Power and beliefs in South Africa

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Economic potency structures in South Africa and their interaction with patterns of communication in the light of a Christian ethic

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Klaus Nürnberger

University of South Africa
Pretoria
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Abstract

South African society is characterised by a marked centre-periphery structure of economic power distribution. It is, at the same time, a prime example of a society divided by a plurality of religious, cultural and economic convictions. It is, furthermore, the target of intense moral challenges. As such it is an ideal ‘laboratory’ for social-ethical research concerning the impact of structures on convictions and vice versa. This study is the attempt to develop a systems-analytical paradigm for the investigation of (a) economic power structures, (b) patterns of conviction, (c) the relation between the two and (d) a theological-ethical critique.

Part I is devoted to economic power structures. The proposed model includes the relation of potency to geographical space (chapter 2), population (chapter 3), and need (chapter 4). A model of causation and a few relevant causal systems close this part (chapter 5). Part II is devoted to convictions and their relation to societal power structures. It begins with a basic model of such relations (chapter 6). Then follow a historical survey of the emergence of structure-related mental predispositions or attitudes (chapter 7), an inventory of convictions relevant to the South African situation (chapter 8) and an analysis of the interaction between structure-related interests and convictions (chapter 9). Part III subjects the findings to a theological-ethical critique (chapter 10), and discusses the positive contribution a theological ethic could make to the solution of the problems concerned (chapter 11).

Vital interests crystallise as the pivotal entity which mediates between structures and convictions. Being interpreted and prioritised needs they are derived from structural position, yet contain an element of meaning and normativeness. My main hypothesis is that vital interests manipulate convictions and thus obstruct structural change. This presents us with a challenge which reaches beyond the realm of conventional theological ethics and it calls for a dynamic new approach.
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Introduction

In 1981 the South African Human Sciences Research Council launched a comprehensive Investigation into Intergroup Relations. The program was subdivided into thirteen fields, and religion was one of them. Research tenders invited under this heading included various aspects of the relation between social structures, ideology and religion.

The present study was tendered, written and submitted to the Human Sciences Research Council as Research Report No. 04/PO17 in August 1984. The main report of the Investigation into Intergroup Relations was published in 1985 under the title The South African Society: Realities and Future Prospects. The volume on religion was published under the title Religion, Intergroup Relations and Social Change in South Africa. The chapter on economics (4.2) in this report was largely structured around the finding of the present study.

Empirical data used in this study has largely been taken from the 1980 census and from social research conducted round about that time, including the Human Sciences Research Council’s own ‘multipurpose survey’. It was not deemed wise to update the data for the present publication. In the first place dependable new census statistics are not available while in other fields social research has continued. To incorporate the latter would lead to diachronical distortions between different sets of data. In the second place the aim was to draw up a model for research, not to present final results — which are difficult to obtain in a situation of flux. In the third place the author considers it safe to assume that the years between 1980 and 1983 represent something like a watershed in South African social history and thus merit investigation for their own sake. The watershed referred to is the turn of the social system from apartheid to a post-apartheid era which has since gathered momentum.

The failure of traditional Verwoerdian policies could no longer be overlooked. The National Party was engaged in the difficult manoeuvre of setting the unwieldy apparatus of the state on a more realistic course. A new labour system became operative. The government tried to woo big business into cooperation. Free enterprise became the watchword for economic policy. New decentralisation and regionalisation policies took the place of the old homelands- and border areas approach. The new constitution which gave Indians and Coloureds limited participation in the central decision-making processes of the country, was still in the pre-referendum phase. Influx control had not yet been abolished.

The Soweto uprising had been quelled and the current unrest sparked off by the exclusion of Blacks from the new constitution had not yet erupted. Violence was still sporadic. The most powerful and versatile internal opposition party in the country’s history, the United Democratic
Front, was only launched in 1983. The comeback of the African National Congress could not yet be foreseen. The massive disinvestment campaigns and other international economic pressures had not taken shape. South Africa looks much different now than it looked in 1980.

The present study represents something like a photo of a ball shot into the air at the highest point of its course. For a second it does not seem to move and then it descends with accelerating speed. Developments during the last two years have taken place at a breathtaking pace. To capture this movement would imply conducting a new study which would in its turn be obsolete only a few months later. The basic insights gained by the present study on the theme of the relation between social structures and patterns of convictions would, however, only be elaborated, not altered.

I hope that the publication of the study will achieve three aims. In the first place it should further insight into the structure of South African society both on the level of economic power and of social consciousness. As such it should dispel long standing myths and misconceptions, particularly among South African Whites. In the second place it should provide further evidence concerning the perennial problem of the relation between social structures, interests and patterns of conviction in the social sciences. I also hope that it will contribute to theory formation on this vital issue. In the third place it should demonstrate the necessity of interdisciplinary research for the development of theological ethics as an academic discipline. The days of naive assumptions and dogmatic postulates are over.

