THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL CONTINUITIES: CLANSHIP IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Anthony M. Mehlwana

Department of Social Anthropology

University of Cape Town

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 # PLEASE NOTE: THE NAMES OF INFORMANTS APPEARING IN THIS THESIS ARE PSEUDONYMS ALTHOUGH THE EVENTS ARE TRUE. THIS HAS BEEN DONE TO PROTECT THEIR IDENTITIES.

ABSTRACT

This thesis came as a result of two years' research in ten households in Makhaza. Makhaza is a shantytown situated in the Khayelitsha complex. The focus of this research is clanship a particularly under researched field in contemporary anthropology in southern Africa.

The early anthropological literature mentioned clanship notions only in the context of social group formation. This literature argued that clanship is meaningless in urban situations since there are various social groups in urban towns which are based on criteria other than clanship.

The present study argues, however, that clanship continues to be a building block in the construction of many relationships that poor Africans in towns manipulate for many purposes. Clanship manipulation should be understood in the context of the history and the poor conditions under which urban Africans live. As a result of the often forced migration, many Africans in urban areas do not live with their immediate families.

In order to adapt to these conditions, they commonly build contingent relationships that they use as resources for reciprocal exchanges. This thesis has looked at these contingent relationships on three levels: a) how they are formed; b) the roles that each social actor is supposed to perform; and c) reciprocal exchange between households which are linked by clanship. It argues that clanship is a powerful symbol which binds these relationships. Clanship relationships are perceived as 'blood' relationships which are culturally defined and that underpin many varied relationships of reciprocity and material assistance among Africans.

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CHAPTER ONE

Continuity and change in the clanship notion: an introduction

The study of changing family structure is properly the study of social processes. In default of adequate evidence to reconstruct the process of change in the rural periphery of southern Africa we are often reduced to comparison between the 'past' and the 'present'. The past in this sense is more or less the hypothetical base-line, a reconstruction of traditional society which is contingent on our relative ignorance of pre-colonial conditions and which is largely derived from ethnographies conceived within a synchronic and functionalist paradigm (Murray 1981: 100).

1.1 Introduction

In February 1992, I was conducting research in the Western Cape shanty settlement of Nyanga Extension when I came across a household, the head of which shares a clan name with me. The excerpt below from a transcript of our discussion illustrates how, over time, kinship ties can be forged from clan-names that people share. The excerpt shows that, wherever Africans (especially Xhosa-speaking Africans) go, among the various relationships they form those based on common clan names are more readily recognised by them than any other. When the clanship relationship is tied with common place of origin, its efficacy in bond formation is reinforced, as the conversation between myself and my respondent shows:

Anthony: My name is Anthony Mehlwana of the Dhlamini clan. Can you give me permission to interview you?

Respondent (female): Oh! Are you really a Dhlamini? Where do you come from, I mean where is your home?

Anthony: My home (my father's birthplace) is in Cofimvaba, in the district of Zigudu.

Respondent: Oh, I can see ... Yes I remember the place. There are oo-Mehlwana there, near the mission (Roman Catholic Church). Are you related to them?

Anthony: Yes. Actually, my father was born there and went to school there in the mission. Since you know so much about the Oo-Mehlwana in Cofimvaba; how do you know them, I mean, what is your clan name?

Respondent: The reason I asked you is because I am also a Dhlamini. Although I did not live there (in Cofimvaba), my father's brother once lived in Zigudu and I

> usually visited him there. That was when I came to know the oo-Dhlamini who lived there. That was a long time ago. Who is your father? Is he staying here in Cape Town?
>
> Anthony: My father's name is Mncedisi. He has a house here in Nyanga East
>
> Respondent: I do not believe my ears! You see son [from then on, she referred to me as her 'son' and not as a stranger], I knew your father - yes I knew Mncedisi. The last time I saw him was when he went away to work. It was [a] long time ago, I never saw him again. Where exactly are you living? Hawu! (exclamation). My 'father son' (Mncedisi)! Is he still living? Why should I suffer so much while I have my 'blood' relative right next door to me ...

Throughout the interview that followed my interviewee was very co-operative. I was no longer a stranger, she kept on referring to me as her 'son'. Even to this day I cannot resist the temptation of occasionally going to her shack and greeting her. Thus a social bond has developed between her and me because we share the same clan name, and 'we' also originated in the same village in the Transkei, even though I was not born there.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this study has been to investigate the use of clanship as a basis for one of the survival strategies that people in a Western Cape shantytown employ, given their insufficient and often precarious material resources. The shanty town concerned is the Makhaza area of the greater Khayelitsha complex on the outskirts of Cape Town. Makhaza comprises of a very large tract of land with an estimated population of more than 50 000 people living on more than 15 000 serviced sites where residents have erected shacks (own estimate). As we will see, most Makhaza residents are marginalised from the formal economy of the Western Cape.

Many studies of social networks amongst marginalised or disadvantaged communities have concluded that people make use of every possible avenue to distribute and redistribute income from one household to another (see for example, Epstein 1969; Stack 1974; Lomnitz 1977; Epstein 1981; Oke 1986). The thesis intends to demonstrate that the idea of clanship is one of the most consequential social notions that people in the Makhaza area manipulate as the basis for their survival.

Common clanship is, by definition, a social relationship. The thesis argues that Makhaza people's use of clan-names to create social relationships shows that there are

cultural continuities in use that provide people with resources when confronted with the alienating nature of urban life.

My earlier work (Mehlwana 1992) addressed the issue of how kinship is very significant in moulding day-to-day relationships and the manner in which reciprocity is channelled through these kin relationships[1]. However, I should hasten to add that that project was not satisfactory, on two major grounds. Firstly, the study was neither as intensive nor as extensive as I would have liked. Secondly, I did not conclusively examine how those kinship relationships were formed. The work was based mostly on the instrumental side of kinship, that is, how notions of kinship were being used, without an examination of how, and especially in what kinds of cultural contexts, people themselves contingently create and recreate kinship relationships and categories based on those relationships.

In my work on kinship networks amongst shanty dwellers in a Western Cape black township, I came to realise how extensively clan membership seemed to be significant as a building block in social networks. This was because it constantly permeated most informants' discourses about their relationships to one another. It should be made clear that some respondents in Makhaza did not talk about the idea of clanship as an important issue. Yet it was clear from their repeated reference to it that they saw clanship relations as 'given'. To them clanship is similar to blood, very important and yet not always referred to unless it is needed. Some respondents did not understand why (as an African person - and a Xhosa-speaking individual) I should concern myself with trying formally to understand clan-based relationships. This was precisely because they viewed clanship relationships as self-evident.

The questions I was repeatedly asked hammered this point home: 'Why clanship now when there are much more important issues to be studied?' Alternatively,'[W]hat is it with clanship that is so important to warrant intensive scrutiny?' These questions presuppose that the crucial significance of clan names and membership is so widely

[1] This was an Honours thesis which looked at social networks of black (African) urban dwellers. The work compared the extent and degrees to which people of different economic backgrounds or statuses used kinship as a network for reciprocal obligations during their daily interactions. It is from such work that the present dissertation emerges.

understood that it deserves no further special consideration in the form of academic study. Yet, what work there is on clanship in Southern African ethnography fails adequately to address its use in urban contexts.

1.3 Thesis outline

In order to show the importance of clanship in Makhaza, this dissertation is structured as follows: Chapter Two describes the methodology used and the problems encountered, particularly problems associated with being a 'native' male researcher amongst people of the same language group. Problems relating to gender and age of the researcher are also examined.

Chapter Three provides a synopsis of a large body of literature relating to kinship and clanship with special emphasis on the Xhosa-speaking population in South Africa, and how clanship links are manipulated. It argues that there are gaps in both classical and current kinship and clanship literature, especially when dealing with the urban poor.

As people's social relations are tied up with their histories, so Chapter Four provides a synthesised history of squatting in the Western Cape region, focusing on the past apartheid government's punitive action against people it saw as 'illegal'.

Chapter Five provides detailed and comparative household profiles of key informants in relation to broader national and regional contexts, and evaluates the fluidity of boundaries in domestic units.

Chapter Six investigates the construction, reconstruction and deconstruction of clan networks and, in relation to the literature discussed in Chapter Four, examines critically the use of kinship terminologies as they are played out in Makhaza.

Chapter Seven looks at children's movements between households for various reasons. It focuses on life histories of children to determine the extent to which households create and recreate networks with other households through children (cf. Jones 1990). Generally, Chapter Seven analyses the social processes involved, and the role that clanship plays, in children's movements between households.

Chapter Eight is the conclusion of the thesis in that it summarises points raised (or findings demonstrated) in the thesis and briefly discusses them. It also provides pointers to areas for further research or debate.

CHAPTER TWO

Operationalisation: methodology and problems

> *And I came to believe that there was little virtue to false neutrality in face of the broad political and moral dramas of life and death, good and evil that, as these were played out in the everyday lives and everyday violence practised against the people of Alto do Cruzeiro, as they were in Sunflower County, Mississippi in the 1930s and as they are in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Jerusalem and 'its' cities surrounding occupied territories today. What makes anthropology and anthropologists exempt from human responsibility to take a moral (or even at certain times a political stand) on the working out of historical events as we are privileged to witness them?* (Scheper-Hughes 1994:4).

2.1 The social landscape of Makhaza

It could have been any Thursday, or perhaps any weekday and any week of the month. The place is Makhaza, the date is 12 August 1993, and the time is just after midday. Makhaza lies sprawling alongside a new and 'modern' Makhaya, a relatively upmarket settlement of brick-built houses in greater Khayelitsha. On this day there is a gentle breeze coming from the nearby sea (which is about five kilometres away). Since the area has minimal natural vegetation to break the large barren dunes of sand, the sea breeze carries with it small sand particles. The sky is practically raining sand. Telephone and electric poles surround the settlement, yet homes in the area itself boast neither service nor are there public pay-booths. There are only mast lights with their irregular illumination. One positive aspect is that the roads around and between this shack settlement are, by any standards, well built and tarred.

Shacks fill the landscape in an orderly fashion. They are of varying sizes and designs, and most are built from a combination and assortment of materials, primarily pieces of timber and corrugated iron (popularly known as *amazinki*, from zinc) that have seen better days. Most residents do not call these dwelling units houses, and rightly so. Some call them *amatyotyombe* (which means something that is not steady and which can easily break), others call them *iihoki* (from the Afrikaans term, *hok*, which ironically denotes something like a pig sty or a dog kennel). These terms are very descriptive of the living quarters in the settlement. Although there are some people who have tried to improve their houses (by painting them in bright and attractive

colours), on the whole these so-called houses are a text, a living embodiment, that portrays the socio-economic predicament of their economically marginalised occupants.

There is an obvious lack of recreational facilities in the whole of Makhaza. One finds a 'soccer field' (by far the most popular and arguably the only practised sport among the residents of the area). But, it is an open, sandy grassless land. The only features that make one recognise it as a soccer field are the goal posts at either end, made of lopsided timber of exotic Port Jackson willow weed, probably cut from the nearby bush area.

Two half-naked youths in dirty torn shorts (and in an apparent state of bliss) play with what looks like a ball (this is a soccer 'ball' made of rags tied around an old sponge).

Next to where the boys are playing, concrete slabs about two metres high separate the settlement from the highways, where most taxis - in a bad state of mechanical repair - drive by, carelessly and recklessly. On these slabs, there are inscriptions depicting various socio-political convictions. Indeed, a history of the place is written there in the graffiti. People's fears and aspirations are interspersed with advertisements and political ridicule. One, which reads, **'We want houses not toilets'** refers to the inadequacy of housing provision in site and service areas. Another ridicules the settlement's former, albeit unpopular, leadership. It asks, rather crudely:

> *Sis siyakonyanya Jerry ... kodwa kubenini usitya amagazi usela iinyembezi uphila ngamandla ethu?* (We abhor you Jerry ... 'till when will you eat our blood, drink our tears and live by our sweat?)

I make particular mention of this second graffito because it touches on themes articulated by people when they constructed for me the history of their settlement (see Mehlwana 1994a). These themes permeated most informants' discourses about the socio-political construction of the area. The themes included references to 'blood' (many people have died and continued to do so because of a repressive local leadership); 'tears' (when lots of families are still mourning for their departed relatives and friends killed during 'vigilante wars'); and leaders living by 'our sweat' (meaning the way the self-styled leadership exploits the residents for their (leadership's) personal

consumption). These themes are discussed in greater detail elsewhere (see Mehlwana 1994a and 1994b).

Apart from the sounds made by playing children and minibus taxis moving about the settlement, there is relative tranquillity, bordering on utter silence. In contrast to the densely filled shacks, few people can be seen on the streets. As I move around the streets towards the appointment I have with an informant, groups of men sit in the shade, away from the blowing sand, and absent-mindedly listen to the latest South African music on their portable radios. One man lies on his back, apparently in deep thought. Within a few metres, three completely naked children have found refuge between the bushes where they are defecating. On the other side of the street, some children play hide-and-seek among the debris of a recently burnt down shack, burnt down either because someone was careless with a candle or as result of a politically related feud.

In strategic positions (near the main roads) there are ramshackle stalls for informal trade. At this time of the day the stalls are empty, since business flourishes late in the afternoon and during weekends. At those times, meat, fruit and vegetables are sold. In addition, there are spaza shops and shebeens in almost every street. (Liquor consumption is a favourite pastime of economically oppressed sectors in many communities). But right now, most houses are locked, their owners looking for work or, for those fortunate to have employment, probably at their places of work, and for those who have abandoned the job search, simply visiting.

In one of the shacks, a young woman is cooking *umngqusho* (the staple diet that is a combination of maize and beans) over a flame stove in preparation for her live-in-boyfriend who has gone to look for work. A few minutes later she decides to buy a slab of fat to add flavour to her simmering pot. She fastens her crying baby on her back, turns down the stove, locks the door and moves in the direction of the spaza shop. Precisely two minutes later, her shack is on fire. She is not even twenty yards from her shack when a woman neighbour screams that the house is on fire. Within a minute, the place is full of people (surprising, considering that the place was like a ghost town not few moments ago). Out of nowhere, water pipes emerge, and in

exactly five minutes the fire is extinguished but the shack is totally burnt down, save for a few-half burnt items that have been retrieved by neighbours.

When the fire is under control and out, the neighbours retire to wherever they have come from. The young woman is left alone to grieve her losses and contemplate the action that her boy-friend will take when he comes home in the afternoon, probably tired and frustrated by the futile job search. She holds her mouth in a gesture of surprise and helplessness. The child on her back is crying even more than before as if aware of what has taken place. The woman sifts through the debris of her burnt-down shack and realises that there is nothing of importance saved from the fire. Clothes and all have gone. (The neighbours' efforts merely contained the fire from spreading to their shacks nearby.)

According to the residents of this settlement, the above episode is so familiar that it is regarded as 'one of those things' that are inevitable and bound to happen to anyone eventually. A burning house is likened to a savings club; one day it becomes one's turn and on another day it becomes another person's turn. There is no escaping it. A candle might fall when one is asleep or drunk, or wind might cause a flame stove to explode. These are accidents of life, and there is no running away from them.

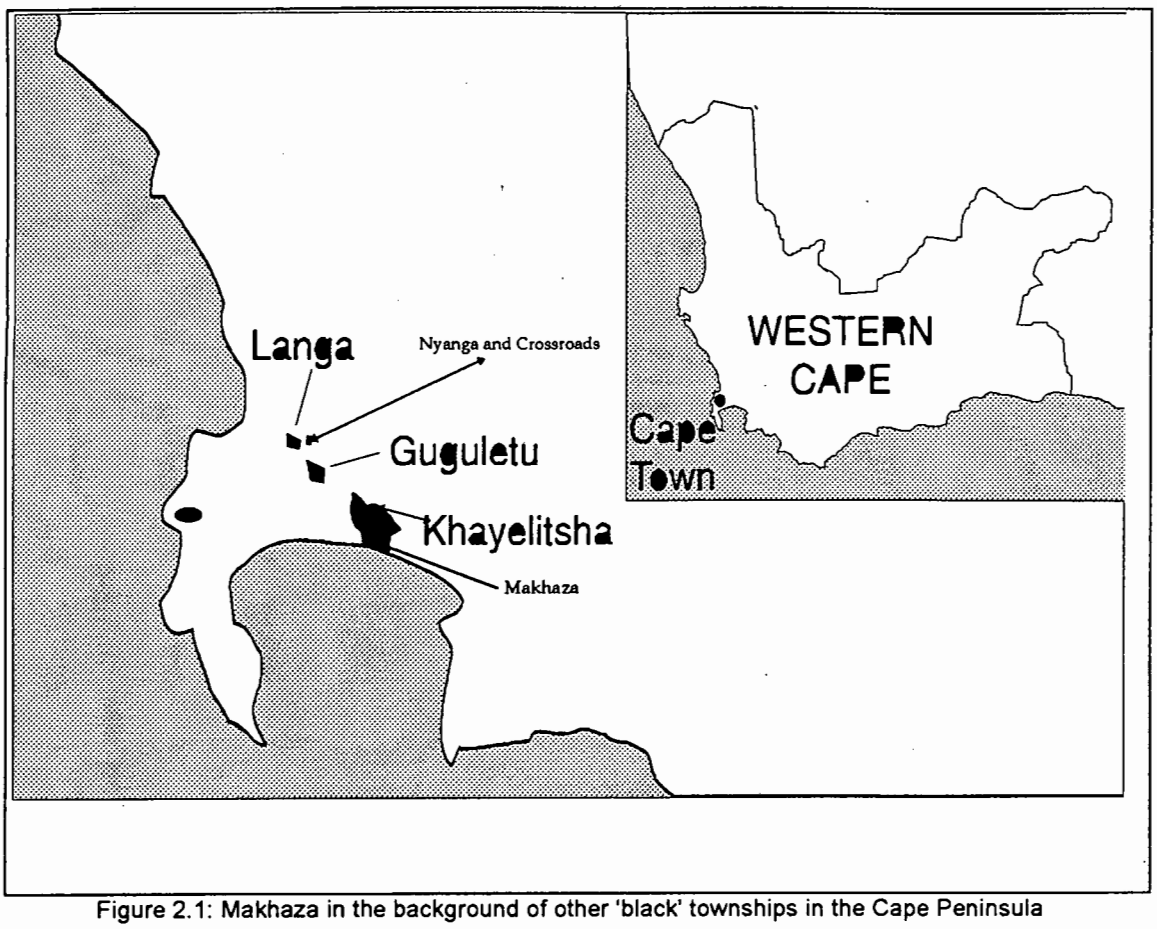

Figure 2.1: Makhaza in the background of other 'black' townships in the Cape Peninsula

2.2 Selection of the sample

The reasons I chose the Mayibuye subsection of the Makhaza settlement are four-fold. Firstly, the area is new in the sense that the residents came to live here beginning from 1990, and have supposedly arrived only after the scrapping of Influx Control in 1986 (Oliver-Evans 1993). Some have, nonetheless, been in greater Cape Town area since the heyday of grand *apartheid*. Secondly, I have previously worked in the area for a while as a research assistant attached to the Urban Problems Research Unit (UPRU), University of Cape Town. Therefore I have some knowledge of the physical and social topographies of the area. Thirdly, the settlement is situated in an area far from the metropolitan centres in Cape Town. It was of great importance to document how people adapt to this context given the astronomical costs of travelling to and from places of work. Lastly, the African areas of the Western Cape are under-researched in as far as their social structure is concerned, save for periodic articles (see Chapter Four). There is little detailed ethnography of the calibre of the Eastern Cape's Xhosa in

Town trilogy (see Mayer's 1971 **Townsmen or Tribesmen**; Reader's 1961 **The Black Man's Portion**; and Pauw's 1963 **The Second Generation**, for example), although there was Wilson and Mafeje's (1963) study in the same period. More recently Ramphele (1993) and Jones (1993) have both published monographs about hostel-life in the region, and there have been occasional theses.

Because of the nature of the research, I worked with ten families, selected for in-depth study. The reasons for this small sample size are two-fold. The first is that the composition of members in a given household is changing over time. Households continue to discard old members (through death, for example) and incorporate new members (for example, through birth or adoption). What is more important, some households are composed of people who do not necessarily live in a particular homestead at any one given time because of the intricacies of migration between town and countryside. Thus, I have limited myself to few households for in-depth study because I anticipated that research in additional households would have ultimately to be included anyway, albeit for less intensive study, as I followed up individuals from the core set of ten families.

Secondly, I chose to focus on a small sample because such a number of households enabled me to attend most family gatherings and pay frequent visits to observe network ties in operation, particularly those concerned with clanship.

My research started at the Philani nutrition centre in a nearby settlement where I developed rapport with four women, all from Makhaza. The Philani nutrition centres in Khayelitsha offer a place where malnourished children can be brought for treatment and nutrition. They are places where children's mothers, staying in shack areas around the Khayelitsha complex, can assemble and work co-operatively to produce woven carpets that are then sold. Each woman takes a certain percentage from the proceeds from sold carpets, and the rest is used to pay for production costs. These centres not only ease the women's financial troubles, but their primary function is to run crèches where women's young children are cared for and fed whilst the women are at work.

From this centre I was able to follow these four women to their place of residence in Makhaza. The women thus provided me with a point of entry to Makhaza. I was then able to expand my sample to include other households that were in one way or another

related to, or neighbours of, the four women. However, I was not limited to the circle of these women. I also became acquainted with the members of a household whose head had been assassinated in a gruesome way in 1992 (see Mehlwana 1994b). From this household too, I was then able to follow up a network of other households in the area.

2.3 Operationalisation

I used both open-ended and closed questionnaire techniques for collecting data about the ten households in the primary sample. I collected synchronic data such as: composition of the households including all the members who lived in one household, whether they were related or not; their relationship to the household head; sex; age; education; and occupation. The questionnaires also covered the household head's children [including those not living with him or her]; both the household head and spouse's parents; their siblings and children; their places of residence; and the frequency of their contact with other kin members. This technique helped in understanding the demographic distribution of people in the settlement, and in their shack.

To complement the questionnaire technique, I employed in-depth interviews (with selected informants);

- that helped in understanding aspects of individuals' life histories, including their migration from rural to urban areas and within urban areas,
- their length of stay in the present settlement; how they got their 'homes',
- their contacts with outside settlements and frequency of such contacts, and
- the nature of relationships with other residents of the settlement.

Interviews also dealt with who assists the household head and/or spouse in caring for children and in doing other household chores when she or he or they are not at home or when they are ill or are otherwise unable to do so. In structuring the interview questions, an effort was made to:

- Investigate family gatherings about various life crises, for example, birth, puberty, marriage and death; the frequency of such gatherings;

- Explore households that the sampled households turn to in cases of crisis and disputes;
- To discover the prominence or not of clanship networks in job situations.

The above methods were supplemented by participant observation that verified some of the information obtained from the questionnaires and interviews. The chief aim of this research technique was to generate a comprehensive, in-depth picture of behaviour over time. Using this technique, which is said to allow for an in-depth study of the individuals in totality (see Bailey 1978: 249-250), I recorded salient features of people's behaviours that were not immediately forthcoming from the interviews and questionnaires. I also attended some of the households' family gatherings - for instance, burial societies and savings clubs - to observe kinship ties in operation, and to check data from the questionnaires, interviews and the kinship diagrams that I drew up from the in-depth interviews.

2.4 Research period

In order to get a relatively rounded picture of the kinds of social networks that people formulate and employ from time to time, it is necessary to work amongst the people one is studying for an extended period. Therefore, I spent fourteen months visiting the settlement repeatedly between January 1993 and February 1994.

My visits to the settlement were never consistent, however, because for some periods Makhaza was a 'no-go zone'. Since the research was done at a critical period in South African history, politically related violence in the settlement reached alarming proportions, especially after April 1993 - in reaction to the death of Chris Hani, an African National Congress (ANC) and South African Communist Party (SACP) leader. It was during this period that I had momentarily to delay my research to allow the situation to normalise.

2.5 Reflexivity in the field and some methodological problems

With the imminent death of apartheid, research in many areas has been inhibited by constraints that were not there previously. Gordon and Spiegel (1993:3) write that 'unfortunately, new constraints have recently been imposed by both local gatekeepers and widespread and increasing conflict in the country'. Makhaza is no exception to

this. Like other shantytowns in South Africa, Makhaza is very politicised (cf. Ross 1974; Maree 1978; Cole 1987; Mehlwana 1994a; 1994b). This resulted in the residents being critically resentful of any outsider encroaching into their community. This was particularly true in Makhaza where those in power felt that their political hegemony was threatened. However, it should be noted that the residents' distrust of outsiders is understandable given the residents' long-time suffering at the hands of those with power, particularly - in the past - the power-holders of the *apartheid* era.

Moreover, like other South African shanty settlements, Makhaza has a powerful civic committee that purports to look after the welfare of the local community. Because of experience at the hands of the oppressive apartheid regime, most of the committee members are highly politicised, their political thinking reflecting both local and national concerns. In their relationship towards me as a researcher, this politicisation was apparent in that at first they viewed me with suspicion - as an outsider recording - as one said 'miseries of people to further [your] academic achievement at the expense of [the] people.'

Although I was in Makhaza with the knowledge and, indeed the permission of the civic committee, the latter felt a need continually to 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.

In addition to this, much was going on in Makhaza that affected some of my key-informants' well being. One informant and widow, Mrs Alice Ntyatyambo (see Case 6.3 in Chapter Six), had to leave the settlement when her family was in danger because of political developments of which she was an arch-opponent. Political violence and rivalry between certain factions in the community continued to affect some families during the period I was in Makhaza (see Mehlwana 1994a). In such circumstances, my attempts to be impartial were stretched to the limit. I began to ask myself a question

which most researchers working in similar situations usually ask themselves: Do researchers have a moral obligation to write about - or to make known - the private matters of their informants? Reflecting on ethical dilemmas that researchers working in violent situations face, Scheper-Hughes (1994:18) writes:

> Anthropologists who are privileged to witness human events close up and over time, who are privy to community secrets that are generally hidden from view by outsiders or from historical scrutiny until much later have, I believe, an ethical obligation to identify the ills in a spirit of solidarity and following a 'womanly' ethic of care and responsibility.

