Family as social network: Kinship and sporadic migrancy in the Western Cape's Khayelitsha

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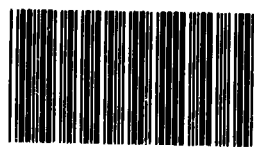Department of Social Anthropology
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The Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life is based in the Group: Social Dynamics of the Human Sciences Research Council. The emphasis in the programme is on the structure and dynamics of family life, the nature of family disorganisation and disintegration, and the nature of the changes taking place with regard to family structure and family processes in society. This report is concerned with the dynamics of family life and the social processes whereby family and kinship are redefined through the use of ideas about clanship amongst Xhosa speakers in a Western Cape shanty town.

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and should not necessarily be viewed as those of the Human Sciences Research Council.

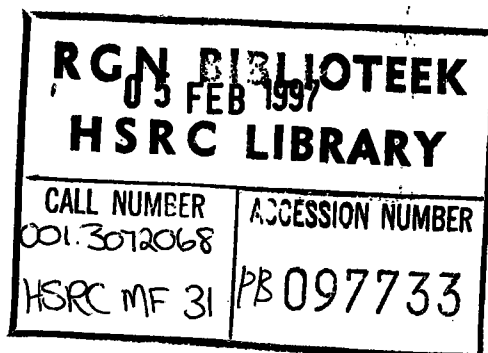**Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life**

EKSERP

Die gesins- en verwantskapgroep is nooit strak omlyn nie, hoewel die biologiese idioom waarop hierdie groeperinge gebou is dit impliseer. Hierdie verslag toon die vloeibaarheid van verwantskap aan, asook hoedat verwantskap in die vroeë 1990s as kulturele hulpbron betekenis gegee het aan die toevallige maatskaplike verhoudings onder plakkers in Khayelitsha, Kaapstad, asook hoedat dit hierdie verhoudings versterk het.

Deur die gebruik van data verkry van 'n klein nie-verteenwoordigende steekproef verskaf die verslag 'n gevallestudie-voorbeeld van hoe mense die wisselvallighede van verstedeliking die hoof bied deur maatskaplike netwerke te skep, en dié dan, deur die manipulering van kultureel begrepe idees van verwantskap en stamgenootskap, verstewig. Die verslag toon aan hoe dit gebeur as deel van mense se ervaring van verstedeliking en as deel van hul daaropvolgende pogings tot huishoudelike konsolidasie. Dit onderstreep die verhouding tussen die hulpsoekende-hulpverlenende maatskaplike verhoudings en netwerke aan die een kant, en die morele imperatiewe wat afgelei word van aansprake op grond van verwantskapsbande aan die ander kant. En dit bied 'n perspektief op stamverwantskap wat tot dusver in Suid-Afrikaanse verwantskapstudies afwesig was.

Die verslag sluit af met 'n betoog teen die ontleding van verwantskap bloot as waarneembare struktuur. In plaas daarvan word aan die hand gedoen dat verwantskap as 'n kulturele hulpbron beskou moet word waarmee mense hul verhoudings definieer, en dat die struktuur daarvan verander juis terwyl dit as hulpbron benut word.

ABSTRACT

The boundaries of family and kinship are never fixed. Yet the biological idiom on which they are constructed suggests that they are. This report demonstrates the fluidity of kinship and its significance as a cultural resource for giving meaning to, and reinforcing, contingent social relationships amongst shanty town residents in Khayelitsha, Cape Town during the early 1990s.

Using material from a small non-representative sample, the report provides case-study illustration of how people faced the exigencies of urbanisation through creating social networks which they reinforced by manipulating culturally understood notions of kinship and clanship. It traces how this occurred as part of their urban migration experience and of their subsequent attempts at domestic consolidation. It highlights the relationship between the contingent nature of reciprocity-based social relationships and networks, on one hand, and the moral imperatives that derive from claims of kin linkages, on the other. And it offers a perspective on clanship thus far absent in South African kinship studies.

The essay concludes by arguing against analyses of kinship simply as observable structure. Instead, it suggests, kinship is a cultural resource that lives in people's efforts to define their relationships and that has its structure transformed precisely as it is drawn upon as a resource.

ISISHWANKATHELO

Imida yekhaya kunye nokuhlobana phakathi koluntu akusoloko kusisigxina. Kodwa ukuhlobana ngesizalo kubonisa ukuba ngathi. Eli livo libonisa ukuphangalala kokuzalana, kunye nokubaluleka kokuzalana njengesixhobo sesithethe esinika intsingiselo kubuhlobo kubahlali bamatyotyombe aseKhayelitsha, kwisithili saseKapa ekuqaleni kweminyaka yama-1990.

Eli livo lisebenzisa ulwazi oluvela kwigcuntswana labantu abakule ndawo. Sithi sibonise ngokucacileyo iindlela nemigudu abantu bakule ndawo ikhankanyiweyo abahlangabezana ngayo iingxaki neenzima zobumi zesixeko ngokuthi bakhe ubuhlobo phakathi kwabo ngokuthi basebenzise ukuzalana kunye nezidiuko. Eli livo liphanda ukuba kwenzeka njani oku, njengenxalenye yamava abantu abasuka emaphandleni besiya ezidolophini, kunye nemizamo yabo ekwakheni intlalo leyo esixekweni. Kwelinye icala ilivo eli libalula ubuhlobo phakathi kokungabi nasigxina kobuhlobo obunikezelana ngezipho, kunye nenkanuko yokunceda isihlobo ephuma kumakhonkco okuzalana. Ilivo eli, libonisa inkalo yokujonga ukuzalana ngeziduko, into leyo engekhoyo kwizibhalo zokuzalana eMzantsi-Afrika.

Eli livo ligqibela ngophikisa uluvo oluthi, ukuzalana bubuhlobo nje obuthi bubonakale. Ilivo eli lona licebisa ukuba ukuzalana sisixhobo sesiko okanye isithethe esisoloko sikhona phakathi kwabantu kwimizamo yabo yokubalula ubuhlobo babo.

Contents

1. Introduction[1]

Discussing a recent set of articles about the nature of households in the former bantustan of Qwaqwa, Henrietta Moore (1994a) repeated the important but often forgotten point that kinship continues to be central to the lives and livelihoods of people in capitalist-industrial circumstances. This is particularly the case for those dislocated by the effects of modernising processes of capitalist industrialisation that commonly go hand in hand with urbanisation (see Manona 1991), albeit that, in the case of Qwaqwa, this process took that peculiarly South African form recently described as 'displaced urbanisation' (see Murray 1987b; Sharp 1994).

It is certainly true that, under such circumstances, kinship principles do not, indeed cannot, offer or provide the basis for structuring overarching economic and political systems. It has been argued that they had precisely this function in many small-scale pre-industrial contexts, where — especially for Africa — the kinship structures (particularly those based on unilineal kinship) were understood by outside analysts to provide the basic principles underlying entire social structures (e.g. Fortes 1945; 1949; 1970; Evans-Pritchard 1940; 1951; Fortes & Evans-Pritchard 1940; Radcliffe-Brown & Forde 1950). In the contemporary capitalist-industrial world this is most certainly not the case. Yet that does not mean that kinship has become irrelevant. Indeed, the principles associated with kinship remain crucial in the ways that especially economically disadvantaged and politically marginalised people create networks of relationships for their mutual support (also see Lomnitz 1977; Guyer 1981; Berry 1993 among others[2]).

In these new circumstances, the means and manner whereby compositions of households and families change is a direct result of people treating the culture of kinship and marriage — a combination Clark (1994:93) glosses for convenience as 'family' — as a resource for use in circumstances of poverty. The result is not the often assumed demise of kinship as a significant social organising principle. Rather it is a marked *redefinition* of kinship and family as institutions of, and a social resource in, contemporary life; Carol Stack's (1974) work on poor Afro-Americans has been used repeatedly to demonstrate this approach to kinship (see also Liebow 1967 and compare with Strathern 1992; Carsten 1995; Weismantel 1995).

This monograph reports on the ways in which processes of this kind can be seen to have been occurring, in 1992-3, among a small cohort of poor people resident in a shanty area in the recently established Khayelitsha, already then a sprawling new African housing complex ('development area' in the planners' jargon) outside Cape Town (see Section 2 for description of our sampling). Our main aim is to provide some evidence of the ways in which these people used kinship to form or reinforce their relationships in and around one of the serviced-site shack areas that constituted most of Khayelitsha's housing and provide places of abode for an estimate of more than half its population.[3] We do this by examining the significance of kinship both for the experience of migration between and within rural and urban areas, and in the context of domestic consolidation processes as, in their everyday lives, people tried

to build up what they perceived as secure households for themselves and those they understood to be their dependants.

The 'household' to which we refer here is emically constituted as an aggregation of individuals who share a common interest in ensuring their mutual future security around a set of resources and potentials to generate income they believe they share. Commonly (although not necessarily) these individuals are linked through consanguineal and affinal ties and they are often to be found in various parts of the subcontinent, as are the resources they claim to share. They are thus not necessarily co-resident, and their material base is not in one place.

To undertake the exercise spelt out above, we have had to take a perspective that asks whether kinship and family[4] should be seen as something other than phenomena that are simply given by the apparent logic of biological relationships. Rather we ask, in the manner of using a somewhat loose working hypothesis, whether it might not be more useful to see these institutions as constituting an array of ideas about relationships to which people turn, and that they use, to define for themselves the roles they should play with respect to others with whom they have established a variety of social relationships of mutual support. Our concern here is to understand kinship in terms of how people appropriate ideas about the norms of kin-based relationships for reinforcing relationships between people acknowledged to have no *a priori* genealogical (kinship) link.

Taking such a perspective thus leads us to be less concerned with demonstrating how people in particular 'biologically' defined kin relationships behave relative to one another than with what they understand as the normative roles appropriate to those statuses.[5] It also demands that we find ways to understand how people's assumptions about what are appropriate roles between those they understand to be kin become a resource — a resource they use for their own redefinition of their social relationships with people who are part of their social networks; and a resource that is recursively transformed in the process of its use in such ways. These questions demand that we also clarify these ideas through going on to show that people do draw on the culture of kinship and use it as a resource by redefining at least some of the members of their networks in kinship terms. Our aim, therefore, must be to examine how people use the culture of kinship to give social weight and salience to reciprocal and other relationships they establish in their struggles to survive the vagaries of being drawn in at the margins of urban industrial life in recent post-apartheid South Africa.

In such contexts, the set of mutually supportive relationships that any one person establishes is best examined to see the extent to which it is a series of somewhat contingent social networks, the membership of which is never static and most certainly never wholly based on kinship and marriage-based relationships. Indeed, the idea of social networks — as often unstable or short-term sets of social relationships created contingently around and by individuals and their households — has proved to be useful for understanding the nature of relationships in such circumstances. This is precisely because the idea does not assume any necessary

long-term continuities in any particular individual's set of relationships, nor the existence of any formally structured basis for them. Where corporations are indeed formed around such networks they are almost as likely not to survive for long, as they are to persist over time. This is precisely because they are based on contingent rather than structural principles, as are the various dyadic relationships on which they are built.

For our purposes, however, what is of special interest is the extent to which an overlay of kinship is placed on at least some of the relationships that make up these kinds of social networks — how, in a sense, there exists a culturally-defined structure that might be imposed on what are effectively a series of contingency-based relationships. Our concern is to see how people build upon and use their own notions of kinship to cement relationships in ways that, in their understanding of society, merely contingent material reciprocities are unable to do.

From this perspective, kinship and family constitute a cultural resource; an array of ideas about normative roles that are contested simultaneously with their being drawn upon. These are ideas from which people derive meaning (and which they contest and refine) precisely as they try to define for themselves, in terms that they readily understand, their relationships with neighbours and others who help them, and whom they help in turn. While phrased in terms of an idiom of biological relationships, kinship here is thus not at all about biology, nor indeed is it always about readily traceable genealogies. It is about a flexibility in defining relationships and the normative roles associated with various social statuses conventionally associated with genealogical linkages. It reflects the lasting legacy to anthropology of Morgan's (1870) work on kinship terminologies through which he came to understand this point, foreshadowing — very far ahead of its time — a central feature of 1990s post-structuralist analysis whereby people are seen to invest time and energy in the cultural constructions of their relationships.

The same argument can be applied to marriage. As Liebow showed thirty years ago (1967), marriage too can be a cultural resource of this sort in that normative rights and duties associated with marriage in a particular social locality can come to be understood to provide a framework for defining and contesting the nature of various other relationships.[6] Among these are consensual unions, although, for Liebow, such unions retain a greater degree of flexibility than formally constituted marriages — a flexibility that derives from the contested nature of the assumed norms of marriage, and the vicissitudes of those norms' applicability to companionate and coresidential arrangements.

Our task in the present project is to show how, in dealing with the processes of migration and the everyday activities associated with domestic life and consolidation, people resident in the greater Khayelitsha complex called on, and took to be members of their social networks, at least some of the people they regarded as their kin from earlier interaction and from genealogical knowledge. It is also to show how such people created kin of others with whom they had intense reciprocal relationships, with whom they created social networks, but with whom their genea-

logical linkages were tenuous at best. On a less positive note, we will show in addition that such constructions of kinship were not always able to withstand the vagaries of differential life chances. When reciprocal relationships are threatened by inadequacies in material circumstances, the kinship-based patina that has been laid over them can also crack, and with it the assumed and asserted moral basis of the relationship. Similarly, as Sharp and Spiegel (1985) demonstrated for Qwaqwa in the 1980s, even readily traceable genealogically based kin relationships can be thoroughly undermined by extremes of poverty.

We begin our presentation with a brief overview of the circumstances and history of Khayelitsha, and of the particular area there where all of our immediate informants were resident at the time of our research in 1992-3. We then go on briefly to present our sample population before discussing the methods we used and methodological problems we encountered in conducting both the primary field-based research for this project and in writing it up. The ethnographic substance of the essay is based, for the most part, on detailed case material. It is divided into three sections. The first deals with uses of kinship in the migration process, looking at this from the perspective of different categories of people in our sampled population. The second section turns to the ways kinship is used in people's everyday lives to support their efforts to achieve a sense of urban domestic consolidation, and the problems faced in this process. Although the latter can be analytically distinguished from the migration process, it is by no means experientially distinct. In the third section we discuss how people use kinship- and clanship-based terms to realise and reinforce their reciprocal relationships and how this reflects their understanding of the nature of these kinds of relationships. We conclude with a brief discussion of the implications of our findings for the ways in which kinship should be understood in the context of its socio-cultural importance to poor African people in contemporary South Africa.

2. The research area and population

2.1 Khayelitsha

Today Khayelitsha is the largest black residential area in the Western Cape province (Pick *et al*. 1990). Its original centre is located about 35 km away from Cape Town's harbour and central business district. Its population was estimated to be about 400 000 in 1992 (Conradie 1992:56 in Fast 1995:24),[7] and all indications are that it has continued to grow since then, as has the area of developed land that constitutes the developed parts of what is officially described as the development area of Khayelitsha.

Khayelitsha was first conceived as a potential black residential area in 1983 when the apartheid state hoped to create a new area in which to relocate the whole African population of Cape Town (SPP 1984:99; Fast 1995:21-2). Public outcry and consistent resistance to that aspect of the state's intentions meant, however, that this facet of Khayelitsha's planning was never realised. Yet the growing African population of Cape Town and the mushrooming of squatter shacks on invaded land

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indicated a need for further areas of residential land within the area of greater Cape Town. The relative security of tenure that Khayelitsha offered attracted ever growing numbers of Africans, who were then squatters and backyard shack residents in older townships, to relocate in the new complex. It also provided hopes for a degree of safety from the factional violence that followed the patronage politics of site allocation and local administration that developed in many of the shantytowns that sprung up on invaded land around the older established black townships (see Cole 1987; Fast 1995). In many cases this form of politics was encouraged by apartheid state agents aiming to undermine local unity and resistance (Ngcokotho 1990).

