital as an asset in poor communities

Fatalities due to violence and civil unrest during the apartheid period were both the consequence of and response to state oppression. The cyclical nature of struggle meant that as protest became more intense, it led to greater police reaction, which led to even more resistance, and resistance to counter-action. In 'unbundling' this nexus, contradictory trends can be identified: Certain processes have consolidated stocks of social capital, while opposite processes have eroded them. The following three distinctions may clarify some of the contradictory trends that have materialized in different types of community institutions in South Africa during the past decades.

1. Reciprocity and trust in poor communities: Consolidation of social capital?

Reciprocal social networks that are essential to sustain households in poor communities through the decades of poverty, persecution and suppression associated with apartheid, have consolidated 'stocks' of social capital. These are strongest at the inter-household level where they involve women and in horizontally-structured organizations. For example, the reciprocal sharing of fuel provides the basis for one type of trust that not only protects the vulnerable, but also consolidates social capital.

The most common 'formal' social institutions, based on trust and collaboration, relate to monetary savings. *Stokfels iseti*, *mehodisano* and burial societies, whose design and functions were established decades ago, were all structured around members' mutual benefits and characterized by the circulation of money. Generations of poor Blacks, particularly in urban areas, have participated in such organizations. Although both men and women belong to them, they are particularly important for women.

However, within the range of mutual benefit institutions some are more horizontal than others. One of the most difficult problems around stokfels relates to its pyramid-like structure. This means that while the first members to receive money get it interest free, those at the tail end of the benefit scheme are in fact loaning to others without interest. If the top structure of the stokfel disappears, as sometimes happens, those at the bottom lose everything.

Not all 'indigenous' community organizations generate social capital. In both rural and urban areas, hierarchically structured, traditional, tribal chiefdoms, the *amakhosi*, with their limited customary law judicial functions had a complex relationship with local communities. Another community-level social institution that was often hierarchical in structure was the *people's court*, --the 'extra-state' township courts which addressed civil and criminal cases--with contradictory experience in generating social capital.

2. The apartheid legacy and its associated violence: Erosion of social capital?

Despite inter-community reciprocity, the legacy of apartheid policies and their associated violence systematically destroyed many poor communities. One of the most pernicious mechanisms to directly affect local communities was the relocation or removal, either forced or 'voluntary,' of up to seven million people. This not only eroded households relations as assets--with implications for both household structure and community cohesiveness--but it also led to desperate conditions in relocation areas that were not the result of a tragic disaster but of considered legislation, intended to divide and control people. Over 25 years, this was exerted by removing the productive and physical assets of the Black population, and also by the systematic erosion of close-networked communities in both urban and rural areas--in other words, their social capital.

What started originally as people being taken in trucks and dumped *en masse* in the *veld*, was followed by 'motivational' efforts--vague promises, announcements and retractions, rumors and harassment--sometimes justified in the name of the law. The scale of relocation was so extensive and varied with respect to type, location and ethnic group, that the experiences of communities differed greatly and it is impossible to generalize about its effect on 'stocks' of social capital.

3. Community social institutions, protest and struggle against apartheid: Consolidating or eroding social capital?

Community groups, such as the civic organizations--often hierarchical in structure-- contributed through non-violent protest to the liberation struggle which eventually ended the apartheid system and created the Government of National Unity. Indeed, their success was grounded in the trust and collaboration from poor communities. At the same time, violent protest and resistance associated with the struggle, in turn also eroded 'stocks' of social capital within communities.

Although different types of community groups existed in urban townships in the 1950s and 1960s, a critical milestone was the development of the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970's; it played an instrumental role in developing the self-confidence of Black people--severely eroded after the ruthless destruction of political organizations in the 1960s. Rebuilding trust and collaboration after a decade of fear and mistrust was a critical precondition for the emergence of the an extensive network of resident and youth organizations, generically referred to as the *civics*. Since the 1980s, these have been the most important social institution, particularly in poor urban townships,

These played a critical role in the mass struggles in the 1980s, demonstrating the capacity of poor communities to engage in mass *non-violent* collective actions such as transport, rent and education boycotts. During this period, *people's courts* organized by the civic associations also provided an alternative institutional structure to local

government, removing issues from its jurisdiction into the 'extra-state' township arena. They were also a response to changing township conditions and were broadly supported as they disciplined youth who were involved in crime through re-education, solved inter-neighbor and parent-child conflicts, and resolved disputes over child maintenance payments. However, while the civic associations represented the interests of township communities, they also varied greatly in terms of leadership and structure, and the extent to which they were, and are, truly 'representative' remains the subject of heated debate.

Above all, throughout this period, the important resurgence of the ANC's violent struggle to bring apartheid to an end--resulting in violent guerrilla activities throughout the country--meant that community-based social institutions, including the civics, were drawn into it. In attempts to contain the resistance, police took to indiscriminate violence and arrests, especially of Black youth. Such attacks led to still more resistance, which in turn led to counter-action. Therefore, the violence associated with repression and resistance also destabilized communities and produced an environment characterized by high levels of violence and crime.

4. Conclusions: Policy implications of the 'erosion' of social capital

The government's systematic erosion of trust and collaboration within and between poor communities, as well as the violent struggle that ensued, meant that apartheid has spawned an extremely violent society in which the 'stocks' of social capital within many poor communities appear to be seriously eroded. Today, at the same time that the transition is underway from violent confrontation to political negotiation, there is also increasing gang conflict. Because Black township young men--the 'shock troops of liberation'--were systematically disempowered, some have re-formed themselves as criminal gangs. Frustrated at being displaced from the political arena, a generation that put 'liberation before education' now vent their anger by kidnapping, car jacking, street rapes and domestic violence. Hierarchically structured social institutions dominate most poor communities, many of them linked to 'warlord' or drug ring-associated violence. Such actions seriously restrict the chances for social interaction, and erode the space for community association.

The fact that violence continues to erode social capital has critical implications for policy makers who must design and deliver community based services. Three issues include:

Listening to community priorities

Community residents have the best understanding of ways to resolve their problems. Women, in particular, have fundamental knowledge and experience to share. Thus, participatory needs assessments may help prioritize the interventions most likely to build the social capital needed to reduce poverty and rebuild communities.

- **Recognizing the severe constraints of community participation in communities where social capital has been eroded**

Policy makers must make realistic assessments of community capacity in different rural-urban and regional contexts to participate in programs and projects, as this will help both government and NGOs to develop appropriate delivery mechanisms.

- **Identifying social institutions that can build social capital in poor communities**

Rebuilding 'stocks' of social capital means working with existing community institutions, rather than creating new structures. This has implications for the future role of the 'civics' as they shift their focus from political mobilization towards development-oriented activities.

- **Identifying interventions that can build social capital in poor communities**

Interventions that aim to 'build' social capital may be as important--if not a greater priority--than those designed to increase human capital. The fact that there are severe limitations to providing social and economic infrastructure in highly conflictive contexts--for example, a community facility was destroyed due to inter-community conflict--suggests the importance of prioritizing support, training, space and opportunities for people to first build up trust and collaboration within communities.

CHAPTER I

A. Analytical Framework: A Nexus Linking Poverty, Violence and the Apartheid Legacy

The twin problems of poverty and inequality, along with the dramatic growth in crime and violence, are legacies of the past 30 years of apartheid that confront South Africa today. They affect social and economic development, nationwide: Investors are reluctant to risk their capital, health and police costs are high, as are mortality and morbidity rates. As elsewhere, violence deepens poverty because of the way it erodes the assets of the poor. At the same time, the apartheid system, through its spatial and labor policies, systematically destroyed the assets of more than three generations of the majority, African² population.

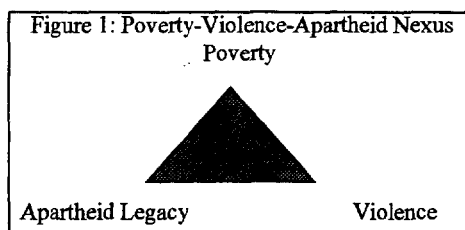
This paper examines the complex interrelationship between the violence-poverty-apartheid legacy. Using secondary data, it provides a brief historical analysis of how apartheid, as well as the struggle against it, affected the assets of the poor -- particularly household relations and social capital. The paper's recommendations are intended to assist in designing interventions that promote opportunities, as well as remove constraints that prevent the poor from using their assets more productively, and thereby reduce levels of violence and poverty.