Although it seems to be a logical action to follow - to write about the 'ills' of the particular community - it could be dangerous to write about those ills that have long been forgotten, and by doing so one disturbs the uneasy peace. Also by interfering (always with a pen), one can put not only one's life in danger, but also those of one's informants. Researchers come and go, but people are mostly stuck, one way or another, in their communities. One has to think of the consequences of one's intervention not from one's point of view, but from the point of view of the people under study. This is one of the ethical dilemmas that faced me in Makhaza. Although I have witnessed, and subsequently documented, gross human rights violations in Makhaza during the period of research (see Mehlwana 1994b), it has been difficult for me to disclose these, lest I endanger the lives of those people who entrusted me with the information since there are no guarantees as to who is going to read what I write, nor how they might react.

The methodological questions, argues Scheper-Hughes (1994), that researchers have to confront are: what should researchers do in circumstances where violence continues to affect people's social lives to the point of utter destruction? Can we really try to be like flies on the wall and pretend that what is going on is not our concern? Should we 'just sit in the shade with a glass of wine and watch dancers?' (Scheper-Hughes 1994:3).

As social researchers, people trust us with much personal information. They trust us sometimes with their best-kept secrets that they would tell no one else. What moral obligation warrants us to divulge such information even though we might disguise

informants' identities? On the other side, what is the cost of silence, of not reflecting on people's miseries? Could not our silence be interpreted as affirming the *status quo*?

These ethical questions, I believe, face every social researcher, but especially a 'native researcher'[1], working in volatile situations like Makhaza, where to know too much can mean certain danger not only to oneself but to informants. Despite that, I feel that by remaining silent we are undermining the contribution our discipline can make. This is because:

> The strength of South African anthropology has been precisely its ability to document, expose and challenge the social contradictions and political-cultural myths so important in the making of South African society both for the powerful and the powerless as well as humanising the vulnerable people at the bottom of society (Gordon and Spiegel 1993:15).

2.6 Problems associated with researching among one's 'own people'

Associated with the ethical considerations outlined above is the social positioning during research of the 'native researcher', that is, one working amongst one's own 'kind'. It can be argued that such a researcher is methodologically located in the best position for data- gathering, precisely because he/she comprehends the communication systems and jargons that the people under study use, and can associate with them. However, this is not without its problems. As my experiences have shown, and I will recount some of them, this status as an 'insider' can also prove to be something of an encumbrance as far as the collection of data is concerned.

My informants in Makhaza were, on the whole, circumspect in almost everything they responded to because they readily recognised my fluency in Xhosa and my familiarity with its jargons. Most importantly, they discerned that my closeness to them in life and family experience meant that I could readily prove a threat to them. For example, they would not gossip in front of me for fear that I would relay such gossip to someone else.

[1] By this term I refer to those researchers who conduct their study on people of their own kind (culturally). It could be white anthropologists conducting research among whites or Chinese researchers studying the Chinese 'culture'. In this context, I refer to African researchers working amongst Africans.

Characteristically, questions I was obliged to field, especially from male informants, were: 'Are you a 'man' (in a social sense)?' 'When and where were you initiated (circumcised)?' These questions presuppose that they did not perceive me primarily as a researcher but as a Xhosa person documenting their life-styles. Their responses to my enquiries were, on the whole, influenced by the social position I occupy in the Xhosa social universe. This was evident when I was speaking to many of my woman respondents (who comprised about three quarters of my sample). They related to me as a 'man'. This means that their responses were circumscribed by gender differences. For example, I could not persevere on any matter that might have upset my rapport with them because of ascribed gender perceptions, even if that issue was central to my enquiries.

Had I been from an ethnic, racial or cultural background that my respondents perceived to be different from their own, the situation might, I believe, have been somewhat different. Firstly, I would not have had to be so reluctant in intruding on people's 'private matters' because I could have used the pretext that I was not familiar with my informants' customary manners; and I could have been forgiven for doing so. Secondly, I could have maintained a clearly defined social distance between myself and the people I was studying.

To most people (lay-person and academics alike), anthropology presupposes the studying of an 'other' culture, always conducted in what is tellingly referred to as 'the field' (see Ferguson and Gupta 1994). 'The field' (where data are collected) is what is always clearly defined. In my situation the boundaries of the 'field' were not evident because I share some of my informant's life experiences: indeed the 'field' could be seen to enter and encompass my own home.

In almost all ethnographies to date, field-work has been done in a social situation other than that of the ethnographer's personal one. In the first half of this century, Malinowski (1929) spent many years studying the Trobrianders in their island society. Likewise, Evans-Pritchard (1940) travelled to Africa to study the Azande and the Nuer, as did Fortes (1949, 1963, 1970) who studied the Tallensi and the Ashante. The list is very long. In terms of these precedents, anthropologists have been expected to journey abroad to investigate and analyse the lives of people very different from

themselves and far away from home: so-called primitive people in their so-called pristine social situations. Anthropology has long been viewed in this way - as spending one's time observing and learning an 'other' culture (although in recent times there is a 'new' anthropology which is highly critical of these aspects (Spiegel: personal communication).

Even here in South Africa, I believe, there have been very few studies by anthropologists (usually white) of their own 'kind'. There are notable exceptions. Our anthropological literature, in the ultimate analysis, is full of such imbalances, where anthropologists (who are on the whole white) customarily travel to study blacks in their own (black) situations, or rather 'locations'.

How then can anthropological methods and techniques address the questions that 'native' anthropologists feel they must address, particularly since, with prevailing power relations in their given situations, they cannot readily study people other than of their own orientation?

Another contentious issue is the method of participant observation. This issue collates with the point made concerning the boundaries of the field and the positioning of a 'native researcher'. Participant observation is said to be the essence of the discipline of social anthropology (see for example Keesing 1981). This is because, as a distinctive research method, it arguably distinguishes the discipline from many related disciplines such as sociology, political science, history, etc., all of which address the topics that anthropology is concerned about (see Hymes 1972) but use different methods to obtain data about. Inherent in this distinctive method is an assumption that a good anthropologist should live for a long period (usually not less than a year) among research informants in order for him/her to become well versed in the indigenous language and the normative behaviour of the people under study. In short, an anthropologist requires a period where he/she would be re-socialised in the culture he/she is studying.

In view of changing social conditions in South Africa, many anthropologists have recently found it difficult to live among their informants. This has been particularly true for those studying urban Africans. Although some local social researchers have managed to live intermittently for an extended period among squatters (for example,

Ross 1993 in *Die Bos* in the Western Cape), it proved impractical for me to spend that kind of time among the Makhaza squatters, given the prevailing socio-political situation in Makhaza as outlined in Mehlwana (1994a) and people's identification of me as one of them. This has proved to be a disadvantage in the sense that participant observation was limited to just those occasions that I was visiting there.

Since Makhaza is a huge settlement consisting of thousands of residents, my informants were scattered around the settlement[2]. For example, it was difficult, and almost impossible logistically, to pay a visit to all of them in any single visit. Moreover, I had to travel to and from the settlement and, on one occasion, I had indefinitely to suspend my visits for reasons of ensuing political violence.

2.7 Conclusion

It is within these stated ethical concerns and methodological problems that the research findings on clanship manipulation in the shanty town of Makhaza should be located. These findings represent an attempt by an 'insider', so to speak, to analyse and interpret some cultural behaviour of people and who shares the language and world-view of his informants.

[2] I am grateful to Dr Spiegel (my supervisor) for paving the way and introducing them to me, and also for allowing me to use some of his data that he collected in the field before I came into the picture. Indeed, the present thesis is closely linked to a research project (of which Dr Spiegel is the research leader) for the Human Sciences Research Council's Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life (Spiegel and Mehlwana, forthcoming).

CHAPTER THREE

Contingent relationships: the clanship mystique

. . . (Kinship) is a crucial cultural resource that lives on through people's efforts to redefine their relationships and give them meaning by reference to 'putative' genealogical 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 (Spiegel and Mehlwana: forthcoming).

3.1 Introduction

In later chapters I shall discuss the extent to which the political (Chapter Four) and the socio-economic contexts (Chapter Five) have created a situation where the sampled households found it difficult to sustain a livelihood by themselves. They had to rely on what Stack (1974) interestingly, but not at all accurately, has called 'fictive relationships'. I would rather refer to those relationships as contingent relationships for reasons that are discussed below. I call them contingent relationships because these relationships mostly do not last. When families or households move to another geographical location, these relationships may be discontinued and a set of new relationships formed in the new area in which they arrive. These relationships are mostly based on perceived cultural constructs. One of the cultural constructs - and which is a subject of discussion here - is *isiduko* (pl. *iziduko*)[1]. The latter is described in English language as clanship.

This chapter evaluates some of the southern African literature that deals with this social construct. It argues that, to date, clanship has not been given the attention it deserves in anthropological literature. This inadequate study of clanship can be wrongly interpreted as if the clanship notion is irrelevant in urban areas. In this chapter, and indeed in the thesis as a whole, I argue the contrary: I maintain that clanship continues to serve important functions in urban areas, particularly in places like Makhaza, where people rally around the concept for a variety of reasons (see Chapters

[1] *Isiduko* and *isibongo* are Nguni-language terms. Variations are found in other Nguni languages - see Preston-Whyte (1974:201) who says that these terms are equivalent words to describe clan names in Cape Nguni (Xhosa) and Zulu/Se-Swati respectively.

Six and Seven). This chapter, therefore, evaluates current literature's notions of construction and reconstruction of relationships based on the idea of clanship. This is done to set a scene within which clanship relationships are constructed and manipulated in Makhaza.

3.2 Clanship and social group formation: contradictions in literature

The classical studies (see for example, Hunter 1961; Reader 1961; Pauw 1963; Wilson and Mafeje 1963; Mayer 1971, amongst many) have mentioned little about the importance of the notion of clanship in urban contexts. Indeed these studies appear not to perceive clanship as serving meaningful purposes in the context of 'urban culture'. This body of literature has consistently argued that the most important or relevant rallying points among urban Africans were social groups formed around a variety of organising principles other than clanship. These included, amongst others, women's church clubs, burial associations, savings clubs, homeboys and age sets.

In her most famous study amongst a section of the Nguni language group in the Eastern Cape area, Monica Hunter (1961:461-464) concluded that in urban townships:

> Clan has less influence as a social group in East London than it does in Pondoland [Transkei] because kinship is ***supplanted*** [my emphasis] by groups based on other common interests and the solidarity of the kinship groups is diminishing.

Pauw (1963:169), who had worked in the same region later echoed Hunter's observation when he also concluded that:

> Clan or lineage are not highly significant categories in urban structure compared to neighbours and friends, churches, associations and relationships at work.

The idea of the diminishing importance of clanship in urban situation was shared also by Epstein (1981:195-200) in his study of social life of Zambians living on the Copperbelt. Although he acknowledged the existence and importance of clanship amongst these Africans, he did not see clanship as playing a significant role in moulding practicable dyadic relationships. Epstein (1981:195) rather prematurely argued that 'clans lacked any distinctive insignia or other symbols of differentiation'. This is because, he argues, there were too many clans to provide any serviceable set of categories. Therefore, Epstein concluded, 'in the context of multi-clan interaction, the

most significant issues are the identities of 'tribes' and class which serve as primary categories of interaction' (Epstein 1981:197).

Such arguments are, in my opinion, inherently flawed, amongst other reasons because they tend to search for corporate group formation. Moreover, there is a tendency in most works on urbanisation to see an 'evolution' from 'primitive to civilised' going hand-in-hand with the urbanisation process - that is, the more urbanised an individual, the more civilised, and therefore the less inclined she or he is to use kinship to form social groups(see Young and Willmot (1957) on their study of kinship in London for comparison). In other words, because Africans in town came across a new material culture based on so-called Western civilisation, they found that their culture was irrelevant and that they had to adapt to the new 'urban culture' in order to survive.

Notwithstanding that, the authors cited above (and others) have agreed that Africans in urban areas did continue to observe some of their cultural traits, for example sanctions concerning marriage, rites of passage (including circumcision, mortuary and funerary rites) and other rituals. It is very surprising therefore that they ignore the importance of clan relationships when people execute these rituals and ceremonies. I shall show in later chapters the extent to which clan relatives help each other on occasions other than the so-called traditional ones. In short, I shall show that the notion of clanship is embedded in people's social lives (especially amongst people living in areas such as Makhaza).

Even though the writers cited above relegate the clanship notion into obscurity, if one looks closely enough in their writings, one can detect contradictions in their statements. For instance, Hunter (1961:462), when commenting on the traditional sanctions on marriage and the roles that wider kin and clan allegiance play, has argued that:

> The larger kinship group, **the clan** [my emphasis], functions in town as in the country especially when it comes to regulating sexual relations.

Later, in her collaboration with Archie Mafeje, she recognised that:

> The residents [in town] are involved in a network of kinship relationships extending to every part of South Africa and sometimes abroad (Wilson and Mafeje 1963:74).

Yet, being concerned with institutions of solidarity and the formation of persistent corporate groups, she underplays the importance of clanship in towns.

The confusion as to the absence or presence of kinship (in our case, clanship) in urban areas could have resulted from the use of different criteria to define kinship. Writing about the importance of kinship, Basham (1978:131) says that if kinship (clanship) is used to refer to residential groups, 'evidence points to a tendency for co-residence groups to approximate nuclear or conjugal family patterns.' Clanship has, therefore, little to do with territorial allegiance or group allegiance.

Historically - or at least as far back as written history goes - each clan was associated with a territory (or sometimes a t of widespread different territories) although, not all clan members lived in that territory (or any one of that set of territories). Indeed, members of many clans lived in, and paid political allegiance to the chief in, a territory that was associated with that chief's clan rather than the clan of which any particular individual was a member (Hammond-Tooke 1991:189). There were many processes that contributed to the scattering of clan members to various locations. Exogamous marriage probably is the single, but not the only, major cause. At the beginning of the 17th century, population movements caused by tribal feuds and, more recently, forced relocations and labour migration, have all helped to complicate the picture as the African population continues to be scattered everywhere in the Republic (see Peires 1976:234-240). One thus finds clan relatives wherever one travels.

Writing recently on the importance of clanship among peri-urban people in Tswele-Tswele in the Eastern Cape, Whisson (1984:251) raises a very crucial point (one that this thesis will attempt to explore more fully) when he says:

> Ancestor and clan affiliations receive a secular recognition in a set of obligations to fellow clan members which remain strong in the hope for assistance with shelter, food and advice in times of need.

From the above quote, it can be implied that, wherever people gather to live, they seek ordered relationships in networks of social importance; or according to Whisson 'an ordered community' which is enduring. In as much as black people in most shack settlements are placed together rather haphazardly by the process of urbanisation (with accompanying material and spiritual poverty), people pursue 'sets of moral obligations'

that are 'strong' and which establish reciprocal obligations that can stand the test of time (Wilson and Ramphele 1989). One way people do this is by using their cultural heritage to enforce and/or reinforce these moral obligations.

As Lomnitz (1977) has demonstrated in her study of the destitute people of the Brazilian shantytown of Cerrada de Condor, kinship ties are readily manipulated as a resource for reciprocal mutual aid. Moreover, she affirms, the survival strategies of the huge, marginal populations of Latin America rely upon efficient use of what she terms 'social resources'. These include reciprocal use of kinship which, she argues, 'occurs in human populations that exist under conditions of chronic insecurity' (1977:212). A similar argument pertains in the Western and Eastern Cape where 'ancestor and clan affiliations' are important avenues through which social reciprocal obligations can be channelled to link an amorphous settlement into an ordered community (Whisson 1984).

This said, however, we must ask why should I make clanship a subject of study? My answer effectively summarises this thesis. I focus on clanship and the use of clan-names because so many ordinary African people perceive them as providing a basis for guaranteed relationships, 'through blood', which are said to be long-enduring and morally strong. The popular and platitudinous Xhosa cliché, perhaps, explains the widely held perceptions of blood relationships as 'thicker than water' (*Igazi liyajiya kunamanzi* which literally means that one should prefer, and therefore be obliged to help, a person who is one's kin).

3.3 Conceptual apparatus of household and clanship Identity

Now I turn to review some anthropological observations relating to the intricacies of kinship and clanship since the two concepts are inherently connected. However, it is important to question the idea of household, since the conception of a household is central to the understanding of how the clanship ideology works. Writing more than four decades ago, Hilda Kuper (1950:86-7) recognised that the starting point towards the understanding of clanship amongst Nguni people should be the analysis of what she called the 'family unit' or the household. She argued that, by definition, a household consists of members who recognise that they share social relationships which may or may not coincide with genealogical ties.

3.3.1 Dynamic households: towards an emic interpretation

The understanding of household has altered dramatically since Murdock's (1949) classic definition of a household as a basic social-economic unit which consists of a husband, wife and their offspring. Evidence from the data collected infers that it is misleading to view people who share living arrangements as necessarily constituting a household (cf. Fayorsey 1994:7).

The concept of household - or the so-called family as inferred in earlier literature (Murdock (1949) is a classic case) does not satisfactorily explain the dynamics of households in contemporary South Africa, particularly in shack areas such as Makhaza where the research was undertaken. It is argued in this literature that a 'family' constitutes a husband, his wife and offspring, and that such an arrangement is the 'basic social-economic unit' since it provides sexual, economic and reproductive and educational functions - that is, it makes up the household (Stack 1974:30).

Writing about the fluidity of household compositions and the implications for housing policy thereof in different Western Cape African settlements, Spiegel et al (1996:9) argue that the 'idea of household as simultaneously co-residential, commensal and co-productive is inappropriate'. They argue that it is useless, and consequently counter-productive, to quantify the household compositions of African population in the Western Cape in static terms, because, they say, 'domestic relations manifest differently depending on income source and reliability . . .' (Spiegel et at 1996:15).

Likewise, Stack (1974) in her review of the structuralist-functionalist conception of the household, writes:

> It has become clear that the 'household' and its group composition was not a meaningful unit to isolate for analysis of family in The Flats (Stack 1974:31).

Other recent studies have also concluded that the household is a very elusive concept, and that we ought to conceive it situationally (see Murray 1981; Ross 1993; Spiegel et al 1996; for example).

Hammond-Tooke (1974) has argued that amongst the rural amaXhosa, for example, an *umzi* - household - is a basic unit of settlement which is defined in economic terms. Members of such a unit eat and work together. He says that:

> It is here that [the individual] first comes into contact with other members of the society, that the social relations are formed that will influence and regulate his life from the cradle to the grave (Hammond-Tooke 1974:44).

Such an *umzi* invariably includes in its composition kin members other than the spouse and the biological descendants of the household head.

However, as Hunter (1961:15) has pointed out, there is a marked difference between *umzi* and *indlu* (technically the 'house': the physical parameters of the building, but here referring to the domestic unit in polygynous marriage). However, 'social ideals urge co-operation and subordination of interests of separate houses to the good of *umzi*' (Hunter [1936] 1961:22). In similar vein, Hoernle (1962:69) states that an *umzi* is made up of 'relative or non relative members living together or working towards a common goal.' She echoes Hunter's assertion that within a household there are individual families inhabiting their own separate houses. And she argues that beyond the household there is a wide circle of kin through marriage or birth with which members of an *umzi* interact in daily life.

Because of the complexities of trying to define or, 'bottle up' the household, one way of viewing the household is to consider the importance of what some anthropologists call the 'native's understanding of themselves or their conceptualisation of their own social actions' (see, for example Fayorsey 1994, Ferguson and Gupta 1994). Analysing the concepts and economy of the household and the family as applicable to the Ga women of Ghana, Fayorsey (1994:6) argues that anthropologists and natives often interpret 'things' differently, and the portrayal of social events by anthropologists could be far different than what the 'subjects' understand about themselves. Most of the purportedly 'classic' and 'excellent' ethnographies (for example, the works of Monica Hunter, Pauw, and many others) which document Africans' social systems, however earnestly they were attempted, in my view fall short of portraying accurately the native's voice, hence the contradictions they often and unconsciously make.

3.3.2 The difference between lineage and clanship

What has the above description of a household to do with clanship amongst the mostly amaXhosa of Makhaza in particular or the ama-Nguni in general? The most powerful answer to the above question is that clanship relationships have the same

characteristics as the household as far as the use of terms are concerned. Indeed, clanship terminologies are the same as those used by members of the same household.

Yet, it is also very important to distinguish clans from lineages. Hammond-Tooke (1974:50) says that a lineage is an exogamous grouping of all people who are able to trace their descent from a common male ancestor in the male line. According to amaXhosa, a lineage is translated as *abantu bomzi*, *usapho* or *intsapho*. The latter expands continually and sub-divides into segments. What then is a clan? A clan consists of individuals who **believe** themselves all to be descendants of a common founding father in the male line, for example, *ukhokho* (trans. great great grandfather). Whether or not they are the descendants of a common *ukhokho* is irrelevant. Membership of a clan is signified by all its members possessing the same clan name because of patrilineal descent - membership is thus ascribed genealogically.

Clanship is both inclusive and exclusive in its nature. It is used to narrow down one's moral obligations with one's broader social group and, at the same time, it provides one with many alternatives in times of need. What I am pointing out is that although people in urban areas form various relationships based on other principles, clanship is one of the most important of such principles, particularly given that deep cultural significance is commonly attached to it.

Kinship is one of anthropology's most studied areas. Yet clanship, a related notion, is not. In fact, it is still quite elusive for its general social significance, particularly in southern Africa social science discourse. This elusiveness stems from the fact that clanship and clan-membership are dynamic. This makes it difficult to 'bottle up' clanship, so to speak, for, as a concept, it is difficult to assign it a single homogeneous conception. Rather, it has been possible to identify clanship-based relationships in the rural parts of the country that manifest in a variety of ways. And, when it comes to urban areas, the concept has become deeply intertwined with other social relationships (see Chapter Six), and as a result, some anthropologists have reached a conclusion that the concept does not play as meaningful a role as it does in the rural areas.

3.3.3 Xhosa clan terminologies

I now turn to various terminologies used in a clanship relationship. This thesis will not dwell on how various amaXhosa clan names came about. In his excellent history of the amaXhosa *ka* (King) Phalo, Peires (1980) very usefully documents the origins of most amaXhosa (including amaMfengu) clan nomenclatures through tracing each clan's dynasty.

What stands out in Peires' documentation is that amaXhosa (and indeed other Nguni-speaking peoples) divide themselves into various groups called *izizwe* (nations or tribes, sing. *isizwe*). AmaBhaca, amaMfengu, abaThembu, amaMpondo, and others are prime examples. *Izizwe* are further divided into subgroups that share *iziduko* (clan names). For example, one finds Ndlovu and Dhlamini within the amaMfengu *isizwe*. Along with the *isiduko* there is also its *isibongo* (praise name). This is connected with each clan and lineage and is used on ceremonial occasions. In some Nguni *izizwe*, such as amaZulu, for instance, an *isibongo* denotes a clan name, similar to, but not the equivalent of, a Western notion of a surname.

More often than not, the names of more remote ancestors are valuable as revealing links of connection between otherwise separate clans. One finds clan members scattered all over South African territories (cf. Wilson and Mafeje 1963; Hammond-Tooke 1991).

Similar to what occurs in a household situation, there is a systematic classification of individuals in a network of co-operating clan relationships based on the same terminological principles. For instance, the children's father forms a close knit group with his brothers, and a kinship term, *bawo* (father) is used by children to name the brothers. Similarly, all father's sisters are referred to as *dadobawo* (Xhosa, lit: female father). Hammond-Tooke (1974:50) cautions that, despite identical classificatory terminology, there is however a difference in the intensity of relations between a son and his father, and between a man and his father's brothers.

On the other hand there is *malume*, a male mother, who plays his part in the lives of his sister's children (Hoernle 1962:72). This pattern of naming among kin, according to Hammond-Tooke (1974:44) and Hunter (1961:51) is developed through a classificatory system of kinship terminology which is extended to other more distant

relatives with modifications due to the scattering caused by distance. **A similar principle is applied to clans-persons**. Thus a person of one's clan and of one's generation is described by the same kinship term as is used for a sibling. One's clan-brother is therefore one's brother; one's father's clan brother (that is, a person of one's clan but of a generation senior to oneself) is called father's younger brother (*bawo omncinci*) or father's older brother (*bawo omkhulu*). Equally, a man of one's mother's clan is known as *malume* (mother's brother), and therefore, according to the ideology of clanship, all clan brothers of one's mother are, in principle, *oomalume* (plural).

In defining the principle of kinship classification, Radcliffe-Brown (1950:9) says it is 'a mechanism which facilitates establishment of a wide range of systems of kinship' in which social relationships are influenced by generation, seniority and sex. The same principle applies in the research area of Makhaza. Hunter (1961:51) argues that there might be no economic responsibilities between people in a kinship relationship, though the method of classification is used both for dividing relatives into categories, and to determine their influence on social relationships as exhibited in conduct. In short, it is used to measure attitudes and behaviour expected from individuals vis-à-vis other individuals signified as kin through their classification in the kinship terminology system.

3.4 Conclusion

It can be seen from the discussion presented above that clanship relationships are complex sets of social, and indeed economic arrangements which require a systematic and sensitive analysis. What is also evident is that there should be an understanding that clanship relationships are tied with household relationships. To divorce one from another is counter-productive. The terminology used by household members denotes how each individual 'ought' to behave relative to any another. The same applies to the terminologies used in a clanship relationship. For instance, there are roles that a father in the household and in a clanship relationship is expected to perform. The manipulation of those roles is discussed in Chapter Six and Seven.