Thus it should be seen as a pilot study on empirical foundations for future work in the ethics of economic life.
CHAPTER 1

The aim and method of this study

1.1 THE AIM DEFINED

The theme of the present study naturally falls into the following components:

(a) The interaction between
(b) economic power structures and
(c) patterns of conviction
(d) seen in the light of a Christian ethic.

A study of this nature is problem-rather than discipline-oriented and can, therefore, only be undertaken on an interdisciplinary basis. Interdisciplinary work can only be meaningful if various aspects are not simply adjoined to each other but placed into a systems-analytical model or paradigm in which the relation between all relevant factors is clearly indicated.

Against the background of the massive use and abuse of research findings by policy-makers and businessmen, research has become aware of its social responsibility and moved beyond the ideal of value-free analysis. Evaluation of findings and
recommendations have become part and parcel of the work of the Human Sciences Research Council itself. Ethical evaluation, however, implies retraction from "objectivity" into commitment concerning the normative system of a particular conviction or world-view.

On this basis we were able to formulate the basic aims of this study as follows:
(a) Analytical: The interaction between social structures and patterns of conviction was investigated.
(b) Constructive: A versatile paradigm for interdisciplinary work covering both quantifiable and unquantifiable aspects was drawn up.
(c) Evaluative: The outcome of the study was subject to ethical criteria derived from a particular conviction, viz. the Christian faith, and certain recommendations were made on this basis.

1.2 THE PROBLEM ANALYSED

1.2.1 Economic power structures (Chapters 2-5)

I assume that the basic ingredient of societary structures is the relative distribution of power or potential between different sections of the population. I further assume that power is mainly derived from four sources in a modern society (cf. Nattrass 1983:283ff):
(a) Political leverage, i.e. the effective range of influence on decision-making processes in matters of public policy, including legislative, administrative, judiciary, security and military powers.
(b) Economic leverage, i.e. the effective control over factors of production in relation to their importance in the productive
process, the relative ability to determine patterns of distribution and purchasing power on the consumer side of the market.

(c) Command over technological expertise and apparatus, which is actually a factor of production as mentioned under (b).

(d) Social prestige.

This study concentrates on economic power structures for three reasons. First, the economic dimension of social processes is crucial, if not fundamental, to all others. Second, this dimension has been less in the limelight than political affairs in studies on South African society. Third, I had to keep this study to manageable proportions. This does not mean, however, that I am not aware of the close interrelation between all four sources of power as the study itself will clearly reveal.

The distribution of economic power or potential have been analysed under four headings:—

(a) The spread of economic potency over geographical space (chapter 2).

(b) The distribution of economic potency between different sections of the population (chapter 3).

(c) The differential relation between economic potency of different groups and their economic needs (chapter 4).

(d) Causes of the unequal distribution of potency in the population (chapter 5).

The well-known centre-periphery model of potency distribution was used throughout this study. It was made dynamic by the introduction of the dimension of historical time. The discussion revealed that this model possesses exceptional explanatory powers in the South African case. We include, under (b), a
crude location of identifiable social groupings within the overall power structure.

1.2.2 Patterns of conviction (Chapters 6-8)

The relation between social structure and consciousness is a perennial problem, dating back to ancient Greek philosophy. Its nineteenth century version of idealism vs. materialism is outdated. The modern task is to find a sophisticated paradigm of all the factors involved and the complex relations between them. We begin this part, therefore, with a brief description of the theory which underlies our study in this regard (chapter 6).

The effect of structures on consciousness is most immediate on the psychological level. I assume that the location of groups in the overall power structure rise to certain basic mental predispositions or attitudes. I therefore offer a hypothetical reconstruction of the evolution of such mental predispositions over historical time. It takes account of the polarity between dominant and dominated groups in society, which is a variation on the centre-periphery motif on the level of consciousness (chapter 7).

Working from the other side of the structure-conviction dialectic, I then drew up a typology of convictions operative in the South African situation. Here I distinguish between the following types:

(a) religious or metaphysical convictions,
(b) convictions related to group identity,
(c) convictions related to the distribution of economic potential,
(d) collective interests.
My hypothesis is that affinity to structural location becomes more marked as we move down this list (chapter 8).

1.2.3 The interaction between structures and convictions
(chapter 9)

In the dialectical relationship between social structures and patterns of conviction collective interests play a pivotal role. I defined interests as interpreted and prioritised needs. On the one hand needs are a function of a group's location in the potency structure. On the other hand their interpretation and prioritisation depends on certain perceptions, values, norms and goals derived from convictions. There is a continuity between mental predispositions and interests, the latter concept denoting, in contrast with the former, concrete and specific conceptualisations.