After a slow start in 1984 — with an initial small area, now known locally as Khayelitsha, of sub-economic 'core houses'[8] — Khayelitsha grew rapidly from the late 1980s as areas of sand-dune, previously owned by the Defence Force, were cleared and laid out for settlement (Van Heerden & Evans 1984:16). The first structures that were erected were meant to entice backyard shack dwellers in the older African townships and squatters in shantytowns such as Crossroads to relocate. By the mid-1990s the greater Khayelitsha complex has come to include a variety of different housing areas. This ranges from some small areas of relatively upmarket privately built homes, through core houses and other small sub-economic formal structures to vast areas of informal houses (shacks) erected on serviced sites that are provided with tarred roads, mast lighting, water and water-borne sewerage services and, in recent times, access also to an electricity grid and some telephone lines. Other shacks are to be found in more rudimentarily serviced transit-camp areas, for people awaiting allocation of serviced sites, where the services are limited to water outlets shared by a number of sites and (today) bucket-toilets serving the sanitation needs of residents there.[9]

The broader structure plan for Khayelitsha divides the area into a series of three numbered 'towns' each comprising a series of local similarly numbered 'villages'. Provision has been made for shopping precincts, schools, community halls and the like, some of which have begun to take shape during the mid-1990s, giving the area a growing semblance of more than just a hurriedly planned dumping ground for vast numbers of poor shack dwellers on the margins of the city. Indeed, our own perfunctory comparison of the area in the mid-1990s with what it was like just five years previously indicates that processes of physical consolidation are occurring at both the broad civic level of infrastructural development and at the very local level where individuals are extending their houses so that their shacks are, bit by bit, gaining a greater degree of solidity. In occasional instances, people have replaced shacks with small but more formal structures. People's development of domestic gardens on their small sites also provides evidence of further physical domestic consolidation in town, both in the sub-economic housing areas and in the sprawling site-and-service areas. But to counter this impression, one must also recognise that there is a slowly growing phenomenon of 'backyard shacks', in the sense that some serviced sites accommodate more than one shack, with as many domestic units resident there as there are shacks — indication that even the minimal costs of

possessing a site are beyond the means of some and that, for others, offering the very poorest a space to erect a tiny shack can generate a small additional income in the form of rents.

Greater Khayelitsha continues, therefore, to house a very poor population. A survey during 1995 found that 58 % of shack-based households were in receipt of a monthly income of R800 or less and a further 29 % were in the cohort R801-R1 500 per month. Read in terms of the Primary Household Subsistence Level (PHSL), 48 % of shack dwellers in greater Khayelitsha were receiving household incomes below the 80th percentile and a further 22 % were receiving between the 80th and 120th percentiles of the PHSL for that area at that time (Mazur & Qangule 1995: Table 10.3).[10]

Formal employment levels were low (36 % of men and 59 % of women were unemployed), and most who earned income were in insecure and poorly paid jobs (e.g. domestic workers, gardeners, construction labourers). For many, this represented a state of underemployment that was characterised by seasonal fluctuations. Poverty was thus exacerbated by the wet winter weather conditions when outdoor employment opportunities were severely limited (see Ross 1995). The same 1995 survey indicates the following regarding income-earning activities for shack residents in greater Khayelitsha in 1995 (Table 1):

Table 1: Income-earning activities of household heads, adult men and adult women in shacks in greater Khayelitsha, 1995

Income-earning activity	Household heads*	Men	Women
	Percentages**		
Unspecified	2	2	-
None	24	36	59
Unskilled labour	12	14	2
Unskilled service	34	16	31
Semi-skilled labour	12	14	7
Semi-skilled service	6	7	-
Skilled labour	10	11	-
Skilled service	-	1	1

Source: Mazur and Qangule (1995: Tables 10.1; 10.2) where not all column totals are precisely 100 % because of rounding.

* Household heads refer to the most senior man or woman in a household.

** 'n' not given for 1995 survey.

For many, the only source of income was thus through informal income generation of one kind or another, whether in temporary piece-work employment or through resale of small quantities of commercially available or other locally produced goods.

Indeed, a large number of tiny stalls can be found alongside greater Khayelitsha's main thoroughfares, particularly at major junctions, most selling locally prepared foodstuffs, such as cooked meat, vegetables and fruit and various other small essentials. There are also scattered *spaza* shops[11] in people's homes throughout the complex, as well as a few formal retail outlets. Most of the latter are owned and managed by members of the local Khayelitsha Business Association.

During the early 1990s when the research on which this report is based was conducted, the administration of the complex was formally under the control of the Lingelethu West Town Council. But the pariah status of such councils and their members — a result of their participation in and collaboration with apartheid state structures — meant that there was another more popular form of local administration based on street committees and local area civic associations. For many residents this represented a more legitimate, albeit not necessarily a more effective, form of local administration. Its downside was the fact that it was based, as had been the case in many of the 'illegal' shantytowns from which people in Khayelitsha had moved, on patronage politics that demanded high levels of local loyalty to individuals who assumed leadership roles, often describing themselves — and being described — as 'headmen' (*isibonda*).[12] One result was persistence of the factional conflict and violence from which many people had tried to escape by settling in Khayelitsha. As before, however, this was often rationalised as a reflection of politically-inspired cleavages between so-called 'collaborators' (their supporters epitomised in the research period as the 'balaclava' people[13]) and so-called 'progressives' supported — often apparently blindly — by young activists known as 'comrades' (see Mehlwana 1994; 1995).

2.2   Makhaza

For many of the people in Makhaza,[14] the shanty area in which all our primary informants resided at the time of our research, the high levels of local violence and lack of personal safety there were attributes that were as negatively viewed as the lack of employment, the long distances and high cost of transport to both job opportunities and services, and the general state of poverty and depression in the area. Indeed, one of our principal respondents, Alice Ntyatyambo (#2),[15] was widowed as a result of local factional/political violence just at the time we had wanted to begin our research. She subsequently fled the area for fear of her own life and that of her children (Mehlwana 1995). During one interview with her, early in 1993, she explained of Makhaza:

> This area is not quiet. Every evening there is lots of shooting, but you never hear the results of all that shooting in the morning. Yet the night is full of shooting ... Now, since there are these balaclavas, you can hear that they are around, that they are invading somewhere.

And another, Novumile Sangweni (#10), explaining some months later how she felt about her house (shack), the dangers of fire, and the area she lived in, said:

> I like this house of mine because I am staying in it. I do not sleep outside ... I do not have any other house I can stay in. The thing that I do not like is that I [must] live in it while it is still like this — it is not yet fully built. I just stay here because I cannot do otherwise ... The problems with it are that it leaks in places. It needs that I must have money to repair it. When it rains it is as if we are not staying inside a house at all. And the thing I hate most is not to eat. There is little to eat. Sometimes a child gets sick and there is no person who cares. Even the father of the house does not care at all. That is painful ... Since he is not working, he gets up early in the morning [to go in search of work] and comes home very late, but the sick one remains with me. Then when he comes he demands his food ... And we are living in shacks which burn easily. The shacks there [across the street] were alight after another man tried to torch all our shacks. This was because he did not want us to stay here ... He is the 'headman' who controlled us there in Greenpoint [transit camp where they lived before; not to be confused with Cape Town's seaboard Greenpoint suburb] and we deposed him. He wanted us to remain there and not come to live here. There we were paying him money ... the same as rent because a person would come in and say that he is collecting money for [the 'headman'] and we would just pay.

Most of Makhaza's residents had settled there at the time it was first developed in 1991, coming immediately from two nearby transit camps whence they brought the materials from which they re-erected their old shacks. Most had also previously lived in shacks in other shanty areas on invaded land elsewhere in the Cape Town area, and some had been in hostels and lodgers in formal houses. These were people who had thus experienced not only the process of migration between rural and urban areas, but also a number of relocations within greater Cape Town itself.

Each household was allocated a numbered, ±170 m², site with its own toilet structure and water tap on site. For this, residents were expected to pay a rates/services charge of R29 per month. But, as had occurred elsewhere throughout South Africa, there was an effective payments boycott instituted by the civic association movement. As one woman explained, echoing what we heard from many others: 'The civic complains that we are expected to [pay] rent for shacks. It wants us to pay rent only for houses.' And another commented: 'We won't pay it [rates] because the building materials are all ours ... We cannot pay that money while the houses are built by us.'[16]

Although these were people who had not come directly from a remote 'homeland' area, almost all Makhaza's residents had close ties with such areas, and many of them continued to maintain these ties if their material circumstances allowed. The vast majority of people's rural ties were in either the Transkei or the Ciskei (or

both), with some also in other rural parts of the Eastern Cape where they had links with people on white-owned farms or in small towns. In addition, people in Makhaza had contacts in other metropolitan areas of the country and social networks that stretched to include areas in Gauteng and elsewhere.

Most adults and many teenage children in Makhaza had been born in a rural former 'homeland' area, although indications from both the presently reported work, and from a related study of housing in greater Cape Town with which we have been associated, indicate that an increasing number of younger children now residing in the area are likely to have been born within greater Cape Town. An example of the latter was the Sawila household (#8).

> Matthew and Nolusapho Sawila, born on Karoo farms respectively in Steynsburg (Eastern Cape) and Colesberg (Northern Cape) in the 1950s, had six children. Two were born on the Steynsburg farm where Mathew Sawila had himself grown up, three in a resettlement area in the Ciskei to which they were relocated, and the last in Cape Town, as was their first grandchild who lived with them in 1992.

In this respect, then, the population of Makhaza appears to reflect the same broad pattern of migration to the Western Cape indicated by Seekings, Graaff and Joubert (1990) in so far as the vast majority were people who had first come to settle in, or close to, greater Cape Town before 1986 when influx control legislation was repealed. They had settled in backyard shacks, in 'illegal' shanty towns, and illegally in hostels, and had taken the opportunity offered them by the development of Khayelitsha firstly to obtain transit camp sites and subsequently to secure more permanent sites in site-and-service areas. Once having developed some security of tenure, they settled on a more long-term basis and bore their children in the area rather than returning, as many women had done in the past, to undergo labour and the first months of child care in a 'homeland' situation.

All along, however, and indeed still up to the time of our research (with no evidence of a major swing since), these people maintained their rural/former 'homeland' links through frequent but sporadic visits back and forth by various members of the groups they saw as constituting their otherwise fluid and 'stretched' households (see Spiegel, Watson & Wilkinson 1996b). We describe these migratory oscillations as sporadic for two reasons. Firstly, by comparison with *apartheid-* and labour market-induced regularity of migrants' movement to workplace areas for long periods and to rural homes for shorter leave periods, these people's movements were far less neatly patterned. Indeed, although an examination of the overall pattern of such travel shows a continuing tendency to its concentration over the summer-Christmas period, there is a strong and steady flow of people in either direction between Cape Town and the former-'homelands' throughout the year, particularly at weekends (Dewar, Rosmarin & Watson 1991). Secondly, at the micro-level of individuals' involvement in such travel, we need to be cognisant of the multiple reasons for which people undertake it: it is no longer determined primarily by

periods of leave given, particularly as large proportions of those who travel do not do so purely to get to or from the areas of their workplaces.

We need, in addition, to reconsider precisely what is meant by the term 'visit' for it does not refer merely to a short-term stay away from one's 'proper' home. To describe people's trips to, and stays in 'rural' homes as 'visits' in this sense is, we would argue, to misunderstand their nature and duration, and to ignore the relationship, in people's minds and practices, between rural and urban areas. Our data indicate that these 'visits' often turn into quite extended stays. Indeed, from the perspective of the rural end, individuals' periods of absence in town (equally sporadic in frequency and indeterminate in length of stay) might also be seen as 'visits'. This was because most of the people with whom we were in contact in Makhaza had experienced no clear mindset shift that would now have them regard 'the Cape' as home. Yet, equally, few were so tied to their places of origin that, like some men in hostels in the Cape (Ramphele 1993; Spiegel, Watson & Wilkinson 1996a; 1996b), they treated their time in Cape Town as entirely temporary and regarded themselves as essentially rural people.

For them, as products of a long history and experience of dependence on migratory labour, the rural-urban/urban-rural nexus constituted just that: a continuous, albeit in some respects culturally disjunctive, whole within which they moved when need demanded and resources enabled. These were neither townspeople nor rural people. Rather, they were people looking to use whatever resources both town and country might offer them to effect their own security, and that of their dependants, both in the shorter and the longer terms. Like the people, and particularly the women, of West Africa and elsewhere in Africa that Berry (1993) discusses, their commitments were fluid and contingent so that for them, as for the people Berry writes about, it could be said that 'no condition is permanent' — that is unless the very fluidity of their circumstances is what is permanent.

For the people with whom we worked during this project, the urban residential end of this continuous whole was Makhaza, an area (about 150 hectares) formally divided up into 3 287, 170 m², sites and identified on the structure plan for Khayelitsha as Town 3, Village 3 (Khayelitsha Structure Plan (revised) Drawing No. C2512/U/12, July 1994). This has since been extended, in the popular understanding of what constitutes Makhaza, by the addition of some of the 4 100 new sites of 160 m² each in another 180 hectare area (unnumbered on the structure plan) that was still being developed during the research period through the efforts of the Independent Development Trust.

Using the first two of the five-digit numbers painted on each site's toilet structure, Makhaza was popularly divided into fifteen separate sections known as sections 31 through 44. Each was administered by its own section committee, drawn from local residents and site-occupiers, and concerned with day-to-day matters including some local dispute resolution. Out of these, the civic association structures had, at the time, created three separate civic branches, the largest of which incorporated about half the sites in Makhaza. This was the Mayibuye branch — a name often used

to refer to the whole area in place of the name Makhaza — and the branch in whose area of jurisdiction we conducted our research.[17]

Formally drawing its membership from the chairpersons of each section committee, but also often including high-status individuals such as a non-resident local retailer and member of the Khayelitsha Business Association in Section 32, the branch executive's activities included mediation in matters it regarded as being of public concern in the branch area, although clearly in some instances their interventions were undertaken more in self-interest than driven by any developed sense of social conscience. In addition, as we discovered, the executive also functioned as a self-appointed 'people's court' for the exercise of a crude justice system. This appeared, on at least one occasion in 1993, to reach a finding, and pass a sentence, that was called for by a locally powerful individual rather than to operate by carefully evaluating clearcut evidence. In that instance local 'comrades' had to execute a death sentence on seven people, using the 'necklace' method (Mehlwana 1994).

2.3 Sample population

For reasons we discuss below in our methodology section, we worked with a very small sample of people drawn initially from the residents of just ten domestic units living in shacks in Makhaza. In order to provide comparative context, we present our statistical socio-demographic data about these people against the backdrop of some aggregate data for shack dwellers in Khayelitsha, drawn from Mazur and Qangule's (1995) survey.

A central argument of this monograph is that one must avoid assuming any degree of fixity of relationships, or of either domestic or indeed local-area population sizes. The high rates of personal mobility to which both poverty and labour migration have given rise militate strongly against any long- or even medium-term stability. Yet, for heuristic purposes, it is necessary to present some base-line data about our sample that, by the very nature of its presentation, implies a sense of stasis. The data presented here derive from the initial interviews conducted with our own small sample and reflect the circumstances that pertained in each unit at the time of that initial interview. Given the high rates of domestic fluidity that some of these domestic units experienced during the research period, however, the apparent stasis of these figures should be treated with caution.

The total *resident* population that our respondents associated with the ten sampled domestic units was recorded, at the time of our initial interviews, as 48 people — implying a mean of 4,8 persons per unit living there at that particular time. This is somewhat higher than the figure of 3,9 per household that Mazur and Qangule report for shacks in Khayelitsha (1995: Table 3.1). In part this merely reflects the statistically non-representative nature of our sample. It is also reflected in the age distribution which is neither normal nor follows a similar pattern to that reflected in Mazur and Qangule's (1995) survey data (see Table 3 below). In part it may also reflect the sample's selection process which, as the methods section below indicates, meant that we worked with some of the poorest domestic groups in the area. This is

indicated too in Table 2 which shows that 30 % of our sample, as compared with 19 % of Mazur and Qangule's, comprised households of six or more members. As Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson (1996a; 1996b) have pointed out, the poorest among

Table 2: Distribution of household sizes in Makhaza sample and in 1995 survey, sample of shacks in Khayelitsha

Number in household	Makhaza sample (n =10)	(percentage)	1995 survey sample (percentage**)
1	1	10	12
2	1	10	15
3	1	10	21
4	2	20	19
5	2	20	14
6+*	3	30	19
6	-		
7	1		
8	1		
9	1		

Source for survey data: Mazur and Qangule (1995: Table 3.1).