Another conclusion from this chapter, and which is tied to the above, is that clanship relationships continue to be played out in urban African townships. I maintain that by virtue of the existence of households, clanship relationships will continue to be

associated with 'urban culture'. This is particularly so because clanship in South Africa provides means of maintaining human bonds in the face of instability brought by a history of political oppression and large scale poverty.

CHAPTER FOUR

Contextualising urbanisation and squatting of African population in the Western Cape

No industrial process is 100% efficient. There is always a residue of energy or inert matter that admits no further processing, which can only be recycled at a greater expense. Similarly, the organisation of society to increasingly complex social structures is achieved at a considerable cost of marginalisation of certain sectors or strata of society. An increment in order at the centre of the society necessarily entails an increment in disorder at its periphery (Lomnitz 1977:11).

4.1 Introduction

In her comprehensive study of the Latin American shantytown of Cerrada del Condor, Lomnitz (1977) emphasises that the survival strategy of impoverished people is their effective use of their cultural resources, notably kinship. She asserts that the reciprocal use of kinship 'occurs in human populations that exist under conditions of chronic insecurity' (Lomnitz 1977:212). Similarly, Stack (1974:22) argues that the use of cultural idioms in situations of poverty provides individuals and groups with 'adaptive strategies, resourcefulness and resilience under conditions of perpetual poverty and instability'.

This chapter presents a general history of the socially, economically and politically marginalised Africans in the Western Cape. Since life experiences and people's adaptive strategies are interlinked, it is important to understand the socio-political position of the Makhaza settlement before I present the thrust of my research findings.

The Western Cape in general, and the Cape Peninsula in particular, have been relatively neglected by South African scholars in terms of intensive research. Many studies focus on South African regions which play major roles in the national political economy, for example, Gauteng and Natal (van Onselen 1982). There is similarly a dearth of literature on squatting in the Western Cape[1], save for periodic papers (for example,

[1] The terms squatting and squatters have derogatory connotations. They presuppose that all people living in shantytowns are, by definition, squatters and consequently are living or occupying the land illegally. These terms have narrow scopes in that they do not satisfactorily explain shack areas such as Makhaza, which are declared legal. For lack of better terms, I retain these terms because they are used widely in popular discourse.

South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) 1984; Black Sash 1984a & 1984b; Surplus People Project 1984; Ngcokotho 1990), and various newspaper articles (for example, Cape Times - 19 May 1986).

In trying to overcome the limitations such a lack of sources impose, I have found it useful to locate Makhaza within the broad South African historiography, and particularly within the Western Cape socio-political context. Makhaza is a clear product of South Africa's political history of racial segregation. However, this chapter does not present a detailed history of urbanisation in South Africa, nor of the *apartheid* policies directed at Africans. Such a task has been accomplished by many writers of South African history across various scholarly disciplines (see for example Mayer 1971; Wolpe 1974; Legassick and Wolpe 1976:87-107; Preston-Whyte 1976:71-89; Bundy 1978; Bozzoli 1978:40-50; West 1983; James and Simons 1989; Hoffman and McKendrick 1990), and its repetition would be superfluous for this thesis.

4.2 A diaspora of 'squatters': black Africans in the Cape Peninsula between 1900-1991

Urbanisation in South Africa has not been consistent, and the official policy to combat African migration into town was also not unvarying. In the Western Cape, for example, Africans were, for decades, barred from getting full rights to settle since it was felt at the time that this area was a so-called Coloured Preferential Area (West 1983). The official view on the influx of Africans into the Western Cape can be ascertained through referring to views put forward by the various governments of the day.

As early as 1921, the Stallard Commission, arguably a cornerstone of the Nationalist Party policy towards Africans in South Africa, proposed that:

> the Native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas, which are essentially the white man's creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man and should depart therefrom when he ceases to minister (in Bundlender 1982:631).

In the late 1970s, the then commissioner of Coloured Affairs, Dr I. D du Plessis was recorded in parliament as saying the following about the influx of Africans into the Cape Peninsula:

> One of the most serious problems facing the unskilled labourer, is the increased competition by a large number of Africans who entered the Cape Peninsula in particular, and the Western Province in general - the **traditional sphere of the Coloured** [my emphasis] (in Horner 1983:2).

Again, an extract from an undated letter from the Department of Development and Co-operation addressed to the members of parliament, puts the position of Africans in the Western Cape very succinctly, with its overt racist statements:

> For your information, it should be mentioned that the Western Cape is a Coloured preferential area and it is the policy of [this] government not to permit entry of Black persons from outside of the Western Cape into the labour market except in certain categories of work where only males are permitted under strictly controlled contract basis to take up employment mainly in the industrial and agricultural sectors (SUCA n.d).

The above statement should be see in the light of an address in parliament in 1978 by MP Dr Connie Mulder, where he expressed explicitly the policy of the National Party administration on racial polarisation in general and the position of Africans in the Western Cape in particular. He declared that, '[I]f the National Party's policy was taken to its logical conclusion, the day will come when there will not be one black man with South African citizenship' (SUCA n.d).

Even though the government of the day employed every conceivable instrument to thwart the influx of so-called illegal Africans into the Western Cape, its attempts were, on the whole, futile (Hindson 1978:71; Mabude 1986:1). It should be noted though that before the government decided to put in place severe restrictions to curb African migration into this part of the country, Africans had been in the Cape Peninsula from as far back as the seventeenth century. Indeed, Africans in the Western Cape have been systematically repressed throughout the decades. Unlike in other major towns of the country, Africans in the Western Cape were treated inhumanely in favour of the Coloured population. As van Heerden (1985:8) noted, the 'history of homelessness [of Africans] in the Western Cape forms a chronology of punitive action on the part of government authorities'.

Historically, Africans have long been squatting illegally (official terminologies) around large cities of South Africa. Arguably, the origins of squatting in general have historical roots in the dispossession of land and the subsequent underdevelopment of the reserves (Maree 1978:10). In 1658 there were Africans in the Western Cape who

were forced to be slaves of white farmers. By 1878 (after slavery was abolished - in the 1830s), about 4000 ama-Xhosa from the Eastern Cape were sent to the Western Cape as farm hands and domestic workers. Many worked in the Strand Street quarry in Cape Town and stayed near the reservoirs on Table Mountain (Black Sash 1984a). In 1853, some Blacks even qualified as voters and were freehold property owners (Black Sash 1984b). In 1900, there were about 1500 African squatters living in the Cape Town docks and 8000 in District Six (Surplus People's Project (SPP) 1984; Horner 1983:1). In addition, forced relocations by the state started in 1901 when Africans were moved from the docks to a place called Uitvlugt (later called Ndabeni) after the outbreak of bubonic plague. At the time, these Africans were regarded as a 'health hazard' and were moved accordingly (SPP 1984:14-15). The movement to Uitvlugt was supposed to be temporary, but 20 years later blacks still lived there.

In 1918, these squatters were moved again, after Uitvlugt (Ndabeni) was declared an industrial site. Between 1925 and 1935, 8000 to 10 000 Africans were then moved to the 'model' black township of Langa, after the Native Affairs Commission decreed that cities are a white man's creation in which blacks cannot be permanent residents - since they were needed for their manpower, but not as human beings (Black Sash 1984b:3). In the same period, more than 50 000 Africans were living as lodgers and squatters in Kensington, Retreat, Vrygrond, Elsies River and Windemere. When the Eiselen Plan[2] was put into action in 1952, all African squatters living in these areas (except Langa) were forced to move and live in areas designated for Africans (SPP 1984). The Eiselen Plan declared the Western Cape a Coloured labour preference area, where very few Africans obtained legal rights to stay permanently, and existing plans to build more houses for Africans were consequently frozen (van Heerden 1985:6). One of the

[2] In 1952, Dr Eiselen was commissioned by the National Party government to draw a demarcation line between Africans and Coloureds in the Western Cape. Ostensibly, the Eiselen commission was a plan to dispossess Africans in the Western Cape even further. The commission proposed:
a)the banishment of foreign Africans as well as a limitation on number of African families in the Western Cape. Single migrants were to be imported to satisfy industries' needs;
b)the reduction of existing legal African population through removals as well as replacement of migrant labour with Coloured workers;
c)the classification of Africans in two groups:
i)Africans who had not had liaisons with Coloured people and who remained Africans,
ii) Africans who have had liaisons with Coloured people, and have been accepted into the Coloured community (Black Sash 1984a).

motivations for making the Western Cape a Coloured labour preference area was, according to West (1983:17), to retain the area as a potential last stand for the white population in the country.

The state applied every pressure in the book, in the form of repressive laws, to prevent Africans from entering and remaining in the Cape Peninsula. Racially integrated squatting (often Coloureds and Africans - in areas such as District Six and Elsies River) was discouraged. Squatter areas such as Unibel, Werkgenot and Modderdam were destroyed between 1974 and 1978 because the state saw them as security risks (since they were very close to white homes and industries). Using the Illegal Squatting Act of 1951[3], every conceivable squatter community which housed so-called illegals, was demolished. People who entered the cities illegally (that is, from the African homelands) were denied section 10 (1) rights[4], and those without passes faced deportation to the already impoverished African homelands.

The editorial of the National government mouthpiece newspaper, Die Burger (11.7.83), expressed the National Party's fear of African squatter communities. It said, rather crudely, that:

> The enormous contrast between the miserable circumstances of the squatters and the abundance of many established residents could further waken revolutionary conditions. That is the main reason most governments in the world are not keen on allowing squatting (in van Heerden 1985:11).

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[3] This Act meant that:
a) A person may only enter the land or a building with owners' permission.
b) The court can have a dwelling demolished if it feels that the safety of the Republic is at risk, as well as the right to move a person to another area.
c) The local authorities can provide alternate dwellings if they are so inclined.
d) Police are not to be obstructed when pulling down shelters.
e) The squatters do not need to be served with a demolition notice before their homes are destroyed.
f) The authorities have the retroactive rights to destroy dwellings which were previously deemed unlawful (SAIRR 1984).

[4] Section 10 (1) of the Blacks (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (No. 25 of 1945) as amended contained the following clauses:

'No Bantu shall remain for more than 72 hours in a prescribed area unless he produces a proof in the manner prescribed that:
a) he has since birth resided continuously in such area; or
b) he has worked continuously in such area for one employer for a period of not less than 10 years or has lawfully resided continuously in such area for a period of not less than 15 years;
c) such Black is the wife, the unmarried daughter, or the son under the age of 18 years of any Black mentioned in paragraph (a) and (b) of this subsection and, after lawful entry into such prescribed area, ordinarily reside with that Black in such area' (West 1983).

However, the international community decried the government strategy of discouraging the influx of African into towns. The London Times (28.7.86) reacted as follows after witnessing the violent ways which were used to relocate Africans in the Cape Peninsula to the so-called Bantu reserves:

> This [resettlement] is the practice of descending upon a place where Africans live, throwing them out of their dwellings (in rural areas also stealing their livestock), bulldozing the area, and deporting the population either to remote and infertile areas, called - with a foul jocularity that recalls Auschwitz, '*Arbeit macht frei*' - homelands (many if not most, of the Africans have never seen, let alone lived in and come from, the 'homelands'), or to the strictly controlled 'townships' that provide white South Africa with cheap labour (in NUSAS 1978:50).

However, during the economic boom of the early 1970s, industries' requirements for cheap labour were not harmonious with the state's restrictive urbanisation policy. Africans continued to flock to the Cape Peninsula and squatter communities mushroomed throughout the Western Cape in the second half of the 1970s as a response to an abundance of job opportunities. Despite the presence of draconian legislation, the African population of the Cape Peninsula grew rapidly. By 1980, there were about 183 360 Africans in the Greater Cape Town area, an increase of 74 533 (68%) over the 1970 figure. Most of these people lived as squatters in areas such as Crossroads and KTC camps (SPP 1984).

4.3 The politics of controlled settlements

The establishment of Old Crossroads and KTC shantytowns, in 1974 and 1977 respectively, marked the start of a long history of violence for control that was inspired by the prevailing politics of the day and exploited by the government. Eventually Old Crossroads was in the late 1970s officially declared by the state as a place where legal tenants would be accommodated in view of the shortage of housing. Yet, during the last years of the 1970s the place was considered by the authorities as a 'security risk' and a 'hotbed' of radical resistance (Cole 1987).

By the end of 1978, squatters in Old Crossroads numbered approximately 20 000, and by 1983, the total number of illegal Africans was said to be approximately 76 000 (SPP 1984). In view of the shortage of houses Dr Koornhof, then the Minister of Co-operation and Development, stated in 1981 that there was a need for expenditure of

R71 million to resolve the housing shortage for Africans squatting in the Western Cape, and an extra R6.25 million a year to accommodate population growth (ibid.). To accomplish this, he argued, there was a need for 11 000 houses to be built a year for the following 10 years.

The government was, however, not prepared to meet such a financial burden. It was still bent on relocating 'illegal' Africans to *bantustans*. In the Cape Peninsula in particular, the government's immediate goal was to demolish Old Crossroads. The Deputy Minister of Co-operation and Development, George Morris, was quoted as saying that Crossroads was 'a symbol of provocation and blackmail; we want to destroy it at all costs' (from Cooper 1990: 10). Likewise, the same Deputy Minister, said in a Cape National Party Conference in September 1984, 'Crossroads will be cleared up, and there must be no doubt about that whatsoever' (van Heerden 1985:11). People who were endangering the security of the state were, he said, hiding in Old Crossroads.

Moreover, during that period, there emerged community leaders in these shantytowns who were subsequently used by the state to further the National Party policies (cf. White 1993b). The state used the power that these leaders exerted in their community to fight against mass-based community organisations such as the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Western Cape Civic Association (WCCA) (predecessor to the present South African National Civics Association [SANCO]). Both of these were African National Congress (ANC) aligned. There were reported allegations of corruption, extortion and brutalities made against these local leaders who were said to use terror tactics to collect taxes and to silence their opponents. One example was that people who wished to erect shacks in the KTC squatter camps were forced to pay R60 for a site (Ngcokotho 1990:14). This principle also applied in other squatter areas.

By 1985, the KTC shantytown was 'a contested area for hegemony' between such leaders and their supporters who had 'traditional attitudes, and urban consciousness especially the militant youth' (Ngcokotho 1990:5). In Crossroads too, the local leadership was challenged by youth who alleged that it was corrupt and was colluding with the police (Cole 1987).

These insinuations should be seen against the background of 'reforms' implemented by the Botha regime in the 1980s. The state embarked on what it described as 'genuine negotiations with credible leaders of [the] people' to address the housing problem (Ngcokotho 1990:1). Yet, that policy was in reality only a means the state employed to co-opt the 'leaders' of shack settlements to further its aims. Indeed, the squatter leadership, having been co-opted into the state's machine, was instrumental in purging the enemies of the state, the so-called comrades, from their settlements. The state provided these leaders with an opportunity to cleanse their settlements of those who constituted their own local opposition (Cole 1987; Mehlwana 1994a). The resulting polarisation in these squatter camps culminated in 'wars' between 1985 and 1986.

Following the 1985-6 vigilante wars in the Crossroads and KTC shanty areas, hundreds of people died and some were seriously injured; many families were left without homes (see PFP Unrest Monitoring Report 1987). The editorial of the Cape Times (11.6.86) asked:

> ... Have some 50 000 become homeless as the result of a deliberate decision to exploit communal tension and promote factional hostilities? By whom would such a decision have been taken or extended? To what purpose? For the sake of counter-insurgency operations against the so-called 'comrades'? Or a forced removal to Khayelitsha? Is this a new and particularly ghastly technique of removal? ... The public is entitled to know ... (Cole 1987:148).

4.4 The ultimate goal behind the concept of Khayelitsha

The state indeed had a part in this violence because it wanted to do away with these squatter settlements since they were considered a 'security risk'. In their place, the state planned to create a new area to which it would have easy access for purposes of control. Khayelitsha, situated about 35 km from Cape Town, was established in 1984. Yet it was less a housing solution than a political solution. It was hoped that only 'legals' would live there, while the 'illegals' would be deported and 'enemies of the state' would simultaneously be done away with. Moreover, the Khayelitsha concept was seen to offer a chance to 'promote ethnic solidarity required by the Nationalist Party ideology and by the defence strategists' (Black Sash 1984b:3), since the buffer zone between Africans and Whites would be Coloured settlements such as Mitchell's Plain.

The conceptualisation and creation of Khayelitsha was thus part of a broad influx regulation mechanism, although in a modernised form of apartheid with a more humane feel than earlier *apartheid* practices. The government had realised that stringent influx control had failed dismally to produce its intended effects. This change of attitude on the part of the government was consistently shown by Dr Koornhof when he introduced the concept of Khayelitsha. He was reported in the Cape Times (11.8.83) as saying that there are:

> ... Ways of implementing Influx Control under modern circumstances in a fair and effective manner without incurring the wrath of those affected ... methods which worked well in the past (are) no longer effective.

Again, he said that,

> We do not want to cause uncertainty, we do not want to harm anybody. Our intention is only to do good in the interests of the people (ibid.).

The state did not exclude the likely possibility of using force in effecting the removals. This was highlighted by some speeches of members of the National Party caucus. Mr Wilkins, MP for Ventersdorp and deputy to Dr Koornhof, declared in 1983 that 'certain methods will at some stage or other have to be used to persuade the people concerned to move, if they do not want to do so voluntarily' (SPP 1984:99).

In the same year, Dr Koornhof did not rule out the use of force after he witnessed mass opposition to the Khayelitsha project by both residents of the established townships (that is, Nyanga, Guguletu and Langa) and the 'squatters' of Old Crossroads. He said:

> We are trying as far as possible to eliminate so-called forced-removals ... it becomes impossible to move people without having to help some of these people to move and having to find methods of doing so ... I did not say that there would be no forced removals ... we shall have no choice but to find methods to encourage those (stubborn and recalcitrant) people to join other members of such [a] community who are prepared to move (SPP 1984:99).

Khayelitsha is situated on land that had belonged to the South African Defence Force (van Heerden 1985:16). It is today the largest black residential area in the Western Cape (cf. Cooper et al 1990). The state's initial intention was to use Khayelitsha to house only people whom the state saw as legal residents. The state met with fierce opposition from Africans with Section 10 rights living in the old townships of

Guguletu, Nyanga and Langa because they refused to be relocated. One Langa resident, interviewed by the Black Sash in 1983, said about the impending move:

> For a long time the people of Langa did not improve their houses because they felt insecure. They believed they were only here temporarily as the Western Cape is a Coloured preferential area. It was only when Guguletu was built that they began to feel their homes were more permanent and they could put down some roots. Yet now they feel they are being removed. I remember when I was a young boy in Langa my grandmother used to say in Xhosa: 'We are levelling the ground. We are only here to pave the way, other people [Coloureds] will take our place' (in Black Sash 1984a:1).

This idea of moving 'legals' from existing townships was soon therefore shelved (cf. Pick et al 1990:3), both because the shortage of houses made the plan impractical, and because moving people out of the existing townships and Old Crossroads proved very difficult (Cooper et al 1990:9).

Today's Khayelitsha complex includes a diversity of housing units that cater for a variety of people. It comprises five kinds of residential units. These are:

- the formal core houses which were initially intended to re-house people from Old Crossroads and backyard shacks in 1983;
- areas of formal squatting or serviced sites at Site C (established in 1985), Site B (established in 1986), Griffith Mxenge, Makhaza and Harare, and others (established from 1990 onwards). All the latter squatter areas have water and sanitation facilities.);
- houses which are made from sandbags for people who can afford to pay rent;
- private houses for upper income residents (1988); and
- unauthorised and mushrooming squatter settlements (Pick et al 1990:4; and Cooper et al 1990:12).

4.5 A description of Makhaza

Makhaza's population comprises people who, for most part, were previously termed illegals and squatters. After the relaxation of *apartheid* in the second half of the 1980s, the state found itself faced with the huge burden of providing these erstwhile squatters with acceptable housing. Land in greater Khayelitsha was thus made available for this purpose. The Makhaza area was identified for low cost housing, and basic

infrastructure (roads, sewerage, water and mast lighting) were installed to supply service to more than 15 000 sites of approximately 170 sq. metres each (Khayelitsha Revised Macroplan 1994).

Makhaza is a sprawling, barren shack settlement covering about eighty hectares of land, and located in the greater Khayelitsha area. It is one of South Africa's unpopular so-called site-and-service schemes that were designed to combat the scarcity of housing, and to provide sites for the multitudes of Africans who did not have proper accommodation. These site and service schemes can be located in the broader context of South African socio-political history as a synthetic manoeuvre, by the Nationalist government, to redress housing imbalances, and of course, a measure designed to pull Africans away from towns into the urban peripheries.

Most of the earliest occupants of the Makhaza site-and-service area came in 1991 from several areas in the Western Cape. Although some came directly from the homelands, the majority came from the adjacent squatter transit camps of Zola Budd and Green Point. This means that they moved from one shanty town to another. In their former settlements, they were living rent-free (save for periodic fees they paid to the leadership), but when they came to Makhaza they were required by the local authority, the Lingelethu West Town Council, to pay R29 per month for services such as water and waste disposal. People boycotted the service charges just as they had done earlier in transit camps from whence the majority came.

The settlement is divided into fifteen sections, numbered from section 31 through section 44. These refer to the first two digits of a five digit number each site has marked on its free-standing toilet structure. Section 40 has two divisions, the old and the new. The latter is situated across a main road and has recently been incorporated into the jurisdiction of Makhaza. There are 1000 plots in each section, making a total of about 15 000 sites, although some are not for residential purposes. There is at least one shack on each site. On some sites there is more than one shack (some sites have five shacks). There is no official census of people inhabiting the area. The overall population of the area arguably exceeds 50 000 people[5] .

[5] Since there is no official census, these figures are speculative. I have deduced them from the sample of families with which I am working, where household density averages six people per site.

The fifteen sections in Makhaza are categorised into three civic branches under SANCO for easy governance. These branches, two of which are named after prominent political activists, are called Solomon Mahlangu (the whole of section 39), Mayibuye (from section 31 to the new 40, with the exception of 39), and Matthew Goniwe - formerly known as the Jerry Tutu's place (the new 40 and section 44). The Matthew Goniwe branch has, since 1992, been amalgamated with the Mayibuye branch. The research for this thesis was conducted among people living in Section 36.

Each section is administered by its section committee. The section committee is, in principle, made up of residents of the section. Their task is to run the day to day matters of the section, including dispute resolution between neighbours. Matters that are very broad are referred to the branch executive committee. The executive office of the civic association branch is, in principle, composed of all street-committee chairpersons. The executive office then elects the branch chairperson from amongst the street-committee chairpersons. The chief role of the branch executive committee is to mediate matters that affect public relations of the branch (for example, the sentencing of 'criminal elements' to death using, on some occasions, the infamous 'necklace' method - see Mehlwana 1994a).

The Khayelitsha Business Association, an association of local retailers also has some vested interests in Makhaza. This business structure seemingly influences the decisions of the civic association in various ways. At the time of my research, in 1993-4, the owner of a local supermarket was an executive officer of the civic association though he was not a resident of the area.

At that time, the settlement's local administration operated autonomously from the government-appointed local authority as far as the application of social rules was concerned. There were peoples' courts and sentences were carried out in public by the civic committee and the 'comrades' (the civics' political allies). The Lingelethu West Town Council and the police were not recognised by the residents as having any authority. Anyone seen working with the latter was marginalised in the community[6].

[6] It should be recalled that the research was conducted before South Africa's first democratic election (i.e. before 27 April 1994). Therefore, some of this information might be outdated, since local authorities, for example the police, have begun to gain legitimacy amongst the people of Makhaza.

4.6 Conclusion

The historical background of African squatting in the Cape Peninsula in general, and Makhaza residents' history and their current situation in particular, provides a background against which to examine the living conditions of people of Makhaza as they deal with the shifting socio-political conditions which surrounds them. Almost all the people in my sample were to a certain degree affected both by state policies and internal violence perpetrated by struggles for leadership and control by the settlement's rival factions (see Mehlwana 1994b).

Because of the apartheid state's urbanisation and housing policies, most Africans in the country have long had no opportunity of choosing where to live. This in turn has created a situation where close family ties were discouraged from developing. African families were dispersed to all over the country, as were their members. In order to create a semblance for themselves of an orderly life, people had to reconstruct points of reference that would tie them together in ways that made sense to them and their traditions, and which could thereby help households to cope with often impersonal urban situations. As I argue below, clanship provides one of the building blocks for this reconstructive process.

However, the history of what I call negative urbanisation was not alone in shaping or influencing people's interactions. The socio-economic positions of households in my sample was clearly another most influential determinant. The latter is elaborated in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

Socio-economic profiles of the sampled households

Anthropologists are a strange breed; they make what is 'familiar' look mysterious and complicated (Levi-Strauss 1969: 333).

Society belongs to the realm of culture and family, an emanation on the social level of those cultural requirements without which there could be no society, and no mankind (Levi-Strauss 1969: 358).

5.1 Introduction

Writing over two decades ago, Levi-Strauss argued that 'the problems of the family should not be approached in a dogmatic way because [the family] is an elusive question in the whole field of social organisation' (1969:338). This point is underscored throughout this chapter, and indeed in the whole thesis, particularly when it relates to the way people in Makhaza imagine their social networks. It should be remembered that conceptualisations of the family are cultural, and people's understanding and utilisation of the idea of family change according to the intricacies, social or otherwise, of a particular society under study. This point can be qualified even further: people's perceptions of family relations are different in as far as there are different social processes that shape those relations.

It is therefore counter-productive for students of social relations to posit a dogmatic stance when looking at how people relate to one another. People are not natural objects that can be put in a laboratory and their behaviour studied while they are in close proximity to each other. Nor can we generate results to use as a yardstick with which to measure people in different social contexts. What this means in practice is that the study of individuals' behaviour to each other should be understood as being situationally determined: there are situation-specific social processes that, arguably, determine individuals' social actions.

