

ASSAULTING CHILDHOOD:

**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF
CHILDREN RESIDENT IN A WESTERN
CAPE MIGRANT HOSTEL COMPLEX**

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This study documents the lives of children between the ages of 10 and 15 years who reside in migrant worker hostels in the Hottentots-Holland region of the Western Cape. It focuses on three particular aspects of the children's lives: their domestic circumstances and relationships prior to their residence in the hostels; their experiences of everyday life in the hostels; and the quality, extent, and determinants of their education over time.

The children's domestic circumstances before moving to the hostels had been disrupted in the extreme. This disruption took various forms, but was caused primarily by the participation of parents and other significant adults in labour migration. Consequently, the children's histories are characterised by high levels of mobility, where children themselves have migrated, by frequent separation from parents, and by high incidences of foster-parenting. Testimony by the children indicates that they have felt this domestic disruption acutely.

A further consequence of the children's residential and domestic mobility has been regular interruptions over time in their schooling. Factors such as the frequency of the children's own movement, separation from their parents, devaluative attitudes towards education by temporary foster-parents, and vicissitudes in their economic circumstances have meant that most of them have progressed less than half as far at school as they should have done. This is compounded at Lwandle by the state's refusal to provide a school for hostel

children, and by the inadequacy of the 'self-help' teaching which takes place there as a result.

The children's everyday lives in the hostels are examined in relation to the severe limitations on space and privacy which exist there. Particular attention is granted to children's perceptions of the hostel milieu, to the difficulties which parents experience in rearing children in the hostels, to parent-child relations, and to the games and other play-activities in which the children engage. Perhaps the most prominent feature of life in the hostels which emerged during the research is the frequency with which children are exposed to acts of extreme violence. The study documents both the children's accounts of this violence, and their diagnoses of it.

In conclusion, questions are raised about the future of these children and others like them. Attention is also directed towards the potential for further research into childhood by anthropology and other social sciences.

The study grants primacy to children's viewpoints over and above those of their parents and other adults in the hostels, and one of its implicit objectives is to demonstrate the value to anthropology of children's insights into social life. It makes extensive use of the children's own testimony, both written and oral, and of life history material.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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There are four people whose marks are imprinted firmly on this work. Themba Mkozi was my research assistant and friend for five months of the fieldwork; he is still very much my friend. His warmth, engaging manner, and the rapport which he developed with the children of Lwandle were the most valuable of my research tools. I owe Themba a great deal for these things. I have also to thank my office partner, Marian Heap. Dreaming is valuable, innovative, and it can be pragmatic and real; I learnt from Marian's dreams, and they are written into this study. Professor Martin West has supervised my work for the past five years. His encouragement, moral support, and generosity are boundless. Without the guidance of him and Emile Boonzaier, whose gentle collusion (I suspect) pointed me in the direction in which I really needed to go, I would probably never have begun this study. My debt is enormous. Throughout the eighteen months for which I have been working on this project, Corinne Jones has provided me with far more than care, support, understanding, clean clothes, razor, and the maps for the study: she has made it all worth doing. For more of this, I would start again tomorrow. I know that I do not have to.

There are many others to whom I owe my gratitude: Dr Mamphela Ramphele and Dr Pam Reynolds for their ideas and valuable assistance; Nosakela Balfour, David and Ulrich of Sakhile Arts Project, Julia Sloth-Neilsen, Mary Comrie, Lynne Helme, and workers from the Somerset West Advice Office, all of whom aided in the field in various ways; Christopher Ngunze, 'Jennifer', David, and Len are Lwandle residents whose help and support I could always count on; Dr Mugsy Spiegel for his advice and bets, both of which spurred me towards completing this work; my parents for their support and encouragement; and all others whom I have momentarily forgotten. My thanks to all.

Finally, this study belongs to the children of Lwandle. It is etched out of their lives, their honesty, and their care for people. It is their story. I tried to teach them, but instead they taught me. If nothing else, I hope that the study does justice to the children who made it. That is enough.

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THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD¹

Principle 1

The child shall enjoy the rights set forth in this Declaration. Every child, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.

Principle 2

The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.

Principle 3

The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

Principle 4

The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end, special care and protection shall be provided both to him and his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.

Principle 5

The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.

Principle 6

The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, wherever possible, grow up in the care and responsibility of his parents, and, in any case, in an atmosphere of affection and moral and material security; a child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and to those without adequate means of support. Payment of State and

¹ Resolution 1386 (XIV), adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1959.

other assistance towards the maintenance of children of large families is desirable.

Principle 7

The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture and enable him, on the basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.

The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which shall be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.

Principle 8

The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.

Principle 9

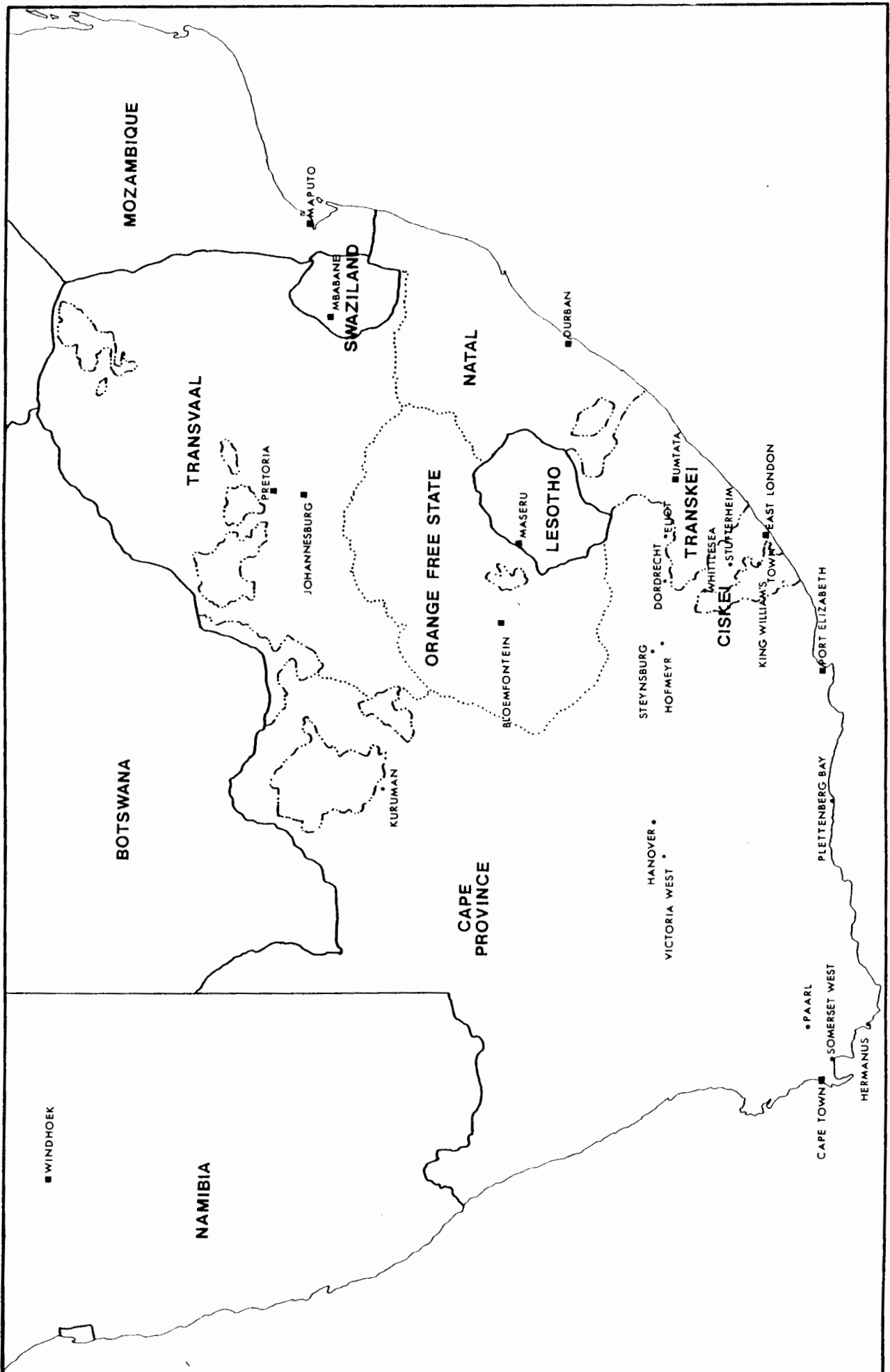
The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form.

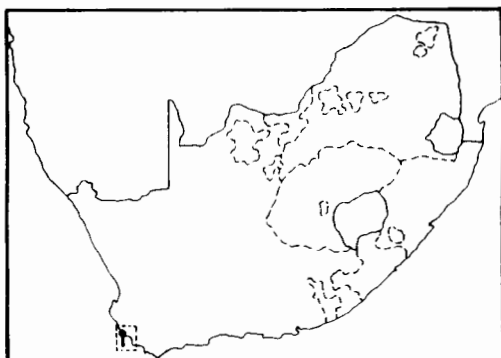
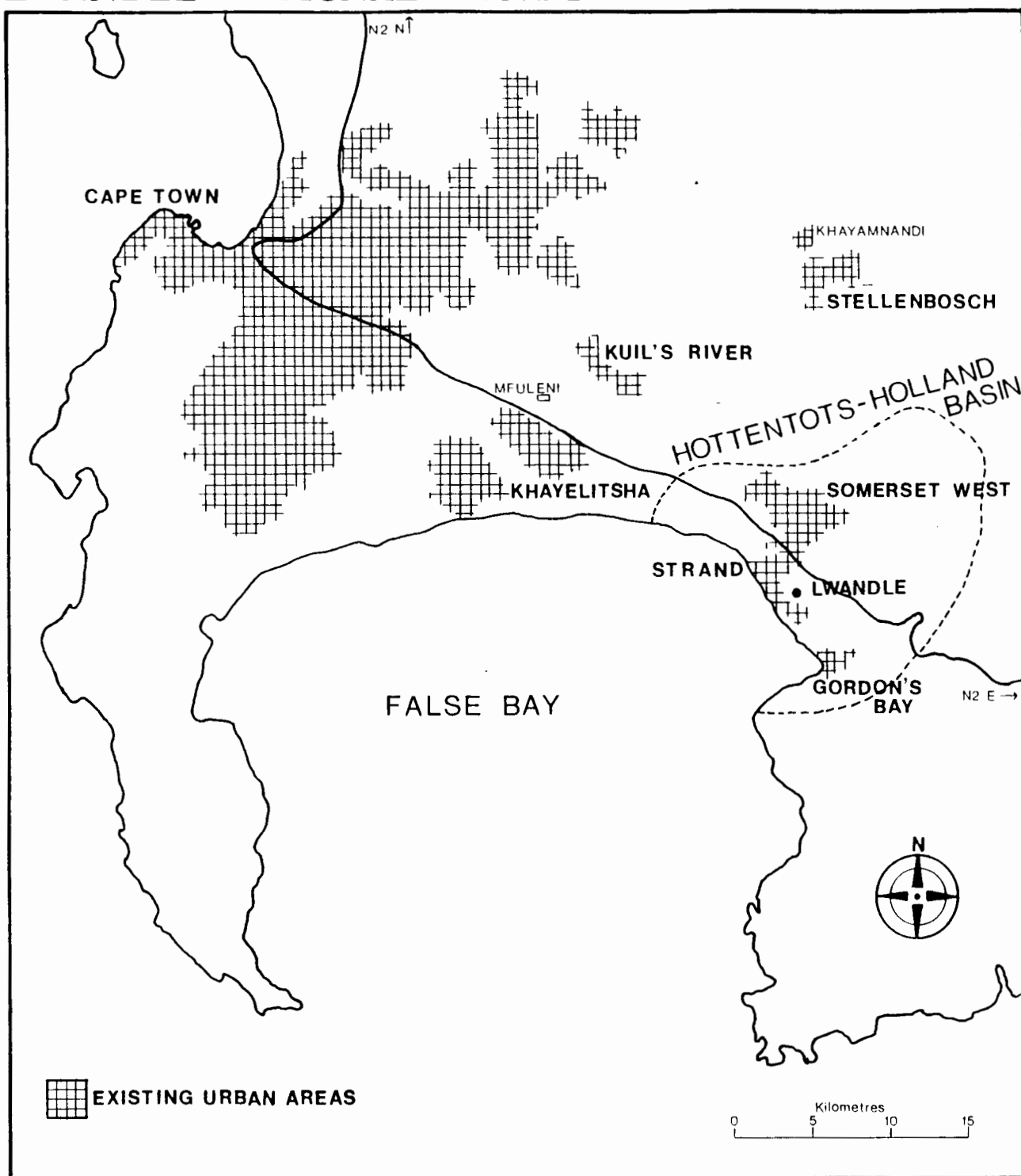
The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development.

Principle 10

The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

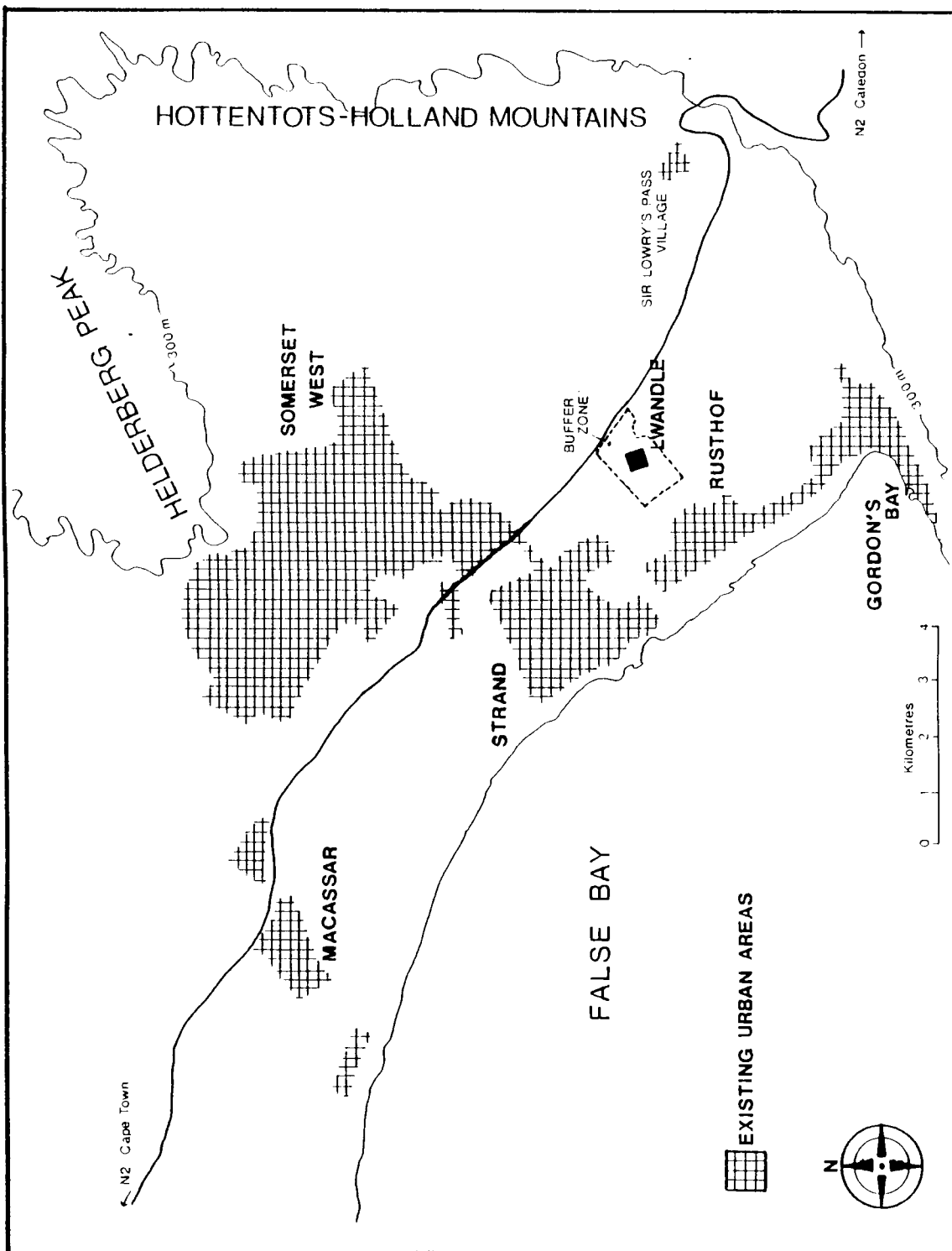
MAP I: SOUTHERN AFRICA AND SOME CHILDREN'S RESIDENCE





LWANDLE: LOCAL CONTEXT

MAP III



CHAPTER 1

PREFACE:

NOTES ON THE ETHNOGRAPHY

This dissertation is an ethnographic study of the lives of 24 South African children - children who were born into, and who have grown up subject to, the system of apartheid¹. When fieldwork began in early 1989, all of the children were living at Lwandle, a complex of migrant worker hostels situated close to Somerset West and the Strand in the Western Cape (see Maps 2 and 3). All were of rural origin, having spent the largest parts of their lives in the Transkei or Ciskei, or in farming districts or small towns in common South Africa, and most belonged to families whose principal members had been migrating for purposes of employment for much of their working lives. The children ranged in age from 10 to 15 years, and were all Xhosa-speaking².

The study examines the circumstances of the children's lives, both at Lwandle and prior to their residence there. In essence, it is an account of the multiple ways in which apartheid policy has impinged upon the lives of these children, fragmented their families, disrupted their home-life and their schooling, and forced on them conditions of the most awful squalor, violence, and human degradation. But it is also an

¹ For the purposes of this study, I have followed the definition of a child contained in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 1): "A child is every person up to the age of 18 years unless, under the law of his or her state, majority is attained at an earlier age" (in Tribute December 1989:50).

² In terms of the Population Registration Act of 1950, as amended, the children are classified as 'Black'; this Act also defines (sic) the categories 'White' and 'Coloured', as well as various sub-categories within them. Such classification is offensive and, as Suzman observed, attempts to 'define the indefinable' (in West 1988:100); it has also had immensely harmful practical implications. In the few instances in which it has been necessary to employ these terms, I have included them in inverted commas. For the remainder, I have used the term 'African' to refer to the category of people designated as 'Black' in the legislation.

account of how the children have coped with, and survived, the ordeals which apartheid has thrust upon them. It is as much a celebration of their strength, their tenacity, and their resourcefulness as it is a condemnation of the system which has bred, and indeed necessitated, these qualities in them.

The structure of the study

It is customary for an ethnography to open with a section which introduces in some detail the objectives, methods, and subjects of study, and which generally defines the parameters of the text which is to follow. This study deviates structurally from this standard mode of introduction. The first chapter is devoted entirely to the biography of one of the children - a 14- year-old boy whom I have called 'Xolisile'³. The biography has been constructed out of life history interviews which I conducted with Xolisile, discussions which I had with his friends, his diaries and other written testimony which I obtained from him, interviews with his parents, and my observations of him in and around the school which he attends. It is followed by a formal introduction to the study, and by the remainder of the ethnography.

My reasons for beginning with Xolisile's biography are twofold. The first is a pragmatic one. There is a severe paucity of ethnographic literature on children in South Africa, and the field is therefore wide open in terms of what research needs to be conducted; indeed, the vacuum is so large that there is as yet little informed basis from which to begin such

³ I have used pseudonyms for all of the children, and for all other informants, who feature in the study. As far as I know, there is no correspondence between the pseudonyms used in the study and the statements or actions of people at Lwandle who might, by chance, have the same names.

work. Xolisile's biography exemplifies well the sorts of experience to which the other children at Lwandle have been exposed. Considered in conjunction with the meagre references to children which do exist in the literature, his biography therefore provides both a referential framework for the remainder of the study, and the basis from which its major themes are extrapolated.

Secondly, my inclusion of Xolisile's biography here is part of my concern to display the children, and their experiences, perceptions, and emotions, in as much depth as possible - to present them as acting, thinking, and feeling people rather than as generalized objects in my own primarily self-referential and academic discourse. Melville Herskovits's observation, made some thirty years ago, is still applicable today:

The humanism in anthropology has been masked by the essentially scientific orientation of the discipline as a whole. It is time that we came to recognize its importance in our research and our theory (1960:1).

Xolisile's biography is part of such a mission. By beginning with an in-depth view of his world, and by allowing him to tell of his feelings about it, the biography is intended to lodge the study as firmly as possible within the human context out of which it is constructed. It is a reminder, from the start, that we are dealing with the living experiences of real people⁴.

⁴ It is perhaps important to clarify that the sequence which is followed in the study does not follow the sequence, either chronological or methodological, of the research itself. Xolisile's biography was collected and assimilated throughout the course of the research; it was not its starting point. My inclusion of the biography at this point in the study is thus a stylistic and thematic device.

The style of the ethnography

In attempting to convey fully the qualitative dimensions of the children's lives, I have allowed them to give their own accounts wherever it has been appropriate. Whilst my method of presentation is akin to that which has been mooted variously as 'multivocalism' (Handler and Segal 1984), 'plurivocality' (Crapanzano 1985), and 'dispersed authority' (Clifford 1983) in the writing of ethnography, my motivation for applying it is entirely different.

Very broadly, the lobby for multivocality has arisen out of the perception that ethnographers tend to load their texts in such a way as to assume a higher, and a more comprehensive, epistemological status than that of their informants - what Crapanzano (1986) has called an assumption of "deistic" authority. The objective of proponents of a multivocal approach seems therefore to have been to equalize ethnographic authority by distributing it between ethnographer and informant. The general idea is thus that ethnographies should

...interrelate(s) diverse viewpoints, thereby presenting not an objective account of the social system, but the meaningful relations of myriad social realities...[They should be made up] of lively interaction of many differentiated viewpoints, no one of which is allowed to obliterate the others (Handler and Segal 1984:15).

Such an enterprise is fraught with pitfalls. For one thing, if put into effect it would rob anthropology of its *academic* purpose and value: it is not possible to explain, synthesize, and draw conclusions usefully without assuming Crapanzano's 'deistic' perspective. For another, there are stylistic and methodological devices which in any case inevitably thwart it;

the rhetorical strategies and meta-commentary adopted by ethnographers (Thornton 1985), and the application of their own rules of selection and relevance (Jarvie 1983), are but two of these. In short, authoritative equality - an aberration of extreme cultural relativism - is both analytically barren and intrinsically impossible to achieve since it is always the ethnographer who has the final say, be it either overtly, or covertly in the design of the text itself. It is better that we acknowledge this than hide it behind flamboyantly attractive, but impracticable, new guises.

The philosophical motives of its proponents aside, as a *mode of presentation* multivocalism has the potential for extraordinary qualitative illumination. As Langness and Frank have suggested, ethnography should

...attempt to provide whatever is necessary for the reader to understand what the described events mean to the participants themselves. [It should] do so not in formulations elicited from hypothetical questions to informants, but in reports which fully evoke the volatile and evanescent acts of living which human events really are (1978:18).

Accordingly, I have employed multivocalism throughout the study to provide lived insights into the children's experience, to capture its flavour and character, and to convey a subjective sense of the quality of their lives. Its application in the study is intended merely to enhance the ethnography; it is not an exercise in epistemological management.

The tone of the study

Finally, it is appropriate that I say something about the moral tone which I have adopted in the study. If anthropology is to lay claim to humanistic ideals - as I believe it does -

then it has an obligation to reveal human injustices where it finds them. Following Gordon's (1977:2) example in his ethnography of Namibian mineworkers, I have accordingly employed what Perrow (1972) has called the "expose tradition" of sociological writing. When the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was passed by the United Nations in 1959, the South African government, in company with only a handful of the most heinous regimes, steadfastly refused to sign it⁵. Thirty years later, in 1989, the United Nations ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child; once more, South Africa has refused to put its name to the Convention. The contempt in which the state holds the principles which were laid down in these two documents is attested to in the lives of the children of Lwandle, and in those of others like them. I therefore make no excuses for my vilification of the South African state and its policies.

⁵ See page ix of this study for the Principles of the Declaration.

CHAPTER 2

CHILD OF APARTHEID: THE BIOGRAPHY OF XOLISILE MEMANI

Apartheid ideology is usually analyzed so exclusively in abstract terms that there is a tendency to ignore the actual mechanisms through which government policy becomes social reality for the smallest building blocks in society: the family, the home, and the children (Burman 1986:8).

Xolisile Memani is 14 years old. He lives at Lwandle with his parents, Mr and Mrs Memani, his paternal grandfather, and four of his seven living siblings - an 18 year old sister called Nomvuyo, and three younger brothers, Andile aged eight, Phumzile aged six, and Themba aged four. An older brother and older sister, both in their early twenties, live in hostels at Khayamnandi near Stellenbosch (see Map 2). Another older brother had a fight with Mr Memani when he was a teenager, and the family have not seen or heard from him for almost five years; they do not know whether, or where, he is presently living¹. Two other siblings died before Xolisile was born, and an older sister, Vuyiswa, died when he was 11 years old (see Diagram 2.1).

A waif of a child, Xolisile is thinner than anyone of his age that I have seen. On the rough, stone-strewn soccer field close to the school it was almost invariably he who tumbled to the ground in the wake of collisions with other players. In the classroom, at play, and around the hostels it was Xolisile who was shoved and jostled so easily, by children both younger

¹ This was the situation when I interviewed Xolisile and his parents. As will become evident in Xolisile's testimony, there were times during the research period when his oldest sister was also resident with the family at Lwandle. Thus what may appear to be inconsistencies in the biography actually reflect changes over time in the circumstances of the Memani family.

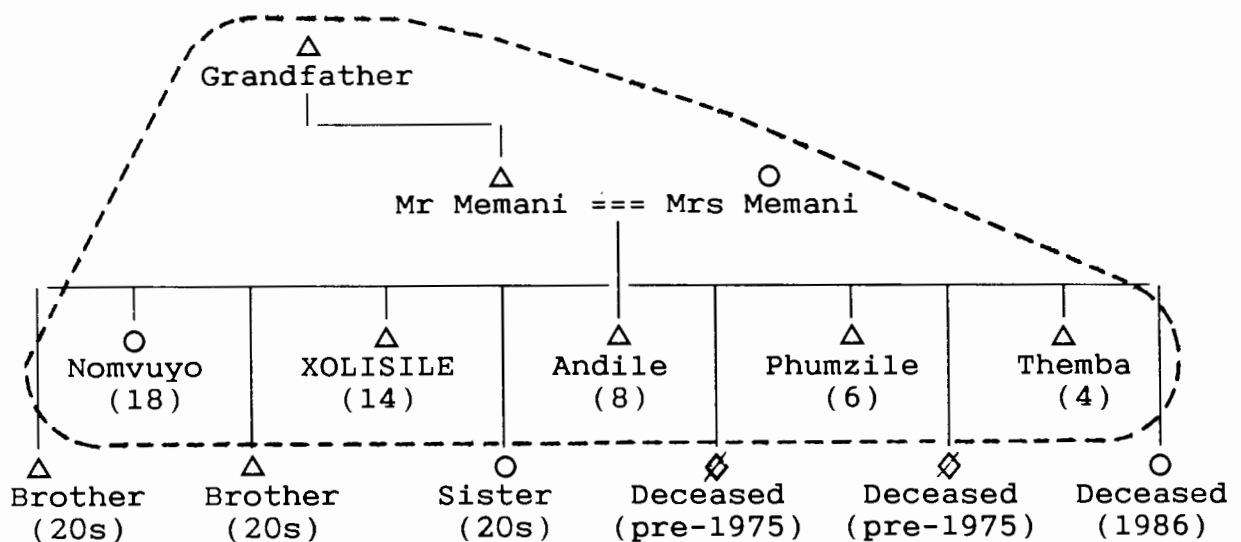
and older than himself, in those sudden moments of confrontation which flare between children who are friends. His outsize clothes - a dirty-white shirt, grey trousers bunched at the waist by a piece of rope, and a beaten and gaping man-size pair of shoes - clung incongruously to his slight frame. He never wore socks, and in wet weather water would seep into his shoes from the large puddles which surrounded, and sometimes even flooded, the school. With the occasional addition of an old, thinly-knitted jersey, which he seemed to share with his younger brothers, these were the only items of clothing that I ever saw Xolisile wear.

But Xolisile also has vitality and charm which outweigh by far his paltry physique. When volunteers were called to run errands from the school, to move desks and benches, to clean the classroom, Xolisile's hand was first in the air. He was often off at speed around the hostels, running messages, taking bread to children at the creche, and buying tea for the school-children on cold days when soup rations were exhausted. If chores required the involvement of other children, it was Xolisile who quickly took the lead; scolding and enlisting those more reluctant than himself; encouraging, allocating, and instructing; he was always a prominent figure amongst the children. His unwavering cheerfulness, and seemingly perpetual grin, were infectious.

Xolisile's perceptions are acute. More than any of the children, he understood my interest in their lives, and was ready to tell me at length about his family, the hostels, and the people who live there. His anecdotes were full of detail, wit, and asides, and, once he realised that I was interested to

hear anything that he had to tell me, he became a spring of information, often seeking me out to inform me about some small detail which he had previously forgotten, or to volunteer information which he thought might interest me. During interviews, his accounts were punctuated only by my insistence that he should stop so that his speech could be translated for me, and by his deep cough which persisted throughout the time that I knew him.

Diagram 2.1: The Memani Family²



The past: Xolisile's life before Lwandle

My mother came to Lwandle to work. My mother once said that she does not like the idea of children staying in other places. My mother wants all of us to be together [Xolisile: "My Family"].

Hanover: 1975 to 1982

Xolisile was born in 1975 in the Karoo town of Hanover, where he lived with his mother and siblings until he was seven

² Those family members included within the slashed lines are those who are resident at the bedhold at Lwandle.

years old (see Map 1). Throughout this time Mr Memani was employed as a labourer by a company involved in road construction, and lived away from his family at the various places that he was sent to work. His visits to his family were erratic and short, and their frequency depended by and large on where he was working at any particular time. When he was based at construction sites close to Hanover, Mr Memani was sometimes home for four or five nights a month; when he was based further afield his visits were much less frequent, and there was once a period of close on two years when he did not see his family at all. He never stayed with them in Hanover for a continuous period of more than about two weeks. This was to be the general pattern of Xolisile's contact with his father until he was around 12 or 13 years old.



*Xolisile and friends in the school-room.
Xolisile is at centre, with the younger child on
his knees.*

The family lived in a house in Hanover which was rented from the local municipality. Mrs Memani worked as a cleaner in a general dealer store, using her wages to meet the rental payments on the house; for the rest, the family survived off monthly remittances from Mr Memani. In 1982 these remittances suddenly ceased. Mrs Memani attempted to make contact with her husband, but his employers had moved him to a new work-site and she did not know how to locate him. (Mr Memani maintains that he was working at a place from which he could not send money to his family; his wife is adamant that he is lying, and that the money was used on women and drink.) Mrs Memani's wages were too low to keep herself and her six children, and the family survived for a few months by calling on the meagre savings which she had put by, and later by selling some of their more valuable household items. When the savings were exhausted and there was little else remaining to sell, Mrs Memani gave up her job and the house, and took Xolisile and his siblings to stay with her sister in Victoria West.

Victoria West and Bloemfontein: 1982 to 1985

Xolisile was seven years old when the family moved to Victoria West in mid-1982. He had entered Substandard A (Sub A) at the local school in Hanover that year, but had to leave school when his family moved to Victoria West. Mrs Memani did not find work in Victoria West. Because their mother could not afford the school-fees, neither Xolisile nor any of his siblings entered school in Victoria West upon their arrival; nor did they enrol at school the following year.

Mr Memani visited his family in Victoria West after they had been there for about a year. He stayed for a short while, and when he left he took Xolisile with him to Bloemfontein where he was then working. Xolisile was eight years old:

My father came to visit us when we were in Victoria West. I was still very small, and I missed my father. When it was time for him to leave, I cried and asked my father to take me with him. So he took me with him to Bloemfontein [Xolisile: Interview].

In Bloemfontein Xolisile lived with his father, his father's girlfriend, and the girlfriend's young daughter. For much of the time that he was with them they lived in a corrugated-iron hostel building, along with other workers and their families and companions. They also spent some time in a canvas tent at a camp-site alongside the section of road where Xolisile's father's company was working. Xolisile described his stay in Bloemfontein as one of his most difficult times:

My father had a girlfriend, and I did not like Bloemfontein because of her. She treated me badly, and I wanted to go back to my mother. She used to *moer* [beat] me all the time. She had a daughter who was the same size as me, but she gave me all the work. I used to carry big drums of water. Sometimes I would ask her why she did not send her daughter to fetch the water, and then she would beat me. She beat me almost every day. When my father returned, I told him that she beat me. Then he would sometimes beat her [Xolisile: Interview].

Hanover: 1985 to 1986

Xolisile spent just over a year in Bloemfontein, and then requested to be taken back to his mother, who by that stage had moved back to Hanover where she and Xolisile's siblings had acquired a room in a house occupied by "many" other people. Xolisile had not had any formal education after the family moved to Victoria West, and he arrived back at Hanover too late

to register for the current school year. His education therefore only resumed in 1985, some two and a half years after he had last attended school. He re-entered Sub A aged about 10 years old.

Shortly after the beginning of the school year, in early 1985, Mr Memani was transferred from Bloemfontein to the Western Cape. He lived at Lwandle, and Mrs Memani, who had been unable to find employment upon her return to Hanover, joined her husband there in the hope that she might find work in the area. One of Xolisile's older brothers accompanied his mother, the other had disappeared from Hanover shortly after Xolisile's return from Bloemfontein the previous year, and his oldest sister was living and working in Plettenberg Bay at the time. The remaining five children - Xolisile, Nomvuyo, Vuyiswa, Andile, and Phumzile (the youngest sibling, Themba, was born soon after Mrs Memani arrived at Lwandle) - continued to live in the house in Hanover, along with the other residents. Xolisile was 10 years old, Nomvuyo and Vuyiswa were then about 14 and 16 years old, and Andile and Phumzile were four and two years old respectively. According to Xolisile, none of the adults who lived in the house was charged with caring for the children. Xolisile described his separation from his parents:

There were many more things for us to do [than at Lwandle], and I usually did not go to school. It was a bad time because my mother was away and I was used to having her with me. She sent me money, and we bought food and sweets with it. My sisters used to cook the food and stay with my [younger] brothers. Sometimes I helped them, but usually I was with my friends. I liked to play with my friends in Hanover [Xolisile: Interview].

Xolisile's parents visited the children briefly over Christmas at the end of 1985, and returned to Lwandle in January of the following year. Vuyiswa died shortly after Mr and Mrs Memani had returned to Lwandle. Neither Xolisile nor his parents know any details about her death; Xolisile was only able to say that she had been sick, and that other people in the house had dealt with her body. He was about 11 years old at the time.

In autumn of 1986, a few months after Vuyiswa had died, Mr and Mrs Memani sent money to the children in Hanover, bidding them to join them at Lwandle. Xolisile and his siblings took a bus to Cape Town. They did not know where Lwandle was, and eventually begged accommodation in one of the Cape Town townships³. Xolisile knows neither which township it was, nor with whom they stayed. The children's hosts enquired about Lwandle, and after two days the children found transport to the township with a taxi which passed by the hostels.

Lwandle and Khayelitsha: 1986 to 1989

Xolisile had been staying at Lwandle for no more than a few weeks when there was a spate of 'trespassing arrests' by the police in the hostels, and his mother and two youngest brothers were detained as a result⁴. Mrs Memani and the boys spent two days in Pollsmoor Prison. After the fine had been paid and they were released, Mrs Memani took Xolisile and his

³ 'Lwandle' is Xhosa for 'the sea'; moreover, Africans often talk about 'uKape', 'the Cape', when referring to either Cape Town or a particular area of the Peninsula. If the children were not issued with specific instructions as to where to go, it is not suprising that they could not find Lwandle: they would have known only that their parents were at 'the sea' in 'the Cape'.

⁴ Influx control legislation had been abolished in March of that year, and women and children could therefore no longer be charged in these terms. Since pass laws did not apply, police arrested people on the grounds that they were trespassing on state property. This tactic is discussed in more depth in later chapters.

siblings to Khayelitsha where they lived in a corrugated-iron and plastic shanty for about six months. During that time Mrs Memani found part-time employment as a domestic worker in Cape Town. In early 1987, when Xolisile was about 12 years old, Mrs Memani and the children moved back to Lwandle. They have been based there ever since.

For the remainder of 1987 Xolisile spent much time travelling with his father to the various places around the Peninsula that he was sent to work. Father and son would leave Lwandle early on Monday mornings, usually returning only on the following Friday afternoon. Towards the end of 1987 Mr Memani was diagnosed as having contracted tuberculosis, and shortly afterwards was retrenched by the company for which he had worked since before Xolisile was born; he was informed by company management that his retrenchment had nothing to do with his illness.

Xolisile was in his twelfth year when his father was retrenched. With the exception of Mr Memani's brief holidays, at that stage Xolisile had been separated from his father for approximately nine and a half years, had lived without his mother for about two of his 12 years, and had lived in the absence of both of his parents simultaneously for around a year and a half. In addition, he had enjoyed only one year of uninterrupted schooling since he had first entered Sub A some five years previously; ironically, this was the year that Mr and Mrs Memani had left the children alone in Hanover. In 1988, his thirteenth year, Xolisile entered Sub B at the school at Lwandle.

The present: Xolisile's life at Lwandle

There are no streets, no houses, and no gardens at Lwandle. There are no fences, no parks, no playgrounds, and no pillar-boxes. There are even no trees and no grass. Lwandle consists of little more than row upon row of hostel blocks, most of which are indistinguishable from one another in respect of their size, shape, colour, and state of disrepair. Built during the early years of the influx control era, the hostels were designed to provide communal accommodation for a maximum of 2 186 male workers. They are presently home to more than three times as many men, women, and children, a substantial number of whom have neither incomes nor any other place to go. Families are crowded together in small dormitories, each of which is furnished with eight beds. Many families share a single bed between all of their members: people sleep two or three to a bed, they sleep packed closely together on the concrete floors, and they sleep in shifts. Children are conceived in the same circumstances. Food is cooked on primus stoves next to the beds, and people wash from basins of cold water on floors strewn with dirt. In the ablution blocks, the plastic buckets which serve as toilets - each of which is shared by around 120 people - overflow on to the floors.

Many of the hostels have not been renovated or repaired since they were built some twenty to thirty years ago: walls are cracked and mouldy, wind sweeps through broken windows, and when it rains people cover themselves with plastic to avoid as best they can the water which leaks down on them from the roof. Apart from mange-ridden dogs, and a few rusty and immobile

motor vehicles, there is nothing outside but mud and filth and the constant stench of human excrement. This is Xolisile's everyday world.

Family and domestic life

I live well at home. I stay with my mother, father, brothers, and sister. Some of my sisters are unemployed. Only one of them is working. Last year my grandmother died, and one of my sisters also died. We are very poor at home. My mother was working in Cape Town, but she does not work any longer. My father worked at building roads. He left the job and never worked again. [Xolisile: "Who I Am"]

Along with Xolisile's grandfather, the Memani family share a bungalow at Lwandle with between 50 and 70 other people. During the week the number of people staying in the bungalow is at its lowest, but increases over weekends when workers who live on-site during the week, and others - such as relatives, boyfriends, and girlfriends from other townships - come to stay. As in most of the hostels at Lwandle, the Memani's bungalow is constituted by two rooms of equal size, each of which leads off a narrow entrance-hall (see Diagram 4.2). As far as separating the rooms off from one another is concerned, the entrance-hall is largely ineffectual: there are no doors which close the rooms off from one another, and sound, vision, cold, and wind have free path between them. For all intents and purposes, the bungalow consists of one room.

The bungalow was designed to accommodate 16 people, and is furnished by the state with nothing more than the same number

of narrow, steel beds - eight beds in each room⁵. The total of 16 beds, and the approximately 6 metres by 12 metres of floor-space which constitutes the interior of the bungalow, accommodate all of the people who live in and visit it. It has one external door, which leads outside from the entrance-hall. Xolisile described his bungalow in his writings:

The hostel I live in is dirty and unhygienic. The hostel is overcrowded. Most of the people in the hostel are youngsters. I stay with my parents, brothers, and sisters. The place stinks. People urinate and excrete in the hostel at night. The hostel is noisy. In our house we try to clean and discipline ourselves. In the room there is someone who sells beer. During the weekends the people sing and shout. [Xolisile: "The Place Where I Live"]

Most families in the Memani's bungalow have one bed-space between their members. The Memani family is however more fortunate than other residents of the bungalow in that they share two bed-spaces between them - a single bed and a double bunk (a single bed which they have converted). The two bed-spaces are not situated alongside one another, and each is neighboured by the beds of other residents of the bungalow. Mr and Mrs Memani occupy the single bed, the grandfather and 18-year-old Nomvuyo share the top bunk, Xolisile and his youngest brother sleep on the bottom bunk, and Andile and Phumzile usually sleep on the floor alongside one or other of the beds. When the floor of the bungalow floods during heavy rain, Andile and Phumzile join those who sleep on the bunk. All of the

⁵ In the context of accommodation such as this, where a number of people, and even an entire family, may share one bed-space (the area of the bed and the floor surrounding it) between them, the conventional analytic concept of the household is clearly inappropriate. Following Segar (1988) and Ramphela (1989a), I have employed the concept of the 'bedhold' as the basic unit of domestic analysis. The occupants of some bed-spaces have converted their beds into double-bunks. Whether the bed is single or a double-bunk, the term 'bedhold' refers to all of the people who are attached to, and live at, the bed-space. In cases where a family may occupy two bed-spaces in a bungalow, the occupants of the two beds are still deemed to constitute one bedhold, since for domestic and economic purposes they generally constitute a single functional unit.

family's belongings are stored in two suitcases above Mr and Mrs Memani's bed, and in a small locker which is built into the wall alongside. The Memanis, and most other residents, have erected curtains around their beds so as to afford themselves a measure of privacy.