* Mazur and Qangule offer cumulative data on households of six or more people. We do the same with our data but then disaggregate them.
** 'n' not given for 1995 survey.

Table 3: Age distribution of members of households in Makhaza sample and in 1995 survey sample of shacks in Khayelitsha

Age cohorts	Makhaza sample (n=48)	(percentage)	Survey sample (percentage*)
0-6	13	27	21
7-12	9	19	11
13-19	8	17	13
20-29	2	4	25
30-39	9	19	18
40-49	6	13	8
50-59	-	-	3
60+	1	1	3

Source for survey data: Mazur and Qangule (1995: Table 3.1) where not all column totals are precisely 100 % because of rounding.

* 'n' not given for 1995 survey.

shack residents in Cape Town are often trapped in the area by their poverty which denies them the resources to disperse children to be cared for by rural kin, and thereby to reduce the sizes of their urban-shack based domestic units. This was borne out by one participant in a woman's group discussion, Nowandile Mthetho (#4), who explained that 'My children even asked to be taken to, and live in, the Transkei because they think it is better there than here. But where can I take the money for transport costs? I do not have some money even to eat.'

As indicated in Table 4, there are areas of more favourable comparison between figures from our own small sample of ten 'households' and those from Mazur and Qangule's survey (1995). We have here placed our data within a grid established by Mazur and Qangule (1995: Table 3.1) in which they differentiate household headship by gender in order to demonstrate that a small majority of Khayelitsha shack households, had 'both a household head and his/her partner (usually spouse)' (that is a male and a female person who were both senior members of the household), while the rest were 'headed by single women' or 'headed by men living without a partner' (Mazur & Qangule 1995:12).

Table 4: **Gender distribution of household heads in Makhaza sample and in 1995 survey sample of shacks in Khayelitsha**

Gender of household head/senior member	Makhaza sample (n=10)	(percentage)	Survey sample (percentage*)
Male and female	6	60	53
Female only	3	30	33
Male only	1	10	14

Source for survey data and grid: Mazur and Qangule (1995: Table 3.1).

* 'n' is not given for 1995 survey.

3.   Methodology

The initial intention of this project was that Spiegel should work closely, as principal researcher but with assistance, with a small sample of people over an extended period. The sample was to be drawn by using a snowball technique (Bernard 1994:97-8) to identify ten core sample 'households' whence could be traced further networks of interpersonal linkages and their reflection of kinship links (whether genealogical or what may be called 'putative'[18]). The research was designed thus to enable an experienced anthropological researcher to gather detailed, in-depth, longitudinal and experiential data that would offer insight into the domestic fluidity of local domestic units, the ways in which this occurred, and how people understood and gave meaning to their experiences of this phenomenon, particularly with regard to their use of ideas about kinship. Although both formal schedule-based and informal open-ended interviews were used, there was never any intention of generating a body of statistically representative data. As Spiegel (1986a) had previously demonstrated, to obtain data that reveals the phenomenon of what he and others[19] have

come recently to describe as domestic fluidity requires longitudinal qualitative research methods that large-scale representative surveys do not offer, even if they are conducted repeatedly over time. The proposal thus envisaged Spiegel undertaking the kind of research programme that his earlier work had been built on, and had indicated was necessary to gain a vantage point onto the micro-level details of people's life experience and how they understand it by giving it cultural meaning. This was so we could analyse adequately processes of domestic fluidity, its causes, results and particularly its cultural constructions, especially, in this instance, in terms of ideas about kinship. Both life-history interview data and information from participant observation techniques were proposed.

As it turned out, a number of factors undermined the possibility of achieving these goals. One worthy of mention, albeit among the less significant, was the tensions that Spiegel experienced in attempting to engage in participant observation within a very short distance of the university where he had full-time academic teaching and administrative demands to fulfil, and of his own home and personal commitments. As Gupta and Ferguson (n.d.) have pointed out, most anthropological research tends to be conducted in places far away from the homes and academic bases of the researchers concerned, and the work of those who work close to 'home' is often regarded as somehow worth less than that of those who work in 'exotic' places. They do not explicitly discuss the problems of trying to conduct intensive participant observation 'on one's doorstep'. Yet Spiegel's dilemma in trying to balance the multiple demands of doing this with those of both an academic job and a personal family life is an indication as to why it is so difficult to achieve a sense of the idealised complete 'immersion' that is supposedly the *sine qua non* of the anthropological method while one is not far from 'home' and relatively disengaged, albeit temporarily, from the everyday demands of one's conventional activities.[20]

A second much more important set of stumbling blocks, however, were the political uncertainties and the factional divisions that manifested in civic association-based tensions and controls as well as in local violence in Cape Town's townships, including the areas that constitute greater Khayelitsha. We discuss first the steps we took to try to establish our *bona fides* as legitimate researchers and then the difficulties we experienced despite our efforts and successes.

Beginning research in the first half of 1992 required Spiegel to establish contacts in the area where work would be conducted and then to go through locally recognised authority structures for permission to be in the area and to conduct research there.[21] A first step in this process in Khayelitsha was to establish contacts with the personnel at the Philani Nutrition Centre (in Town 2 Village 4C[22]) to gain permission to use the centre as a springboard into the surrounding population. This having been achieved, we began two further exercises. One was to establish rapport among the women who worked in the Philani weaving workshop that provided a meagre source of irregular cash income to poverty stricken mothers whose malnourished children were cared for at the Centre and who, with their children, were given a regular meal while there. The second exercise, correctly insisted upon

by the Philani staff, was to go through the local civic association to obtain permission to be in the area.

The first of these was relatively straightforward. Various women in the workshop seemed willing to entertain our presence and questions, and eventually to invite us to visit their homes whence we were able to extend our snowball sample from an initial four Philani-based women. However, we soon discovered that many of those who offered such hospitality resided in Makhaza, a newer area than Griffiths Mxenge and some distance away. This meant that obtaining permission from the latter civic association committee would effectively be superfluous. Yet none of these women then knew any of the people leading the civic association in their own area.[23] We thus chose to pursue the process in Griffiths Mxenge as a means of being redirected to the appropriate people in Makhaza (Mayibuye).

After interrogating Spiegel quite intensively, particularly regarding his political affiliations,[24] the Griffiths Mxenge committee agreed to allow him and his assistant/s to work in the area and to introduce him to the committee in Makhaza (Mayibuye). In this latter instance members of the committee agreed to our presence without demanding that we attend a full formal meeting. Indeed, our initial reception by the Mayibuye committee was far less hostile and demanding of us than our Griffiths Mxenge experience had been. At least partially, this was because the area was newer and because there had been far fewer outsiders present in the area at that time. A further reason was that the then chairperson of the committee was longsighted enough to hope that our presence might be of some ultimate value to his area and to his efforts to build a community there.[25] Indeed, on our second visit to see him, he travelled with us to parts of the area to meet some of the people he understood were part of his constituency, but without obviously interfering in the research process in a way Mehlwana had experienced the previous year in another quite distant area (Mehlwana 1992). With this kind of acceptability at so early a stage, we thought our efforts would be readily rewarded.

Sadly, however, this was not so easily realised. Not long after he and his committee members had agreed to permit us to conduct our research in the area, the chairman, Mr Oliver Ntyatyambo (#2), was assassinated in an incident that was alleged to have involved police or individuals posing as police (*South* 1-5 Aug. 1992). Information that this had occurred reached us only more than a week later. As this was just at the start of a major national mass action campaign, it meant that we were unable to visit the area until quite some time had passed. And, although it did not mean we needed formally to obtain permission all over again, it did provide an important reminder of both the dangers and difficulties of working in the area and of the need repeatedly to re-establish one's acceptability: Mehlwana was at one point criticised by a local leader for recording the 'miseries of people to further [your] academic achievement at the expense of [the] people'. Spiegel's efforts to conduct research in the manner originally planned became quite unfeasible in such a context, marked as it was by expressions of hostility and by continuing uncertainties and

incidents of violence as well as campaigns and boycotts that persisted for the rest of 1992, through 1993 and into the early months of 1994.

An alternative research procedure was therefore adopted. Mehlwana, already working as an assistant on projects in which Spiegel was involved, was appointed as primary fieldwork researcher. While Spiegel continued as supervisor and also visited Makhaza on occasions when it was possible, the brunt of the fieldwork now fell to Mehlwana, a young and then relatively inexperienced researcher.[26] Spiegel's original intentions of gaining firsthand insights were thus thwarted, introducing a new set of difficulties that derived from conducting this kind of research vicariously, particularly as Spiegel, as principal researcher, remained responsible for the project and for preparing this report.[27]

Nor did appointing Mehlwana completely overcome the obstacles of local level suspicion, factionalism and violence in the area. And it raised other important methodological issues that are worthy of more consideration than a brief insert into a methods section of a research report as here.

Mehlwana has long-established personal links with community-based organisations and the civic association movement in Cape Town's townships. While these facilitated his access to Makhaza, it did not protect him fully. He has documented elsewhere (Mehlwana 1994; 1995) how threats of violence to his informants became reality, how people he had interviewed were dead soon thereafter while others had fled the area. In such circumstances it was clear that his own safety was severely compromised. This was precisely because his research efforts meant that he might 'know too much'. And he was thus obliged, for long periods, to 'lie low' and not visit the area either for personal or research reasons. As he has written in an unpublished field report:

> Although I was in Makhaza with the knowledge and, indeed the permission of the civic committee, the latter felt a need to continually monitor my work and to determine whether I had 'not stepped over the line'; that is, whether I had not begun to concern myself with things that were seen not to be my affair. In one incident (about October 1993) I was called by the local civic association or 'comrades' to explain again the nature of the work I was doing in the settlement. It was suggested that I should supply the committee with a copy of the research report (with which request I will, of course comply). Their constant inquiries, especially by local power-holders, appeared to be based on fear — fear that I might . know too much.

Emanating from precisely this problem is a second difficulty Mehlwana faced: to know when, and whether, to expose what he might have regarded as morally wrong (even evil) in the ways in which local affairs were conducted. Scheper-Hughes has argued that anthropologists have 'an ethical obligation to identify [such] ills in a spirit of solidarity and to follow a ... "womanly" ethic of care and responsibility' (1995:419). But we are concerned that such 'identification' (and implicitly exposé)

as Scheper-Hughes demands may have the effect of further endangering local people, as well as researchers. This was also a problem with regard to marginalised men whose perpetration of domestic violence we were told about, but not by themselves, and whose activities outside their homes we often suspected were not always 'wholesome'. Given the structural reasons for many men's involvement with local violence, we question the value in 'identifying' and exposing it to a world of readers outside that environment.

A further difficulty that Mehlwana faced in the process of conducting this research derives precisely from our subjects' sense of close identification with him as a Xhosa-speaking South African, of his being what is described in the literature as a 'native researcher' (Ngubane 1988). For such researchers 'the boundaries of the "field" were not clearly evident because I share some of my informants' life experiences: indeed the "field" could be seen to enter and encompass my own home' (Mehlwana, unpublished field report). In particular, this proved a problem in Mehlwana's discussions with women about issues conventionally not discussed between Xhosa men and women, and which a male 'outsider' such as Spiegel might have had greater success engaging with, precisely because he could have hidden behind a cloak of ignorance as to appropriate norms.[28] But that too raises ethical questions that cannot be addressed here in a report that is primarily concerned with the substantive question of how kinship is used as cultural resource. We turn directly to that discussion.

4. Kinship and the migration[29] process

As indicated, almost all adult and teenage members of the domestic units in our sample had been born in areas away from Cape Town. All had therefore had at least one experience of migration (i.e. to Cape Town), and many had oscillated to and fro both between rural and urban areas, as well as between and within different urban areas and different rural areas. Seen in the aggregate, this migration process has created a sense of increasing urbanisation bringing ever larger numbers of people to the cities on an increasingly long-term, if not permanent, basis. Certainly it has resulted, over time, in growing aggregate numbers of residents in urban metropolitan areas such as greater Cape Town.

Seen from the micro-experiential level, however, it is clear that — as elsewhere in the industrial and developing world (see for example Ferguson 1990; Smith & Wallerstein 1992; Berry 1993; Grieco 1995) — many individuals and domestic groups maintained continuing contacts and dependencies within and between both rural and urban areas, even when these were far apart. It is for this reason that much of the literature about the social-cultural aspects of migrancy in southern Africa has come to understand households as units that are 'stretched' across space, particularly as their income-earning members dispersed — in the past because legislation precluded their dependants travelling and settling with them — to places where they can generate such income for the subsistence of those dependants (see Murray 1976;

1981; 1987a; Spiegel 1980; 1982; Spiegel, Watson & Wilkinson 1996b). This did not suddenly come to an end with the lifting of influx control legislation in 1986. Broader social structural constraints and, at the micro level, the nature of people's networks of support and how they understood their location in the broader political economy, both militated against a sudden massive urbanwards population movement and a depletion of the rural population (Oliver-Evans 1993). As Mabin (1990) has pointed out, the die cast by the demands of *apartheid* and the 'developing' nature of the southern African economy has meant that the phenomenon of oscillating migrancy will continue long after *apartheid's* demise and may, as elsewhere on our continent, become quite permanent.

The evidence for such developing permanence is already there in the increase, rather than decrease, in apparently short-term spatial mobility in recent years. As elsewhere in Africa (Berry 1993) people engage in frequent but sporadic to-and-fro migrations between different areas, all of which offer some resources for sustaining life, although these are never adequate and are always temporary and insecure.

Our concern here is to deal with the ways in which the networks and dyadic relationships that people created and relied upon to manage these migration experiences were often (although not exclusively) constructed around notions of kinship.[30] We present cases which illustrate such uses of kinship (and clanship) and leave aside those where other factors were drawn upon to cleave people together in the migration experience, albeit sometimes only temporarily.

For many individuals, migrancy begins when they must travel as young children with their parents, or even in some instances alone, to live for extended periods in various parts of the country and with a variety of relatives (see Spiegel 1987; Reynolds 1989; 1993; Jones 1993). Indeed, as Jones (1993) has graphically illustrated, the experience may start very early in life for some who then find they have to make their own way in the world of migrancy, alone and apart from kin. For others, the processes whereby children are dispersed among relatives means often repeated disruptions of their early closest relationships and the need to re-establish such relationships with others to whom they are related genealogically but whom they may not previously have known personally, or with individuals with whom they activate latent clan-based kinship links (see also Kotzé 1993; Reynolds 1993; Ross 1995; 1996; Van der Waal 1996).

This early disruption of close relationships had been the experience of various of our adult respondents. One, Ms 'Mamotaung Ndlovu (#6), recalled for us the most significant aspects of her childhood experience of being shunted about between kin before she was subsequently married and soon thereafter moved to Cape Town. Note the ways in which genealogically described links underpin these movements.

> Ms 'Mamotaung Ndlovu was born in Mount Fletcher in the (then) Transkei in 1955. But her mother was unable to support her on the minuscule remittances she received from her husband ('she was destitute; she didn't work'), and 'Mamotaung was sent, aged about five, to live with her maternal grandmother in a nearby village. There she took

on various domestic chores and later began her schooling. But a while later, once she was in her teens, she was told to go and live with a mother's brother, a policeman in the neigbouring Matatiele district whose wife was a teacher. This was because 'my mother could not afford to educate me, and my father was unemployed'. There too she was both at school and required to perform domestic chores. A while later, when she became pregnant, she was obliged to leave and go back 'home' to her maternal grandmother's house, although her child was subsequently taken in by its maternal grandmother ('Mamotaung's mother). And soon thereafter 'Mamotaung married and moved into her husband's home where she bore a child. At that point her husband, although already well into his thirties, was not formally employed but remained at home looking after his father's herd of cattle that had steadily been diminishing due to thefts. Two years later he left to look, unsuccessfully, for work in Cape Town. A year later 'Mamotaung followed him bringing their kwashiorkor-ridden child with her to settle in the Site C transit camp. By the time of our research, the husband was still unemployed and quite destitute, the child had been sent back to its paternal grandmother in the Transkei, and their next child was being treated at the Philani Centre. Before the end of the research period 'Mamotaung had left her husband for a man in another settlement, and both children were in the Transkei with their father's mother.