The interaction between structures and convictions can then be seen to be operating in two stages (between structures and interests and between interests and convictions) and in two directions (from structures over interests to convictions and the other way round).

The relation between location in the social structure and interests is fairly obvious. I concentrate, therefore, on the more complicated relation between interests and convictions. Convictions entail a normative system, against which the pursuit of interests has to be justified. This process is variably called rationalisation, legitimation or ideology (in the critical sense of the term as used in radical sociology).

The conflict between convictions and interests (the latter representing structure-related needs and desires) moves along three
channels: perception (guided by values), justification (guided by norms) and motivation (guided by goals). We concentrate on justification - showing how interests are justified in terms of the normative system of a conviction. In this process convictions and their normative systems are manipulated in characteristic ways.

On the other hand convictions also determine and screen the interpretation and the pursuit of interests and challenge the ideological self-justification of interest groups in society.

Three further aspects need to be considered -

(a) The relative power or potential at the disposal of a group, which is, of course, directly related to its position in the power system. Power obviously determines the degree to which groups are able to realise their ideas and ideals in the structural sphere.

(b) The "horizon" and general awareness of a group, which are partly determined by its location in the power grid and partly by its convictions. They determine how far a group is conscious of the possibilities at its disposal to make an impact on the structural sphere - without which it will not even try.

(c) The historical dimension. On the level of convictions we speak of traditions in this regard; on the level of structures we speak of chain-reactions of cause and effect, or more precisely, of evolving networks of causality.

1.2.4 Ethical evaluation (Chapters 10 and 11)

I assume that there is no way in which an ethical evaluation can be conducted on the basis of a "neutral", non-committal, purely
rational or analytical stance. The choice of a particular conviction, viz. the Christian faith, can be justified in two ways. The most obvious is that the author is a Christian theologian. The second is that the majority of the South African population, and notably its most powerful decision-makers, claim allegiance to the Christian faith in some form or other. On this basis I offer a critique (chapter 10) and a positive contribution of theological ethics (chapter 11).

From the discussion so far three kinds of interaction or conflict of theological-ethical relevance emerge:

(a) Conflicts between different convictions. From a theological point of view this is the area of missionary dialogue or evangelisation.

(b) Conflicts between the collective interests of various groups in society. This is the area of social justice. Obviously it has a direct bearing on the demands for structural change.

(c) The conflict between convictions and collective interests, or more precisely, between normative systems and ideological self-justifications. In theological terms this is the area of justification and sanctification.

I assume that the first two kinds of conflict are relatively lucid. They are also receiving much attention in missiological and ethical literature. The third kind of conflict is largely a terra incognita in theological circles, at least in its social-structural application. It is also the most crucial because ideological self-justification effectively prevents a normative system from becoming operative in the structural sphere. If that were not the case, Christians (and maybe others) would long have changed the system.
My basic contention is that the theological-ethical task is to facilitate rather than prevent or avoid these confrontations, and to channel them, at the same time, into a process of creative reconstruction - concerning convictions on level (a), social power relations on level (b) and human integrity on level (c).

1.3 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.3.1 South Africa treated as a microcosm

South African society can be described, as most other societies, as a system of differentiated and institutionalised distributions of political, economic and social potentials with a high level of built-in discrepancies. Determinants include: (a) geographical location, (b) racial and ethnic affiliation, (c) class affiliation, (d) rural-urban gradient, etc. In this respect South Africa can be considered to be a microcosm of the global situation of inequality.

At the same time South African society is characterised by a marked pluriformity of patterns of collective convictions and mentality. Determinants include: (a) religious traditions, (b) cultural backgrounds, (c) perceptions of collective interests and social justice, (d) exposure to, or isolation from, other groups and their alternative mindsets, (e) the flow of information and its deliberate manipulation by powerful groups, etc. Again South Africa can be considered to be a microcosm of what obtains in the world as a whole.

Although the thesis that South Africa represents a microcosm of global problems in a concentrated form should not be pressed at the expense of local peculiarities, I assume that the South African case is illumined by the world situation as a whole and
vice versa. I give methodological expression to this expectation in that I place the South African peculiarities into a broader, more generalising framework as I proceed from step to step.

1.3.2(a) A systems-analytical approach

As mentioned earlier, a study of this nature can only be done appropriately on an interdisciplinary basis. Interdisciplinary work seems to be profitable only if the different approaches and dimensions are not arbitrarily joined to each other but integrated in a comprehensive systems-theoretical model or paradigm which defines the complex relationships between all relevant factors. The fundamental aim of this study is to contribute to the development of such a paradigm (Checkland 1981).