Like other residents of the bungalow, the Memani family frequently has visitors who stay over for weekends: Xolisile's sister from Khayamnandi sometimes visits, and there is also a seemingly endless stream of other relatives - from the Transkei, from Grahamstown, and from Khayelitsha - who stay in the bungalow with the family from time to time. When this happens, sleeping space is at even more of a premium, and Xolisile and Themba usually have to find place on the floor along with Andile and Phumzile. Similarly, when visitors stay



The exterior of Xolisile's bungalow. His room is to the left of the door. The window visible to the right of the door is that of the second room in the bungalow. In the foreground is a vegetable seller.

with those occupying the beds which neighbour those of the Memani family, which occurs over most weekends, there is not space for Andile and Phumzile on the floor next to their parents, and they have to find place elsewhere in the bungalow.



The interior of Xolisile's room, taken from the entrance-hall. The people in the photograph are residents of the room who are not related to Xolisile. The room usually accommodates between 25 and 30 people, and the one alongside it accommodates around the same number of people.

Apart from the odd piece-job which he occasionally picks up, Mr Memani has been unable to find employment since he was retrenched at the end of 1987. Xolisile's mother and Nomvuyo have also not been able to secure steady employment: at times they find domestic work for one or two days a week, but neither seems to keep these jobs for very long. Since none of the

family is involved in informal sector activities of any kind, the Memanis survive primarily off the grandfather's pension, which he travels to the Transkei to collect, irregular contributions from Xolisile's brother and sister in Stellenbosch, and the charity of neighbours; Xolisile is also sometimes called upon to seek means of contributing to the upkeep of the family. When they are not looking for work, Xolisile's parents and Nomvuyo spend much of their time in the shebeens which are dotted around the hostel rooms⁶.

Meals for the Memani family are prepared by either Nomvuyo or Mrs Memani on a small primus stove inside the room. At home Xolisile is usually provided with two meals a day. The first meal, which consists invariably of dry bread and coffee, is taken at around three o'clock in the afternoon when Xolisile returns from school. The second meal is usually eaten at around eight o'clock in the evening, and consists of either *mphokoqu* - boiled sugar beans, sometimes with vegetables mixed into it - or porridge. When there is food remaining from the previous evening, which is rare, Xolisile eats these left-overs with his afternoon meal. There is very little variation from this diet, although Xolisile did say that when his sister visits from Khayamnandi, or when his father is paid for the few hour's work he occasionally finds, they do sometimes eat sheep's heads, offal (intestines), or chicken pieces. However, there are also times when there is no food to be cooked, or when Nomvuyo and Xolisile's parents are drinking elsewhere in the hostels and the evening meal simply does not materialize. When this happens, Xolisile and his younger

⁶ I was not able to discover where they find the money to drink in the shebeens as frequently as they apparently do.

brothers either do not eat, or they find somebody who is willing to share their food with them.

Apart from the food which he is given at home, Xolisile is sometimes provided with a small meal at the school. Served daily at noon, this meal consists of a cup of soup and a slice of bread. Children who wish to partake in it are required to pay 10c for every meal, and Xolisile frequently does not have the money. On some occasions his inability to pay is overlooked, but often he eats nothing until school is over in the afternoon.

At school, work, and play

Xolisile is absent from school frequently, certainly more so than most of the other children, and there are times when he does not attend classes for a week or more. When questioned about this by the teacher, he commonly gives one of two reasons: either his parents have not been able to afford school-fees for that week, or his clothes have been dirty. As far as the latter was concerned, Xolisile would never elaborate further; however, one of his friends explained:

Xolisile's mother does not wash his clothes. Our mothers do washing so that we have clothes to wear to school. If Xolisile's clothes are dirty then he must wash them himself. But he does not like to wash clothes. That is why he does not come to school.
[Mphumzi: Informal Discussion]

But there are other reasons for Xolisile's absences which he never himself revealed. Firstly, his friends said that Xolisile is beaten often by his parents, and that at times he does not come to school because he is too embarrassed to be seen with the bruises which these beatings induce. Secondly,

his friends also said that Xolisile sometimes misses school, apparently following instruction by his parents, in order to work for the day for taxi-drivers who operate from the bus rank at Lwandle. On some occasions he spends the day washing their vehicles, for which he receives small payments. On others he travels with the taxi-drivers, working as a "caller" who recruits passengers and collects their fares; for the latter, he is generally paid R5 to R10 per day. According to Xolisile's friends, the money which he earns from this work is handed over to Mr and Mrs Memani (although he does sometimes have small amounts of cash of his own, which he might surreptitiously keep back from his parents).

Mr and Mrs Memani do not send Xolisile off to work because they do not understand the value of education. Mr Memani never attended school, and Mrs Memani was educated as far as Standard 5. From their own experience, Xolisile's parents seem to recognise only too well that it is important that he attends school:

School is very important. Today, learning is important because people do not want to work with spades. The only work is for people with learning. This is why my children go to school - so that they can find work [Mr Memani: Parental Interview]

Xolisile's oldest sister also encourages Xolisile to attend school:

My sister arrived and my mother told her that I am not going to school any longer. She asked me why. I told her that I did not have money for school-fees. My sister said that she will pay for the school-fees. The following day she gave my mother money, and she also gave money to my father to go to look for a job. [Xolisile: "My Holiday" - April]

Xolisile also recognises the importance of education:

Education helps you to find work, and an educated person does not have to work hard - he does soft jobs. The other people suffer. If you are educated, you do not do jobs like bricklaying. Educated people have money for their children. [Xolisile: Group Interview]

Although Xolisile does contribute to the family's livelihood when it is necessary, he has few domestic duties. Every now and then he is required to sweep the floor around the family's bed-spaces, or to fetch water for washing, but on the whole his time is his own. Soccer is by far Xolisile's favourite pastime. At every opportunity between lessons at school he and other boys dart off to kick a ball around, and after school and over weekends they spend much time practising soccer and watching matches between the many teams which have been formed at Lwandle. There is a proper soccer field at Lwandle, but it is enclosed by a high barbed-wire fence, and anyone who wishes to make use of it is required to pay R2.50 per hour by the state officials responsible for the hostels. Requests by Xolisile and his friends to make use of the field without paying have been refused repeatedly, and as a result they have to play on the rough ground which surrounds the hostels.

Apart from playing and watching soccer, there are other pastimes which Xolisile and his friends enjoy:

On the weekends we drive around with the car which carries pig-waste. We also go to the dumping place [rubbish-dump]. Sometimes we go to town with bicycles. My mother does not like me to go to the dumping place and to town. Sometimes when my friends go to those places I stay at the hostels and play ball. [Xolisile: "My Spare Time"]

The rubbish dump to which Xolisile refers serves the Somerset West municipality, and is situated about two kilometres from the hostels themselves. Xolisile said that he and his friends

search through the rubbish for bicycle parts, for toys, and for items which they might be able to sell. When they do find an item which they think might appeal to people in the hostels, or when they find something which they know a particular person would want or needs, then they clean and, if necessary, mend it, and attempt to sell it in the hostels.

As a result of these activities, Xolisile spends very little time with his family, and Mr Memani said that he is usually at home only to eat and sleep. This worries Xolisile's father:

It is bad for the children here. Whatever you teach your children in manners and discipline, they do not learn it because there are so many other children. In the rural places children have manners. You can tell a child not to do things and he will listen. Here he will go to other rooms and see adults doing a thing, and then do it himself. There is nothing we can do to stop it. [Mr Memani: Parental Interview]

Mrs Memani expressed similar sentiments about the 'waywardness' which children develop as a result of life in the hostels:

The *deurmekaarigheid* [upside-down-ness] of Lwandle causes the children to drink. There are so many rooms and houses here where people drink, and you do not know what your child is doing. In Hanover the children will not drink. You can see where your children are going, and there are not many houses that sell drink. [Mrs Memani: Parental Interview]

Although Xolisile does not spend much time with the members of his family who live at Lwandle, he does enjoy being with his brother and sister who live in Stellenbosch. His pleasure at spending time with them is clear:

My oldest sister came to Lwandle to fetch me. We went to Khayamnandi. My oldest brother asked me why I did not come to Khayamnandi sooner. I told him that I did not have the money. He took me to town, and he bought me under-clothes. There I met new friends. My brother also took me to watch soccer. I enjoyed the short time at Khayamnandi. I told my brother that the school was opening on Tuesday. So

he put me on the taxi back to Lwandle. He said that if I do well at school he will buy me something beautiful. [Xolisile: "My Holiday" - June]

Present, past, and future: Xolisile's reflections

The following extracts from Xolisile's diary reflect the routine, and the quality, of his life in the hostels:

- 14-7-89
Friday When I arrived home yesterday, I saw two guys who were selling a bicycle. Its price was R15. I asked my mother to buy it. She said I must wait for my father. When he returned, he told me that he does not have the money. He said that he only has money for school-fees because they are unemployed.
- 17-7-89
Monday During the week-end the people were drinking beer. In our hostel people were fighting and stabbing each other. That was on Sunday. An ambulance arrived to take the wounded man to hospital. Early on Monday the police arrived at the hostel to pick up the man who had stabbed the other. Unfortunately, the police did not find the man. Our dog was also stabbed on Sunday night. My father was very angry, and he punished my older sister for not looking after the dog.
- 20-7-89
Thursday After school as usual I went to play soccer with my friends. When I arrived home, I found my parents sitting together unhappy. I asked them what was going on. They told me that both of them had gone to town to look for a job, but no one was lucky. They said they were worried about taxi-fares for the next day. I also felt worried.
- 24-7-89
Monday On Sunday there was fighting. One man stabbed another to death. He then came to our house and drank beer. The family of the dead man arrived at our house and stabbed the one who had killed him. He died near the door. People called the ambulance. They asked who killed the man, but nobody would tell them. My older sister knew the man. He lives at room [XX]. She says she does not know the man's name or surname. She only knows his nickname.
- 27-7-89
Thursday Yesterday my mother went to town. I asked her to buy me a jacket. She said that she did not have the money. I said she must buy me shoes because I am going to Khayamandi on Saturday. My mother drinks beer. When she becomes drunk she starts to beat us. My father also drinks. Then he stands up and asks for some more food.

- 28-7-89
Friday
My mother went to work yesterday. When she arrived at home I told her that the teacher asked for school-fees. The teacher also said that I must have grey trousers and a white shirt. My father said that he did not have money for these things.
- 3-8-89
Thursday
Yesterday we played with a big red ball on the soccer field. We stopped playing at about 5 o'clock. When I arrived home I was very hungry. My mother gave me some food to eat. I poured some water in the washing-basin to wash my body. I washed outside. My father said I must go inside the house because I will become sick.
- 4-8-89
Friday
I went to the beach yesterday. I asked for some money from my father, but he said he did not have money. Me and my friends went to the beach and we started to swim. After we swam, we went back home. I asked money again from my father. He asked me why I did not ask my mother. I said that she will not give me money.
- 7-8-89
Monday
Yesterday my friends went to Strand on their bicycles. I asked to borrow Ntobeko's bicycle, but he would not let me. So I went back home. When I arrived at home my mother was drunk. I told her that I did not like her drinking wine. My father was sleeping at the time. My sister gave me food. I ate, and after that went to play soccer with my friends.
- 14-8-89
Monday
It was nice yesterday. We were playing soccer at the soccer field. After we played, we watched another soccer match. An old man said that I must sell his eggs. I sold all of them, and gave him his money. He paid me some money. After the match I went back home. I saw my father speaking to an older man.
- 15-8-89
Tuesday
Yesterday I did not come to school. My mother did not have the money for school-fees. She said she will give it to me on Thursday. Our teacher said that those who do not pay the school-fees must not come to school. That is why I was not at school.
- 17-8-89
Thursday
My older brother sent me to town to buy some fish. I went to town and came back. We ate the fish. I said to my father that I was going to play soccer. He said that I like to go away from home. I asked another man how much a bicycle was. He said it was R90. I really want it.
- 21-8-89
Monday
During the weekend my mother fought with another man. My older sister asked the man why they were fighting. The man hit my sister. My sister asked the man - "why are you hitting me?". He

said it was not her business. My sister ran away to fetch an empty paraffin bottle, and threw it at the man. The man pulled his knife out of his pocket and stabbed my mother. My sister ran to call my uncle. My uncle came, and asked what was happening. The man asked my uncle what he is going to do about it. He also stabbed my uncle. My father was sleeping at the time. We woke him to tell him what was happening.

Looking back through his life, Xolisile admits that it is difficult for him to decide where, and at what times, he has been happiest. He said that he likes being at Lwandle because his parents are there and his older siblings are close by. At the same time, he also has extremely fond memories of his earliest years in Hanover:

Things were peaceful in Hanover. People did not stab each other, and I was not frightened to walk around. Here I am frightened. Things were also better there. There was money for food, and my mother did not drink all the time. [Xolisile: Interview]

Xolisile's second stay in Hanover, when his parents were both away at Lwandle, was very different:

There is no money in the rural area. All the people come to Cape Town to look for jobs. The people are starving in the rural area. They even struggle to get bread flour. That is why most people come to the city. The people come with their children and their wives....There is no money in the rural area in such a way that we did not even have money for shoes and school-fees. [Xolisile: "Life in the Rural Areas"]

Xolisile also enjoyed travelling around the Western Cape with Mr Memani. Simply being with his father probably had a lot to do with this enjoyment, but this was not how Xolisile explained it:

It was good with my father. My mother used to get drunk, and I did not like to be with her when she was drinking. She started to drink when we were in Khayelitsha. My father used to visit us in Khayelitsha. Sometimes my mother was too drunk to cook the food, and my father would beat her. It was better to be with my father. He did not get drunk like my mother. [Xolisile: Interview]

One of Xolisile's most shocking memories from the first year he spent at Lwandle is of an assault by the police on one of the residents of the room in which he and his family live:

Sometimes they [the police] wrongfully arrest people. We have seen people being beaten by the police many times. They use batons to beat the people. One morning at dawn the police came to our room. The people were still sleeping. They started to beat a man in our room while he was sleeping. They said that he had stolen a TV set, but he was the wrong person. I was frightened because the man was bleeding and swollen, and they still carried on beating him. Nobody told them that he was the wrong person. Everybody else was silent and hid under the blankets because they did not want the police to beat them too. [Xolisile: Group Interview]

Despite his exposure to police brutality of this kind, Xolisile is adamant that he wants to be a policeman when he grows up:

I want to be a policeman one day. I like the job. I want to arrest people who murder others. I will prevent people from committing crimes. I would like to be a policeman so that I can protect children. They must not be misused. I would like to build a big house in Cape Town. [Xolisile: "What I Want to Be When I Am Older"]

Xolisile is acutely aware of the economic disparities which exist in South Africa, and of why he fits into society where he does. On what he would do to change the world as he knows it, Xolisile wrote:

If I was God I would have stopped the fighting and killing of people. I would have built houses for every human-being. I would have liked all the people to stay in harmony. I would also have called the black people and the white people, and told them to stop apartheid. The black people must speak to the whites. If I was God I would have made the black people to be rich, just like the white people. The black people must be like white people. They must be the same. [Xolisile: "If I was God"]

In most ways, Xolisile is an ordinary child with ordinary dreams: he wants a bicycle, he wants to be a policeman, and he

wants a large house. It could be that he will realise his dreams. Indeed, perhaps Xolisile already has a bicycle, perhaps he *is* moving towards his ambition of becoming a policeman, and perhaps he *will* one day build himself a large house in Cape Town. But apartheid's cards are already stacked so high against Xolisile that it is improbable that he will ever achieve these things: even if 'black people' and 'white people' do speak to one another, as this 14-year-old child has suggested, and even when apartheid legislation is expunged in its entirety, the effects of the system on him will reverberate for a long time afterwards. Xolisile is a child of apartheid; that is something which can never be erased.

CHAPTER 3

UNCOVERING CHILDHOOD: THE THEMES AND METHODS OF STUDY

Xolisile's biography is of course unique to him as an individual: it encapsulates one child's experiences of, and feelings about, the world in which he is growing up. But it is also much more than merely an idiosyncratic history. As Keegan (1988) has suggested, life history has the potential to reveal vividly both broader aspects of society, and the larger forces which operate within it. Life histories are

...not simply embellishments of the historical record, nor are they merely alternative subjective perceptions on the objectively established past. Large questions are raised here for our consideration....All sorts of hidden dimensions of the past are revealed in the life histories of obscure people. [They show] some very large-scale processes of social change at work in the small-scale context of individual and family experiences (Keegan 1988:131).

Viewed in this way, Xolisile's biography is more than just an existential recital of one child's life. At a personal level, it illuminates in qualitative depth the magnitude, and the truculence, of apartheid's assault on an ordinary child and his family. In this sense, his biography is an account of apartheid in intimate operation. At the same time, Xolisile is but one of thousands, perhaps even hundreds of thousands, of children who presently reside in the worker hostels which are scattered in abundance throughout urban and peri-urban South Africa. He is also one of untold millions of children, both of his own generation and of generations past, whose lives have been affected by institutionalised migrant labour in this country. Theirs are realms of experience which, although so

common in South Africa, have remained largely shuttered from all but those who are directly part of them. Whilst it can never represent completely these realms, Xolisile's biography affords a glimpse into them. At this level, his story is therefore more than just a singular account of childhood in apartheid South Africa: it is also testament to the experiences, and quality of life, of a huge and ever-increasing number of his fellow children.

The remainder of this study examines the lives of another 23 such children. Like Xolisile, most of these children have fathers who have migrated for purposes of employment for much of their working lives; some have mothers who have also done so. The study documents what this migration has meant for the children. Like Xolisile, all of them presently live in the hostels at Lwandle; their experiences there are little different to his. The study describes these experiences. And like Xolisile, these 23 children are but a few amongst the enormous number of invisible children in this country. In documenting their world, the study aims to make the lives of at least some of these hidden children more accessible to those who have thus far remained either blind or impervious to them.

Where are the children?: a review of anthropological literature

Anthropology as a whole has devoted little serious attention to children, either as informants about the societies of which they are part, or as subjects of study in their own right. This neglect derives in a large part from antiquated notions held by anthropologists regarding children's relation to, and roles within, society and culture (for similar

criticism see Hardman 1973; Schwartzman 1976; La Fontaine 1986; Travathern and Logotheti 1989). With only a very few recent exceptions (see Schildkrout 1978; Reynolds 1989), the general assumption within anthropology seems to have been that children are passive recipients of an extant adult culture, that their adherence to it is as yet perfunctory, and that their ideas and behaviour are merely partial and immature imitations of the culturally-complete adults who surround them. As La Fontaine has observed,

[i]n general anthropology has retained an outdated view of children as raw material, unfinished specimens of the social beings whose ideas and behaviour are the proper subject matter for a social science (1986:10).

Hardman's comment had a similar import:

They [anthropologists] see the child as continually assimilating, learning and responding to the adult, having little autonomy, contributing nothing to social values or behaviour save the latent outpourings of earlier acquired experience. The adult plays the role of either frustrating the child in its toilet training, feeding or other activities, or compelling the child to fit the cultural pattern (1973:87).

The implicit rationale for marginalising children has therefore been that, by virtue of their incomplete cultural state, children neither qualify as informants about culture, nor are they suitable subjects for anthropological enquiry. Culture, it seems, is adult; it is thus represented most comprehensively in the thoughts and actions of adults.

On the face of it, these assertions may appear to be extreme. Firstly, many of the earliest monographs did include fairly detailed expositions on children and childhood experience, most often in the contexts of age-sets, family life, systems of kinship, and rites of passage (see Rivers

1906; Malinowski 1913; Radcliffe-Brown 1922; Basden 1938).

Secondly, there has been a proliferation of studies which have dealt with such topics as initiation and puberty rites (see Mead 1928; Richards 1956); with children's socialisation (see Mayer 1970; Middleton 1970; Leighton and Kluckhohn 1974) - examined and referred to by earlier anthropologists as 'indigenous education' (see Dennis 1940; Raum 1940; Read 1959); and with the impact which culture has on children's personality (see Read 1959; Honigman 1967). Children have also surfaced to a lesser extent in studies of parenting arrangements (see Goody 1982; Bledsoe 1990), and of childhood play (see Bateson 1955; Lancey and Tindall 1976; Schwartzman 1979).

Nevertheless, although they were often significant actors in these studies, many of them have in fact marginalised children and trivialised childhood as a state of being. Firstly, they have generally failed to take account of what children themselves have to say about their experiences. Richards's (1956) ethnography of a girls' initiation ceremony in Northern Rhodesia, published as a full-length monograph, is a prime example. Some years subsequent to its publication, Richards freely admitted that

I failed even to speak to the two Bemba girls I saw initiated at a three week's ceremony in 1934 which I documented in great detail afterwards (1970:12; my emphasis).

Similarly, Read's (1959) work on indigenous education amongst the Ngoni of Nyasaland, published rather appropriately under the title of *"Children of Their Fathers"* (my emphasis), was in her own words "...a close study of the home and of parent's attitudes towards the bringing up of their children" (1959:11;

my emphasis). Implicit in this is the assumption that adults are better qualified to talk about childhood than are children themselves, and that children's testimony has little of value to contribute to anthropological knowledge.

In addition, most studies which have ostensibly dealt with aspects of childhood have in effect not done so at all. For example, concerned as they are with the onset of adult status, studies of initiation and puberty rites almost invariably reveal far more about what it means to be adult than they do about what it means to be a child. Whilst Mead's (1928) study of pubescent girls in Samoa was admittedly exceptional in that she did treat children as *informants*, her explicit purpose was to divulge what children reflected about adult behaviour and thought, not what children's behaviour and ways thinking were in their own right. The same can be said of anthropological studies of socialisation. Mayer, for example, defined socialisation as "the inculcation of the skills and attitudes necessary for playing *given social roles*" (1970:xiii; my emphasis); he might just as well have termed these roles 'adult'. Similarly, Gearing and Tindall began their review of work on socialisation as follows:

In all human communities babes are born innocent, and in most communities all end up thinking and acting much as their parental generation acts and thinks. That this regularly happens is an awesome fact....In any event, precisely how this cultural transmission happens is largely a mystery (1973:96).

Thus what at face value seem to be ethnographic accounts of children's lives, or of aspects of them, are in fact most often explorations of adult institutions and the cultural logic which lies behind them: adults and adult culture remain the real

subjects of study, and children are merely the medium of enquiry. Anthropology's approach has therefore on the whole been either prospective or retrospective: what do children exhibit about adults, or what can adults tell us about children? The question has seldom been: what can children tell us about themselves?

Moving full circle: an anthropology of children?

There are a number of reasons for anthropology's neglect of children. Firstly, some authors have suggested that anthropological notions of childhood have derived in a large part from ideas in psychology about children, particularly those of Freudian developmental psychology, which have dominated the social sciences for much of this century (see Hardman 1973; Schildkrout 1978; Travathern and Logotheti 1989). A second reason, probably derivative of the first, is that anthropology has for much of its history ascribed a largely static character to culture; it is only in the last decade or so that the discipline has begun to modify its view of culture so as to take proper account of its essential fluidity and transience (see Thornton 1988;1989). In discussing the purpose of anthropological studies of socialisation, Middleton expressed the old view:

[t]he essential fact is that one of the basic features of man's social condition is that culture is learned and not genetically inherited....In this regard our basic questions are how culture is transmitted from one generation to the next, how individuals share in this transmission, and how learning and transmitting culture are related to society's social organisation (1970:xii).

As a result of notions of cultural rigidity such as those expressed by Middleton, children effectively qualified as subjects of cultural inquiry only insofar as they were prone to processes of cultural transmission; their contributions and innovations to culture were thus lost to anthropology. Finally, as Reynolds (1986:393) has pointed out, adults are far easier to work with than are children; childhood is a continuing metamorphosis, whereas adulthood is ostensibly more constant; children do not have formal and articulated institutions as do adults; and children's codes of behaviour, belief, and thought are more difficult to identify with, to transcribe, and to convey. All of these barriers have militated against anthropological work on children.

These problems, and anthropology's specious treatment of children consequent upon them, led Hardman (1973) to call for "an anthropology of children". Criticising the socialisation approach which, she said, attributes to children a passive status because it views them developmentally, Hardman proposed synchronic studies of children which focus on their interaction and activities *with one another* rather than with adults or wider society. Examining playground chatter amongst children in a British creche, Hardman was led to conclude that

children do reveal a segment of society's stock of beliefs, values and social interaction which is exclusive to them; and we can begin to understand children by observing and listening to them...(1973:98).

Subsequent to Hardman's paper (but not necessarily motivated by it) there has been a revision of thought amongst some anthropologists about children and their place in society. Perhaps not surprisingly, this revision has been stimulated by

changing ideas in psychology and, in particular, in interactional phenomenology (Schildkrout 1978; Travathern and Logotheti 1989). The latter position is expressed by

Wartofsky:

...I am urging (is) that we must not underestimate the extent to which children create themselves by their own activity and differentiate and individuate themselves in the face of what we mistakenly take to be a totalistic construction from without (1983:200).

Schildkrout is one anthropologist who has followed these trends in psychology:

Instead of the conventional emphasis on socialisation, increasing attention has been given, in the social sciences, to the interaction of children and adults, to the autonomy of the child's world, and to the relationship between culturally distinct definitions of childhood and socio-economic factors (1978:109).

Schildkrout continues to describe children in Hausa society, concluding that

[t]he Hausa child does not simply imitate adult behaviour in rehearsal for adult life. Childhood is qualitatively different from adulthood...(1978:133)

Reynolds (1983;1989;1990) is another who has begun to move away from conventional notions of children and childhood. In her ethnography of Xhosa-speaking children in Crossroads squatter-camp near Cape Town, she succinctly expressed her view of childhood:

Each child's experience, as with every child anywhere, is like a freshly baked loaf of bread: the ingredients derive from the past...and the present, and the yeast is the child's own (1989:198).

Like that of Schildkrout, Reynolds's work has shown that children are worthy of study in their own right, and that they do make significant contributions, and even innovations, to society and culture.

In a sense, anthropology is moving full circle. Prior to the pre-eminence of developmental psychology, and to rigid structure-functionalist notions of cultural transmission, there are indications that anthropology in general did not trivialise children's experience, nor did it necessarily regard children as secondary informants. Malinowski, for example, recalled that

[i]n my ethnographic work I was able and indeed forced to collect my information about children and their concerns directly from them. Their spiritual ownership in games and childish activities was acknowledged, and they were also quite capable of instructing me and explaining the intricacies of their play and enterprise (1987:46).

Malinowski also recognised that children constitute a significant social and cultural category over and above their status as pre-adults. Referring to the relative freedom of thought and movement enjoyed by Trobriand children, he commented that

[s]uch freedom gives scope for the formation of the children's own little community, an independent group, into which they naturally drop from the age of four or five and continue till puberty....And this community within a community acts very much as its own members determine....(1987:45)

Although he shirked (wisely, I think) attributing absolute autonomy to children, Raum's observation with regard to Chaga children was similar:

...a spontaneous tendency is discoverable in childish behaviour that leads to the formation of a semi-independent juvenile society (1940:385).

Whilst I endorse Hardman's call for an anthropology which takes better account of children, and her assertions - like those of Malinowski and Raum - that children *do* have their own realms of experience, and that they *do* display their own

cultural features, there is nevertheless a danger in conceiving of these experiences and features as being removed absolutely from larger society and its influences. A view which assumes an independent children's world dichotomises and reifies childhood and adulthood as states of being. It also obscures both the undoubted dependence in certain respects which children do have on adults, and the very real obverse dependence which adults in some circumstances have on children.

In short, we should go to neither extreme: we should not view children as passive recipients of culture, but nor should we view them as possessing cultural ways which are exclusive to them. The effect in both instances is to divorce children from wider society, and to obscure the continuities and links which exist between them and those around them. There *is* a child's world, but it is one which is neither fully independent of, nor dependent on, the world of the adult. We need to document this world, and we need to listen to what children themselves have to say about it. In doing so, we must also recognise that children are not just passive recipients of culture, not just half and three-quarter adults: as scholars such as Reynolds and Schildkrout have begun to show, children, as much as men and women, have culture, are *part* of culture, and are *makers* of culture. We do not require an anthropology of children; what is required is an anthropology which acknowledges, and accounts for, both childhood in culture and culture in childhood.

Xolisile revisited: the themes of the study

The trends with regard to children in South African anthropology have generally mirrored those of the discipline

elsewhere. There have been only two full length monographs on children in this country. The first, Kidd's (1906) work on what he called 'Kafir' children and their experiences of 'savage childhood', offers a colonialist and distinctly evolutionary perspective; it can hardly be taken seriously. The second, published more than eighty years after that of Kidd, is Reynolds's (1989 [1983]) seminal ethnography of seven-year-old Xhosa-speaking children in Crossroads squatter camp¹. As I have already mentioned, the latter is one of the few anthropologists in the world whose work acknowledges and demonstrates the cultural value of children, their intellectual ingenuity, and their significance as subjects of study in their own right.

The remaining anthropological literature on children in this country is limited to a few short studies, and some scattered references to children in the ethnography of the region; it can in no way be considered a comprehensive body of literature on the topic. A number of local monographs of the old holistic genre included fairly informative but all too fleeting sections on childhood in the context of what was then viewed as 'traditional' African society (see Hunter 1979 [1936]; Krige 1936a; Hammond-Tooke 1962). As elsewhere, there have also been a few forays into the topics of indigenous education (see Hoernlè 1931; Krige 1937), socialisation (see Mayer and Mayer 1970), the impact which culture has on individual personality in childhood (see De Ridder 1958), and children's play (see Van Zyl 1939). Hellmann (1940) also

¹ It should be noted that Reynolds's doctoral dissertation, completed in 1983, was published as a monograph in 1989, and that there are large sections of the dissertation which were excluded from the book.

produced a volume on what she termed 'the problems of urban youth' in Pimville outside Johannesburg. More recently, there has been a proliferation of studies of street-children (see Schärf et al 1986; Bothma 1988), and there are a number of anthropological, and anthropological-style, essays on aspects of children's lives included in a compendium on childhood in South Africa edited by Burman and Reynolds (see Preston-Whyte and Louw 1986; Cock et al 1986; Roux 1986; McCormick 1986)². Noteworthy also is Kotzé's (no date) unpublished paper on what he called 'the more mundane aspects of living' amongst men, women, and children in a Gazankulu settlement; once more, whilst Kotzé's ethnography is tantalising, like most of the earlier studies it is all too brief. Apart from the little more than gratuitous mention which children have received in urban and rural household studies, there is little else on children in this country which has been produced by anthropologists; as a consequence, there is very little substantive information about them. As Reynolds concluded in the final chapter of her monograph, there remains an urgent need in South Africa

...for much more work on excavating the reality of children's experience. We ought to know what the real impact of discrimination, migration, re-location and repatriation are on children. We ought to know how many childhood years each child spends with his or her father and mother. We ought to discover what access they have to the props of Western society; the physical conditions under which they live; their mobility; the continuity of their school experience; and the quality of their education in the classroom. We ought to enable children to speak (1989:201).

² The Burman and Reynolds (1986) anthology is the only one of its kind in South Africa. Whilst it constitutes the most definitive interdisciplinary work on children in this country to date, there are some glaring lacunae in it, not least of which is the absence of rural children. That this is so is not a fault of the anthology itself; there has simply been little worthwhile work conducted on rural children by the South African social sciences.

Xolisile's biography has begun to illuminate some of the invisible dimensions of childhood which Reynolds has highlighted. We have seen the effects which his parents' migration, and Xolisile's own mobility, have had on his life. We have seen the extent of his separation from his parents throughout much of his childhood years, the absence in his life of a settled and stable home environment, and the interruptions in his schooling which this flux has caused. We have seen the poverty, the fragility, and the squalor of his existence in the hostels; the lack of privacy to which he and those around him are subject in the performance of even the most basic of human functions; and the violence which these circumstances induce. Most lucid of all, we have heard from Xolisile himself how he feels about these things. It is these particular aspects of childhood - migration and mobility, their schooling, and the quality of their lives in the hostels - which are examined in the context of the lives of the other children with whom this study is concerned.

Children, family life, and migration

My father came to visit us in Victoria West. I was still very small, and I missed my father. When it was time for him to leave, I cried and asked my father to take me with him. (Xolisile)

There is a large body of literature, in anthropology and in other social sciences, which deals with the topic of migration in South Africa. Some of this literature attempts a macro-economic perspective of the migrant labour system (see Wilson 1972), some focuses on particular experiences of male

migrants in the urban centres (see Peskin and Spiegel 1976; Moodie 1980;1983; McNamara 1985; Reynolds 1984), and some examines the local economic, political, and structural implications of migration for the rural sending areas (see Spiegel 1979; Murray 1981; Sharp 1982 and 1987). This literature is however concerned almost exclusively with the reasons and motivations for *adult* migration, and with *adult* experiences of it. Nowhere has the frequency of children's migration been examined, and nowhere have the experiences of either those children who migrate or those who remain behind, been comprehensively documented. Children have remained a largely invisible category within the migratory complex, in most instances receiving mention as little more than statistics in dependency plottings.

Chapter 5 examines the effects of migrant labour on the children's domestic circumstances prior to their arrival at Lwandle. I begin with a discussion of literature which has dealt with African households in rural Southern Africa, arguing that the synchronism of these studies, and their conception of the household as a unit whose *physical* nucleus is rooted in space, have obscured significant dimensions of people's domestic experiences in the countryside³. I then present quantitative data which demonstrate the extent to which the children have been separated from their parents in the past, and provide case histories which elucidate some of the dynamics, and the consequences for children, of this separation. It becomes clear from the ethnography that many of

³ Whilst Murray's (1981) definition of the household is extended to include absent members, in his conception the core of the household still remains geographically rooted in its material location. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

the children have histories of frequent mobility, both at an intra-rural level and at the level of rural-urban oscillation, and that contingently they have been subject to high degrees of domestic flux, brought about both by their own movement, and by that of others who are close to them. When viewed diachronically, it also becomes clear that the domestic circumstances of at least this category of children have in many instances been of an entirely different nature to that which is alluded to in earlier studies of rural households.

Childhood and domestic life in the hostels

The hostel I live in is dirty and unhygienic. The hostel is overcrowded. Most of the people in the hostel are youngsters....The place stinks. People urinate and excrete in the hostels at night. The hostel is noisy. In our house we try to clean and discipline ourselves. In the room there is someone who sells beer. During the weekends the people sing and shout. (Xolisile)

Literature on family life in urban South Africa is scarce. The most recent full-length works on urban African families were the companion studies in East London, researched and published some thirty years ago, of the Mayers (1961) and Pauw (1963). Work on the topic prior to that time consists of only a few short papers produced in the 1930s (see Hunter 1932; Krige 1936b; Hellmann 1935;1937), followed a decade later by Hellmann's (1948) study of Africans living in the Witwatersrand township of Rooiyard. Subsequent to the East London studies there have been a few articles on household structure amongst urban Africans (see Marwick 1978), and a number of anthropologists have shown a particular interest in single-

parenthood and female-headed households (see Preston-Whyte 1978; Van der Vliet 1984).

Literature on family life in urban hostels is even scarcer. Some 14 years ago, Philip Mayer (in Peskin and Spiegel 1976:i) noted that despite the key importance of mine compounds and urban hostels to migrant labour, there had at that stage been no published in-depth investigations of them by anthropologists. Since that time there have been a number of anthropological studies of mine compounds (see Gordon 1977; Moodie 1980;1983; McNamara 1985), and, even more recently, of urban hostels in the Western Cape (see Thomas 1987; Segar 1988; Ramphele and Boonzaier 1988; Ramphele 1989a;1989c). Even though there is evidence to suggest that women and children have been resident in urban hostels for at least two to three decades (see Wilson 1972:73; Selvan 1976:3; Ramphele 1989c:18)⁴, the only work which has begun to touch on family life in this context is constituted by the handful of very recent papers which have emanated from the research of Ramphele and her colleagues at the University of Cape Town (cited above). As Segar has observed, "the situation of hostel dwellers...remains largely unpublicised and unknown" (1988:1).

Chapters 6 and 7 document the children's everyday lives in the hostels. Making extensive use of the testimony of both parents and children, Chapter 6 explores aspects of family life in the context of the constraints placed on it by the hostel environment. I begin by providing an overview of the social features of the bungalows in which the children live, and in particular of the strategies which residents have adopted to

⁴ See also 'The people of Lwandle' in Chapter 4 of this study.

guide social interaction in the context of severe overcrowding. This scenario forms the backdrop against which the children's domestic lives in the hostels should be considered. I then move on to a discussion of family life, focusing in the main on children's domestic duties, parent-child relations, and the problems which parents claim to experience in rearing their children in the hostel environment. Finally, the chapter provides an account of some of the games and other play-activities in which the children engage.

Chapter 7 deals with an aspect of the children's everyday experiences at Lwandle which is particularly prominent - the regularity with which they are exposed to violence, both in the rooms in which they live, and in and around the hostels generally. One of the most striking features of Xolisile's biography, perhaps the most striking of all, is the extent to which he is exposed to violence, both passively and actively, during the course of his everyday life at Lwandle. In the six week period which was covered by his diary, Xolisile's mother and uncle were stabbed and his sister was assaulted (21-8-89), one of the victims of a double murder was attacked in, and "died near the door" of, his bungalow (24-7-89), and a man "in our hostel" was stabbed and hospitalised (17-7-89). Xolisile's experiences with regard to violence are by no means exceptional: all of the other children describe the same or similar types of incidents. Chapter 7 examines this violence as it is viewed, experienced, and sometimes performed by children. At an empirical level, the chapter is an ethnography of violence in the hostels from the point of view of the children. At a theoretical level, it suggests firstly

that in the context of the hostels there can be no real distinction between suburban/public violence and conjugal/private violence; and secondly that violence of the type which occurs at Lwandle is in reality part and parcel of what has rather narrowly been referred to in popular discourse as 'political violence': insofar as its genesis lies in the conditions which exist in the hostels, the violence which occurs at Lwandle is structural and therefore political in character.

Lwandle School and education over time

Yesterday I did not come to school. My mother did not have the money for school-fees. She said she will give it to me on Thursday. Our teacher said that those who do not pay the school-fees must not come to school. That is why I was not at school.
(Xolisile)

The South African state has been criticised frequently for the disparities which exist between African and 'White' education in this country (see Nasson 1986; 'Opinion 2', Sunday Times 8 July 1990). Most of the critics in this regard have tended to channel their admonitions towards the schooling system itself, identifying such things as high pupil-to-teacher ratios in African schools, bad teacher-training, inadequate state involvement in rural, and particularly, farm schools, and low per capita state funding for African education generally as the root-causes for the consistently inferior levels of educational performance amongst Africans. Whilst all of these are certainly important contributing factors, such analyses are limited in that they fail to account for elements which are external to the pedagogical system itself but which

nevertheless play an equally significant role in frustrating African educational advancement.

Chapters 8 and 9 examine the children's experiences of education. Both diachronic and synchronic material is presented to show the multiplicity of factors, not least of which is the mobility of children and parents, which hinder children's progress at school. Along with Graaff (1990), I conclude that poor education amongst Africans must properly be viewed within the wider socio-economic context in which it takes place. Low levels of education do not arise solely out of inadequate facilities and neglect by state education departments; they are built into the fabric of childhood experience and society as a whole.

Having dealt with the children's past and present experiences earlier in the study, Chapter 10 briefly assesses the children's ambitions and plans for the future, and returns to the problem of anthropology's inattention to children. It also suggests certain avenues of research which might profitably be pursued by anthropologists and other social scientists who are interested in working amongst children. Chapter 4, which follows the present one, provides a summary account of the legislative and political conditions which have buttressed migrant labour and hostel accommodation, with specific reference to their peculiarities and effects in the Western Cape. It then outlines the physical and demographic features of the Lwandle hostels, and introduces individually the 24 children who are the primary subjects of the study.

Field methods

Fieldwork for this study was conducted over the eight month period spanning April to November 1989. During that time I travelled to Lwandle on a daily basis during the week, spending anything from three or four to 12 hours there per day; I also visited the hostels fairly regularly at night and over weekends. For five months of the fieldwork period I was aided by an interpreter and research assistant, Themba Mkoko, who is himself a hostel-dweller from Nyanga. I opted to employ an outsider in preference to a Lwandle resident because I wished to avoid, as far as possible, being associated with any particular local-level political or other faction which might have been present at Lwandle. For the other three months of the fieldwork I worked primarily without assistance, although I was aided when the need arose by people from Lwandle with whom I had become friendly.

During the fieldwork period I based myself at Lwandle School. The school was founded in 1987 by residents of Lwandle, and is administered with the aid of church workers and members of the Black Sash from Somerset West. For reasons which I shall discuss in Chapter 8, the school is not affiliated to the Department of Education and Training (DET). It is housed in a small corrugated-iron shack, and accommodates approximately 100 children who are in Sub A to Standard 4. These children are served by one teacher.