The unique levels of poverty and violence in South Africa relate to apartheid, which systematically imposed long-term labor, welfare and spatial policies: Under the guise of 'separate development,' apartheid not only discriminated against the Black population economically, politically and socially, but also produced and reproduced severe levels of violence--shaping the lives of generations. In 1996, the Lund Committee, a government-appointed committee formed to review existing welfare policy, observed that:

'As early as 1911, a statutory color bar was introduced in the mines, reserving certain job categories for particular races. The Land Act of 1917 legislated for racial segregation of land ownership; Africans were not allowed to buy land outside restricted reserves and 'scheduled areas', and African forms of sharecropping were prohibited. The 1920s and 1930s saw a growing battery of legislation to control the presence of Africans in urban areas, and the removal of black voting rights. When the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, it consolidated policies already in place, and started the mass removals and formalized the creation of the Bantustans which affected the family and economic lives of millions of South Africans.'

² Under apartheid, the term 'black' referred collectively to all racially oppressed groups, i.e., Africans, Indians and Coloureds. (SAR, 1984). This paper focuses particularly on the African population, given that they constitute nearly 95% of South Africa's poor, with Coloureds 5%, and less than 1% Indian or White (RDF, 1995, 3).

To identify the causes of sustained high levels of poverty and violence, this paper analyzes a nexus linking poverty, violence and the legacy of apartheid policy (see Figure 1). An understanding of each of these three issues and the way they are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, is necessary to design interventions capable of breaking the cycle.



In analyzing this nexus, it is necessary to recognize that poverty relates not only to income but also to vulnerability --to complex forces that determine 'well-being' and livelihood security, physical safety, survival and self-respect.³ Both poverty and vulnerability are closely linked to asset ownership. These include tangible assets, such as labor and human capital, and productive assets (such as land and housing) as well as intangible assets, such as household relations and social capital (see Figure 2).⁴ The poor, as much as the non-poor, are managers of complex asset portfolios. The more assets that individuals, households and communities can acquire and the better they manage them, the less vulnerable they are. The more their assets are eroded, the greater their insecurity and associated poverty (Moser, 1996; 1998).

Figure 2: Assets of the Poor

Labor—commonly identified as the most important asset of poor people.

Human capital—health status, which determines people's capacity to work, and skills and education, which determine the return to their labor.

Productive assets—for poor urban households, the most important is often housing; in rural areas it is land

Household relations—a mechanism for pooling income and sharing consumption.

Social capital—reciprocity within communities and between households based on trust deriving from social ties.

Source: Moser (1996; 1998)

Because other background reports for the *Review of Poverty and Inequality in South Africa* have examined some of these assets (labor, human capital, land and housing), this paper will focus on the two that are less frequently studied--household relations and social capital--and highlight their links to the others.

³ See Chambers (1989, p 1)

⁴ For a more detailed discussion of poverty and vulnerability, and a description of the fivefold asset vulnerability framework, see Moser (1996)

While violence and crime are often seen as synonymous, they involve important distinctions. Violence is generally defined as the unlawful exercise of physical force, while crime is an act (usually a grave offense but not necessarily violent) punishable by law--the breach of a legal prohibition. However, distinctions become blurred because perceptions about which crimes are violent, or which types of violence are unlawful, differ widely. Further, violence differs in terms of level, spatial area and type, and the range is daunting.⁵

The next two sections focus on household relations and social capital as assets. They do not include primary data; nor do they aim to comprehensively review current conditions. Rather, in drawing on secondary sources from the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s as well as the recently completed Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA, 1997), the paper seeks to establish the contribution of recent experience to the complex debate about the ways to reduce poverty. Both sections will:

- Identify the importance of each asset in reducing vulnerability and poverty;
- Describe historically how the legacy of apartheid consolidated or eroded each asset;
- Depict how violence has either consolidated or eroded each asset;
- Outline potential interventions to help the poor strengthen their assets.

⁵ In a recent participatory study of urban violence in Jamaica, for instance, women and men from five communities listed nineteen different types of violence they considered important in their communities (Moser and Holland, 1997).

B. Household Relations as an Asset

1. Why household relations are important

Although household relations are rarely considered an economic asset, they critically affect a household's ability to adjust to changes in the external environment. First, its composition, structure and cohesion of its members determine its ability to mobilize household labor as an asset. Second, households are important adaptive (rather than static) social institutions for pooling income and other resources, particularly in economically or politically difficult times. Consequently, they are crucial mechanisms for strategies that modify consumption and raise income (Deveraux, 1993), and act as safety nets, long before outside assistance is provided.

Households routinely restructure for internal reasons, such as births, deaths, marriages, child care, marital conflicts and to support weaker members such as the elderly; in turn, this restructuring affects their ability to respond to external changes (Evans, 1989). They also restructure for external reasons, such as housing and employment problems. Finally, within households, asymmetries in rights and obligations on the basis of gender and age often translate into differences in the ability to cope, for instance with economic difficulties; household restructuring consequently affects household members differently (Sen, 1990; Elson, 1991; Moser, 1993)

Over the past 30 years, the structure and composition of poor South African households has fundamentally changed, both due to, and as a response to, the political and socio-economic environment.⁶ In the current period of political transition, a number of 'family-focused' pro-poor policies--with respect to housing, infrastructure, child welfare and pensions--are being designed. The way that households operate will determine the success of such policies, which, themselves may influence future household types. Thus, it is important to understand household relations as economic assets--identifying the current structures, composition, intra-household relationships and obstacles to household cohesion resulting from decades of discriminatory policies.

2. Families or households?

The central feature of apartheid has been 'separate development'. The manipulation of the family through migrant labor and the homeland system played an important role in achieving apartheid policies. The family should therefore be one of the key areas targeted by progressive forces in any attempt to reach a non-racial and unitary South Africa' (Gwagwa, 1990)

⁶ In the period prior to 1948, three clusters of African rural household 'types' were identified as (i) the cash-cropping household; (ii) the labor-exporting household; and (iii) the labor tenant or share-cropping household (Martin and Beittel, 1987)

As noted by Gwagwa, the transitional government is involved in debates about ways to perceive families in the 'new South Africa.' Different assumptions about household structure and composition affect proposed policies. The first position focuses on reuniting families separated by apartheid laws and migrant labor practices; the other focuses on acknowledging the existence of different family models, including those that are matrifocal, as the fastest developing form (Sachs, 1990; Ginwala et al, 1991).

To ensure that past inequalities of race and gender are addressed along with poverty, current stereotypes relating to the family are being carefully examined. These include assumptions about the (a) nuclear family as the 'ideal', post-apartheid 'stable' family type, (b) traditional gender roles and relations within the family, (c) the family as a social unit based on kinship, marriage, and parenthood and (d) the household as a unit based on co-residence for such purposes as production, reproduction, consumption and socialization. (see, for instance, Preston-White, 1988; Segar and White, 1992; Speigel et al 1996⁷). Following the South African debate, this paper focuses on households, rather than families *per se*.

3. Characteristics of poor households

Widespread evidence shows poverty to be greatest in rural areas and identifies two important household-level trends. First, household size and poverty are closely related; those that are large and have many dependents are most likely to be poor. The South African Labor and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) study concluded that average household⁸ size among the poor is 5.9, compared to only 3.5 among the non-poor. The dependency ratio is more than twice as high among the poor than the better-off (1.1 vs. 0.5). In the PPA, those interviewed perceived a decrease in family size since the 1960s.

Second, many women have assumed the role of household head, and this affects its structure. The SALDRU study enumerated *de jure*⁹ female-headed households at

⁷ Earlier South African anthropologists tended to see the nuclear family as the quintessential domestic group, even in a labor migration context (see for instance, Schapera, (1935) working in Botswana; Wilson et al 1952; Hobart Houghton and Walton, 1952).

⁸ The study used two definitions of the household; The first, used for the Household Roster comprised all individuals who:

- (i) live under this 'roof' or within the same compound/homestead/stand at least 15 days of the out of the past year; and
- (ii) when they are together they share food from a common source (i.e. they cook and eat together) and
- (iii) contribute to or share in a common resource pool (i.e. they contribute to the household through wages and salaries or other cash and in-kind income, or they may be benefiting from this income but not contributing to it, e.g. children and other, non-economically active people in the household)"

The second included only those members who had lived 'under this roof for more than fifteen days of the last 30 days'. This definition was used for the rest of the questionnaire (Saldru, 1994, iii-iv).