The particular methodological difficulty in this case is that a paradigm has to be devised which is versatile enough to combine both "hard" (= quantifiable) and "soft" (non-quantifiable) components of the system. Economic structures are an example of the former; patterns of conviction are an example of the latter. We proceeded as follows:

(a) Concerning "hard" components, viz. economic structures, we constructed graphic models which we attempt to substantiate with empirical (mainly statistical) data.

(b) Concerning "soft" components, viz. convictions, we drew up a series of hypotheses which we attempted to clarify by means of examples. We thus used the phenomenological method in a particular way.

(c) The ethical evaluation was conducted on the basis of theological-ethical postulates.
Obviously the methods utilised in (b) and (c) are not entirely satisfactory because they can only lead to preliminary results which need extensive further investigation and may prove to be contentious on every level of operation. To achieve exhaustive documentation in (b) and full theological accountability in (c) would demand, however, at least two further volumes and much more time than I had at my disposal. The emphasis of this contribution, therefore, does not lie in the presentation of empirical research but in the development of a workable paradigm for such research.

Since the model is the outcome of a decade of work on socio-structural and ideological issues in theological-ethical perspective, the author is confident that it will prove to be a useful point of departure for further in-depth investigations.

1.3.3 Sources

Sources consulted have been mainly literary although I also did a substantial amount of original work in the statistical field. All direct sources have been listed but it is quite impossible to give account of all the reading over the years which has contributed to the present stage in the evolution of my thinking on the issues concerned.

Concerning representativeness and reliability of the sources, I assumed that critical (and particularly self-critical) literature is, in general, more apt to reveal unbiased truth than its apologetic and self-justificatory counterpart.
1.3.4 The emphasis on the structural dimension

It will occur to the reader that the first part on economic power structures is much more elaborate than subsequent parts dealing with convictions and their relationship with structures. Various considerations led to this emphasis. In the first place disciplines investigating the spiritual and personal sides of human existence, including theology, tend to underestimate the importance of societal structures - even for their own specific field of interest. Secondly, social sciences which deal with group relations, often do not take sufficient cognizance of the crucial difference between relations between equals (horizontal relationships) and those between more powerful and less powerful partners (vertical relationships). That is why the key concept in our study is the distribution of power or potential in the population. In the third place, economics as a science has not spent a great deal of its energies on the development of a comprehensive picture of economic power structures in South Africa. A problem which is not seen in its overall dimensions, is unlikely to be tackled with particular vigour. By suggesting a systems-analytical approach to the whole issue, we try to blaze a trail in this regard.

In contrast, various ideological and religious convictions found in South Africa have been extensively described and documented. In a study which is supposed to be brief, a duplication of this work would be out of place.

1.3.5 Level of sophistication

No complicated mathematical and statistical methods have been employed. My aim was to make my contribution accessible to any
person who enjoyed higher education, irrespective of his particular professional qualifications. For the greater part it claims to be based on plain common sense.

1.4 SUMMARY

I defined the aim of the study as follows: the interaction between economic power structures and patterns of conviction in South Africa was investigated, a systems-analytical model was to be developed for interdisciplinary studies of this interaction and the results of the investigation subjected to a theological-ethical critique (1.1).

Each of the four components of the problem, viz. structures, convictions, interaction and ethical critique, were briefly circumscribed and all assumptions were made explicit (1.2).

Finally methodological aspects were briefly discussed: South Africa is taken as a microcosm, a systems-analytical approach is employed, the nature of the sources used, the emphasis on the structural dimension of the problem and the level of sophistication were accounted for (1.3).
PART I

Economic power structures in South Africa
CHAPTER 2

Space-potency relations

2.1 THE AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

Part I as a whole is an attempt to develop a model of economic power structures in South Africa. Chapter 2 deals with the first dimension of this task, viz. an analysis of the spread of economic potential over geographical space.

We begin with a few general characteristics of the so-called centre-periphery phenomenon in geographical terms. After that we turn to the South African example. In each case we give some indications of the reasons for the development of the discrepancy in the development of economic potency between geographical regions.

2.2 THE CENTRE-PERIPHERY PHENOMENON DESCRIBED

The link between economic potential and geographical space has been investigated for quite some time by economic geography. Here the basic insight is that economic activity and potential tend to gravitate towards certain urban commercial and industrial
centres. Their respective environments are rendered peripheral in terms of economic potential and activity. This insight is expressed in the so-called centre-periphery (or core-periphery) model.