Apart from my work with the children, I also became involved with the committee which had been formed to administer the school, and was active as part of an informal group,

composed of members of the Lwandle community and certain residents of the neighbouring settlements, which was lobbying for proper consultation with Lwandle residents on the part of the authorities regarding a scheme which was being mooted for upgrading the hostels to family accommodation.

Selecting and gaining access to Lwandle

Prior to beginning fieldwork I spent a number of days travelling with a nursing sister attached to the Western Cape Hostel Dwellers' Association (HDA) on her rounds to some of the hostels in the Cape Peninsula⁵. My reasons for doing so were twofold. Firstly, I wished to develop a broad perspective of hostels in the Western Cape, having previously visited only one hostel in Langa for a morning. Secondly, I was seeking a research location and hostel population suitable for my purposes. An important requirement for me was that there should be an extant children's forum - a youth or sporting club, a church group, a school, or something of this sort - which was constituted either exclusively or primarily by hostel children. I hoped to attach myself in some way to such a forum, and in so doing to gain regular access to the children who participated in it.

Of the hostels which I visited, those at Lwandle best satisfied this requirement. Hostels in the Cape Town metropolitan area are on the whole situated within African suburbs, and the children who live in them generally merge socially with the township children around them. In this

⁵ The HDA was constituted in 1985 to represent and serve the interests of hostel residents in the Western Cape. For a detailed discussion of the HDA, its membership, and its functions see Thomas (1987).

context, it would have been difficult for me to isolate hostel children from others for the purposes of conducting the research. Lwandle's peculiar distinction as a township comprised entirely of hostels, and the existence there of a school attended exclusively by hostel children, rendered it ideal for my purposes.

Lwandle held a number of other attractions for me. Firstly, during the course of my initial visit to the school it became apparent that there was a role which I could play there over and above that of researcher. This was important to me. I had been following debates in social scientific literature about the ethics of conducting research in impoverished and politically-oppressed communities, and felt strongly that there should be room for me to make a constructive contribution to the lives of those amongst whom I worked⁶. The school provided such an opportunity. When I was introduced to her, the teacher, Jennifer, expressed extreme frustration at the inefficacy of her teaching in the overcrowded and ill-equipped circumstances which pertain at the school. When I explained my objectives to her, and raised the possibility of my assisting her, she welcomed the idea. Secondly, Lwandle's population had a reputation for low-level involvement in the wider political struggle in South Africa. This in itself held no particular attraction for me, but it did have a logistical advantage: in the event of an increase in political instability in the Western Cape my access to Lwandle was far less likely to be blocked than would have been the case had I chosen to work in

⁶ Ramphela (1989b) has recently discussed these issues as they pertain to South African social scientific research. Another local contribution is that of Lund (1982), whilst international work on the topic includes that by Schumaker (1973), Hall (1975), Reason and Rowan (1981), Linkopig University (1981), and Kassam (1982).

the Cape Town townships, where circumstances are generally far more volatile. Finally, Lwandle had not been included in a broader study of hostels in the Cape Town area which was being conducted by my university department at the time. By working at Lwandle, I hoped to contribute to this project⁷.

Having decided that Lwandle was a suitable location for fieldwork, I obtained permission from both the HDA and the Lwandle Men's Committee to work in the hostels, and to assist Jennifer with the children at the school⁸. I did not seek permission from the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA) officials who are responsible for Lwandle, primarily because I am opposed in principle to the authority vested in them to obstruct the free association of hostel residents with others. Nevertheless, they soon became aware of my presence at Lwandle, tolerated it, and in some instances cooperated in providing me with information when I required it.

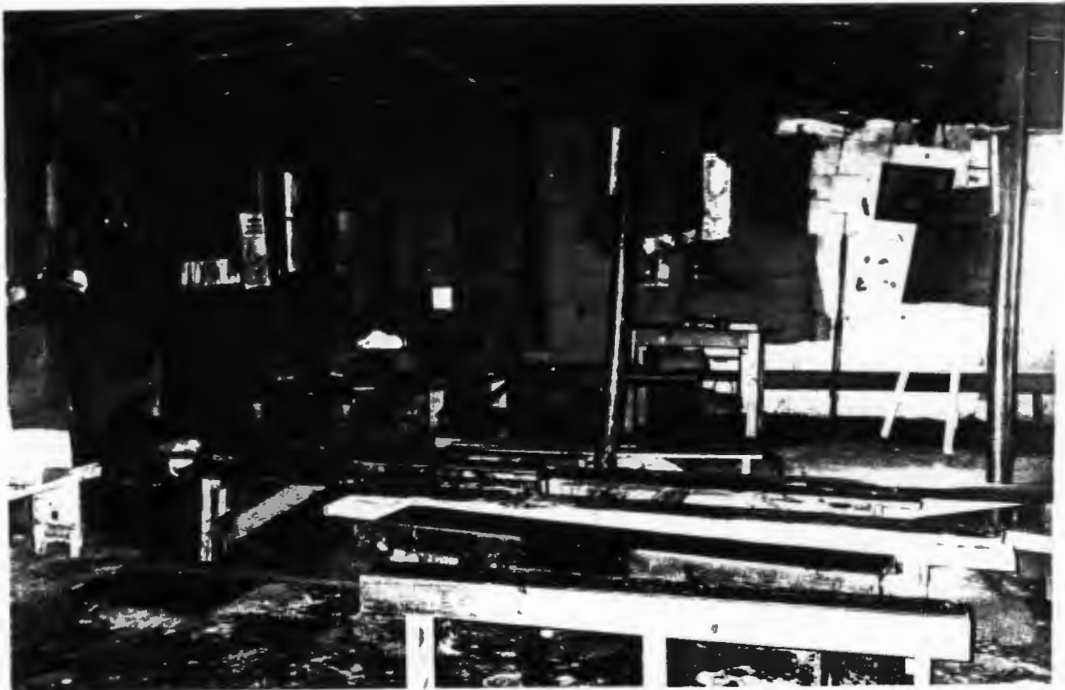
Participation and observation at the school

For the first month of the fieldwork I did little more than 'be' at the school. I observed Jennifer and the children in their activities in the classroom, played soccer with the boys during breaks in their lessons, helped to run the soup kitchen which operated at the school, and watched the children in their play and other activities around the school. I hired Themba at the end of the first month. With the enthusiastic help of the older school-children, he and I renovated a second

⁷ For a preliminary overview of the findings of this project see Segar (1988). Particular aspects of the study are discussed in Ramphela (1989a;1989b;1989c), and full documentation of it will be found in Ramphela's doctoral dissertation to be submitted shortly to the University of Cape Town.

⁸ The Men's Committee represents the interests of Lwandle residents to officialdom. It will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

but very dilapidated corrugated-iron shed which was situated alongside that which housed the school. I obtained permission to do so from a group of Lwandle residents who use the structure as a church over weekends. The 'renovation' consisted of replacing broken window panes, carpeting the concrete floor, insulating the gaping walls on the inside with large sheets of cardboard, and, once insulated, painting the cardboard walls. The shed became my 'office' and classroom for the remainder of the fieldwork.



My shed prior to renovation.

My formal role at the school was defined through consultation between Jennifer and myself, and began shortly after Themba's arrival. I took charge of the Sub A and B children (about three quarters of the children at the school) for around two hours per morning, which enabled Jennifer to

devote her attention solely to Standards 1 to 4. We then swopped around: the more advanced classes came to me, and the Sub A and B groups went to Jennifer. Themba and I concentrated on language teaching with the Standard 1 to Standard 4 children; I attempted to teach the children basic conversational English, and Themba focused on written Xhosa (which he found to be of a very low standard). As far as the Sub A and B classes were concerned, we did a variety of exercises: we taught them basic arithmetic, did artwork with them, and required them to compose and act out stories, both individually and in groups. The divide-and-teach scheme was developed further when Roman Catholic nuns from the Strand, and some individuals from Somerset West, volunteered to devote one morning per week to helping the Sub A and B groups. On some days the children were tutored by these other volunteers, which freed me to devote time to other aspects of the fieldwork.

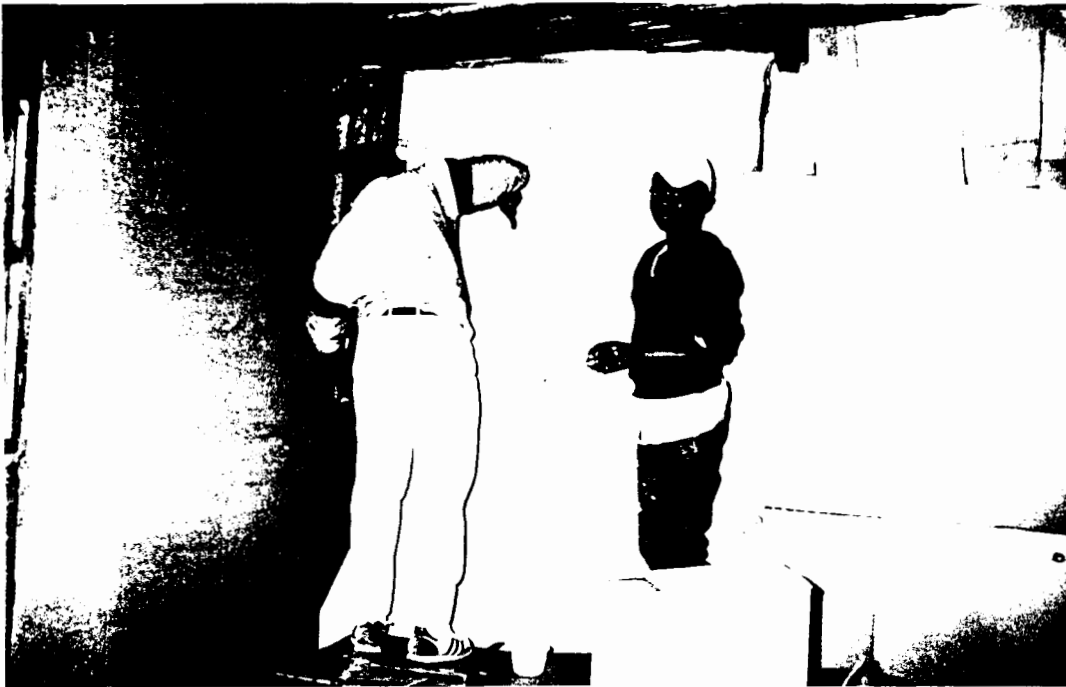
The key informants

At a general level, all children at Lwandle were the subjects of my research. However, I elected to focus on the more advanced group of children with whom I dealt at the school - those in Standards 1 to 4 - for more specific purposes. I decided to work with this group, as opposed to the other, for a number of reasons. Firstly, since it was not possible for me to conduct participant observation in the traditional anthropological sense - I could not have resided legally in the hostels - I was compelled to devise other means of gathering the type of in-depth qualitative data which is anthropology's hallmark. Apart from interviewing them, I had therefore

resolved to ask the children to keep diaries for me, and to write and illustrate their own autobiographies around topics which I set for them. Children in the lower Standards were not sufficiently advanced to do these exercises. Secondly, I was interested to collect children's life histories, and I was concerned that it should be they, and *not* their parents, who told them to me. On the whole, the children in Standards 1 to 4 were older than the others - they ranged in age from 10 to 15 years old - and I assumed that they would be better able to recall, and articulate, their past experiences than would younger children. There was another obvious advantage as far as life history collection was concerned: such children had lived longer, and thus had more to tell. The final reason for working with this group of children had to do with the sizes of the two groups. Whilst the number of children in the junior classes varied from 50 to 70 children every day, there were only between 25 and 30 children in the more advanced ones. The latter group was therefore a far more manageable sample for the types of qualitative work which I wished to do, and for the depth of interview information which I wished to obtain.

Because some children left the school during the course of my work, the number of children in the core group of informants dwindled to 24. In addition, there were two children, one in Sub A and the other in Sub B, who crept into it by accident. When I first started to work with the children Jennifer divided them up by age rather than by Standard, sending those over the age of 10 years to me. When I discovered that these two children were missing lessons which were being taught to their Standards whilst they were with me, I sent them back. However,

at that stage I had already conducted initial interviews with them, and decided to continue gathering their oral testimony. These two children did not keep diaries or write autobiographies, and I therefore have no written testimony from them. There were 10 boys and 14 girls within the core group.



Themba and Ayande renovating the shed.

Formal components of the research

Written testimony

The diaries and autobiographies were written in Xhosa. At the outset of the written exercises I explained the value of documenting human experience to the children, and, as far as the diaries are concerned, the only instructions which I gave them were that they should write about what they did, what they saw, and what they thought during the course of their everyday

lives. The diaries were written at school, first thing in the morning, for a period of six weeks. For the autobiographies, I set particular topics around which the children wrote. The children spent approximately two hours per week, for around three months, working on the autobiographies.

Collectively, the diaries and autobiographies constitute close on a thousand hand-written pages of testimony; some of this material has been translated for me by Themba, and some has yet to be translated. Generally, those sections which have been translated were selected randomly from the others. However, there were a few of the children in whom I was particularly interested, and in these instances I specifically singled out portions of their writing to be translated. Although the extracts from the diaries and autobiographies which are included here have not been altered substantively, it has been necessary in some instances to edit them for purposes of coherence.

Oral testimony

The bulk of my oral testimony was gathered in a series of life history interviews which I conducted with the children and their parents; these are described below. I also gathered oral testimony in other ways. Firstly, I conducted a number of open-ended interviews with small groups of children, usually three or four friends of the same gender. In these interviews we discussed topics such as domestic duties and chores, games, leisure-time activities, and the entrepreneurial attempts of some children. Secondly, I initiated general discussions in class about such things as contemporary political events, the

value of education, and conditions in the hostels. The latter usually followed immediately after the children had written on these topics in their autobiographies. Finally, when I first began to work at Lwandle, and before the children had come to know me well enough for me to interview them, I conducted a number of pilot discussions with adults in the hostels. These were intended to provide me with some idea as to what to ask of, and expect from, the children in subsequent interviews.

The children's life histories were developed out of three series of interviews. The first series was devoted to establishing a basic chronology of significant episodes in the life of each child. I did not initially follow a standard interviewing format; however, after the first two or three interviews I began to develop an approach, and style of questioning, which operated quite efficiently. I employed the latter for the remainder of the interviews, and at the end re-interviewed the three children with whom I had begun.

The second set of interviews was conducted with either one or both of the parents or guardians of each child. Since mothers were more accessible than were fathers it was usually they to whom I spoke, although I did also interview a few of the children's fathers. My objectives in these interviews were primarily threefold: to substantiate as far as possible the children's own accounts of their histories, to determine such things as parents' feelings about child-rearing in the hostel environment and their attitudes towards their children, and simply to meet the children's parents and view the circumstances in which each of them lived.

The third series of interviews, which were conducted after the parental interviews, was eclectic in its objectives. Firstly, in instances where I had identified inconsistencies between the children's initial accounts and those of their parents, I discussed and attempted to clarify these with them. Secondly, I attempted to add flesh to the chronologies by asking the children to elaborate in depth about people, places, and incidents which had arisen in them. Finally, I took this opportunity to probe the children about their lives in the hostels.

The life history interviews with the children were conducted in private and on an individual basis - outside in good weather, or in my shed in bad weather. I spent between two and five hours in total interviewing each child, depending by and large on a child's age (the older children had more ground to cover) and on the complexity of his or her movements in the past. The parental interviews were usually conducted inside the hostels, and a number of onlookers were often present. At times the curiosity of the latter was a hindrance, but on some occasions, when onlookers could not resist 'having their say', the interviews turned into highly informative group discussions about both childhood, and life generally, in the hostels. The parental interviews usually lasted for approximately an hour to an hour and a half, although some were shorter and others very much longer.

Three of the life history interviews failed completely. In each instance the child was unable, or perhaps unwilling, to recall coherently his or her past experiences, and the parents were not available to be interviewed. Two of these children

were illegitimate, and at the time were living with kin who did not know their past movements; the parents of the third child were inebriated on the first two occasions that I attempted to interview them, and on the third occasion, although they were then sober, they refused to talk to me. The information which I have on the pasts of these children is therefore not reliable. In hindsight, although their interviews failed to achieve what I had *intended*, when considered in conjunction with the particular circumstances of each of these children, and in view of the fact that most of the others were able to recall their pasts quite coherently, this failure was itself significant. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

The survey

During the mid-year school vacation I conducted a general demographic survey of the hostels. The survey was administered on a random basis, and covered 114 of the total of 2 186 beds at Lwandle - a sample of 5.2% of the beds. My objective in conducting it was to establish a socio-economic profile of Lwandle within which to locate the children. However, it also provided me with the opportunity to meet and talk to parents, other adults, and children who did not attend the school, and I learnt a great deal about life in the hostels during the process of conducting it. The interview schedule which I used in the survey was adapted from that used by Ramphele and her colleagues; it is included in Appendix 1.

Discussion of the methods

A criticism which has been levelled at life history approaches in anthropology is that they open the way for selectivity and subjectivity on the part of informants. Du Boulay and Williams (1984), for example, cite the poet Raine in making this point:

What at some other time I might have recalled, and called my story, I cannot say; for we select in retrospect, in the light of whatever present self we have become, and that self changes continually. Some new experience may awaken a whole sequence of past memories, or some mood shed on the past its own colour (Raine in Du Boulay and Williams 1984:247)⁹.

Whilst Raine's observations certainly may ring true, there is nevertheless no reason for caprice such as this to be limited solely to biographical recall, which is what Du Boulay and Williams seem to imply. Indeed, as a number of anthropologists have noted, *all* personal testimony is prone to context-specificity in what it reveals (see Crapanzano 1980; Keesing 1987): circumstantial vagaries such as the interactional dynamics of the interview or conversational situation, who else is present when such takes place, to what interest groups informants belong, the rapport which is established between anthropologist and informant, and their relation to one another in terms of the power structure of wider society are all significant determinants of the types of information which are communicated. In other words, an important portion of anthropologists' primary source material, *no matter how* it is gathered, has been filtered from the outset by informants in their process of deciding what to communicate.

⁹ Reynolds has made much the same point. In discussing women's accounts of their childhood, she noted that "it is difficult to conjure childhood out of the past and difficult to tell what has been re-ordered in the process" (Reynolds 1983:11).

But this need not reduce the validity of anthropological work; on the contrary, it may even enhance it. Firstly, human beings are selective and they are subjective; if ethnography acknowledges and perhaps even manages to convey these aspects of what it is to be human, then it is succeeding in its basic mission: it is documenting human experience. Secondly, selectivity on the part of informants can be highly revealing if it is possible to discern, which admittedly is not always the case, when they have wittingly omitted information and what that information is. In other words, it is valuable to know *when* and *why* people choose to tell about certain experiences and not about others. A number of the children at times knowingly chose the latter course in their interviews; from the accounts of their parents, guardians, or friends, their exclusion of certain experiences sometimes revealed much to me about what these experiences had meant to them.

Because the circumstances in which testimony is gathered often determine much about its content, it is important that anthropologists begin to indicate the particular contexts in which the testimony which they include in their texts, and which has informed their analysis, was gathered. This is particularly so in instances, such as in this study, where testimony has been gathered in a variety of circumstances and where it takes a number of different forms. Thus it may be useful to know whether a particular statement was made by a child in casual conversation with myself and Themba, in a classroom situation in the presence of other children, during the private interviews, in his or her diary or autobiography, and, if the latter was the case, what topic was set for the

child to write about. Wherever I have made use of testimony in the text, I have therefore indicated the interactional medium through which it was gathered, and from which it has been extracted¹⁰.

The field method was limited in three primary respects. First and foremost, I did not have even a basic working knowledge of the Xhosa language. A number of the children who had lived in the Karoo were fluent in both Afrikaans, which I do speak, and Xhosa, and before Themba joined me I recruited them to interpret for me. Communication between the children and myself was very much easier after Themba's arrival, but there is no doubt that I missed many of the nuances and asides which are part of any conversational situation. A further consequence of my inability to understand Xhosa has been that the children's written testimony has been translated on my behalf. Hunter, amongst others, has noted the difficulty of translating Xhosa into English, and that even the simplest of concepts do not translate directly (1979:12). It is therefore likely that some of the flavour of the diaries and autobiographies has been lost in translation, and that I (and consequently readers) have missed much as a result of this. I feel certain that the substance of the children's writings has not been altered knowingly. Secondly, my attempts to make contact with children of the same age as my key informants who lived at Lwandle but were not at school did not succeed. I came to know a few who were friendly with the school-children, but did not gather sufficient data to use as a comparative base

¹⁰ Dates after sections of testimony indicate diary entries; a topic, such as 'Who I Am' or 'My Rural Home', is from a child's autobiography; 'interview' denotes testimony which was gathered during a private interview with a particular child; and 'conversation', 'parental interview', and 'class discussion' are self-explanatory.

between them and the children in the core group. Finally, although I spent much time at Lwandle and frequently visited people in the rooms in which they lived, I was never able to achieve the kind of experiential understanding of life in the hostels which is the ideal of participant observation.

Interviews, observation, and the children's written testimony compensated partly for this; nevertheless, the true quality of hostel life, as it is felt by those who are part of it, escaped me. In that, I am fortunate.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCING THE CHILDREN: MIGRANT LABOUR, HOSTELS, AND THE LWANDLE CHILDREN

Although my work at Lwandle took place some three years subsequent to the abolition of legislated influx control, all of the children lived through the final seven to ten years for which this legislation was in force, and all were affected by it, and continue to be affected, in various ways. Moreover, both influx control and hostel accommodation have been integral to enforcing and sustaining South Africa's system of forced labour migration. The experiences of the children of Lwandle, and of their families, must therefore be informed at least by a basic understanding of influx control and its cognate legislation and structures, and of the system of migrant labour which they have served to entrench.

Migrant labour, influx control, and hostels in the Western Cape¹

The formal bases of contemporary migrant labour

In its institutionalised form, migrant labour in Southern Africa dates back to the nascent years of the region's mining industry (see Wilson 1972; Turrell 1982; Richards and Van

¹ The topic of influx control is a complex one; as Savage (1984:2) has observed, the legislation which has been used to enforce it forms a "...daunting legal complex' establishing far reaching controls over African employment, housing, access to land and citizenship rights". Influx control and migrant labour have been documented well elsewhere. I shall therefore limit discussion to a brief overview of their formal bases. For comprehensive accounts of migrant labour and influx control see Wilson (1972), Savage (1984), and Giliomee and Schlemmer (1985). For specific effects of migrant labour on rural life see Mayer (1980) and Murray (1981). West (1983a;1983b) provides good discussion of influx control application and its peculiarities in the Western Cape, and case material which demonstrates some of its effects on Africans. I have relied extensively in this section on the discussions of Savage (1984), West (1983a), and Giliomee and Schlemmer (1985).

Helten 1982)². As Savage (1984:24) has shown, however, legislation governing African movement during this early period was of an entirely different character to that which has been in force for much of the present century: whilst the early legislation was designed to propel the Africans into the 'White' controlled economy "...the thrust of further legislation has been to expel them from this economy unless their labour was needed" (Savage 1984:84).

The switch from the former to the latter policy was motivated initially by the recommendations of the Stallard Commission into local government in the Transvaal in the early 1920s. In its report of 1921 the Commission recommended that:

It should be a recognized principle of government that Natives - men, women, and children - should only be permitted within municipal areas insofar and for so long as their presence is demanded by the wants of the white population and should depart there from when they cease to minister to the needs of the white man. (Stallard Commission in Savage 1984:25)

As a result of the recommendations of the Commission, the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 provided local municipalities with the power to expel Africans who were idle, disorderly, or habitually unemployed, regardless of either how long they had been resident in the municipal area, or whether they in fact originated from it. This Act was followed by a string of associated legislation, central amongst which were the Native Laws Amendments Act of 1937, the Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945, and the newly installed Nationalist Government's 1952 amendments to the 1945 Act.

² There is some evidence that Africans had been migrating for purposes of employment prior even to this time (see Schapera 1947). Nevertheless, as Murray (1981:10-21) has pointed out with regard to Basotho - and this is equally applicable to other Africans - it was the discovery of valuable mineral deposits in the Northern Cape and Transvaal which drew them irrevocably into migrant labour.

The collective effects of these Acts, and additions and amendments to them over time, were wide-reaching, and constituted the formal basis from which contemporary migrant labour has been enforced and perpetuated. Amongst other things, the 1937 Act included the provision that African work-seekers were entitled to reside in a 'White' municipal area for not longer than 14 days; if employment had not been secured within that time, they were required to leave the municipal area. The 1952 amendments to Section 10 of the Urban Areas Consolidation Act, which constituted the first statutory articulation of Verwoerdian apartheid, are of special significance. The Section 10 restrictions were as follows (quoted in West 1983a:10):

10. (1) No Black shall remain more than seventy-two hours in a prescribed area unless he produces proof in the manner prescribed that -
 - (a) he has, since birth, resided in such area; or
 - (b) he has worked continuously in such area for one employer for a period of not less than ten years or has lawfully resided continuously in such area for a period of not less than fifteen years, and has thereafter continued to reside in such area and is not employed outside such area and has not during either period or thereafter been sentenced to a fine exceeding five hundred rand or to imprisonment for a period exceeding six months; or
 - (c) such Black is the wife, the unmarried daughter, or the son under the age of eighteen years, of any Black mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b) of this subsection and, after lawful entry into such a prescribed area, ordinarily resides with that Black in such area; or
 - (d) in the case of any other Black, permission so to remain has been granted by an officer appointed to manage a labour bureau...due regard being had to the availability of accommodation in a Black residential area.

As is clear from the above, the amendments reduced from 14 days to 72 hours the amount of time for which an African could reside in an urban area without official permission. Most importantly, the gross upshot of these provisions was to define away, quite arbitrarily, the rights of huge numbers of people to reside in urban South Africa.

Subsequent developments until the late 1960s consisted on the whole of measures designed to hone, and consolidate, existing legislation. In 1964 regulations were enacted which placed a blanket embargo on the right of women to enter an urban area unless they acquired a permit to do so in terms of Section 10 (d) above. In the same year a system of rural labour bureaux was established to control the allocation of labour for urban areas. Rural Africans who wished to be employed were required to register with their local labour bureau, which would allocate an employment contract to them when, and if, the need for their labour arose. Moreover, Africans were to be offered contracts, or were issued permits to leave their districts, only if the labour bureau was satisfied that labour requirements in the home-district itself were being met. The latter provision served primarily to protect farmers, who paid far lower wages than were offered in the mining and other urban-based industries (Giliomee and Schlemmer 1985:2). Very importantly, the right to work in an urban area, whether granted on either a permit or a contract basis, was awarded to individual workers - by far the majority of whom were men - and was not extended to include immediate family members. Regulations were also enacted in 1968 which required workers to return annually to their labour bureaux in

the rural districts in order to renew their contracts. The purposive effect of this was to deny people the opportunity to accumulate sufficient years of uninterrupted urban employment and residence, and thereby to disqualify them from eventual eligibility for Section 10 (a) and (b) rights.

In sum, the labour bureaux determined whether or not people were permitted to leave their rural districts, as well as the types of work and levels of remuneration which they might acquire. A man's right to earn a livelihood rested on the discretion of the most minor bureaucratic officials who were assigned to the labour bureaux; his right to do so in the company of his wife and children, and their right to be with him, were denied.

The state employed more subtle means of restricting movement to the urban areas in addition to legislated influx control mechanisms. In 1956, for example, the state cut back severely on funds for sub-economic housing for urban Africans claiming that it was not its responsibility to provide African housing in 'White' urban areas (Giliomee and Schlemmer 1985:6); in the 1970s, in conjunction with inducements to industries to situate themselves close to labour in the homelands, it began to build dormitory towns on the edges of, but still within, the homeland borders so that workers could commute to work on a daily basis (Savage 1984:37)³.

Legislation after the late 1960s concentrated largely on the creation of the homelands, and, concurrently, on the removal of citizenship from Africans. It was envisaged by the

³ I have employed the term 'homeland' in place of 'Bantustan' because the term 'Bantu' has negative connotations. My usage of 'homeland' is not intended to indicate that these areas are homelands in any real sense of the word.

architects of apartheid that Africans would be consigned to self-governing and, eventually, independent 'homelands'. In 1970 the Bantu Citizenship Act was passed, providing for the unilateral cancellation of the South African citizenship of all Africans. 'Independence' was granted to the Transkei in 1976, followed in 1981 by 'independence' for the Ciskei. As West noted with regard to Africans in Cape Town, when these two Acts were passed

...virtually every black person in Cape Town became a technical foreigner. The implications are clear: nearly 100 000 people are subject to instant deportation in the Cape Peninsula, without even the minimal recourse to the law which exists in terms of other influx control legislation (1982).

A similar process of removal of South African citizenship was subsequently applied to Africans throughout the country. One of the more serious results of this legislation has been the forced removal by the state of hundreds of thousands of Africans to the homelands⁴.

In 1986 the state put into legislative effect major alterations in influx control measures, introducing a number of Acts which effectively abolished influx control as it had been known for decades⁵. A number of authors have however noted that certain of the informal means of influx control mentioned above - lack of access to housing, education, and so on - continue to apply; that this is so will become clear from the ethnography which follows in the remainder of the study. Although there have been many critics of the new measures, and justifiably so, the fact remains that the wives and children of

⁴ For extensive documentation of these removals see Surplus Peoples Project Reports (1983).

⁵ West and Oliver-Evans (1990:13) list these Acts as follows: the Abolition of Influx Control Act, the Identification Act, the Black Communities Amendment Act, and the Abolition of Development Bodies Act, all of 1986.

workers are now permitted to reside in urban areas with their husbands and children: movement between rural and urban areas, free from prosecution, is now open to all Africans.

'Coloured' labour preference in the Western Cape

Africans in the Western Cape have since the mid-1950s been subject to additional prohibitions which have not been applied elsewhere in the country. In 1954 it was announced that workers classified as 'Coloured' would be granted labour preference in the Western Cape, and that all Africans would eventually be removed from the area. This policy was put into effect in 1955 with the demarcation of the Eiselen line; the Coloured Labour Preference Policy was to be applied in the area west of this line (see Map 1)⁶. West (1983a:17) outlined the Coloured Labour Preference Policy:

The implementation of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy involved a freeze on the erection of Black family housing, stringent implementation of influx control regulations...and a shift to the use of migrant labour to meet new needs. A cumbersome system was developed whereby an employer who wished to hire Black labour had first to apply to the Department of Labour, which would issue a certificate if it could be shown that no suitable 'Coloured' labour was available. This certificate would be presented to the local Black Labour Officer who would first check whether any qualified local Black people were available, before authorising the recruiting of migrant labourers through the rural labour bureaux system.

As a result of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, pass law regulations have been applied more rigorously in the Western Cape than anywhere else in the country. During the decade 1965-1975, for example, there were an estimated 6

⁶ The Eiselen line includes the area south of the Orange River and west of, but not including, the magisterial districts of Gordonia, Hope Town, De Aar, Hanover, Richmond, Murraysburg, Aberdeen, Willowmore, Uniondale, and Knysna (Seloane 1985:5). See also Map 1.

million pass law prosecutions at a cost to the state of some R32 million (Savage 1984); actual pass law arrests during that period ran at around half a million per annum (West 1983a:19). Large-scale forced removals of so-called 'illegal' residents, and the bulldozing by the state of squatter settlements, occurred throughout the region into the early 1980s (see West 1983b; Ellis 1983; Cole 1987). The latter actions separated men from their wives and children, and left tens of thousands of people homeless. Nevertheless, as West has observed the system still

did not reverse the flow of Black people to the Western Cape, and the South African government no longer speaks of removing all Black people from the area. People who are found to be illegally in the area in terms of the regulations are fined, imprisoned or sometimes deported to a rural area. But the situation in those rural areas (mainly Ciskei and Transkei) in terms of poverty and unemployment is such that most people are better off in the cities, even if they are not in full-time employment (1983a:17).

The freeze on African housing in the Peninsula has had particularly disastrous and painful effects, and has contributed directly to the situation of severe overcrowding which now exists in hostels and squatter settlements throughout the area. In 1981 it was estimated that there were 21 505 families living in 14 229 family housing units and 2 102 squatter dwellings in the Peninsula; there were only 209 housing units built during the first six months of that year, and a shortage of 7 135 family units remained (Ellis 1983:112)⁷. This shortfall, and the numbers of squatters in the Peninsula, have probably increased at least tenfold since that time. It has recently been estimated that some 8 000 to

⁷ See Elias (1984) and Kentridge (1986) for further discussion of the housing shortage in the Western Cape and in South Africa generally.

10 000 'new' rural Africans arrive in the metropolitan areas of Western Cape every month⁸.

Hostel accommodation

Hostels are the urban extensions of the homelands, and have played a central role in the perpetuation of migrant labour. As is the case with migrant labour, hostel accommodation dates back primarily to the nascent years of this country's mining industry, although Deacon (1989) has shown that Khoi workers at the Cape Town docks were accommodated in similar structures a long time before then. Turrell has reported that mine compounds in the late nineteenth century were "cold and overcrowded", and that "[n]ext to accidents on the mines, exposure and pneumonia were the largest killers in the field" (1982:64). Moroney has also described conditions in mine hostels at the turn of the century:

Compound rooms or huts accommodated anything between 20 and 50 workers. Usually double decked bunks were built against the walls and were often turned into separate cabins by their occupants nailing strips of wood over the openings to protect themselves and their belongings. As a result of overcrowding in most cases, workers were forced to sleep on earth floors which, because of poor drainage and leaking roofs, became muddy during rain. Heating facilities were seldom provided and workers installed their own *Imbanla* or fire buckets which usually had no chimneys (1978:31).

As we shall see, material conditions in the Lwandle hostels are little different to those in the earlier prototypes described by these authors.

The compound-concept of the mines was taken over by government and other private sector employers for the

⁸ Cited in the Weekend Argus 'Editorial' (15 September 1990).

accommodation of rural migrants in the urban industrial centres. Wilson has documented the existence of hostels in all of the major urban centres in South Africa (1972:ch 4), as well as in smaller coastal areas where the fishing industry is operative (1972:27). There are also hostels in the fruit-farming districts which surround the Peninsula, and in small towns in the South Western Cape and Karoo⁹.

Hostels have played a pivotal role in the state's attempts to effect the Coloured Labour Preference Policy in the Western Cape. The majority of those in the Peninsula are state-administered, and all officially provide for accommodation for men only (Segar 1988). There is much variation in design, but on the whole the hostels provide only the most spartan of facilities: residents are accommodated in dormitories which may contain anything from two to 30 or more beds, and cooking and ablution facilities are shared. Moreover, as Segar has observed,

...hostels do not house male migrants temporarily living in the city, but men, women and children attempting to live as families...(1988:22).

There are no records of the numbers of people who are accommodated in hostels in the Western Cape (or for that matter in the remainder of the country); Segar (1988:10) and her colleagues estimated from research conducted during 1987 that there were approximately 36 000 men, women, and children living in government hostels in Langa, Guguletu, and Nyanga alone. Given the steady influx of Africans to the Peninsula since that

⁹ I interviewed a number of farmers in the Elgin-Grabouw district who stated that there are hostels on farms in that area. Some of the children and several other Lwandle residents told me about hostels in the South Western Cape and Karoo in which they had lived, and we have already heard from Xolisile (Chapter 2) that he stayed for a short while in a hostel in Bloemfontein with his father.

time, it is likely that this figure is now substantially higher.

Significant legislation pertaining to hostels is contained in regulations effected in terms of the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945. Amongst other things, these regulations state clearly that residence in the hostels is open only to male "Bantu" over the age of 18 years who are in *bona fide* employment and who are legally resident in the urban area (Segar 1988:2). They also make provision for the following (quoted in Segar 1988:3):

6. (1) The hostel superintendent, his assistant or some other employee of the Council authorised thereto by him, or any officer appointed in terms of section 22 (1) or (3) of the Act may in the execution of his duties enter any room in the Bantu hostel for such examination, inspection or action as may be deemed necessary.
- (2) Subject to the provisions in these regulations, no person shall enter, be or remain in any Bantu hostel without a hostel permit or other permission in writing given by the hostel superintendent or any other person authorised thereto by him.

These regulations are still applicable today, and since the Abolition of Influx Control Act in 1986 have been utilised at Lwandle, and at other hostels in the Western Cape, to expel women and children from the hostels on the grounds that they are trespassing on state property¹⁰.

It is this history of prohibition on entry into the Western Cape, of harassment, deportation, and arrest, and of a cultivated and increasingly severe shortage of accommodation in the area which forms the backdrop against which both the past

¹⁰ It is these provisions which were used in the arrest of Xolisile's mother and younger brothers. For an account of raids at Lwandle which were conducted in terms of these provisions in May 1986 see Sloth-Nielsen (1987). Segar (1988:3) also mentions that there were further such raids at Lwandle in April 1987, and that others took place at Mfuleni in September and October 1987.

and present circumstances of the children of Lwandle should be viewed.

Lwandle township: a formal profile

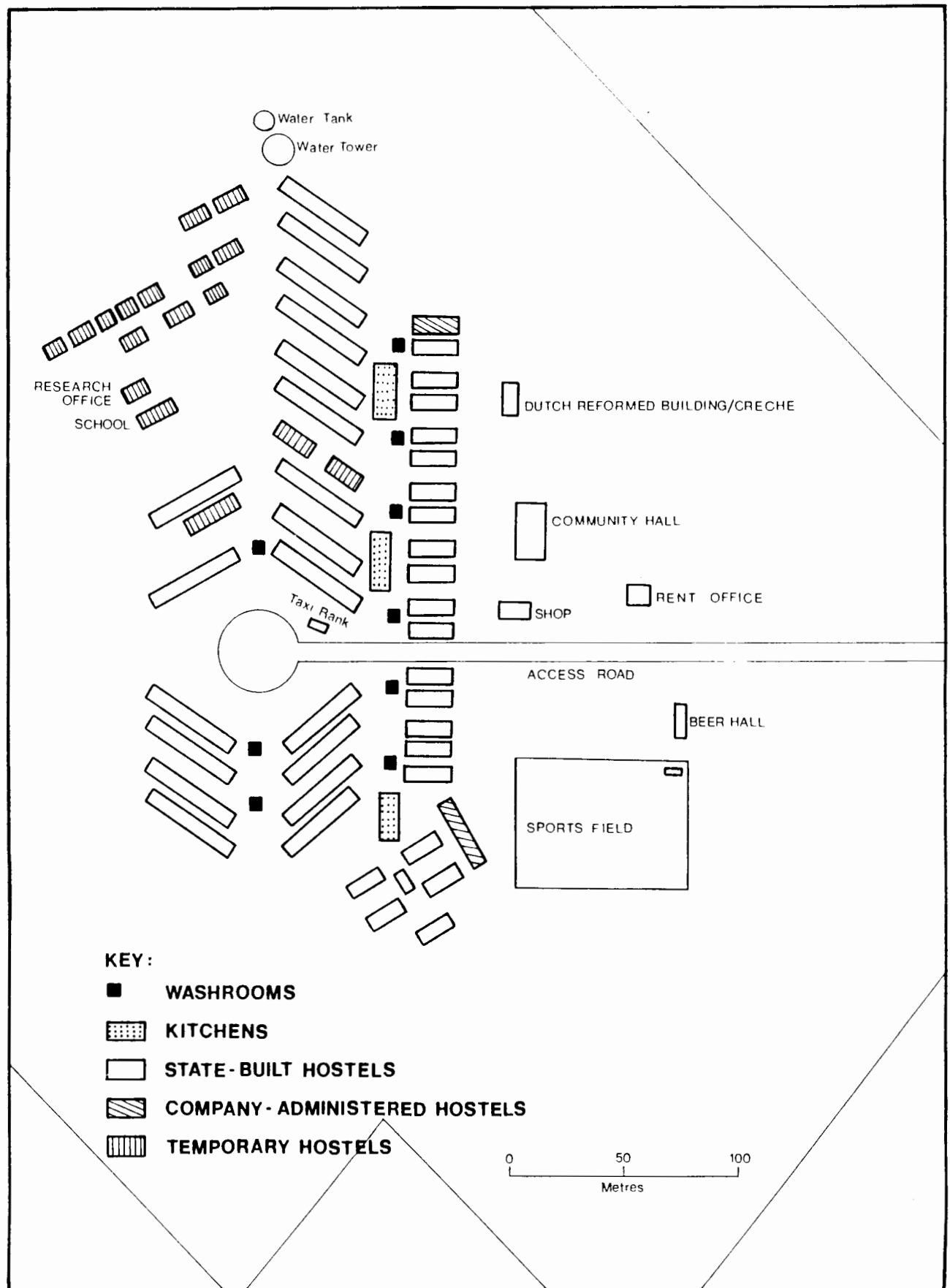
Regional and local context

Lwandle is situated in the Hottentots-Holland Basin, approximately 45 kilometres south east of Cape Town (see Maps 2 and 3, and Diagram 4.1). It is bordered in the north by the municipality of Somerset West, and by the coastal settlements of Gordon's Bay in the south, Rusthof in the south-west, and the Strand in the west. The central business districts of Somerset West, Gordon's Bay, and the Strand are all within a four kilometre radius of the township. The national road (N2) passes less than a kilometre to the north, and the False Bay coastline lies beyond Rusthof, about two kilometres to the south. 'Lwandle' is Xhosa for the sea, and its name derives from its close proximity to the coast.