Let us now compare these experiences with those of a 15 year-old girl who was living in Makhaza in 1993. As we do so, we should look out for the ways in which the routes she was obliged to travel reflected the significance of both established and 'putative' genealogical links for the adults who directed her movements as well as for the way she understood her ties to those in whose care she was left.

Noxolo Mlingwa (#5) was born in 1978 near Lady Frere in the then Transkei and started life in her maternal grandmother's Transkei home as her mother, Nomakhaya, was unmarried. Noxolo's maternal grandmother was Nomachule Mlingwa, household head of the Makhaza home where we met Noxolo soon after she first took up residence there.

In 1984, her mother, Nomakhaya, 'disappeared' (*waduka* lit: wandered unknown among strangers) in Cofimvaba, another Transkei town. Noxolo pined for a while and, when her mother's mother's brother (MMB),[31] whom she described as grandfather (*tat'omkhulu* = FoB; big father), visited from Gauteng soon thereafter, she asked to accompany him when he returned. She explained that: 'there was no one at home who would take care of me. My grandfather (MMB) was living in Johannesburg at that time, and I asked him to take me to Gauteng when he came for a visit in December. I had to go with him to Gauteng

because my mother went away to I-don't-know-where. I've never seen her since. She is the one person I miss [of those I knew] there.'

She reported living quite contentedly with her MMB and his wife in Katlehong for the next three years, particularly as they had a comfortably furnished brick house. But then the old people's relationship soured and both she and her 'grandfather' had to leave as the house was registered in his wife's name.

By her account, Noxolo was then placed for a while in the care of a woman, Buyiswa, whom she understood was her MMBD, moving into Buyiswa's shack in a nearby area. From the account of her MM, Nomachule, however, Buyiswa was a woman with whom the 'grandfather' had been friendly and who offered to help. The fact that Buyiswa's mother and Nomachule's mother (Noxolo's MMM) were of the same clan meant that they could activate a 'putative' kin-relationship (Nomachule said she and Buyiswa were reciprocally MZDs); for Noxolo, they were indeed related and she described Buyiswa as her *mamokhulu* (older mother = MoZ; in this case MMoZ).

This was in 1987. Her 'grandfather' was then living elsewhere. But when he found a new wife who had a place in Maseru, Lesotho, he fetched Noxolo to live there with him and his new wife. This lasted a further three years, until her 'grandfather' died.

Noxolo was then sent back to Katlehong to live with her 'grandfather's' first wife. While she was happy to be back on familiar territory, life was difficult for Noxolo: 'things were not very well in Katlehong the second time I was there. *Auntie* was struggling [since she was unemployed] and we did not have enough to eat. Also I was not admitted to school in Katlehong because I arrived in the middle of the year. I had to stay home ...' She remained there for a further 30 months during which time her unemployed MBS discovered her predicament and wrote to his paternal grandmother, Nomachule, about it. By January 1993, Nomachule had borrowed the necessary money from her part-time employer (she worked as a char) and had sent another granddaughter who lived with her to fetch Noxolo and bring her to Makhaza. Noxolo was fifteen when she first saw Cape Town. She expressed horror to us about the destitution of Makhaza and her lack of friends even after nine months of being there; and she pined to go back to the comforts of her old Katlehong existence, even though it might mean living with an *Auntie* (her MMBW) who had neither the resources nor the will to care for her.

An important factor resulting in children being shunted around between kin was clearly their parents' own migration practices, which were often intermittent and sporadic. Thus, as various authors have recently shown (see Spiegel 1986a; 1987;

Sharp 1987; Reynolds 1989; 1993; Jones 1993; Van der Waal 1996), the exigencies of migrant labour have meant that many African children could never expect that those who care for them, and who support them both materially and emotionally, would do so regularly and reliably over time or would consistently comprise the same set of individuals. It also meant, as the case above indicates, that kinship relationships that had long been dormant had to be (re)vitalised or, in some instances, new ones constructed around previously latent but subsequently activated clan-based kinship links.

It was not just young children's relationships, however, that were thus affected by migrancy. The migration experiences of most adults too were marked and facilitated by the use of kinship, both readily traceable genealogically and potentially 'putative'. Such constructions were thus important in adults' migration experiences and the relationships around which these hinged, as the details of the migration history of Noxolo Mlingwa's own maternal grandmother illustrate.

Nomachule Mlingwa (#5) was already in her early forties when, her husband having abandoned her, she fled her Transkei home to seek work in the Western Cape, 'because I was suffering there in the Transkei, just as I continue to suffer now here'. This was in 1976.

She first went to a town 40 km north west of Cape Town, where she was able to find a place to stay in the township with people from 'home' in the Transkei who were relatives of her older sister's husband: 'my older sister was married to the Sotetsis [a family surname; the people who helped her in Paarl were of the Sotetsi family]'. After a period there as a domestic worker she lost her job and decided to move to Cape Town itself. Her sister's daughter was then married and living in a formal township house where Nomachule was able to become a weekend lodger while she 'lived in' at her places of work 'in the kitchens [first] in Mitchell's Plain' and subsequently elsewhere around the Cape Peninsula. Later she changed her 'lodgings' address to the Langa home of a man she described as her *malume* (lit: mother's brother) but with whom her precise genealogical relationship was not clear (i.e. he was her classificatory MB in that he shared the clan name of her mother). When her own daughter, now an adult and also living in Cape Town, established herself in a shack in Greenpoint transit camp, Nomachule relocated herself there: 'We got tired of staying in somebody else's house for a long time because they had their own family to take care of.' Others of her children and grandchildren were slowly assembled in the Greenpoint shack from their places of abode in the Transkei and elsewhere around the Peninsula, and they moved, *en famille*, to Makhaza when sites there were made available for transit camp residents in 1991.

Another example is that of Ms Nomsa Malibongwe (#1) who arrived in Cape Town after having been abandoned by her husband and left to care

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for her four children in a rural Transkei village. One child was severely physically handicapped and Ms Malibongwe was advised to take her for treatment in Cape Town. She arrived destitute and first found accommodation with a childless woman, Nonstikizi Mlamo, whom she had known as a child at home (their respective parents had been closely associated) and whom she had recently met again in the Transkei during a visit there by Nontsikizi.[32] Ms Malibongwe explained why she and Nontsikizi called each other sister in the following way: 'Her mother and my mother are sisters, but not in a direct way. [Is that through sharing a clan name (isiduko)? we asked.] Not really through clan name. The woman who bore her mother is the same woman who bore my mother. Their [the respective mothers'] clan names are not the same. Her mother is my kanina' (lit: matrilateral cross cousin; but this does not fit with the previous description). But the relationship was constantly strained — primarily over the behaviour of Ms Malibongwe's children — and, when Ms Malibongwe eventually found herself a job and generated sufficient income to purchase a shack of her own, that is precisely what she did, leaving her 'relative' and erstwhile housemate (see below).

As Manona (1991) showed to have occurred among in-migrants from neighbouring farming areas to the small Eastern Cape city of Grahamstown, there were also individuals associated with our sample of households whose migration and urban settlement paths followed those of close kin, primarily because that provided them with a *sense* of secure havens to which they could turn as they themselves moved into town. An example from our Makhaza sample is Doris Mlawu (#7). Doris had not long previously abandoned her attempts to eke out the miserably poor wages she received as a worker in one of the Gcuwa (Butterworth, Transkei) decentralised factories. In 1989 she gave up her equally ineffective efforts to generate an informal income in Umtata, her home town, where she had knitted clothing for sale. She decided to migrate to a city to find work, and chose Cape Town because

> my mother was a worker here in Cape Town and was a resident here in the past ... I used to come and visit her here at those times, when she was staying in Nyanga ... I prefer Cape Town because it is the first place [city] that I came to. I've never been to any other big city ...
>
> Ever since I grew up my mother has been here in Cape Town. I think she left me when I was six years old. She was a resident here for many years and I did not know her.

Similarly, when Nolusapho Sawila (#8) arrived in Cape Town to join her husband in 1985, she very quickly insisted that they move from the shack in KTC shantytown near to Old Crossroads (another shantytown), where he was a lodger with a couple, one of whom he had discovered was a distant relative of his. This was to ensure that they were closer to one of her own many sisters, all of whom had eventually settled

in areas of greater Cape Town. First they built a small shack on her sister's site in the Site C shanty area elsewhere in the greater Khayelitsha complex. Then, once they had accumulated enough materials, they removed it and rebuilt it in extended form on another nearby site of their own, also in Site C. Throughout this time they thus ensured that they remained close to the sites of two of Nolusapho's sisters: 'I was a neighbour to my sisters ... My sister was on one side and another was on the other side. And we all knew each other [there].'

Yet, when they were all moved to Makhaza in 1991, the site allocation process was such that they ended up on sites some distance from one another, a situation Ms Sawila resented — particularly, she said, because now 'we stay amongst people we do not know. I am staying here between Sotho-speaking people. And I do not know them even now. We do not ask for sugar or salt from them, and they do not ask us. We just greet when we see each other, and that's it.' But she did travel frequently to visit her various sisters scattered around greater Khayelitsha and further afield in Cape Town. And she had, by the time we met her, established a few personal relationships of reciprocity, among the people living around her, on which she felt she could depend.

The above cases illustrate how important kin are for people in the processes of first migrating to town and then finding their feet there. This is commonly the case for migrants to towns around the globe. Importantly in the Khayelitsha context, however, it is relatively close kin who are readily traceable genealogically, or people known from home,[33] to whom people turn during this earlier phase. This is indicated by the experiences of most of our sampled cases. We would argue that this selection of only readily traceable close kin occurs because the migration and first settlement processes are such as to allow little time to establish relationships through acts of repeated reciprocity. It requires time to establish such relationships and then to reinforce those that prove reliable by characterising them as kin-based relationships. Constructing genealogies by means of the long process of activating previously only latent clan-based kinship links cannot be done overnight. As Nomsa Malibongwe (#1) said, when explaining why she had stayed with a 'sister' and 'homegirl' she could not really get on with and why she had even moved from the transit camp to Makhaza with her: 'I was already living with her; and at the time I had just arrived in Cape Town so I did not know anyone [else here].' Another example comes from the instance, cited earlier, where Nolusapho Sawila (#8) did all she could to ensure that, at least on her arrival in Cape Town, she had close kin nearby. Although resentful, once relocated to Makhaza, about having to live at a greater distance from close kin than she had arranged on her first arrival in Cape Town, she had managed the transition relatively well. This was because she was by then relatively familiar with the area and life in town in general. And by the time of our meeting her, she had established a small but quite reliable network of mutually supportive friends — although she did not, at that early stage, describe any of them to us in kinship terms. (She did so later in our interactions with her.)

Some of the cases discussed, both above and below, also reveal some negative aspects of the role of kinship, and particularly marriage, in the migration process. We have mentioned that adults' practices often had significant social effects on children. Similarly, men's practices often had the effect of forcing their wives to become migrants or even to decide to settle in a city; this despite the widespread expectation that a migrant worker's wife should go to live with her mother-in-law in her husband's rural natal home. The literature is replete with descriptions of men who had gone off to towns to generate incomes but then failed to remit enough to support their relict dependants. For example, Nomachule Mlingwa (#5) left her rural home for town only when it was clear that her husband had abandoned her and could thus no longer be relied upon to remit; Wellington Mooi (#9; see below) had his wife threaten to leave their rural family home to come to town when he was unable to meet her expectation of remittances; and Novumile Sangweni (#10; above and below) had to relocate first herself and then her children from her rural home and settle in town precisely in order to try to ensure that her husband would continue to work and support her and her children.

A further negative aspect of the migration process as it affects kinship is revealed in the case of Doris Mlawu (#7) who, having established herself in Cape Town with her mother's help, made every effort — including selling her mother's shack while her mother was away — to ensure that her mother would remain in the Transkei after she had retired. In part this was to ensure continuity of family presence in the shack Doris had established in Umtata before herself migrating to Cape Town. In part it was because, having hardly ever 'known' her mother, Ms Mlawu felt put upon by her mother's continuing presence in her own new Cape Town home once the mother was no longer earning an income for herself: 'I do not want her here because during all those years I have not seen anything that she did for us.' Clearly here the 'moral' component of what is widely assumed to be one of the closest kinship relationships, that between mother and daughter, was quite tenuous. This was precisely because it had not been backed up over time with material transfers to form the basis of the kind of reciprocity that necessarily must underpin such relationships for their ultimate success.[34] Nor had there been significant emotional support. Further evidence for this is the fact (see below) that Doris accommodated her 'putative' cousin (*mzala* = cross cousin) and old friend, Magareth Mbiza, with whom she had a proven reliable reciprocal relationship with both a material and emotional component.

> Magareth Mbiza was a woman who had offered Doris accommodation in the backyard of her own rented Umtata, Transkei house some years before. Through their daily interaction, they had 'discovered' that they were related through clan ties whereby they constructed a genealogical relationship to reinforce the increasingly close and mutually supportive reciprocal relationship they had established. Doris's mother's mother and Magareth's father shared the clan name, Cirha. This made Magareth into Doris's classificatory MMBD, a link they regarded as sufficient reason to

describe each other as *mzala* (cross cousin), ignoring the genealogical generation difference between them in favour of the chronological fact that they were much the same age.

When, in the early 1990s, Doris visited Umtata from Cape Town, she encouraged Magareth to join her as the latter's efforts to sustain herself in Umtata were proving fruitless. Magareth had a 'birth-sister'[35] in Cape Town already, living in a very small formal house in Khayelitsha. When she did make the move to Cape Town, Magareth initially spent five months living with that sister who helped find her a part-time job as a domestic worker. She then moved to Makhaza, however, taking up *mzala* Doris's offer of accommodation in her shack. This was because there was more space there and because Doris's own connections with the local street committee held the promise that Magareth might acquire a nearby site and be able to build a house of her own near that of a proven reciprocity partner. Doris subsequently 'stood for her' (suretyship) with a local man who sold shack materials on credit, but exclusively to Makhaza residents, while part of Magareth's earnings (±R560 per month) went to *rholisa* (contribute to)[36] Doris's household budget. A few months later, Magareth acquired a nearby site and built a shack for herself there.

Much of the literature about migration processes and the use of kinship refers also to the ways in which kin are called upon to find jobs for new arrivals, and how individuals' decisions as to where to go are determined by the possibilities of employment to which their kin can apparently recommend them, or from which they turn them away. We see how this occurs, in combination with other factors, by examining the example of Wellington Mooi (#9) whose recent quest to accommodate himself in Cape Town, after a history of migrant work on the Reef and then in Durban, had also meant turning to 'putative' kin.

47-year-old Mr Mooi had first gone to Johannesburg as a contract worker in the mid- to late-1960s (he did not remember precisely when) and spent well over ten years there. At first he was recruited as a contract worker at a labour bureau in his home district of Qumbu, Transkei.[37] He was accommodated in migrant workers' hostels. Some time later, he felt 'I had gained knowledge of staying in Johannesburg' and he found both employment and accommodation independently, although his papers were never 'in order' and he was arrested a number of times on 'pass offences'.

Mr Mooi fled the Reef in 1976 at the time of the Soweto uprisings, and stayed 'at home' in Qumbu for some months while 'I built my house there'. He returned to Johannesburg for a further four consecutive migrant work contracts with a single employer. This ended 'because I quarreled with some Zulus. There was just one that was involved. But

when you fight with one of them, all of them want to fight you. They want to know where you are working and want to kill you. And so I ran away from them ... The quarrel was because of a girlfriend.' This was in 1982.

From his description, until then he had found most of his jobs through the labour bureau although he had tried walking the streets for a job and finding accommodation with men he knew from home, and been arrested as a result. He spent 1983 again 'building my house [in Qumbu]', and returned to Johannesburg in 1984 to live in a formal Soweto house with a 'homeboy' there who also found him work in the firm where he was employed. Both lost their jobs a year later when the firm closed down. Mr Mooi returned to Qumbu.

Borrowing money from relatives early in 1986, he travelled to Cape Town in the hope that his kin and 'homeboy' network there would help him find work. But he was unsuccessful and was back in Qumbu by April 1986 when his classificatory FB visited from Durban for the Easter break.