Heinrich von Thünen's work (1826) seems to have been seminal. It was followed by Alfred Weber (1922) and Walter Christaller (1933) and then by many others. The model drew the attention of radical rather than liberal economics, where it is widely used today (e.g. Senghaas 1974). But it is also utilised by Western mainline sociology (e.g. Behrendt 1965) and various other disciplines. (Refer to Smith 1977, Smit 1981, Anzuck 1982).

The discrepancy between core and periphery is a universal phenomenon. It can be studied on the basis of:

(a) The world as a whole: the USA constitutes the economic centre in global dimensions with Western Europe and Japan the main subcentres. The Soviet Union and its satellites constitute a smaller system which is partly dependent on and partly in competition with the Western system.

(b) A whole continent such as Europe: the economic centre of Europe stretches from southern Scandinavia to northern Italy and from eastern France to western Poland. All around this complex we find less developed areas; northern Scandinavia, Scotland, Ireland, Portugal, southern Italy, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, etc. The industrial core stretches from Birmingham along the Rhine valley to Milan with major subcentres in Paris, Hamburg, Berlin, etc.

(c) A large country such as Brazil: the economic centre of Brazil is located in the triangle Sao Paulo-Rio de Janeiro-Belo Horizonte with Recife and Porto Allegre as the main subcentres.

(d) A small country such as Swaziland: the economic centre is situated in the area comprising Mbabane and Manzini.

(e) An urban complex such as the Witwatersrand where the economic centre is the Johannesburg CBD with a series of subcentres scattered further afield (see figure 8a).
A colonial empire constitutes a system of a dominant and a number of dependent centres and their respective peripheries. The interaction network (communications, transport) is geared to the dominant centre. "All roads lead to Rome!" That is the reason why colonial centres (New York, Rio de Janeiro, Lagos, Cape Town) tended to develop on the coast nearest to the main harbour of the colonial power (figure 1). Basically they were administrative and trading centres and the inland was "opened" in a radial fashion from these points.

There is a strong primary correlation between the economic potential and activity of certain groups and their geographical
distance to the core: the nearer a group is situated to the core, the higher its productivity and income.

A secondary development is able to reverse this trend: impoverished peripheral population groups move to inner city areas which rapidly deteriorate while the affluent centre population moves into the surrounding suburbs. The latter may even acquire abandoned or neglected rural areas and develop them with superior technology and a high level of capital investment into viable, sometimes lucrative undertakings.

The socio-economic discrepancy between centre and periphery is an all-inclusive phenomenon and has multi-dimensional characteristics.

Economically centres are characterised by a concentration of indicators of economic potency such as:

(a) A highly differentiated and integrated economy with strong linkages between a large variety of specialised and complementary industries.
(b) Capital accumulation and resultant labour productivity.
(c) A developed infrastructure, such as communications and transport networks, water and energy supplies etc.
(d) A high level of technological sophistication, expertise, training and entrepreneurial initiative.
(e) Fiercely competitive markets for skills, labour, goods and services.
(f) A high velocity of all socio-economic processes.
(g) Strong population concentrations leading to flourishing consumer markets.
(h) A high material standard of living.

Peripheral economies, in contrast, are characterised by a thin spread of indicators of economic potential:

(a) Subsistence agricultural production, or concentration on one industry, even one product.
(b) A low level of capital investment and low labour productivity.
(c) A poorly developed infrastructure.
(d) Little sophistication, expertise, training and risk-taking initiative.
(e) Little competition.
(f) A relaxed pace in all socio-economic processes.
(g) Low material standards of living.
(h) Populations spread over vast areas with only rudimentary local market formation.
The difference can be observed equally well, however, in other dimensions of life. In the centre, social organization materialises on a larger and more sophisticated scale; cultural activities are more varied and reach higher standards; political activity is more progressive; families are reduced to the basic unit of parent and children; intergroup relations are segmentary and versatile; the grown relationships of tribal society have made way for superficial and casual voluntary associations; status and role are achieved rather than ascribed; relations tend to be impersonal and functional rather than holistic and existential; time is experienced as a scarce resource; systems of meaning, values, norms, religious convictions, etc. tend to be more secular, pluralistic and relative, etc.

Causes of this phenomenon include, *inter alia* (Anzuck 1982):

(a) Historical advantages of some localities over others, e.g. mineral deposits, trade route intersections, coastal outlets, administrative capitals, rich soils, etc.

(b) Economies of space and distance, e.g. proximity to abundant supplies of the main factors of production, complementary industries, services, markets and a well-developed infrastructure.

(c) The subsequent generation of a cumulative socio-economic dynamic, sometimes called the agglomeration effect, which sucks the potential of its environment into its vortex and prevents the formation of competing centres in the vicinity, even at places which would otherwise possess a potential for centre formation.