I argue that the historical context of Africans in the Western Cape, particularly the history of socio-economic and political agony of most people in Makhaza (as described in Chapter Four), has shaped the family life of most households in my sample.

Therefore, people's understanding and use of particularly clanship names or ideas should be understood in terms of their history.

Chapters Six and Seven will look at the ways in which the sampled population respond to various life situations using clanship notion as a resource. However, to contextualise the research findings on clanship, this present chapter gives a detailed description of the sampled households, showing, a) their composition, b) their gender and age distribution and, c) their socio-economic position.

These data are then compared with data from other similar situations both in South Africa and elsewhere. It is hoped that by doing so, the situation in Makhaza will not be seen in a vacuum, but as providing a glimpse of the wider southern African context. However, it should be emphasised that this is a demographic not an analytical chapter.

5.2 Dynamics of family life: fluidity and fluctuation of household boundaries

My initial questionnaire interviews, conducted with ten households generated data to indicate that there were 67 people in total resident in those households: an average of 6.7 per household. However, given the fluidity of the households, the figure did not remain constant through the research period. People, especially the dependants of the household heads, continued to move in and out of the settlement for reasons that are discussed elsewhere (see Mehlwana 1994a and 1994b).

In one respect, the figure quoted above showed acute overcrowding in the relation to physical space (in the shacks). In one case nine people shared a four by five metres, three-roomed shack; an average of three persons per room and 2.2 square metres per person. Table 5.1 summarises the number of people in the sampled households at the time of the initial interviews.

Households	Head	Spouse	Son	Daughter	Other	Intermittent	Total
Ndlovu	1	1	0	0	0	3	5
Malibongwe	1	0	2	1	0	0	5
Sangweni	1	1	1	5	0	0	8
Kheswayo	1	1	0	0	0	2	4
Mthetho	1	1	2	1	0	2	7
Mlingwa	1	0	0	1	6	2	10
Booi	1	0	1	0	0	6	8
Mlawu	1	1	2	0	0	1	5
Ntyatyambo	1	0	2	2	0	0	5
Sawila	1	1	4	2	1	0	9
Total	10	6	14	11	8	17	66

Table 5.1 Individual household composition at the time of the initial survey

Because of their precarious socio-economic position, some household members stayed elsewhere, and yet continued to visit their families in Makhaza for extended periods of time, usually during holidays. In some extreme cases the entire household would move out of the settlement and live elsewhere. During the period of fieldwork, for instance, one household - Kheswayo in Table 5.1 - moved out and was reported to have migrated to Paarl where their close relatives lived. Similarly, another household - Ntyatyambo in Table 5.1 - ran away from the settlement for political reasons. That family went to live with relatives in New Crossroads, a formal township a few kilometres away. Both cases show that the population of the settlement is dynamic, and indeed continues to fluctuate according to prevailing circumstances.

The number of respondents did not remain constant as other people moved in and out of their respective households for various reasons. These reasons included children moving out to live with relatives elsewhere in the greater Cape Town, or being 'transported' to the ex-*bantustans* to live with other family members.

One of my respondents, Ms Mlawu, had this to say when lamenting about the reasons she did not stay with her eldest child who is currently in the Transkei, and who frequently visited her during summer holidays:

> The reason she stays there [Umtata] is that I was forced to take her there [to my boyfriend's house in Umtata] because there was no one at home who would keep her. Then I was too young to look after the child, and I had aims of resuming my

> education. In her father's home, they are rich people ... they do not suffer from anything and they took her in order for her not to suffer ... I have not taken her back because I saw that when I take her I would be jeopardising her education.
>
> I am still suffering ... and there they are educating her. I am saying she was born in 1976, she is doing standard 10 this year [1993]. I would love to stay with her permanently. It is so painful as a parent to stay away from your child for so long. But there is nothing I can do. I would bring her here with me and where does that lead me? I could not be able to provide for her.

Ms Mlawu was echoing sentiments shared by many parents in Makhaza who unwillingly had to send their children to the Transkei in order to be looked after by relatives (cf. Chapter Seven).

Some households in Makhaza found that it was to their advantage to send their children to live with relatives who could more easily afford to keep them. Mr Ndlovu (see Table 5.1) was not working and his wife was selling hand-woven carpets. They lived with two of their children, while another was staying with relatives in the Transkei. Mrs 'Mamotaung Ndlovu saved money specifically to send to her children in the Transkei because her husband had been out of work for a considerable time. The same applied in other households where they sent their children to live with relatives because they could not afford to feed them. This sharing of responsibilities which involves raising children, and the role of clanship in this, will be explored in great detail in Chapter Seven.

5.2.1 Age distribution

At this point it is useful to look at the age and gender distribution of members that constitute the ten sampled households. The tabulations of age and sex of household members produced here should also be understood in terms of a broader regional pattern among the urban poor (see for example Cooper et al 1990; Seekings et al 1990; Ross 1995), and indeed, the southern African pattern (cf. Stopforth 1978; May 1979; White 1993b).

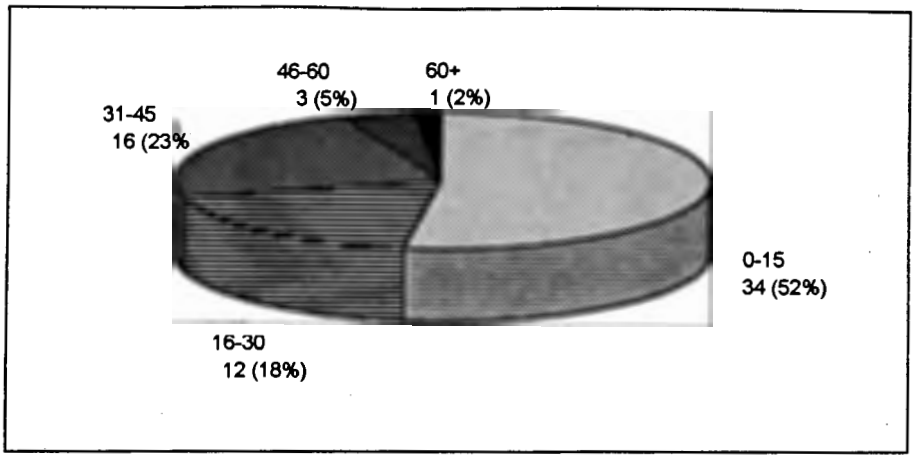

Figure 5.1 The sample's age distribution

The age distribution in the Makhaza sample was unevenly balanced among various age cohorts (see Figure 5.1).[1] The majority of household members were children under the age of 15. They comprised 52% of the sampled households' members (see Section 5.4 below). This was followed by the adult population (16-45) which had a combined figure of 41%. Although the sample is not representative, there is an indication that young people in Makhaza own sites. This is evidenced by the fact that there were fewer people who exceed 45 years and very few (about 2% in the sample) that exceed 60 years of age. Indeed, there was only one person who was older than 60 years.

5.2.2 Locating children of Makhaza

The ten sampled households in Makhaza included 34 children aged under 15 years of age. There have been differences in the literature when it comes to defining the category of children (see, for example, Rose 1986; Simkins 1986; and Burman 1988), but for this thesis I have labelled as children all persons up to 15 years of age.

My definition of children is consistent with how people in Makhaza themselves perceived the maximum age of childhood. For example some adult respondents (31%) argued that 'children' of 16 years and older might not be seen as children after all since they are in the 'ripe' stage to assume adult duties, for example contributing to the domestic economy or, in the case of female children, 'ripe' enough to be married. Others (25%) perceived children as persons not older than 15 years, especially if they

[1] A survey conducted in the Western Cape in 1985 shows a large concentration of African population -.73.9% - in the Cape Town area to be between 0 and 44 years (City Council Report 1987:44).

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are males. Males older than 15 years are said to be in a stage of *ukwaluka* (initiation ritual). A sizeable number of respondents (44%), however, regarded all their biological offspring as children irrespective of age. However, for this study, I define household members under 15 years of age as children.

Children's number was broken down as follows; 10 were children not older than 5 years, 11 between 6 and 10 years old, and, by far the majority 13 were children between 11 and 15 years old (see Figure 5.2).

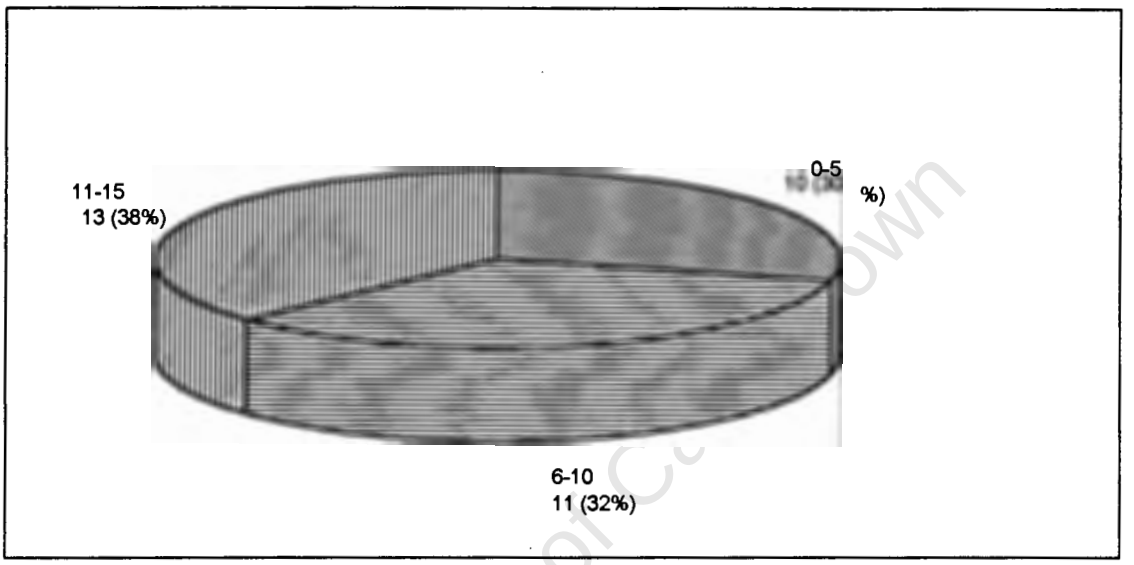


Figure 5.2 The children of Makhaza (Number of Children = 34)

Out of these 34 children 68% were born outside the Cape Peninsula, in various areas in the Eastern Cape. A majority of those children born in the Cape Peninsula belonged in the 0-5 age cohort, while other children were born outside the Cape Town area (see Figure 5.3). Out of 11 children born in the Cape Peninsula, 8 were born either in the transit settlement of Green Point, or in Makhaza. Only 3 children were born in various townships of the Western Cape (for more discussions on children, see Chapter Seven).

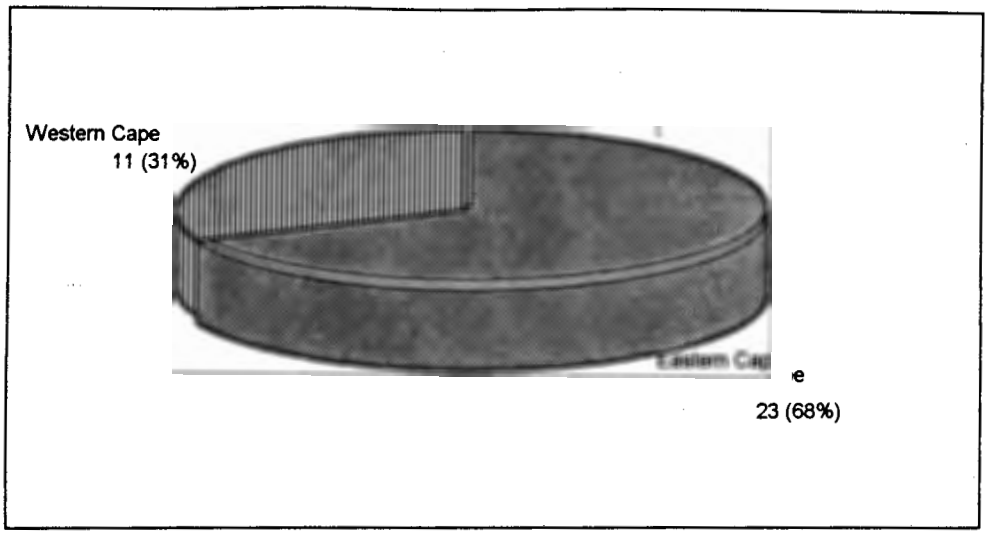


Figure 5.3 % of Children's places of origin

5.2.3 Gender distribution

There were almost as many males as females among the members of the household still to be sampled, with males just dominating (see Figure 5.4). There were 36 (54%) males and 30 (46%) females.

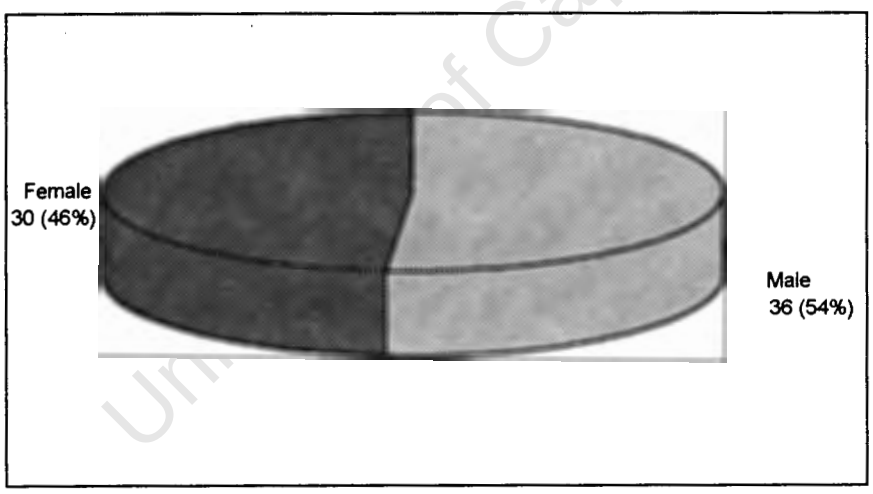


Figure 5.4 Male to female ratio in the Makhaza sample

This should not be interpreted as representative of the broader picture (considering the number of households sampled). A male-female census in 1985 of African residents in the Cape Peninsula showed the balanced distribution of population by sex. For instance, males constituted 33.8% to females' 34% in the 25-44 age cohort - an insignificant difference of 0.2% (Cape Town City Council 1987). A recent survey by Mazur and Qangule (1995) conducted in the Western Cape shows a major preponderance of adult women over adult men.

However, in the sampled households in Makhaza, there were significant differences in as far as age cohorts were concerned. In the 30-45 age cohort, females were more than males by nearly three to one (see Table 5.2). Among ten households studied, three were headed by women. The reasons for such household arrangement were either that male spouses had died or because of separation.

Gender	Male	Female	Total
Age			
0-15	21	13	34
16-30	7	5	12
31-45	5	11	16
45-60	3	0	3
60+	0	1	1
Total	36	30	66

Table 5.2 Gender by age cohorts

However, it should be mentioned that, although many households were headed by men, some were, in fact, supported fully by women. In this case heading a household does not necessarily mean supporting it. Perhaps Boulding's (1976:102-3) assertion in his study of domestic labour in a countryside village in Zimbabwe regarding this contradiction is a case in point. He asserted:

> One of the most enduring constraints (on women workers) is the 'male head of the household' concept. I have labelled this term a fiction, for while a careful study still needs to be done, it appears that in any setting, rural or urban at any period of history for which data is available, one-fifth to half of the heads of the households are women. Many of these women are rearing children without the male partners because of widowhood, desertion or divorce ... most of these women ... had to struggle to make ends meet. They had to accept low wages established through the fiction of male support.

In Makhaza, out of seven sampled households said to be headed by men, four were sustained by women either because of high unemployment among males or, in one instance, because the male household head, although fully employed, did not support his household.

5.3 The socio-economic position of the households

I describe below people's socio-economic statuses as reflected by their education levels, their occupations and income categories. There were parallels between the

education levels and life chances, especially among adults in the sample. Table 5.3 below summarises education levels of all members of the households by age cohorts.

Yr.	N/A	1-2 yr.	3-4 yr.	5-6 yr.	7-8 yr.	9-10 yr.	11-12 yr.	12+ yr.	Total
Age									
0-15	17	5	7	5	0	0	0	0	34
16-30	0	0	2	2	4	2	2	0	12
31-45	2	1	1	3	5	2	1	1	16
46-60	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
60+	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	3	1	3	6	9	5	4	1	32

Table 5.3 Education level by age cohorts

Although Makhaza is one of the African settlements where literacy levels are very low, the sample was too small to demonstrate this. However, in South Africa generally, Africans perceived as literate were said to be 48% by 1990 (White 1993b:30). By definition, a literate person has to be more than 13 years of age and possess at least a standard four certificate (an equivalent of six years of schooling) (ibid). According to Table 5.3, there was a concentration of people who had no formal education at all, but the majority of those fell in the 0-15 age cohort. There were only three adult household members who did not possess any formal schooling.

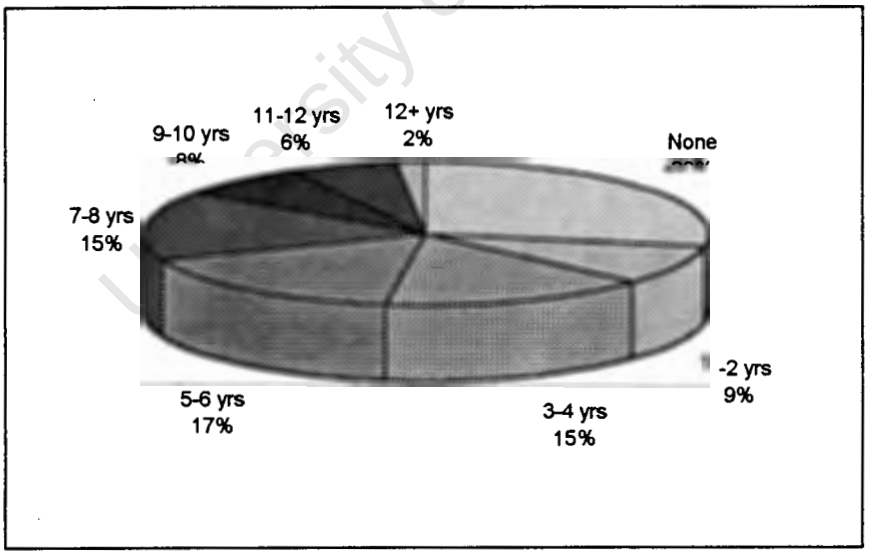


Figure 5.5 Years of education of the sampled household members

Eighteen adults had between three and eight years of schooling. There were very few (10) who had more than eight years of schooling, an exceptional case was one household member who had a post-school vocational education.

Respondents in Makhaza expressed different reasons which had led them to quit schooling. Although the reasons they expressed differed, there was a common underlying tendency: that they were victims of the structural situation that continues to affect the economically disadvantaged people throughout South Africa. This trend, which is symptomatic of southern Africa's underdeveloped and slum areas, includes mass poverty and people's powerlessness to exert structural change in any substantive sense (see Wilson and Ramphele 1989).

Mrs Mthetho who claimed to possess standard 9 had this to say about the reason she quit school: 'The thing that made me to quit school was that I became married'. In similar vein Mrs Ntyatyambo recalled:

> After standard 8, it was called Form III during those times, I had to stop studying because my mother was pulling very hard [suffering in a material sense] and so I started working to contribute [to the household income]. At the same time I attended a night school at St. Francis [Langa]. There, I did standard 10. It is standard 9 and 10 at the same time ... but I did pass the first subjects and then I was supposed to take other subjects in the second year but I was married, and then I stopped. After I was married I went to the Cape Jewish Home to study nurse assistantship for the elderly. I did not complete there because some people stole me from that home to look after their old people at their house. They paid me more than I earned there.

Mrs Sangweni who quit schooling while doing standard 3 recalled:

> I ended in standard 3. The reason was that I was married, and it was decided that I should quit schooling because it clashed with my domestic chores. My husband's home said that they would not pay for my education because I am an *umfazi* [married woman]. My husband did not care because he does not know anything about education. I regret it [that she stopped studying], and I regret that my parents forced me to marry. I did not want to be married. I was married by *tsiki* [arranged customary marriage]. I first saw my husband after we were married. I never saw him before and never spoke to him.

Ms Doris Mlawu who claimed to have quit schooling while she was in standard 8 said:

> At school I stopped when I was in Form III. It was called Junior Certificate during those times when there was no standard eight. I did not fail it but I did not write because I got a fall [fell pregnant].

In all the cases alluded to above, the respondents expressed feelings of regret that they had never had opportunities to better their education levels. Marriage featured as the most important single impediment that prevented women from pursuing their

education. In addition, their precarious economic position contributed to a considerable extent. It seems that the respondents quoted above saw that there is a correspondence between their limited educational achievement and the socio-economic status they currently hold.

5.3.1 Occupation and income

As noted above, respondents' educational backgrounds tended to reflect their occupational dispositions, and consequently their income. However, the latter statement did not apply in every case.[2] In other instances, unemployment was evident amongst the literate women. Nevertheless, Makhaza follows a similar trend to those of other African shack settlements in South Africa where minimal education acutely corresponds with the precarious living conditions, and where structural unemployment and underemployment are the order of the day (see SAIRR 1984; UPRU 1978; Cape Town City Council 1987; Mehlwana 1992:30; Employment Research Unit (ERU) 1984).

In its 1991 and 1994 surveys, ERU drew parallels between the occupational structure of greater Cape Town's Africans and their educational statuses. It found that 75% of the unemployed fell between 20 and 40 years of age. In October 1991, about 15% of the unemployed had a standard ten qualification. This figure increased to 18% by March 1994. The same can be said of Makhaza where high unemployment rates also affects those who, by definition, are literate. Table 5.5 below summarises the socio-economic predicament of the households as reflected by their occupation.

[2] For instance, by November-December 1993, Mrs Malibongwe's economic position was enhanced because of her education. Then she was working for an NGO. At the same time, presumably because of her higher education level, Mrs Ntyatyambo, who was unemployed before, got a secure plum job as counsellor for the victims of political and domestic violence, in Cape Town. She was then staying with her mother in New Crossroads. An opposite case concerned Mrs Mqukwa, a woman of equal education status to the two women cited above, who no longer weaves carpets because people were no longer interested in buying them. Her state of affairs had deteriorated. She tried to sell fruit and vegetables but soon stopped because she could not save money to buy stock, and when her husband jettisoned her for a younger woman, the household's suffering worsened. At the conclusion of research, this household had no visible source of income.

Occup.	Child	Pupil	Char work	Welfare	Informal work	Full-time work	Unemployed	Total
Age	17	17	0	0	0	0	0	34
0-15								
16-30	0	3	0	1	0	0	8	12
31-45	0	0	0	0	5	1	10	16
46-60	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
60+	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	17	20	1	1	5	1	21	66

Table 5.5 Occupation of the sample by age cohorts

As can be gleaned from Table 5.5, people in Makhaza face both acute and chronic structural unemployment. The number of people who are unemployed and studying far exceeded other occupation categories. Twenty of the sample was, at the time of the research still at school, followed by 21 who were unemployed. The third largest category (17) was that of children still too young to attend school.

There was also an indication that youth was affected the most by unemployment (since the youth was not even studying) which is indicative of a general trend in African settlements of South Africa (op.cit). The 15-30 age cohort is the hardest hit with 67% (8) of the age cohort being unemployed.

Only 8 members in the sample were employed in various labour occupations; 5 were engaged in informal activities to generate income. These activities included chopping and selling wood fuel and handicraft. Due to the smallness of the sample, it had not been possible to quantify the extent of informal trade among the selected household members.

This pattern has precedents. The literature has portrayed the existence of informal trade or, according to Hart (1973) the informal sector, amongst mostly, the poor strata of the society. In 1972, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that between 28% and 33% of people in urban settlements of Kenya were engaged in informal work as means of generating income. In Khartoum, Sudan, between 23% and 25% of labour force in the same period was reported to be engaged in the informal sector (UPRU 1978:2).

Some women in the Makhaza sample - 4 out of 9 - were engaged in informal work, weaving carpets in a self-help programme at the Philani centre in Griffith Mxenge settlement near Khayelitsha. These women earned an average income of R60 per month, depending, of course, on whether their carpets are sold (cf. Preston-Whyte and Nene 1984 - on informal activities of women in Natal). Mrs Mthetho (see Table 5.1 above) described her daily routine as follows:

> Last year (1991) I got a job but soon lost it and returned to Philani. There in Philani I was making mats. When they [project co-ordinators] saw my [education] standard, they took me and made me a seller of mats.
>
> The people in Philani are making mats and then those mats are taken [displayed] to certain places where they are sold [usually for tourists' attraction]. But now I have stopped selling mats in those places. What they are doing now is that the mats are taken to the hotels and Waterfront (near the Cape Town docks), and there is a place built to sell them.
>
> There is a Coloured woman who is employed to sell the mats for us. Now I am making mats here at home and take it to Philani. I would only be paid when the mat is finished. On most occasions you can get nothing in a month. Sometimes you get R100 per month if you are lucky. All depends on the quality of your mat and it also depends on how your mat is beautiful compared with others.

Competition in selling carpets in Philani is clearly very stiff and this results in some women not earning anything. Mrs Malibongwe, then a co-worker with Mrs Mthetho, who has improved her education and economic security, described the insecure way of getting income from selling carpets. She said:

> When I am doing my mats ... Let us say in one month I have made ten mats, in this ten only two mats will be sold for R40 each. In one R40 some money for Philani will be deducted, and I get R26 for each R40. I normally make up to R50 per month. and all depends on these mats being sold because it is not me alone, we are many.

However, 'Mamotaung Ndlovu who at an earlier stage of my research was involved in Philani's activities, did not see weaving mats as constituting 'work' (for income) in a pragmatic sense. She rather conceived Philani as serving other important functions. She said:

> At Philani's, I am not working. We are only taking our children there to be fed because they are not well fed. They have got Kwashiorkor [what she refers to as 'Kwashi']. They could not become robust.