The hostels themselves are located on 16.3 hectares (19 morgen) of land, and are surrounded by a further 70 hectares (82 morgen) of undeveloped and densely-grassed 'buffer' strip. As elsewhere, the buffer strip is intended to isolate the African residential area from surrounding 'population groups', from industrial and agricultural lands, and from major traffic routes in the vicinity.

Lwandle is the only site in the entire Hottentots-Holland Basin which is zoned officially for African residence. Somerset West, Gordon's Bay, and the Strand are all 'White' Group Areas, and Rusthof and Macassar (about eight kilometres

LWANDLE: PRESENT LAYOUT



north west of the Strand) are zoned for residence by people classified as 'Coloured'. At the time of the last government census in 1985 these settlements shared a population of 79 898 people, comprising 36 856 people classified as 'White' and 43 042 people classified as 'Coloured' and 'Asian' (Central Statistics Services 1986)¹¹. The closest other African townships - Khayamnandi near Stellenbosch, Mfuleni at Kuils River, and Cape Town's newest dormitory suburb of Khayelitsha - are all more than 25 kilometres away. With the exception of some domestic workers who are accommodated at the homes of their employers, workers who are engaged and live on local farms, and employees of a chemical plant who are accommodated on-site, Africans who work or wish to live in the Hottentots-Holland Basin have little choice but to seek places for themselves in the hostels at Lwandle.

Historical context

Lwandle was proclaimed a "Location and Native Village" in 1952 in terms of the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945. Proclamation for the development of the township was however only issued in 1958, by which time the Coloured Labour Preference Policy was in force in the Western Cape. The 1958 proclamation therefore provided for the erection solely of single-sex accommodation for male workers; it specifically excluded accommodation for women and children, and did not provide for the erection of houses or any other form of family

¹¹ For present purposes, the region consists of the census districts of Somerset West and the Strand, which incorporate Sir Lowry's Pass Village, Gordon's Bay, Rusthof, and Macassar. Lwandle is also included in the census district of the Strand. Its population size will be dealt with later in this chapter.

accommodation. Lwandle was to be a township consisting entirely of hostels reserved for employed African men only.

Construction of the hostels at Lwandle began in 1959, and by the end of that year facilities intended to accommodate 960 workers had been completed. The first workers moved into the hostels in 1960. Various additions were made to the complex during the 1960s to cater for increased labour demands in the Hottentots-Holland Basin, and by the end of that decade facilities at Lwandle catered officially for 1 984 residents. As a result of attempts by the state to enforce the Coloured Labour Preference Policy more stringently (Horner 1983), there were no 'permanent' additions made to the complex during the period between 1970 and 1985. Further labour demands were accommodated by the erection, with official permission, of 15 ostensibly 'temporary' hostel blocks by the private sector¹². These temporary blocks, which are still in use today, increased the number of beds at the complex to 2 186. This is presently the official capacity of Lwandle.

Administration

Lwandle is currently administered by the Cape Provincial Administration's (CPA) Office for Community Development. At the local level, the CPA operates from a small office - known to residents as the 'rent office' - situated close to the entrance to the township. A Local Authority was proclaimed in July 1989 and plans for a housing project are apparently under way. As yet there have been no moves to appoint Local

¹² Although these blocks are still in use at present, the CPA officials at Lwandle continue to refer to them as 'temporary'. Wilson (1972:68-75) has noted the occurrence of such 'temporary' blocks elsewhere in the Western Cape in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Authority personnel, and residents are currently represented to officialdom by a large committee of men, of which about 12 members are active regularly. The Men's Committee, as it is known, has been in office since 1986, and there is lack of clarity amongst at least some residents as to how its members came to be appointed. Whilst the committee enjoys some support, particularly amongst older residents, there is growing discontent amongst younger residents about what they perceive to be committee members' 'collaboration' with the authorities.

There are a few hostels at Lwandle which are administered or rented by private companies for the exclusive use of their employees. Workers who live in these hostels are allocated beds by the company concerned, and in most instances a small amount is subtracted from their wages to cover the rental. Beds in hostels which are administered by the CPA are acquired through application to the rent office, and are awarded only to men who are able to furnish proof of employment. Beds are rented at a fee of R9 per month. There is an extensive blackmarket in beds. For example, contract workers who spend much of their time away from Lwandle sub-let their beds to others, whilst the beds of people who leave Lwandle permanently are often simply taken over by other residents who then make the rent payment themselves in the name of the previous (official) bedholder. In the final analysis the rent office thus in fact has little control over the allocation of beds.

The people of Lwandle

There are no recent official demographic figures for Lwandle which are reliable¹³. My survey revealed an average bed-to-person ratio of 1:3,3 for the sample, although there were some bed-spaces which were home to as many as eight or more people¹⁴. Approximately 27% of the sample population were children under the age of 18 years, 27% were adult women, and 46% were adult men. These figures align closely with those of Segar (1988) and her colleagues who found an average bed occupancy of 2,8 people and a similar distribution of men, women, and children in their 1987 survey of hostels in Langa, Nyanga, and Guguletu. Assuming an average bed-to-person ratio of 1:3,3 for all of the 2 186 beds, at the time of research Lwandle had a population of approximately 7 200 people, comprising around 1 800 children, 1 800 women, and 3 600 men¹⁵.

Approximately 70% of the men and only 20% of the women in the sample were engaged in full-time employment, whilst 48% of the adult population as a whole were not engaged in wage labour. Once more, these figures align closely with those found in hostels in the Cape Town metropole (see Segar 1988).

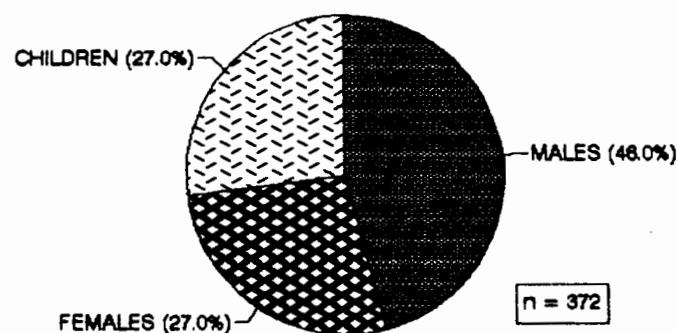
¹³ Given the high rates of influx into urban South African in the past few years, the last government census, conducted in 1985, is outdated. Moreover, the latter found that Lwandle had a population of approximately 1 800 people, some 500 people less than even the official number of beds at Lwandle. Its findings are therefore dubious. Those other estimates which do exist contradict one another. In early 1989 the CPA estimated that there were between 5 000 and 6 000 people living at Lwandle (personal communication). At much the same time a survey conducted by the Urban Foundation suggested that Lwandle had a population of around 3 200 people (personal communication).

¹⁴ For the purpose of the survey, a bed was equated with a bed-space, so that if a makeshift double-bunk had been erected by residents then all of those who used the double-bunk were considered to be making use of one bed.

¹⁵ The average person-to-bed ratio is a conservative figure. There were some residents who, due to past experience of evictions by the police and the CPA, were reluctant to reveal all of the people who shared their bed-spaces. There were also some married men (whose wives were not present at Lwandle) who had girlfriends resident with them and preferred not to tell me of them. I know this firstly because in some instances other residents of particular rooms mentioned bed-users who had not been revealed to me, and secondly because afterwards I came to know better some of the people who were included in the sample.

The average income of those adults who were employed was R365 per month - an average of R399 for men and R191 per month for women. Around 60% of the men who were employed in wage labour were engaged in some way in the building industry, which is the largest employer of labour in the region. Other prominent sources of employment are the food-canning industry, the municipalities of the three neighbouring 'White' settlements, and 'White' households. There were also two boys under the age of 18 years who were engaged in wage employment - a 16-year-old who earned R300 per month, and a 17-year-old who earned R100 per month.

Table 4.1: Basic population breakdown



There were also substantial numbers of men and women - approximately 30% of the sample of adults - who engaged in informal sector activities such as photography, hairdressing, and divining, and in the sale of alcohol, soft drinks, packaged and fresh foods, cooked meals, and clothing. Most of the latter operate from their rooms, but there are some who have set up makeshift stalls around the periphery of the township.

Several of those who were engaged in informal sector activities did so as their sole form of livelihood, whilst for others their businesses supplemented earnings from wage employment. Informal sector incomes gleaned from activities such as the above ranged from little more than a couple of rand per month to as much as R500 or more. There were also two male taxi-owners in the sample who claimed that their incomes were in excess of R3000 per month.

Table 4.2: Adult male and female employment

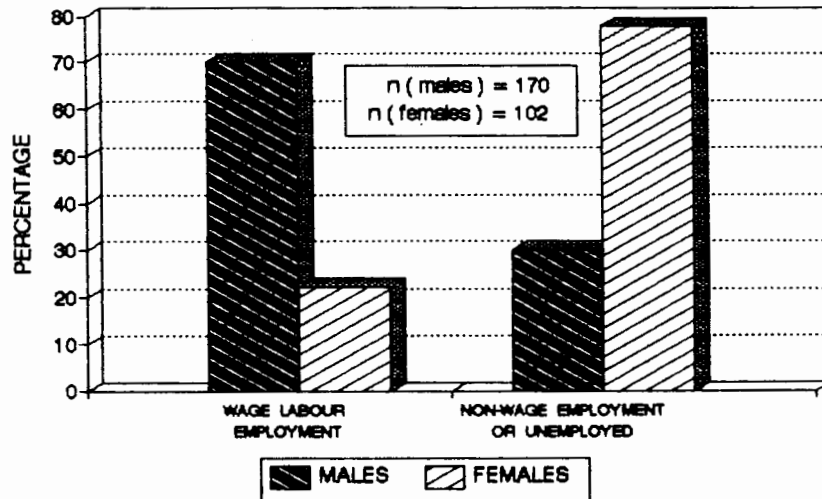
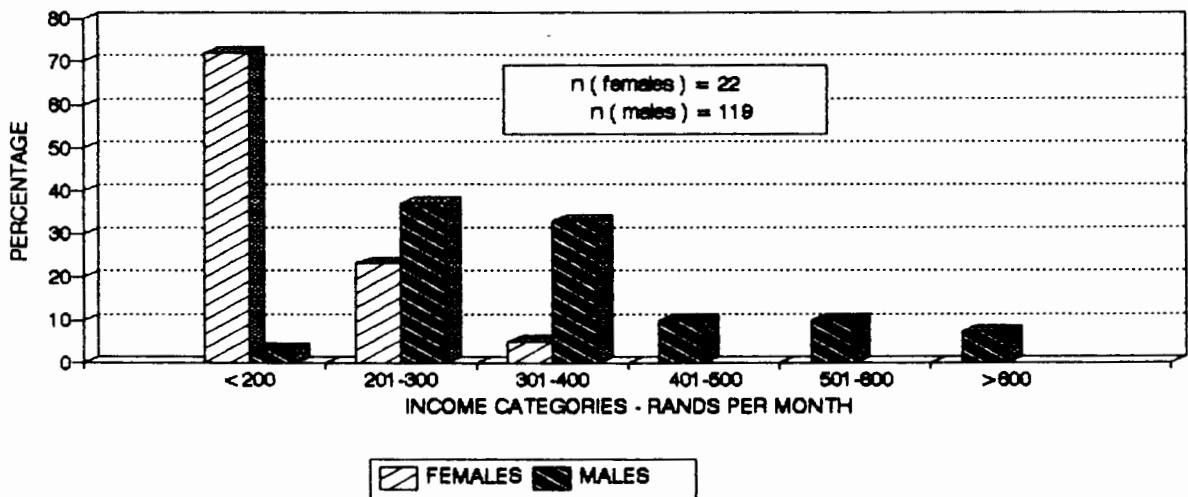


Table 4.3: Monthly income levels amongst adult full-time wage earners





*A spaza [general-dealer store] set up
at its proprietor's bed-space.*

Other noteworthy features of the sample population were its relatively young average age, and the low levels of education amongst adults. There was an average age of 20 years for the sample as a whole, with 19% under six years of age and 71% aged 30 years or younger. Only 14% of the sample were over the age of 40 years, and less than 2% were over 60 years of age. As far as education is concerned, 58% of the adults had reached Standard 5 or lower, less than 1% had matriculated, and none had attained tertiary qualifications. There were also six adults - people over the age of 18 years - who were still attending school, travelling to Khayelitsha by bus on a daily basis.

By far the largest proportion of the sample population was Xhosa-speaking, and originated from the Transkei or Ciskei. There was also a significant number of Xhosa-speaking people

Table 4.4: Population by age

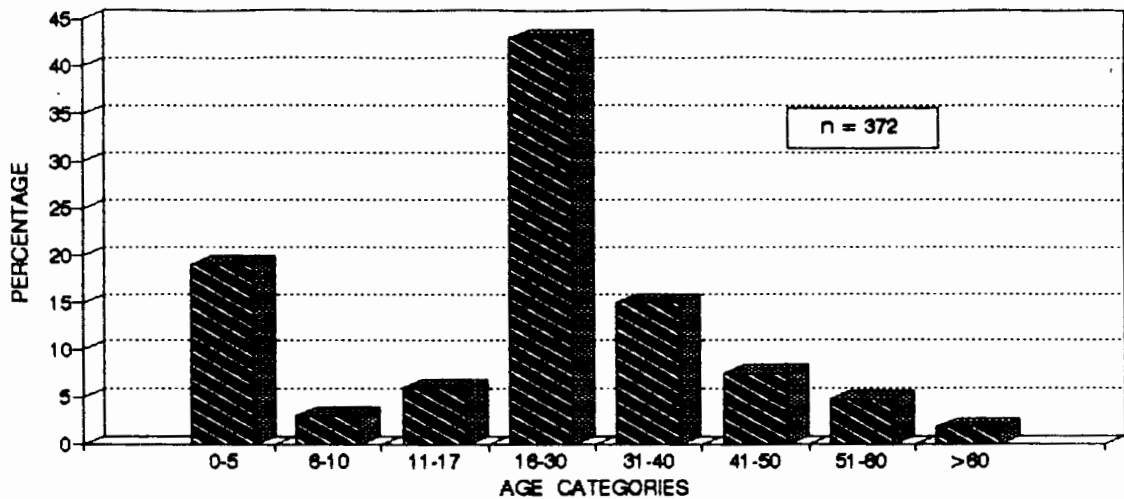
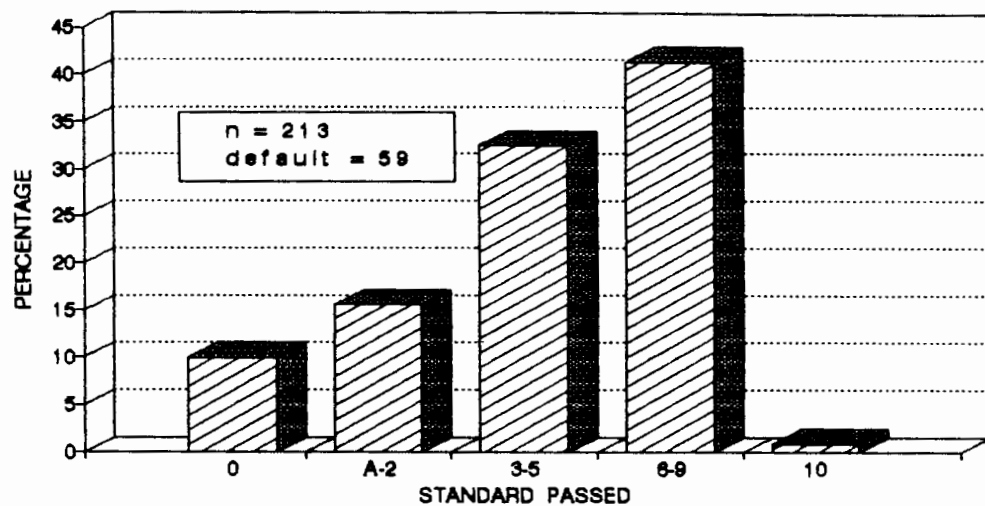


Table 4.5: Adult education levels¹⁶



who had moved to Lwandle from the Karoo. Others hailed from the Eastern Cape, the Orange Free State, Lesotho, and Cape Town, whilst there was a small number of residents from as far afield as QwaQwa and Zululand. There was also a small number of Afrikaans-speaking people, classified as 'Coloured', who

¹⁶ 59 of the 272 adults in the sample could not recall the Standards which they had passed, did not wish to disclose them, or were absent when the bed to which they were attached was surveyed. In the latter instances, interviewees did not know the levels of education achieved by their fellow bed-users. It is possible that some people exaggerated their levels of educational achievement.

originate from the surrounding townships of Rusthof and Macassar, and from nearby towns such as Paarl, Stellenbosch, and Grabouw.

It is fairly certain that women have been staying at Lwandle since the early 1960s. There were three women in my sample who had stayed at Lwandle before 1970, and older male residents testified to their presence there during that time. A study conducted by the Urban Foundation in 1986 also identified a small number of women, resident at Lwandle at the time of the study, who had first stayed in the hostels shortly after they were built (Urban Foundation 1987). Nevertheless, strict enforcement of pass law regulations until the early 1980s, as well as regular policing of the hostels by the responsible state officials, probably prevented women from staying there for anything but very short periods of time.

By all accounts the major influx of women and children - and, for that matter, of unemployed men - began in the early 1980s, and has escalated significantly since then. The Urban Foundation (1987) found that 70% of its sample of women had either stayed in the hostels for the first time, or had settled there permanently, between the beginning of 1980 and December 1986. My findings bear this out. More than 45% of the women in my sample had been resident at Lwandle for less than six months when the survey was conducted, and 90% had first stayed or settled there after the beginning of 1980. There is no record of the number of children at Lwandle over time, but it is likely that the trend would have been similar to that of women.



Some of the younger hostel residents.

Approximately 80% of the sample who had been resident at Lwandle for longer than six months claimed to travel to their places of origin at least once a year; a substantial number, particularly women and children, do so more often. Some of the residents who had been at Lwandle for less than six months had already visited their places of origin, and almost all said that they planned to do so at least once every year. In addition, a large number of interviewees cling to the ideal of returning to either the Transkei or Ciskei and establishing a homestead there; this applies equally to the younger of the adults as it does to others. A majority said that they would prefer to rent rather than buy a house in the Western Cape, and many claimed that even if they do succeed in obtaining a house in the Western Cape they still eventually intend returning to their rural places of origin. I shall return to the long-term

intentions of hostel residents in the concluding chapter of the study.

Physical profile of the hostels

There are various types of hostel block at Lwandle. By far the predominant type, of which there are 41 blocks in total, is that built by the state in 1959 and the early 1960s. These hostels house around 85% of Lwandle's population (approximately 6 120 people), and are all administered by the CPA. Apart from the state-built hostels, the 15 so-called 'temporary' blocks are also under CPA administration. These blocks were left for use by the CPA once the companies which had erected them had completed their contracts. Two are built out of corrugated materials (one out of corrugated-iron and the other out of corrugated-asbestos), and the other 13 out of flat asbestos. The temporary blocks accommodate approximately 9% of Lwandle's population (about 650 people). Finally, there are two hostel blocks which are administered and maintained by private companies; between them, these blocks house the remaining 6% of Lwandle's population (about 430 people).

The 41 state-built blocks are all more or less uniform. They are built from brick, and have sloping asbestos roofs. Each block is divided into either three or four bungalows, and each bungalow comprises two interleading rooms (see Diagram 4.2). There is a narrow entrance passage which separates the two rooms from one another, with two apertures leading off it into each of the rooms. In most instances there are no doors fixed to the apertures, so that the rooms are in fact only partially separate from one another. The only means of

entrance to and exit from the bungalows is a single door which leads outside from the passage.

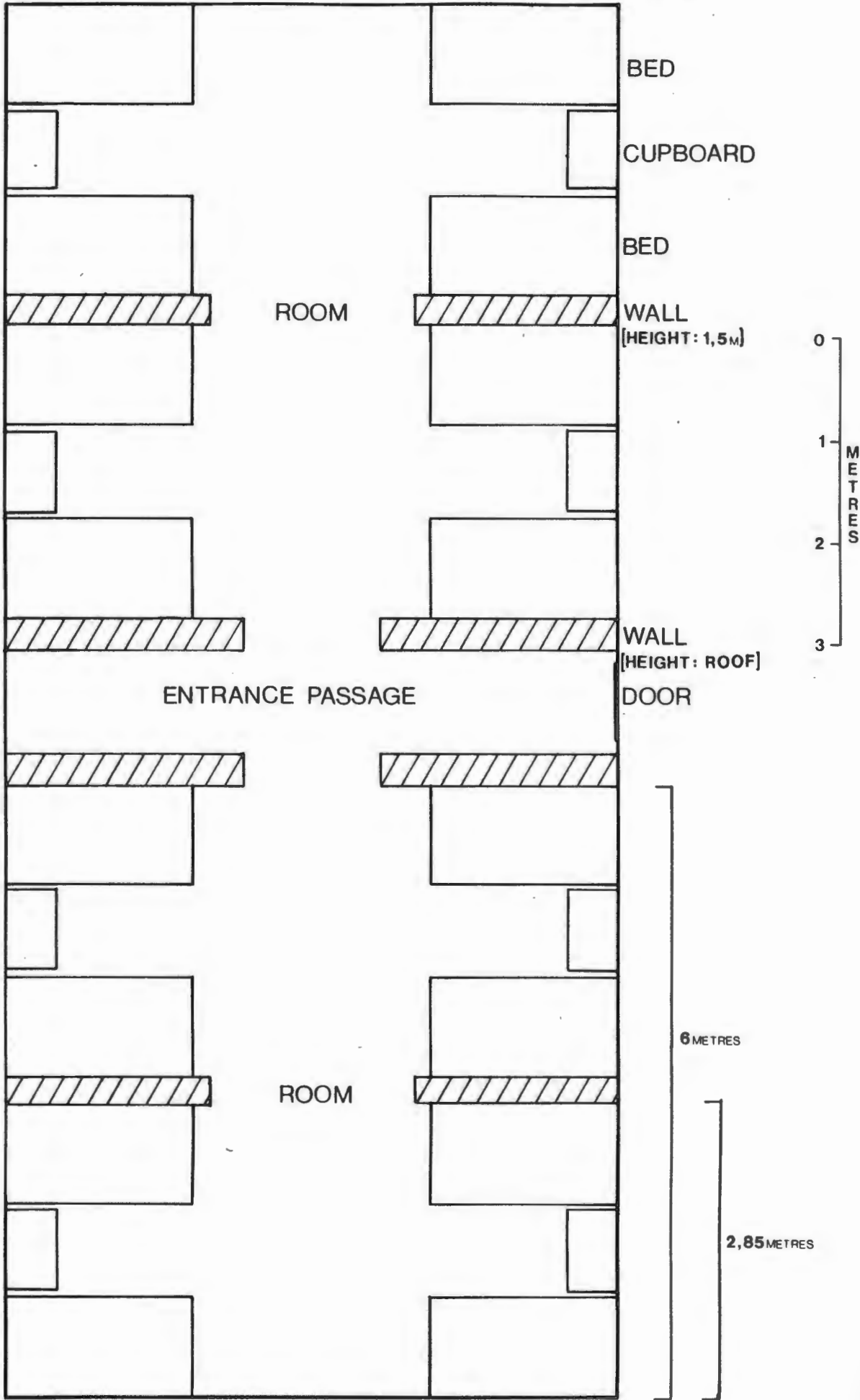


*A column of
state-built
bungalows.*

The rooms in the state-built hostels are all six metres by six metres square. Each is provided with eight beds, four on either side of the room, and each set of four beds is further divided into two pairs by a low wall which is in most instances about a metre and a half in height¹⁷. There is a narrow window above each pair of beds, and a small cupboard built into the wall between them. The floors are rough uncovered concrete,

¹⁷ The state-built hostels were erected over a number of years, and the internal design in the later buildings seems to have altered so that there are a few in which this wall is around two metres in height.

FLOOR PLAN: STATE-BUILT BUNGALOWS



there is one unshaded light bulb suspended from the middle of the roof, and there are no ceilings or electric plugs.



The central area of a room in a state-built bungalow. The cupboard is privately owned.

The corrugated blocks are closely reminiscent of second world war aeroplane hangars¹⁸. The larger of the two is let to a construction company for the accommodation of its workers, but responsibility for its maintenance still falls to the CPA. This block is divided into two large rooms, each of which is furnished with approximately 30 beds. The beds stand about half a metre apart, and there are no partitioning walls

¹⁸ Wilson (1972:71) noted the occurrence of such hostel blocks, calling them 'hangar-type' hostels, in other parts of the Western Cape.



A bed-space in a state-built hostel

separating them off from one another. The smaller of the hangar-type blocks is also divided into two rooms, one of which is presently in use as a church; the second room is furnished with eight unpartitioned beds. As in the state-built hostels, the floors of the hangar-type blocks are concrete, the windows are small, and there are no ceilings and only one light bulb per room. There are also no cupboards provided for storing residents' personal possessions.

The remaining 13 temporary blocks, those built from flat asbestos, are situated on the inner edge of the buffer strip in the southern-most part of the complex; they are known collectively to hostel residents as 'Greenpoint' (they are military green in colour). Each block consists of two non-interleading rooms. These rooms are slightly smaller than those in the state-built hostels, and are each furnished with four double bunks. As in the hangar-type buildings, there are

no walled partitions between the beds, and no facilities for storing personal possessions. There is also no electric lighting in these blocks, and residents therefore use candles and paraffin lamps at night.



A woman and her bed-space in a hangar-type hostel.

All of the CPA administered hostels - the state-built blocks, the hangar-type blocks, and those at Greenpoint - are extremely run down. Roofs leak badly when it rains, and residents complain that they have to cover themselves with plastic at night to protect themselves from the wet. Their repeated requests that the CPA mend the roofs remains unheeded. In virtually all of the rooms there are panes of glass which are broken, and which remain that way month after month. Officials at the rent office have purportedly told residents that there are insufficient funds to replace the panes, and that it is up to them to purchase the necessary glass and

putty. As a consequence, when window panes are mended it is almost invariably done by residents themselves.

Being ceilingless, all of the CPA hostels are extremely hot during summer and cold during winter. The walls in the state-built blocks are often cracked and mouldy, and those in the hangar-type blocks have large holes which let in cold air, wind, and rain. The floors in the latter sometimes flood completely in heavy rain, whilst there are often large puddles in the other types of hostel. Residents also report that the power supply which feeds the lights in the rooms fails frequently, and that it is common for sections of the complex to be without electric lighting for as long as six to eight weeks at a time. Some residents even allege that there is a patterned cycle of power failures, with the CPA sequentially cutting off the electricity supply to each section of Lwandle so as to lower maintenance costs.



Junk outside a hangar-type hostel. Note the informal sector stall in the background.

There are approximately 60 toilets which are intended to serve the residents of all of the hostels which are administered by the CPA - a toilet-to-person ratio of between 1:105 and 1:110. The toilets themselves consist of nothing more than heavy-duty plastic buckets, located in concrete blocks situated sporadically around the complex. There are no lights in the blocks. In most instances the wooden seats which were inserted above the buckets have disappeared and have not been replaced. Some of the buckets are placed in partitioned, doorless stalls, whilst others stand in unpartitioned rows. All of the toilet blocks are only partly roofed. A truck is sent by the Stellenbosch Regional Services Council (RSC) to empty the toilets three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Residents say that they are full within a few hours of being cleaned, and that over weekends they overflow on to the floor. Sometimes the RSC truck misses some of the toilets, and these are therefore only cleared on its next visit. The stench from the toilets is constant, and seeps into the hostel rooms which are closest to them.

There are nine ablution blocks which are intended to serve all of the 6 770 or so people who live in the CPA-administered hostels. The ablution blocks consist inside of six to eight unpartitioned showers - many of which do not have nozzles - and outside of a row of basins for washing clothes. Hot water is only available for an hour and a half per day, between 3.30 and 5.30 in the mornings, and is switched off for the remainder of the time. The floors and walls of the shower-rooms are green with mould and slime. Due to lack of partitions they are reserved for men only, although not surprisingly most residents

prefer to wash from portable hand-basins alongside their beds. Residents claim that some people use the showers as urinals.



'Toilets' immediately after being cleaned.

There are three communal kitchens at Lwandle, each of which is provided with four gas stoves. Residents say that there are never more than two gas stoves alight in each kitchen at any time, the justification apparently being that it would cost too much to run all four simultaneously. Although it is not permitted, most residents opt to do their cooking on small primus stoves inside the rooms, both because there is insufficient space on the stoves in the kitchens, and because food is commonly stolen from pots which are left to cook unattended.

Apart from a few old oil drums which are scattered sparsely around the complex, there are few refuse bins provided for residents. Waste piles up between the hostel blocks, and

is cleared away irregularly by RSC workers. The areas surrounding the hostels are untarred and ungrassed, and there is little drainage system worth speaking of; as a result, these areas remain a green muddy slush for much of the year. There are two spotlights, on high poles, which 'light' the complex at night. These are utterly inadequate, and much of Lwandle remains very dark at night.



Waste.

A recent report on the health implications of living in the larger of the hangar-type blocks, but which also takes account of wider conditions such as sanitation, drainage, and external lighting, concluded that the conditions in and around the block make it a slum in terms of the Slums Act and the Black Local Communities Act (personal communication). Given that the state-built hostels are as crowded, if not more so, as the block referred to in this report, and that conditions in

the two types of block are very similar, it is not unlikely that the same conclusion would have been reached regarding all of the hostels at Lwandle which are administered by the CPA.



A child collecting water from a puddle.

The two hostel blocks which are maintained by private companies, and which are reserved for the accommodation of their workers, are far superior to those which are kept by the CPA¹⁹. The rooms in these hostels each house two beds, and have ceilings, electrical fittings, and large windows. Ablution facilities, which include heated showers, hand basins, mirrors, and flush toilets, have also been installed. In one of the blocks the ablution facilities are kept locked - residents have their own keys to the door - so that they are not over-run by residents of other hostels who wish to make use of the superior amenities. The other block is minded by a security-guard

¹⁹ Segar (1988:3) has noted that employer-built and -administered hostels throughout the Western Cape "are fairly well-equipped and generally offer living conditions of a much higher standard than is found in the government hostels".

employed by the company which owns it. Whilst conditions in these hostels are far more congenial those in the CPA blocks, residents are obviously still subject to the surrounding malaise of mud and filth which is present throughout the township.

Other facilities at Lwandle

Other facilities at Lwandle which are provided by the state include a community hall, a soccer pitch, and a beer-hall. There is also a general dealer store which is operated by a Lwandle resident, a church building which was erected by the Dutch Reformed Church and which doubles as a crèche for about 30 children during the week, and the community-owned school. Numerous rough rugby and soccer pitches which were cleared by residents are scattered around the periphery of the complex. There is no social infrastructure at Lwandle apart from these facilities.

Introducing the children²⁰

This section provides a summary profile of the basic personal circumstances of each of the children who feature centrally in the study (excluding Xolisile). The profiles should be read in conjunction with the case studies which are included in later ethnography, and in some instances with the life history summaries included in Chapter 5. Apart from introducing the children, they can also be used for quick reference where background information on a particular child might be desired at any point in the ethnography.

²⁰ The profiles reflect the circumstances of each child when I interviewed him or her in mid-1989.

Table 4.6: The children and their bedholds - basic information²¹

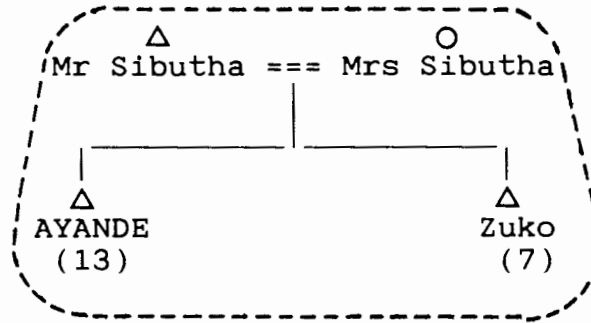
Child	Age	Std	Guardian/s at Lwandle	Number of beds	Number of occupants	Date of arrival

Ayandé	13	1	parents	1	4	late-1987
Christinah	15	4	parents	1	6	1985
Christophy	14	3	parents	1	3	end-1988
Fundiswa*	14	A	none(parents)	2	8(10)	1986
Thembeni*	11	B	none(parents)	2	8(10)	1986
Khosi*	13	1	none(kin)	2	8(10)	1986
Kholeka	14	1	kin	?	?	early-1989
Lumka	14	4	kin	2	6	early-1989
Mandisa	11	1	father	2	4	mid-1987
Mphumzi*	14	1	parents	2	5	1985
Siyabulela*	12	1	parents	2	5	1985
Nandipha	13	3	parents	1	3	mid-1988
Niombosi	10	1	parents	1	4	early-1989
Nkosnathi*	12	3	parents	2	6	1981
Nosipho*	10	1	parents	2	6	1982
Nodazibona	12	1	kin	2	8	early-1989
Nolandela	11	3	none(mother)	1	2(3)	early-1989
Nomsingisi	11	3	parents	2	6	end-1988
Nomvuyo	10	2	parents	1	4	early-1987
Ntobeko	11	2	parents	2	7	mid-1988
Siphiwo	10	1	parents	1	4	1983
Thembela	13	1	mother	1	6	1987
Xolisa	13	1	parents	1	7	1986
Xolisile	14	1	parents	2	7	mid-1986

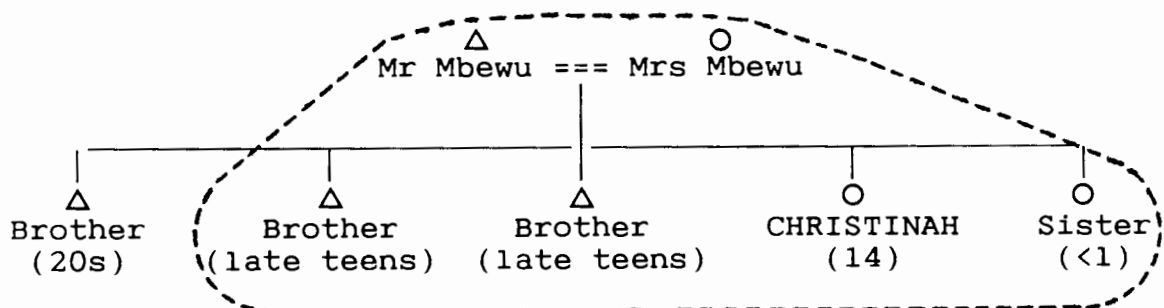
Ayande

Ayande is a 13-year-old boy in Standard 1. He originates from a 'White'-owned farm in the Stutterheim district of the Eastern Cape, and has been resident at Lwandle since the end of 1987. He lives in a state-built hostel with his parents and younger brother, Zuko, who is 7 years old; he has no other siblings. The four members of the family share a double-bunk between them. Ayande's father is employed by a construction company, and his mother operates a shebeen from the room in which the family lives.

²¹ Those children with asterisks next to their names, and who are listed alongside one another, are members of the same bedhold. 'Std' refers to the Standard at school which a child is presently doing. Brackets in the 'guardian' column refer to guardians who are away more than they are present, and brackets in the 'occupants' column refer to the number of people using the beds when guardians, who are most often absent, also stay at Lwandle. In the case of Kholeka, refer for explanation to her profile below. As with the survey, double-bunks are counted as one bed since they occupy one bed-space. Where relevant, 'date of arrival' refers to the first period of residence.

Diagram 4.3: Ayande's family and bedhold²²**Christinah**

Christinah is 15 years old, and is in Standard 4. She was born on the Witwatersrand where her father was employed as a labourer on the mines, but spent most of her life prior to moving to Lwandle in Mount Fletcher in the Transkei. She moved to Lwandle for the first time in 1985. Christinah has four siblings: an infant sister, born towards the end of 1988, and three older brothers in their late teens and early twenties. Her oldest brother is employed somewhere in Cape Town, and the other two brothers, both of whom are unemployed, live with the family in one of the hangar-type blocks at Lwandle. When I first interviewed Christinah's mother the family occupied two double bunks. Since that time, however, the company which rents the hostel from the CPA moved a large number of new workers into the building, and Christinah and the five other co-resident members of her family - six people in total - now share just one self-erected double bunk between them. Christinah's father is employed by the above company, a firm of building contractors, and her mother is a diviner.

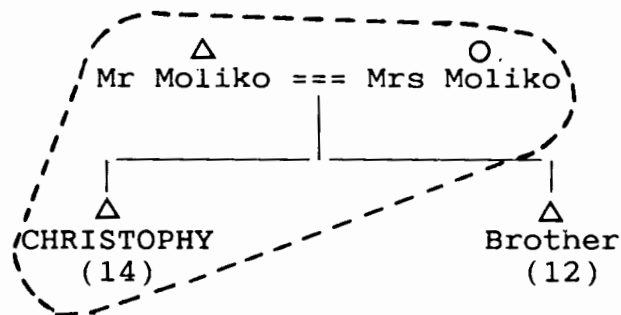
Diagram 4.4: Christinah's family and bedhold

²² In all of the diagrams which follow in this section, people inside the slashed lines are part of the bedhold at Lwandle, and those inside the dotted lines live in another bungalow or partly at Lwandle (i.e. over weekends).

Christophy

Christophy is a 14-year-old boy in Standard 3. He originates from Lesotho; his father is Mosotho and his mother, a diviner, is Xhosa. His 12-year-old brother, his only sibling, lives with his grandparents in Mount Fletcher in the Transkei. Christophy has been in the Western Cape since late in 1988, but he does not reside at Lwandle constantly. His father is employed by the same company as is Christinah's father, and the family has a single bed in the same hangar-type block as Christinah. Christophy and his mother sometimes live with his father in this block, but they also spend much time with his mother's sister who lives at Sir Lowry's Pass Village. When Christophy is staying at Sir Lowry's Pass Village he sometimes either rides his bicycle, or catches a bus, to and from school. However, he is very often absent from school when he is staying away from Lwandle.

Diagram 4.5: Christophy's family and bedhold²³



Fundiswa, Thembeni, and Khosi

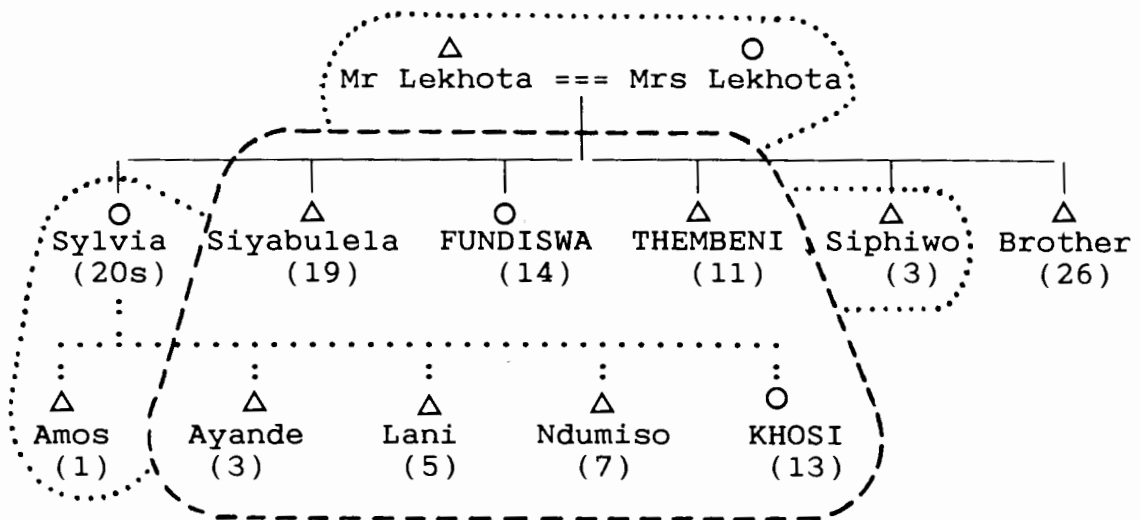
Fundiswa and Thembeni Lekhota, aged 14 and 11 years respectively, are brother and sister. Fundiswa is in Sub A and Thembeni is in Sub B; these two children are those in the core sample from whom I did not obtain written testimony. Fundiswa was born in Eliot in the Eastern Cape, and Thembeni was born in the Transkei district of Cala. They have moved around extensively, but have spent much of their lives in rural districts of the country. Mr Lekhota is a construction worker, and on the whole his family have travelled with him wherever he

²³ Applicable when Christophy and his mother are staying at Lwandle.

is sent to work. The children have been living at Lwandle on and off since 1986.

Mr and Mrs Lekhota spend most of their time away from Lwandle. Mr Lekhota lives on-site during the week, returning usually for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. Mrs Lekhota is a live-in domestic worker at the Strand; like her husband, she stays at Lwandle only over weekends. Fundiswa and Thembeni have four siblings: Sylvia, who is in her late twenties, two older brothers aged 19 and 26 years, and another brother who is three years old. The oldest brother lives and works in Cape Town, and Sylvia and her youngest child live in a room at Lwandle with Sylvia's boyfriend. Mr and Mrs Lekhota's youngest child, three-year-old Siphwiwo, stays with Mrs Lekhota at the Strand. Fundiswa, Thembeni and the remaining brother, 19-year-old Siyabulela, live together at Lwandle.