(d) The use of economic, political and military power by centre elites to strengthen their competitive or dominant position at the expense of weaker groups and areas.

Thus the interaction between larger and smaller centres, as well as between centres and their respective peripheries, tends to operate to the greater advantage of the strong and the lesser advantage (or the disadvantage) of the weak. Potential does not balance out; it gravitates towards places where it is already
concentrated. The physical model to be applied here is not that of communicating tubes, but of the parallelogram of forces (Myrdal 1957).

Centres of comparable strength compete with each other; yet they also tend to become integrated in an ever more complicated network of interaction, interdependence and division of labour. Weaker centres, in contrast, tend to become satellites of stronger centres. The outcome is a hierarchy of centres of declining importance which stretches its tentacles into the remotest villages of the periphery. Thus the density of economic interaction decreases down the following list:

(a) intra-core  
(b) inter-core  
(c) core-periphery  
(d) periphery-periphery.

The network of communication, transport and trade therefore follows a radial pattern with strong links between the commanding centre and its dependencies but very little interaction between the latter (figure 2). All intercourse runs via the commanding centre (Galtung 1971: 89ff):

This does not mean, however, that such concentrations of economic activity and potential cannot shift in geographical space over historical time. In the early phases of commercial capitalism the centre of gravity shifted from North Italy (Venice, Milan, Genoa, Florence) to the Low Countries (Antwerp and Amsterdam). The Industrial Revolution and the Empire made England the economic centre of the world until World War II brought its rapid decline in favour of central Europe. Europe as a whole lost its leading position in the world to the USA (Wilson 1974).
Dependent centres are particularly prone to rapid growth, decline and possible collapse. In Brazil a thriving centre on the north-eastern coast (Recife, Salvador) collapsed together with the world sugar market in the 1650s leaving an area of extreme poverty ever after. Sao Paulo and vicinity emerged as the new centre of the country during the last century on the basis of coffee, and later, secondary industry.
2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CASE

2.3.1 The overall centre-periphery structure

In South Africa the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging complex (PWV), with Johannesburg as its core, forms the commanding centre with the Cape Peninsula and Durban-Pinetown two major subcentres (figure 3). Port Elizabeth, East London, Bloemfontein, Kimberley and the OFS gold fields are lesser subcentres. The system stretches down to the small rural villages of the periphery.

In passing we may mention that the South African centre is a subcentre of the world economic system dominated by the metropoles in the USA, Europe and Japan, though it is less dependent on external capital and control than in comparable semi-industrialised countries such as Brazil. We cannot go into these international connections (cf. Ehrensaft 1976).

Cape Town developed as colonial harbour and administrative capital of the Cape Colony. It was overshadowed by Johannesburg because of the rich mineral deposits there, particularly gold. Pretoria contributed to the development of the PWV complex as administrative capital of united South Africa. The development of commerce and secondary industry followed suit - particularly during and after World War II. Durban began as colonial harbour and administrative capital of Natal, then became the main coastal outlet for the PWV complex and subsequently attracted considerable commercial interests and secondary industries (See figure 4)

It is remarkable that the gold fields of the Orange Free State did not develop into another Witwatersrand. One reason must be
the vicinity of the virulent metropolis of Johannesburg. Another may be the application of influx control which prevented the establishment of a permanent Black urban population in this region. The phenomenon that a potential centre cannot easily establish itself against the competition of a strong existing centre leaves little hope for new centres in 'Black States' to grow to real economic significance.

Figure 3
Gross domestic product per square mile in South Africa
(Compiled by J Browett. Source: Smith 1977:20.)
Economic activity spreads in a radial fashion from the great centres into their respective peripheries. A definite radial hierarchy of centres of varying degrees of dependency developed over the decades. Most prominent is the development along the main lines of communication and transport, particularly between the greater centres. While the latter are highly integrated, communications between the various peripheries are either absent or they run via their respective centres. The further one moves into the periphery, the more isolated towns, villages and communities become. The "National Physical Development Plan" of 1975 (figure 5) does not seem to counteract the general pattern of radial development, nor does the "Good Hope Plan" of 1981 (figure 9) (South Africa 1975; De Villiers 1981).

2.3.2 Areas reserved for Blacks

The rural periphery is split into two unequal sets of regions, the White farming area which spreads across the whole country and the pockets of land reserved for Black occupation which form "black specks on the white background". Smaller patches of land traditionally owned by Blacks have been dissolved and their occupants have been resettled on land adjacent to greater blocs of land occupied by Blacks. This policy of "Black spot
removal" and "consolidation" is still in progress (Cooper 1984: 298-315).