Mr Mooi then accompanied his FB to Durban, stayed with him in a hostel there ('he was sleeping on his bed and I was sleeping on the floor'), and was assisted in the quest to find work. For four years he was a production clerk in a textiles factory but lost the job after an industrial dispute in which his union was unable to intercede for his reinstatement. He spent two further years unemployed in the Transkei attempting to subsist as a hawker. When this proved unsuccessful, he travelled to Cape Town where his wife's brothers had established themselves, first in a transit camp and then Makhaza, and with whom his first son, now employed in a Cape Town factory, was living.

He found insecure work and accommodation in a *spaza* shop in Site B transit camp where he was responsible for ice sales. His employers then moved him to another shop in Makhaza. But 'after a while I left because there was little money. I went to Hout Bay (a shanty settlement in an affluent white neighbourhood) ... and tried to get work there'. After three weeks he returned to Makhaza, but was refused accommodation where he had previously been 'because I was no longer working there'. He was offered temporary accommodation in the shack of a neighbouring woman he had known previously in Qumbu and with whom he could (and did) construct an (unclear) genealogical link. When we asked how he knew her he answered: 'Her grandmother is the sister of my mother. Her father is my *kanina* (lit: matrilateral cross cousin). She calls me *tat'omncinci* (lit: small father; FyB).'

Soon thereafter he had arranged to build a tiny shack for himself on another neighbour's site, and was looking for a site of his own. He was generating small intermittent income from various piece jobs he found

and from painting people's shacks, and making small pieces of furniture with scraps of paint and timber he said he found in the Cape Town docks and outside factories while seeking work there.

As we have pointed out, the migration process is experienced by most as neither a smooth nor a singular event. Indeed, for some such as Wellington Mooi, the experience of oscillating migrancy in circumstances of insecure employment and income-generating opportunity was particularly pernicious, as Mr Mooi indicated when he complained that both his wife and oldest son were berating him for his lack of ability to earn a reasonable and steady income with which to support his five dependent children in the Transkei. Writing in early 1994 in a journal he agreed to keep for us for a period, he recorded as follows:

> About 7.30 my first born [son] arrived from the Transkei with a letter from my wife. It was a sorrowful letter with bad news. My wife promised [threatened] to leave my children alone at home. She told me that I am failing to support [her], and that I am also truthless [a liar]. She told me I do not care about my family. She attacked with a lot of bad stinking words.
>
> I was really disappointed, losing my manhood and dignity from my wife, and from my children too. My son also attacked me with bad words. I did not even get sleeping [fall asleep]. I do not know what to say and what to do. I just say, whoo [woe] unto me. It is so shame[ful]. The poor church mouse! [a phrase he used elsewhere to describe himself in his poverty-stricken situation].

A number of the men we met in Makhaza had had equally baleful experiences and were — in many ways like Liebow's (1967) streetcorner men — unable to realise their sense of self-worth and dignity other than through acts of violence perpetrated on their wives and children, commonly when they were thoroughly drunk (see also Ramphele 1993).[38] And some, like Mandla Sangweni (#10), had been through periods of total marginalisation from both their kin and the dominant sectors of the economy. This was when they had reportedly become out and out vagrants.[39] Ms Novumile Sangweni's explanation of what occurred reveals also the role both 'putative' and close kin had played to help her husband, to bring her to town, and to force her to establish a household of her own in town.[40]

> We were married by *tsiki* [arranged marriage] in 1970. My husband had first come to the Cape in 1969 or 1970. He stayed in Khaya 'Mnandi, there in Stellenbosch. He was staying with a [classificatory] brother, and went to work there. He stayed there until I went and fetched him in 1988. [He had visited his wife and growing family in the Transkei in between, and she had occasionally visited him in the Cape.] ...
>
> I had come to Cape Town and was staying there with his sister in Khayelitsha [formal house] ... I went to fetch him [my husband, Mandla]

when I was still staying in Khayelitsha. I went to fetch him because he was not sending money. He was not working. He was staying outside in the forest. He was like a 'bergie'. He was no longer living with 'our brother' ... He would come home from work one day, and on other days he would not come back. When they asked about his whereabouts, he left for good ...

So that 'brother' contacted his [Mandla's] sister, and she wrote a letter to me so that I would come here because they were unable to bring him out of the forest. I went up there in 1988. I even left behind this baby [born that same year]. I came there in Khaya 'Mnandi and they showed me where he was in the forest. And I came out with him [to Cape Town, Khayelitsha].

He got work and he worked. After that I went home again and then I came back. I've never been home since. I brought all my children with me the second time ...

[Later in the interview she explained that] I wanted them to stay there in the Transkei, to grow up there. But their grandmother [with whom they had been left] was unable to sustain them. She was unable to feed children who did not belong to her. So she decided that they ought to be brought here to be with their parents.

In 1989 we moved to Greenpoint [transit camp] because I was not happy there [in Mandla's sister's house in Khayelitsha]. Life was very difficult there because of the children. *Sisi's* [older sister's] children. They would tease my children. So I saw that it is better for me to find my own place to live ... They would also swear ... and I could not beat those children [there] in their own home. We moved to Greenpoint because it was not far away from the J section [of Khayelitsha where *Sisi* lived]. And a woman I knew from home was living there and showed me the house of [the 'headman'] ... We came to Makhaza in 1991.

The experiences of Mandla and Novumile Sangweni (#10) and of Wellington Mooi (#9) demonstrate that there are many negative aspects of kinship expectations as they are played out in individual's experiences of migration, particularly, as we showed at the start of this section, as regards children. It is clear also that practices and behaviours that we have thus far associated with migrancy run over into the everyday processes associated with attempts at domestic consolidation that are the concern of our next section. The same is true of the ways in which kinship is used and constructed more positively in migrancy.

Our next section is concerned with the role of kinship in precisely these everyday activities, as they contribute (with greater or lesser success) to domestic consolidation processes, whether these are intended by the individuals concerned to occur in town or in the rural former 'homeland' areas from which they originate. We turn to that discussion now.

5. Kinship and the everyday life of domestic consolidation

Most people, both in our sample and in the industrial world generally, live according to an expectation that, over time, they should (or would like to) be able to establish and then consolidate domestic units that will provide them and their dependants with the basis for medium- to long-term security. It is never unambiguous precisely where these units should be located, nor the forms their assets should take, save to say that they should be able to provide for those who regard themselves and each other as their members and, in the longer term, for those who have contributed to their resource pool.

Thus, when we use the phrase domestic consolidation, we use it to describe something other (or more) than what John Turner (1968) meant when he described the process whereby a newly urbanised family incrementally improves its circumstances through securing the physical structure of an urban shack dwelling and imbedding its members in an ever more cohesive urban community increasingly able to provide infrastructural supports. As we understand the notion, people with roots in rural areas — as so many Makhaza residents had — often prefer the process of domestic consolidation to take place over a wide space, often stretching across rural-urban divides (see Spiegel, Watson & Wilkinson 1996b).

Moreover, the process involves building social and cultural-emotional as well as material resources. It includes social network creation according to, and in turn influencing, culturally accepted norms of association such as those associated with kinship and other family relations. Analytically, we can understand this domestic consolidation process to underpin and run parallel with what is described in the anthropological literature as the developmental cycle of the domestic group (see Goody 1958). But again we must beware not to assume that any one such domestic group will necessarily associate itself exclusively with any particular domestic space and fixed set of material resources or real estate. Moreover, we need to recognise the individuality of each particular attempt to consolidate, and the fact that the kinds of domestic groups with which we are here concerned tend not to have static boundaries, precisely because of the vicissitudes that come with dependence on migrants' earnings from a very unstable and insecure labour market. In addition, we must always be conscious that not all people's attempts at domestic consolidation are successful. Indeed, for the poverty-stricken people in our sample population, lack of such success was often the case, despite people's dreams and hopes (see Spiegel, Watson & Wilkinson 1996a; 1996b).

Our aim in this section is to follow the model of the previous section. There we demonstrated how and where kinship, both genealogical and activated from latent links ('putative'), was used in, and affected, migration practices. Here we do the same with regard to everyday practices associated with domestic consolidation subsequent to and, in some respects, separate from, the larger-scale movements of people and domestic groups that one usually associates with migrancy. Our main concern lies less with the process of physical house construction than it does with

ways in which people attempted to create and/or sustain social relationships and networks that offered some support in a context of quite dire material poverty. Again we use illustrative examples to support our discussion.

All the domestic units that were the core sample for this study had relocated into Makhaza within at most two years of our working with them. As we have seen, the site allocation process implemented by the local state administration had not been at all cognisant of, or sensitive to, the dynamics of very local neighbourhood networks in the transit camps from which these people had come. Thus these were people who were faced, yet again in their lives in town, with having to establish new neighbourhood networks in conditions which at least some found less than ideal: we described earlier Nolusapho Sawila's (#8) complaints about the difficulties of engaging her Sotho-speaking neighbours.

For a number of the women with whom we worked, their involvement with the Philani Nutrition Centre had provided a basis for constructing such a network, although — as we show below — networks created from this base were not necessarily very enduring, particularly when wealth-based differences began to manifest themselves as fission lines in the networks. Yet equally interesting about these networks, particularly as they involved shared child care duties, was that they tended to be understood, at least implicitly, in terms of ideas conventionally associated with family and household. Let us illustrate with examples.

Nomsa Malibongwe (#1), Nolusapho Sawila (#8), Nowandile Mthetho (#4) and 'Mamotaung Ndlovu (#6) were all women we first met at the Philani Centre in Town 2 (Griffiths Mxenge). All were then destitute and had malnourished children. The first three all lived quite close to one another and were in regular interaction both at the Centre and in the shack neighbourhood. Indeed, when we asked each of them independently to identify whom they would turn to for everyday assistance, they listed each other (among others). Their lists included another woman — a neighbour and particularly close associate of Nowandile Mthetho. This was Nomachule Mlingwa (#5) who was quite a lot older than the rest.

A particularly interesting facet of these women's mutually supportive relationships, especially for researchers concerned with domestic fluidity and spatial mobility as we were, was the ways in which child care duties for the resident young children of their respective households were passed about between them. This resulted in children shifting between homes (households) quite frequently and somewhat sporadically (see also Ross 1995; 1996). In some senses, this is a similar phenomenon to that discussed earlier whereby children are placed with distantly located relatives, often in rural areas, while adults are in town. It differs particularly in that sharing child care in town often results in frequent exchanges of children between households, and the creation of a sense, for the children so exchanged, of an almost seamless continuity of family (at least in its material sense but also to some extent emotionally) between the various households within which they are housed.

Although every woman was quite clear in her expositions to us about which of the children around her particular shack 'belonged' to her household, they were also

quite explicit about the extent to which those children could eat and sleep, sometimes for days at a time, in the others' shacks, and how this was reciprocated by others' children staying with them, sometimes for quite extended periods. Moreover, when they discussed this, they did so in terms that reflected a sense that such practices meant, for them, that there were 'putative' — even 'fictional' — kin-type links between them. Thus Nomsa Malibongwe (#1) explained:

> Someone who often visits my house is the child of *Sisi*[41] Nowandile (#4) ... He sleeps here often. A week does not end without his having slept here ... I do have other [adult] visitors and sometimes they want to stay over. But I send them off (embarrassed laugh), because I do not know what [food] to give them; and I do not have a place for them. [But] Khayalethu [Nowandile's son]! I regard him as one of my children. He sleeps where my children sleep.

Indeed, Khayalethu's activities exemplify the practice of many other children in the area who frequently ate and slept over, for days at a time, at the homes of neighbours who were part of their parents' networks of mutual support. The adults concerned understood these occurrences for precisely what they were: opportunities for those who were temporarily unable to sustain their children to have them fed and cared for, albeit only minimally, by associates and neighbours. It was understood, however, that such arrangements had to be reciprocal: that when they had obtained a few resources they would offer others' children the same support. Moreover, this was tied in with an ideology of common household membership. So, when Ms Malibongwe said of Khayalethu, 'I regard him as one of my children' she was indicating a cultural understanding that the reciprocities involved in shared child care, what Stack (1974) called childkeeping, should be understood in kinship and family terms.

Yet the relationships that constituted these networks were very fragile, an indication that using notions about common kinship was not always successful for reinforcing the bonds in such networks. This became most clearly evident when some individuals in a network began to be more successful in the urban consolidation efforts than others. When someone, who had been part of a network in which everyone was all but penniless, found a regular job and began to live a little more comfortably, the tendency seems to have been for such a person to begin to break her ties with the rest. This is precisely what happened with Nomsa Malibongwe (#1) who found that her relatively good education (she had completed Standard 8 — that is, tenth grade), and the ease with which she spoke English, as well as her own personal drive,[42] provided a platform from which to pull herself out of the penury in which she first found herself on arrival in Cape Town.

> Ms Malibongwe's skills and abilities were identified while she was working at the Philani Centre and, after some months, she was encouraged to join a programme to train literacy trainers. Once qualified there,

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she found employment in that field and began successfully to consolidate her domestic arrangements in town. As we have seen earlier, although she started out as a tenant in a classificatory sister's shack, she later established herself on a site of her own. And she was steadily improving the shack there. She also distanced herself increasingly from her erstwhile friends and began to create a new social network of mutual support with others similar to her in terms of her new material status.

When we first met her, Ms Malibongwe explained that she did have a small number of kin who were quite well established elsewhere in the Cape and to whom she might have turned for help had she really had to. But she preferred not to because her inability to reciprocate quickly meant that they would probably look down on her, and because it would have been obvious that she was using the kinship connection purely for her own material benefit. Her sense of pride was evident when, discussing where she might allow her own children to sleep out, she indicated that it was fine if they did so at 'sister' Nowandile Mthetho's equally poverty-stricken home (#4). But she did not want them to sleep over at her better-off kin's homes, which were more thoroughly consolidated in town, because 'The children of Cape Town have many clothes, they even have sleeping clothes [pyjamas], and my children do not have any. For example, my children will wake up in the morning, and the others will ask them, "Where are your sleeping clothes?" Those clothes they do not have. Therefore, I want my children to sleep here with me [and not to sleep at any other house].'

Yet just a few months later, Ms Malibongwe had become the focus of much resentment on the part of her old friends and 'sisters' in her social network. By that time she had established herself in, and was extending her new shack, on the basis of a regular reliable income. She had also taken her disabled child out of the boarding establishment where she had previously been placed and was housing her at home (she continued at the school there). She did this, she said, because she felt rather more secure now and was able to give the girl the 'mother's love' that she needed. And by year's end she was able to pay the fees for the initiation of her son in the Transkei, a son of whom she had earlier said: 'He is doing Standard 8 this year. The problem [reason] that he must study [in the Transkei] is that I cannot afford the costs of education. I gave him over to my brothers [mine migrants] to educate him for me.'

The resentment her erstwhile friends expressed towards Ms Malibongwe, in a group discussion we attended, stemmed from the fact that she no longer had time for, nor offered any help to, either them or their children. This was despite the fact that their children had previously always been able to find a place to stay, and a bite of food, at her house. From their perspective, it seemed, in Nowandile Mthetho's (#4) words,

that not only does 'she no longer visit us. Even her children [who] used to come and visit Khayalethu here no longer come. It was only my children who used [recently] to go there. But I had to put a stop to that because the other day Khayalethu came home and said that mother Malibongwe did not give them anything to eat while she gave her own children food.'

To this Novumile Sangweni (#10) added 'Mother Malibongwe no longer comes to my house either, even though I stay near to her. The only time I see her is when she is in the house alongside mine ... That woman is her only friend [around here]. You will find her children playing there. When she is at work, her children go there since she comes home late. She has her suppers there. The only thing they do there is gossip. I once went there to borrow a cup of sugar from mother Malibongwe. She said she did not have one, even though I could see a big bag of sugar ...'

'She was my friend in the past' responded Nowandile Mthetho (#4), who had first introduced Ms Malibongwe to the Philani Nutrition Centre, 'but she no longer is. Because she is working, she sees us as a burden on her. It means she was not really a true friend of mine. She was a friend [just] because she was in the same situation as mine. But I tell you *inkunga ilala kwiintaba ngeentaba* (mist lands on different mountains; that is, luck lands on different people at different times).'