Khosi is 13 years old and in Standard 1. She is the illegitimate daughter of Sylvia, Fundiswa and Thembeni's older sister. Like Thembeni, Khosi was born in Cala. She lived initially with her father's parents in Cala, but has been with the Lekhota family since she was eight years old. Khosi considers Mr and Mrs Lekhota's children to be her siblings, and Mrs Lekhota - her biological grandmother - to be her mother. Khosi lives with Siyabulela, Fundiswa, Thembeni, and three of Sylvia's other children (she has born five children in total) in a room in one of the state-built hostels. They share a single bed and a double bunk between the seven of them. Over weekends, when Mr and Mrs Lekhota and Siphwiwo visit, there are 10 people using these beds.

Diagram 4.6: The Lekhota family and bedhold**Kholeka**

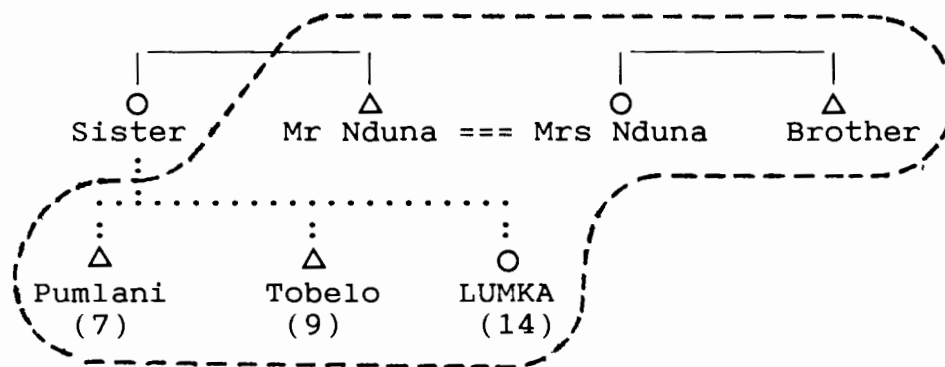
Kholeka lives at Lwandle with maternal kin, who appear to have a number of bed-spaces in different bungalows. My interviews with Kholeka failed completely, and I was unable to obtain a comprehensible account of either her past or present circumstances from the relatives with whom she lives at Lwandle. As far as I could tell, Kholeka is not attached to any one of the three bedholds, and seems to move and live between them. I know from her mother's cousin that she was born out of wedlock, and that her mother's whereabouts is presently unknown to her family. She has apparently had no contact with her mother for at least five years. The members of the bedholds at Lwandle include her grandmother, who is separated from her grandfather (he lives on a farm in Kuruman), and a variety of uncles, aunts, cousins, and their spouses and children. Kholeka is 14 years old and is in Standard 1. She said that she has been living at Lwandle since early in 1989, and that prior to then she lived with her grandfather, grandmother, and other maternal kin in Kuruman.

Lumka

Lumka is a 14-year-old girl in Standard 4. She and her two half-brothers, aged nine and seven years, live in a state-built hostel with their maternal uncle and his wife, Mr and Mrs

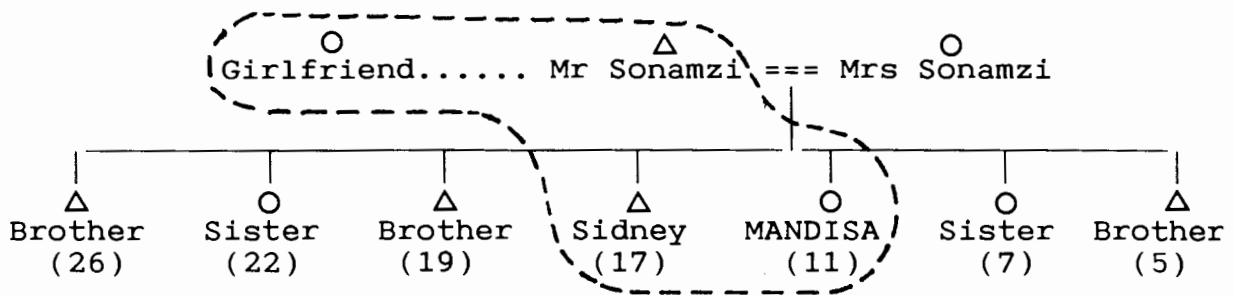
Nduna. All three of the children were born out of wedlock, and have been in the care of Mr and Mrs Nduna since the beginning of 1988. Mr and Mrs Nduna are as yet childless, but they are still relatively young, aged 27 and 24 respectively. He is employed as a petrol pump attendant at a garage in the Strand, and Mrs Nduna is unemployed. They have been resident at Lwandle since early 1989, having moved there from Sada (Whittlesea) in the Ciskei. Mrs Nduna's brother also lives with them. The members of the domestic unit share two beds, a single bed and a double bunk, between the six of them.

Diagram 4.7: Lumka's family and bedhold

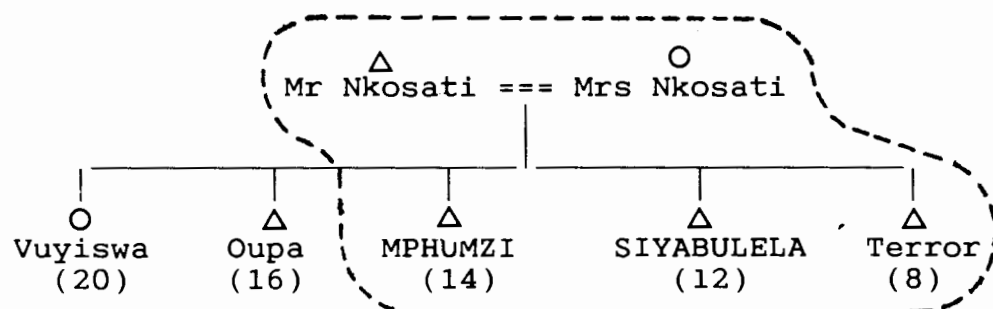


Mandisa

Mandisa Sonamzi is 11 years old, and is in Standard 1. She originates from Lady Frere in the Transkei, where she lived for the first nine years of her life. She has been resident at Lwandle with her father and one of her brothers, 17-year-old Sidney, since 1988. Mr Sonamzi is employed by a food processing factory in the Strand, and her brother works for a construction company which is based at Gordon's Bay. Mrs Sonamzi and Mandisa's remaining five siblings live at Lady Frere. Mr Sonamzi has a girlfriend who lives with him at Lwandle, but both he and Mandisa deny that there is a rift between his wife and himself. The four members of the domestic unit share a single bed and a double bunk in a state-built hostel.

Diagram 4.8: Mandisa's family and bedhold**Mphumzi and Siyabulela**

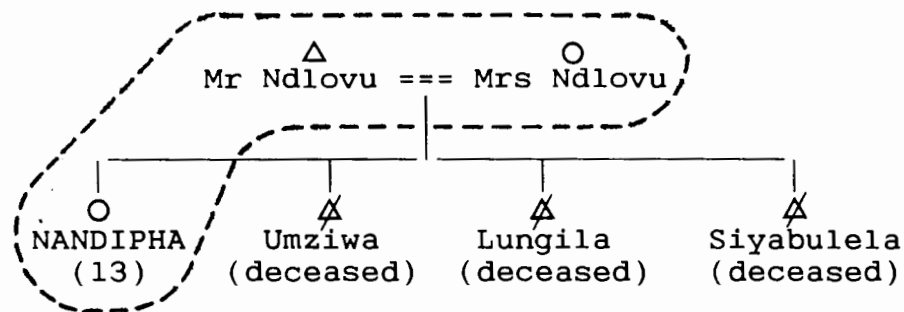
Mphumzi and Siyabulela Nkosati, aged 14 and 12 years respectively, are brothers; both are in Standard 1. They have moved around extensively with their mother, but have also spent much time with their maternal grandparents in Hanover in the Karoo. They have both been living at Lwandle on and off since 1985. Mr Nkosati works for a food canning factory in the Strand, and Mrs Nkosati operates a shebeen from the room in which the family lives. Mphumzi and Siyabulela have three other siblings: an eight-year-old brother, Terror, who lives with them at Lwandle, and a 16 year-old-brother and 20-year-old sister, both of whom are at school in Hanover and live with their grandparents. The five co-resident members of the Nkosati family share a single bed and a double-bunk in a state-built hostel.

Diagram 4.9: The Nkosati family and bedhold**Nandipha**

Nandipha Ndlovu is 13 years old and in Standard 3. She is the only surviving child of Mr and Mrs Ndlovu, although Mr Ndlovu has two much older children from a previous marriage;

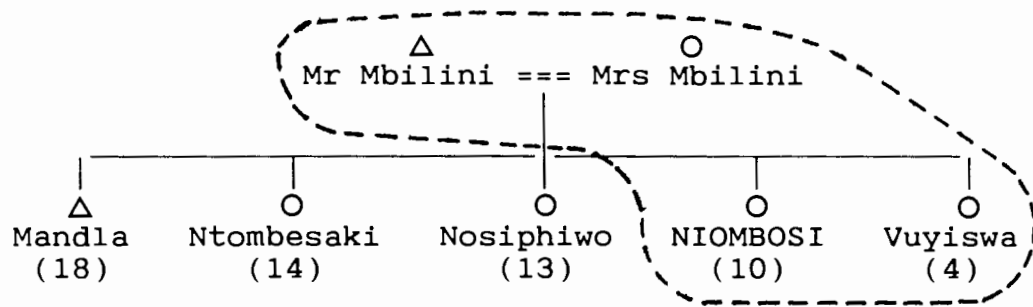
Nandipha knows very little about her father's older offspring. Nandipha and her mother have been living at Lwandle since the middle of 1988. Prior to that time they had always lived in the Transkei, and had never previously visited Mr Ndlovu in the Western Cape. Mr Ndlovu is employed by the Somerset West municipality, and Mrs Ndlovu is sickly and confined to her bed for much of the time. The three members of the family share a single bed between them: Mr and Mrs Ndlovu occupy the bed, and Nandipha sleeps on the floor.

Diagram 4.10: Nandipha's family and bedhold

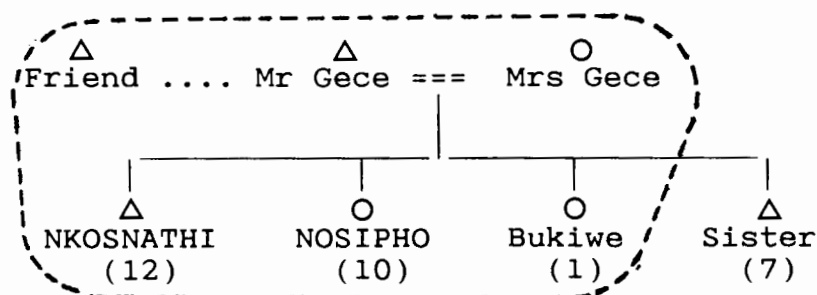


Niombosi

Niombosi Mbilini is a 10-year-old girl in Standard 1. She has four siblings: an 18-year-old brother, two sisters aged 14 and 13 years, and a younger sister who is four years old. The three older siblings all live with a friend of Mr and Mrs Mbilini in Keiskammahoek, and Niombosi and her youngest sister, Vuyiswa, live with their parents in a state-built hostel at Lwandle. Niombosi and Vuyiswa came to Lwandle in January 1989; at that stage Mr Mbilini had been at Lwandle for just over a year, and his wife had been with him there for about four months. The family members who are present share a double-bunk between the four of them. Niombosi and Vuyiswa sleep together on the bottom bunk, and Mr and Mrs Mbilini occupy the top. Mr Mbilini has been unemployed since early 1989 when the company for which he worked went bankrupt. He did not receive his pay for the last two months that he worked for them. The family survives off the income of Mrs Mbilini, who is employed as a full-time domestic worker in Gordon's Bay. She earns R180 per month.

Diagram 4.11: Niombosi's family and bedhold**Nkosnathi and Nosipho**

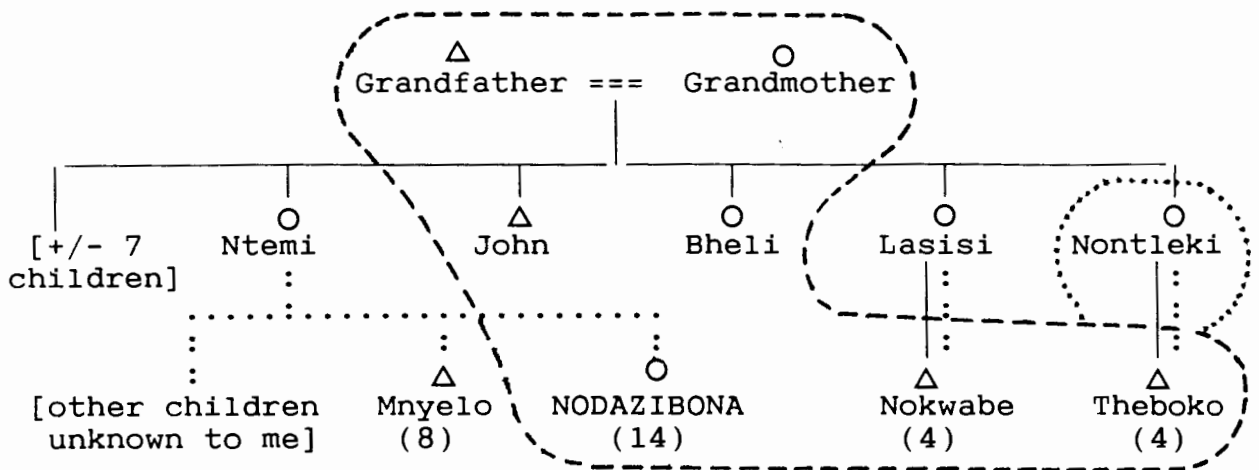
Nkosnathi and Nosipho Gece are brother and sister. Nkosnathi is 12 years old and in Standard 3, and Nosipho is 10 years old and in Standard 1. Nkosnathi and Nosipho live in a room in one of the company-administered blocks, together with their father and mother, a one-year-old brother called Bukiwe, and a friend of Mr Gece from his home in the Transkei. Another sibling, a seven-year-old sister, lives in the Transkei with Mrs Gece's sister. There are two double bunks *in the room*: Nkosnathi and Nosipho share the bottom of one of the bunks, Mrs Gece sleeps above them, and Mr Gece and his friend sleep on the other bunk. Mr Gece has rights to both of the beds in the room, but offered his friend a place in it because he could not find anywhere else to live. Mr Gece works for the company which owns the hostel, and his wife and the friend are unemployed. Nkosnathi and Nosipho have lived at Lwandle on and off since 1981 and 1982 respectively.

Diagram 4.12: The Gece family and bedhold

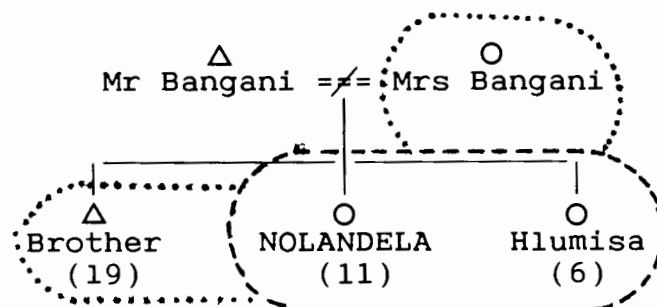
Nodazibona

Nodazibona was born in the Transkei. Her parents were not married, and she has never known the identity of her father. Nodazibona's mother (Ntemi) has born a number of other children out of wedlock (she is still not married), all of whom live with her in the Transkei; Nodazibona has not seen her mother for around three years, and is not certain how many half-siblings she has. Nodazibona is the first-born of these children, and has always been cared for primarily by her maternal grandparents. Her mother has often lived with them, but seems to have paid little attention to Nodazibona. Nodazibona has been living at Lwandle with her grandparents since early-1989. She is 12 years old, and is in Standard 1. She is very friendly with Kholeka, another illegitimate child.

Nodazibona's bedhold has seven members. Apart from herself, it consists of her grandparents, two of her grandparents' children, John and Bheli, and two of her grandparents' children's children, Nokwabe and Theboko. Nokwabe's mother (Lasisi) lives in the Transkei, and Theboko's mother (Nontleki) lives in another bungalow at Lwandle with her boyfriend. The members of Nodazibona's bedhold have two beds, a single bed and a double bunk, in a state-built hostel. Her grandmother is employed as a full-time (non-live-in) domestic worker in Somerset West, and John works for a construction company; her grandfather, Bheli, and Lasisi are all unemployed, although Bheli cooks food which she sells to hostel residents in order to bring in extra money.

Diagram 4.13: Nodazibona's bedhold and some family members**Nolandela**

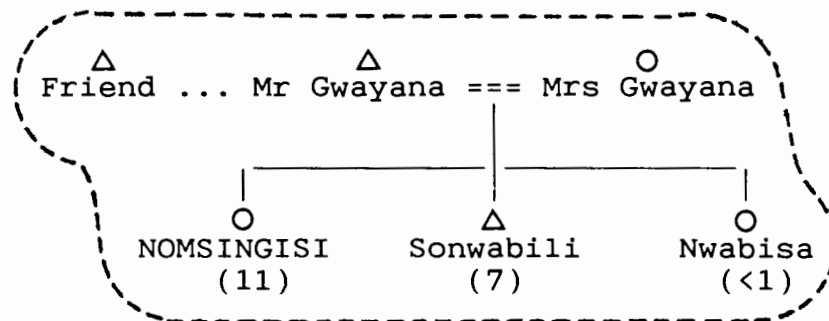
Nolandela is an 11-year-old girl in Standard 3. She originates from the town of Dordrecht in the Eastern Cape, and has been living in the hostels at Lwandle since January 1989. Nolandela's parents are separated: her father still lives in Dordrecht, and she and her two siblings - a brother aged 19 years and a six-year-old sister, Hlumisa - are in the 'custody' of their mother. Nolandela's mother is however employed as a live-in domestic worker at the Strand, and returns to Lwandle only over weekends. Her brother lives elsewhere in the hostels, and Nolandela and Hlumisa therefore live alone, and care for themselves, during the week when their mother is away. The sisters occupy a single bed in one of the state-built hostels.

Diagram 4.14: Nolandela's family and bedhold

Nomsingisi

Nomsingisi Gwayana is an 11-year-old girl in Standard 3 at Lwandle School. She lives with her parents and two younger siblings, Sonwabili and Nwabisa, in a state-built hostel. Together with a family friend, they share a double-bunk and a single bed between them. Mr Gwayana is a construction worker, and Mrs Gwayana and the friend are unemployed. Nomsingisi and her family originate from the Transkei. She has been at Lwandle since the end of 1988.

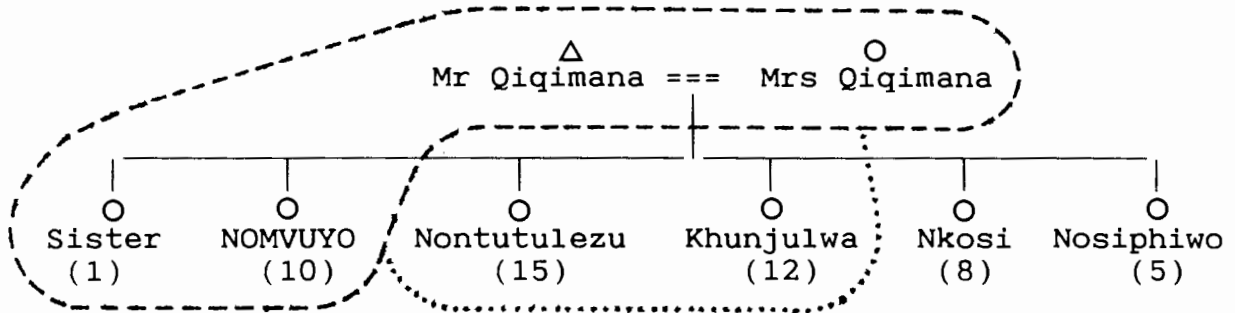
Diagram 4.15: Nomsingisi's family and bedhold

**Nomvuyo**

Nomvuyo Qiqimana lives at Lwandle with her parents and two of her five siblings - an unnamed infant sister, about a year old, and an older sister called Nontutulezu who is 15 years of age. Another older sister, 12-year-old Khunjulwa, lives at Mfuleni near Kuils River, and Nomvuyo's two remaining siblings - a younger brother and sister, aged eight and five years - live with their maternal grandparents in KwaNxeba in the Transkei. The family has two bed-spaces in two different state-built bungalows. Mr and Mrs Qiqimana, Nomvuyo, and her baby sister sleep in a double bunk in one of the rooms, and Nontutulezu, along with Khunjulwa when she is there over weekends, occupies the single bed in the other bungalow. The latter bed belongs to Mrs Qiqimana's sister, who is most often away from Lwandle. Mr Qiqimana is employed as a labourer by a building contracting firm, and Mrs Qiqimana sells vegetables from the room in which the family lives. Nomvuyo has been

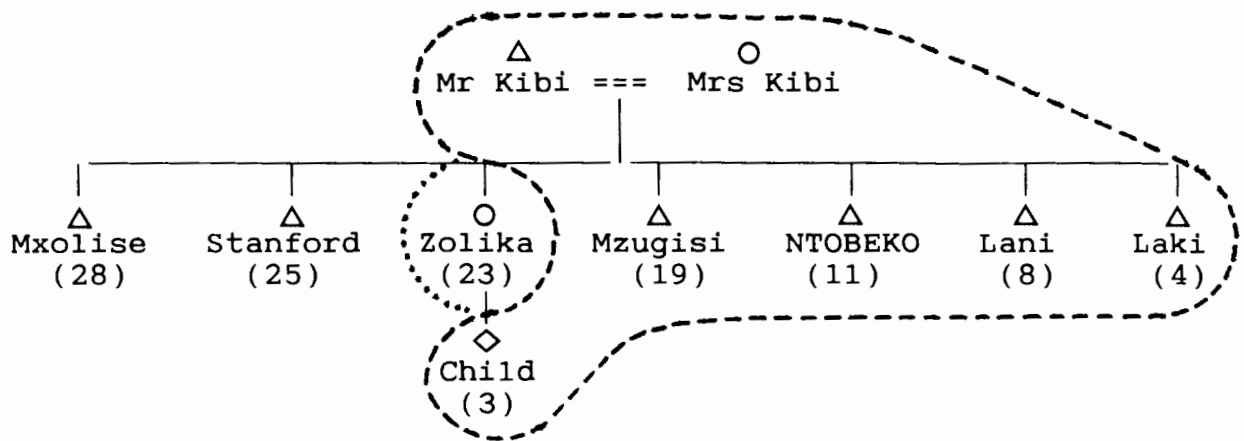
living in the hostels at Lwandle since early in 1987. She is 10 years old, and is in Standard 2 at Lwandle School.

Diagram 4.16: Nomvuyo's family and bedhold

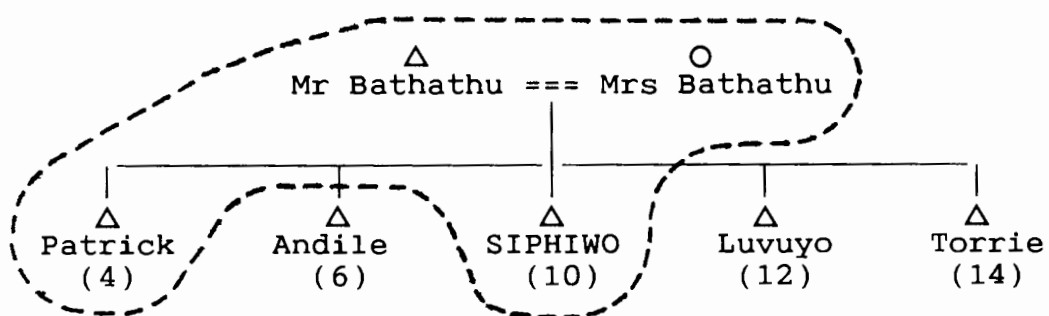


Ntobeko

Ntobeko Kibi is an 11-year-old boy in Standard 2. He has been living at Lwandle with his parents since they moved there in the middle of 1988. Mr Kibi is employed by a building firm as an assistant mechanic, and Mrs Kibi operates a shebeen from the room in which they live. Ntobeko has six siblings: two older brothers, Mxolise and Stanford, who live and work elsewhere in the Cape, a married sister, Zolika, who lives with her husband in another bungalow at Lwandle, and one older and two younger brothers, Mzugisi, Lani, and Laki, who live with their parents at Lwandle. Mr and Mrs Kibi, Ntobeko, his three co-resident brothers, and one of Zolika's children, aged three years - seven people in total - share a double bunk and a single bed in one of the state-built hostels. Mr and Mrs Kibi sleep on the top bunk, Laki and the sister's child sleep on the bottom bunk, Mzugisi and Ntobeko share the single bed, and Lani sleeps on the floor.

Diagram 4.17: Ntobeko's family and bedhold**Siphiwo**

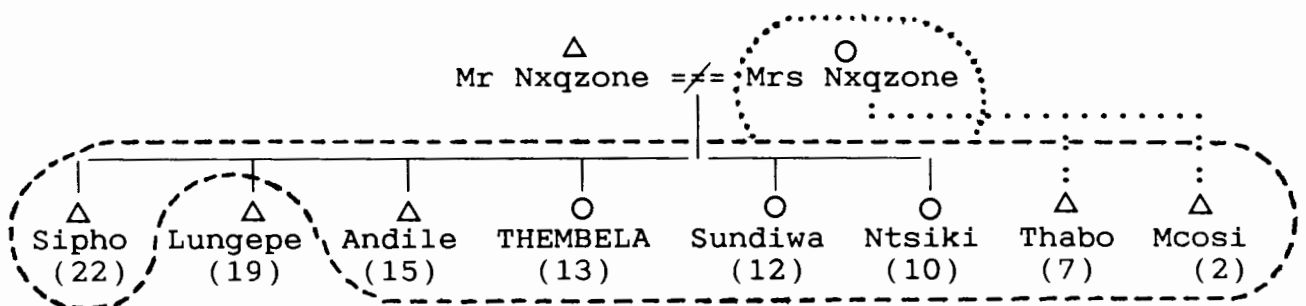
Siphiwo Bathathu lives at Lwandle with his parents and one of his four siblings, a four-year-old brother called Patrick. Two of his other three brothers, Luvuyo and Torrie, live with their paternal grandparents in Lady Frere in the Transkei, and the third, six-year-old Andile, stays with his maternal grandparents in Lady Frere. Mr Bathathu is employed as a driver for a dairy in the Hottentots-Holland area. The family members who are present share a double-bunk in a state-built hostel: Siphiwo and Patrick sleep on the bottom bunk, and Mr and Mrs Bathathu sleep on the top bunk. Siphiwo first lived at Lwandle in 1983 for a year, but spent some time with both his maternal and paternal grandparents in Lady Frere after that. He has been back at Lwandle since 1988. He is 10 years old, and is in Standard 1.

Diagram 4.18: Siphiwo's family and bedhold

Thembela

Thembela is 13 years old and in Standard 1. Her parents have been separated since she was eight years old, and Thembela has been living with her mother since that time. She has seven siblings: the second oldest, a brother called Lungepe, lives and works on a farm in the Elgin district, and the remaining six live at Lwandle with Thembela and their mother. The youngest two siblings - Thabo and Mcoseleli - were fathered by different men, neither of whom was Thembela's father. The family have one bed at Lwandle, which is registered at the rent office in Sipho's name. Thembela and Ntsiki share the bottom bunk, Sipho and Mcoseleli sleep on the top bunk, and Andile, Thabo, and Sundiwa sleep on the floor. Thembela's mother has a boyfriend who lives at Lwandle, and she usually sleeps in his bungalow. Sipho works at a petrol-station in the area, and Thembela's mother is employed in domestic work at the Strand for three days a week. Although Lungepe does not live with them, he also contributes to the income of the family at Lwandle. Thembela has been living in the hostels since 1987.

Diagram 4.19: Thembela's family and bedhold



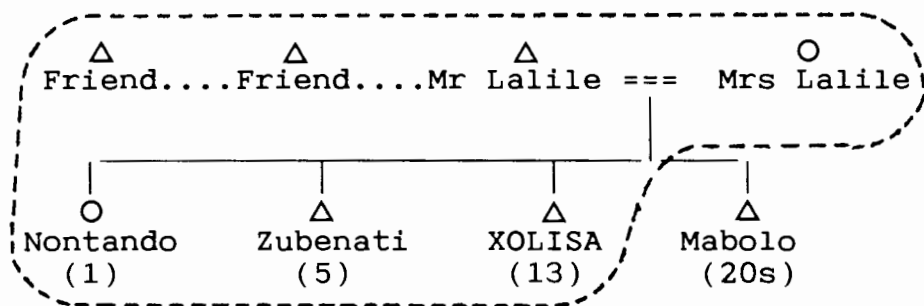
Xolisa²⁴

Xolisa Lalile lives at Lwandle with his parents and two younger siblings, Nontando aged one year and Zubenati aged five years. An older brother, in his twenties, is married and lives in the Transkei. Two siblings, both just slightly older than Xolisa, died when Xolisa was still very little. Mr Lalile is employed by the municipality of one of the surrounding

²⁴ Xolisa is the child whose parents were inebriated and would not allow me to interview them.

settlements, and Mrs Lalile sells assorted goods such as cigarettes, sugar, coffee, and cold-drinks from the room in the state-built hostel in which they live. Along with two friends of Xolisa's father, who are both unemployed, the five members of the Lalile family who are present at Lwandle share a double-bunk in a state-built hostel. Xolisa and Zubenati sleep on the top bunk, his parents and Nontando share the bottom bed, and the two friends sleep on the floor alongside the bed. Xolisa is 13 years old and in Standard 2. He has been living at Lwandle since 1986.

Diagram 4.20: Xolisa's family and bedhold



CHAPTER 5

PASSAGES TO LWANDLE: MOBILITY AND THE CHILDREN'S DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIPS OVER TIME

South Africa's system of migrant labour, and the myriad state mechanisms which underlie it, have been criticised frequently by anthropologists for the destructive effects which they have on family life amongst rural Africans. Monica Wilson, for example, described the consequences of migrant labour as follows¹:

South Africa has lived on the capital of a very strong African family system and that capital has been squandered. Traditionally, children were trained at home in respect and in regard for law. The old family system is now deeply undermined by the separation of husband and wife, the lack of supervision of children, the high illegitimacy rate, all of which are immediately and directly linked to migrant labour. There are very many children both in country and town who have grown up without their fathers; thousands of men who have spent their working lives separated from their wives; an equal number of women forced to live apart from their husbands (1975:18).

The observations of non-anthropologists have been similar. In a short article for the Black Sash in which she discussed the normative effects of conjugal fragmentation in the Ciskei, Thomas noted that

[i]t is unusual for rural Ciskeians to enjoy uninterrupted home life in the commonly accepted sense where parents and children live together as a matter of course. Most families are disrupted at some time and to some degree by the need to earn a living away from home in accordance with our migrant labour policy. For many, a "family unit" is never even formed (1974:8).

Cursory commentary such as that cited above, which refers broadly to the ways in which migrant labour has ravaged African

¹ See also Reynolds (1986:397).

family life, abounds in both popular and academic literature. Yet despite both the extent to which conjugal fragmentation has been entrenched as a way of life in Southern Africa, and its prominence as a locus of critical comment, there have been surprisingly few studies which have examined in any substantive depth the impacts which migrant labour has on rural family life *per se*. That literature which has dealt with the topic specifically is either outdated (see Schapera 1947; Hobart Houghton and Walton 1952; Wilson et al 1952), or focuses on male migrants' experiences of separation from their families in the urban centres (see Agency for Industrial Mission 1976; Peskin and Spiegel 1976; Reynolds 1984). On the other hand, contemporary studies of rural communities more generally have dealt primarily with the structural and economic consequences which migrant labour has for rural households, and at best grant only cursory attention to other functional aspects of domestic life (see Spiegel 1979; Murray 1981; Sharp 1982 and 1987; James 1985; Niehaus 1987). As a consequence, much of our knowledge of the effects which migrant labour has on *other* dimensions of family life remains inferential and impressionistic: we have little comprehensive information about parenting and child-rearing practices in these circumstances, about children's experiences of separation from either one or both of their parents, and about the circumstances of their lives in the rural areas in general. In short, we know very little about how women and children, as *families*, have experienced migrant labour at the rural end.

This chapter examines the disruption of family life in rural South Africa from the point of view of the children at

Lwandle who have been part of it. In particular, it focuses on the mobility over time of the children and their parents and guardians, and on the conjugal fragmentation and fostering relationships which have arisen from it. I begin by reviewing literature on households in rural Southern Africa, arguing that the synchronism of these studies, and their focus on households as their basic units of analysis, have failed to capture fully the essential dynamism of rural household composition in the context of labour migration; in so doing, such studies have in fact obscured, and even skewed, the reality of children's lives in the countryside. I then present case material which begins to uncover some of these unexplored and hidden dimensions. The case histories are supplemented by life history summaries (LHS) which are presented as linear diagrams (see double page insert later in the chapter).

For the purposes of presentation, I have divided the children into three categories: those whose parents were married at the time that fieldwork was conducted, those whose parents were divorced or matrimonially separated, and those who had been born out of wedlock². I have chosen these categories for two reasons. Firstly, although the extent to which the children have moved from household to household, and from place to place, is generally similar across the categories, their qualitative experiences of this movement have differed in certain respects. Presentation of the ethnography in terms of the three categories elucidates these differences, and thus

² As Reynolds (1983:130) has noted, the law in South Africa relating to divorce is complex. In addition, it is difficult to distinguish whether the marriages of these children's parents had been formally dissolved, or whether they had simply separated from one another. Either way, what is of importance as far as the children are concerned is that their parents no longer live together as, or consider themselves to be, husband and wife. For purposes of convenience, I shall refer to these parents as 'matrimonially separated'.

permits a richer perspective of the variety of children's experience as a whole. Secondly, I have been able to compute the *approximate* amounts of time for which children in the first two categories - those whose parents were married, and those whose parents were matrimonially separated - had been apart from their fathers and mothers. Clearly, however, there are circumstantial differences between children who have been separated from one or both parents because the marriage has broken down, and those who have been separated from parents even though the marriage is still intact. Moreover, for reasons which I shall discuss later in the chapter, it has not been possible even to estimate the amounts of time for which illegitimate children had been apart from their parents or guardians. The different types of data which I have for each category of children therefore require that they be distinguished analytically from one another.

There were 18 children out of the total of 24 whose parents were married. In all instances but one the fathers and mothers of these children were both resident at Lwandle at the time of research. The exception was Mandisa, who lived in the hostels with her father whilst her mother and siblings remained at their home in the Transkei. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, however, there were three children whose life history accounts were unobtainable in any kind of coherent form. One of these children, Xolisa, falls into the category of children whose parents were married; he has therefore been excluded for the present purposes, and the chapter thus effectively deals only with 17 of the children whose parents were married. Two of the children's parents were matrimonially separated. In both cases

the children were in the custody of their mothers, and had been since the separation between the parents took place. Finally, there were four children who had been born out of wedlock. At the time of research none of them was being parented by either of their biological parents, and two had in fact had no contact with their biological mothers for some time.

Rural children's domestic experience: the literature

In an unpublished paper in which he described with great sensitivity the dynamics of everyday social life in the Gazankulu settlement of Pungwe, Kotzé (no date) included a fascinating account of the strategies adopted by children to survive in a world characterised by what he dubbed as a rational milieu of "infidelity, distrust, betrayal, neglect of women and children, promiscuity and prostitution" (no date:45). Pungwe is relatively exceptional in homeland terms in the sense that

its male residents have experienced virtually no unemployment since fieldwork started in January, 1985; in the sense that a high percentage of female residents is able to find employment; and in the sense that the majority of the residents are employed in one of either of two exotic game reserves adjacent to Pungwe. In these respects the position of Pungwe is in contrast to situations in homelands generally where unemployment is high and where women, having few alternatives, are acutely dependent on men (no date:1).

Furthermore, in Pungwe there was virtually no participation in labour migration, and grazing and arable land existed in relative abundance. Yet as far as children were concerned, Kotzé described a situation in which

[c]ontrary to other settlements where adults engaged in social cooperation as a long term strategy and where children immersed themselves with less reserve

in their respective families (which were also sensitive to the needs of children), the children of Pungwe appeared to be both less involved with their respective families and more involved with other children....The degree of competition and conflict prevalent amongst the adults resulted in corporateness to a concomitant degree amongst children (no date:28).

But although the children of Pungwe demonstrated a distinctive cohesiveness amongst themselves, this community was founded in contradictory and what Kotzè called 'anti-social' behaviour:

...they did not easily break their ties, and they shared as much as they could with as many friends as circumstances allowed. Betrayal and sharing, trust and mistrust, were equally important necessities in the life of the children of Pungwe, and the two sides of the same coin: functional mistrust and functional inter-dependence. It reflected their continual disappointment in those on whom they had to depend, and the need to cope with that experience; the need to cope with the experience of unreliable humanity; the need not to rely on those one had to depend on; to know the need for one's own dependence in the face of dependence on people who were all individually unreliable by virtue of their own circumstances; having only experienced the neglect or rejection or inability of a father to take care of his children, or having experienced the almost permanent absence and/or ineffectual efforts of a mother to take care of her children alone. Independence was embodied in its opposite - in the personal responsibility for social engineering and the forging of bonds (no date:32).

Although their rural backgrounds seem to have fallen more in line with those of the typical homeland setting rather than the atypical one of Pungwe, some of the themes raised in Kotzè's description are evident in the histories of the Lwandle children. It is clearly not possible for me to distinguish the extent to which children communed in the face of destitution and hardship in the past, but what children *might* have perceived as parental unreliability or even rejection is a recurrent, even if implicit, theme in their accounts of their

pasts. This will emerge in the ethnography which is presented later in the chapter.

Kotzè's work represents the only real attempt by an anthropologist to delve into the finer details of the lives of rural children. The only other contemporary anthropological work in which rural children have appeared is that which has dealt with aspects of rural household structure and economy. In general, however, children have received only very brief mention in these studies, and we are left to infer much about their circumstances from ethnography which is not concerned directly with them. There have been two partial exceptions to this. In his excellent although summary discussion of domestic arrangements in the Qwa Qwa town of Phutidjaba, Niehaus (1987) described how children are often dispersed between different households because their parents or guardians cannot afford to keep them. Spiegel (1987) has referred to the same practice of dispersing dependents, for economic reasons, in rural Transkei. Niehaus also mentioned that children sometimes leave the households to which they are attached, becoming homeless scavengers, either because their mothers are unable to control them in the absence of their fathers, or because their domestic circumstances do not afford them adequate emotional and material support. Whilst the accounts of Niehaus and Spiegel are tantalising in that they have begun to hint at the dynamics of children's domestic experience in rural areas, they do little more than raise questions which are left unanswered: they tell us nothing about how much time children spend within particular households, the frequency with which they move between households, what it means to them to be dispersed in

this way, and the circumstances of those children who opt out of formal domestic units altogether.

Murray's (1981) ethnography of households in rural Lesotho is the only contemporary study which has purportedly (as its title implies) dealt with rural family life in the context of migrant labour. The insights which Murray offers regarding family life are however limited by his predominant concern with household economy, and with its relation to Southern Africa's regional political economy as a whole. Where he does deal directly with the functional and qualitative dimensions of family life, Murray does so only partially, focusing his attention merely on women's economic experiences of separation from their husbands, and on the material circumstances of the households which they head or of which they are part. Nowhere do children, who must surely be important figures in any analysis of the family, receive anything but the briefest mention. Murray's ethnography is thus a treatise on the political economy of the household in the context of labour migration; notwithstanding its excellence in this respect, it can hardly be considered a complete study of *families* divided.

Apart from the contributions of Kotzé, Niehaus, and Spiegel, other studies of rural communities have paid as much, or less, attention to children's domestic lives as has Murray. The resultant lack is a serious one, firstly because anthropology *should* have substantive information about children and their domestic circumstances, but more importantly because lacunae themselves often give rise to misrepresentation. In this instance, children's obscurity has created an image of their relative domestic security. In her

study of family and household structure in the village of Morotse in Lebowa, James for example observed that most extended households, which were the large majority in her sample, included

a significant number of grandchildren, some of whom live there in the temporary or permanent absence of their parents from the household. The existence of similar households, in urban and rural areas of contemporary southern Africa, is reported by anthropologists such as Pauw (1963:152) and Murray (1980:108; 1981:112). These authors show that, as in Morotse, the presence of large numbers of grandchildren, with or without their parents, is accounted for in most cases by the system of migrant labour: since adults of a working age are absent for long periods or permanently, *their children must be brought up within the extended household* (1985:167; my emphases).

Sketchy and brief references to children such as this abound in studies which deal in some way with households in rural Southern Africa³. As a result, a general reading of this literature engenders the impression that children lead relatively staid and sedentary existences in the rural areas, albeit with only their mothers, kin, or foster parents. Our vision is thus one of absent and mobile parents, usually only fathers, and children who remain secure within the nurturing net proffered by the agnatic household or some other form of extended family grouping. As will become clear, the experiences of many of the children of Lwandle have deviated significantly from this.