Large numbers of "redundant" Blacks in White urban areas and "squatters" on White-owned farms have been resettled in the rural areas reserved for Blacks. The population density in the latter has increased dramatically as a result of these policies as well as natural population growth over the last 25 years (Simkins 1979: 20). The following statistics demonstrate these shifts in the black population:

Domestic Africans in various areas in South Africa according to Simkins (1983: 58):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan areas</td>
<td>25,4%</td>
<td>26,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White rural areas</td>
<td>35,1%</td>
<td>20,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black areas</td>
<td>40,9%</td>
<td>53,1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The radial lines of communications and development neatly avoid the geographical areas reserved for Blacks except where the latter are in fact part of the metropolital regions (e.g. north of Durban and north of Pretoria). Where these lines do not circumvent Black areas, they form "corridors" of White-owned land through them (see figure 9 for the country as a whole and figures 6 and 7 for a more detailed example). In terms of socio-economic potential the areas reserved for Blacks, therefore, form the outer periphery in the total spatial structure. This pattern is only rendered inconsistent by the semi-arid conditions in the western parts of the country.
Figure 5

National Physical Development Plan 1975 of the Department of Planning and Environment - Republic of South Africa
Figure 6
Natal and KwaZulu: Areas accessible to roads, railways and electricity.

Figure 7
The rural land area reserved for Blacks has long ceased to supply the local Black population with a means of livelihood on the basis of traditional subsistence agriculture (Möller 1982). The carrying capacity of these lands has actually deteriorated rapidly as a result of population pressure, soil erosion, over-grazing and obsolete farming methods.

Food production hovered around 45% of subsistence needs in the nineteen-twenties and remained there until resettlement began in earnest in 1955. From then it dropped to under 20% in 1970 as population density increased (Simkins 1979:12).

Efforts by the Government to arrest this deterioration and enhance productivity are unable to keep pace with population growth. Newcomers are being concentrated in "closer settlements" and rural villages (Smit 1981:4). In the absence of agricultural or industrial employment opportunities these groups are entirely dependent on migrant labour in the White rural and urban areas.

The Black areas consistently contribute only 2-3% to the South African gross domestic product (BENBO 1976:69, table B.7.1). Black 'national governments' controlled 8% of expenditure on public services and received 2.7% of revenue from own sources in 1978/9 (Lombard 1980b: fig.9).

Small, dependent subcentres in Black areas (Ulundi, Mmabatho, Lebowakgomo etc.) are artificial creations which are totally dependent on grants from Pretoria. If the policy of creating "Black States" was to be abolished, they would probably collapse. Many of the urban concentrations and rural villages established in Black areas in recent years would probably develop into ghost towns in such an eventuality because they lack an economic base.
2.3.3 The urban centres

Due to the "push" of increasing population pressure in Black areas and the "pull" of accelerating industrial development in the White urban centres during the past half century or so, there has been a growing influx of Blacks into the latter (Nattrass 1983b: 5ff; Smit 1981: 17ff; Wilson 1972: 144ff).

Black townships were soon severely overcrowded and informal settlements sprung up on the outskirts of towns all over the country (Smit 1981: 21ff).

With the expansion of White towns and the promulgation of "group areas" policies, the Black urban population was moved to high density townships at a convenient distance from White urban areas (Smit 1981: 73ff; Beavon 1982).

These townships are peripheral in relation to the economic activity of the urban centres concerned, pure 'dormitory towns' with inadequate infrastructure, services, commercial outlets and taxable income. This has to be taken into account when thinking of the devolution of power to local authorities which has now become government policy.

In a similar move Indian traders who had settled in inner city areas as well as persons of mixed race were resettled out of town (Maasdorp 1977).

The Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 (as amended and consolidated) defines areas for occupation in proclaimed urban areas by the four major race groups. The area reserved for White occupation invariably includes the economically potent centres of economic activity as well as lavish suburban sprawls while other
Figure 8a

Black, Coloured and Asian Townships in the PWV Area.

(adapted from Smit 1981: 76)
Figures 8b and 8c

Distribution of Blacks (top) and Whites (Bottom) in greater Johannesburg in 1970.
(taken from P.H. Pirie in Smith 1976b:89-90)
Figure 8d

Movements of Blacks in South Africa.
(Source: Muller 1984:5)
race groups are settled in narrowly delineated and restricted "ghettos" (See figure 8a for the PWV-area and figures 8b and 8c for a visual impression of the different locations and densities of the two main race groups in Johannesburg).

At the same time the influx of Blacks into White urban areas has been subjected to draconic controls. Labour needs of the centres were increasingly met by migrant labourers residing in hostels adjacent to Black townships while their families remained either in their rural homes or were resettled in quasi-urban concentrations in the rural areas reserved for Black occupation.