One person in the sample got her income from selling liquor but she claimed that her business was not going well because she faced stiff competition from other more

successful households who were selling liquor in large quantities. In her street, there were three other households which sold liquor.

5.4 Conclusion

It can be said with some measure of confidence that the socio-economic position of households in the Makhaza sample influenced the way the households relate to others. Because of economic insecurity, it had been functionally important for household members to extend the web of their networks to other households to generate symbiotic benefits. The households in the sample were forced by their unique social positions to utilise their cultural elements, including, as we shall see, clanship relationships, to survive the harsh and often impersonal realities of urban life. Chapter Six discusses the formation of clanship and how people in Makhaza use it as a resource to counter the difficulties of urban life.

CHAPTER SIX

Strategising with social networks: instrumental uses of clanship

The marginal dilemma, then, is not so much a problem of how to live on an inadequate income as of how to survive during recurrent periods of zero income. There is one way out of this dilemma: using the social resources of the individual. Kinship and friendship are the resources used by marginals for this purpose (Lomnitz 1977:208).

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Four has considered the intricacies of African migration into South African towns and particularly the role that the *apartheid* ideology has played in depositing the migrants (usually men, but later women) in major towns of the Republic. This chapter examines the living strategies members of the Makhaza sample manipulate to counter what they experience as the alienation of urban life. At the same time, it looks at the strategies that they use to distribute and redistribute meagre resources, and at the relationships they establish that offer moral support in times of personal danger or crises that occur from time to time.

In many communities, there are various relationships which are used for many purposes. In Makhaza, one of the most important of these relationships was the one built on clanship links. Mr Dengana Ndlovu - the spouse of 'Mamotaung (see Case 6.4 below) - one of the impoverished residents of Makhaza had this to say about the significance of clanship and clan names:

> There are many people I know here in Makhaza but I do not know their names. We men call each other by our clan names; names are not important. What is very important is the clan name, and to a lesser extent the place of one's origin.

This quotation offers a glimpse of the essence of my argument in this thesis. In part, this chapter provides a response (which I believe is long overdue) to Monica Hunter (1971), and others (for example, Pauw 1973), who tacitly assert that the notion of clanship is less important as a rallying point in urban than in rural situations.

This chapter, however, does not simply refute Hunter's statement on clanship in urban situations (see Chapter Three). Rather it provides a critical investigation of associations

and clubs 'based on other common interests' than clanship, and determines the extent to which clanship ideology plays a role in moulding and promoting them. Although I contend that clanship ideology was central to many social relationships found amongst the sampled population of Makhaza, I do not mean that every relationship in Makhaza is based on clanship. Some non-kin relationships were often established where the idiom of clanship was absent. It is, however, not within the scope of this thesis to explore these non-kin relationships.

This chapter probes how clanship links have been used by members of the sample as means of consolidation in Makhaza. In essence, I describe relationships that are the basis for networks and how clanship links help many (albeit not all) of these to work smoothly. Again, it is not assumed here that clanship links are more important than any other links. Rather, the chapter demonstrates situations where clanship is important as a building block for creating social relationships.

To show the importance of clanship in everyday life of the sampled households, this chapter first deals with the importance of clanship in individuals' movements within urban areas and between rural areas. Secondly, it looks closely at how these clan networks are cultivated and the roles that each individual in the network is expected to play. This is to show how some actors manipulate these 'normative roles' for strategic purposes. Thirdly it describes the nature of reciprocal exchange between individuals and households that are linked by clanship. Fourthly it argues that clanship relationships are not only employed for day-today interaction, but these relationships provide a building block in the formation of social institutions (such as savings clubs and burial associations) that serve other purposes. This is to show that clanship ***can*** be a powerful tool or symbol that can underpin the formation of social groups. Lastly, I conclude the chapter by pointing that clanship relationships are formed irrespective of rural area affiliation. In cases where they are associated with rural background, they tend to be strong and enduring.

6.2 Movements, urban consolidation and the use of clanship

When people move from one area to another, they tend to form what I have called in earlier chapters, contingent relationships (see Chapter Three) that are used for various reasons. One of the reasons that these relationships are formed is that they give security,

financial or otherwise, to the individuals or households that have moved into the new area. As shall be illustrated by Case 6.1 below, individuals were able to form strong and lasting relationships using clanship as a building block. The individuals in question in that case were able to trace their clanship relationship from earlier generations. This, I believe, shows how important clanship is. As mentioned elsewhere in various points in the thesis (Chapter Three), clanship terminology is the same as the kin-terms used in households. Therefore, it is expected that individuals related through clanship should interact with each other as if they were people of the same household.

It should also be understood that another important factor in a relationship built on clanship is that the individuals or households in question should have a will to form a relationship. Thus clanship reckoning alone cannot form a working relationship without the willingness of the two parties to form a relationship. Thus, clanship in itself is not a relationship, but a catalyst in the formation of a relationship.

Below I present a case which illustrates the arguments presented above. This case shows how two individuals had successfully forged a relationship through the notion of clanship that helped each in rural and urban movements and in urban consolidation.

Case 6.1 'My mother is born from the Cirha clan'

Margareth comes from a location in Umtata, in the Eastern Cape. She is an unmarried mother of two children whom she has left in Umtata. She is the same age as Doris Mlawu with whom she stayed in Makhaza. In Umtata she was 'renting a town house' but had left it (and her children) in the custody of her relatives, to come to Cape Town in search of work. She left Umtata because of the high cost of living in the economically depleted part of the Eastern Cape. In Umtata, she claimed, she earned a 'paltry' income of R500 per month at a local manufacturing plant. She asserted that almost everything in the Transkei 'is very expensive, starting from food down'.

She had contacted her sister who stayed in the core or formal houses of the greater Khayelitsha area and requested a place to stay while she would be looking for her own. She spent a short time with her sister, staying with her from May until the beginning of October (1993) when she decided to move to the shack area of Makhaza, for the following reasons. Firstly, the core house which her sister's household owned was very small and overcrowded. It had only two rooms and she had to share one bedroom with her sister, sister's husband and the couple's four children. Secondly, she heard that people who lodged in the backyards of houses in the formal settlement had little chance of acquiring houses of their own; and she had come to Cape Town with a view to building a home of her own. Thirdly, Doris, with whom she later lodged, encouraged her to move to Makhaza.

Margareth and Doris had known each other over the past years. Their meeting was rather accidental. In the early 1980s, Doris sought work in Umtata from her rural home. Margareth had given her a space in her backyard where she could build a shack. Margareth's family was using the space in their backyard to generate income by letting to tenants who could pay a stipulated fee each month. When Margareth and Doris formed a relationship she was no longer required to pay the monthly rent since, as shown below, she was considered part of the household.

Through talking to each other, they 'discovered' that they were indeed related by clan and affinal ties[1]. There appeared to be no direct relationship between Doris's and Margareth's families. After tracing each other's genealogy and origin, they found out that their families came from the same area in Umtata. In addition, they are relatives in the sense that they refer to each other as *mzala* (cross-cousin). Doris's mother referred to Margareth's father as a clan brother of her mother. The *isiduko* (clan name) of Doris's mother's mother was Cirha (see Figure 6.1). Similarly, Margareth's father's clan name was Cirha. It can be learnt from this that Margareth is Doris's mother's classificatory matrilateral cross-cousin, while Doris's mother is Margareth's classificatory patrilateral cross-cousin. However, because Margareth and Doris are, chronologically (albeit not genealogically) of the same generation, it was they rather than Margareth and Doris's mother who referred to each other as *mzala* (cross-cousins).

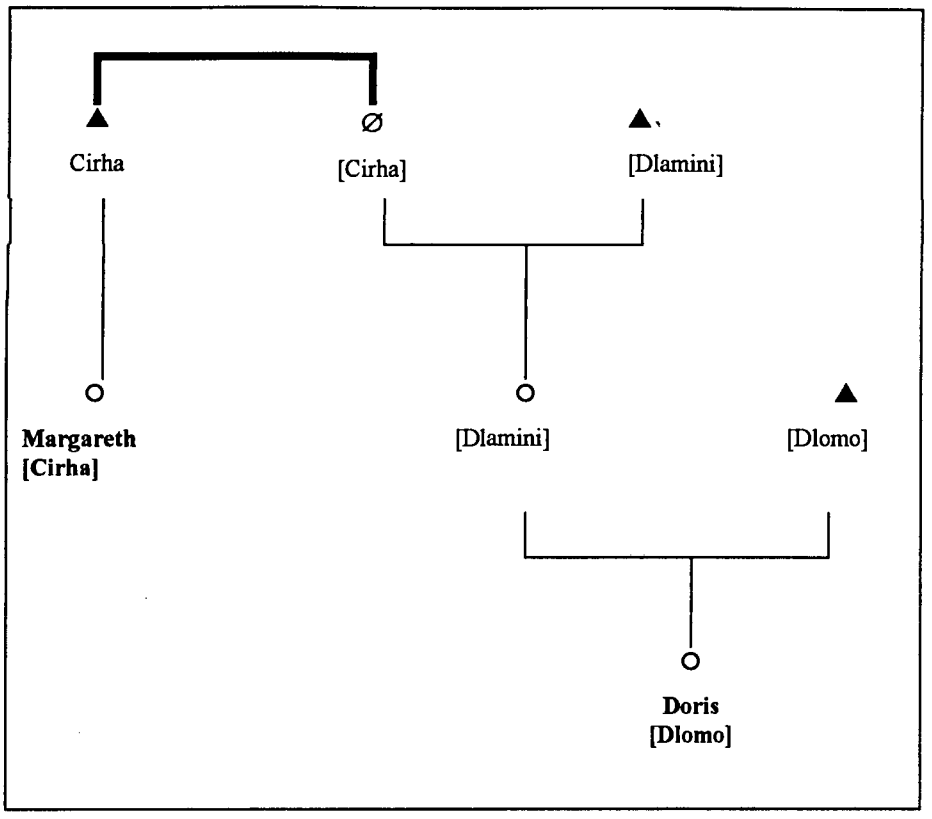
When Doris had visited Umtata from Cape Town in 1992, Margareth asked for her address in Makhaza, anticipating her own migration to Cape Town. At the end of September 1993 (and while she was staying in her sister's house in the core houses in Khayelitsha), she had visited Doris in Makhaza. Doris encouraged her to come and live with her in Makhaza. She promised to use her influence as a member of the executive committee of the street committee to secure a site for her in Makhaza. Doris even went to the extent of 'standing for her [surety-ship] to a man selling building materials on credit only to people living in Makhaza'. Because Margareth was then living in the core houses in Khayelitsha, she could not have got the building materials without this help. Meanwhile her sister had found her a domestic job in Table View where she earned R35 a day (she worked four times a week. Her gross payment per month was approximately R564 (excluding transport and other costs), and a small portion of that money was used to *rholisa* at Doris's household[2].

The last time I met Margareth she had left Doris's household and had built her own shack a couple of metres away from Doris's. Then she was saving money enough to bring her children to Cape Town, and was even toying with the idea of selling her house in Umtata. She did not see herself staying permanently in Umtata. She would visit Umtata, she said, since it is her 'ancestor's' home. But she had no intention of staying there again. Life in Umtata, she has said, is so expensive 'and here in Cape Town people are not paying rent'.

---

[1] When Doris went to visit Umtata after she had moved to Cape Town, she visited Magareth's yard. Upon her 'retirement', and after more than two decades of living and working in and around Cape Town, Doris's mother went to stay in the backyard house (on Magareth's site) that Doris had built when she was staying at Umtata.

[2] This means to contribute to the household in kind (see the section on reciprocity below).



Thick lines = clanship links
Thin lines = conjugal and affinal links

Figure 6.1 Margareth and Doris' relationship

What is important to note from the above case is that, firstly, the clan-based linkage was established in Umtata (and not in Cape Town). In Umtata, Doris was the major beneficiary because, after they had recognised that they were clan relatives, she was absorbed into Margareth's household and, as result, was not required to pay rent. Thus, this relationship assisted Doris to consolidate in Umtata. Secondly, this relationship based on clanship was then used in Cape Town after they migrated at different times. This time, Margareth was the main beneficiary. However, in Margareth's case, she had known, before coming to Cape Town, that Doris would be able to help her to adjust and consolidate in Cape Town because of the relationship that they had formed in Umtata. As seen from this case, clanship was used to form a working relationship which both women manipulated for each other's benefit.

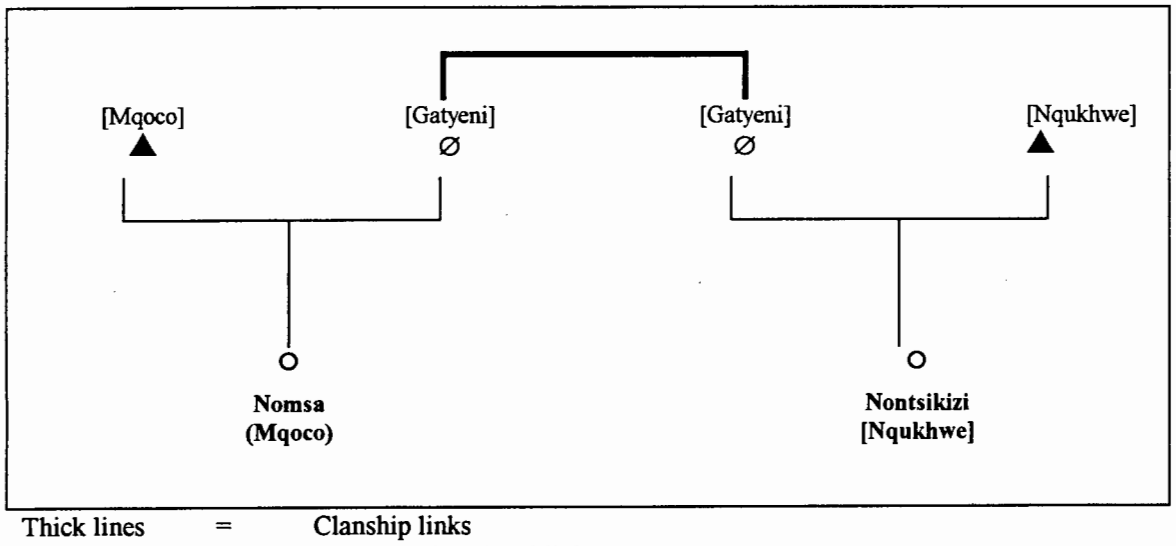
From a different vantage point, the next case (6.2) demonstrates that clan relationships can be successfully negotiated from previous generations. Whether such relationships are 'authentic' or putative is not always regarded as significant. Secondly, this case

reveals the manner in which relationships, based on the idiom of blood, can be satisfactorily used to the benefit of the individuals concerned, as would be expected to happen, for instance, if such individuals had had close genealogical relationships. Thirdly, it shows that relationships which are cemented by clanship, although strong, sometimes cannot last. This case reiterates the point made above that a successful relationship requires commitment from the individuals or households in question to perpetuate the relationship. If that commitment is absent or lacking, such relationships tend to falter.

Case 6.2 'I am no longer part of her family': a broken clan relationship

After her separation from her husband in 1990, Nomsa Malibongwe (a mother of four children) returned to live with her natal family's household in Mt. Fletcher in the Eastern Cape[3]. In 1991, she took two of her children and migrated to Cape Town in search of work. She left her eldest child in the care of her brothers because:

> He is doing standard 8 this year [1993]. The *problem* [reason] that he must study there is that I cannot afford the cost of education. I gave him over to my brothers to educate him for me.



Thick lines = Clanship links
Thin lines = Affinal and conjugal links

Figure 6.2 Nomsa and Nontsikizi's relationship

In Cape Town she stayed with her 'cousin' Nontsikizi. They had known each other since they were at school together, and Nontsikizi had since gone to live in Cape Town after her husband had stopped sending remittances. Nomsa's natal household was very close to Nontsikizi's and the two women referred to each other as *Mzala* (loosely translated as 'cousin sisters'). Nomsa and Nontsikizi's relationship is a

[3] At the time of her separation from her husband, Mrs Malibongwe was pregnant with her fourth child.

The relationship between Nomsa and Nontsikizi appeared strong since it was based on clanship and place of origin. As this case has demonstrated, however, some clanship relationships, like other relationships, can be discontinued when there are conflicting demands among individuals in a relationship.

6.3 The construction of clanship relationships and reciprocity

Now I examine in detail how the sampled households construct and use these relationships based on clanship. I have mentioned in Chapter Four that it is a widespread phenomenon amongst amaXhosa, when meeting each other for the first time, to include their clan names or affiliations in their greetings. Even though amaXhosa (like any Nguni group, for instance amaZulu) trace their clanship descent through the male line, they also mention their mother's clan affiliation, especially when they are concerned to use the meeting to form a new relationship.[5] For instance neither Margareth nor Nomsa (Cases 6.1 and 6.2) were related to their hosts through their fathers' clan name, but both found that somewhere along their respective lines of descent, their ancestors once shared a common clan name.

It is important to underscore that the ability to trace such relationships invariably depends on the capability of recalling one's genealogical history and, more importantly, on the context of the meetings where this recall occurs. For instance, in Case 6.1 Magareth and Doris were fortunate in tracing their genealogies, and it was possible to put their relationship to good use. Margareth's offer to Doris of a place to build her shack in Umtata was the beginning of a lasting relationship which was not only confined to Umtata, and indeed between these two people, but a functional relationship which overflowed to Cape Town and encompassed the households of both 'sisters'. Indeed, it flowed over a generation too, when Doris's mother took advantage of it in her retirement.

Similarly, after having been abandoned by her spouse in 1990, Nomsa was in a great difficulty. The Xhosa customary law does not provide legal recourse for married

[5] Marriage within one's clan is forbidden amongst amaXhosa, and regarded as a serious breach of conduct or incest. It is therefore important for people who start a relationship, especially when it is an intimate one, to sit down and narrate their family tree in order to ascertain whether they are relatives. Relationships with kin on the maternal side are not considered as a serious breach of customary law, provided that such relationships are not close (that is, traced in the first or second generations); yet they too are potentially problematic, as are relationships with clans-people of one's grandmother's clan.

complex one. Yet it shows the way in which clanship relationships can be stretched to distant generations (see figure 6.2). Like the women in Case 6.1, they do not share the same clan name; nor do their mothers. Yet the jargon of *iziduko* (clan names) is inherent in their relationship. They are related because their respective mothers' mothers shared a clan name. They were able to trace this relationship because their families, until recently, shared a common geographical location in rural Transkei. Because of this Nomsa was able to travel in Cape Town to someone she knew from back home. Nontsikizi had invited Nomsa to come and live with her in Cape Town.

Nontsikizi then was staying in the Green Point (Khayelitsha) transit camp while her husband had 'vanished into the thin air' of Cape Town. Nomsa stayed with Nontsikizi from December 1991 until they both moved to Makhaza in 1992 where she continued to share the household with her. Because Nontsikizi had been in Cape Town for a relatively long period, she helped Mrs. Malibongwe to find social workers who then took care of her disabled daughter.[4]

Her relationship with Nontsikizi did not last for long. In 1993 they began to quarrel over mundane things that led them to divide household facilities. No longer were they 'eating from the same pot', or sharing cooking and other domestic facilities. Nomsa once said that:

> The thing that I do not like is that I am not allowed to use the toilet of that house [Nontsikizi's]. Even when I want to use the toilet at night I am not able to do; it is always locked . . . My children there are not happy because they are afraid of the owner of the house. But I cannot help it because I do not have a house [of my own].

She was constrained however from ending the relationship because she had no other place to live. She added that:

> I do not trust the house. How safe could you be when you are living with a person when sometimes you greet each other, and in other times you do not?

In Makhaza, Nomsa became acquainted with a group of women with whom she was involved in a self-help programme at the Philani nutrition centre. She was involved with these women mainly for reciprocal reasons. These women would share gossip, cooking materials, and even domestic chores such as child care when someone in their network needed assistance. They had a great deal in common. They were all earning meagre income and were not supported by their husbands (who were either unemployed or just 'irresponsible'). It was one of these women who helped Nomsa to acquire a site where she later built her shack.

The above case has added another dimension or element to a relationship based on clanship. This element, which reinforces the relationship, is the sharing of geographical origin. Besides being related through clanship, Nomsa came from the same natal home as her host. In this case, they were both *abakhaya* (what Mayer (1971:124) called 'homeboys') and clan relatives.

[4] The social workers took her daughter to a home for paraplegic children.

partners to obtain a divorce, and even such a term is, on the whole, not accommodated in the Xhosa lexicon.[6] The absence of formal rules to govern spouses' separations, abandonment and divorce allows a man to leave his wife at will and to provide very little (in terms of material support) for his family. Nomsa, who by that time depended on the irregular remittances sent by her husband, was faced with this predicament. She was left with three children (including a physically disabled child) and she was, by that time expecting her fourth. When her husband went *tshipa* (absconded; disappeared), so did the remittances he infrequently sent. She decided to move to her natal home and be amongst her mother and brothers.

It is important, therefore, to locate the use of clanship within the broader socio-economic context of the sampled households. Material poverty of the sampled households (see Chapter Five) puts severe strains on people's scant resources. At this stage I give a scenario of how these people cultivate relationships that work to their advantage. Clanship relations featured as the most long-enduring relationships that were perceived as morally strong compared to other relationships based on other qualities. Case 6.3 below shows how relationships based on clan-names were forged in Makhaza between households.

Case 6.3 Reciprocal exchanges and clanship relationships

When Alice Ntyatyambo arrived in Makhaza in 1991, she began an informal business, selling offal while her husband was employed as a care-taker at a local primary school which had just been opened. Although Alice met many people during her business life with whom she could somewhat create a clan-based linkage, she chose to form a relationship with Doris (of Case 6.1). The first time these two women met was when Doris had come to Alice to buy meat. By talking to each other they discovered that they are related to each other by clanship. Ever since that day, Doris became a staunch customer of Alice, in such a way that after some time Alice sometimes gave Doris meat on credit. How then, did these two women trace their clanship relationship?

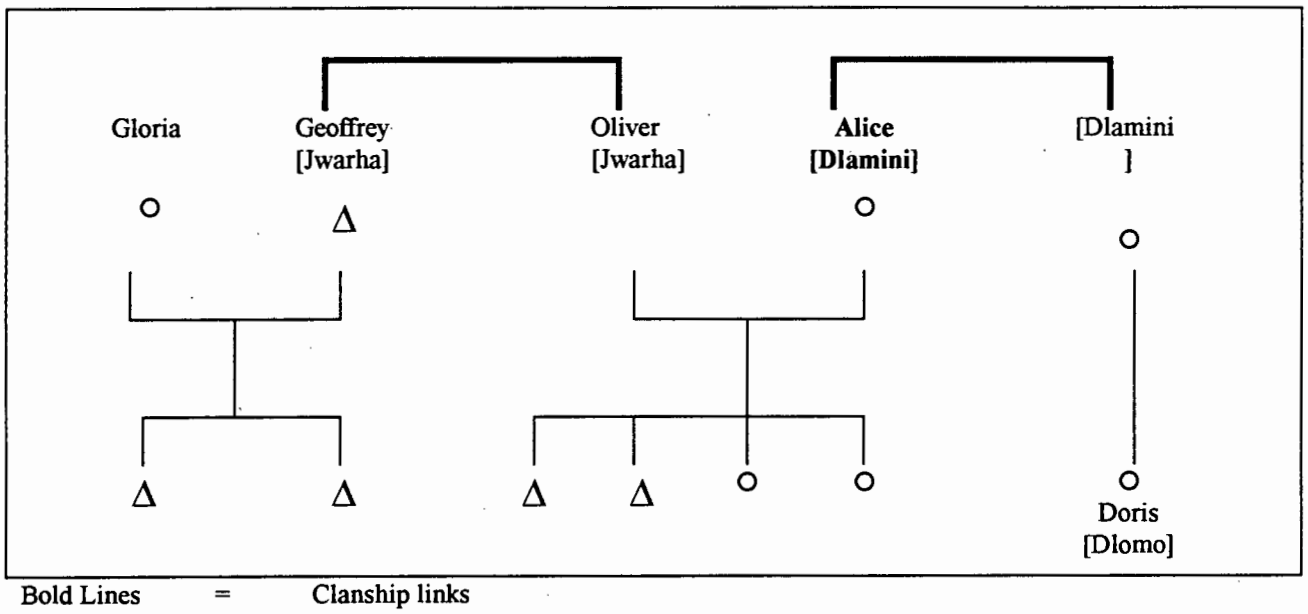
Although they have different clan names, upon their conversation they found that they were related by clan names. Doris's mother shared the same clan name as Alice. Because of this, from that day Doris referred to Alice as her *makazi* (mother's sister), although both women were relatively of the same age. Doris was born in 1960 while Alice was born in 1958. Yet, by referring to Alice as her *makazi*, Doris

[6] Maclean (1906:119-121) provides a detailed 'unwritten' compendium of Xhosa customs, in which the 'laws' show clearly the power that Xhosa husbands exert on their households with immunity from responsibilities. He wrote that because of their social standing, men were not sufficiently constrained by tradition to be responsible for the welfare of their families after separation.

was putting the latter in the same age generation as her mother. By recognising Doris as her sister's child, Alice was acknowledging that she was morally bound to assist Doris in times of need. Therefore, Doris could not be refused credit, because Alice was her mother. Age in this case was not relevant. What mattered was the social position that each of these women occupied in the relationship because of their clan names. So a relationship was formed between these two households using a clanship relationship as a building block.