Some moments later, the older woman in the group, Nomachule Mlingwa (#5), added: 'Women as lucky as mother Malibongwe are turning their backs on their own friends and people. I remember when she had just come to live in this area. She was as poor as we are ... I was working at the time and she was not. I used to give some food and other things. But she has forgotten all that now. Maybe she no longer sees herself as being in the same situation as we are. She is working and earning money every month. She avoids us because she thinks we are going to borrow from her. Even if I'm as poor as I am, I still like myself (have self-respect). If someone thinks she is better than I am, then I won't bother her.'

While these women continued to regard each others' children (and grandchildren) as their own, as Ms Malibongwe had said she did of Khayalethu, they no longer did so for Ms Malibongwe's children. Indeed, from having earlier described her in kinship terms, when they were still close, they now said that she was no longer even their friend. This indicates clearly that they had long since abandoned hope of activating any sense of kinship-based moral responsibility in their relationships with her, and they therefore had no need to refer to their relationship with her in kinship terms. Moreover, it is clear from her reported actions that Ms Malibongwe too no longer

felt any clear sense of moral responsibility and kinship with these women or their children, and was trying to distance herself from them.

Another example of this process of distancing from one's erstwhile peers can be found in the relationship of Gloria Kheswayo (#2) and Alice Ntyatyambo (#3), a woman Gloria called *sisi* (older sister) because Gloria was understood to be Alice's HyBW through Alice's husband being Gloria's husband's classificatory younger brother.

> The relationship had been established when the two men, Oliver Ntyatyambo and Geoffrey Kheswayo, had made friends [presumably in a shebeen] and then discovered that they shared the clan name, Jwarha. From then on they regarded each other as brothers by virtue of their common clanship. Their relative chronological age difference, and the fact that Mr Ntyatyambo was a civic leader, was signified by his being regarded as the older brother. For a while there was much interaction between their two households, their shacks being quite close to one another. And when Oliver Ntyatyambo was assassinated, the Kheswayos were at the forefront of providing support. Indeed, through the subsequent months, as Alice Ntyatyambo struggled to re-establish herself and find employment, Gloria Kheswayo looked after the Ntyatyambo children, one of whom was born only after his father's death.
>
> Alice and her children all came to stay in the Kheswayo shack for the duration of the subsequent Christmas-New Year holiday, just as they had done on various weekends during the year. As Alice explained, 'When the month ends we come and sleep here. We like to sleep here when they have money. I come with my children and sleep here when her [Gloria's] husband has money.' On another occasion she added: 'Gloria and her husband do help at month's end. But sometimes they can't because they must pay their own accounts, or they must send money to their parents in the Transkei.'
>
> Things subsequently began to improve materially for Alice, and she developed other clan-based links, particularly with a slightly better-off neighbouring woman, Nokulunga. Nokulunga was of the same Jwarha clan as Alice's husband, as was a tenant on her site, Ntombesizwe, who had begun to live in Alice's house and look after it whenever Alice was away for a while, and whom Alice addressed as *ndodakazi* (lit: female husband) or *skwiza*, both terms used for a woman's HyZ. This effectively excluded a need for Alice to call on Gloria whose own access to material resources was just then severely reduced as a result of the deterioration of her own marital relationship: despite her having borne another baby, the support she received from her husband began to decrease steadily.
>
> During this period, then, the links between Alice and Gloria weakened. Alice was fortunate to find a permanent job with an NGO (non-governmental organisation) concerned with the victims of violence

where she had been counselled, and so she no longer left her children with Gloria whose own baby care responsibilities were a great burden. Indeed it was precisely in that kind of situation that Gloria expected some reciprocation from Alice. But it was not forthcoming. Indeed, it was after this time that Gloria commented that she had come to see much less of Alice, particularly since Alice had found herself a job. And she added, in a mumble more to herself than to us, that 'people who have money do not want to be bothered'.

Carol Stack's (1974) discussion of the practice of childkeeping — the sharing and frequent transfer of responsibility for child care amongst poor Afro-American households and individuals — provides a fascinating picture of the ways in which ideas about what constitutes kinship are redefined in pragmatic terms. One result, which Stack describes as fictive kinship,[43] is that people come to use a variety of kinship terms to describe people in whose households they live, and who provide the means necessary for their support, even if there is no clear genealogical link between them.

It is difficult to apply this argument in a simplistic manner to the material we are discussing here. This is primarily because Xhosa, the first language of the majority of Khayelitsha's residents, uses kin terms as a means of both address and reference for a very wide variety of relationships, and not by any means just for those that are genealogically traceable.[44] But Ms Malibongwe's statement that she 'regard[ed] him [Khayalethu] as one of my children. He sleeps where my children sleep' indicates, as argued earlier, that notions of kinship (and household) are used as an ideological underpinning to practices of sharing and reciprocal mutual support between very poor people in areas such as Khayelitsha. The fact that people use ideas about clanship, as in the case of the Ntyatyambo-Kheswayo relationship, provides yet stronger indication of a concern to construct such relationships in kinship terms. Oliver Ntyatyambo and Geoffrey Kheswayo could quite readily have remained just friends, even close friends. But their recognition and activation of a latent genealogical relationship, based on their common clan name through which they became 'brothers', and its extension to the relationship between their wives and indeed their children, shows how culturally potent, and simultaneously how readily constructed, the notion of kinship is. The next two cases demonstrate this again: the first also revealing how important such clan-based links are in times of desperation; the second how they may turn out to be far more significant in people's lives than genealogically much closer links.

> Mr Dengana Ndlovu (#6) was unemployed and spent a lot of time in the shebeens, having all but given up hope of finding a job. When we first met him and his wife, she was attending the Philani Nutrition Centre with her child. Their shack was cramped and tiny, reflecting their destitute state.

Within a few months, his wife had left him, having found a job for herself. Before this she ensured that some of her earnings went to sending her children to the Transkei to be cared for there by her mother.

Dengana, left to fend for himself, managed to burn himself badly when a pot of hot water fell on him. When we visited him, he was being cared for by two men (and one of their girlfriends), both of whom he described as kinsmen and referred to using kin terms. The first, Sisa, he called *mzala* (cross cousin) explaining that this was because they were related through a clan link: Dengana's clan-name was the same as that of Sisa's mother. Thus, as they constructed it, Dengana's father and Sisa's mother were (clan) siblings, Dengana's father was Sisa's MB (*malume*), etc. The second, Mfundo, a man who owned a car and had assisted Dengana to the clinic, Dengana described as *kayise* (brother, sibling). Although it was reinforced by their having known each other as children in the Mount Fletcher district of the Transkei where they had grown up as neighbours, this too was a relationship constructed around a clan link — they shared a clan name and, although they were not literally that close genealogically, Dengana understood Mfundo to be his FyBS.

It is clear then that, for the desperate Dengana Ndlovu, clan relatives were crucially important. Indeed, when we discussed with him the names of the people he regarded as his closest associates in Makhaza, and on whom he felt he could most readily rely, he explained that

> ... there are many people I know here in Makhaza but I do not know their names [that is first names or surnames]. We men call each other by our clan names, so that names are not important. What is really important is the clan name, and to a lesser extent the place of one's origin.

For Doris Mlawu (#7), as we have seen in Section 4, clan-based kin were more valued than even close genealogical kin: she tried to keep a distance between herself and her own mother, but established close relationships with people (such as Magareth Mbiza) with whom she could create only 'putative' kin links. Indeed, as we now document, she explicitly said that, despite their relative wealthiness, her own genealogically traceable kin were effectively useless to her in her struggle to sustain and establish herself — to build and consolidate her household — while those she could depend on were all just associates with whom she nonetheless could, and had been able to, construct kin links through the activation of previously unrecognised but latent clan-based linkages.

> Ms Mlawu was a direct descendant of the paramount chief of Thembuland, Mtirara, her own father having been the second son of Chief Mtirara and a brother of Chief Mtirara's successor, Chief Sabata.

Yet she regarded these linkages as unimportant for practical purposes. Some of the reasons she gave follow.

Ms Mlawu's father died unexpectedly when she was just three years old and she and her siblings were taken in and cared for by Chief Sabata, her FoB. This was before he was forced into exile during the apartheid years because he had opposed the politics of his patrilateral cousin, Chief Kaiser Matanzima, who subsequently became president of the (then) Transkei bantustan.

When he left, he was replaced by his younger brother Chief Bambilanga who was a Matanzima supporter. (Bambilanga was Chief Mtirara's third son, and thus Doris Mlawu's FyB.) Because Ms Mlawu and her mother and siblings had previously taken shelter with Chief Sabata, his political opponent, Bambilanga offered them no assistance. Indeed he ensured that his relationship with them was thoroughly fractured. Doris's mother (a junior wife) ended up a worker in Cape Town and Doris was left in the care of her mother's brothers.

We have already seen (Section 4) how, in Umtata, Doris had established a reciprocal relationship with Magareth Mbiza; how they subsequently reinforced it in Cape Town; and how, despite the tensions between Doris and her mother, it allowed Magareth to leave her house and child in Doris's mother's care in Umtata. We have also seen how Doris and Magareth gave their relationship salience through their constructing and activating a genealogical link with one another. But it was not just that link that Doris activated. We have already commented on her relationship with Alice Ntyatyambo (#3). Indeed, with Doris's help we were able to compile the details represented in diagram 1 which shows how extensively her urban network was given salience by its linkages being realised as ties with a range of 'putative' kin. Importantly, for our present discussion, the diagram excludes various genealogically close kin whom Doris identified as kin when we asked, but of whom she said: 'They are my relatives who are not very useful because they don't help me at all.' They were thus excluded from her contingent social network, and thereby perceptually placed at greater social distance than her 'putative' kin whom she did include in her network and of whom she said: 'These are the ones who are very useful to me.' We have shaded them on the diagram which also includes (unshaded) symbols for various individuals through whom the networked kin are linked but who were not part of Doris's social network around the time of our research.

Diagram 1: Doris Mlawu's social network represented in ('putative') genealogical terms

KEY
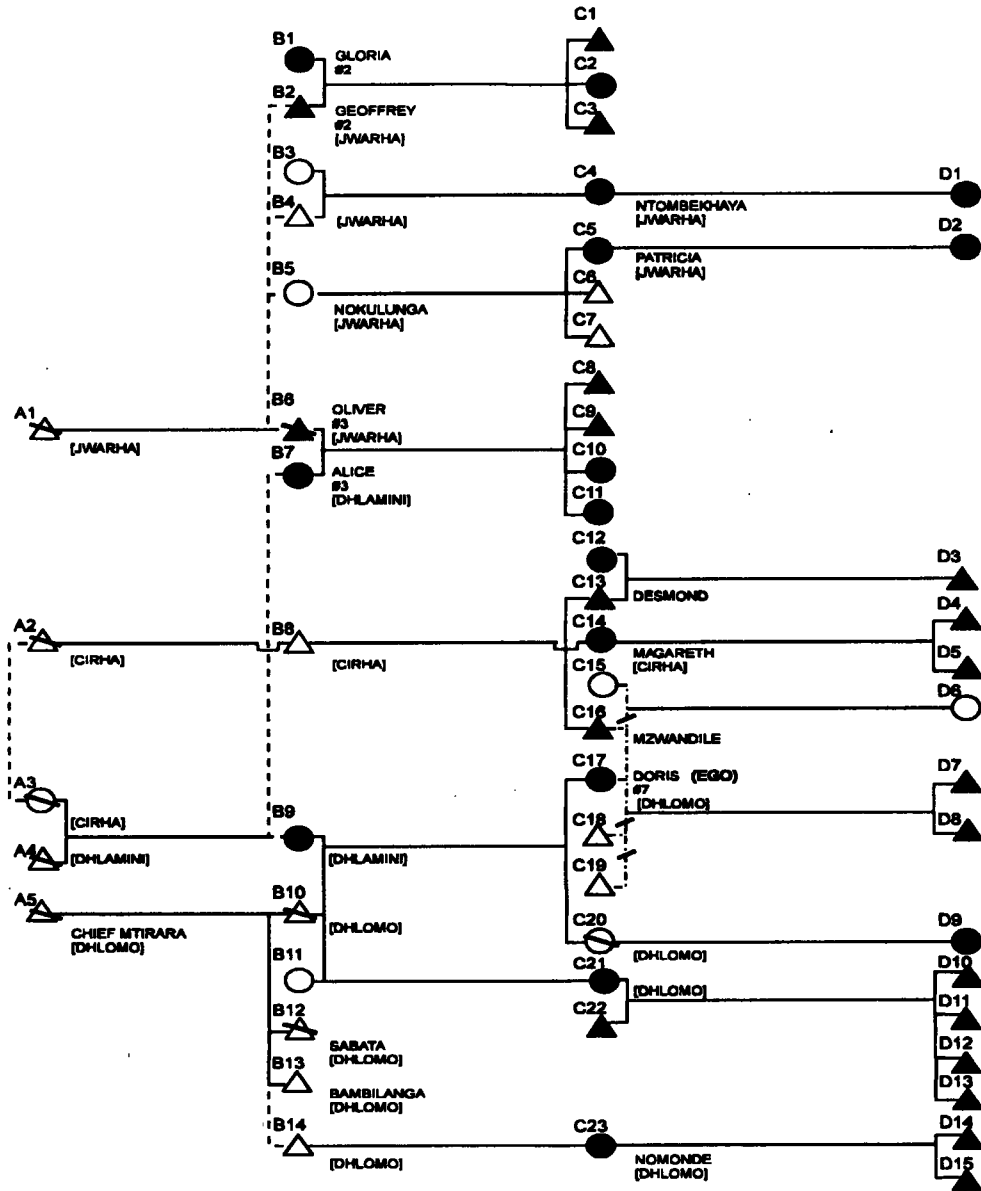
△	MALE	—·—·—	CONSENSUAL UNION	NAME	PERSONAL NAME
○	FEMALE	⁄	RELATIONSHIP ENDED	[CLAN NAME]	
—	TRACEABLE GENEALOGICAL LINK	⁄	INDIVIDUAL DECEASED	#	REFERENCE NO. (PROJECT)
---	CLAN LINK	▲●	MEMBER OF DORIS' PRESENT SOCIAL NETWORK	A1....D15	REFERENCE NO. (DIAGRAM)

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A diagram of this sort provides graphic representation of the ways in which ideas about kinship and clanship are used to underpin and reinforce a contingent social network, in this case Doris Mlawu's (#7) network. Indeed, the ways in which the shaded individuals are 'putatively' related through clanship-based links reveal the extent to which the culture of kinship is called upon to give salience to contingently constructed social networks.

Diagram 1 also represents part (but not the whole) of the social networks of two others among our respondents: Gloria Kheswayo (#2) and Alice Ntyatyambo (#3) who appear on the diagram as B1 and B7 respectively. For both, however, their respective networks stretched in further directions. For Alice this was partly because she had been born in Cape Town and could appeal to her own local natal kin and childhood friends in times of desperation, as occurred when she fled from Makhaza under threat from the local civic branch (see earlier). Yet, just as Doris had attenuated her relationship with her own mother, Alice preferred for the most part to keep her distance from her genealogically close kin (including her mother who lived in a formal township).

Turning to Gloria, we must remember that, as indicated earlier, her relationship with Alice began to disintegrate when Alice found herself employment and when Gloria's husband, Geoffrey, reduced his support for Gloria and her children. This had meant that she was obliged to look elsewhere for a hopefully more reliable set of people on whom to depend, and her ties with Alice, and through her with Doris, became increasingly attenuated.

What a diagram of this type does not show is the detailed contents of the relationships it illustrates. Space constraints prevent us from discussing the full substantive extent of the relationships indicated in Diagram 1, although the fact that Doris features in many of the examples we have used throughout our presentation means that much of this information can be found there. Here we thus merely add a couple of further aspects of the kinds of reciprocities which were part of Doris's links with others whom she indicated were part of her kin-based network, and recall some of the other links referred to earlier.

Various of the shaded adult individuals on the diagram were members of one of the two savings clubs to which Doris belonged, and in one of which she played a leading administrative role.[45] These individuals were C17 (Doris herself), C5, C21, and C23. Interestingly, with the exception of Doris herself, none of these individuals was a member of both these savings clubs, both of which explicitly preferred to recruit as members only people to whom existing members could claim a kin-based relationship of some kind — even if constructed around clan names (as in the case of the Ikhaya Lethemba burial society discussed in Section 6 below).