⁹ Female-headed legally

26.9%, and *de facto*¹⁰ at 10.5 %. Such households are even more common among the African population. A 1994 estimate put the figure of *de facto* and *de jure* at 41% (Govender et al, 1994). The SALDRU study further demonstrated that poverty rates within such households are much higher than for those with a resident male head. While *de facto* female-headed households had nearly a 70% poverty rate, the figures dropped to 43.6% for those headed by males. As a result, half the ultra-poor are in families without a resident male head, although they make up only 39% of the population. (SALDRU, 1996, 12-13).

4. Household fluidity and fragmentation: Causes and consequences of double-rooted¹¹, 'split' or 'stretched' households¹²

Recommendations to reduce poverty that target poor African households (or families) acknowledge their tremendously diverse structure and composition. Differences exist between rural and urban areas, as well as within urban and rural communities (Murray, 1987). Two aspects of apartheid, in particular, fragmented the so-called, 'traditional' households. These were:

- The migrant labor system and influx control measures that separated workers (mainly men), from their families for long periods, which led to double-rootedness;
- 'Separate development' spatial policies that forcibly dispossessed households of their land and cattle and relocated them, locking them into the 'Bantustan homelands.'

The fragmentation of poor African households, primarily caused by these policies, was exacerbated over the decades because households themselves proactively restructured. This occurred both as their natural response to retain as much of a semblance of normalcy (wherever loopholes in the system have allowed it), and as their fundamental coping strategy in a context of extreme poverty.

Extensive empirical work from different parts of the country shows it is not only wage-earning men but increasingly women, and even some children who are absent from rural domestic units. The marginalized location of most African households within the South African economy has resulted in a lack of adequate *local* resources where households reside, to guarantee residential stability. Thus, fluctuating, open-ended, social networks and fluid, unstable residential arrangements--which include long absences from home to find employment --were a widespread response to the narrow and vulnerable

¹⁰ Female-headed in practice (male head absent)

¹¹ Double-rootedness is defined as households having more than one homestead, and migrants having more than one household (PPA, 1997, 24)

¹² In an early definition based on 'double-rootedness', households were defined functionally in terms of the flow of income and expenditure needed for their members (Murray, 1981)

economic base and part of the life experience of many African poor, especially women and children (Spiegel et al, 1996a).

African households are highly diverse, and various examples drawn from sociological and anthropological studies illustrate the different coping strategies. However, the conditions listed below are not context-specific and may have wider application: For example, the types of violence cited in a rural study may apply equally in an urban context. However, in all cases, the tensions described that relate to the contradictory need to stay home to care for children or the elderly, or to leave to acquire income to maintain (the reproduction of) the family, exacerbate levels of intra-household conflict. This in turn intensifies household instability. The extent to which domestic units are fixed, bounded households that continue over time as a discrete reality, or are fluid, raises critical questions for policy makers

a. Conditions in rural areas: Examples from Ciskei and Transkei, Bantustan resettlement areas, KwaZulu and the Eastern Cape

In traditional rural areas such as the Ciskei and Transkei, generations of male migrant workers have oscillated between job and home, as they were prevented by influx control measures from taking their wives and children with them. As early as 1974, Thomas noted, "It is unusual for rural Ciskeians to enjoy uninterrupted home life in the commonly accepted sense where parents and children live together as a matter of course. For many, a 'family' unit is never even formed." In the 1970s therefore, rural households were perceived as stretched across space, with one or more members absent to earn income, and the *de facto* members remaining in the rural home, subsisting on remittances. The primary criterion for defining the household thus became its income-sharing role (Spiegel et al 1996a, 10).

During the 1980s, as a result of government programs, up to seven million Blacks were forcibly moved from 'White' South Africa and resettled in fragmented rural areas of 'Black space', the 10 *Bantustans* or *Black homelands*¹³ (Surplus People's Project 1983; Rogerson, 1989).¹⁴ Aptly described as 'arbitrarily uprooting helpless people and dumping them' (Nash, 1980, 4), this social engineering feat induced a scale of suffering, trauma and alienation, 'the labyrinth of broken communities, broken families and broken lives' whose effects will be felt for generations.¹⁵

¹³ Urban relocation was to segregated townships or locations (see next section)

¹⁴ Rogerson and Letsoalo identify six categories of relocation as follows; (i) the clearance of so-called Black Spots; (ii) the program of Homelands consolidation; (iii) the abolition of labor tenancies (iv) Urban township relocations; (v) the operation of 'influx control' and associated legislation; (vi) the effects of agricultural betterment policies (1985, 180). See Platzky and Walker (1985) for extensive case studies of relocation processes.

¹⁵ The town clerk of Petersburg, the largest settlement in the Northern Transvaal, proudly claimed in 1980: 'We will have no urban blacks here next year' (Star 7/3/80) (Quoted in Rogerson and Letsoalo, 1985, 182).

The income-generating capacity of rural relocated homelands has been a fundamental determinant of household structure. Conflicting evidence from different areas--whether migratory labor *per se* positively or negatively affects subsistence production--characterizes the migrant labor-agricultural production nexus.¹⁶ At the same time the extent to which women are involved in commercial or subsistence agriculture in rural areas, is also highly complex: A KwaZulu study found a high incidence of female-headed households, but low incidence of commercially-oriented female farmers. Although women represent 75% of the adult population, the majority of commercial farmers are men--with women balancing survival, household and non-agricultural income-generating tasks (Murphy, 1991).¹⁷

In most resettlement areas, lack of access to land or regulations governing agricultural betterment meant that relocation was closely associated with increased levels of migration--since remittances from long-term male and female migrants were the major source of household income. Pensions of the elderly and retired were the next most important source, with the method of payment reinforcing homeland relocation because of its non-transferability to other areas (Roux, 1981). In some cases, household restructured around a core of women, rather than a single female household head¹⁸ (Preston-White, 1988). In others, where all adults of working age were absent for long periods or permanently, children were frequently brought up in extended households without the presence of either parent, with the only adults present no longer of working age.

A further example of a different rural context, were the farm worker communities, such as in the Eastern Cape. Here low income and job insecurity also meant that most households could not function as self-sufficient reproductive units (Van der Waal, 1996). Thus, strong inter-household links and fluid household boundaries developed, especially with regard to caring for the aged, children and other dependents. These arrangements moved along kinship lines when resources were unavailable. Reciprocal contributions were pensions, or labor for domestic work, with children circulated between households in fostering arrangements.

Because of such conditions, levels of intra-household conflict and domestic violence in rural areas historically have been high, and remain so. In the rural land-owning areas with high out-migration, conflict between partners over the short and long-

¹⁶ See for instance, May (1985), Heron (1991)

¹⁷ In this context, community gardens, have been a popular policy to assist women in rural areas. In KwaZulu areas, for instance, these started in the 1960s as a 'breakthrough on the part of women' (Brooks and Friedman(1991). However, as part of home economics programs, may recent examples, introduced as a result of increasing concern about starvation and malnutrition, have been fraught with problems (McLauchlan, 1986).

¹⁸ In the late 1970s, Preston-White distinguished between (i) households in which the women head or founder was once married and had been subsequently been widowed or deserted; and (ii) households established by single women (1988, 61)

term use of income was widespread. Studies illustrate how men were sometimes more disposed to 'build the house' by investing in agricultural resources (to secure their future rights and status in the village), while women wanted to obtain the daily means of subsistence for themselves and their children. Occasionally, conflicts occurred when men prioritized the use of scarce income to search for work, while women wanted it to feed the family. Finally, landless women attempting to earn income in rural areas, particularly from shebeens, posed particular to their husbands.¹⁹

In some cases, relocation itself was accompanied by extreme violence. Bedford (1995) describes situations where homes were burned and destroyed during the violence in Kwa-Zulu, and children, unable to return home, were forced to live on the streets, where they were exposed to violence and sexual abuse (PPA, 1997, 54).²⁰ In many contexts, the trauma of the forced relocation was a major source of conflict between young and old and men and women; often, it reduced the authority of older men and the adults' control over some young men and women, who moved out to the towns on their own.

In rural farm-worker communities, the insecurity, violence and social costs associated with fluid households and constant movement, have also been high. In 1996, Van de Waal noted that 'remittances from migrant men were the main sources of income in the settlement. But they came at a very high social cost of strain on family relationships. Men's severe neglect of their family-support commitments particularly eroded inter-personal relationships, especially when men established new marital relationships or liaisons at their workplaces. Often this led to domestic rupture and residential instability.'

Besides the widespread male-female conflict and domestic violence, children have been profoundly affected by frequently being placed in foster households. Where parental abuse was prevalent, fostering was beneficial; but in other cases, it weakened the ties between parents and children, particularly with the mother, or exposed them, particularly girls, to emotional and physical abuse.