Inadequate attention to children excepted, there are other limitations in rural anthropological studies which have contributed to the above view of childhood. On the whole, the synchronism of these studies, and their focus on households as

³ See also the references to Murray cited by James in the above quotation. Listed in the bibliography as 1980b and 1981.

their basic units of analysis, obscure the very real mobility of people, children and adults, which takes place at both the intra-rural and regional levels. We are presented with developmental models of the household, with agnatic clusters and other types of family groupings, and with female-headed households; we are told that different people enter and exit these households at different times, and in some instances we see them doing so in case material which is provided. But such accounts generally begin at the point of individual entry, or end at the point of exit, and we are seldom provided with information about these horizontal movements themselves. Although he did not make any substantial progress towards correcting this view, Murray has by implication made much the same point. With regard to studies of small communities in Botswana and Lesotho, he noted that

on the one hand, we have evidence of a relatively stable agnatic structure which endures through several generations. On the other hand, we have evidence of high rates of individual mobility, conjugal instability, illegitimacy, desertion and the break-up of families. The significant inference to be drawn from this is that the study of small communities, defined in terms of the relationship between household heads, does not of itself indicate the qualitative disruption of family life that takes place over time (Murray 1981:112).

Nevertheless, even Murray's (1981) reconceptualisation of the household, which incorporates *absent* members, has not been employed in a way which reflects fully the dynamism of rural domestic life. This is because it has been used to analyse the *vertical* structural and economic changes which occur in the household over time; it does not accommodate the analysis of *horizontal* movements - movements across space - of either households themselves, or their individual members. Whilst he

acknowledges the membership of absent and mobile individuals, in Murray's conception the *nucleus* of the household itself therefore remains geographically rooted.

In sum, therefore, the synchronism of extant studies, and their focus on households whose material development is on the whole spatially-rooted, have obscured the very real horizontal mobility which takes place at the domestic level; whilst such studies *infer* that they are happening, the *actual* processes whereby individuals enter and exit the spatial boundaries of the household, and by which households are formed, joined, dissolved, and reformed through time and across space, have remained largely invisible.

It is conceptual and methodological limitations such as these which have prompted Spiegel (1980:8) to suggest that a necessary corollary to studies of household structure, where households are taken as the basic units of analysis, must be a focus on individuals, their social networks, and the ways in which they exploit these networks. More recently, Spiegel has pointed out that in the context of oscillating labour migration

it is precisely the fluidity of household composition which must be explored and understood. Its occurrence is an intrinsic part of the process of labour migration and its analysis must have a central role in the explanation of the effects of that process on domestic relations, particularly of age and gender...(1987:127).

The analysis which follows is an attempt to implement Spiegel's proposals: by focusing on the life histories of individual children, and on their domestic and spatial mobility through time, the ethnography begins to develop perspectives of both rural household fluidity at the micro-level, and the ways in which this fluidity is felt by children who are part of it.

Living with migrant labour: the children of married parents

All of the 17 children whose parents were married had lived separately from their fathers at some stage, most of them for very long periods (see Table 5.1). There was a mean period of separation from their fathers amongst these children of 58% of their lives. Ten of the 17 children (59%) had lived apart from their fathers for 70% or more of their lives, four (23%) had been separated from them for between 18% and 45% of their lives, and three (18%) had been separated from their fathers for 10% or less of their lives.

On the whole, children had been separated from their mothers for much less time. There were a few who had never lived without their mothers for any significant amount of time, although there was one child, Christophy, who had spent 79% of his life apart from his mother. Of the others, three children (17%) had spent between 30% and 46% of their lives separated from their mothers, five (28%) had been apart from their mothers for between 20% and 29% of their lives, four (24%) for between 14% and 18%, one for less than a year, and three (19%) had never been separated from their mothers for any significant amount of time. As far as separation from their mothers is concerned, there was a mean period of 22% of their lives amongst this category of children.

In all cases but two, the amounts of time for which children were separated from both parents *simultaneously* were the same as the amounts of time they had been separated from their mothers, most often because mothers were away visiting absent fathers. Xolisile, who spent time with his father in

both Bloemfontein and the Western Cape (see Chapter 2), and Mandisa, who presently lives in the hostels with her father in the absence of her mother, are the two exceptions.

Table 5.1: Intact marriages - time separated from parents⁴

Child	Age	Time separated from:					
		Father		Mother		Both simultaneously	
		(Years)	(%)	(Years)	(%)	(Years)	(%)
Xolisile	14	11	79%	3	21%	3	21%
Mphumzi	14	11	79%	4	29%	4	29%
Christinah	14	10	71%	3	21%	3	21%
Fundiswa	14	5	36%	2	14%	2	14%
Christophy	14	11	79%	11	79%	11	79%
Ayande	13	10	77%	6	46%	6	46%
Nandipha	13	12	92%	0	-	0	-
Nkosnathi	12	9	75%	4	33%	4	33%
Siyabulela	12	10	77%	3	25%	3	25%
Nomsingisi	11	5	45%	2	18%	2	18%
Ntobeko	11	<1	<9%	0	-	0	-
Thembeni	11	2	18%	2	18%	2	18%
Mandisa	11	9	82%	2	18%	0	0
Siphiwo	10	3	30%	3	30%	3	30%
Niombosi	10	1	10%	<1	<10%	<1	<10%
Nomvuyo	10	<1	<10%	0	-	0	-
Nosipho	10	7	70%	2	20%	2	20%

The above quantitative data is at best a vulgar means of representing the conjugal fragmentation to which the children and their families have been subject; the qualitative dimensions of this fragmentation, the pain and the disruption which it has caused the children, can in no way be measured in such terms. I turn now to the circumstances surrounding

⁴ The amounts of time for which parents and children have been separated from one another were calculated from the life history interviews which I conducted with the children, and from my interviews with their parents which were designed to check, and supplement, the children's own accounts. In calculation, I have not taken into account short periods of time such as holidays which fathers spent with their families and periods when mothers paid brief visits of a month or two to fathers who lived and worked elsewhere. Moreover, since informants sometimes had to recall quite far back, they were often understandably vague about specific lengths of time. I must therefore stress that the figures are rough approximations which, in some instances, might be inaccurate within as much as a year. In the absence of such data anywhere else in the literature, they do nevertheless begin to provide some indication of the extent to which children in rural Southern Africa are separated from their parents.

children's separation from their parents, and to what this separation has meant for the children themselves.

Residential stability, domestic flux

There were four children - Ayande, Christophy, Nomsingisi, and Mandisa - whose historical experiences had on the whole been consistent with the popular view of childhood in rural South Africa which has been advanced (at least by implication) by earlier studies: that of children who, in the absence of either one or both of their parents, are brought up primarily by grandparents or other kin in a small extended household. In all instances, the fathers of these children had left their rural homes for purposes of employment, and their mothers had spent long periods of time away with their husbands in the places where they were working; all of them had remained within one small extended household, and in one residential location, for much of their lives prior to moving to Lwandle. Despite their relative residential stability, each of these four children had nevertheless been subject to extreme *domestic* disruption during their early childhood years. The case of Ayande demonstrates something of the disruption which has been experienced by children who have grown up in these circumstances.

Case 5.1 *Fluctuating parental relationships*⁵

Ayande Sibutha was born in 1976 in the district of Stutterheim in the far Eastern Cape. When Ayande was a year old, Mr Sibutha moved to the Western Cape to seek employment, and Ayande, his three-year-old sister, and Mrs Sibutha remained behind with Ayande's paternal grandparents on the white-owned

⁵ For the locations of the towns, districts, and homelands in which Ayande and other children have lived refer to Map 1.

farm where his grandfather was employed. Mr Sibutha found work with a construction company based in the Hottentots-Holland region; he has been employed by this company, and has lived in the hostels at Lwandle, since that time. He returned to Stutterheim only once subsequent to leaving for the Western Cape (the Christmas immediately following his initial departure).

Ayande lived with his grandparents on the farm for the following nine years. Although Mrs Sibutha travelled to the Western Cape frequently during this time - according to Ayande she was away more than she was present - Ayande never accompanied her. The first occasion that Mrs Sibutha visited her husband followed the death of Ayande's sister when he was two years old. The child had been ill, and after she died Ayande's mother travelled to Lwandle to inform Mr Sibutha about what had happened. She stayed there with him for around six months. Ayande was too young at the time to recall how he felt about either his sister's death, or the absence of his mother.

After her first visit to the Western Cape, Mrs Sibutha spent much of her time away with her husband. Sometimes she was absent for only a few months; in other instances she was away for a year or more at a time. In 1981, when Ayande was five years old, Mrs Sibutha gave birth to another son, Zuko, and returned to the farm for approximately two years - the longest uninterrupted period that she had spent with Ayande since first visiting her husband. When Zuko was two years old, Mrs Sibutha once more moved back to the Western Cape, leaving both Ayande and Zuko with their grandparents. For the next four to five years the pattern continued in much the same fashion as before the birth of Ayande's brother, with Ayande's mother occasionally visiting her children on the farm for short periods.

In 1986 Ayande's grandfather lost his job, and his accommodation, on the farm on which he had worked for much of his adult life - according to Mrs Sibutha, the farmer told the grandfather that he was too old to continue working. Mrs Sibutha was away at Lwandle at the time, and Ayande's grandparents therefore sent him and Zuko to their maternal grandparents in Devon (Kingwilliamstown district) in the Ciskei. Ayande was 10 years old at the time, and he had only ever met his maternal kin once previously when he was very much younger. He has not had any contact with his paternal grandparents since he moved to Devon.

Zuko was fetched from Devon by Mrs Sibutha shortly after the children arrived there. Ayande continued to live with his maternal kin for another year, and then in 1987 was taken to Lwandle by his mother's brother. He has been there since that time.

When I interviewed him at Lwandle, Ayande was 13 years old and had been living in the hostels for about 18 months. These

18 months constituted the first time since he was a year old that he had lived with both of his parents simultaneously - the first period in approximately 10 years that they had been together as a co-resident family unit. Nine of those 10 years had been spent with his paternal grandparents on the farm, his mother had been away at Lwandle on and off for approximately six years of that time, and his father had been absent for the entire period. Clearly, Ayande's early childhood experiences align broadly with what has come to be viewed as typical of children born into migrant families.

But although Ayande's story demonstrates nothing new about rural household organisation itself, it does begin to show some of the dynamics, and the consequences for children, of life as part of a family which is reliant on participation in migrant labour. Whilst Ayande did lead a relatively settled life with his paternal grandparents, it was clearly by no means an undisturbed one. Ayande's mother moved in and out of his life frequently whilst he lived on the farm:

I do not know how many times my mother was away. One day she arrived, one day she left. I was very small, and I do not remember when she was at home....Nobody told me when she would go away. [Ayande: Interview]

Similarly, Ayande was not old enough to understand the reasons for his parents' absence, nor why he could not be with them. The bewilderment and anguish which the absence of his father and the continual movement of his mother caused Ayande are clear:

I was sad because I did not see my mother and father. I was lonely for them, and I did not know where they were. Nobody told me. My grandfather always lied to me. He told me that my father was in Devon. They did not want me to cry, and they always told me that my

mother was coming back the next week. [Ayande:
Interview]

In the absence of his parents it was Ayande's paternal grandparents who nurtured him, cared for him, and taught him. It was they who were the stable adults in his life until he was 10 years old, they upon whom he could rely most consistently, and they whom he could best trust to always be there. Ayande's move to Devon was therefore far more than just a shift from one set of grandparents to another: it was a parting, which seems to have been permanent, from the only adults in his life with whom he had been able to develop a steady bond. Moreover, Ayande did not understand why he had to leave his grandparents, and he did not know where they had gone; his parents were away, and he did not know where they were; and he moved into an environment, and a household, which were largely unfamiliar to him. At 10 years old, Ayande felt very lost:

I did not like to be in Devon....The farm was a good place to live, but Devon was not the same as the farm. I did not know any of the people who were there. My grandfather always told me that my parents were in Devon, but they were not there when I came to the place. I was also used to being with my grandfather. I did not see him after I went to Devon. [Ayande: Interview]

Fluctuating relations between parents and children, and separation from others in whom children have sought succour and support, featured prominently in the life history accounts of others of the children who had spent most of their earliest years with kin. Before he moved to Lwandle when he was 13 years old, Christophy (LHS 1) had spent his entire life with his paternal grandparents, first in Lesotho, and then, when his grandparents moved, in Mount Fletcher in the Transkei. For most of that time Christophy's mother lived with his father on

the Witwatersrand and, later, at Lwandle. His father and mother used to visit he and his brother at least once every year, and there was also a period of approximately a year during which his parents stayed with him and his grandparents in Mount Fletcher. In his thirteenth year Christophy's mother took him to Lwandle. This is how Christophy described the early years of his life:

My mother used to come to see me from *Goudini* [Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand - literally, "the place of gold"], and sometimes my father also came. I was happy with my grandparents, but it would have been better if my mother and father were with us....Everyday I took the cattle to drink. Sometimes I did it many times a day. My grandmother also said that I must help her with the pumpkins. If my father was there I would not have to look after the cattle myself. My father would help me, and my mother would help my grandmother with the pumpkins and then I would not have to help her....It was good when my parents were with us in Mount Fletcher. My father was not working; he was at the house every day....The saddest time for me was when my grandparents died. My mother came to fetch me from Mount Fletcher, but my brother did not come with us....I did not like to leave him in Mount Fletcher. [Christophy: Interview]

The experiences of Nomsingisi (LHS 2) and Mandisa (LHS 3) were similar. Nomsingisi lived with her maternal grandmother until the latter's death when Nomsingisi was 10 years old. The wife of Nomsingisi's maternal uncle was present throughout the time that she was with her grandmother; after her grandmother's death, Nomsingisi therefore continued to live with her uncle's wife. Regarding her parents' absence, Nomsingisi told me that "I was always longing to be with my parents"; however, when the time came for her to move to Lwandle she said that she had not wanted to leave:

She [the uncle's wife] started to cry when it was time to go....I also cried, and I told my mother that I did not want to go away....It is better now. I do

not long for the people in Willowvale so much. We
will go to see them at Christmas. [Nomsingisi:
Interview]

Mandisa's sentiments with regard to her separation from her parents were similar to those of the above children. Aspects of her life history will be discussed in Chapter 9.

These have been the early childhood experiences of the more sedentary of the children. Even though they did enjoy relative degrees of *residential* stability during this time, the quality of the relationships which they formed with significant others around them, and the relationships themselves, were clearly far from constant. All of them knew their mothers, and some knew their fathers, sufficiently well to hanker after them during their often lengthy absences. As a result, the children were not subject merely to separation from their parents; rather they were subject to *sporadic separation* from their parents, a form of separation which, in some ways, may have had far more of a rupturing effect on them than the complete, uninterrupted absence of their parents would have done. At the same time, their attachments to those kin who fostered them, and to others who were part of their foster households, were such that leaving them, even to join parents, was also agonising for them.

Mobile children

Two of the more sedentary children, Ayande and Christophy, had moved residence once before coming to Lwandle: Ayande spent a short while in Devon in the Ciskei, and Christophy moved from Lesotho to Mount Fletcher. Most of the other children had been far more mobile. Consequently, the majority of them had been

subject not only to intermittent separation from their parents, but also to frequent movement between different households and different places of residence. The Nkosati brothers, Mphumzi and Siyabulela, are two children who have experienced such spatial and domestic dislocation.

Case 5.2 *Oscillating children*

Mphumzi and Siyabulela Nkosati are 14 and 12 years old respectively. They have three siblings: an older brother and older sister, aged 16 and 20 years, who stay with their maternal grandparents in Hofmeyr in the Karoo, and an eight year old brother who lives at Lwandle with them and their parents. Siyabulela has been resident in the hostels since the middle of 1987, and Mphumzi has been there since the beginning of 1989. Even though they are brothers, they have lived together in the same place for only about three or four out of a possible 12 years. Their father, Mr Nkosati, has been employed in Somerset West since the mid-1960s.

When Mrs Nkosati gave birth to Siyabulela in 1977, she and Mphumzi were living at a squatter settlement situated little more than ten minutes walk from Lwandle. Mr Nkosati rented a bed in the hostels, and his wife had made accommodation for herself at the settlement so as to be close to him. At that stage the two older children, Oupa aged four years and Vuyiswa aged eight years, were living with their maternal grandparents in Hofmeyr.

Mphumzi and Siyabulela lived with their mother at the squatter camp for two years subsequent to Siyabulela's birth. Some time during 1979 the 'authorities' (Mrs Nkosati could not identify precisely which authorities) threatened the squatter community with prosecution. Many of the other squatters stayed where they were, but Mrs Nkosati dismantled her shack, took two-year-old Siyabulela to her parents in Hofmeyr, and returned with Mphumzi and Vuyiswa to the Hottentots-Holland Basin where they re-erected another shack at a less conspicuous site close to the Strand. Mrs Nkosati and the two children remained in the shack for two years; Oupa stayed with them there for about two months during that time.

In 1981 Mrs Nkosati took Mphumzi, then six years old, and Vuyiswa back to Hofmeyr. She remained there for a short while, and then went to stay with her sister in Khayelitsha. This time it was four-year-old Siyabulela who accompanied her, whilst the other three children stayed in Hofmeyr with their grandparents. Mrs Nkosati and Siyabulela lived with the sister in Khayelitsha for approximately three years, although they did return periodically to Hofmeyr, and also spent some time at Lwandle with Mr Nkosati. Both Vuyiswa and Oupa were present with them for short spells during this period, but Mphumzi

spent all of the these three years with his grandparents. Mrs Nkosati had given birth to the brothers' youngest sibling, a boy called Terror, in 1982; he was also present with Mrs Nkosati throughout this time.

Some time during 1984 and 1985, Mrs Nkosati moved for a year to a shack in the Cape Town squatter township of Crossroads. During this time Siyabulela, Mphumzi, and Terror lived with her, and Oupa and Vuysiwa stayed in Hofmeyr. Towards the end of 1985, Mrs Nkosati and the three youngest children moved to Lwandle. Siyabulela remained there for about six months, and was then sent back to Hofmeyr. Mphumzi and Terror continued to live with their father and mother in the hostels. Siyabulela moved back to Lwandle in the middle of 1987, and at the same time Mphumzi was sent to his grandparents. Mphumzi remained in Hofmeyr for about 18 months, and then at the beginning of 1989 returned to Lwandle. Oupa and Vuysiwa continued to live with their grandparents in Hofmeyr.

The Nkosati brothers felt much the same as other children about being separated from their parents. Like Ayande, Mphumzi expressed bewilderment and fear at being left behind in Hofmeyr by his mother:

My mother did not tell me she was leaving me there. She took me to my grandparents, and then one day when I got out of the bed she was not there. She did not tell me she was going away. I did not know where she went, and I was worried that she was dead. [Mphumzi: Interview]

Whilst the frequency of the Nkosati brother's oscillation between the Peninsula and Hofmeyr may have been a function of the close proximity of these places to one another, many of the other children oscillated frequently over the much greater distance between the Transkei and Ciskei and the Peninsula. Like the Nkosati brothers, Nosipho and Nkosnathi Gece (LHS 4 and LHS 5) moved a number of times between the Peninsula and the Transkei; and like Mphumzi and Siyabulela, they did not always live in the same place at the same time. During 1983 and 1984 Nkosnathi lived with his maternal grandparents in the Transkei whilst Nosipho stayed with the children's mother and father at Lwandle; in 1985, both of the children lived with

their mother in Guguletu, but then the following year Nosipho was sent to her maternal grandparents in the Transkei and Nkosnathi lived with his paternal aunt elsewhere in the Transkei. Nosipho was about seven years old when she was left with her grandparents. As Mphumzi had done, she worried that her parents might not return:

I was afraid. I feared that I would hear that my parents had been shot. There was another man who was shot when he was coming back from working on a farm, and he died when he was shot. I thought it might also happen to my parents. [Nosipho: Interview]

Nkosnathi did not say that he feared for his parents, but he was clearly unhappy about being parted from them:

I was longing for my father and mother. My father's sister was nice to me, but I still wanted to be with my mother. [Nkosnathi: Interview]

Christinah Mbewu (LHS 6) and Siphiwo Bathathu (LHS 7) are two other children whose residence has oscillated frequently. Christinah spent close on two years with her maternal aunt in Mount Fletcher when she was nine and 10 years old, lived for a year with her parents at Lwandle when she was 11 years old, was sent back to her mother's sister for a year when she was 12 years of age, and then returned to Lwandle when she was 13 years old. Similarly, Siphiwo lived with his parents in the Western Cape until he was five years old, went to stay with his paternal grandparents in the Transkei for a year when he was six years old, returned to his parents for a year, and then moved to his maternal grandparents in the Ciskei for two years. He then rejoined his parents in the Western Cape when he was nine years old.

Neither Christinah nor Siphiwo remembers these years away from their parents with much fondness. Christinah described her stay with her mother's sister:

We were not treated well. If we had been with our parents we would not have been beaten. The husband of my mother's sister used to beat us....He beat us many times a week....It was also difficult because I got the disease [epilepsy] when I was living with them. It was worse because my aunt did not care that I was sick. [Christinah: Interview]

Christinah also claims that she and her siblings did not attend school whilst staying with her aunt in Mount Fletcher because the latter wasted away the money for uniforms and school-fees which her mother sent from the Cape (see case 9.2). It was this, she said, which prompted her mother to bring her and her siblings back to Lwandle after she had visited them in Mount Fletcher and discovered what had been happening. Siphiwo's case was slightly different. Unlike Christinah and her aunt, he appears to have developed a good relationship with his grandparents; however, he still does not have fond memories of his years in the two homelands. He did not specify to which set of grandparents he was referring:

It was not good to be without my parents. I could not get things if I needed them. I did not have food at school like the other children. My grandmother did not want to give me food. She said I must go home to eat, but it was too far to walk. [Siphiwo: Interview]

Regional oscillation such as that outlined in the above histories is not the only level at which children have been mobile. Many of the children have also moved at an intra-rural level. The case of Nandipha demonstrates something of this.

Case 5.3 Local level mobility

Nandipha's father, Mr Ndlovu, is employed by the Somerset West municipality. He has been living at Lwandle since the early 1960s, returning to his family in the Transkei for only three weeks every year. Nandipha's mother has born four children by Mr Ndlovu: three of them - Siyabulela, Umziwa, and Lungila - are deceased, and Nandipha, the last born, is the only surviving child. Mr Ndlovu also has two children by a previous wife, both of whom are married and live in the Transkei; Nandipha knows very little of her older half-siblings. Neither Mr Ndlovu's wife, nor any of his children, had visited him at Lwandle prior to the arrival of Nandipha and her mother in the middle of 1988.

Mrs Ndlovu was staying at the Transkei home of her husband's parents when Nandipha was born in 1976. Umziwa and Lungila, who were then aged three and two years respectively, were present with their mother. Siyabulela, who was five years old, lived with his maternal grandparents elsewhere in the Transkei.

Shortly after Nandipha was born Mrs Ndlovu, Lungila, and the infant Nandipha went to live with Mrs Ndlovu's parents. Umziwa remained behind with his paternal grandparents. Along with Siyabulela, who had been there for some time already, Mrs Ndlovu and the children spent the next four years at the home of Mrs Ndlovu's parents. After they had been there for approximately two years, Umziwa died at the home of his paternal grandparents. Mrs Ndlovu does not know what caused his death, only that he was dead when the household arose one morning.

The family remained with Mrs Ndlovu's parents for a further two years, at which time Mrs Ndlovu and Nandipha moved back to the home of Mr Ndlovu's parents. Siyabulela and Lungila, then aged nine and six years old, remained with their maternal grandparents. Nandipha and her mother stayed with Nandipha's paternal grandparents for a further four years, and then returned to her maternal grandparents. A few months after their return Siyabulela was sent to his paternal grandparents. He remained there for two years, whilst Nandipha, Lungila, and Mrs Ndlovu lived with Mrs Ndlovu's parents. In 1985 Siyabulela died at the home of his paternal grandparents. He had been sick, but the family do not know what his illness was. Siyabulela was 14 years old when he died.

Mrs Ndlovu and Nandipha went to live with Nandipha's paternal grandparents, leaving Lungila behind with Nandipha's maternal grandparents. They had been there for only a few months when they heard that Lungila had been killed in a fight with a son of Mrs Ndlovu's brother. The two boys had been taking the cattle to be dipped, and Lungila's cousin had hit him with a knobkerrie. The cousin called his grandfather, but by the time that he arrived Lungila had died.

Mrs Ndlovu and Nandipha continued to stay with Nandipha's paternal grandparents until mid-1988, when they moved to

Lwandle following Mrs Ndlovu's need for medical treatment in the Western Cape. Mr Ndlovu is due for retirement in a few years time, and they intend to remain with him at Lwandle until that time.

Nandipha's case illuminates many of the exigencies of rural parenting and childhood, but what is significant in the present context is the mobility of Nandipha and her mother at an *intra-rural* level: Nandipha was born at the home of her paternal grandparents; she moved to her maternal grandparents as an infant; returned to her paternal grandparents; moved back to her maternal grandparents; back to her paternal grandparents; and then came to Lwandle. Mobility may also *combine* to take place at both the intra-rural and regional levels. Xolisile is one child who was mobile at both of these levels: he lived with his mother in Hanover until he was seven years old; moved to Victoria West; joined his father in Bloemfontein; returned to Hanover; moved to Lwandle; to Khayelitsha; and back to Lwandle (see Chapter 2).

Choosing children: the mother's dilemma

There is a further aspect of Nandipha's case which is worthy of notice. Whilst Nandipha was never separated from her mother, her three brothers were continually moving and dispersed between the households of their maternal and paternal kin. It seems as though Nandipha's mother made choices between which children she wished to be parted from at certain times; either her mother did not want to be parted from her, or she believed that Nandipha could least bear such a separation⁶. The case of Nomvuyo and her siblings was similar.

⁶ James (1985) has also suggested that grandparents' attachments to their grandchildren cause them to negotiate with parents to leave certain children, possibly their favourites, with them.

Case 5.4 Choosing children

Nomvuyo Qiqimana lives at Lwandle with her parents and two of her five siblings, an un-named infant and an older sister called Nontutulezu. Another older sister, Khunjulwa, stays with relatives at Mfuleni near Kuils River, where she attends school. Nomvuyo's remaining two siblings - a younger brother and sister - live with their maternal grandparents in KwaNxeba in the Transkei.

Prior to moving to Lwandle Nomvuyo had spent all of her life in the Transkei, where her father was employed by a building contraction company. Mr Qiqimana was retrenched at the end of 1986, and in January the following year he left KwaNxeba to seek employment in the Western Cape. He found work and acquired a bed at Lwandle. After receiving his first fortnightly wages, Mr Qiqimana sent money to his wife so that she could visit him. Nomvuyo had been ill, and her mother decided that she should accompany her to Lwandle. Nomvuyo's siblings (at that stage there were four) remained behind at KwaNxeba with their grandparents.

In the middle of 1988, after Nomvuyo and her parents had been at Lwandle for about 18 months, Nontutulezu and Khunjulwa came to visit them from the Transkei over a school holiday. It was the intention of Mr and Mrs Qiqimana that Nomvuyo would accompany her older sisters back to the Transkei when it was time for school to re-open. As the time for their departure grew closer the three girls became progressively more upset at the prospect of having to leave their parents. Mr and Mrs Qiqimana therefore decided that they would remain in the Western Cape. Khunjulwa was sent to Mfuleni so that she could attend a school which offered Standard 5; she returns to Lwandle over weekends. Nontutulezu commutes to school at Khayelitsha by bus on a daily basis, and Nomvuyo is doing Standard 2 at Lwandle school. The two younger siblings have remained with their grandparents.

Unlike most of the other children, Nomvuyo has spent only a few months without her father (when he moved to Lwandle), and has never been separated from her mother for what she regards as a significant amount of time. However, the same cannot be said for her siblings. Her one-year-old sister excepted, Nomvuyo is the only one of her other four siblings who initially accompanied Mr and Mrs Qiqimana to the Western Cape. The older two sisters arrived only a year and a half later, and the two younger siblings have never lived at, or visited, Lwandle. They are eight and five years old, and at the time of

research had been separated from their parents for the past two and a half years. It is also significant to note that Nomvuyo is amongst the youngest of the children with whom I worked, and the stability which she has enjoyed could end at any time. Indeed, Mrs Qiqimana told me that she and her husband intended sending Nomvuyo and her two older sisters back to the Transkei at the end of the year. She said that, as much as she would like to be able to keep her children with her, conditions are too bad at Lwandle for her children to have the kind of upbringing that she would like them to have.

Arrangements whereby certain children are parted little from their parents whilst their siblings spend much time elsewhere are common. We have already seen that Ayande's younger brother, Zuko, was taken to Lwandle from Devon about a year prior to Ayande's arrival there; that Mphumzi and Siyabulela, in preference to their two older siblings, spent far more time with their mother and father; and that Nandipha's brothers were separated from their mother far more frequently than she was. I do not have complete records of the *movements* of all of the children's siblings. However, eight of the children whose parent's marriages are still intact have siblings, under the age of eighteen, who were living elsewhere at the time of research: Christophy has a younger brother who lives with his paternal kin; Nkosnathi and Nosipho have a seven-year-old sister who stays with her maternal grandparents in the Transkei; Niombosi (LHS 10) has two siblings, aged 13 and 14 years, who are fostered by non-kin in the Ciskei; Siphiwo has two older brothers, aged 12 and 14 years, who live with their grandparents; as we have seen, Nomvuyo has two

younger siblings who live with their grandparents in the Transkei and an older sister who stays with relatives in Mfuleni; and Mphumzi and Siyabulela have a 16-year-old brother who lives in Hofmeyr, and who has never spent a significant amount of time with his parents in the peninsula. (Although Vuyiswa, Mphumzi and Siyabulela's older sister is no longer a child, her experience has been similar to that of their 16-year-old brother.)⁷

In sum, therefore, it is not unusual for one or a number of siblings in a family to experience little separation from their parents whilst others in the same family are isolated for long periods of time. Parents, particularly mothers since it is they who oscillate most frequently, are forced to make choices as to which children should accompany and live with them, and which children should not. As a result, the nuclear relationships of some children remain relatively intact at the expense of other siblings. Mothers are also faced with another dilemma: to spend time with their husbands, or to devote their attention to their children. And the two desires are by no means always compatible. Mothers therefore attempt to divide their attention between their husbands on the one hand, and their children on the other. Ramphela's observations were similar:

Most married women who live in the hostels oscillate between town and country, spending part of the year at the rural base and the other in town. They are torn between the responsibilities of maintaining the rural 'home', bringing up children and fulfilling wider family responsibilities on one hand, and servicing a personal relationship with their husbands on the other (1989a:11).

⁷ A glance back at the family and bedhold diagrams in Chapter 4 shows the extent to which the children's families are presently fragmented.

The result has been the kind of sporadic separation which children have experienced, as Ayande's case has demonstrated, and, where it has been possible, frequent oscillation of children between their fathers' places of work and the rural households to which they have been attached.

The stable few

The correlation between children's separation from their parents on the one hand, and parent's involvement in migration on the other, is clear from the above cases. The point is an obvious but necessary one: with the exception of Nomvuyo, in all of the above instances the children had been separated from either one or both of their parents for long periods of their lives, and all of their fathers had been engaged in migratory labour. That this correlation is real is underlined by Nomvuyo's experience and those of the other two children who, like her, had been separated very little from either their fathers or their mothers. As we have seen, Nomvuyo's father had never migrated prior to moving to Lwandle, and neither Nomvuyo, nor any of her siblings, had been separated from him; contingently, they had never been separated from their mother because she had not had cause to leave their home to visit her husband. As regards the other two children who had not been separated from their parents for any significant time - Niombosi (LHS 10) and Ntobeko (LHS 11) - the situation was the same: both of their fathers had previously been employed at the families' places of residence, and the children had not previously been parted from either of their parents. This is reinforced even further by the fact that, like Nomvuyo's

father, the fathers of Niombosi and Ntobeko have now migrated for purposes of employment, and that, in the case of Niombosi, the family is now fragmented.

Migrant mothers: children and marital breakdown

Ramphele and Boonzaier (1988:153) have noted that it is not uncommon for single, widowed, and divorced mothers of rural origin to be present in urban hostels, either with or without their offspring, in order to earn a livelihood for their children. The mothers of the two children whose parents are matrimonially separated, Thembela and Nolandela, fall into this category. Thembela's case demonstrates something of the events which might lead to these circumstances.

Case 5.5 Matrimonially separated parents

Thembela lives at Lwandle with her mother and six of her seven siblings. She was born in 1976 in the Transkei district of Kwebisi. At the time of her birth Thembela's father was employed as a farm labourer in common South Africa. Thembela and her family lived on the farm until she was four years old, at which time her father was fired from his job. The family spent the following four years living with friends at Seplasi in the Transkei. Both parents were unemployed throughout this time.

Thembela's parents split towards the end of 1984, and her mother took her and her siblings to live at the home of their maternal grandparents in Sibidukwe in the Transkei. Thembela was seven or eight years old at the time. Thembela's mother claimed that she had left her husband because he would not leave the Transkei to seek employment; she said that she did not want to continue rearing her children in the extremely impoverished circumstances in which they had been living at Seplasi.

Thembela's oldest brother moved to Lwandle shortly after their arrival at Sibidukwe. He secured employment, and remitted money back to his mother in the Transkei. In late 1985 Thembela's mother joined the brother at Lwandle, and after a few months secured part-time employment as a domestic worker. Thembela and her other four siblings remained at Sibidukwe with their grandmother for a further year and a half until her death in 1987, when they moved to Lwandle.

Apart from another older brother who found employment in the Elgin district after his arrival in 1987, the remaining seven family members (one half sibling was born after Thembela's mother arrived at Lwandle) share a single bed-space at Lwandle; Thembela's mother however spends most nights in another bungalow with her boy-friend. The family survives off the incomes of Thembela's two brothers and her mother. Early in 1988 Thembela's father visited his family at Lwandle, and attempted to reconcile with his wife. She would not have him back, and he left after a couple of days. Thembela has not seen him since.

Nolandela's (LHS 12) circumstances have been virtually identical to those of Thembela. Her parents were separated when she was six years old; she lived with her maternal grandparents for four years subsequent to the separation, three years of which her mother spent at Lwandle; and she moved to the Western Cape upon the death of her grandparents. Like others, these children's experiences of fostering have differed. Nolandela claims to have been very happy with her grandparents; she told me that the saddest time for her had been when her grandfather died because "my grandfather loved me". Thembela, on the other hand, does not seem to have been at all happy with her grandmother:

It was terrible with my grandmother. She used to beat us often when we did things wrong. If we called other children to eat with us, she beat us. There was not enough food⁸. [Thembela: Interview]

The differences between the circumstances of Thembela and Nolandela extend beyond this. Nolandela misses her father and says that she would like her parents to be together, but she seems to be content to be living with her mother. Thembela however seems to feel much the same way about being with her mother as she did about her grandmother:

⁸ It is perhaps worth considering Thembela's statement in the light of Hunter's comment about children in Pondoland: "Generosity and the sharing of food are instilled as primary virtues. A child is brought up seeing all food eaten in public and shared" (1979:163).

It was bad when my mother took us away from my father. He does not come to see us now....I would like to stay with my father because he does not beat us. My mother beats us often. She uses a switch (stick cut from tree or bush) to beat us. [Thembela: Interview]

There is an additional element in the cases of both Thembela and Nolandela which is worth mentioning. Abandonment by husbands is common amongst rural women whose menfolk are migrant workers (see Wilson 1975:18; Preston-Whyte 1978:58). But neither Thembela's father nor Nolandela's father was involved in labour migration prior to the break-down of their marriages; Nolandela's father had been (and apparently still is) employed in Dordrecht as a petrol-pump attendant, and Thembela's father was unemployed. In both cases it was the mothers who had left their husbands, and not the other way around. In addition, Nolandela's father has apparently offered to support the children, but her mother has refused his help; similarly, Thembela's mother refused to reconcile with her husband when he attempted to do so at Lwandle in 1988. Thus, both Thembela's mother and Nolandela's mother have made active choices with regard to taking sole responsibility for their children; they left their husbands, and they did so with the full intent of rearing and supporting their children without male assistance.

In sum, there are instances in which mothers migrate, not in order to be with their migrant husbands, but rather because they need to support their families; migration for purposes of employment is therefore not simply limited to married and unmarried males (see also Preston-Whyte 1978:58). Moreover, it seems as though some women leave their husbands in the full

knowledge that it will be up to them to support the children of the marriage, and perhaps to migrate in order to do so.

Uncertainties multiplied: the illegitimate children

The past experiences of the four children who had been conceived out of marriage were similar to those of others in terms of the frequency of their movement. The circumstances surrounding their mobility, and the alterations which took place in their domestic relationships over time, seem however to have been far more traumatic for them. In addition to being illegitimate, all of these children had effectively been abandoned by their mothers from very early ages. In the cases of Khosi and Nodazibona, their mothers sporadically entered and exited the various households to which the children were attached over time, but appear to have shown little interest in them. The other two children, Lumka and Kholeka, had been discarded completely by their mothers, and at the time of research had long since lost contact with them. Since these children had passed through a number of different sets of foster parents, and since the children could not themselves recall how long their *previous* guardians (who were no longer present to be questioned themselves) had been absent during the periods for which they were the primary custodians of the children, it is impossible to even attempt to estimate the amounts of time for which they have been separated from guardians.

There was a marked difference between the ways in which the illegitimate children interviewed in comparison with the others. Some of the children discussed above certainly did

have difficulty relating their chronological pasts, but they succeeded in doing so very much more easily than did the illegitimate children. All of the latter were extremely withdrawn when questioned about their domestic circumstances, both past and present, and sometimes sat silently without making any attempt to reply. Two of the children, Lumka and Khosi, did eventually manage to relate their chronological pasts in ways which checked roughly with the accounts of their guardians, but they achieved this with great difficulty and only after many hours of backtracking, checking, and repetition. The other two children, Nodazibona and Kholeka, were either not willing, or not able, to recall their pasts coherently; nor were they able to identify precisely their relationships to others who belonged to their bedholds. The information which I have on their pasts is therefore incomplete, and that which I have regarding their domestic circumstances at Lwandle was gleaned not from them but from other members of their bedholds. In the absence of reliable information on Nodazibona and Kholeka, the two case studies in this section deal with the experiences of Khosi and Lumka.

Case 5.6 Abandoned and illegitimate (1)⁹

Khosi was born in the Transkei district of Cala. Her parents were not married, but they lived with their respective families within close proximity to one another at Cala. Until she was about a year old Khosi was cared for by her maternal grandmother, Mrs Lekhota, after which time she was sent to live with her father at the home of her paternal grandparents. She remained with her father's family for the next six to seven years; however, her maternal kin kept close contact with her for the first four or so of those years, and she remembers spending much time at their home.

In 1981 her maternal kin left Cala, and Khosi's mother, Sylvia, accompanied them. Khosi was about five years old when they left. Khosi's father went to the Transvaal to seek employment at around the same time. For the next three years Khosi remained in Cala with her paternal grandparents. In 1983, when Khosi was in her eighth year, her father's parents sent her to her maternal grandparents, who were then living in Hermanus in the Western Cape. Khosi was not told why she was sent away, but she does remember being hungry for the last few years that she was with her paternal family. Khosi had spent six or seven years living with her paternal grandparents; she is now 13 years old, and has not seen them since then.

Sylvia and Khosi's half-brother, Ndumiso (who was born in 1982 after Sylvia had left Cala), were resident with Khosi's maternal grandparents when she arrived at Hermanus. Sylvia however moved to Lwandle shortly after Khosi's arrival, leaving both Khosi and Ndumiso with Mr and Mrs Lekhota. There were also three of Mr and Mrs Lekhota's younger children present at the time: Siyabulela who at that time was about 13 years old, Fundiswa who was then about nine years old, and Thembeni who was six years old.

The family stayed in Hermanus until late 1985, at which time Mr Lekhota was transferred to the Hottentots-Holland region. He secured a bed at Lwandle, and the remainder of the domestic unit moved to Guguletu, where they rented a room in a house for about ten months. After her arrival at Lwandle, Sylvia had given birth to Lani, Khosi's second-born half-brother. The child was sent to Guguletu to be cared for by Khosi's

⁹ Khosi's life history is complex. The following are the names (ages in 1989 in brackets), and the relationships to her, of those who feature most prominently in it:

Mr Lekhota.....maternal grandfather
Mrs Lekhota.....maternal grandmother
Sylvia.....biological mother
Siyabulela (19).....maternal uncle
Fundiswa (14).....maternal aunt
Thembeni (11).....maternal uncle
Siphiwo (3).....maternal uncle
Ndumiso (7).....first-born half-brother
Lani (5).....second-born half-brother
Ayande (3).....third-born half-brother
Amos (1).....fourth-born half-brother

grandmother, who also gave birth to a child during the time that they lived there. In Guguletu the domestic unit therefore consisted of Mrs Lekhota, four of her own children, and Khosi and her two younger brothers.

In 1986 Khosi's grandmother moved to Lwandle with the children. Along with Khosi's grandfather, they all shared two bed-spaces between them: a double-bunk which was registered in the name of Khosi's grandfather, and a single bed in the same room which was borrowed from a man who usually lived away at his work site. The single bed, and the floor surrounding it, were occupied by Khosi's grandparents (although her grandfather was frequently absent on-site), the grandparent's youngest child, Siphiso, who was then just over a year old, and Lani, the youngest of Khosi's two brothers. Khosi, Ndumiso, and the grandparents' remaining three children - five children in total - shared the double-bunk. Khosi's mother continued to live with her boyfriend and the infant Ayande, Khosi's third half-brother, in a room elsewhere in the hostels.