We have seen earlier how Doris and Alice (B7) were drinking friends as well as reciprocal partners, and how Doris and Magareth (C14) had drawn on a close link, established years earlier in Umtata, both to help the latter find her feet in Cape Town and to provide her with a caretaker for her children in Umtata — in the form of Doris's mother whom Doris insisted remain in the Transkei. Importantly, the

tensions between Doris and her mother were not carried over to the relationship between Doris's mother and Doris's close friend and 'putative' *mzala* (cross cousin), Magareth.

We pointed out above that Doris claimed as kin as many people in her network as she could and rejected as significant those of her genealogical kin whom she could not rely on for material or even emotional support. This raises questions about precisely what kinship is, for we need to ask whether kinship is really about genealogies or whether it is actually about the moral component of relationships in which reciprocities are intensely generalised and where there is a reliable expectation that mutual assistance will be forthcoming from one's relatives. We return to these questions in our concluding section.

6.   Reconsidering kinship, clanship and reciprocity

The material in Sections 4 and 5 has been used to demonstrate two things. The first is that the effective bonding agent between poor people is their reliability as exchange partners in generalised reciprocal relationships (see Sharp & Spiegel 1985 with reference to people in both Qwaqwa and Matatiele, Transkei). These reciprocal relationships are, on the one hand, thoroughly socially imbedded so that there is little or no need for people to account closely for the values of exchanges between them. On the other hand they are clearly unsustainable if such transfers of material assistance always go in one direction.

Secondly, and notwithstanding the first point, the material presented above reflects how poor people in Khayelitsha prefer to give meaning to the most effective of these bonding agents — to imbed them culturally — by constructing them in kinship terms. Clearly, then, the ideology of kinship as a (possibly even *the*) fundamental signifier of closeness is extremely resilient. Ideas about the morality of kinship remain a potent resource to be used and applied to otherwise purely associational and materially based transactional relationships.

The second point also demonstrates that the people of Makhaza who 'imputed' kinship ties onto reciprocal relationships had a cultural model in their heads that recognised the potential for making kin of a wide variety of others in their social environment and that simultaneously valued close kin as normatively more morally dependable than distant kin. This is clear from their practice of using kinship terms that effectively described their 'putative' kin as close kin and of not enunciating the imputed nature of their relationships (except when we asked them to explain the precise nature of the kin link). Indeed, the very fact that the terms they used 'made' close kin of 'putative' kin indicates their normative expectation that close kin should be more reliable than distant kin. If they had used language that immediately indicated a genealogical distance between themselves and their 'putative' kin, they would thereby have been saying that those were 'only' distant relatives. By describing them in close-kin terms, they brought them perceptually close to themselves. They also thereby revealed a culturally constructed hierarchy that distin-

guishes close and distant kin and is flexible enough not to be constrained by the structures of neatly traced genealogies.[46]

Having said that, we need now to ask how this very flexible use of kinship as a cultural resource relates to the notion of clanship in southern Africa, particularly in its Nguni and Xhosa idiom? We have already argued that kinship should not be seen as a simple description of biological relationships. The questions such an assertion begs, however, are: what are the particular cultural artifacts through which kinship is constituted as a resource? and, what ideas underpin the notion that close association can be reinforced by appeals to the language of kinship?

In the southern African context a particularly important cultural construct for this purpose is one described in English as clanship. Amongst the broader Nguni-speaking population, there is a well-entrenched understanding that everyone is associated genealogically — through the patriline — with an *isiduko* (pl: *iziduko*; only inadequately translated as clan) that can be identified by its *isibongo* (pl: *izibongo*; clan name) (Preston-Whyte 1974:201).[47]

The classical ethnographic literature describes these *iziduko* as social categories comprising people who claim to be related to one another patrilineally, but who cannot formally trace a common line of descent (Wilson 1969:116-7; Preston-Whyte 1974; see also Hammond-Tooke 1985a; 1991). Each such *isiduko* is identified by its own *isibongo* which is, for the Nguni clans, a putative ancestor's name. Thus there is a range of Nguni *iziduko* with names such as Cirha, Dlhamini, Dhlomo, Jwarha, Ndlovu, Nkwali and Tshawe among others.[48] In Preston-Whyte's (1974:178) words, 'Clans, consisting of descendants in the male line of a named but distant and often mythical ancestor, are found in all Nguni societies.'

People of any one clan name can be found scattered across the sub-continent (Wilson & Mafeje 1963; Wilson 1969; Hammond-Tooke 1991),[49] a factor that makes any one clan far too large to constitute a corporate group. This dispersed nature of clans is a phenomenon that predates colonialism and the impact of labour migration. Indeed it was a clear feature of pre-colonial times and it is unlikely that there was ever a time when clans occupied particular areas of land in any exclusive way (Wilson 1969:117-118). For Nguni people, clan exogamy rules and the principle of patrilocality would have rendered exclusive occupation of an area impossible as all married women would have, by definition, to be of clans other than those of their husbands. In addition, practices such as what Wilson describes as 'the absorption of strangers ... some being provided with cattle by the chief they acknowledged' (*ibid.*) — known also as *ukukhonza* (to serve) — would have meant that any one area was occupied by people of a variety of clans. Thus while there were precolonial chiefdoms and other local polities described by clan names — these were the clan names of their respective leaders — their constituents were always of a variety of clans, and their political allegiance was to the chief of that particular polity (Wilson 1969:117-118; Hammond-Tooke 1991).

Clans functioned precolonially (and to some extent still today) for two important purposes: among Nguni people for defining the categories of people whom one

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could and could not marry (Preston-Whyte 1974:178, 192-3), and, for both Nguni and Sotho, for ritual purposes. In terms of Xhosa marriage rules (which were, and still are, particularly strict) one cannot marry a person of one's own clan, one's mother's clan or one's grandmother's clan. Thus there is an exogamy rule which requires one to exclude anyone from each of four clans (own, M's, FM's and MM's clans) as a potential spouse (Preston-Whyte 1974:192).

Clan membership was also important for ritual purposes, particularly among the Cape Nguni (Hammond-Tooke 1985b; 1991). Submissions and sacrifices to one's ancestors always required, firstly, that one find a senior clansperson to officiate and, secondly, that others of one's clanspeople in one's neighbourhood participate. For brief moments such as these, clusters of clanspeople became temporary corporate groups, but only for ritual purposes. And they most certainly did not imply the incorporation, even temporarily, of all the people everywhere with the same *isibongo* (Hammond-Tooke 1985b; 1991).

While both of these functions are still part of the nature of clanship today, the *isibongo* has another quite different importance in the contemporary industrial world. It is to provide all Africans in southern Africa with a named set of people across the subcontinent with whom they can reinforce associational relationships that work. Given the extensive mobility of poor people caused by apartheid-induced migrancy and subsequent urbanisation processes, this provides an important resource. Migrants arriving in a foreign place are able, often, to call on people whose *isibongo* they share to provide assistance, albeit often only temporarily. As Preston-Whyte (1974:201) suggested twenty years ago:

> It would appear that, today, common clanship amongst the Nguni
> provides an initial facilitating link between individuals, especially useful
> to the stranger coming to town ... [and] ... clanship may be used as a basis
> for a more demanding relationship should there be the need and should
> both partners be agreeable.[50]

More importantly than simple assistance to migrants, many people are able to underpin the associational and reciprocal relationships they do establish in their new urban environments by referring to those relationships as kinship links that are built on clan links. They thereby inculcate them with a sense of moral obligation. This does not, of course, mean that all of the people who share any one person's *isibongo* can be relied upon by that person to provide support: indeed, as we have seen, even one's closest relatives may be of no assistance at all. It means, rather, that the relationships that a person establishes can be reinforced ideologically through the imputation of a kinship (clanship) link to the relationship, and that by doing this the morality conventionally associated with kinship is simultaneously imputed, imported and imbedded into the relationship.

The examples we have discussed above all describe how this occurs in the construction and reinforcement of a variety of dyadic relationships, albeit located in wider social networks. This is when a pair of individuals, who have established a

working reciprocal relationship and friendship, reinforce it by 'discovering' a clan-based genealogical link and redefining their relationship thereafter in kinship terms. The experience of Doris Mlawu and Magareth Mbiza who 'discovered' a genealogical link between them (Doris's mother's mother shared the clan name of Magareth's father — see above) provides a clear example of this process at work.

Other examples we have considered show that these dyadic 'putative' kinship/clanship links can, and do, spill over into redefining relationships between household units and their members: thus the close domestic kin of one partner in such a dyadic relationship are 'imputed' to be kin (clan) linked to the close domestic kin of the other partner. In this instance, obvious examples discussed earlier include that between the households of Alice Ntyatyambo (#3) and Gloria Kheswayo (#2) through their husbands' common clan name — at least before the relationship was undermined after Alice began to be able to support herself after the trauma of being widowed, and after Gloria's husband abandoned his responsibilities to her and their children. In terms of a clan-based genealogy, Alice and Gloria's respective children were patrilateral parallel cousins of one another, which in Xhosa meant they were regarded as siblings. This terminological link reinforced their sense of being members of what at times appeared to be a single 'stretched' household.

Another example is the relationship, not dealt with in detail above, between the households of Alice Ntyatyambo (#3) and Doris Mlawu (#7) who, having become close friends and sometime co-drinkers, used the fact that Alice shared a clan name with Doris's mother to reinforce their relationship and to bring their respective households together. Doris began referring to Alice as her MZ, and they took on mutual child-care duties for each other.

The use of clan-based linkages to construct and reinforce relationships does not, however, end with these two dyad-based forms of network creation. We have also found examples where whole associational groups are consolidated, albeit not constructed, around sets of people all of whom share a limited number of clan names. We here discuss one such example — a Khayelitsha-based burial society.

> *Ikhaya Lethemba* (House of Hope/Trust) was a burial society we encountered in Makhaza. It was established in 1991 after many of its members had been relocated to that area and after the burial society they had previously participated in had collapsed.
>
> The earlier society had been established by a group of co-workers in a Cape Town-based fishing company who had all come from the Sada district of the then Ciskei. Given that Sada was a relocation area for ex-farmworkers from surrounding areas, the relationships between the area's residents were not deep enough for strong bonds of trust to have been created between them. Thus, when the people who constituted the members of the earlier burial society were scattered among various locations from the squatter camp where they had been staying, the links between them were readily undermined. This allowed some leading members to 'mismanage' the society's funds. Matthew Sawila (#8)

explained that the 'home-boy' basis of their association was not strong enough to hold it together in the face of its members' urban relocations and their dispersals from a common place of work. The escalating costs of funerals in, and transport to, former 'homeland' areas was a further factor.

Once settled in Makhaza, Mr Sawila and some others who had been members of the earlier burial society established *Ikhaya Lethemba*, a burial society with the limited objectives of covering funeral costs in the Cape Peninsula only, and of providing emotional support to bereaved members.[51] Although they said that in principle any trustworthy person living in the neighbourhood of other members could become a member,[52] in practice the membership was restricted to people of just four different clans: Rhadebe (22 members, including Mr Sawila), Sukwini (14), Khumalo (9) and Mdlane (5). Moreover, this ensured that all the members were able to create at least 'putative' kinship and/or affinal links with one another through activating previously unrecognised clan-based ties. This was because their recruitment policy expressly required them to introduce only 'family', a term which meant people to whom a member was related through at least 'putative' kinship (clanship) links that reflected reliable dyadic reciprocal relationships. That way, they believed, they could ensure the trustworthiness of all members, a trustworthiness built on an idiom of kinship and the morality assumed to be associated with it.

The case of the *Ikhaya Lethemba* Burial Society offers just one example of how a whole network of relationships can be created, and indeed transformed into a corporate structure, on the basis of a series of dyadic relationships that are reinforced by a sense of clan-kinship based morality. Yet, just as the simple dyads built around this principle are insecure and easily breached, as we have already shown, so too are these larger networks subject to break-up when their material basis can no longer sustain them. The same applies to corporations, such as burial societies, that are built on the structures of such larger effectively contingent social networks. While people appeal to principles of kinship through imputing kin-based linkages by reference to clan names, and while this creates a greater sense of moral obligation than would otherwise pertain, they know that they cannot expect them to survive material extremes.

7.   Conclusion: What is kinship in the Khayelitsha-type context?

We answer this question first by explaining some of what kinship is not. We then discuss briefly the significance of genealogies in contemporary South African kinship, and the importance of clanship for their construction. This brings us back to our argument about kinship as a recursively reconfigured cultural resource that is

used to give meaning and cultural salience to relationships that are imbedded in contingently created social networks.

What is the kinship that we have here been describing? It is most certainly neither biology nor simple genealogy. Nor is it fictive kinship in the sense in which child adoptions are said to affiliate the adopted children to their adoptive parents as if their relationship was based on a 'normal' biology between parent and child, and then recognised as such. Similarly it is not the putative kinship of clientage in a unilineally organised segmentary kinship system whereby both poor individuals and entire groups of poor and materially dispossessed people are taken into a wealthy unilineal kin group and are subsumed, genealogically, within that group. This was the case with the practice known as *ukukhonza* amongst precolonial Nguni people; a practice whereby a wealthy and powerful man would affiliate poor people to his homestead, and ultimately to his lineage, by taking them in as servants who, after some generations, would have become full (albeit junior) members of the lineage.

Furthermore the notion of kinship with which we are concerned here is not simply the fictive kinship that Carol Stack (1974) described for poor Afro-Americans. Nor is it the kinship of adoption that Mary Weismantel (1995) has described for people in Zumbagua, Ecuador, or the kinship of common ingestion that Janet Carsten (1995) describes for Malays in Pulau Langkawi. It is true that Stack's notion of fictive kinship, Weismantel's of adoptive kinship and Carsten's of kinship through commonality of food intake come close to what we are describing. This is precisely because all three are concerned with a kinship that is built upon relation-ships of reciprocity, materiality and, in Stack's case, contingent social networks rather than only on readily traceable genealogies. The people whose lives Stack described used kin terms to reflect the closeness or otherwise of their material reciprocal relationships. An adult who could demonstrate having provided for a child could claim the right to be regarded as its parent. Two women who helped each other out on a regular and long-term basis would regard themselves as sisters. And individuals who failed to meet their expected material obligations to their genealo-gically close kin could lose the right to describe their relationships in kin terms.[53] All of this is true too for the people of Makhaza, in particular, and Khayelitsha in general.

What is significantly absent from Stack's notion of fictive kinship and from the adoptive kinship described by Weismantel, however, is the clanship element and its significance for creating genealogies and underpinning social networks. The fictive kinship Stack describes is based exclusively on material and sometimes emotional reciprocities. It is constructed purely by the application of kinship terminology. The adoptive kinship Weismantel describes is similarly built upon material reciprocities with a patina of emotionality, although she is at pains to stress the symbolic significance of the specific materials exchanged (food in particular).

By contrast, the kinship of common ingestion that Carsten describes, and her stress on the symbolic significance of food consumption (rather than simply on material exchanges) for emic definitions of kinship makes her argument resonate

most strongly with ours. This is precisely because it gives strong credence to a cultural structure underlying people's constructions of kinship links, even though, in her case, that has nothing at all to do with ideas about clanship and genealogy.

The 'putative' reciprocity-based kinship relationships and networks that pertain in the population with which we worked are not constructed on kinship *terminologies* alone. Nor are they constructed around the particularities of the kinds of *materials* exchanged. They are built around a clear understanding, shared by the people of these areas, that kinship is indeed genealogy and not just terminology or materiality.

To describe someone as kin, and to call upon that person to behave with the morality befitting a close kinsperson, one has to construct a genealogy through the use of clan names and the activation of latent kin-links that such clan names generate. Without clanship at its base, everyone involved knows that it really is just a fictive relationship. Links of common clanship, and even those established through tracing affinal links between clans, are understood to carry special weight — to be potentially particularly efficacious for reinforcing the interpersonal bonds that are the core of the social networks through which people face up to the vagaries and vicissitudes of urban township life in places such as Khayelitsha.