The PPA documented the child abuse in poor households (including rape and children being forced into prostitution), caused by fractured and unstable families (step-parents as a source of abuse), and parental alcoholism: For many children, the home was not a safe place and they choose to live on the street (PPA, 1997, 119).

¹⁹ For instance, in Qwaqwa, a rural Bantustan in the orange Free State, 'husbands who were migrant workers were afraid that if their wives sold liqueur from their homes they would be tempted into prostitution by their clients...they often threatened physical violence if their wives 'wasted' the remittance on liqueur or the ingredients of home-brew (Sharp and Spiegel, 1990, 530)

²⁰ The impact of violence on children is explored in a separate PIR paper.

b. Conditions in urban areas: Examples from hostel 'bedholds' in the Cape Province

In urban areas, the most extreme household structure is the 'bedhold,' where hostel accommodations provide beds for single male migrants.²¹ In a study of three hostels in the Cape undertaken during the apartheid era, Ramphele notes:

It is only a sick society that can require the separation of families, and tolerate the immersion of people in filth and without any privacy.... the common denominator in the hostels is a bed. Every aspect of life here revolves around a bed. ...one's very identity and legal existence depend on one's attachment to a bed²² (Ramphele, 1993,20-49).

The legacy of apartheid labor influx legislation (which tied legal urban residence to employment and the availability of approved accommodations) and a deliberate policy not to provide family housing meant that hostels and 'mine compounds' formed the urban backbone of the migrant labor system. Dormitory-style accommodations for 'oscillating migrants' in urban and peri-urban areas started as mining barracks and were later adopted by government and private sector employers. Thus, from the 1970s onwards, state and private sector hostels existed in all major urban centers, as well as in small towns and even agricultural districts throughout the country: In fact, a 1993 assessment calculated they housed at least one million South Africans (the figure excludes mine compounds). Although strict controls in mining compounds ensured they retained a male-only character, in other hostels (especially in the Western Cape), men, women and children 'attempted to live as families (Segar, 1988, 22) in hostel 'bedholds'.²³

The bedholds presented considerable fluidity and varied in their degree of coherence as viable economic units.²⁴ Most women oscillated between town and country, torn between looking after the rural 'home,' bringing up children, and fulfilling wider family responsibilities on the one hand, and maintaining a relationship with husbands or partners on the other. Conversely, urban-based single women changed their bedholds

²¹ In the context of Lwandle, a Western Cape hostel, Jones defines a single bed and the area of floor surrounding it as the bed-space, and the occupants of a bed-space as a bed-hold. A bed space then is the conceptual counterpart in more normal circumstances of a house or some other private living area; a bedhold the conceptual counterpart of a household (1993, 28)

²² The 'beds' are wooden bunks or concrete slabs the size of a single bed (Ramphele, 1993, 23)

²³ In Ramphele's study, where one third of the hostel population were bedholders and the rest - men, women and children - dependents, the average length of stay was 26 years for men, and 12 for female bedholders - in some cases beds were handed from fathers to sons, going back a generation or two.

²⁴ In Ramphele's study, the overall average occupancy rate for all the hostel types was 2.8 persons per bed; however this obscures significant differences - in some hostels the range is from one to ten. In one hostel the person-toilet ratio was 31:1. In some hostels only men are permitted to use toilets and showers in the morning, because they are said to have a prior claim on them historically (Ramphele, 1993, 23, 26)

over time and space, depending on their relationships. For some children, the bedhold was the only home, while rural children only visited there on school holidays.

Hostel life created considerable tension, and its associated violence was based on ethnic, union, personal and other criteria.

‘The dingy hostels are turned into ‘castles’ by the men, who lord it over their women; the constraints of physical space add considerable intensity to human interaction. The separation of men and women by legal decree, although formally removed, has left a legacy of distorted family relations, limited by space, for the development of mutual trust and respect (Ramphele, 1993, 78).

Hostel relationships have been described as patriarchal and gerontocratic, with the presence of women creating problems for some men, used to living as ‘men alone.’ Reciprocity between bedholders and female dependents were based on the expectation that women would do domestic chores such as cooking, laundry and cleaning, as well as attend to the men’s sexual needs, in return for accommodations.

The costs of keeping families together were very high, with the stability of double-rooted relationships depending on the security of the male’s employment, his remittance behavior, and levels of trust and communication. Often, wives left behind in rural homes felt they carried the full burden of responsibility, while husbands felt the wives’ insistence on short term visits jeopardized their chances of better and more secure futures in rural areas. Occasionally, women even used sickness as an excuse to come to town - to save families from disintegrating or starving.

In a 1993 graphic account of living conditions in the Western Cape hostel of Lwandle, where ‘exposure to violence was inevitable,’ Jones prioritized structural and social factors that fueled hostel violence. Overcrowded conditions were cited most often by hostel residents as the primary cause of conflict, with their accompanying noise, invasion of privacy and the property of others, drunkenness and infidelity. Second, the physical conditions of the township created a climate conducive to robbery and assault. Third, gangs of unemployed youth were involved in stealing and rape. Fourth, alcohol was linked to increased levels of knifing and domestic violence. Last, violence was a socially sanctioned way for adults to resolve personal disputes between themselves as well as with children (such as sexual attacks), and was used by children with each other (Jones, 1993, 143-161).

The fact that the empirical data in this section relates to the apartheid era makes it particularly important to know how far the situation has changed since pass laws were lifted.

5. Conclusions: The social and economic costs of 'fluid' household relations

"As poverty becomes ever more extreme...marriage and normal long term family units as we envisage them at present may simply not be able to function. Other associations both at the community and the domestic level will have to take their place... for many Black people, life in a single, long-lived household is neither a reality, nor possibly an ideal (Preston White, 1988, 68-69)

The above examples demonstrate that what started as a comprehensive system of influx control and separate development to prevent black migrant workers from bringing families to cities and from owning either land or housing, fundamentally changed the concept of households, families and parent-child relationships. Many Black South Africans have now experienced two or three generations of 'split,' double-rooted, or 'fluid' households. Indeed, elastic household boundaries, complicated and varied structures, and short-term 'marriages' (men and women moving through a series of monogamous relationships²⁵) have become institutionalized.

For many children, foster care has prepared them for a life of residential instability, which is then reinforced from one generation to the next. Parents accustom children to relatively fluid non-exclusive filial bonds; relationships with fathers are often superficial because of the long periods when they are away, or in some cases the fathers are not even known. When mothers need to work, to continue their education or become involved in new relationships, child care is difficult. Later in their lives, many children, like their parents, also have had to adapt to regular absences from home, long-distance traveling, residential instability and lack of economic security (Van der Waal, 1996, 51).

At the same time, the examples highlight the resourcefulness and determination that people developed to survive and manage household relations as assets over space and time, while violence and poverty cyclically reinforced each other, eroding intra-household trust and reciprocity. In a context of high fluidity, four interrelated characteristics can be identified that categorize more systematically the way in which household relations as assets were mobilized as effectively as possible.

First, extended households, often involving three or four generations, provided a safety net. With high dependency ratios and low per capita incomes, these very poor households offered refuge to the most vulnerable members, particularly when fathers are unknown (see Box 1). According to the Lund Committee, 'It may be that an unintended side effect of the Bantustan and migrant labor policies was that while it removed men of

²⁵ In a recent study of poor urban households in Zambia, 'serial monogamy' was a widely identified trend. Poor middle-aged women, in particular, viewed female headship as a high risk arrangement - largely on economic grounds - with strategies to rapidly seek new partners when relationships broke up (Moser and Holland, 1997).

working age, it made more likely the continuation of the extended family.' Evidence from other parts of the world is similar.²⁶

Second, in many extended households, the middle generation was incomplete or missing altogether as grandparents assumed parenting responsibilities of their grandchildren, thus releasing parents to earn an income away from their place of residence²⁷.

Third, as is occurring elsewhere, an increasing number of households were being headed by women. In the PPA, split families with absent fathers and children living elsewhere were perceived as commonplace. For example, in Duncan village, 'the classic formulae for chronic impoverishment for female-headed households seemed to be the absence of a reliable male breadwinner in two consecutive generations' (PPA, 1997, 35). In other cases, women headed households by choice, due to high levels of domestic violence. However female heads were not necessarily the mothers of the children in the household; often they were grandmothers, aunts or other relatives taking primary responsibility. This occurred when a woman had a child by a second partner who does not want children by earlier relationships, or when married daughters of unreliable wage remitters turned to their parents or close agnates for support and shelter.