Alice was also a clan relative of Gloria Kheswayo. They became acquainted after Alice's late husband introduced Gloria to Alice. The latter did not know exactly how these two met, but reckoned that her late husband, Oliver, knew Gloria's husband, Geoffrey, 'when they had met in their places [presumably, in a shebeen].' Oliver shared a clan name with Geoffrey. Their shared clan name was Jwarha. According to Alice, it seemed they hit it off well together. 'To them the places where they were born are not relevant . . . they shared a clan name' and they were relatively of the same age. They soon referred to each other as *kayise* (blood brother).

Oliver and Geoffrey started to visit each other, and their spouses became acquainted with each other. Because Alice's husband was slightly older than Gloria's husband, the wife of the latter referred to the wife of the former as *sisi*, meaning older sister, and referred to Alice's husband as *bhuti*, (a term which denotes seniority). The two couples' children were made to refer to each other as brothers and sisters.



Bold Lines = Clanship links
Thin Lines = Conjugal and affinal links

Figure 6.3 The coming together of three households

This case highlights crucial issues in a clanship relationship. First, in some instances the importance of the chronological age of people (especially between Alice and Doris) is downplayed in favour of genealogical age so that what is important is the social position of the individual in a clanship relationship. Secondly, the case shows the expected or

ascribed roles that each player in the relationship is supposed to perform. These two issues are discussed shortly below.

In the case of Doris and Alice, age difference was not essential when it came to their clan names. Although there was not much difference in the age gap between the two women, Doris continued to refer to Alice as her mother's sister. Furthermore, Alice's children were perceived as Doris's cousins, though they belonged to different chronological generations. Although Doris's relationship with Alice might simply be interpreted as indicating some degree of respect toward the latter, there was more to it. She could have easily referred to Alice as her *mzala* (cross cousin), yet she chose to refer to her otherwise. The reason, had to do with Alice's superior economic status at the time the relationship was formed. She had a flourishing business and, because of that, Doris strategically took a subordinate position in the relationship, to receive favours from Alice. For instance, Alice gave Doris credit when the latter did not have cash.

Still following on Alice's network, I cite an example where clan names were consciously manipulated to form a workable social network: an example which also shows that clanship is a builder of social relationships. Although this case was not directly amongst the sampled households, it clearly illustrates this point.

There was a woman named Nokulunga who stayed in the same neighbourhood as Alice and Doris. She was fondly referred to as '*Dabs*' (from *dadobawo* - father's sister) by the latter women. Nokulunga was said to be related to both women because she claimed to be born from the Jwarha clan, the same as Alice's husband. However, the case of Nokulunga was more complex than it seemed. Her father was Tshawe and her mother was Jwarha, but the latter and the former were never married, and she grew up at her mother's home until she migrated to Cape Town. Because she was born out of wedlock, she was known by her mother's clan.

However, Nokulunga could have taken and used her father's clan name. But she was known by her mother's clan name - Ma-jwarha because of the reason stated above. Moreover, she did not discount that her father was Tshawe nor denied that, because her father is Tshawe, she is also Ma-tshawe. She claimed that in situations where Ama-tshawe were dominant, she reconstructed her Tshawe-ness accordingly. She said,

'EmaJwarheni ndili Jwarha, kanti emaTshaweni ndili Tshawe (when I am among the Jwarha clans-people, I am Jwarha and when I am among the Tshawe, I become a Tshawe.'

In addition, she asserted that, because of being Jwarha, she was the sister of the Alice's late husband, although she was obviously an older woman. (She was born in 1928 and he in 1955.) She was old enough to be called Oliver's mother. Considering that the Ntyatyambo household was erstwhile popular and comparatively more affluent, it would have been to Nokulunga's disadvantage (for strategic reasons) to refer to Oliver as her brother's son. Had she done so, she might have been the one who was expected to give more during reciprocal exchanges. Oliver had a moral obligation to take care of her as it might have been, if she was his 'real' sister because the (perceived) cultural functions of each social actor require that.

6.4 *Umntu ngumntu ngabantu* (a person is a person by other persons): the perceived roles of individuals in clanship relationships

Let us look now at the perceived cultural functions and roles that each individual in a clanship relationship is supposed to perform. In short, let us look at reciprocal relationships and exchanges occurring between households and individuals and how the notion of clanship plays a role of facilitating these. It should be stated, however, that reciprocal exchanges also do occur in relationships not based on clanship. Nevertheless, I discuss only the reciprocal exchanges occurring in relationships based on clanship.

As carefully noted by Wilson and Mafeje (1963) in their seminal study of social groups in an African township of Langa near Cape Town, one's kinsmen are found in almost any place in the Republic and, I add, it is equally and practically impossible for people to form functional relationships with all the kinsfolk they meet. People select suitable kinsmen among a large pool of kins-people. Even in Makhaza, informants reiterated that there could be many clan members in the settlement, and this would not necessarily mean that they all together form networks. Factors that determine the formation of clanship relationships are manifold; they include both social and physical distances, and most importantly, the will to form a relationship. There also might be other criteria included as ingredients, such as friendship and age. In the ultimate analysis, the

formation of relationships where clan plays a part involves choice exercised by individuals in choosing whom to relate to.

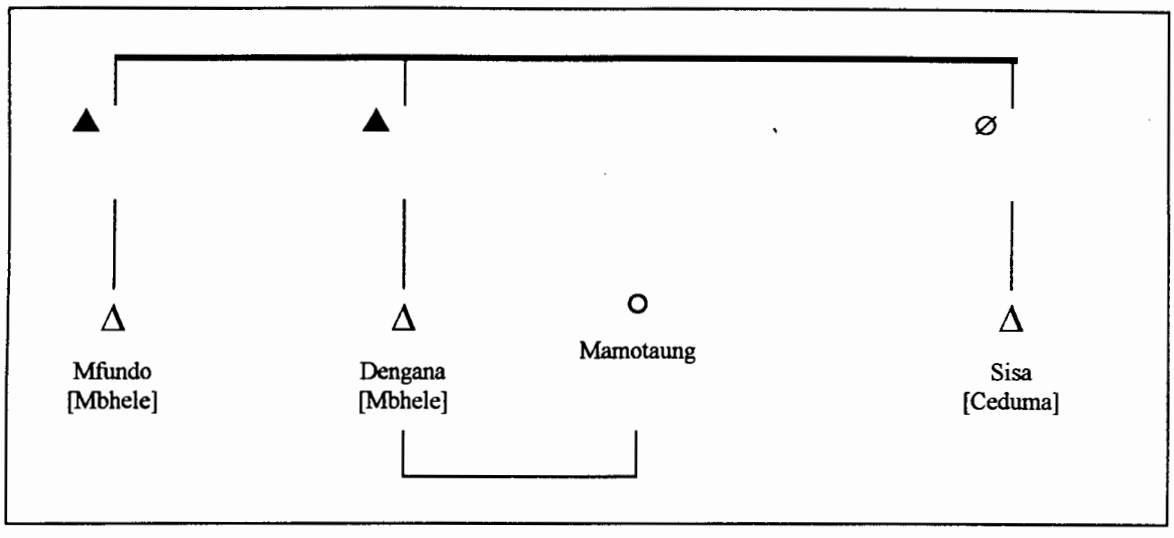
Once such a relationship has been formed, however, the individuals involved perform tasks that are proper to such a relationship. This is because everyone is expected to assist his or her fellow clansperson. The assistance given varies according to prevailing situations. But the basic principle is that one should treat identified members of one's clan in the same way one is treating one's immediate family. Case 6.4 shows how assistance among a network of clan relatives is marshalled in times of dire need.

Case 6.4 'A hand washes another': the role of a (clan) brother

When I visited Mr. Dengana Ndlovu, he was lying in bed having burned himself while 'I was mending a [broken] table'. He was burned the previous week. Hot water fell from the table and spilled all over his right foot and burnt him badly. He was finding it difficult to walk. He was writhing in agony and, with little success, trying to fight off flies that were contentedly feeding on greasy stains on his bandaged foot.

However there were two persons that took care of Dengana in his moments of agony. One was Sisa, whom he referred to as *mzala* (cousin); the other was Mfundo whom he referred to as *kayise* (brother). When I was there Sisa had come to give Dengana a packet of tobacco. He left later and promised to return in the evening. I learned later that Sisa's girlfriend was cooking for Dengana. Dengana and Sisa's relationship did not begin in Makhaza. They claimed that their families had known each other from the rural Mt. Fletcher, Transkei. When they were young they had herded cattle together. When they met each other in Makhaza in 1992, they rekindled their childhood memories. Sisa is Dengana's *mzala* because he is the child of Dengana's father's clan sister (*dadobawo*).

On the other hand, Dengana referred to Mfundo as his *kayise* (brother) because the latter is the son of his father's clan brother. He also knew Mfundo from Mt. Fletcher where the latter is married and has five children who, at the time of research, were in the Transkei. Their households in the Transkei are next to each other. Mfundo also came regularly to check on Dengana's condition. It was because of him that Dengana went to the clinic for the injury, since Mfundo owned a car.



Bold lines = Clanship links
Thin lines = Affinal and conjugal links

Figure 6.4 Dengana's relatives

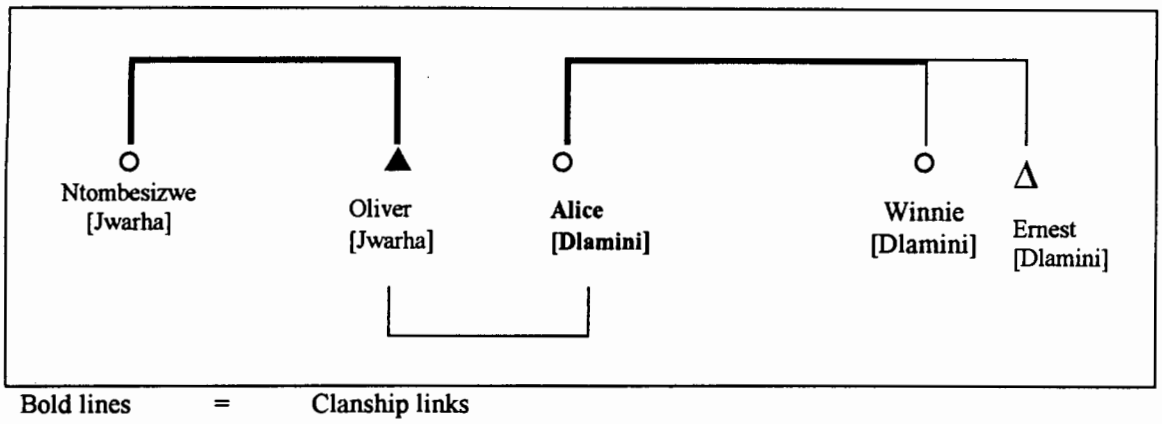
The case of Dengana shows the extent to which clan relatives go in assisting each other in times of need. What is worth repeating in this network is the strength of this relationship since it was not based both on clanship and place of origin. The three men in this case arrived in Cape Town at different times, but through their residential movements came to live near each other in Makhaza. Because they shared clan names and natal homes, they were able to form a functional relationship. Since they treated each other as members of the same household, they were able to take care of each other in critical situations.

The case below provides a different scenario, however. This is in the sense that the people involved in this relationship had not known each other from their place of birth. Nevertheless, the relationship that these people had formed was also based on the notion of clanship. This case describes a social process which created their relationship, and how the relationship was consequently used to channel reciprocal exchanges between the people involved.

Case 6.5 *Inkungu ilala kwiintaba ngeentaba* (the mist covers different mountains): co-operating clans-people and their roles

Alice Ntyatyambo (see Case 6.3) came to know Ernest Bhobho way back in 1982. Then, Alice was lodging in a backyard in Gugulethu (which is situated about 20 km from Makhaza). Alice was then working as 'private nurse' in a suburban house

where Ernest's sister, Winnie (whose original home is in King Williamstown) was working as a domestic worker. The nature of their work compelled them to interact with each other frequently. Since it is customary among Nguni-speaking people (indeed, Africans in general) when meeting each other to mention each other's clan names, these two women discovered that they were 'sisters' through sharing the clan names of their fathers. Both women's clan names are Dlamini (see Figure 6.5). From then on, they cemented their relationship by visiting each other's places of residence.



Bold lines = Clanship links
Thin lines = affinal and conjugal links

Figure 6.5 One of Alice's reciprocal networks

It was during one of these visits that Alice was introduced to Ernest who, then, was staying in a compound in the industrial area in Epping. When Ernest came to stay in Makhaza, they renewed their relationship. Their relationship became stronger after Alice's husband was killed. Ernest claimed that; 'I am looking after her [Alice's] household since there is no man living here'. They referred to each other as siblings and they treat each other as such. Since Ernest is older than Alice, she referred to him as *bhuti* (older brother), and the role Ernest performed was a protective one befitting his status as an older brother.

Ernest was not the only person who aided Alice after her husband died. Ntombesizwe, whose shack was situated across Alice's street, also kept a watchful eye on Alice's home. Ntombesizwe would sleep at Alice's house when the latter and her children had gone to New Crossroads (about 18 km away) to visit her mother, since Makhaza was perceived to be a crime infested area where a shack left unattended was likely to be robbed. Ntombesizwe was introduced to Alice by Alice's late husband, Oliver. The late Oliver and Ntombesizwe both belong to the Jwarha clan. When Alice addressed Ntombesizwe, she referred to her as her husband's younger sister, her *ndodakazi* or *skwiza* (the latter is a term which in township language means husband's sister). When Ntombesizwe had a fight with her live-in boyfriend, she stayed with Alice. The movement was beneficial to Alice since then she was unemployed. Ntombesizwe contributed to the household income.

Although Case 6.5 is different to the previous case, the same principle in the utilisation of clan relatives applies. In both cases the clan relatives regard each other as *abantwana begazi elinye* (children of the same blood). This emphasis on blood is important because it legitimates the relationship built around the notion of clanship.

Relationships that are formed around the idea of clanship are not, however, purely confined to the interactions discussed thus far. The clanship notion is important as a building block also in some relationships which seem to be based on other criteria. The next section explores the role that clanship plays in cementing larger and more structured relationships such as associations and savings clubs.

6.5 Informal 'checks and balances': the relationship between social clubs and clanship in Makhaza

Some voluntary associations which, on the surface, seem to be based on criteria other than blood-linkages are in fact built around the notion of clanship. These associations which contribute to, or are sources of, material support for many urban poor, can be said to be based on formalised reciprocal exchanges. This is because participants in these associations **have** to return a favour. They are different to the dyadic relationships explained above in that these associations by definition imply sets of relationships governed by common rules. The most important binding component that ensures the continuity of these relationships is trust acting as a safety valve to ensure one returns goods due at an agreed upon period. Because there is so much at stake - in material and monetary terms - these associations are hardly ever built between strangers (See Ross 1995:17). The main function of these associations and/or clubs is to redistribute resources amongst constituent members.

Below I present details about one such association which was used as a rotating credit association. However, I do not intend to discuss the details of how people in this association save money. That has been discussed elsewhere (see Lukhele 1990; Ramphele 1993; Buijs and Atherford 1995). This thesis is only concerned with the social processes that led to the formation of this particular association, and the extent to which clanship played a part.

The case below, therefore, examines the relationships underpinning this kind of association and looks for the extent to which clanship has had a role specifically in moulding and giving it a personal appeal that derives from mutual trust and responsibility between members.

Case 6.6 *Uthango Lotyebiselwano* savings club

Uthango Lotyebiselwano (lit: a forum for enrichment) was established in 1991. This was a splinter club from a 'big savings club in Site B' (another shack area in Khayelitsha, about 8 kilometres from Makhaza). Originally, a majority of the club's constituent members came from the transit camp in Site B. After residents of this transit settlement were relocated to areas such as Makhaza and Harare (a settlement near Makhaza), the club in Site B effectively ceased to exist. The composition of this savings club's members, perhaps reflected its history.

The objective of *Uthango Lotyebiselwano* is enshrined in its unwritten mission. It is to pool a certain amount of money from its constituent members. The distributions are delayed so that one gives small amounts over a period in order to get a big amount when one's turn comes around (Ramphele 1993; Ross 1995:17 Buijs and Atherford 1995).

Uthango Lotyebiselwano consists of 23 members, all of whom are drawn from different shanty settlements in and around Makhaza. Fifteen members stay in Makhaza, two in Green Point, three in Site B (where it was first established), and another three in Harare. Members of this association include Ntombesizwe (see Case 6.4) and Nonceba (a clan sister of Doris Mlawu - Case 6.1). By the end of February 1993, Doris too joined the organisation after she secured employment. Because of her better education, she became its secretary. She once said, 'I know how to talk to the whites.'

For one to be a member of the club one should be known and trusted by other members. Doris said,

> The rule [although not formalised] is that a person wishing to join should be someone we trust. We do not want any chancers. We are dealing with money here, so it is important that we know exactly whom we are dealing with. If I know you are my brother, you can join because you will not rob someone of your own blood.

'Does this mean a person born by your parents?' I asked her. She said:

> The person might not be your real *mntakwethu* [sibling] but you should know where his *imvelaphi* [origin] is, or be related by *isiduko* [clan name]. In other words, *nibegazi linye* [be of the same blood]. In our *mgalelo* [savings club] most people are clan relatives [*abantakwethu*] of one another. For instance, it would have been difficult for me to join the club if I was not introduced by Nonceba [my sister, because we are of the same clan].

At a casual glance this savings club appears to be devoid of clanship significance. It is when one inspects the composition of the club that the notion of clanship becomes apparent. The context within which this organisation operates required that the members should trust each other. Through the urbanisation history of club members, they live in areas where clanship is one of the symbols or notions with which they identify and recognise. Doris's explanation above substantiates this view.

Clanship relationships are arguably one of the most significant apparatuses employed to safeguard against likely antagonistic interests, and hence guarantee the perpetuation of the club's existence. For instance, Doris was introduced to *Uthango Lotyebiselwano* by Nonceba who was one of the key founder members of the savings club. Nonceba and Doris are both Dlomo and came from Umtata, although not in the same village.[7]

To demonstrate further the argument about the inherent importance of clanship reckoning, I provide another example, this time of a burial association which, although different from the above in terms of objectives, gives priority to the notion of clanship.

Case 6.7 *Ikhaya Lethemba* burial society

Ikhaya Lethemba Burial Society is similar to most burial societies that could be observed meeting on any Sunday morning in most African settlements.[8] *Ikhaya Lethemba* came into existence as a response to escalating costs of funerals. It has become an intensely expensive exercise to bury the deceased members of one's family without financial assistance from these associations. Apart from the obvious financial reasons, *Ikhaya Lethemba* also provides moral support to the family of the deceased, since close kin relatives of many of its constituent members stay in former homeland areas of Transkei and Ciskei.

Originally *Ikhaya Lethemba* (then known as *Sada* Burial Association) was constituted in 1987 by co-workers of a fishing company on the Cape Town docks. The association consisted of only migrants from the district of Sada in the Ciskei. Most members of the association stayed, at that time, in KTC (a shantytown near Guguletu township). Among its founder members, was Matthew Sawila, a household head of one of the sampled households.

According to Matthew, three reasons contributed to the disintegration which occurred between December 1989 and 1991. The third reason directly applies to the theme of my discussion. Firstly, there were conflicts between some members who, according to Matthew, 'fought for high positions, rather than meeting the interests and welfare of the members.' He said that there was also mismanagement of the association's funds. Secondly, was when its core membership dispersed due to forced relocation. Thirdly, he said,

> *Sada* burial association was made up of people who were not related to one another. We knew that we were *abakhaya* [come from the same area], and that was all. Even then, some of us had been recently moved from [various] farms

[7] Doris father's father's father, the late Chief Mtirara, was the paramount of the abaThembu tribe which historically dominated the former Transkei's politics. Nonceba also comes from this tribe which has a colourful history.

[8] This is the best time of the week for burial associations' meetings since most members are free of work commitments. Usually, and on hot days, such meetings are held outdoors at any shady place. An outsider could not fail to notice numerous groups of people sitting on benches. Whether one is in Langa, Gugulethu or Khayelitsha, those congregations are the usual sights in African townships. The author attended one of *Ikhaya Lethemba* meetings.

> where we spent most of our years. Although we moved from Sada to work in Cape Town, we had not known each very well. Maybe that is why people quarrelled.

The burial society was revived by Matthew with a few of its erstwhile members. To break completely from its predecessor, the association was given the new name of *Ikhaya Lethemba*. The objectives and composition of the association were also amended to include any potential member. It was changed from being solely for people coming from Sada and included other people who wanted to join, irrespective of their place of origin. However, Matthew said,

> People joining the association should be part of the family. We have here people coming from both the Ciskei and Transkei [former homelands]. Although we met each other here [Cape Town], we know each other's clan names.

As a result, the association's membership consists of people of only four clans. These clans, in the order of their numerical strength, are Rhadebe (22) (Matthew is a member of this clan), Sukwini (14), and Khumalo (9) and Mdlane (5). One important thing to note is that all the members come from different areas in the Eastern Cape. However, a large number (33) currently stays in Makhaza, and some stay as far away as Langa hostels.

On how the organisation operates Matthew said,

> We encourage each member to bring new members from their families to make the association strong. Everyone is welcome to join, but they should be related to the members. We do this to avoid petty quarrels that might destroy the association.

This case shows the potential of clanship in ensuring the smooth running of the association. It also shows that clanship, as a building block of relationships may act independently of common place of origin. In recognition that people share clan names, and not necessarily originate from the same area, *Ikhaya Lethemba* opened up its membership to include people from different areas. Yet, the majority of its members are related through clanship links.

6.6 Conclusion

The functional importance of clanship relations, as shown above, is to serve both the short and the long-term demands of urbanisation. It can be gleaned from the case studies and discussions presented above that clanship relations provide mediums through which reciprocal obligations can be channelled between various households, both in Makhaza and in other areas in the Cape Peninsula. The chapter has demonstrated that a migrant coming to Cape Town often uses clanship to create a circle of relatives with whom he or she can interact on a daily basis.

Because of the history of migration in South Africa, migrants might not come with their families, or settle amongst relatives known to them before coming into towns. These constraints do not necessarily discourage migrants from cultivating close relationships based on the idea of clanship. When the migrants have been sufficiently integrated into, or have stayed for a long time in, the urban area, their relationship with people they knew in the countryside, in many instances, tends to weaken. However, an additional factor contributing to weakening of rural-urban bonds is unemployment. Sufficient interaction of town and country households requires more money. Most people in the sample, although expressing a desire to return or visit the country sometime in the future, admitted that it had been impossible to achieve this because of financial constraints.

However, the country still serves important purposes for most Makhaza residents. Because of the shared perception that the country is a safe place, most informants see it as a place where their children should be raised. This point will be the subject of discussion in Chapter Seven. Suffice to mention here that even though the country's influence on urbanites appears to be diminishing, the country still maintains its symbolic importance - as a place that people see as their 'real' homes - a sentimental affection of traditional life, in the face of changing cultural context in urban areas. In addition, people living in rural areas see their relatives in urban areas as resources for future migration into towns.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Clanship and childhood: sharing domestic labour

(A)nthropology should have substantive information about children and their domestic circumstances . . . because lacunae themselves often give rise to misrepresentation. In this instance, children's obscurity has created an image of their relative security (Jones 1990:122).

Case 7.1 The present, past and future of Noxolo Mlingwa

It is October 1993. It is also the first year that Noxolo Mlingwa (15 years old) has spent in Cape Town or, more precisely, in Makhaza. She has enrolled at Emithini Primary school in Khayelitsha (about 5 kilometres from her place of residence). She has to walk the distance to and from school daily since her 'parents' cannot afford to pay a bus or taxi fare (about R12 per week). Everyday, she leaves for school at six o'clock in the morning in order to be on time for the eight o'clock school assembly and morning prayer.

Noxolo was born in 1978 in a village in Lady Frere, Eastern Cape Province (in the former Transkei). She was born out of wedlock to Nomakhaya, a daughter of Nomachule with whom she now lives (see diagram 7.1). She never knew her father although she had heard he stayed somewhere in Lady Frere. In 1984, when Noxolo was 6 years old, she was taken to live with her mother's mother's older brother (MMoB) in Katlehong, an African township near Johannesburg. One of the reasons she went to stay with her 'grandfather' was that her mother, Nomakhaya 'disappeared' (*waduka*) in Cofimvaba, a small village town many kilometres from Lady Frere.

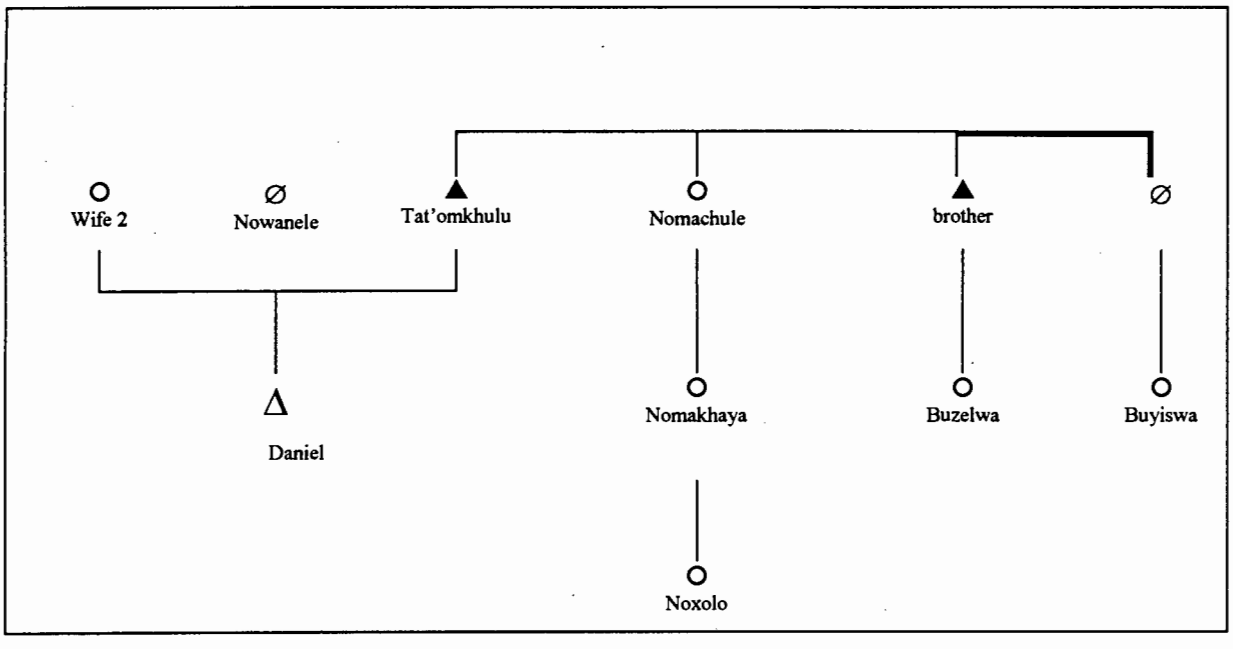
She recounted that:

> There was no one at home who would take care of me. My grandfather [MMoB] was living in Johannesburg at that time, and I asked him to take me to Transvaal 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 never ever saw [my mother] since. She is the only person I miss there. I never saw my father ... I do not miss him because I never saw him.