Kinship here is clearly not a principle for constructing long-lasting corporate groups. But (with family) it is, most definitely, a central and crucial feature of the social network construction and manipulation that characterises urban life for poor Africans in contemporary South Africa. It is a crucial cultural resource that lives on through people's efforts to redefine their relationships and give them meaning by reference to genealogies and clan-based interpersonal linkages. It is a popular ideational resource that simultaneously appeals to idioms of biology and genealogy and immediately undermines them in any material sense. It is also constantly in process of being transformed, precisely through the ways it is called upon and used.

Kinship in this sense, then, has a twofold value for social scientists. It demonstrates the paucity of positivist notions that underlie perceptions of kinship purely as observable and recordable structure; and it illustrates precisely the structured nature of popular ideas about relationships and how those cultural structures are transformed every time they are used in the pragmatics of everyday life. As people create and reinforce their social networks around their use of kinship links, so do they reformulate their ideas about precisely what constitutes kinship. In this way the culture of kinship is virtually reinvented, over and over again.

Notes

2   We here emphasise this point with regard to poor and politically marginalised people. But the very fact that nepotism continues to be a feature of the lives of many better-off and more powerful people around the world indicates that kinship continues to have cultural significance amongst other than poor people. Recent work on the changing nature, function and composition of working people's households in modern industrial societies such as the USA also belie the belief that kinship has diminishing importance in such circumstances (see, for example, Smith, Wallerstein & Evers 1984; Smith & Wallerstein 1992).

3   We would estimate that at least three-quarters of the total greater Khayelitsha population live in shacks, either in these serviced-site areas or in transit camps (areas established for temporary occupation by people waiting for serviced sites. Some of these have since been upgraded into permanent site and service areas).

4   We use the term 'family' to refer to any combination of consanguines and affines that people themselves regard as significant (their own sense of kindred) at any point in their own lives. Given the ambiguities and confusions that surround the term, and its popular use to describe co-resident members of a household, we would prefer to avoid it altogether. Indeed, an implication of the present essay is to reinforce calls for its abandonment as a term used in critical sociological analyses. We are faced, however, with the fact that the Programme that has supported this project has itself used the term uncritically

in its title, and we have therefore used the term ourselves — but as loosely as is possible.

5   While we would agree with Gellner (1987) that kinship is indeed *about* biological relationships, we would argue that it is not *of* such relationships.

6   Fiona Ross (personal communication) has recently reported that the introduction of a church mission-driven housing programme in *Die Bos* shanty town has led various residents there to formalise their previously consensual unions through marriage by a religious minister. This appears to be a response to their understanding that the church recognises only formal marriage, and that the mission will look askance at those who want houses but are not formally married.

7   Mazur and Qangule (1995: Appendix 5) used a lower estimate of the total Khayelitsha population for their survey: 310 000 Khayelitsha residents out of a total African population in greater Cape Town of 836 500. Given the rapid growth of serviced-site areas such as Makhaza, Harare and others, we would be inclined to see their Khayelitsha figure as significantly underestimated.

8   We use the prefix 'greater' to distinguish the whole 'greater Khayelitsha complex' (formally the 'Khayelitsha Development Area' but now widely known simply as Khayelitsha) from the small local area of original core houses near the Khayelitsha railway station and known locally by that name. Similarly, the other parts of the greater Khayelitsha complex are each described by a local name such as Makhaza (or Mayibuye — see below), Makhaya, Harare, Site B, Silvertown, Griffiths Mxenge, etc.

9   Two of these are Site C which formally comprises 3 453 sites of 160 m^2 each, and Site B with 9 000 sites of 90 m^2 each (Khayelitsha Structure Plan (revised) Drawing No. C2512/U/12, July 1994).

10   Equivalent figures for formal housing in Khayelitsha are: 29 % with less than R800 and 28 % with R800-R1 500 monthly household incomes; 16 % below the 80th percentile of PHSL and 17 % between the 80th and 120th percentiles (Mazur & Qangule 1995:Table 10.3).

11   *Spaza* shops are small retail outlets, within people's homes, that offer basic domestic necessities including food, drink and tobacco products, as well as cooking, lighting and cleaning materials.

12   The term is the same as that used to describe government-appointed administrators of rural locations under the old Bantu Authorities system. It has been

adopted for the urban situation to describe self-appointed (and even sometimes initially elected) leaders of local urban populations who take on the role of patron rather than democratic leader and demand tribute for their services.

13   This was because men wearing balaclava helmets (woollen caps) to hide their faces were alleged to have perpetrated various attacks locally, both on ordinary citizens in their homes and on supporters of the civic movement. This was during 1992-4. In their latter role they were understood to be successors to the 'witdoek' vigilantes of earlier times in other squatter settlements (Cole, 1987).

14   Makhaza appears to be a corruption of Macassar, the name of a neighbouring township which was built to house the 'coloured' population servicing the Somerset West area. As -*makhaza* is the Zulu relative adjective to describe something that is cold, and as Makhaza is regarded as a cold place because of its situation not far from the shores of False Bay whence a cold wind often blows, the name has gained a particularly interesting local meaning deriving from a Nguni-language term; Xhosa, the local language, is also a Nguni language and there is a lot of overlap between Zulu and Xhosa.

15   All personal names used here are pseudonyms in accordance with agreements reached with informants who wished to remain anonymous. The bracketed (#X) refers to our records. We include it here to assist in cross referencing as one reads the report.

16   One graffito on a wall in the area reflected this dissatisfaction with site-and-service schemes' provision of serviced sites with only toilet superstructures. It read 'Give us houses not toilets'. It continues to be a contentious issue, what with the Government of National Unity's Ministry of Housing promising construction of millions of houses.

17   The other two branches were named for political activists: Mathew Goniwe and Solomon Mahlangu.

18   We use the terms 'putative' and 'impute' in various places in this report. We do this to follow anthropological conventions regarding ideas about 'real' (genealogically traceable) kin, 'putative' ('imputed') kin and 'fictive' kin. However, we do not wish to suggest that the process of imputing a kin relationship implies creating a fictional kinship link out of nothing. Indeed, our argument is that the process has a strong cultural basis in the idea, accepted by most southern Africans, that people of one's own clan are, by definition, one's siblings or patrilineal kin, and that one can extend the agnatic relationship of clanship through affinal relationships. When we use the term

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impute we therefore refer to an activation of what is already an acknowledged latent kin relationship. 'Putative' kin are, as we use the term here, people with whom one has activated an already latent kinship relationship that was not previously recognised in practice, although its potential was formally recognised. We put both terms in quote marks wherever we use them to describe relationships we have observed: this is to indicate our dissatisfaction with the conventional meanings ascribed to them in discussions of kinship.

19   The idea of domestic fluidity is relatively new in South African literature. It has preoccupied Spiegel for some years, and has been developed by students and colleagues working with him. Published work that deals with the topic, albeit not always with reference to the phrase domestic fluidity, includes Spiegel 1986a; 1986b; 1987; 1995; Sharp 1987; Spiegel and Sharp 1988; Jones, 1993; Reynolds 1993; Bank 1994; Niehaus 1994; Ross 1995; 1996; Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson 1996a; 1996b; Van der Waal 1996.

20   Mehlwana too faced this problem, but in a very different way. For him it derived from his close identification by our informants with themselves, as Xhosa-speaking black South Africans (see below).

21   The original proposal was that research would be conducted in Worcester, a town about 100 km north of Cape Town. After some preliminary visits to contacts in Worcester, Spiegel recognised that research there was not really feasible because of the logistics of carving time out of university-based demands, and of travelling there regularly. To this was added the uncertainties of reported outbursts of violence there. Although it was clear already then that violence might be a problem in Khayelitsha too, it seemed more attractive for its relative proximity so that visits could be structured around such incidents. We did not anticipate, however, the problems outlined above regarding working in close proximity to 'home'.

22   This area was popularly known as Griffiths Mxenge. It comprised 1 500 sites of 120 m^2 each (Khayelitsha Structure Plan (revised) Drawing No. C2512/U/12, July 1994).

23   One subsequently became an active member of the Mayibuye civic association, a status change that reflected improved circumstances, including leaving the support structures of the Philani Centre and upsetting her local relationships with her erstwhile friends.

24   Spiegel carries an ANC membership card, which he had with him at the time he was interviewed by the committee. However, he refrained from displaying this allegiance until it was explicitly demanded, and he insisted throughout

that his primary objective in being there was to undertake academically respectable research rather than to contribute to a party political enterprise.

25   His assassination not long thereafter was thus a major blow, not only to the research process, but also — particularly — to the local population.

26   Mehlwana had, by that time, been successfully involved in a number of related projects as a fieldwork research assistant where he had been required to document in detail both observational and interview data. These were used both for various principal researchers' published products (see Spiegel, Watson & Wilkinson 1996a; 1996b; 1996c) and for his own honours dissertation (Mehlwana 1992). His formal tenure as research assistant was throughout 1993 and early into 1994, but continuing disturbances in the research area, particularly after the April 1993 assassination of ANC/SACP leader Chris Hani, persisted in interrupting his work there.

27   We do not interrogate the issue of vicarious anthropological research methods here. Mehlwana has had opportunity to read, comment on and suggest modifications to this report. Its written structure and argument is Spiegel's although this has followed extensive discussion with Mehlwana.

28   In a sense these are dilemmas of a similar order, albeit more acute, to those Spiegel (above) faced in trying to reconcile the conflicting demands of research close to home. As South African anthropologists attempt to draw more African personnel into their ranks, the local discipline will have to reconsider the relationship between its field and its methods.

29   We use the term migration here without implying any necessary directionality of movement or any necessary intentionality of the migrating parties, particularly when these are children. While a better term might be spatial or geographical mobility, we continue to describe people's movements as migration because that is the term most commonly used in the literature.

30   Although we know of no study that attempts to show this, it would seem likely that the statistical process of urbanisation is probably greater than any one-off census type survey can indicate. This is because the oscillating nature of the migration process, at least at present, means that at any one time there are more people who are closely connected with, and expect to live at least for some time in, a particular urban or metropolitan region than are there to be counted at the time of a census-type survey. This needs, however, to be tempered by recognising that at least some people thus 'connected' with any one metropolitan or urban region may simultaneously be 'connected' with another or other such regions.

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31 Although we recognise its Anglocentric nature, we use the standard anthropological notation to signify genealogical relationships in terms of a series of dyadic kin relationships. These are: F=father; M=mother; B=brother; Z=sister; S=son; D=daughter; H=husband; W=wife. To signify older or younger sibling we insert a lower case o or y respectively before B or Z.

32 She said she had anticipated that the hospital to which the child was referred would arrange accommodation for her and the other children she brought with her. When it became clear this would not occur, she looked for her 'sister' in the Greenpoint transit camp.

33 Much of the literature on African people's migration to towns refers to associations being formed between 'homeboys', men from the same or neighbouring 'homeland' districts who help each other out (e.g. Mayer 1963; Wilson & Mafeje 1963). We use the term here despite its belittling connotations. We do so because it is used both in the literature and in much popular everyday speech. 'Homeboy' is often used to describe a category distinct from kin, although the terminology used, at least in Sesotho, implies a sense of overlap. We plan to address this issue elsewhere.

34 This does not mean that the reciprocities must regularly have been realised or that there is necessarily a full accounting of them. Rather it means that there must be some assurances, either from experience or knowledge that the resources are there, that they will be realised if needed.

35 We use this term to describe the relationship of two people genealogically recognised as born of the same parents.

36 The term *rholisa* here means to contribute to the household in kind, for instance by buying groceries. It derives from *ukur(h)ola* (to take out, make visible). Literally it means to cause someone to take out, in the sense of taking something out of one's own resources and giving it over. To *rholisa* in this way does not imply having been asked to contribute, but doing so at one's own discretion. In this case, Magareth was not *required* to pay for staying at Doris's house, but she and Doris both *recognised* that their relationship required she contribute towards household income.

37 Under the stringent conditions of apartheid legislation, 'homeland' residents were barred from being in 'prescribed' urban areas and seeking work there. State-run labour bureaus, set up in 'homeland' centres, recruited local men on one-year migrant work contracts and renewed such contracts annually for those men who returned to the bureau with documentary requests (call-in cards), from their employers, that they be re-recruited for a further year-long

contract. Many people bypassed this system, but then faced repeated arrest in towns and possible 'repatriation' to a 'homeland'.

38   We heard reference to such domestic violence on various occasions, and were given close-up details of its occurrence in one case amongst our sample of ten domestic units. While it cannot be documented here, we must remark that it provides clear indication that kinship and affinity do not necessarily go hand in hand with a morality of mutual support and concern.

39   Ross's (1995) work in a small shanty area elsewhere in the Western Cape indicates that vagrancy can be a means for an individual of integrating into a community rather than experienced as marginalisation. It is not clear whether this was the case with Mandla Sangweni. It is clear that becoming a vagrant effectively marginalised him from his kin and that this occurred when he found himself marginalised in his employment situation.

40   This extended 'quotation' is drawn from the transcript of an interview with Ms Sangweni. It does not follow the precise ordering of the transcript text. We have rearranged it to present the material as clearly as possible without doing major disservice to the structure of the text itself.

41   It is conventional always to prefix a personal name in this way, both addressing and referring to someone. In situations where there is a significant rank differential, this is indicated by use of an honorific (usually signified by a term such as 'chief' — *inkosi*). In most situations, however, a kinship-based term is used: usually father (mother) for a significantly older man (woman), brother or sister for one closer in age.

42   Nowandile Mthetho had achieved a similar level of formal education, but seemed personally less motivated and was certainly less confident with her use of English than Ms Malibongwe. Unlike the latter, whose husband had abandoned her, Ms Mthetho still lived with her (admittedly very abusive) husband. This meant that, despite his failings, she expected him to be the breadwinner and she was thus less motivated than Ms Malibongwe to generate income for herself. This attitude reflects an issue about the expectations of marriage that deserves detailed separate consideration elsewhere.

43   This phrase begs a variety of questions about the 'reality' of kinship and its biological basis that have been debated at length in the anthropological literature (e.g. Gellner 1987) without any clear conclusion being reached (see also Weismantel 1995).

44   See note 41. The same applies to most African languages used in southern Africa.

45   Note that not all the members of these clubs are indicated on the diagram.

46   We are grateful to Sally Frankental for helping us to recognise this point in the material presented here.

47   *Isiduko* and *isibongo* are Nguni-language terms. Variations are found in the other so-called Nguni languages — see Preston-Whyte (1974:201) who says that *isiduko* and *isibongo* are equivalent words to describe clan name in Cape Nguni (Xhosa) and Zulu/SeSwati respectively. A similar system of clanship pertains amongst Sotho speakers, although its functions, particularly regarding marriage rules, differ markedly (Preston-Whyte 1974). As the vast majority of Khayelitsha's residents are first-language Xhosa speakers, and as the ways in which clanship is used to define contingent associational links are found equally amongst Sotho speakers, we do not pursue these differences here.

48   Among Sotho-speakers clans (*liboko;* sing: *seboko)* are often named for the animals which are their respective totems: for example *Taung* (lion), *Koena* (crocodile), *Hlaping* (fish).

49   Indeed, some clan names (e.g. Ndlovu/Tlou: elephant in Nguni and Sotho languages respectively) appear to cut across the Nguni-Sotho 'divide', although this does not negate the specificities of marriage rules in any particular population.

50   Although we have not seen any other detailed evidence in support, it is likely that people in pre-colonial times were able, when travelling, to call on people of their own clan, just as contemporary migrants appear to do. Preston-Whyte (1974:201) cites a variety of sources in support of her statement (seemingly about the past, albeit couched in the ethnographic present) that 'Fellow clansmen recognise certain obligations of hospitality and mutual aid towards each other, mainly the offering of food, drink and shelter to clansmen when travelling.'

51   Where members or their dependants were buried in distant areas, *Ikhaya Lethemba* covered costs only of the coffin and the food for the local vigil.

52   Members were resident in Makhaza as well as hostels in Langa and Nyanga.

53   Weismantel's (1995) discussion of the material-symbolic significance of food transfers for creating common substance and thereby 'making kinship' in the

Ecuadorian community of Zumbagua reflects the more positive side of this equation: those who took upon themselves and successfully fulfilled the obligation to meet material obligations to children made kin of those children. Carsten's (1995) argument is similar but more directly relating to food intake associated with co-residence.

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