Box 1: Extended households and care of the elderly

A study of the elderly's needs in a rural area of Northern Cape found that having a sympathetic daughter-in-law was the main ingredient for a comfortable life, since it is duty of the son's wife to care for his parents.

The study also found that loneliness was a main reason for unhappiness, even for older people with pensions. Also, one older man said that people living alone are compelled to use their pensions to 'buy' the services of extended family members and neighbors to cook or fetch water for them. (PPA, 1997, 40)

Fourth, the phenomenon of widespread fostering can be seen as a conscious strategy to more effectively pool the burden of child care in terms of the availability of resources, shelter, the presence of adults, food and clothing. In the Western Cape, for instance, Van der Waal noted in 1996 that 'probably the most common reason for changes in household site and composition is the depositing of children with foster

²⁶ For instance, trend data from urban case studies in Ecuador, Philippines and Zambia showed that the number of extended households had been steadily increasing between 1978-92 (Moser, 1996, 50)

²⁷ For instance, a 1992 multi-dimensional study of the elderly found that more than half the urban and rural respondents (54.8% and 58.4% respectively) were living in three generation families. The figure for two generational households comprising grandparents and grandchildren only (with a missing middle generation) were a further 6.8% for urban and 15.7 % for rural. (Ferreira et al, 1992).

parents by their absent migrant parents.' Also, the SPLD survey found that 20% of South African children were not living with either parent, while in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands region, another survey found one in three under 16 was not living with his/her mother (McKerrow and Verbeek, 1995).²⁸ Thus, the Lund Committee concluded that many children, especially among the poor, were not being continuously parented by either or both parents.

Foster children made important economic contributions to the functioning of foster households; in fact, the labor of teenagers was an especially important asset for aging or single people. Gender divisions of labor meant more girls were fostered--since they do various domestic tasks--while boys' contributions were usually limited to herding.

Box 2: Teenagers create social-support networks: A Western Cape example

When children (both foster and parented), are badly or violently treated, they use various means to resist and also build alternate networks of other children and adults on whom they rely when the residential instability at home forces them to meet their needs outside.

For example, two cousins, Lucas and James (aged 14 and 15) developed a close relationship between themselves and with friends, as there was little material security at home. Both fathers lived in the community but neither supported their families. The boys' relationships with their parents were conflict ridden, and teachers were unable to keep them in school.

The boys earned money working on local farms and looking after donkeys, and created strong bonds with others doing similar work. Soccer club matches strengthened their relationship. When the parental conflicts became serious, the boys occupied an abandoned hut on a vacant stand in the settlement, set up their own household where they received friends, and continued to be given food by one of their grandmothers (Van der Waal, 1996, 31).

Although an assessment of the economic costs of 'fluid' or double-rooted households is beyond the scope of this paper, a number of pertinent questions can be raised. Double-rootedness implies two separate households, each with associated expenditures. Does the running of two households on a single income result in diseconomies? Does the problem become exacerbated if the primary earner develops another family--as demonstrated by the unreliability or non-existence of remittances from absent male heads? From the state's perspective, does the phenomenon translate into duplicated resource allocations or programs?

In fact, the costs are high. When wives go to urban areas to extract remittances from husbands, they incur travel expenses and lose time, which translates into lost opportunities to earn income or rear their children. Similarly, when children are fostered out because their labor is useful, the effects can be lasting, since they often must drop out

²⁸ The fact that this area of Kwa-Zulu Natal has the highest levels of HIV/AIDS may affect this pattern (Budlender, D.; Personal communication)

of school; when children accompany their mothers, they change schools and often lose skills.

As observed in the PPA, the combination of very high levels of poverty, violence and social disintegration meant that many Blacks were constantly 'on the move'--not only in and out of relationships, but also spatially as they sought employment, chased wayward husbands, or avoided violence and conflict. When relationships broke up, or people moved from dangerous areas, separation may have reduced stress and violence, but it also meant that households had fewer assets--for example, fewer workers in the household.

6. Policy implications

a. Defining, monitoring and measuring fluid households during the post-apartheid era.

Changes in concepts, with respect to households, families and father/mother-child parenting relationships, which are fundamental for targeting planning interventions, present a number of challenges for policy makers. If poverty reduction strategies are to succeed, the following issues must be addressed.

- Operational definitions of households present enormous problems, since high levels of fluidity make them difficult to categorize. Since household composition and domestic consolidation processes are more complex than generally assumed, the definitions need to be modified to better reflect reality.²⁹
- While sufficient evidence exists about fluid households to support generalizations, much of the evidence comes from micro-level studies. Thus, more data is needed to measure the scale of the phenomenon and its regional and urban/rural variations.
- The extent and manner in which the households change during the very different climate of the post-apartheid period must be closely monitored. This will provide information on important trends in the new political climate.
- Limits to the household surveys--as tools to measure the fluidity of household composition and domestic group membership--have already been recognized, and the advantages of more participatory techniques have been identified.³⁰ Although these

²⁹ For instance, for a discussion of the need to select sites rather than household as units of investigation, see Sharp and Spiegel (1985)

³⁰ For a South African focused discussion of the limitations of survey data to measure poverty, and the importance of introducing more participatory techniques such as life histories and participant observation, see Spiegel, (1986). Spiegel demonstrates the limitation of comparative survey data for analyzing the fluidity of residential site occupancy, and the reasons for differences in household composition.

present problems for country-level data, it is crucial to integrate such information into broader survey results.

b. Sector policy implications of different household structures.

The sector implications of the complex household types need to be identified, with results integrated into the design and implementation of policies, programs and projects. This has already been noted in some recent sectoral policy recommendations, particularly in relation to welfare:

- **Child support grants.** The Lund Committee's recommendation that a flat-rate grant be paid to the primary care-giver of a child reflected the awareness that these individuals were frequently neither fathers nor mothers. Given the high levels of fluidity and fostering, this innovative recommendation requires close monitoring to ensure that benefits move with the child.
- **Old age pensions.** It also recommended that old age and disability pensions be continued, given their important distributional effects. Although awarded to individuals, they are generally consumed as a household asset, especially where the elderly live in three-generation families. Still, it must be understood that pensions are small and highly inadequate (Lund, 1993; Arlington and Lund; 1995; Le Roux, 1995).
- **Housing policies.** Recent research illustrates the limitations for fluid households of self-help housing policies which require low-income households to incrementally consolidate their housing. Consolidation requires a degree of domestic stability, and vice versa, not least because it requires a relatively long-term commitment of resources -- something these households do not enjoy (Spiegel et al, 1996b).³¹ In addition, comprehensive reviews of the ways that current housing programs discriminate against women have concluded that hostel upgrading is biased towards men: The fact that male hostel workers can opt for individual upgrades inadvertently continues to endorse migrant labor (Parnell, 1996, 136; Crankshaw and Parnell, 1996).

Evidence in this paper also points to the critical need for policy makers in government and NGOs to consider household structure and the importance of household relations as assets.

³¹ Self-help housing policy tends to use a standardized model of a stable, nuclear family-based household with regularized patterns of co-residence, commensality and income pooling. Where policy has considered household dynamics it has tended to conceptualize them in terms of standardized developmental cycles. From this perspective adult members are always seeking to consolidate their assets, first to support a dependent family, and then to provide for their old age. (see Spiegel et al, 1996)

c. The effects of poverty and violence on attempts to rebuild household relations

The dimension that is probably missing and most important in current poverty reduction strategies is an understanding of the enormity of the poverty-violence nexus. If households are to manage their assets successfully, interventions to break the cycles that sustain poverty and violence need to be integrated into all sector planning.

What to do and how to do it are critical questions that ultimately can only be answered by the Black South Africans themselves. Nevertheless, a multitude of entry points are needed. For instance, the prioritization of services that address domestic violence and its impact on women, children and men is not simply a welfare issue. Similarly, the impact on human dignity and the lack of a sense of self-worth - resulting from degrading physical and social environments (Ramphela, 1993,8) - will not necessarily change overnight by a coherent housing policy.

Equally problematic are the highly complex questions concerning women, men and children's perceptions of relationships in the post-apartheid context. While the return to the so-called 'traditional' (i.e. nuclear) family is not an option, nor is the future of the new structures of families and households clear--given women's views of men, as noted in the PPA.

'At the most extreme... some women regard men as dangerous and a liability, and as such, a drain on the resources of women, and a factor contributing to their poverty. ...At a middle level, women indicate that the presence of men at certain times of the year placed a demand on their already over-committed time...For other women, men are merely useless, contributing nothing towards their struggle to make ends meet' (PPA, 1997, 49)

Within such a context, the issue is to design policies that can facilitate greater levels of inter-personal trust, so as to promote greater stability in household relations. The entry point may well be less difficult at the community rather than the household level. For this reason, social capital and its links to household relations should be considered as an asset. The issue is examined in the next section.