Noxolo lived in Gauteng with her MMoB and his wife, Nowanele, between December 1984 and 1987. She vividly remembered that;

> In Gauteng ... it was the best place I have ever been. We were staying in the Sotho section of Katlehong called Mokoena [she is Xhosa]. Although there was violence in other areas such as Orlando and the southern side of Katlehong where other tribes [Xhosa and Zulu] were staying, we were living peacefully in our section. There were Venda people but they never created any problems for us. I liked to live there. We used to watch and play net-ball during weekends. I really miss my friends. If I could have money now, I would surely return there. Here [in Makhaza], life is so bad. I do not like it here.

Towards the end of 1987 Noxolo's life circumstances changed drastically when her MMoB and his spouse would 'fight every day'. They then separated and, since the house in which they were staying belonged to Nowanele, Noxolo's MMoB took her to live with Buyiswa (her mother's mother's clan sister's daughter) who lived near Katlehong, in a shack settlement called Mleleki (situated in the Xhosa section). She stayed with her 'older mother' (*mamomkhulu*) Buyiswa for a few months, after which her MMoB took her to live in a small town near Maseru in Lesotho where he married a Sotho woman he met there.



Thin lines = conjugal and affinal links
Bold lines = clanship links

Figure 7.1 Noxolo's close kin links

They continued to live in Lesotho from December 1987 to 1990 until her MMoB died in March 1990 after a long illness. After his funeral in Lesotho, his wife no longer wanted Noxolo to stay with her, as she had her own family to take care of. In June of that year, she sent Noxolo back to Katlehong to her MMoB's first wife. Noxolo recalled that:

> I was happy when I returned to Katlehong because I did not like to live in Maseru. But Maseru is better than Cape Town. But things were not very well in Katlehong the second time I was there. *Auntie* [Nowanele] 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 for the whole year.

Nevertheless, she stayed in Katlehong from June 1990 to January 1993. Noxolo's MMoB's son who was unemployed in Johannesburg, wrote to Noxolo's mother's mother, Nomachule, in Makhaza and told her about Noxolo's predicament. Nomachule requested her employer to lend her money in order to fetch her daughter's daughter. At the beginning of 1993 she sent Buzelwa, a daughter of another of her brothers, to fetch Noxolo.

Length of Stay	*South Africa*				*Lesotho*
	Lady Frere	*Johannesburg*		*Cape Town*	*Maseru*
		Katlehong	*Mleleki*	*Makhaza*	
1978-84	Born here. Stays with maternal grandparents & other members				
1984-87		Stays with Mother's mother's brother (MMoB)			
1987			mother's mother's clan sister's daughter		
1988-90					stays with MMoB in Maseru
1990-1992		Stays with MMB's wife and sons			
1993+				Stays with MM,	

Table 7.1 Summary of Noxolo's movements

7.1 Listen to children talking: introducing childhood in Makhaza

Recently, there has been an upsurge in the number of studies focusing on childhood in South Africa (Reynolds 1986; 1989; Jones 1990; 1994), and elsewhere in southern Africa (Reynolds 1991). In her study about the usages of kin networks among Black Americans, Stack (1974:73-89) devotes a chapter to discussing how children forged links between households. She looks, in particular, at *child-keeping* amongst the residents of a poor slum settlement in the United States, considering this process as a way of forging ties between households that shared similar life chances. Unfortunately, her study of children is arguably incomplete in that her analysis of kin networks concentrates mainly on adults' discourses about childhood experiences, and children's input is secondary.

The significance of children in society has also been belatedly discovered by other social science studies (see Everatt and Sisulu 1992). In the past, childhood has been viewed as a passing stage, a threshold before adulthood that, according to Reynolds (1991:159), never warranted any individual study[1]. 'The implicit rationale for marginalising children', writes Jones (1990:33), 'has therefore been that, by virtue of their incomplete cultural state, children neither qualify as informants about culture, nor are they suitable objects for anthropological enquiry'. This, he later adds, 'engenders

[1] The classic instance is Victor Turner's (1957 and 1962) elaborate and celebrated descriptions of the Ndembu ritual, when young boys are prepared for manhood. There are other South African examples which follow or precede this genre (see Mayer 1961 for example).

the impression that children lead a relatively staid and sedentary existence' (Jones 1990:123).

Writing about the importance of child labour, which constituted about 60% of the labour expended in Zambezi village, Zimbabwe, Reynolds (1991:159) says that children as subjects of study have long been neglected. Instead, they have been 'lumped in an amorphous category of women and children'. She noticed that, in the Zambezi, most children continued to be vulnerable to the vicissitudes of 'life's chances' (ibid.). Only children who are 'within strong kinship groups or harmonious and productive units' were secure (Reynolds 1991:160). On the other hand, Jones (1990) has written an eloquent ethnographic account of childhood in the *apartheid* South Africa where he focused on both children's and their parents' mobility, and the way such mobility affected conjugal relationships and the general well-being of children. His thesis is that a child's well-being, like his/her parents' well-being, is affected by, and affects, the fluidity of households.

There are also some anthropological works that have mentioned children (albeit, in passing) as active participants in domestic units (see Spiegel's 1990 study of migration in Matatiele; and Burman's 1988 definition of children). Indeed, the literature on childhood is expanding with the passage of time. However, as Jones (1990:35) has commented, some studies that appear to have dealt with various aspects of childhood have, on the contrary, not done so very well at all! This is because these studies have documented childhood through the eyes of adult members of the society (see the monographs of Hunter 1961; Mayer 1971; Middleton 1970), or have tended to separate the child's existence from the adults' world (for example the works of Malinowoski 1929 [1987]; Raum 1940 - in Jones 1990).

This chapter thus views children as integral components of the social structure of the community of Makhaza, without which an ethnography of Makhaza would be incomplete. In analysing children's situations, an effort is thus made to reconcile adults' discourses with children's, and to form a single integrated account. I believe such a holistic approach will show clearly children's inter-household movements in Makhaza.

Having said that, the central question one might pose would be **how** childhood in Makhaza is related with themes raised in this thesis. More precisely, **why** should children be relevant to a study of clanship in Makhaza? Granted, children are active participants in the migration process, as the case histories alluded to here show. But are they important when it comes to the formulation and sustenance of clanship relationships? The answer to these questions is answered with case studies affecting children.

Following Stack (1974) I regard children as one of the most important facilitators of relationships between households through their movements from one household to another. Chapter Six of this dissertation has looked at the formation of relationships based on the clanship notion and how such relationships are functionally important in various life situations. This chapter shows how children are exchanged and how that process of exchange was facilitated by clan links. In short this chapter demonstrates the manner in which children contribute to making household boundaries fluid, and how that is possible, *inter alia*, because clanship exists to support that fluidity.

7.2 Learning about networks through children's movements

The role that children play in facilitating relationships is clearly illustrated by Noxolo's life history and movements (Case 7.1). Her example can be viewed as a microcosm of the kind of life experience that many African children have had to endure during different stages of their childhood. Analogous to children's life histories of Lwandle migrants collected by Jones in his study, Noxolo's story (Case 7.1), to quote Jones (1990:31), 'illuminates in qualitative depth, the magnitude and truculence of *apartheid*'s [indirect] assault' on children and their families; her life story is a 'biographical account of *apartheid* in intimate operation'.

Between 1978 when she was born, and 1993 when she had to move to Makhaza, Noxolo had migrated from one place to another six times, staying an average of two and a half years in each settlement (see Figure 7.1). Her movements had adverse influences on her in terms of her education. For example, in 1993, she enrolled in standard 3 at an age where normally she should have been in standard 8 (that is assuming she had enrolled at school at the age of six, the officially approved school-

going age in South Africa). Her various movements had obliged her to sacrifice a valuable five year period of schooling. This includes a year (1990) when she arrived in Katlehong and was refused entry to a school because 'I arrived in the middle of the year and I had to stay the whole year [at home]'.

In Noxolo's case, it is significant to note that clanship relationships played a part in her residential movements. In 1987, when her grandfather separated from his spouse, Noxolo was taken to live with a clan relative in Mleleki. But the question that one might pose is: why that particular clan relative, given that the kinship relationship between them is very distant (see Figure 7.1)?

Unlike in Cape Town townships in Cape Town - where there is a relative homogeneity as far as ethnic groups are concerned - there is a variety of African ethnic groups in areas in and around Johannesburg. For instance, Noxolo and her family were living in a Sotho section while the neighbouring section was inhabited by Venda people. This meant that there was not a large pool of relatives from which they could readily request assistance.

What has this case to do with clanship? In Noxolo's history of movements, a relationship based on clanship was used to give Noxolo a temporary place to live. This was a household in another settlement with which Noxolo's MMoB had a forged a clanship-based relationship. They were related to that household through a sharing of clanship bonds. This household belonged to her MMoB's clan sister's daughter, Buyiswa, whom Noxolo described as *makhulu* (grandmother). It was this household that offered them sanctuary for a few months until Noxolo's MMoB moved to Lesotho.

She referred to her as *makhulu* because she treated her as the same as her mother's mother. It is obvious from this case that people use these clanship relationships to refer to one another - particularly when their relationship is significant to them. First people give meaning to their relationships through describing them in kinship terms, and secondly, people reveal the importance to themselves of kinship terminology (and therefore, kinship relationships) by describing significant relationships through the kinship idiom wherever they can.

Noxolo's case is not unique, but is similar to others in Makhaza and elsewhere. For instance, almost all the respondents wished that they could live with all of those they regarded as their proper household members, especially children, but were constrained from doing so by their precarious socio-economic positions (refer to Doris Mlawu's lamentations in Chapter Six, pp 73-74). Respondents who dared to take their children or dependants from their relatives in other households faced an uncertain future as Case 7.3 below shows.

Case 7. 3 Ayanda's biography of movements

Ayanda was born in 1982 in the district of Ngqamakhwe in the Transkei. She is the third of the five children (and her mother is pregnant with her sixth child). About coming to Cape Town she said:

> I came here in Cape Town ... I was on holiday, last year in December [1992]. I have been here ever since. I like to live here in Cape Town, but I do not like it more than living in the Transkei.

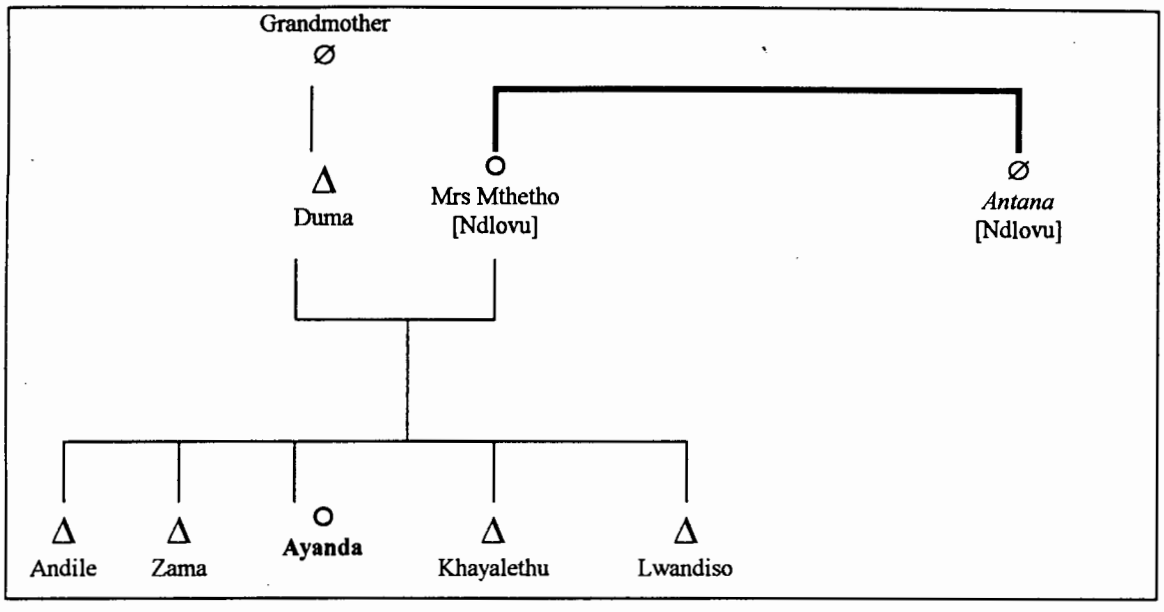
Although Ayanda was born in the district of Ngqamakhwe, she had never lived there for long periods. Her mother's clan sister ('aunt'), who was teaching at a local school in Umtata, took her in in 1986 because she did not have children of her own. However the important reason she took her, according to Ayanda was that:

> In Ngqamakhwe I was living with my older brother and sister. My mother was in Cape Town because [my] father was not sending money for us ... so they said. My mother took only Khayelethu [a younger child] to Cape Town and left the rest of us behind with my grandmother (father's mother). Mother said she would come back quickly but she did not. We were suffering at home. I remember when there was no food and grandmother, old as she was, would go to *nkinqa* [beg for food] from neighbours. I remember that because, at that time, I was not yet at school. We would go from one *lali* [rural village] to another.

Indeed, in December 1986, her 'aunt from Umtata' came to Ngqamakhwe on holiday. When she returned to Umtata, she took Ayanda with her. Ayanda's mother did not know at first. But when she returned to the Transkei after a few years in Cape Town, she was told that Ayanda was living with her aunt in Umtata. Ayanda enrolled at school in Umtata (where her aunt was teaching). She nostalgically recalled that:

> My aunt from Umtata gave me everything I wanted. She had money because she was a teacher. We did not live in a shack like this. I was living in a house made of bricks. We had hot water, television ... we had everything. We ate what we wanted. I was the only child who lived in that house. The only thing I missed was my mother and father, and my brothers and sisters. In December 1992, I came to this place. I did not know that my parents were living in a shack. When I arrived here, life was very different from the one I was used to back in Umtata, and this

place is very cold. I want to go back to Umtata but my mother does not want me to. She says she does not have money to pay for the bus.



Thin lines = affinal and conjugal links
Bold lines = clanship links

Figure 7.2 Ayanda's kinship links

Ayanda has been living in Makhaza since December 1992, and had enrolled at the local school. The chances of her return to Umtata are very slim considering that her aunt has recently died. She had this say about living in Makhaza:

> I do not like to live here. There is violence here ... people are beating each other. One mother and father were beating each other in the street the other day. People here do not behave themselves, especially on Fridays. The place is also very dirty.

I believed she was referring to her parents when she said that because when she spoke about them she expressed the same sentiments. She said:

> My parents like to fight each other. I never liked it but there is nothing I can do because I am a child ... and they are old. My friends here in Makhaza like to tease me about my parents' fights. They say my parents are *bergies* [lit = vagrants; implies they drink too much]. The neighbours too like to laugh at them because [my parents] would fight in the street and everyone would be watching.

Apparently, she did not like to live the way she lives currently. She pointed out that she is ashamed about her home which she saw as the worst in Makhaza. She did not understand the reason they are so poor while her father is working. She commented:

> Our house is very cold, especially at night and there are very few blankets for all of us. We sleep in one bed, me, Khayelethu and Lwandiso because our house is very small. I want to have a beautiful house and very big house like the one next door. That house has a television which is operated by a [petrol] generator. There is a beautiful red sofa, there is a double bed, a room-divider [wall unit] and

> a car. Their house is not raining [leaking], it is not raining like ours. If my mother and father can stop drinking they could afford to make our home very beautiful (see Case 7.3).

Like Noxolo's case (Case 7.1), this case has shown the manner in which clan relatives are utilised to assist in caring of children. When Ayanda's mother was struggling to take care of all her children because her husband was not giving sufficient support, she sent one of her children to her clan sister. Partly because this clan sister had no children of her own and partly because Ayanda's was her 'sister's child', she agreed to feed and educate her as she would have done had she been her own child. It was when Ayanda's *antana* (*makazi* - mother's sister) died that Ayanda was returned to her destitute parents.

Some households in Makhaza found that it was to their advantage to send their children to live with relatives who could more easily afford to keep them. Mr Dengana Ndlovu (see Case 6.4) of one household was not working and his wife was selling hand-woven carpets. When we first met them, they lived with two of their three children, the other one was staying with clan relatives in the Transkei. By a later stage in the research process, his wife, 'Mamotaung, had saved enough money and sent her other children to the Transkei to stay with the same clan relatives because her husband had been unemployed for a considerable time.

The same applied to other households where parents would send their children to live with relatives because they could not afford to feed them. This exchange of domestic labour, that is, through rearing of children, and the role of clanship is explored in greater detail below.

7.3 Child-keeping and clanship

Most cases shown in this chapter point to the fact that children's movements between households had to do with what Stack (1974) has called 'child-keeping'. Child-keeping by members in a network is a sign of a balanced and long-term relationship since it implies the fulfilment of continued obligations between the households. People send their children to households they know very well, in households where their children would not feel inferior. Mrs Malibongwe (see Case 6.2) hammered this point home, when she said:

> The children of Cape Town have many clothes, they even have sleeping clothes, and my children do not have any. For example, my children will wake up in the morning, and 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 house].

On the other hand, the same informant said this about Khayalethu, Ayanda's brother (Case 7.2) who frequented her household, 'I regard him as one of my children ... he sleeps where my children sleep'. She said this because her household and Nowandile's (mother of Ayanda) then seemed to share a similar fate - they were both destitute. Nowandile, a very poor woman, would similarly not allow any children, except those of her friend and neighbour, Nomachule, to visit her household because she would find it difficult to feed them. She said,

> I do have visitors [children] during the day but when it gets late I throw them out because I do not have a place for them to stay and food to eat. No, they must go ... I am very poor.

When relationships between households are strained as a result of adults' conflicting objectives, children are affected. After Mrs Malibongwe's economic position improved somewhat, the interaction her household had with Nowandile's subsequently decreased, and so did their respective children's interaction with each other. The relationships between households depends on whether such households are of similar socio-economic position.

A similar situation contributed to Gloria's severing of her relationship with Alice Ntyatyambo (see Case 6.3 above). When Alice obtained full-time secure employment, her relationship with Gloria hit a low ebb. When Alice had been unemployed (and would be gone for most of the day to search for work), Gloria would look after Alice's children. In addition, the children of both households, were, at the initial stage of the research, visiting each other on a frequent basis. When their parents stopped visiting each other, so did the children.

On one of my visits to Gloria's household, I found her son, Bongolwethu, who was five years old then, playing at a neighbour's house. Also, at that time Gloria had just delivered her third child. According to her, she needed someone to take care of young Bongolwethu since she had to devote all her attention to the newly born child. Though she had relatives who might have fulfilled this role, she could not summon their help

since they were all staying very far from her place of residence. *Antana* (aunt in a diminutive sense) who stayed next door, assisted her by keeping Bongolwethu while Gloria would take care of the younger one. *Antana* and Gloria's households were related because the former's husband was Jwarha, the same clan name as Gloria's husband's clan name.

Even though child-keeping is a reason for some inter-household movements of children, the underlying motivation that compels children to move from one household to another had to do with the quest for survival. Employed relatives who can afford to take on the task are entrusted with the well-being of children of their unemployed and destitute relatives. 'Mamotaung said this after having sent her children to live with relatives in the Transkei, 'If they starve away from my eyes it's all the better because I cry [when] I see them going hungry'.

At the time of the research, a live-in-boyfriend of Doris Mlawu (see Case 6.1), Mr Andile Maneliso had both his two children in Ciskei with his relatives. Because of his situation, he did not regard it as a good idea to bring his two children to live with him in Makhaza since he was unemployed. However, he said, if he could bring them to Cape Town, his children would visit a select number of relatives. He said:

> When my children are here they will stay with me, and if I or my wife [Doris] is not here I would take them to Site C to live with my *mzala* [cross cousin], Ntombizakhe. We are *oomzala* because she comes from my mother's family[4]. They can live with her because *mzala* likes children a lot, especially my children although they never stayed with her.
>
> Also, there are other relatives here in Cape Town where I can send my children to. There is *bhuti* Phephana - an older member of the family - in Langa. He is the son of my father's older brother. He lives in a hostel but that house belongs to him now because he has a business. I only go to him whenever I am in serious trouble. Anyway, I do not want to bother him by borrowing money every time. I would take my children to live with him because there are many children there. These are some of the close relatives that I would allow my children to visit whilst here in Cape Town.

[4] Ntombizakhe is a wife of one of Andile's friends (and erstwhile co-worker). The former's clan name (mam'Thembu) is that of Andile's mother. Apparently, because of her age (she was 28), Andile referred to her as *mzala* (cross-cousins), not as *makazi* (mother's sister).

Andile admitted that he had many relatives living in Makhaza and elsewhere in the Cape Peninsula. However, he could not entrust all those relatives with the well-being of his children. For instance, there was a close brother of his living a few metres away from his shack, but he did not mention that brother's household as a prospective household where his children might, in the near future, visit. This was probably because his brother was also unemployed, and was struggling to make ends meet. The relatives he mentioned were in households that were relatively well off; households to which he was related by bonds of blood and through clanship, and households he was sure would be sympathetic for his plight.

Andile welcomed any relative's children to come and visit his household for an extended period of time but:

> [T]he other thing that might make my relatives, especially children, not to visit and sleep here, is that this place [shack] is so little; there is no room for everyone to stay. You see, even myself, I never slept out of the house because I know most people do not have enough room in their houses for others to visit.

However, some children, feeling poverty in their own households, would choose to visit their relatives' households with or without their parents' permission. This applied to one of my respondents, Mr Sangweni's children. He said:

> They would go to visit my relatives in Khayelitsha. They would go there without my permission. I am forced to allow them. They like to create enemies out of old people. They would go to that mother [one of his sisters] in Khayelitsha and say that I do not want them to visit another [sister] in Site B. If my sister in Khayelitsha wants them, I would not stand in their way. I allow them to go and stay with them. My children also like to go to Site B to my *sibali* [brother-in-law] who lives there.

Due to the inability of children adequately to recall periods which they spent with their relatives, some information regarding children's interaction with other households remains unrecorded. I believe, as Jones (1990) has shown in his study, that such a study requires individual attention. Children's movements portrayed in this chapter are gleaned from both children and their parents' interviews.

However, one important lesson to be learnt from the children's account above is that children's movement histories or children's interactions with other households is dependent on the links that their parents forge. There cannot be a separation of the two. Children in Makhaza had limited choices when it came to places or households with

which they could interact. As a result their opinions are subsumed under their parents'. This is shown quite clearly by these excerpts from children's interviews:

⇒ I want to stay in the Transkei and not here. When I am old, I shall study in the Transkei ... I am afraid of taxis here because they will hit me when I am going to school[5] (Bongolwethu, 5 year-old son of Gloria Kheswayo).

⇒ I do not want to stay in this place [Makhaza]. I hate this place because it is very lonely here ... I do not have friends here. I am also afraid to stay here when it is dark. I want to stay in New Crossroads with my grandmother but mother does not want us to stay there[6] (Neliswa, 15 year-old daughter of Alice Ntyatyambo of Case 6.3).

In practical terms, there was little these children could do to alleviate their situations. Their parents dictated which households they could visit for extended periods. In turn, their parents' choices were severely limited by their own life chances, since movement from one household to another, especially if it requires travel to the Transkei, needed money (a resource most households did not have).

7.4 Some examples of children's movements and clanship relationships

So far, I have detailed some underlying reasons for children's movements both between urban and rural settings, and within the urban complex. I have shown that children's movements are embedded in their parents' networks and their interaction with other households is dictated by their parents. As a result, children's inter-household interactions in Makhaza can be viewed as yardsticks to evaluate the degree of social proximity between households. My research made it clear that, because of the impoverished nature of most sampled households, children were often moved from one household to another to ease the burden of individual household heads, who, for all practical purposes, could not afford the costs of maintaining their children. However,

[5] This reaction came after a 12 year-old child was hit by a taxi bus in Makhaza. That child was on holiday from the Transkei. Bongolwethu had witnessed that accident and had internalised that traumatic accident. As a result, he had been afraid of taxis ever since that episode.

[6] Perhaps, one of the reasons that Neliswa did not like to live in Makhaza had to do with the brutal murder of her father in July 1992 by unidentified people, which left Makhaza residents 'stunned' (South 1-15 August 1992). Neliswa was witness to the calamity, and afterwards had severe psychological afflictions which might take a long time to heal. However, towards the end of the research period, her household moved to New Crossroads, after hearing rumours that her mother, Alice was going to be attacked.

the cases cited thus far have not explained satisfactorily the roles that clanship has taken in facilitating these movements.

Now I discuss in greater detail how clanship relationships facilitate child-keeping and child-exchange processes. However, we need also to recognise that children's inter-household movements were not only for purposes of child-keeping and to provide an escape from the worst ravages of poverty, but had to do with a host of other reasons as well, for example providing children with security, sanctuary and a more stable living environment. Case 7.3 illustrates this.