There were 'trespassing' raids by the authorities at Lwandle about three months after they arrived there, and all of the children moved back to Guguletu with Khosi's grandmother¹⁰. Her grandfather remained at Lwandle, as did Sylvia and Ayande who were away at the time of the raid. In Guguletu Mrs Lekhota could not cope financially with all of the children, and after they had been there for about two months she sent her eldest son, Siyabulela, and Khosi to live with relatives in Eliot in the far Eastern Cape.

Early in 1987, after the two children had been in Eliot for four months, Khosi and Siyabulela were sent back to Mrs Lekhota, who by that time was once again living at Lwandle. Khosi was then 11 years old. Living arrangements were initially the same as their first period of residence there. However, soon after they arrived back at Lwandle Mrs Lekhota secured employment as a live-in domestic worker at the Strand. Some of the children accompanied her (those who did actually oscillated their residence between Lwandle and the Strand), and three others, Khosi, Siyabulela, and Thembeni, were never permitted by Mrs Lekhota to accompany and stay with her.

In 1988 Sylvia gave birth to a fourth son, Amos, and she therefore sent Ayande to Khosi in the room where she was staying with Siyabulela and Thembeni. By the end of 1988 all of the children, save Mrs Lekhota's youngest child, had returned to Lwandle. The bedhold therefore consisted of Khosi, three of her four half-brothers, and Siyabulela, Fundiswa, and Thembeni. The oldest, Siyabulela, was then 18 years old, and the others ranged in age from two or three to 13 years.

The situation was the same when Khosi's life history was recorded in the middle of 1989: her grandparents lived away from Lwandle, returning for most weekends, her mother continued to live with her boyfriend and Amos, and the seven children were left in the care of one another.

¹⁰ These were the same raids which affected Xolisile and his family (see Chapter 2).

Khosi has effectively been rejected by her mother throughout her life. In considering her case it is however important to recognise that Khosi claimed that she does not consider this to be significant. When she was living in Cala with her paternal grandparents, Khosi knew both of her grandmothers as *mama* (mother), and her mother as *somnci* (older sister); she told me that she did not know (or, more likely, did not understand) her true relationship to her biological mother. She did however know her father as *tete* (father), although the true significance of the relationship was probably lost on her:

I knew that he was my father because my grandmother [paternal] told me that I must not call him *bhuti* [brother]. She said I must call him *tete*. [Khosi: Interview]

Khosi only discovered, or acknowledged to herself, the identity of her mother when she was 10 years old and they were living at Lwandle for the first time:

Mama [maternal grandmother] told me that *somnci* was my mother. I did not believe her, and I shouted to her that she was lying. But the clan name of Fundiswa and Thembeni is different to my clan name, so I know that she was not lying. [Khosi: Interview]

Khosi nevertheless continues to consider her grandparents as her parents, and their children as her brothers and sisters. She does however feel that she is of secondary significance to her grandmother. When Mrs Lekhota felt the necessity to send children to Eliot, she sent her oldest son and Khosi, who was not the oldest girl in the domestic group (Fundiswa, the grandmother's own child, is the oldest girl). Similarly, when Mrs Lekhota secured employment at the Strand, Khosi was one of the three children who was never permitted to stay with her:

The most difficult time for me was when *mama* went to Strand. It was difficult because she left me only with Siyabulela (then aged about 16 years) and Thembeni (then aged nine years). She was choosing from the children, and she did not choose us....I did the washing and the cooking, and over weekends *mama* even sent me the dirty clothes of the people who were staying at Strand. I also cleaned my grandfather's clothes at the weekends. *Mama* also did not give us money. Sometimes *somnci* gave us food, and sometimes we ate with other people in our house....We were often hungry. [Khosi: Interview]

We also see in Khosi's case another example of children who are wrenched, or pushed, away from parental figures with whom they have spent much time. Although Khosi did not tell me that she had been disturbed by being sent away from her paternal grandparent, she does however miss her father. She has only seen him once since he went to find work on the Witwatersrand when Khosi was five years old; he came to visit her whilst she was living with the Lekhotas in Guguletu in 1985:

My father was speaking to *mama* inside the house. He said that she must give me to him so that he could take me to Goudini. My old father [grandfather] said he must go away....My father saw me playing outside and called to me. I went to speak to him, but *mama* was looking through the window. She came and shouted at my father. Then she pulled me into the house. I was unhappy because I wanted to talk to him....I would have liked to go with him to Goudini. [Khosi: Interview]

Case 5.7 Abandoned and illegitimate (2)

Lumka spent the earliest years of her life with her mother at the home of her maternal grandmother in the Transkei. Her parents were not married, and she has never known the identity of her father. In 1979, when Lumka was four years old, her mother moved to the Witwatersrand to seek employment. Lumka remained in the Transkei in the care of her grandmother.

Nothing was heard from Lumka's mother for around two years, whereupon word was received that she had given birth to a second child, and that the grandmother should travel to the Witwatersrand to fetch the infant. She did so, and returned to the Transkei with Lumka's baby brother. Once more, Lumka's mother did not contact her family for a further two years, at

which time she once again sent a message that she had given birth to a third child. Again, Lumka's grandmother went up to the Witwatersrand to fetch the child. This was the last contact which Lumka's mother has had with her children, or with any other members of her family. Lumka has not seen her since she left the Transkei some 10 years ago.

Lumka and her two brothers continued to live with their grandmother until her death in 1986. Lumka was 11 years old at the time, and her brothers were five and three years old. For a year following the grandmother's death the children lived with neighbours of the grandmother. According to Lumka, they were treated like servants, were beaten frequently, and were not given as much food as other children in the household. Lumka's maternal uncle, Mr Nduna, had been employed on a mine in Germiston when his mother died. When his contract expired at the end of 1987, he visited Lumka and her brothers to see how they were faring. Upon discovering the circumstances in which they were living, Mr Nduna took the children to the home of his wife's mother in Sada (Whittlesea) in the Ciskei. He returned for a further spell on the mine, and Lumka and her brothers stayed with Mrs Nduna and her mother.

Lumka and her brothers have been in the care of Mr and Mrs Nduna ever since. When Mr Nduna gave up his employment on the mine and moved to Lwandle at the end of 1988, Mrs Nduna took Lumka and her brothers to join him there.

Lumka is very happy with Mr and Mrs Nduna. She described "My Family" in her autobiography:

I stay with my parents and my brothers. We are very happy at home. We get everything we want....My mother goes to town on Saturdays. My father works at a garage. He works day-shifts and sometimes night-shifts....I love my parents. [Lumka: "My Family"]

Lumka's diary is full of similar references to Mr and Mrs Nduna, and it is clear from both her writing, and the way she speaks about them, that she values greatly the care and support which she and her brothers receive from them. But the losses and uncertainties which have plagued Lumka's past are clearly still with her. Lumka's life history was pieced together from two interviews with her and one interview with Mrs Nduna. When I traced her pattern of residence with her in the first interview, Lumka told me merely that she had lived with her grandmother until she was 11 years old, that her 'father' (Mr

Nduna) was away working on the mines, and that during that time her 'mother' (Mrs Nduna) had been staying with her other grandmother (Mrs Nduna's mother) in Sada. She said that when her grandmother had died, she and her brothers had gone to live with their mother in Sada. She did not mention her biological mother at all; nor did she tell me about the year during which she had lived with her grandmother's neighbours.

It was only when I interviewed Mrs Nduna, subsequent to my first interview with Lumka, that I discovered both her true relationship to Mr and Mrs Nduna, and the harsh circumstances in which Mr Nduna had found Lumka and her brothers in the Transkei. During my second interview with Lumka I asked her why she had not told me about these things. She replied that she had been embarrassed to do so, and that she had not wanted me to know that Mr and Mrs Nduna were not her real father and mother. Furthermore, although Lumka never mentioned her biological mother as such, some of her statements, both written and oral, suggest that she has felt her abandonment by her mother severely. In her autobiography she referred to an "aunt" who lives in Johannesburg:

My parents are here in the Cape, and also my brothers. My aunt is working in *Goudini*....We never went to *Goudini* to see her. It is a good idea for the family to live in different places. That will prevent them from arguing and fighting. [Lumka: "The Place Where I Live"]

Responding to a question in her first interview as to where she would most like to live now, Lumka told me:

I would like to live in Sada now, but when I am older I would like to live in *Goudini*. My aunt is in *Goudini*. She is a good person, and I would like to live with her. [Lumka: Interview].

Mrs Nduna said that Lumka does not have an aunt anywhere on the Witwatersrand, and that her mother is the only close relative who lives there. Lumka has not seen her mother for about ten years, but she has clearly not forgotten her.

The cases of Khosi and Lumka hint at the reasons for the reticence of the two other illegitimate children - Nodazibona and Kholeka - to tell me about either their past or present lives. Both of the latter children persistently claimed that they were living at Lwandle with *their* parents. I asked them for the names, and relationships to them, of their fellow bed-users. Over the two interviews which I conducted with Nodazibona, she at different times identified as her mother each of her three adult female relatives who live at Lwandle; Kholeka identified two people as her mother. In both cases I eventually asked each child which of the people whom she had mentioned was her *biological mother*. I asked Themba to make sure that they understood what I meant by that; he discussed the question with them and assured me that they did understand. Kholeka identified somebody at Lwandle who is not her mother, and Nodazibona first identified one of her aunts, became confused, and then identified her grandmother as her biological mother¹¹. Both Kholeka and Nodazibona were visibly very upset after being asked these questions so persistently, and we decided to desist with their interviews because of this. I now know from speaking to the kin with whom Nodazibona lives that she is illegitimate; I also know that she is fully aware of her

¹¹ Anthropology is on the whole concerned more with social relationships than it is with biological ones. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile in circumstances such as those described above to consider the way that people perceive relationships, biological and otherwise, in terms of the expected norms of those relationships. Even though Nodazibona may consider somebody else to be her (social) mother, she knows who her biological mother is but she would not tell me about her. That is sociologically significant.

relationship to her mother. I know little about Kholeka's background. The relative to whom I talked at Kholeka's 'bedhold'¹² claimed to be her mother's cousin, and from what she said it was not very clear to me who the other members of the 'bedhold' were. She did however say that nobody knew where Kholeka's mother was, and that Kholeka had lived with various members of her extended family in the past. Considered in conjunction with the cases of Lumka and Khosi, the upshot of all of this is that my interviews with Nodazibona and Kholeka suggest strongly that their inability and sometimes unwillingness to provide accounts of their past and present domestic circumstances is linked directly to the insecurities and uncertainties attendant upon their experiences as illegitimate and abandoned children.

Conclusion: apartheid's nomadic children

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate some of the ways in which the migrant labour system impacts on children who are born into migrant families. It is clear from the ethnography that such children do not necessarily lead fairly sedentary lives in the complete absence of their parents, and that for many of them their early childhoods have been times of great domestic flux, upheaval, fragmentation, and uncertainty; even those children whose residence has been relatively stable have not escaped the anguish associated with absent, and *intermittently* absent, parents or guardians. These are some of the dynamics of rural life which spatially-bound and synchronic household studies have failed to capture and explore.

¹² Kholeka does not appear to belong to any single bedhold. Refer to her profile in Chapter 4 for further explanation.

A recurrent feature of the children's life histories has been the extent to which they have been reared outside of the basic nuclear unit. It is of course important not to impute cross-culturally that the nuclear family is the ideal, or even desired, locus of child-rearing. The common Eurocentric perception of parental neglect aside, there are various explanations which have been offered for the occurrence of fostering elsewhere in the world. Stone (1977), for example, has described how in sixteenth-century England, where child mortality was high, parents put their children out for fostering with wealthier families in order to avoid developing emotional attachment to them. Stannard (1977) has accounted for fostering in eighteenth-century New England (North America) in the same way. Other authors have accredited fostering to the belief amongst parents that emotional detachment, and even a certain degree of brutality, are necessary in child-rearing; because their involvement with their own children is too great for parents to effect this properly themselves, the cultural ideal is therefore to have them reared by emotionally ambivalent foster parents (see Aries 1962; Le Vine and Le Vine 1977; Cohen 1969). There is also a body of anthropological literature which suggests, amongst other things, that fostering acts as a means of forging and sealing patron-client links between hosting and sending families (see Goody 1982; Bledsoe 1990). The latter also stress the economic advantages to host families of foster children's labour, and the educational and status advantages which accrue to foster children themselves.

Whilst elements of some of the above accounts may have been partly relevant in particular instances amongst the

children of Lwandle, it would clearly be a mistake to seek recourse in any of them as the primary motivation for fostering amongst rural Africans in this country. Certainly there is evidence of contemporaneous attempts by parents to account for dispersing dependents between households by describing it as 'traditional' practice (see Niehaus 1987:188). It is also true that some children were reared traditionally within co-resident and commensal extended kin groupings; that there is evidence of fostering which was culturally-motivated in colonial times; and that in occasional instances it may *still* persist, for the old reasons, in contemporary South Africa (see Mayer and Mayer 1970; Mayer 1961:273). But such culturalist ruses as these ignore the political and economic contexts in which present-day fostering in South Africa occurs; they also in a sense ratify the effects which migrant labour has on children, detracting from the perversity of the system by implying that parents' separation from their children is willful, and that it takes place in accord with African custom.

In the cases of the illegitimate children, their mothers may have left them willfully; we do not know, though, whether there were other pressing considerations involved. As for the other children, they and their parents appear to have experienced deep pain at their separation from one another. Consider Hunter's description of a mother's parting from her child for customary reasons:

Children are often left with paternal grandparents if they live in another *umzi*¹³. A mother, when I inquired whether she did not hate having to send her eldest son to live with her husband's parents, replied: 'It is my custom. I do not complain when I

¹³ Hunter defined the *umzi* as a "local kinship group, and the huts in which they live" (Hunter 1979:435).

leave him, for he will inherit there.' But I have seen the tears rolling down a mother's face when she went away, after bringing a child who had been ill to stay for some time with its father's mother. She sent the child, who was 5 or 6 years old, to play with the other children beyond the kraal, then hastened out round the back of the huts that she might not have the pain of seeing him cry at parting (1979:24).

Some of the Lwandle children's mothers departed with the same stealth when they had to leave their children. But the important distinction between the Pondoland child and the children of Lwandle is that they were *not* separated from their parents for reasons of succession or anything else which might be construed as customary: in the overwhelming number of instances, parents and children were separated, first and foremost, as a direct result of parental involvement in labour migration and the restrictions on African mobility which underpin it. As we have seen, the consequences and repercussions for the children have been immense.

CHAPTER 6

CHILDHOOD AT LWANDLE: DOMESTIC AND FAMILY LIFE IN THE HOSTELS

I am staying in a hostel. The hostel is a big block. Husbands and wives are staying here. The hostel is divided into two small rooms. The toilets are outside. They are dirty and stinking. The lights always go off, and we are forced to live in darkness. The hostel is also dirty inside. It is very cold. Some people do not clean their rooms. The place is bad and boring. We stay in the hostels because our parents must work. During the weekends the people drink and make a lot of noise. We cannot even rest and sleep well. The place is very bad, but the people say - we are in Cape Town. [Mandisa: "The Place Where I Live"]

The previous chapter has examined something of the children's historical backgrounds: we have seen some of the places where they have lived and the paths which they have travelled; the relationships which they have been able, or unable, to develop with their parents; the pain which has been caused to some of them as a result of separation from their parents and others who have been close to them; and perhaps most forceful of all, we have seen the desire of parents and children to live together as a complete family unit, and the efforts which they have made to do so. This chapter considers what the children have come to at Lwandle, and what it means for them now that most of them are together with the adults in their lives who are significant to them.

The bungalows constitute the domestic centre of the children's lives at Lwandle. It is here that their bed-spaces are located, that their meals are cooked and eaten, that their possessions are stored, that they sleep, wash, and dress, and that they interact with their parents, siblings, and other

fellow bed-users. As far as they resemble it, the bungalows are 'home' to the children. The first section of the chapter presents an overview of the physical and social conditions which exist in the bungalows, focusing particularly on the problem of space, on the strategies which residents have devised to guide interaction in such crowded circumstances, and on my observations of the children's play and domestic activities. The section serves as the general backdrop against which family life at Lwandle should be viewed. The remainder of the chapter examines the ways in which child-rearing and parent-child relations are affected by the hostel environment. I begin by presenting the children's own descriptions of life in the bungalows, and then examine the character of parent-child relations and the problems, as perceived by parents, which are associated with child-rearing in the hostel context. I must emphasise that I did not have the opportunity to observe interaction between parents and children in any great depth; by the nature of things, such interaction is largely confined to the bungalows in the evenings. I have thus relied heavily on personal testimony in the latter portion of the chapter.

The parameters of domestic life: an etic overview of hostel life

Space and overcrowding in the bungalows

In our house there are 37 people. There are 21 children and 16 adults. [Nolandela: "The Place Where I Live"]

The general structure and physical condition of the bungalows at Lwandle have been outlined in earlier chapters.

It is nevertheless useful to situate the bungalows comparatively in terms of other hostels in the Peninsula, and to briefly elaborate on the material conditions which exist in them. Segar (1988:10-15) has described contemporary living conditions in hostels in the Cape Town townships. She noted that most of the hostels in the areas covered by her research - Nyanga, Guguletu, and Langa - are approximations of the type known as Langa Zones:

The Zones are the most common type of hostel in Langa, and although it is difficult to rank degrees of squalor, it is probably not unfair to say that they represent the worst type of hostel accommodation in this area. The buildings themselves are single storied brick structures, most of which have been built in long rows constituting 'streets'. One of the most dismal aspects of the Zones is their surroundings; many of the rows are very close together with spaces in between being filled with a jumble of cars, chickens, children and rubbish....The structures themselves appear to be of sturdy construction, but Zones' interiors are very grim being particularly dark. Most units comprise three bedrooms - two with three beds and one with two - a room with a lavatory bowl and shower-cum-urinal, and a small kitchen area. The 'kitchen' which is also the hostel entrance, is the only common room (apart from the ablution room) and is a narrow, unlit and unfurnished area with a sink and a tap in one corner. Given an average bed occupancy rate of 2,7, approximately 22 people share these facilities (Segar 1988:10-11).

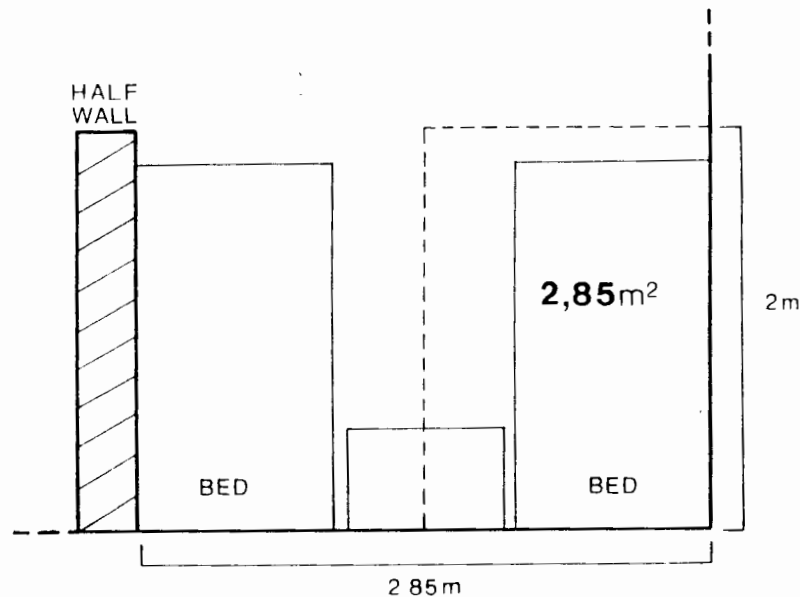
In Segar's estimation, the Zones are amongst the worst hostel accommodation which she came across during the course of her research; the Lwandle hostels lack many of the facilities with which even the Zones are provided. Firstly, it will be recalled that there are *no internal* toilet, ablution, and cooking facilities in the bungalows; in addition, some bungalows are further than 100 metres from the nearest toilet and ablution blocks, and most residents cook on small stoves alongside their beds in the bungalows themselves. Secondly,

whilst the Zones in Langa generally have three bedrooms with two or three beds per room, the bungalows in the state-built hostels at Lwandle consist of two rooms which are furnished with 16 beds between them, and in one of the hangar-type blocks there are around 30 beds in each room. Thirdly, none of the hostels at Lwandle have a common-room as do the Zones, and there is thus *nowhere* for people to gather in-doors other than in the rooms themselves. Finally, there was an average bed occupancy of 2,7 people in the Zones, which translates into an average room occupancy of between five and nine people in the rooms with two and three beds; at Lwandle there is an average room occupancy of 27 people in the state-built hostels and an average bungalow occupancy of around 54 people. As mentioned earlier, in some instances there are rooms which are occupied by 32 people or more and bungalows which house over 60 people. On all of these counts - amenities, space, and overcrowding - conditions at Lwandle are worse than those in the worst of the Cape Town hostels.

The severity of these conditions is conceptualised better when considered in relation to the amount of space which is available. It will be recalled that the floor area of the rooms in the state-built bungalows is six metres by six metres square (see Diagram 4.2). Excluding the passage-area - which residents consider to be communal space - but without subtracting the area taken up by beds and other internal furnishings, the residents of each bed-space share an area of 2.85 square metres between them. Assuming an average occupancy of 3,3 people per bed, each resident of the state-built hostels therefore has a theoretical personal living space of around 86

square centimetres (see Diagram 6.1). Conditions in the rooms at Greenpoint are similar, and those in the corrugated-iron blocks, where beds are about half a metre apart, are worse.

Diagram 6.1: Bed-space in the state-built bungalows



The most serious structural constraints on life in the hostels, then, are overcrowding and lack of space, amenities, and privacy. There are no adequate facilities for cooking, for personal ablutions, and for general social gatherings, and virtually *all* spheres of life - apart from those which can be conducted outside - are confined to the bungalows.

Bedhold organisation and composition

Studies of African households in urban South Africa have noted a general tendency towards diminishing domestic structural complexity, with variations of simple and complex nuclear, single-parent, and female-headed structures emerging as the predominant types of household organisation in these areas (see Pauw 1963:141-165; Marwick 1978; Preston-Whyte 1978;

Simkins 1986). With regard to the latter, Preston-Whyte (1978) and Van der Vliet (1984) have shown how significant numbers of women opt out of marriage, and often also out of informal cohabitation with men, because they value the material, emotional, and child-rearing independence which this allows them. On the other hand, the tendency towards nuclear groupings has remained largely unexplained. Preston-Whyte (1978:56) and Simkins (1986:28) have hypothesised that incidences of nuclear formation may be highest in newer African settlements, particularly those in which houses are allocated only to married couples. Length of urban residence is another likely factor, although this could influence domestic structural changes either way: long-term residence in town may lead to progressive alienation from rural kin, or it may lead to incremental increases in domestic complexity as more and more kin join the household from the rural side.

The composition of the children's bedholds suggests that domestic structural trends in the hostels, certainly as far as bedholds containing children are concerned, align broadly with household trends amongst township Africans. The children's family and bedhold profiles in Chapter 4, and the summary information contained in Table 4.6, have provided some indication as to the structural dimensions of the children's domestic circumstances. The children's bedhold types are summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Children's bedhold types¹

Simple nuclear	Complex nuclear	Single parent	Multi-generation	Locally fragmented
Ayande Christinah Christophy Mphumzi Siyabulela Nandipha Niombosi Nomvuyo Siphiwo	Lumka Nkosnathi Nosipho Nomsingisi Ntobeko Xolisa Xolisile	Mandisa Nolandela Thembela	Fundiswa Thembeni Khosi Kholeka Nodazibona	Christophy Fundiswa Thembeni Khosi Nolandela Nomvuyo Thembela

Most of the children are part of nuclear structures: nine of them belong to simple nuclear bedholds (although as we have seen a number of these are fragmented with some minor siblings resident elsewhere) and seven are part of complex nuclear structures where the bedhold consists of the parental couple, at least one child, and one or more other bed-user. In the latter instances the extra-nuclear members of the bedhold are kin, work-mates, and family friends. There are five children who belong to multi-generational or extended family bedholds; three of these children - Kholeka, Nodazibona, and Khosi - were born out of wedlock and live with maternal kin, whilst the other two, Fundiswa and Thembeni, are part of Khosi's maternal kin group. Three of the children belong to single-parent bedholds. The mothers of two of them, Nolandela and Thembela, are separated matrimonially from their husbands, and their bedholds are therefore female-headed. The case of the third child in this category, Mandisa, is more complex. She lives at Lwandle with her older brother, her father, and her father's

¹ Although Lumka is fostered by kin, she is for all intents and purposes part of a nuclear family. I have therefore categorised her as such.

girlfriend, and the remainder of the Sonamzi family live in the Transkei; both Mandisa and her father deny that there is a rift between Mr and Mrs Sonamzi. Insofar as the Sonamzi domestic unit at Lwandle can be considered to be separate from its extension in the Transkei, Mandisa lives as part of a single-parent domestic unit; this is however confounded by the presence of Mr Sonamzi's girlfriend, whom, moreover, Mandisa claims to consider as a mother-figure.

It is necessary to qualify the organisation and composition of some of the children's bedholds. Firstly, one of the children who belongs to a simple nuclear bedhold, Christophy, sometimes stays at Sir Lowry's Pass Village with his mother's sister; in addition, he also has an uncle in another bungalow at Lwandle whose bed he sometimes uses when the uncle is away on-site. Christophy therefore moves between bungalows and between the hostels and Sir Lowry's Pass Village. Kholeka's circumstances are similar: she sleeps at any one of a number of her kins' bed-spaces which are distributed around the hostels. Secondly, as we have already seen in Chapters 4 and 5, there are some children who live at Lwandle for much of the time without adult company: Fundiswa and Thembeni's parents, who are also Khosi's guardians, live away from Lwandle during the week, Nolandela's mother is a live-in domestic worker, and Thembela's mother stays with her boyfriend in his bungalow. The circumstances of Nomvuyo's two older sisters, aged 15 and 12 years, are similar. The older of the two, Nontutulezu, sleeps in another bungalow at the bed of Mrs Qiqimana's sister who is usually absent from Lwandle, and Khunjulwa stays with relatives at Mfuleni; when she returns from Mfuleni over

weekends, Khunjulwa stays with Nontutulezu at her bed.

Nolandela described her feelings about being part of a locally-fragmented bedhold:

The places here are too small for families to live together. That is a big problem because some people must go to find other places to live. It is bad because people look at you in funny ways if you stay without your parents. They tease you and ask you questions all the time. [Nolandela: Girls' Group Interview]

The trends which are evident in the children's bedhold organisation and composition are at least partly attributable to the hostel environment itself. The small number of multi-generational groupings and the large-scale presence of simple and complex nuclear ones amongst the children can be explained in terms of the *spatial constraints* of the hostels. Quite simply, there is insufficient space for the bedhold to expand numerically and thus to increase in structural complexity. However, the fact that children belong to nuclear or single-parent bedholds does not necessarily always mean that contact with wider kin is severely reduced or non-existent in the hostel context. Indeed, many of the children have relatives who live in other bungalows at Lwandle, and some of them mentioned these people frequently in their writing and interviews. I did not however establish with each child what particular kin were resident elsewhere in the hostels, and how many of them there were.

The relatively small numbers of single-parent and female-headed groupings is clearly the product of the structural and historical constraints of the migrant labour and hostel system. The hostels are historically a male environment, beds are usually rented to men only, and women's access to hostel

accommodation is therefore on the whole conditional upon an existent or purposively-cultivated relationship with male bedholders or their fellow male bed-users. As Ramphele (1989a) has shown, this may have particularly serious consequences for women, leading them into literal prostitution, competition with one another, and heightened conflict in order to gain access to, or retain, their own and their children's places in a bedhold².

My work did not bring me into sufficient contact with women to determine the extent to which they are exploited in this way, but given the evidence from elsewhere it is not unlikely that there are women at Lwandle whose positions are similar to those described by Ramphele. It is however noteworthy that the mothers of the two children whose parents are matrimonially separated, Nolandela and Thembela, did not initially gain access to beds at Lwandle by cultivating relationships with men, although both do now have boyfriends who live elsewhere in the hostels and with whom they usually stay. Thembela's bed is registered in the name of her older brother, who moved to Lwandle prior to the remainder of the family. Nolandela's case is highly unusual in that the bed is registered in her *mother's* name³. When Nolandela's grandparents died in Dordrecht, her mother's employers arranged with the CPA administrator of Lwandle to grant Nolandela's mother a bed so that her children would have a place to live in the area. There are four members of Nolandela's nuclear family resident at Lwandle and elsewhere in the Hottentots-Holland

² See also Ramphele and Boonzaier (1988).

³ In terms of policy and law, beds may only be rented to men. See 'Migrant labour, influx control, and hostels in the Western Cape' in Chapter 4 of this study.

region, who have a single bed between them in the hostels, and there are nine members of Thembela's family at Lwandle, all of whom occupy one bed-space (a double-bunk). It is thus possible that both of these mothers maintain their relationships with their boyfriends in order to gain access to another bed in the hostels, and thereby to reduce overcrowding at their own bed-spaces.

Finally, the existence of locally-fragmented bedholds is the product of various circumstances. As we have heard from Nolandela, there is often insufficient space for all members of a family to live together in the same bungalow. It may also happen that employers require that the people in their service spend much time away from Lwandle, either living at the construction sites where they are working, or staying on their employer's premises in the case of live-in domestic workers. In addition, Nomvuyo's 12-year-old sister lives with relatives at Mfuleni during the week in order that she may attend school in the area.

Apart from those mentioned above, there are numerous other permutations of bed-user relationships at Lwandle. For one thing, the hostel population is highly mobile, and there is a continuous stream of men, women, children, kin, and friends moving in and out of the hostels, joining and leaving bedholds, and moving between bedholds and bungalows. For another, there are numerous permutations of bed-user relationships: some beds are occupied by only a single male bed-user, although these are rare; there are bedholds comprising a number of male kin (fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, and nephews), some of whom may at various times have girlfriends living with them;

bedholds which are constituted by unmarried men and women, either with or without children; and bedholds composed of adult siblings and their offspring. There are also bed-users who have kin or even conjugal ties across bungalows, such as young adult or even minor offspring who sleep at a bed-space in one bungalow but whose domestic affiliation in terms of meals, personal ablutions, storing of possessions, and family life remains at the natal bedhold. Whilst it is *generally* the case that a bedhold is constituted by the users of one or perhaps two beds in the same bungalow, it therefore also happens that bedholds spread outwards into other bungalows. Bedhold composition in the hostels is thus on the whole fluid, variable, and complex.

The rules of social life

One day there was a naked man in our room who was walking around the passage. The man was drinking when he was doing that, and the children were all laughing at him. The older people beat him because they said he is losing respect for the children. The elders beat him. Then they chased him out of the room. They said he must not come back, and he went to live in Site B [Khayelitsha]. [Thembeni: Sub B Boys' Group Interview]

A particular feature of mine, urban, and company-owned hostels throughout South Africa is the emic system of rules which residents devise in order to maintain some semblance of social normality in such aberrant living conditions (see Peskin and Spiegel 1976; Moodie 1980;1983; Thomas 1987; Segar 1988; Ramphele 1989a). Ramphele has described the purpose of these rules:

The system of discipline is aimed at limiting tensions and promoting cordial relations between

residents of the hostels. This system revolves around electing one resident in a 'door'...to act as convenor, arbitrator and chairman of disciplinary hearings, which are called whenever a resident lodges a complaint. Such convenors are called *izibonda* (singular, *isibonda*) (1989a:4-5)⁴.

As in other hostels, the occupants of some bungalows at Lwandle devise *mteto* (rules) which govern interaction and behaviour in the bungalows. *Mteto* are administered, disputes are mediated, and *ikundliwa* (punishment) is meted out by *ibhodi*. *Ibhodi* is made up of a number of elected, initiated male residents of the bungalow who together perform the functions of convenor, chairman, and arbitrator, and who operate on the basis of consensus; although exceptional, there are also some bungalows at Lwandle in which every initiated male is part of *ibhodi*⁵.

Mteto vary from bungalow to bungalow according to the specific circumstances and desires of the occupants of each. The most common sources of conflict are noise, invasion of privacy and the property of others, consumption of alcohol, and infidelity. *Mteto* are very general, and usually provide for the first three of these common problems, as well as for such things as the times at which the door of the bungalow is locked at night and unlocked in the morning. There are no *mteto* governing sexual conduct, and infidelity and conflicts arising out of it only become punishable when they lead to disturbances of some sort (noise, violence, and so on) which encroach on others in the bungalow.

⁴ Ramphele defines a 'door' as a dormitory of beds, usually accessed through a single door (1989a:5).

⁵ This arrangement, whereby *ibhodi* operates as a committee, is a notable deviation from the emic systems of discipline described by Ramphele and others where authority is vested in one individual (*isibonda*). Although women are excluded completely from *ibhodi*, it still represents a shift towards 'democratic' convention in the hostels. I was told by residents that the term *ibhodi* is a bastardised form of the English word 'board', and that its adoption derives from people's continued experience of administrative boards - the Bantu Administration Board, the Transkei Development Board, the Ciskei Employment Board, and so on.

There are generally three levels of *ikundliwa*: a suspended sentence (punishment is "hung"), a fine, and expulsion from the bungalow. Fines vary from R10 to as much as R100 or more, depending on the nature of the offence, and the money is used to purchase consumables such as alcohol, soft drinks, and meat which are shared out amongst all the members of the bungalow. Expulsion occurs for repeated offences, when offenders fail to pay fines, and for particularly serious incidents of physical assault. The CPA officials at the rent office are sometimes called to assist with the removal of offenders who refuse to observe an expulsion ruling⁶. Beatings are also a common form of punishment, although no informants mentioned them to me as part of the formally delineated levels of *ikundliwa*.

The actual functioning of the system of discipline is fairly complex, and there is not space here to elaborate it fully. Very briefly, it is both patriarchal and gerontocratic. Just as membership of *ibhodi* is reserved for initiated men, so too may only initiated men appear before it. Thus, when a woman, child, or uninitiated male commits an offence it is the man responsible for him or her who appears before *ibhodi*, and to whom *ikundliwa* is meted out: he is given a suspended sentence, he pays the fine, or he and his fellow bed-users are expelled from the bungalow. It is then up to the man who is held responsible to punish the offender in whatever manner he chooses⁷. This most often takes the form of beatings, which

⁶ Thomas (1987) has noted the same co-operation between *izibonda* and township authorities in hostels in Guguletu.

⁷ Hammond-Tooke (1962:47) has described a similar situation amongst the Transkeian Bhaca where a father is responsible for his son's misdeeds in law, and where he is responsible for paying all fines imposed on his son by the courts, throughout his life. I do not know whether or not this pertains amongst *initiated* sons who live at Lwandle with their fathers, although it is probable that the senior male bed-user is ultimately responsible for all other bed-users.

are acceptable as long as they take place outside the bungalow. The system therefore performs the contradictory function of both deterring and stimulating conflict: it deters people from behaving in such a way as to cause conflict, but when the offender is a 'legal minor' it also creates conflict - very often in the form of violence - between the responsible man and the offender.

The *mteto* and *ibhodi* system is not as effective in some bungalows as it is in others, and there are some bungalows in which it has dissolved completely. Those in which it is minimally effective or not operative at all tend to be bungalows with low average ages, those in which the majority of residents originate from rural towns rather than reserves or homelands, or those in which both of the above factors are present. As will become clear, there are notable differences in material and social conditions between bungalows in which *mteto* are stringently applied and those in which the system is weak or non-existent.

Children's domestic responsibilities and play

In discussing childhood in Pondoland as she observed it during the 1930s, Hunter described how girls began to assume child-care and other domestic responsibilities from as young an age as seven or eight years (1979:159-160). Moreover, whilst boys' domestic duties involved herding and checking livestock, which permitted much time for recreation while they were out in the pastures during the day, girls were kept busy at the homestead cleaning, fetching water, grinding corn, and preparing the evening meal; the latter was especially so in

busy horticultural seasons when mothers and older sisters worked the fields during the day. As a result, Hunter observed that

[g]irls' duties are more arduous than those of boys, so their games are not as well developed...(1979:160).

Reynolds noted similar patterns in her more recent work amongst children in Crossroads (see 1989:54-73). She found that girls of 10 years and older often ran the household in the absence of employed or politically-active mothers, and that the burden of their work was frequently very heavy. She also suggested that there was a clear distinction between the kinds of play engaged in by boys and girls, and that

boys' play was more conspicuous than girls' and it is quite likely that I noted their play more frequently than the quieter pursuits of girls (Reynolds 1989:70).

My observations of the mix between play and domestic chores amongst the Lwandle children, and of gender separation in games, align generally with those of Hunter and Reynolds⁸. On the whole, girls appear to be very much more involved in the day-to-day operation of the household than boys, and consequently boys enjoy far greater freedom and time to themselves than girls. Something of this is reflected in extracts from the diaries of Lumka and Mphumzi:

Lumka:

- 28-7-89 Yesterday I cleaned up everything at home. When my mother arrived she said she will buy me something special. I said she must buy me a church dress.
- 3-8-89 On Wednesday I arrived at home and my mother was doing the washing. I helped her to wash our clothes. I then washed the dishes and packed them nicely in the locker. I swept the floor. Then I

⁸ See also Pauw (1963:78-79).

studied my books. After I had finished, I prepared my father's work-clothes. My father is doing night-shift.

7-8-89 On Sunday my mother and father went to Khayelitsha. They went by car. I stayed behind to clean the house. I also changed the curtains and the tablecloth. After that I cooked for us. Then I washed myself and dressed in clean clothes. At about five o'clock I cooked meat for supper.

Mphumzi:

17-7-89 Yesterday we were playing soccer at the soccer field. As we were playing a fight broke out. We were looking at the boys who were fighting when a police-van drove up. We started to run away. Some of the boys were arrested. When I arrived home my mother was very angry. She said that I must not go to the soccer fields again. She said she does not want me to get into trouble.

20-7-89 When I arrived at home yesterday I saw my friends going to play soccer. I was very worried because my mother said I must not go to the soccer field. I hid from her and did go to the practise. I really enjoyed it. Our coach told us that we were to play another team on Saturday. When I arrived home I did not tell my mother that I was at the soccer field.

24-7-89 Yesterday we played soccer. We were playing for one of our team-mates who is celebrating his birthday. We played for money. We won and gave him the money for a present. We were very happy.

On the whole, girls' domestic responsibilities only begin at around the age of eight or nine years, and boys and girls who are younger have almost complete freedom to play and amuse themselves. The only exception occurs in the realm of child-care, where young girls tend to be charged with caring for younger siblings or kin far more than boys.

Apart from gender and age, other variables such as the developmental level of the family, economic circumstances, and the number and ages of *other* children present as part of the bedhold may also determine both the extent to which boys and girls engage in domestic work, and the age at which they begin to do so. Such factors may also in some instances necessitate

that boys' domestic responsibilities are greater than is generally the case. Something of this is evident in an exchange between Mphumzi, Ayande, and Xolisile. I had been questioning them about the duties of girls as compared to those of boys:

Mphumzi: I do not think that there is any difference between boys' duties and girls' duties. I have a friend, Sabela, and he does all the things that girls do because his sister does not live here.

Ayande: You are wrong. There is a big difference. Boys must not have to cook. Cooking is girls' work. Boys should not do girls' work.

Xolisile: There is no difference. When you do not have sisters then you have to cook. When your mother is working you have to cook or there will be no food for the people. It is good because it will prepare you for when you are old.

Nandipha is the only child attached to her bedhold; Mrs Ndlovu told me that Nandipha takes sole responsibility for the domestic work:

Nandipha washes the dishes, fetches the water, cleans the clothes, and cooks the food. I go to the clinic. She must make sure that I have something to eat. When we were in the Transkei I had asthma and my legs could not move. We came to Cape Town, and the doctors said I had poison. They operated on me. Now I can walk, and I only have TB. [Mrs Ndlovu: Parental Interview]

Similarly, Nolandela said that she does all of the cooking and other domestic chores in the absence of her mother at the Strand during the week, and we have already heard from Khosi that she is expected to do the washing not only of her bedhold but also of those family members who are sometimes absent (see case 5.6). In sum, from the age of around eight years girls spend much of their time out of school hours helping to clean their bed-spaces, washing clothes and cooking implements, and

preparing meals; boys on the other hand are most often away from the bungalows with their friends.



Children play in piles of trash. Those in the picture took fright at the camera.

Gender separation in play, distinction between the types of play-activities of boys and girls, and marked differences in the frequency, intensity, and repertoire of boys' and girls' games only really begin to be evident simultaneous to girls' increasing domestic responsibilities at around eight years old. Little differentiation is evident prior to this general age. The area around the school during the break periods is a mass of running and shrieking children - the younger of the boys and girls - playing games of catch and hide-and-seek, and sometimes kicking soccer and tennis balls between themselves. Such scenes amongst these children, in which girls and boys play

together, are as common out of school hours as they are during school breaks. During their spare time the younger children also make much use of the refuse which lies in abundance around the periphery of the hostels for their play. They build boats from sticks, pieces of board, bottles, plastic, and whatever else is at hand, and float them in the puddles of green water which lie all over Lwandle. They build houses from old, rusty corrugated-iron, from plastic bags, and from branches. They manufacture toy vehicles and musical instruments such as drums, tambourines, and guitars from discarded junk which they find lying around. The seeking out and uncovering of the components for these manufactured items in itself seems to provide great pleasure, and children spend hours sifting through rubbish in their pursuit of useful bits and pieces.