CHAPTER II: SOCIAL CAPITAL AS AN ASSET

A. Why Social Capital is Important

The extent to which a community can be considered an asset that reduces vulnerability or increases opportunities depends on its stock of social capital--the networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1993,36). Reciprocity within communities and between households, based on trust, derives from social ties, which exist, most importantly, between individuals and households, but also among social institutions at the community level. Such institutions can be hierarchical or horizontal in terms of structure. Putnam argues that structures based on horizontal linkages, rather than vertical/ hierarchical structures are more likely to increase the cooperation needed to develop social capital.

Anthropologists have long recognized the importance of social capital in building and maintaining the trust necessary for social cohesion and change.³² Growing evidence that it may be as critical as human capital in development processes has also led economists to increasingly see it as key to the feasibility and productivity of economic activity (Moser, 1996; Narayan and Pritchard, 1996). However, social institutions can either consolidate or erode the collaboration needed to mediate poverty and violence; the various types range from community associations and credit groups to formal organizations such as the church and schools.

Box 3: Types of violence in South Africa in late the 1980s (as defined by Indicator S.A.)

- **Non-collaborative politics:** rent boycotts, student protests, activist detentions
- **Civil unrest:** township clashes, factionalism, kitskonstabels, sporadic flare-ups
- **Government responses:** new powers, court interdictions, unrest/security trials, bans, restrictions
- **Black nationalist activity:** insurgent shoot-outs and sabotage

Source: Indicator South Africa (1988a)

The extent to which violence erodes social capital may therefore have long-term development consequences, affecting the delivery of community-based services and the capacity for communities to create and sustain bottom-up local delivery systems. Thus, the issue of building local trust is pivotal.

³² For instance, writing as early as 1958, social anthropologist Meyer Fortes stated “ For a social system to maintain itself, its two vital resources.... are its human capital and its social capital (1958, 1)

B. The Post-Apartheid Context: Contradictory Tendencies for Social Capital

Because two PIR background reports separately address the importance of both violence and social capital in poor rural and urban communities, this paper focuses on the nexus linking the apartheid legacy, poverty and violence in repeating cycles. As Boxes 3 and 4 illustrate, the types of violence identified and the civil unrest fatalities of the 1980s were the result of, and response to, state oppression. The cyclical nature of the struggle meant that as protest against apartheid intensified, it led to greater police reaction, which in turn led to greater resistance and even more repression (Haysom, 1986, 279). Thus, in unbundling the nexus, contradictory trends can be identified: While certain processes consolidated stocks of social capital, the legacy of apartheid and its associated violence also eroded them. For example:

- Support networks critical to sustain households in poor communities through the decades of poverty, persecution and repression associated with apartheid policy consolidated stocks of social capital. These social networks were often strong at the inter-household level and in horizontally structured organizations.

Box 4: Categories and numbers of civil unrest fatalities, based on Indicator S.A (Sept. 1984-March 1988)

- Township residents killed by security forces: 1,057
- Township residents killed by internecine violence: 1,569
- Other fatalities of indeterminate responsibility: 358
- Security force members killed in unrest: 159
- ANC/PAC guerrilla fatalities: 120
- Civilian fatalities from land mines/bombs: 52

Source: Indicator South Africa (1988b)

- Community organizations such as civic associations, which were often hierarchical, contributed through non-violent protest to the struggle that eventually ended the apartheid system and created the Government of National Unity. Important elements in their success were the trust and collaboration (social capital) that were built in poor communities. However, the violent protest and resistance associated with the struggle also eroded social capital in many communities.

Each of these trends has implications for social capital in the post-apartheid era. While a rich academic and activist documentation on community struggles and protest during the 1980s and early 1990s exists, it has not yet been analyzed from the perspective of social capital. In addition, as in other contexts where work on social capital is still experimental, indicators do not exist to measure whether the stocks of social capital have been consolidated or eroded.³³ Nevertheless, if social capital is an important asset in

³³ Putnam (1993), for instance developed a composite indicator of social capital based on a fourfold civic community index comprising number of local associations, participation in national referenda, newspaper readership and preference voting. Narayan and Pritchett (1996) measured village level

developing local communities, such an account is needed so as to better understand the current context.

C. Reciprocity and Trust in Poor Communities: Consolidation of Social Capital?

Complex relationships, often built on long-term trust and reciprocity, exist in many poor communities both in rural and urban areas. The most important are informal inter-household reciprocities, commonly based on problems associated with daily survival in conditions of extreme poverty, and the legacy of apartheid. These generally involve women and provide an important basis for developing social capital. Box 5 describes a typical coping strategy in which households are involved in intricate webs of social relationships. Indeed, the poorer the household (where incomes are unstable and insecure), the greater the reliance on such social networks.

Box 5: Reciprocal relations among women in Khayelitsha, Cape Province

Natalie, a 69-year-old household head, who has lived in this settlement since 1985, describes the way women share: 'We are like relatives because we have been neighbors for 10 years. We share everything. If I do not have soap to wash a bit of my clothes, she will lend me.....and she does not expect me to return it. When she cooks something nice, like when she cooks *umfino* (wild plants mixed with mealies), she sends me a plate. She uses my fridge whenever she wants to store something. I borrow her my (electric) iron because she only has these heavy irons. We are like family here. We borrow each other's money and even use each others stoves.'

Natalie's contacts also extend to a group of 10 women in the Anglican Church, a relationship that goes beyond church involvement to activities such as membership in a *iseti* (loosely translated as savings club). 'We assist each other because we are women who understand the burden that womenfolk face. (Mehlwana and Qase, 1996, 37-38)

The PPA identified a number of different reciprocal kin and social networks across poor communities. These include borrowing money, sharing accommodations (particularly in urban areas), minding children, and offering advice and moral support. With street children, friendship networks are the primary coping strategy, and mutual security is based on reliance within a group. The negative side to this is that children have to fit in and 'be prepared to fight, to drink, to smoke, to flout authority' (PPA, 1997, 86).

One type of cooperation is that based on the sharing of fuel, which not only protects the vulnerable but also provides the basis for consolidating stocks of social capital: The sharing of fuel, whether in an informal settlement in Khayelitsha, a backyard shack in Langa (Mehlwana and Qase, 1996), or a rural squatter farm community in Die

social capital in terms of composite indicators relating to group membership, kin heterogeneity, income heterogeneity and group functioning.

Bos (Ross, 1993), is a key collaborative mechanism. Since cooking is primarily done by women, the primary users of energy at the household level, more women than men are involved in such relationships (Anneke, 1993; Makan, 1994).

Of the more formal social institutions, the most common are those relating to monetary savings: *Stokfels iseti*, *mehodisano* and burial societies are all structured around the mutual benefit of members, and characterized by the circulation of sums of money. Generations of poor Blacks, particularly in urban areas, have participated in such organizations whose structure and functions were identified decades ago (Kuper and Kaplan, 1944). Although both men and women belong to them, they are particularly important for the latter.

However, within the range of mutual benefit institutions, some are more horizontal than others. One of the most difficult problems around *stokfels* relates to its pyramid-like structure. This means that while the first members to receive money get it interest free, those at the tail end of the benefit scheme are in fact loaning to others without interest. If the top structure of the *stokfel* disappears, as sometimes happens, those at the bottom lose everything.

At the same time, not all community members participate in such institutions. For example, the PPA found that the poorest were not involved in community self-help structures, gardens or *crèches*: As in other contexts, the inability to reciprocate often results in voluntary withdrawal from informal and formal community support systems--which leads to a sense of isolation from institutions of kinship and community (PPA, 1997, 38; 46).³⁴

It must be noted that not all 'indigenous' community organizations generate social capital. For example, in both rural and urban areas, hierarchically structured, traditional, tribal chiefdoms (the *amakhosi*), which have limited customary law judicial functions, are sometimes depicted as weak and inconsistent forms of local government. In fact, PPA findings from various communities identified their function as little more than extracting favors from wealthier members of the community, while failing to assist those poor unable to offer favors. 'Chiefs and headmen no longer care about the needs of their people' (PPA, 1997,26). Where the government has tended to give more credence to the views of *amakhosi* and local farmers over those of communities, this has caused tensions between chiefs and other local social institutions.