Case 7.3 Clanship provide sanctuary from domestic violence

After a very long absence from his house, Ayanda's father (refer to Case 7.2) came home one Friday midnight, and forced his way in. It was obvious that he was very drunk. Having had to force the door open, he asked why Ayanda's mother, Nowandile had not opened the door for him. Nowandile admitted that she had heard the knock but, knowing that when he was drunk he would beat her, she was reluctant to open the door. She said, 'I was delaying to open the door in order for my neighbours to come and intervene [as they usually do when they hear the commotion]. On this night, her husband 'beat and beat me, without stopping, in front of the children who were themselves scared to death'.

He stopped beating her when some neighbours intervened. The following day he recriminated her for not waking him in time for work. Again he beat her repeatedly, with an iron rod; and he stabbed her with a screwdriver. This time, he then left her with her leg broken and suffering concussion.

In hospital, the doctor urged her to lay charges of assault against her husband, which she reluctantly did. However, the police did not find him at his place of work. Instead, they left a summons that he should report to a local police charge office. When he heard that, on the Saturday afternoon, her husband returned to their shack. And 'he asked me why I had reported him to the police, and he beat me again, saying that I must move out of the house, me and my children, because he is tired of me and wants a new wife'.

Because Nowandile was scared that her husband might harm the children, she decided to take the children to stay with relatives. She could not place her children with her neighbour and friend, Nomachule (refer to Case 7.1) because her husband would still see them. As she had done before, she went to her husband's (clan) brothers in Phillippi (a shack settlement about 15 kilometres away from Makhaza), and reported that her husband had again beaten her. However, her husband's relatives failed to restrain him:

> They never even talked to him, instead, when I went there the other day to tell them what [father of Khayalethu] had done to me, I found him [her husband] there drinking beer with them. They shouted bad words at me and said a wife is supposed to *nyamezela* [to persevere] - and that I must stop complaining to them.

> They have a fine cheek, because *tata ka Khayalethu* [father of Khayalethu] did not even complete paying *lobola* [bridewealth]. If it was not for these children, I would have left him to marry someone else long time ago.

Since Nowandile could now not rely on her husband's kin, she then took her children to live with a 'brother' of hers, Sabulela, in Makhaya (a neighbouring formal area). He was her brother because his clan name, like Nowandile's, is Ndlovu. Sabulela was a respected elder of the Roman Catholic Church, the church denomination which Nowandile attends. She said:

> I could not take my children to anyone else except my *brother* because we share the same blood. We are both of the Ndlovu clan. Other people here might not take care of them as their own. I have peace of mind now knowing that my children are in good hands under the care of their *malume* [mother's brother].

All Nowandile's children went to stay at Sabulela's house until the dust had settled. At the conclusion of the research, they were still living there, as the trial of Nowandile's husband was still in progress, and the latter still out on bail.

The above case shows clan relatives which can be mobilised for support. These clan relatives provide a choice in selecting which clan relatives are best suited to serve the individual. Nowandile could have used either her own clan relatives or her husband's. However, she chose to use hers because she felt that her children would be taken good care of by them.

A similar situation is discussed below, where children's movements between households tighten bonds between them further. Case 7.4 shows the manner in which clanship bonds were manipulated by one child in his quest for a conducive learning environment.

Case 7.4 A quest for better education and conducive learning environment

Lulamile (the son of Matthew - refer to Case 6.7 in Chapter Six) was born on a farm in Steynsburg in 1979. However, he was only 9 months old when his parents migrated to Whittlesea (Sada), in the then Ciskei homeland. At the end of 1979, his parents were forced to vacate the farm following the death of the farm owner.

They moved to Sada (Whittlesea) where Matthew had kinship ties[8]. After many unsuccessful attempts at securing work in the mines in the Johannesburg area, Matthew finally headed for Cape Town in 1981 where he found employment in the docks. Matthew did not, however, send remittances on a regular basis. In 1986, his wife, Nolusapho decided enough was enough and she boarded a bus to Cape Town. She recalled,

[8] Although Matthew was born in Steynsburg in 1950, his father was born in the Ciskei homeland. Matthew spent most of his life in Steynsburg where he married Nolusapho in 1975. By the time of their eviction, his father had long been dead, but his mother was still alive. It was his mother who decided that they return to Sada to rebuild Matthew' father's homestead.

> You see, our husbands tend to forget us when we are there in the Kaffirland. Sometimes they would send money, and sometimes they would not. I decided to come when I saw that he was not sending money for the children and myself. Truly, I wanted to be near him so that he would support me.

In December 1987, Nolusapho and Matthew fetched all their children from Sada to live with them in the Site C transit camp near Khayelitsha. In January 1988, Lulamile, then 9 years old, recommenced his schooling in a Khayelitsha primary school. In 1991, Matthew's household moved to Makhaza. In 1993, Lulamile was in standard 6 at a high school in Makhaza.

Lulamile was a pride to his parents since he was a very bright child, and was comparatively more educated than all the household's members. By October 1993, Lulamile was finding it impossible to concentrate on his studies because of his many siblings and little space at his home. For this reason, his mother decided to send him to live with Khaya in Section 41 in Makhaza. Khaya, from the Sukwini clan, is the son of Matthew's father's clan sister. Matthew recognised Khaya as the son of his father's sister rather than his own sister's son because of a need to recognise generations. He was a close and long friend of Matthew's household. He is one of the co-founders of the 'Ikhaya Lethemba' Burial Association (refer to Case 6.7). It should be noted here that the two households (Khaya's and Matthew's) were in close contact with each other. It was partly because of that that Lulamile was sent there. Also that these households were related through bonds of clanship made the transaction complete.

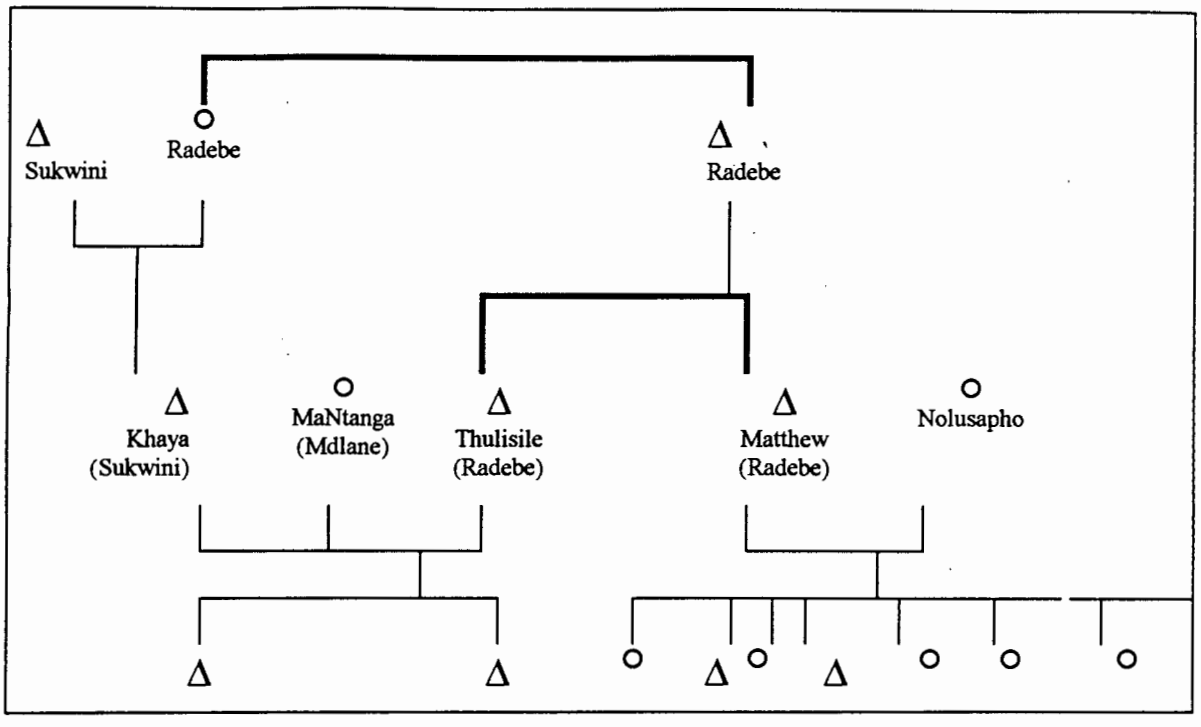
However, after a month of staying there, Lulamile returned home because he felt lonely at his father's *mzala*'s (cross-cousin's) house. Although Lulamile was sent there because he needed space for learning, it was clear that Khayalethu accepted the child with a view to having him to perform domestic chores. Lulamile recalled that:

> It was very lonely there. I did not want to stay there but my mother forced me because father Sukwini[7] did not have children to send to the shops. I came back because I missed my brothers.

He stayed at his home for a few days and, in November 1993, he went to live with MaNtanga, of the Mdlane clan, in a formal house in Khayelitsha. MaNtanga is the wife of Thulisile (Matthew's clan brother) also a key member in the Ikhaya Lethemba Burial society. Thulisile, however, had died in 1990, and Mrs Ntanga had since remarried. MaNtanga was at Matthew's house one Sunday when Lulamile asked her to allow him to go with her to Khayelitsha. By the beginning of December 1993, Lulamile was still staying there. Nolusapho said that she would let Lulamile stay there as long as he wanted, and could enroll at Luhlaza high school (reportedly, the top African school in the Western Cape) in Khayelitsha. She said:

> Apparently, he is happy there because Nomaindiya [MaNtanga] has a colour television at her house, and Lulamile does not feel lonely there since there are children to play with in that house.

[7] Lulamile used Khayalethu's clan name refer to him. This is a common practice.



Key

Thin lines = Affinal and conjugal links
Thick lines = Clanship links

Figure 7.3 Lulamile's clan relatives

Both the above case histories illustrate the role that the notion of clanship - coupled with other notions (in the above case, common association membership) - plays in the exchange of children, or child-keeping. In fact, these two cases display that clanship relationships are not only used for short term needs, that is, borrowing or lending household goods or money, but can be satisfactorily utilised in a more demanding situation, that is, to rear children. The exchange of children between households suggests the close social proximity of a relationship based on common membership of the burial association. The latter relationship is cemented because members recognise that they share clan names. As a result, through their movements, children diffuse boundaries between households engaged in such networks, since they 'may retain ties with their parents and siblings and at the same time establish comparable relationships with other kinsmen' (Stack 1974:63).

7.5 Conclusion

The cases alluded to in this chapter show that children and parents alike feel more secure in households to which they are related by 'blood' than in households where such relationship is lacking. For instance, parents, particularly, perceive that their children, upon living with their relatives, would be well looked after by their relatives. Because of the huge responsibilities which such transactions might entail, children are sent to live with relatives who might have a profound and moral obligation to regard their relatives' children as if they were their own.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Summary and conclusions

> It is at family level that the most pain is felt, and we cannot forget that the African cultural heritage enshrines a broader, more noble concept of the family than that of the West. The extended family has proved a marvellous security for those for whom, otherwise, there was no security at all ... (Barker 1973:492, in Murray 1981:101)

8.1 Summary of key points

This thesis has examined people's everyday social activities and interactions to determine the ways in which clanship has played a part in underpinning them. I have looked at a variety of interpersonal interactions and at how clanship related to them. I have also located the importance of clanship relationships at different levels of social interaction, starting from the household level. These levels of social interaction demonstrate that clan-links are not only called upon for supposed traditional ceremonies as earlier literature suggests (Mayer 1961; Wilson and Mafeje 1963), but are relevant and applicable to people's day-to-day interactions.

8.1.1 Oscillatory migration, intra-urban movements and clanship

Chapters Six and Seven have documented experiences of rural-urban migration and intra-urban movements, considering how the notion of clanship had played a part in shaping relationships between affected people in such migration and movement. I have demonstrated that, in the context of Makhaza's socio-economic insecurity as reflected by the sampled population's low levels of income and their history of political instability, people of this settlement employed clanship in their efforts to cope with the demands of urban life, including the search for shelter. Examples throughout the thesis explain in detail how people seek out clan 'relatives' with the purpose of obtaining a place to stay. As inferred by Wilson and Mafeje (1963), one's clan relatives are scattered throughout South Africa. Therefore, there is always a strong probability that a person travelling from the countryside can obtain a place to stay amongst his or her clan relatives in towns.

8.1.2 Inter-household reciprocity and clanship

I have also shown that it was practically impossible for most people in the sample to maintain their households unaided, even after establishing themselves in the urban area. The sample's socio-economic profile indicated a high unemployment rate amongst males and a growing number of households in which women were the sole supporters of their families, whether or not these households were headed by females or males.

The data presented show that the households in the sample were inter-connected with other households both in Makhaza and elsewhere, for reciprocal benefits. As a popular Xhosa proverb puts it: *Ukuzalwa wedwa ngumlu wenyama* (to be born alone is to be a heap of meat) - meaning that no one can survive on his or her own without assistance. All the households sampled were entwined in local networks of reciprocity, many using common clanship and other clanship-based links as a means of explicating and lubricating those networks.

Moreover, women were the ones who actively sought out and constructed relationships with members of other households[1]. It is easier for women to do this than for men because, in the women's opinions, they are more readily able to empathise with one another's plight. Men, they say, have difficulty establishing such reciprocal relationships because they tend to be very critical of one another. As one of the women among my informants said, 'they are my *izihlobo* [friends or relatives] and they are not my husband's friends. Other men dislike him because they say he is impecunious and poor. As for me, other women sympathise with me when I cry [complain] about hunger'.

8.1.3 Voluntary groups and clanship

Use of clanship has been found to be present in some social groups which on the surface seem to be based on criteria other than clanship. Examples cited - especially Cases 6.6 and 6.7 - demonstrate that when one scrutinises the histories and relationships of these associations, a strong element of clanship is built into them, with clanship being an important means of cementing these voluntary associations. It ties together constituent members in ways that mere contractual relationships cannot.

[1] It is notable that women evoked mostly their own clan identities and not their husbands'.

The context within which these voluntary associations operated obliged members to find a means to trust one another. Clanship was seen by people in such groups as important in providing the element of trust to the group. Some individuals were found to join those associations in which members of their clan were most prevalent. Also, in recruiting new members, emphasis was on clan relatives. Further research with a bigger sample would be able to indicate how widespread this phenomenon is.

8.1.4 Clanship and children's networks

Child rearing, as we have seen in Chapter Seven, was arguably a yardstick with which to measure the proximity and the strength of a social relationship. Despite previous impressions in the literature, children have been found to be active participants in the migration process (cf. Jones 1990). They also play a part in the formation of, and in sustaining, clanship relationships. In their life histories, children were found to have moved from one household to another, and in the course of those movements to have cemented relationships between those households. The life stories of children cited in Chapter Seven show how extended kin networks - frequently made up of clan relatives rather than closer kin - were called upon to see to the well being of children. In some instances, clan relatives who had improved their economic status found themselves entrusted with the care of children of their more destitute relatives.

8.2 The context of clanship reckoning

At the outset of this thesis I maintained that it is important to locate social relationships - in this case, clanship relationships - within the general framework of the socio-economic and political landscapes. Chapter Two has located the statuses of people inhabiting the shantytown of Makhaza in a broad historical framework of squatting in South Africa, particularly in the Cape Peninsula. The focus there was on the past government's pernicious treatment of black South Africans, particularly the so-called illegals and squatters, throughout the past few decades. Also, it was shown that the government's attempts at guiding urbanisation did not result in the intended effects. Instead, the myth that the major towns of the Republic could be kept as white people's domain was shown to have been vigorously and persistently contested. Africans

continued to migrate *en masse* to towns - albeit in a disorderly fashion - mainly in response to impoverishment in the former homelands.

The massive movement of Africans from the countryside into towns and cities was not without deprivation and sacrifices on their part. Apart from the state's punitive actions to 'put Africans in their place', Africans in towns had to sacrifice their family life and living conditions. Fear of action by the repressive *apartheid* state's agents meant that many settled in areas fundamentally unsuitable for human habitation.

In the Western Cape in particular, Africans defined by state laws as illegal were repeatedly expelled from one squatter area after another, only to move to the next such area. Previously established social networks were eroded in the process as these so-called illegals found they had to contend with even more squalid conditions. They were condemned to live in tin shacks, with unemployment and poverty stigmatising them even further. Since the state considered them *personae non gratae* in so-called white towns, the squatters were never granted welfare packages to assist them in making ends meet. They had to eke out the few resources they possessed to sustain themselves.

It is with this backdrop constantly in view that I have examined the idea of clanship as a catalyst in the formation of workable relationships that provide people with strategies for survival. The thesis has been inspired by the excellent studies by Stack (1974) and Lomnitz (1977), respectively among poor African-American urban United States dwellers, and the marginal community of a South American peri-urban settlement. These authors have argued that in situations similar to those in Makhaza, people employ various cultural resources to provide relationships that are used to help make ends meet. I have argued similarly, in this thesis, to show that clanship is prominent among the cultural resources evident in the practices of people used to form adaptive strategies.

8.3 Limitations of the clanship literature

As indicated in Chapter Four, little of the South African literature recognises that clanship is an important rallying point to provide what I have labelled 'guaranteed relationships'. Most of the literature tacitly suggests that, in urban situations, clanship relationships become irrelevant in the face of other associations that people have

created (see Hunter 1961; Wilson and Mafeje 1963; Mayer 1971). When clanship is mentioned, it is associated with its 'traditional' functions, such as sanctioning of marriages between people, rites of passage, and 'traditional' ceremonies (Pauw 1973; Hunter 1961:462).

The limited literature there is that focuses on clanship, has broadened our understanding of the 'traditional' clanship structure and significance as the basis for defining corporate groups. But it has provided little by way of demonstrating how such a structure functions in the everyday processes of daily life - save for the supposed traditional functions. I have demonstrated that clanship is still applicable in urban situations since it is a catalyst of many relationships found there.

8.4 The construction of clanship relationships

Before I conclude with discussion about the construction or reconstruction of clanship identities, it is helpful to indicate some connections between different issues raised in this thesis regarding households and social networks based on clanship that were built over time. These connections bring into focus some concepts and terminologies that people in Makhaza used to describe their social relationships. On one hand, these concepts concerned the way people situationally conceived a household as dissimilar from, and yet connected to, other related terms such as a house (*umzi*), home (*ikhaya*), and homestead (*usapho*, or *intsapho*). On the other hand, I have shown the manner in which clanship terminologies are the same as terminologies used to describe the relationships of members of a household.

8.4.1 The fluidity of the household in Makhaza

At various points, especially in Chapter Five, I have talked about the fluid nature of households. More crucial is that the very notion of household is itself quite fluid. I have underscored that the concept 'household' is elusive since it is never comprehensive enough to cover all aspects of what constitutes a domestic unit, specifically the kinship related aspects of such units. As a result, we need to be highly circumspect in using it to define aspects of social organisation. The illustrations presented in this thesis indicate that the concept of household as a self-supporting unit was not applicable to the sampled population of Makhaza.

People in the sample conceived a household differently than the way in which literature on the concept of a household suggests (for example, Murdock 1949 in Stack 1974). Amongst people in the sample, the term 'household' is understood differently according to peculiar situations. It could mean *umzi* - the physical parameters of the building (co-residence) where the inhabitants 'eat from the same pot'; *usapho* - sharing the same ideals for the perpetuation of the group (commensal and reproductive unit), or *ikhaya* - a place where one's *inkaba* (umbilical cord) is symbolically buried (see Wilson 1961 and Pauw 1973).

For instance, if one looks at the terminologies that people of Makhaza used to denote a household, one finds that there is no consistency in that usage. Moreover, their use of these terms is very broad in nature, in that the concepts they use have less to do with geographic disposition than with relationships that cut across households. The concepts they use refer to broad networks of relatives - known as the 'family' - depending on the choices exercised by the individuals who form those networks or relationships. This means that even amongst relatives, one chooses which person or group of persons with whom to associate. The implication is that any analysis of households should take into consideration all the social actors that are in constant contact with each other as well as the roles that each actor performs in such relationships or networks.

As have I shown, the nature of urbanisation in South Africa (Chapter Two), along with other structural problems of mass poverty and acute unemployment and/or underemployment (Chapter Five), have meant that families have continued to be divided over generations (see Murray 1981:100). For instance, most respondents cited did not perceive their little shacks in Makhaza as their *amakhaya*, or *imizi* because they believed that those were in the Transkei where they were born and where the bulk of their dependants resided, or at least that they all saw as their home. Yet, they viewed all the people they mentioned as relatives as their *usapho*. Therefore, they drew close connections between a household and kinship group; the latter tended to overlap with the former.

However, there is a paradox here: not all the people they mentioned as relatives co-operated, co-produced or worked to the benefit of all members of the kin group. Although at times they helped each other when required to do so (for example, in

funerals etc.), it cannot be said that they formed a household defined in terms of co-operation. Partly because of the high costs of travelling to and from the countryside, some urban families could not, for decades, interact with their counterparts in the countryside. Nevertheless, they would constantly refer to them as part of their *usapho*. To complicate matters even further, there were some kin members whom they did not recognise as forming part of their household, but with whom they nevertheless had close relationships.

The ethnographic data presented here beg a host of questions regarding the concept of household. In what sense does the 'household', as a descriptive concept, accommodate these manifold renditions of kin-links, cooperations, etc.? In what sense can 'household' as a blanket term be applicable in Makhaza (or in other urban situations) where the forces of urbanisation have disrupted the supposedly traditional life of African people (cf. Smith and Wallerstein 1992, in Spiegel et al 1996)? In what ways do people themselves conceive their social organisation? Should we discard the term 'household' for a more analytical or subjective terminology that harmonises paradoxes inherent in this concept?

The above questions, and others that remain unanswered, indicate that there is an obligation to look afresh at the concept of a household as an analytical label (Spiegel et al, 1996 who deconstruct the household concept in urban situations). Because of changing family structures and other dynamics in human lives, there is a need to fashion other concepts that could usefully and relevantly address people's changing perceptions about themselves.

One way of addressing this difficulty is to employ what I call subjective terminologies, or emic categories, to denote the particularities of the people under study. What this means in practice is that one should refer to the emic categorisation in order to bypass or minimise the analytical confusion that the term household often raises. It is necessary to employ subjective concepts in order to bring together all the complexities raised here. Because of problems of acting as a cultural interpreter, I have been required to abandon the emic perspective, that is, I have continued to subvert emic categories to a set of etic categories. Further research on household should more extensively reflect

people's understanding of the concepts by employing their categories and terminologies for analytical purposes.

8.4.2 Situational use of clanship identity

There are some analogies between the paradoxes of the household concept and the terminologies used to describe relationships based on the clanship notion. One important phenomenon I observed in Makhaza is that people's construction of clan terminologies is closely related to how they perceive the household. Therefore, one needs to understand the changing nature of the concept of household prior to the comprehension of people's utilisation of the clanship relationship, since the latter is determined by the former.

A relationship based on clanship can be conceived as either *isiduko* or *isibongo*. These terms are synonyms from different Nguni dialectics and both are often invoked when unknown people meet each other (the example is the way relationships in Case 6.1 were formed) and on ceremonial occasions, for example when a ritual is performed. The use of these terms simply means the recital of a family tree or genealogy, often using clanship as a criterion.

As pointed out, people related by clanship can potentially form close-knit groups *but not all people who share the same clan-names form such relationships with one another* (emphasis added). Clanship-based social relationships therefore involve an element of choice. The criteria used to form such relationships can be manifold. This is despite the fact that they are said, by those involved, to be based on common clan allegiance. As we have seen, these are functionally important in Makhaza. Firstly, because of its history, Makhaza is composed of people who not only came from different corners of the Republic, but of people who mostly did not know each other prior to their settlement there. Secondly, the Xhosa-speaking community in this settlement is proportionally the majority (there was only one person in my sample who spoke a first language other than Xhosa). Thirdly, because of their socio-economic insecurity, people in Makhaza strove for relationships that are culturally sanctioned; relationships that are based on a metaphor of blood are important in this regard. Clanship notions provided symbolical relationships that have the same basis as relationships that draw much more directly on a biological idiom. Moreover, not only

are the terminologies used important, but so is the functional importance attached to such terminologies.

8.5 Conclusion

This thesis has covered points concerning one overriding issue: that there is a need that studies not only document the ways and means people employ to survive, but that they examine also the social and cultural constructions of those 'ways and means' of survival. Among these, I believe, are the issues of clanship and clan-identity which are under-researched in the context of South African work that tries to understand poor people's creation of instruments for survival. Clanship should not only be perceived in the context of so-called traditional festivities which is where most literature lays emphasis. Rather, it should be seen as a cultural idiom that is readily utilised by people to confront the often alienating realities of urban life.

There is thus an imperative to approach the study of clanship situationally in the way I have done in this thesis. As shown above, one way of doing this is to examine the context of relationships that people form from time to time and to determine the extent to which clanship features as the cementing fluid. Although clanship is inclusive in nature, it can also be exclusive. It is used to broaden one's pool of relatives, and yet at times it also narrows down who those relatives are.

This points to the fact that, for a clanship relationship to function smoothly, additional factors should be taken into consideration. Perhaps the most important of those is the willingness of individuals to form relationships which are advantageous to both parties. People in the sample taken from Makhaza did not form relationships with a clan basis on a principle of ascription. Rather they created working relationships that were reinforced through appeals to the notion of clanship, appeals that were made consciously. In doing so, people found means to trace clanship relationships if necessary to preceding generations.

As a result of the classificatory system of categorisation and expected roles that each actor is supposed to perform, participants in relationships were able to manipulate their differential clanship positions for their benefit. Yet it was clanship and clan names that people used for these purposes. They drew on a cultural idiom that was salient for them

and their life experiences. This reflects again the importance of recognising the manner in which cultural continuities occur, with cultural artefacts - in this case, clanship - being simultaneously maintained and transformed by people's lived experiences.

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