These population groups are economically part of the urban centres but socially they are strangers isolated from the rest of the urban population (Erasmus 1977a: 29ff).

In the vicinity of White urban centres but inside the rural areas reserved for Blacks large concentrations of Black informal settlements (slums) came into being. While legally they form part of the "Black States" they are economically integral parts of the urban-industrial centres. Their inhabitants are commuting to and from town on a daily or weekly basis.

The de facto population of Bophuthatswana, for instance, is concentrated on the borders of the Black areas adjoining the Pretoria-Brits-Rustenburg development axis and almost 50% live within a radius of 50 km from Pretoria (Smit 1981:85-86). Similar concentrations can be found in Kwa-Ndebele near Pretoria, in Umlazi and Kwa Mashu near Durban and in Mdantsane near East London.

Figure 8d, taken from Muller (1984: 5) gives a good indication of state controlled settlement, immigration and commuting patterns of Blacks in South Africa.
Due to the "push" of economic pressures in black rural areas and the "pull" of the urban-industrial centres the influx of Blacks into the cities is accelerating in spite of ever tightening bureaucratic and police controls. It is estimated that, by the year 2000, 23 million Blacks will have been urbanised in some way or another (Cooper 1984: 261). Various avenues present themselves:

(a) Dormitory towns in Black rural areas which depend on migrant labour.
(b) Site and service schemes for Blacks with urban rights in White towns.
(c) Informal settlements (slums) in Black rural areas nearest to the urban centres.
(d) Illegal infiltration into White urban areas and the concomitant formation of slums and high density living in existing houses in Black townships.

All these avenues and many more - will be followed.

2.3.4 Decentralisation

For quite some time decentralisation policies of the South African Government were based on ideological considerations. Blacks were to be drawn back or pushed back from White areas to Black areas. White private initiative was not to be allowed within the Black areas. Government agencies conducted rural stabilisation and development schemes as well as small scale commercial and industrial projects. White entrepreneurs were encouraged to move close to the borders of Black areas to take advantage of an abundance of Black commuter labour. Black labour supply in White rural areas was drastically reduced through the abolition of the squatter system and strictly controlled in White urban areas through influx control.
This policy led to a relative reduction of the Black population in White rural areas and a greater concentration of Blacks in Black areas (cf. 5.4.2 below). Black areas and border industrial areas did not develop in any meaningful way, except where the latter were natural extensions of existing urban concentrations such as Rosslyn near Pretoria. By the end of the seventies it became clear to Afrikaner academics and policy-makers that the ideological objectives were unrealistic and a more pragmatic approach was adopted (Smit 1981: 29-35).

Urban Blacks were now considered to be permanent residents in White areas and a more liberal policy towards them emerged (the right to build and own houses, trade union rights, better training facilities etc.). Influx control was tightened, apparently with the aim of freezing the number of urban Blacks as far as possible. The "Good Hope Plan" subdivided the entire country into development regions which include Black and White areas and even cut across existing "international" boundaries. Thus the Transkei's northern part was grouped together with Natal, the southern part with the Eastern Cape. A number of "deconcentration points" and "industrial development points" have been demarcated both inside and outside the Black areas. Strong incentives for industrialists to move to these growth points have been instituted. A development bank has been established. Cooperation between White and Black capital and initiative has been made possible. It is clear that economically speaking the old idea of separate development has been abandoned in favour of the doctrine of "interdependence" (See figure 9). (See Tomlinson 1983:546-550 for the development of policy).
2.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter we analysed spatial (geographical) aspects of economic power differentials in South Africa.

The universal phenomenon of the concentration of economic activity and potential in certain geographical centres and the concomitant relative underdevelopment of their respective peripheries was briefly described and a few causes were indicated (2.2).

We then turned to the South African case. Here a particularly marked centre-periphery pattern evolved over the last century. The so-called PWV area is in a commanding position while the Cape Peninsula and Durban-Pinetown area form smaller sub-centres (2.3.1).

The peripheral position of the areas reserved for Blacks and the resultant total dependence of their populations on the economic centres were discussed (2.3.2).

We then highlighted a few aspects of the situation in the urban centres and the effects of spatial race policies on the urbanisation of Blacks (2.3.3). We closed with a brief consideration of decentralisation in a spatial perspective (2.3.4).

The overall picture which emerged is a polarisation between economically powerful urban-industrial centres firmly under White control and small, scattered and economically insignificant peripheral areas to which half of the Black population has been restricted.
Figure 9
The Good Hope Plan (1981)

- Metropolitan areas
- Black areas (consolidated development regions)
- Deconcentration/industrial development points

(Source: The Good Hope Plan for Southern Africa, S.A. Department of Foreign Affairs and Information)