Another community social institution with an hierarchical structure was the people's court, the extra-state township court that met regularly, had a recognized structure (either formally or informally constituted), and addressed civil and criminal charges. This institution was based on intra-community trust and collaboration; it arose from a long tradition of informal settling of disputes in squatter settlements and townships, as the residents sought to keep police out of township disputes.

³⁴ See Moser and Holland (1997) for a similar finding in poor urban communities in Lusaka, Zambia.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, these ‘*makgotla*’ sometimes provided justice more effectively than did the formal courts in atrocities committed by local youths - such as those who forced women to drink paraffin when they broke consumer boycotts; in other contexts, however, they used coercion and were unpopular. Where run by self-appointed older community members who had few links with most of the community, they focused on civil and family disputes--primarily on delinquent youth--and were more often paramilitary than judicial, even brutalizing the residents.

Box 6: Categories of *forced* relocation in South Africa

- black spots
- urban relocation
- eviction of farm workers
- control of squatter settlements
- group areas removals
- consolidation of Bantustans and forced removals within them
- infrastructural and strategic removals

Source: Platsky and Walker, 1985

D. The Apartheid Legacy and Associated Violence: Erosion of Social Capital?

Apartheid’s most effective tool for destroying local communities and their social institutions was probably the relocation and removal policy, either forced or ‘voluntary,’ that affected up to seven million people. This not only eroded household relations as assets, which affected household structures, but also fundamentally changed the structure and cohesiveness of communities. As Platsky (1985, 396) observed more than a decade ago, the desperate conditions found in South Africa’s relocation areas were not the result of some tragic disaster but of legislation intended to divide and control the people so as to maintain economic and political power in the hands of the White minority. Over a 25-year period, this control was exerted by removing the productive and physical assets of the Black population, along with systematically eroding the close communities (the social capital) in both urban and rural areas.

What started originally as people being herded in trucks and dumped *en masse* in the *veld* was followed by ‘motivational’ efforts that included vague promises, announcements and retractions, rumors and harassment--sometimes justified in the name of the law. However, the scale of relocation was so extensive and the communities’ experiences so varied in type (forced or voluntary), location (rural or urban), and ethnic group (Coloreds, Africans or Indians), that it is impossible to generalize about its impact on social capital. Nevertheless, examples from the Cape Province illustrate some patterns.

1. Forced removals: Cape Town's District Six

Most important, forced removals dispersed previously close-knit communities and created tensions among newly grouped migrants. For example, in the highly conflicted removal of Cape Town's District Six (Hart, 1990, 118), some 50,000 'Colored people' were evicted from a tightly knit, racially mixed, inner-city community located on prime land, to racially homogeneous townships on the urban periphery of the Cape Flats. Two decades of oral accounts and newspaper reports documented not only the fear, humiliation and anger that accompanied the displacement, but also the 'fragmentation of the identity and heritage of a particular community' (Western, 1981).

Such removals not only destroyed community networks and imposed harsh physical and economic conditions, but intensified gangsterism. While it was an important means of economic survival, it also terrorized local residents. Further, the exodus of thousands of District Six residents was identified as the source of proliferating unrest in the Cape Peninsula, with the most serious outbreaks traced to the sub-economic townships inhabited by District Six evacuees (Western, 1982).

2. Conflict over resources: Mgwali, Eastern Cape

In many cases, forced removals not only stripped the relocated of their physical assets (such as homes and plots), but also increased conflict over resources in the communities into which they were relocated. Thus, the resettlement severely eroded trust and collaboration. In the Mgwali area of the Eastern Cape, the collapse of a successful alliance to resist removal divided the community (Roodt, 1995, 11-12), and heated power struggles emerged over local government functions (PPA, 1997, 24).

3. Resisting relocation in Crossroads, Cape Peninsula and Khayelitsha, Cape Province: Contradictory experiences

In some contexts, the experience of resisting relocation consolidated social capital, but elsewhere, under extreme repressive pressure, factionalism developed, trust was eroded, and the settlements were destroyed. In all, severe inter-personal conflict and violence erupted.

The case of Crossroads, a shack community in the Cape Peninsula that started as a transit emergency camp, is instructive. Initially, separate women's and men's committees mobilized resistance to resettlement with 'the consistent presence of an external threat fundamental in creating solidarity and unity amongst the residents of Crossroads'. It also helped transform the hitherto 'provisional settlement' into a more organized and structured community' (Cole, 1987, 15). However, as squatter conflicts became highly politicized, internal power struggles developed, and the women's committee deferred to a male-dominated group. Violent confrontations broke out between residents and security forces, and the government's plan to destroy the

settlement was aided by right-wing vigilante groups and leaders from the community itself. In 1987, Cole observed that:

‘Crossroads’ history illuminates the consistent failure of progressive forces to fundamentally win the hearts and minds of those who lead and inhabit squatter communities on a large scale.’

However, two examples, also from the Cape, illustrate exceptions--where communities successfully resisted their relocation, mainly through the support of intermediary agencies. The 600 residents of the Noordhoek squatter community were forcibly moved to Khayelitsha in December 1987. A committee was established, and with the support of the Surplus Peoples Project (SPP) and Cape Town lawyers, a successful Supreme Court application challenged the removal. This was a major victory for the community and united them further in what became a two-year struggle to gain a permanent site. However, once the threat of eviction was removed, the incentive to organize and build on the victory seemed to dissipate (DAG, 1996a, 10).

A number of organizations, including the SPP, Development Action Group (DAG) and Catholic Welfare Bureau, served as community advisers, helping transform the approach from resistance to negotiation around development issues; they facilitated the ‘struggle for community participation’ through the complex process of planning the new community (DAG, 1996a).

E. Community Social Institutions, Protest and Struggle against Apartheid: Consolidating or Eroding Social Capital?

Historically, various types of social institutions played and continue to play important roles in communities across the country. Not only were there important regional and rural-urban differences, but also different social institutions played diverse roles in the struggle against apartheid. A critical milestone was the development of the Back Consciousness Movement in the 1970’s; its role was instrumental in developing the self-confidence of Blacks, which had been severely eroded after the ruthless destruction of political organizations in the 1960s. Rebuilding trust and collaboration after a decade of fear and mistrust was a critical precondition for the emergence of an extensive network of resident and youth organizations, generically referred to as the *civics*. Since the 1980s these have been the most important social institutions, particularly in poor urban townships, where they are defined as,

‘localized grassroots organizational structures that are accountable to local constituencies, seek to address local grievances that residents have with their condition of daily living, and are located outside formal governmental, party-political or development agency institutions’ (Swilling, 1993, 16)

Swilling identified five strands of organizational activities that shaped the civics in terms of their structure and leadership. Given the current debate as to whether they

fostered social capital, their characteristics and activities are useful to identify because of the collaboration and trust embedded in them.

- The creation of important groups such as the Soweto Civic Association (SCA)--populist organizations formed around charismatic leaders--introduced the word 'civic' into the language of Black resistance and heralded a decade of urban struggle;
- The 1980 Cape Town school boycott that was the backbone of an education struggle was gradually transformed into neighborhood associations in Cape Town's Colored areas, emphasizing grassroots leadership and participation;
- Trade union leaders active in the civics brought a knowledge of organizational and committee practice into the movement;
- The creation of the youth congress movement in the early 1980s--a mixture of educated young workers, unemployed youth and poorly educated marginals--produced the most militant rhetoric and provided the shock troops for the violent conflict with state security agencies during the 1980s. Over time, various youth congress leaders became leaders in the civic movement;
- From the early 1980s, the release of 'prison graduates'--veterans of earlier resistance campaigns--provided a national network of leaders who shared a common experience, language, and organizational strategy.

An extensive literature has reviewed the role of the civics in the apartheid struggle, followed the movement through its different phases (Seekings, 1992; Swilling, 1993), traced its links with the UDF in ending apartheid (Mayekiso, 1993), and assessed the civics' role in the post-apartheid reconstruction process (Heymans, 1993; Development and Democracy, 1994). From the perspective of the social capital-violence nexus, a number of contradictory trends can be identified.

1. The role of civics in non-violent collective action

Civics played a critical role in the struggles in the 1980s, demonstrating the capacity of poor communities to engage in mass non-violent collective action.³⁵ These included the famous 1984 Vaal uprisings, the 1985 Eastern Cape mass struggles, the consumer boycotts that spread from the Eastern Cape to other provinces, the transport boycotts in the Boarder region, the upsurges of mass action in the Western Cape and Natal towards the end of 1985, and the long-term rent boycotts that eventually crippled local government in the Transvaal, FS and Northern Cape (see Box 7).

³⁵ The township protests in the 1980s resulted from a combination of factors that included high unemployment, rising cost of living, deterioration of township resident's living standards, absence of basic services and amenities, imposition of rental and other service charge increases by community councils or development boards, imposition of government-created municipal councils on townships residents, and inadequate and authoritarian education system.

Box 7: Rent boycotts

Through the rent boycotts, which were one of the most effective forms of non-violent protest, tenants in state housing refused to pay for the site, house and service charges. The boycotts rose markedly in the early 1980s and by mid-1986, had spread throughout the townships. They were triggered by economic and political factors, as many households could not pay rents that continued to rise while incomes were eroded by inflation. Also, renters had little motivation to pay, since the townships were not developed (as had been promised), corruption among councilors was widespread, the councils were perceived as illegitimate, and repression had intensified.

The UDF used the boycotts as a general weapon of protest, and officials responded by discussing concessions and threatening evictions. Moreover, officials misinterpreted the boycotts, which were an attempt to avoid violent confrontation. The boycotts quickly developed their own momentum and required relatively little organization to continue.

However, in some cases they caused the civics to atrophy, councilors to resign and elected Black local governments to collapse.

Source: Chaskalson et al, 1987

2. Civics as alternative institutional structures

In many communities, civics provided an alternative institutional structure to local government. As Seekings (1993) describes, in some cases they incorporated existing social institutions, such as the new *people's courts*, 400 of which were established in townships across the country from 1985-1986. While they were an institutionalized form of struggle against the state, because they removed issues from its jurisdiction, they were also a response to changing conditions in the townships. Widespread protest provided new problems or exacerbated existing ones for both political organizations and residents. The complete breakdown of relations with the police and the disruption, or demise, of councilor-based courts of previous years left a vacuum.

At the same time, the civics were concerned by the lack of discipline within their organizations or campaigns: In particular, consumer boycotts were often accompanied by an unacceptable degree of coercive enforcement and violence. Thus, residents broadly supported or participated in the new courts, which disciplined youth through anti-crime campaigns and re-education, resolved conflicts among neighbors and parents and their children, and settled disputes over child maintenance payments. In the Johannesburg township of Alexandra, a total of five courts reflected not only the breakdown of state policing and the court system, but the various groups vying for political leadership. Thus, previously popular structures rapidly lost community support when they became self-serving, particularly when township youth adjudicated adult cases and imposed severe corporal punishment. Although the new courts were eliminated by the state in 1988, they

illustrated the extent of community collaboration and the way violence eroded it (Seekings, 1993, 119-135).

Although such initiatives required commitment and support from local communities, the civics could only generate a certain level of trust and collaboration. While they represented the shared interests of the township residents, their leadership and structure varied, and the extent to which they were and are truly 'representative' is still a subject of debate (Christianson and Ndukwana, 1994). In many cases, the civics were built around a dominant charismatic personality, and enjoyed grassroots support--although the support was not translated into organized structures at the base. Where the object of protest was to mobilize the public against apartheid conditions, decision-making was primarily reactive, issue-focused and often depended on repressive state actions to galvanize support.

3. Community-based social institutions and violent struggle

Throughout this period, the resurgence of the ANC's violent struggle to end apartheid led to violent guerrilla activities throughout the country; thus, community-based social institutions, including the civics, were drawn into violent struggle. In attempts to contain the protest and resistance which included attacks on Black police and their property, the police employed indiscriminate violence and arrests, especially of Black youth (Haysom, 1986, 279); these attacks led to resistance, which generated even more repression.

Therefore, because community level organizations (representing stocks of social capital) sometimes had to use violence to overthrow the apartheid structure, the actions associated with repression and resistance also destabilized communities in rural and urban areas, and produced an environment characterized by high levels of gang violence (tsotsi), domestic violence, crime and assaults (Wilson and Ramphele, 1990), such that by the end of the apartheid period 'Violence has become so entrenched in society that a whole generation have known little else' (Coetzee, Beukes and Mokhosi, 1994).

F. Policy Implications

The efforts of diverse social institutions such as the civics in poor communities across the country were critical to overthrowing the Nationalist Party and its apartheid policy. But the erosion of trust and collaboration within and between poor communities, promoted by the state, along with the violent struggle, meant that apartheid fostered an extremely violent society where the stocks of social capital appear to be seriously eroded.

Such constraints are cyclically reinforced by the current community violence, which includes increased levels of gang conflict that developed with the transition from violent confrontation to political negotiation. As Black township young men--the 'shock troops of liberation'--have been systematically disempowered, some have created criminal gangs. Frustrated by being displaced from the political arena, a generation that

put 'liberation before education' appears to be venting its anger through kidnappings, car jacking, street rapes and domestic violence. This seriously restricts mobility for social interaction, eroding space for community association. Moreover, hierarchically structured social institutions dominate most poor communities, and many are linked to violence--whether associated with migrant labor hostels (such as in Alexandria, Johannesburg), 'war' lords (Durban), or drug rings (Cape Town).

The fact that violence continues to erode social capital has critical implications for the design and delivery of community-based services and attempts to reduce poverty. In identifying entry points for addressing this problem, a number of issues may be pertinent for policy makers and planners concerned with poverty reduction in the post apartheid transition.

G. Recommendations

1. Community priorities

Most important, members of poor communities--particularly women--in different types of social institutions have first-hand experience about the best ways to deal with their problems. The practice of including all members of communities in decision-making, such as through participatory needs assessments, would allow priorities to be set more effectively; in addition it helps develop the trust and collaboration (social capital) critical to reduce poverty and rebuild communities³⁶.

2. Constraints to community participation

Recent examples of initiatives at community planning, such as in Alexandra (Mayekiso, 1992), and Phola Park (Bremner, 1994), demonstrate the limitations when 'an ambitious model of development, which presupposed a stable and cohesive community, was imposed on a situation that was volatile, violent and unstable' (Bremner, 1994, 23). Recognition of the realities of communities in different rural-urban and regional contexts to participate in programs and projects will facilitate interventions by both government and NGOs to develop appropriate delivery mechanisms. One such example is the Independent Development Trust which seeks to facilitate government ministries to accelerate the delivery of services to the very poor.

³⁶ In a participatory urban appraisal in five violence-ridden poor communities in urban Jamaica, for instance, members of all communities prioritized projects and programs that built social capital. These included conflict resolution programs; rehabilitation and equipping of 'integrated community spaces', which included sport facilities, teen centers and training facilities; drug abuse counseling; family-life education and parenting courses; career guidance and job placement services; and skill training (Moser and Holland, 1997)

3. Social institutions and social capital

To rebuild stocks of social capital in poor communities, it is important to work with already established institutions, rather than create new structures. This has implications for the civics' future in communities shattered by decades of struggle, as they shift from political mobilization to development-oriented activities and from an alternate form of government to assuming a community-based 'watchdog' role over local issues and services (Swilling, 1990). Their capacity to simultaneously rebuild the stocks of social capital in communities shattered by the last decades of struggle, is important in the current debates about the future role of civics. Since the civics are dominated by men, it is also critical to identify social institutions that recognize and increase the status and decision-making powers of women (PPA, 1997, 116).

Communities themselves are aware of the problems associated with creating multiple, competing institutions. For example, the PPA found that community representatives in KwaZulu Natal felt that 'service providers, particularly government departments (potentially) divide communities by forming too many committees in the community (e.g. separate ones for schools, health and roads)' (PPA, 1997, 30).

4. Interventions to build social capital

Given the level of violence, it is difficult to design interventions that can successfully reduce poverty. However, interventions that aim to build social capital may be as important--if not even more so--than those designed to increase human capital. Box 9 illustrates the limits of providing social and economic infrastructure in highly conflictive contexts, and suggests the need to prioritize support, training, space and opportunities so as to first build trust and collaboration within communities.

Box 9: Priorities for reducing violence

The August 21, 1996 edition of the *Cape Argus*, Cape Town's evening newspaper, had three stories on violence. The page one lead story discussed a plan to introduce crack teams to fight Cape Flats gangsters and drug lords; page three focused on teenage gangs and the culture of violence in communities; and a third, smaller story reported that a new one million rand health-care center in a poor squatter settlement had been petrol bombed as a result of 'a power struggle between two (civic) groups'.

In addition, high levels of violence can have important implications for project design where community groups are vulnerable to co-optation by gangs or other forces. Indeed, capital flows to particular groups may be divisive and actually increase conflict. Thus, contracting and disbursement procedures must be designed in a way to ensure social capital is not further eroded.

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