A wire car in the making.



Children playing with junk.



Young children play in incapacitated motor vehicles.

A particularly popular pastime amongst both pre-school children and the younger of the school-children is playing shop. There are a number of shanty-like structures situated close to the school; these are made from wood and plastic, and belong to hawkers who sell their wares there, primarily on Friday afternoons and evenings and over weekends. For the remainder of the time, these stalls are for the most part not used. The children gather items from the trash heaps and bits and pieces of junk which they find lying around the hostels, and array them on display in the stalls. Other children collect pebbles, and make their purchases with them. But they cannot be any pebbles; they must be washed and smooth or they will be rejected. And so, the children enter into business, selling rubbish and earning stones.

It is play, but I did once see one little entrepreneur sell some filthy shoe laces which he had found to a passing woman. She initially attempted to pay him with pebbles like the play-customers at the shop, but this little fellow was not parting with his shoe laces for anything less than copper coins which he knew the woman would be able to give him. She haggled, and he would not budge; she offered him a handful of pebbles, and still he would not budge. I think that she ended up paying him two cents for the laces - one cent for each - and the payment was received with great ecstasy, not so much for the money-value but more for the joy and pride at having done what hawkers really do.

Gender separation in play begins at around the age of eight or nine years. The older of the boys at the school, and their friends of the same age, venture far from the hostels in

their recreational activities. Some parts of the buffer strip are thick with tall grass and bush, and afford the boys an expansive play area isolated and hidden from the hostels. A number of the boys told me about a secret place which they have in the buffer strip which they call the *possie* [Afrikaans slang for 'place']. The *possie* is a shanty constructed out of branches, plastic, corrugated-iron, and other odds and ends which the boys have collected, and is apparently well-hidden in a section of the buffer strip which is infrequently visited by others. Access to it is exclusive and highly prized, and its whereabouts is a highly guarded secret. Only a few of the boys at the school are members of the '*possie* gang', and boys at the school who do not belong to it have been unable to locate the *possie*, although they said that they have tried to do so frequently. Mphumzi, Xolisile, Ntobeko, and Ayande, who are members, are certain that it will never be found. They said that the *possie* is used as a meeting place and for storage of 'valuable' items, and that the most valuable items are buried somewhere close to it. With defiant glee, they refused to tell me what these items are.

The boys also walk to the beach beyond Rusthof settlement when the weather is good, where they swim, kick soccer balls around, and share the bicycles of the few who own them. At other times they head off in the opposite direction to the Somerset West municipal rubbish dump, just north of the national road. They said that it is always fun to go to the dump because they find many interesting, useful, and sometimes even vendible items there.



Boys of the "possie" gang

Soccer is by far the most popular of the pastimes in which boys engage in the vicinity of the hostels. The boys play soccer on the rough fields which have been shaped in the buffer strip, and their diaries are littered with references to the game - to playing, practising, supporting, and watching it. People wishing to make use of the formally delineated soccer field which is administered by the CPA are required to pay an amount of R2.50 per hour, and the boys therefore do not have general access to it. I supplied the boys at the school with three soccer balls early in the fieldwork. The balls were missing one morning when I arrived at school, and I asked what had happened to them. Siphiso told me:

We went to play soccer at the stadium. The watchmen heard us and they took the balls away. They were angry because we climbed over the fence. They said we must pay to play in the stadium. They will keep the balls until we pay for going there. They said we must pay R2.50 for each ball. [Siphiso: Conversation]

I never saw soccer or anything else being played at the stadium, and residents told me that it stands vacant, never used, month after month. The balls were retrieved from the watchmen at the specified price.

Boys often also play miniature soccer. I do not know what they call this game, but it is a fascinating brew of soccer, snooker, and *vingerbord* (karem using thumb flicks instead of sticks). A mini soccer pitch, about a metre in length and three-quarters of a metre in breadth, is carved with a stick or other sharp object into a section of hard and grassless ground. The pitch includes all of the proper field markings - goal-keepers' boxes, half-way line, notches for corner kicks, and so on - and wire is fashioned into goal-posts which are placed at each end of the field. A distinctive marble, usually white, is selected to represent the soccer ball, and other marbles are distributed around the field in the various player positions.

The game is played by two boys at a time, and as far as possible abides by the rules of soccer, even though skilled players also employ the strategies of snooker. The opponents draw lots for kick-off, and the game begins. The player-marbles are manoeuvred around the field by thumb-flicks. Each boy has a chance to propel one of his player-marbles towards the ball, and then his opponent has a chance. There is a certain amount of skill and strategy involved in playing well. As in soccer, the major objective of the game is obviously to score more goals than one's opponent, and to prevent the latter from scoring if he is in an advantageous position. Sometimes a boy will propel one of his player-marbles around directly towards the ball in the hope that he will hit it and thereby

'kick' it forward towards his opponent's defence; sometimes he will choose to manoeuvre player-marbles around the field, and in so doing attempt to set himself up in an attacking position. When he is defending or is particularly vulnerable, rather than shooting directly for the ball and risking missing it he may flick the closest player-marble into the line of his opponent's shot at goal, effectively snookering the latter's access to it. The game continues in this fashion. It is intricate, highly engrossing, and a single game may continue for many hours. Particular interest is at times shown by other children as they crowd around the field cheering, betting, coaching, and strategising with their friends. Onlookers are often keen to challenge the victor. Since marbles are in particularly short supply amongst the children, the game is dominated by the lucky few, and their friends, who do have marbles.

Another extremely popular activity amongst boys - although girls do very occasionally partake (see photograph below) - is gambling of various sorts. All of these games are commonly conducted outside the school and on their haunches in the dust and dried mud around the hostels. When they take place during school break periods, the children make certain that they remain out of view of their teacher, who takes strong objection to their gambling pursuits. Gambling is a common cause of conflict between the children. Mphumzi said that it sparks many of the fights between teenagers:

The children of our age fight often. We fight with anything we can grab - stones, spades, knives....We usually fight about gambling. [Mphumzi: Group Interview]

One of the gambling games is played with cards, and I did not observe enough of it to understand how it is played. The other two games which I observed most frequently are called *tail-of-hex* and *mchina*. *Tail-of-hex* refers to what is nowadays commonly known as 'heads or tails', but as a pastime amongst the children it has developed into something a little more elaborate⁹. There are two clear categories of player, and two levels of sophistication in the play. Firstly, there are those children who play the game socially amongst three, four, or five friends. Instead of spinning the coin up into the air and catching it in the palms of their hands, the children crouch or sprawl on the ground, preferably on a cemented area, and spin the coin on the flat surface. As the spinning slows, they smack the coin down flat and cover it with their hands. Participants then place bets as to whether the face of the coin which lies upward is *tail-of-hex*; the spinner pays out those who are correct the amount which they have put up, and collects the money from those who are not. At this level the right to spin, and thus to act as bank, usually rotates from player to player, changing each time the coin is spun. I only ever saw children betting 1c, 2c, or at the most 5c at a time, although they did claim that they sometimes play for stakes as high as R1 and R2. Sometimes a particular player is luckier than his fellows, winning substantial amounts from them, but losses are generally small.

Secondly, there are the hardy gamblers, the 'professionals', who make a business out of it. These more

⁹ Interestingly, the children still employ the term 'hex', which is virtually unheard of any longer since coinage with King George's head has been out of circulation for around 30 years. I also heard of this game referred to occasionally using the English term 'spinning'.

seasoned players' movements are practised, stylish, dexterous, and lighteningly quick, and they spin, cover, uncover, collect and pay out winnings, and spin again so swiftly that it is often difficult for the unpracticed observer to follow what has taken place. They do not alternate the spin with other players but keep it for themselves, and set up shop in a particular place where they hope to attract, and usually do attract, other children (and sometimes even adults) who wish to test their powers of observation against the professional's skill. The regularity with which these more practised players empty the pockets of other children leads one to suspect that there is more happening in all of their rapid movement than meets the eye. There was one child amongst the 24 children, Christophy, included in this category of player. Unlike most of the other children, who seldom had more than a few copper coins, Christophy always had ready cash in his pocket; he sometimes carried R4 or R5 on him, and his pockets were often heavy with change.

Mchina is generally played with a small board manufactured from varieties of hardboard and cardboard, although 'boards' are sometimes delineated in soil or scratched on to concrete. Boards are privately-owned, and are divided into small squares, some of which are marked with numbers. The owner of the board sets up 'business' somewhere around the hostels, and those who wish to try their skill are required to pitch a specified amount of money at the board. The objective of pitchers is to land their money in a block which is numerically demarcated, which entitles them to be paid out the amount of money which corresponds to the number in the block. If the coin which is

pitched misses the board or a demarcated block, then the owner of the board retains the coin. Once more, there are seasoned pitchers who are extremely accurate and whom many of the board owners avoid or refuse to allow to participate.

Although gambling does cause many fights between children (and sometimes between children and adults who have lost), it is also noteworthy that it is not always the winning or the acquisition of prizes which is the incentive for these gambling games. I witnessed many games which took place without any money changing hands. In both *tail-of-hex* and *mchina* the children often betted with pebbles, and seemed to experience immense satisfaction even though there was no direct material gain. The same applies to the kinds of marble games which are played so commonly by boys elsewhere: children who do not have marbles collect attractive stones and play *amapeka* (marbles) with these.

Unlike the older boys, the younger of the children and the older girls spend much of their spare time within the vicinity of the hostels. Older girls in particular are usually not far from their bungalows when they are with their friends, so that they are within close calling distance should they be required for some purpose. Much of their time with their friends is spent sunning themselves and relaxing. They sit against walls chatting and singing amongst themselves, and there are almost invariably a few infants or toddlers close by over whom they have charge. Hairdressing is a favourite activity whilst they are relaxing in this way, and some girls spend hours knotting, parting, straightening, and styling one another's hair.



Children playing tail-of-hex outside their bungalow.



*Boys playing tail-of-hex close to the school.
Christophy, at back to the left, is observing.*



*Girls hair-dressing in the sun
during break-time at school.*

Most of the games which girls do play happen in groups. *Nomlenzana* (leggy) is extremely popular, and involves passing a tennis ball under their lifted legs, catching it, and repeating the motion. There is an ongoing competition for top-spot amongst school-girls; the record when I worked at the school was held by Christinah, who surpassed two hundred full cycles of the tennis-ball. Girls also play many variations of *chucks* (hopscotch), either in pairs or in larger teams which compete with one another. They are extremely innovative in *chucks*, and continuously invent new forms of the game and new designs which they have negotiate. Girls also form dance groups which collect during school breaks and after school hours to practise together, they hold *ggapu* (skipping) competitions, and play netball in which two girls catch the ball and act as

receptacles in the absence of proper nets. All of these play-activities are most visible around the school; in the afternoons and over weekends there is little evidence of play around Lwandle amongst the older of the girls.



Girls playing nomlenzana. In the far background are hawker stalls.

Life in the bungalows: emic points of view

The above discussion has provided an overview of the basic material and social conditions which circumscribe the children's everyday lives in the bungalows, as well as something of my observations of children's activities when they are not at school. I turn now to the children's own descriptions of the circumstances in which they live. Khosi wrote about "The Place Where I Live" in her autobiography:

The house I live in is untidy. Even the passage is untidy. The toilets are dirty and bad. They do not

become clean even if they are washed. People vomit in the houses, and the older people also. Sies - the hostels stink. We are only staying here because our parents are staying here. It is worse during weekends. It is just a mess because people are selling liquor. The people make shops in the hostels. Baby nappies are lying all over the passage, and the people do not pick them up. We buy bread and sweets in those dirty places. Different people stay in the hostels. [Khosi: "The Place Where I Live"]

Nomsingisi's description was similar:

During the weekends the room becomes full and overcrowded as if it is a beer-hall. It stinks in the house I live in. I sometimes help the people who try to clean the house. The place is very bad. We only live here because our parents are here. [Nomsingisi: "The Place Where I Live"]

Both Khosi and Nomsingisi are clearly disgusted by the dirt, filth, and odours which surround them. Others of the children are equally conscious of this squalor, and their accounts, particularly those of girls, are replete with descriptions of how they attempt to keep the places in which they live as clean as circumstances will allow:

We always try to clean our house. In the house there are two beds. The house is not so clean, but we try by all means to keep it clean....My mother likes to make an example of her brother's house which is very clean. [Nolandela: "The Place Where I Live"]

Niombosi lives in a room which is particularly crowded and which is notably filthy for much of the time (I know of one bed-space in it which accommodates eight people):

I am staying in a dirty house. The passage is untidy and it stinks. The walls are dirty and dark. They are not cleaned. My mother tries to clean our house, but the other people keep it dirty. There are two beds in our house. There is a paraffin stove which keeps the house warm. The place is very dirty outside. The rubbish is all over the place. [Niombosi: "The Place Where I Live"]

As Niombosi observed, it is not always for lack of trying to keep them clean that their bungalows and bed-spaces are as

dirty as the children describe. I often entered bungalows in the mornings to find women feverishly sweeping and scrubbing floors, scouring window-sills, making up and smoothing beds, folding clothes, and so on. One morning I spent a number of hours in a particular bungalow chatting to the women, children, and unemployed men and youths who were there. Some of the women sat with us on old wooden benches in the narrow passage area of one of the rooms; others continued with their domestic chores at their bed-spaces, joining in the conversation from there. Several of the women who were sitting with us for most of the time got up and swept their bed-spaces a number of times during the course of my visit. We would talk, and every now and then a woman would rise, sweep her bed-space, and return to where she had been sitting. We would continue talking, people would move in and out, children would drop papers, rubbish, and food on the floor, cigarettes were squashed under foot, and then the same woman would rise and again sweep her bed-space. Keeping a bed-space clean therefore requires constant vigilance and repeated domestic attention throughout the day; some women studiously attempt this, but not all bed-users are able or have the time to do so. Lumka expressed her frustration at this state of affairs:

When I arrived home....I took a broom and cleaned inside and outside the hostel. I always clean the hostel, but it does not help. The people in our hostel are very untidy. They do not care. They just throw rubbish all over, even in the passage. It is just a waste of time to clean this place. [Lumka: 17-7-89]

Just as they are so acutely aware of cleanliness, so too do many of the children realise the need for particular attention to personal health and hygiene which is necessary in

the context of such living conditions. Mandisa wants to be a nurse when she is older:

I want to be a nurse. I want to prevent diseases from children. The houses we are staying in are not clean. I want to see that the people who are staying in these dirty houses become clean. I want to study hard so that I can look after my people who are sick. I like the places which are clean and hygienic. I always pick up papers in front of my house. It is not good for people to stay in dirty places. I would like to work for my parents because they are paying for everything for me. [Mandisa: "What I Want to Be"]

Mandisa believes that there are people in the hostels who do not wash and are not concerned about personal and general hygiene. Nolandela's observation was the same; like Mandisa, she said that she would like to train for the nursing profession:

I want to teach people about diseases. Many of the people do not wash their bodies, and they do not open their windows in the morning. [Nolandela: "What I Want to Be"]

Nolandela wrote elsewhere that

Most of the people of Lwandle are not healthy. Even the dogs of Lwandle are thin. Some of them have diseases. To start development, houses must be built. The people will stop throwing rubbish all over the place. They will know the use of dirt-bins. I am always dreaming of a beautiful Lwandle township. [Nolandela: 11-8-89]

Mphumzi stressed unsanitary conditions in his description of the hostels. He also frequently mentioned illness in his diary:

We live in a very bad hostel. Some people are sick. They have TB. Many people are smoking. The toilets are also bad. There are many germs there. It is very dirty because the people are careless. [Mphumzi: "The Place Where I Live"]

12-7-89 When I arrived at home yesterday I found that my father did not go to work because he was sick. He did not even have money for medicines and tablets.

- 28-7-89 My father was sick last night. He said he will buy some tablets in town. I told him he must go to the doctor. He said he will go on Saturday.
- 3-8-89 My mother was sick yesterday. We were even forced to wash our own clothes. I washed my clothes and did not even have time to play soccer.
- 4-8-89 After school I saw an ambulance which had come to pick up a man who was sick with TB. He was taken to hospital. When he arrived at the hospital he was dead. Most of the people were so shocked because he was a good man. The people collected money for him to be buried.

There is a host of other material problems which are associated with life in the hostels and which were raised by the children at various times. The danger of fire is one of these:

Yesterday we went to church. When we came home from church I slept. Yesterday the gas exploded and our bed burnt down. My father cried and went to the rent office and was given another bed. [Mandisa: 24-7-89]

There was an even more serious fire in one of the bungalows during the fieldwork. It was apparently caused by a candle during one of the frequent power failures, and two people died and most of the residents of the bungalow lost all of their possessions. The hazards of fire and heat were mentioned repeatedly to me by parents in my discussions with them, and many provided accounts of children who had been burnt by kettles or pots of hot water or food. They said that they worry continually about their small children's safety in this regard because no matter how careful they are themselves there are always others in their bungalows who leave stoves and pots unattended, or who insist on cooking on the floor alongside their beds rather than on top of their cupboards or elsewhere.

Security of possessions is another major problem throughout the hostels. Most people keep their personal

effects in the lockers alongside their beds, in suit-cases above the beds, and on rough shelves which they have erected.

However, as Mphumzi noted:

Some people steal money from others. If someone goes on holiday, they will return to find that their things are missing. There are no doors. [Mphumzi: "The Place Where I Live"]

Nomsingisi's mother, Mrs Qwayana, identified the same problem:

There is a big problem with stealing here. It is especially a problem with the young boys. If they want money, they try to get it by force. [Mrs Qwayana: Parental Interview]

But theft does not only occur when people leave for extended periods. Many women told me that the necessity to guard their possessions makes their lives at Lwandle particularly difficult because it binds them to the bungalows for much of the time. When they need to be away from their bed-spaces some residents appoint a child, a friend, or some other trustworthy resident of their bungalow to keep an eye on their possessions. Lumka is sometimes required to guard the Nduna family's bed-space:

My mother and father went to town on Saturday. They said I must not go away from the house because the people are stealing. [Lumka: 14-8-89]

One woman, who is Afrikaans-speaking and comes from Paarl, lives with a migrant worker at Lwandle. She openly told me that one of the reasons that the man keeps her with him is so that there is somebody to look after his possessions when he is away at work. She told me that she is virtually always in the bungalow during the day, and that when she must leave for any reason she gets a friend from the adjoining room to watch their possessions. Nevertheless, something was once stolen from the bed-space, and the man with whom she lives beat her for being

irresponsible. She is now very reluctant to leave the bungalow when her boyfriend is not present.

Over and above the material constraints of the hostels themselves, the quality of life in the bungalows depends greatly on the level of co-operation which is achieved amongst residents. Angelina is a mother who lives in the same (particularly filthy and overcrowded) room as do Niombosi and her family. She provides some indication as to why conditions are so bad in it:

This room does not have *mteto*. People were elected here but nobody cares about it. People can be killed and nothing happens. If people make a lot of noise we do not say anything because we will be beaten. If I had a hi-fi set I could turn the music up as loud as I want like the other people do. [Conversation].

Bonelwa is Angelina's 13-year-old daughter. We were discussing the differences between urban and rural life:

In Keiskammahoek [place of origin] they do not live like in the Cape. The places in Keiskammahoek have much more space for the family. Here, when I want to wash I must wait for the other people to go away. In the Cape, if you tell your neighbour you want to wash he will tell you that he paid for the bed and he will stay. The people will not go away if you want to wash. They say you must wash when they are there. [Bonelwa: Sub B Girls' Group Interview]

Nomsingisi lives in a different bungalow to Bonelwa, but her comment with regard to other residents of her own bungalow was similar to hers:

The house I live in is very dirty. Inside and outside and nothing is being done about it. The house stinks. The people cause problems; they are funny and they behave funny towards each other. They gossip and they are jealous of each other. [Nomsingisi: "The Place Where I Live"]

The extent to which co-operation or lack of it between residents determines the quality of interaction and the material conditions in a bungalow is clear when the accounts of

others of the children are contrasted to those included above. When I interviewed her, Nomvuyo's mother told me that the *mteto* system of their bungalow works well and is strictly applied. Nomvuyo's bungalow is strikingly clean in comparison to those of many of the other children; this is what she said about cleanliness:

We are clean in our house. We always keep it clean and our bodies. Everyone has a task to pick up paper and rubbish which lies on the floor. During the weekends, we wake up early in the morning to clean the house. In the afternoon we also clean it. We play outside to keep the inside clean. [Nomvuyo: "The Place Where I Live"]

Ntobeko also lives in a hostel in which rules seem to be strictly enforced:

Our house is clean. The hostel I live in is not untidy. It is very quiet in the hostel. Anyone who tries to be troublesome is beaten up. Our hostel is very strict. Nobody is allowed to drink beer. The doors are closed at nine o'clock. If anyone comes after nine, he will stay outside until the next day. [Ntobeko: "The Place Where I Live"]

Circumstances in Siphiwo's bungalow appear to be similar to those of Ntobeko:

There are strict laws in our room. There is no fighting and noise....The people sell beers in our room, but nobody must drink inside. It is a take-away. [Siphiwo: "The Place Where I Live"]

It would seem as though successful co-operation in the bungalows depends to a large extent on the efficacy of *ibhodi*. Nandipha's father is *ibhodi* of the bungalow in which she lives. He is an elderly man, and has been resident in the hostels since the 1960s. Mrs Ndlovu, Nandipha's mother, described the circumstances in their room:

There are not too many people who are young in the room - they are all married. That is why there is little fighting. Nandipha's father is the oldest man here, and everybody listens to him. When they want

to argue, the people always call him. The people here are old, and they see that they are staying with an old man. They have respect for older people. [Mrs Ndlovu: Parental Interview]

The circumstances of the two children who live in a company-administered hostel, Nosipho and Nkosnathi Gece, are very different to those of their fellows. These differences are clear from their written testimony:

The house I live in has lockers and wardrobes. There are two double-bunks and blankets. The house I live in is not big. It is small....There are toilets and showers at the house. There is electricity. The passages are clean. [Nkosnathi: "The Place Where I Live"]

The room has a wooden floor. I stay with my parents and brother and sister. We are a total of five people in our room. I like to clean up the house. It is not dirty. I even look after my mother's baby. There are showers in our hostel. The toilets flush. There is also hot water. If you want hot water you turn the red handle. If you want cold water you turn the green handle. [Nosipho: "The Place Where I Live"]

Family life and conjugal relations

The situation is not good for the family. Different kinds of people stay in the hostels. Some people do things which affect children. Some children are disciplined, other children are not. The bad children influence our children. [Group Parental Interview]

In her study of what she termed the 'problems' of African youth in Pimville on the Witwatersrand, Hellmann (1940) described a situation of alienation and conflict between parents and children, and an emaciation of family life generally, in the urban context. She attributed these wilting relationships primarily to two factors. Firstly, the move towards nuclear household formations in the urban context diminished contact with wider kin, thus denying children access to alternative sources of warmth and support; this was

exacerbated by parental absence at work and consequently by lack of care and supervision of children. Secondly, Hellmann found that parents clung to models of child-rearing which emanated from their own rural heritages. She concluded that parents' child-rearing ideals were incongruous with changing circumstances, and that this caused progressive antagonism between parents and children as the latter grew older.

Although the *ingredients* for deteriorating relations between parents and children identified by Hellmann are present at Lwandle, parent-child relations in the hostels, at least amongst the 24 children, do not appear to have deteriorated in the way that they did in Pimville. As we have already seen, most of the children live within simple or complex nuclear structures at Lwandle, and their contact with wider kin networks is generally minimal. As in Pimville, parents are also exasperated by diminishing contact with their children, by what they consider to be their inability to control and discipline them in the hostel environment, and by the impossibility of realising the child-rearing ideals which they uphold. But the crucial difference between conjugal relations in the hostels and those in Pimville is that parents and children at Lwandle demonstrate mutual understanding of the day-to-day difficulties which each faces: parents realise the problems which children, in being children, incur in the hostel environment, children are acutely aware of the struggle which their parents endure in order to secure their survival, and on the whole neither parents nor children express antagonism towards one another.

Parents view the quality of their children's lives in the hostels, and the child-rearing which they are able to effect there, with much sadness. They frequently made comparisons between their rural homes and Lwandle when discussing childhood and child-rearing in the hostels with me. Vuyiswa is a young mother who believes that there are normative differences between the urban and rural milieus, and that children are confounded by their frequent movement between the two:

It is very confusing for children to move from the Transkei to the hostels all the time. In the Transkei children are taught the old ways and they know discipline. Here they learn other things. When the child is in the Transkei, he wants to do what he is taught in the hostels. When he is in the hostels, he wants to do what he is taught in the Transkei. Many of these things are not the same, and so the child does not know what is wrong and what is right, what he is supposed to do and what he is not supposed to do. [Group Parental Interview]

Other parents expressed the same misgivings about children's oscillation between the hostels and the rural areas:

In the rural places children eat together and everyone shares. Even the neighbours will eat the food. Here it is not like that, and it affects the children. They are used to sharing and they take food from anywhere. This causes many fights between parents. [Group Parental Interview]

Parents are also extremely concerned that their children will grow up without learning the different roles and behaviour which are appropriate for men and women; many believe that these things can only be taught properly in the rural areas.

Mrs Qiqimana, mother of Nomvuyo, expressed the feelings of most parents in this regard:

Here children do not know the things that men should do and the things that women should do. It is important for us to teach them these things, so that they know how they must live when they are older. But it is very difficult to teach them in the hostels. [Mrs Qiqimana: Parental Interview]

Several parents to whom I spoke felt that this problem is applicable particularly to boys, since the hostels and the urban environment more generally do not facilitate the activities which they believe to be important ingredients of boyhood. On the other hand, whilst the hostels are by no means ideal for teaching girls the ways of women, they say that there does remain some scope for training girls to perform domestic duties:

The problem here is that we do not have fields. There is no work for the boys to do, so they are always outside away from the hostels. We do not know what they are doing, and they learn bad things from other children....With the girls it is easier because there are still things for them to do at the house. But it is different with boys. [Group Parental Interview]

The boys are the big problem. They wake up in the morning and run away. They only come home when they are hungry and when it is time to sleep. [General Parental Interview]

Although parents regret their inability to provide their children with the rural upbringing which they believe to be so important, they appear to be more concerned about the hindrances to child-rearing which are contingent upon the *immediacies* of the hostel environment. Exposure to what they consider to be bad behaviour by adults and other children, and their inability to shield their children from such conduct, seems to be most worrying to parents. Nandipha's mother talked of this:

The children grow up in bad conditions here. People drink and speak bad language to each other. Then the children use the same language and you cannot control them....The children talk about things outside, so parents cannot correct them. Then they come inside and do these things that they have talked about. [Mrs Ndlovu: Parental Interview]

Another parent expressed the same concern:

It does not help to teach children what is right and what is wrong here. They see wrong things every day. How can I tell my children they must not do something which the parents of their friends are doing? Also, you cannot distance your children from their friends if the friends are bad. There is nothing you can do about it. [General Parental Interview]

Many other parents told me that they have difficulty keeping their children away from undesirable friends and controlling where they go and what they do. One mother explained that

Parents cannot be here all the time, and the children learn bad things. They learn only play, and they lose discipline. [Group Parental Interview]

Ntobeko's mother worries that her son strays too far from the hostels:

There is nothing to keep them busy after school. They like to go to play, but they go far from the hostels. They go to the bushes and trees, and we do not know what they are doing. [Mrs Kibi: Parental Interview]

Like Mrs Kibi and other parents cited above, Angelina (mother of Bonelwa, mentioned earlier) is concerned that her children will be corrupted by what they see and hear around them, and she expressed the same difficulty with regard to controlling who her children associate with. But she also identified adults who do not have children living with them as being a major cause of the problem, saying that such people do not care about what they do in the presence of the children of others:

A big problem is that some people do not have children here. They do very bad things in front of children because their own children are not here to see it. [General Parental Interview]

The problem of children's exposure to what their parents deem to be undesirable behaviour clearly stems from the lack of privacy which families experience in their bungalows. But parents also believe that the absence of domestic partition between *themselves* and their children is detrimental to

children's upbringing. Christinah's mother described how this may affect children:

There is no privacy; there are no doors. Sometimes a man is washing and his daughter enters without calling. Then she sees the underparts of her father. Children lose respect for adults when they see these things. Sometimes people sleep together. The children see it and then they do it themselves outside. [Mrs Mbewu: Parental Interview]

The problem of privacy, and particularly of protecting children from exposure to sexual activity, recurred repeatedly in the accounts of other parents. Mrs Gece, mother of Nosipho and Nkosnathi, explained that

At home there is space for parents and children to be separate. Here there is no space for that....The big difference in other places is that parents and children live on their own. Everything can stay secret. Here we cannot keep anything secret. Everybody knows what you are doing. Even your own children know. [Mrs Gece: Parental Interview]

Some parents provided examples of the ways in which they believe the hostel environment affects children. Mrs Qiqimana, Nomvuyo's mother, described how children lose respect for adults:

Respect is not good here. When you see a child, maybe at the water tap, and he is doing something wrong, you tell him not to do that. Then he swears at you. Some children do that at the age of Nomvuyo. They pick up stones and throw them at you as if you are a dog. They also drink and smoke dagga [cannabis]....They get the money from washing taxis. [Mrs Qiqimana: Parental Interview]

Another mother also identified use of liquor and dagga as a major problem amongst children. She described one of the children, a six-year-old boy, who lives in her bungalow:

There is a child in this room. He is six years old. Sometimes he comes home drunk. His parents do not know where he does this. They ask him about it, and the child tells them: 'Do not worry yourselves with me'. The children start with drinking and smoking dagga very young in the hostels. Then the parents

send them back to the Transkei so they will learn the ways of children. But they never come right.
[General Parental Interview]

Several parents told me that children's common and often uninhibited witness to sexual activity not only leads them into experimentation but has also made them very open about their own sexual activity. This particular mother did not specify what age the children were to whom she was referring:

We never presented boyfriends in front of our parents. Old people never saw the things that we did when we were children. When you went to sleep with your boyfriend you always made excuses, saying that you were going to see your friends or your grandparents. Now children just sleep with people in front of their parents. [General Parental Interview]

There is often not very much that parents can do to protect their children from what occurs amongst other residents of their bungalows, but several told me that they attempt to entertain their children or create diversions for them so that they will not wander off and get into mischief out of view of their parents:

We try not to let the children play over the weekends. We try to keep them busy with washing and cleaning so they will not go off around the hostels.
[General Parental Interview]

Similarly, Lumka's foster mother described how her husband keeps Lumka's two younger brothers busy:

There is nothing for the smaller children to do at the house. There is an old bicycle outside the door. My husband takes it to pieces so that it does not even look like a bicycle, and then he makes them put it together again. He does it to keep them at home and so that they will know how to do these things when they are older. [Mrs Nduna: Parental Interview]

It appears from Lumka's diary as though Mrs Nduna also attempts to keep her at home:

My mother said that I must come to eat at home during lunch and after school. She said that I must not go

to play after school. I must always go straight home. [Lumka: 13-7-89]

Mrs Nduna also said that she and her husband attempt to get the children out of the hostels and away from Lwandle whenever they can over weekends, because it is then, when the children are not at school, that they are most vulnerable to corruptive influences. Mr Nduna is a petrol-pump attendant:

The day before yesterday we went to the garage to see my father. We spent the day with my father. He also sent us to Pick 'n Pay to buy chips and bread and cooldrink. After that we went back home with my father. [Lumka: 21-7-89]

It is clear from the parents' accounts that the major problems as far as they are concerned derive from lack of space and privacy, and hence the difficulty of controlling what their children do, where they go, who they see, and what they see. Although parents regret that they cannot give their children the rural childhoods which they themselves had, they believe that it is the hostels in particular, in contradistinction to the urban environment, which is the most potentially corrupting influence on children. Mrs Ndlovu said that the problems would be solved if different families or bedholds did not all have to live together:

It would be much better if houses could be built so that families can stay by themselves. It is very important for a family to have its own place to stay so that the children can grow up learning the rules of the house. [Mrs Ndlovu: Parental Interview]

Whilst many parents constantly contemplate sending their children back to their rural homes so that they may grow up free of the influences of the hostels, they do not necessarily consider this to be an ideal solution, even in the present circumstances. Nomsingisi's mother, Mrs Qwayana, summed up the dilemma which parents face:

The children are not here because we want them to grow up seeing the things in the hostels. It is because we are here that they are here. The hostels are very bad for children, but what must we do? You cannot send your children back to the Transkei because there is no love for them there. [Mrs Qwayana: Parental Interview]

The children's descriptions of their lives in the bungalows presented earlier demonstrate the extent to which they feel and deplore the general squalor and impoverishment which embraces them. But children also know that their parents feel these circumstances, that they regret them, and that they attempt to allay them for their children wherever it is possible. This concern is reciprocated by children, and from their testimony at any rate it appears as though their emotional ties to their parents on the whole remain strong. Ntobeko wrote that he hopes to alleviate his parents circumstances:

I want my parents to live comfortably. They must not suffer. They must get everything they want. I would like my children to be teachers with degrees.
[Ntobeko: "What I Want to Be"]

Siphiwo's sentiments are similar:

I must study hard and finish my studies. I first want a degree to work with the people in parliament. I want to be an intelligent magistrate. I will look after my mother and father and grandparents. I will support them and give them everything they need.
[Siphiwo: "What I Want to Be"]

Other references to parents' well-being, and evidence of children's desire to provide for them, are scattered throughout their writing. Nomvuyo wrote that she "wants to work for her parents", Mandisa wants to "work for my parents because they are paying for everything for me", and Mphumzi said that "my aim is to build a big and beautiful house for my parents". The children are also acutely aware of the difficulties which their

parents face in rearing and supporting them. Nomsingisi felt the need to explain her residence in the hostels:

My father has to work in Somerset West, so I was forced to come and stay in the hostels. I will tell you the truth, I will not lie: we are very poor at home. [Nomsingisi: "Who I Am"]

Niombosi clearly values what her parents have given her:

After I finish my studies I want to look after my parents. I want to see if I am able to treat them like they have treated me. I want to give them everything. [Niombosi: "What I Want to Be"]

The strong ties which children feel towards their parents are demonstrated in other ways. Niombosi also wrote about her mother in her diary:

Yesterday when I arrived home my mother advised me to study my books. My mother loves me. She does not want me to do wrong things. I saw some policemen holding big rifles. They were arresting some people. There were a lot of people around the scene. [Niombosi: 10-8-89]

Nolandela described an incident which occurred between her mother and the mother's boyfriend:

We did washing over the weekend. My mother brought nice food for us from town. My father [mother's boyfriend] arrived at home and he was drunk. He argued with my mother. I said my mother must remain silent. I made some coffee for my mother because I love her. I woke up early on Sunday morning and washed myself. I went to church. [Nolandela: 31-7-89]

Christinah's references to her family in her diary are similar to those of Niombosi and Nolandela with regard to affection. They also show something of the relationships which she has with her father and mother, her dedication to caring for her family, and the importance which she places in the domestic activities which she conducts for them:

27-7-89 Yesterday after school I went to play. After that my mother made some coffee for me because it was very cold. I put some water on the heat for my

father to wash. I always wash our clothes on Saturday. I love my family.

- 28-7-89 Yesterday we were taught Maths at school. Before two o'clock we ate soup and bread. After our meal we swept the floor and cleaned our school. When I arrived home I went to fetch water. After that I cooked supper. After supper I washed the dishes. Then I went to sleep.
- 31-7-89 On Sunday I woke early and cleaned our house. I washed my school uniform and my father's clothes. After that I went to church. I enjoyed church because I believe in God.
- 7-8-89 I went to school on Friday last week. After school I fetched water. I cooked food for supper that night. When my father arrived I gave him water to wash. I also gave him soap and a towel. As he was washing I made coffee for him. On Sunday we went to do some shopping at town. When we arrived back home I washed some clothes and cleaned our house.
- 8-8-89 After school I went back home. When I arrived at home my mother was sick. My heart was very disturbed. I even cried. I did not eat that night. The following morning she went to hospital. That afternoon I went to church to pray for her. After church I cooked and prepared dinner.

Conclusion: synthesising parents' and children's accounts

The elements for the type of conjugal disintegration described by Hellmann are present at Lwandle: extended family networks are minimal amongst the children; some of them, particularly boys, apparently spend much of their time away from their bungalows; and parents subscribe to child-rearing ideals which are clearly incompatible with, and impossible to realise in, the hostel environment.

Yet despite this, the testimony of parents and children suggests that they are *not alienated* from one another. We have heard parents' deep concern for the lack of control which they have over their children, their inability to teach them the kinds of discipline and respect which they believe to be

requisite of children, and the unsuitability of the hostels as an environment for children to learn the 'proper' ways in which men and women conduct themselves. In articulating their fears parents also provided examples of how the hostel milieu corrupts children, leading them into drinking, dagga, sex, and theft, sometimes at very young ages. But there was a notable lack of recrimination towards children on the part of parents in their discussions about these things with me. They blamed the hostels, they blamed irresponsible adults, they blamed their work, and they blamed themselves; none ever blamed children. In other words, parents *understand* the predicaments in which children, in being children, find themselves in the hostels. And just as parents show empathy with and sympathy for children, so too do children display the same towards parents. Children recognise the battle which their parents endure in order to keep them; they see them struggling every day to feed and clothe them and their siblings; they worry about their parents' illness and about their parents' own worries; and they are acutely appreciative of them. The feelings of Fundiswa and Christinah are representative of most of the other children. I asked them where they would most like to live, and where they considered their homes to be:

I would not like to leave Lwandle because my parents are here. It is a bad place, but it is better to be where your parents are. If my parents left Lwandle, then I would leave. [Fundiswa: Interview]

The houses are better in the Transkei. My parents would prefer to live there. They always talk about leaving the hostels....I would like to go wherever my parents go. Home is where my parents are. [Christinah: Interview]

Thus, whilst conditions in the hostels may sometimes lead to flared tempers and antagonism between parents and children, their fundamental understanding of one another's separate difficulties, and of those which they share by virtue of the conditions in which they all live, modulate and perhaps even counter the serious antagonisms which might otherwise arise. In addition, many of the parents and children share another particular type of common experience: many have been separated from one another in the past, some for long periods. Parents and children therefore value greatly their being together, and the parent-child bond persists even in these extremely testing circumstances. This assessment aligns broadly with those of other authors. Reynolds for example found that a strongly recurrent theme in her discussions with Crossroads mothers was "the elemental link between mother and child and its importance" (1983:112); similarly, Cock et al observed that in their "daily struggle for survival, children are an important source of joy and meaning for many African women" (1986:71). It is this quality of relationship which appears to predominate between the Lwandle children and their parents.

It is necessary to add a number of provisos to this interpretation of parent-child relations in the hostels. Firstly, it is a generalised one. Clearly, just as the wider material and social conditions of the children's domestic lives differ from bedhold to bedhold and from bungalow to bungalow, so too do the particularities of their relationships with those around them. In addition, there are a few amongst the 24 children who are at times clearly unhappy with their parents or others who are part of their bedholds. We have already seen

evidence of this in earlier chapters: Xolisile has testified that his mother beats him when she is drunk (see Chapter 2); Khosi said that she would have liked very much to have moved to the Witwatersrand with her father when he came to visit her in Guguletu (see case 5.6); and Thembela indicated that she misses her father because he did not beat her as much as her mother does (see case 5.5). Nevertheless, Xolisile also said that he values living in the Peninsula because he is able to be close to his parents and siblings, and Thembela stated that she would like her father to be present with the remainder of the family, not that she would prefer to move away and live with him elsewhere. She also wrote that:

I want to build a large house for my family. We are a big family. I want to feed them all and buy clothes for them all. [Thembela: "What I Want to Be"]

Only Khosi was adamant that she would like to leave her present companions to be with her father on the Witwatersrand. Even though the parent-child bond appears to remain fairly strong in most instances, relationships between parents and children are therefore by no means completely free of strain; nor are all as secure and constant as others.

A second proviso is that I do not know the extent to which parents' apprehensions about childhood in the hostels are grounded in the behaviour of their own children. All of the adults whom I interviewed (the parents and guardians of the 24 children and others) cited examples of the behaviour of *other* children - children in a neighbouring bedhold, from across the room, or in a next-door bungalow - and none explicitly stated that their own children engaged in the activities, or had internalised the attitudes, which they described as being

undesirable. I asked Mphumzi, Xolisile, Ayande, and Ntobeko during a group interview whether they drank or smoked dagga. They looked sheepish, and told me that of course they did not. I pressed them further; they still denied that they smoked dagga, but Ntobeko told me:

We did drink at Easter....It was Easter this year. Mphumzi and Ayande were sick on the soccer field from drinking...[interjections and laughter]...All the people in the hostels drink at Easter. Everyone was drunk. We took some money and bought beer from the shebeen. [Ntobeko: Group Interview]

Mphumzi was not going to let the matter rest there:

Ntobeko was also sick. He was sicker than anyone else in the hostels....We do not drink often. We usually have no money for beer. Easter was the only time this year that we were drinking. [Mphumzi: Group Interview]

I only ever witnessed use of alcohol and dagga amongst 16- or 17-year-olds, and never amongst younger children.

Nevertheless, I do not think that parents' fears are exaggerated; Nolandela testified to the same types of behaviour amongst young children as did parents:

Here in our hostel there are also children who drink. I hate children who drink wine and beer at the age of 11 or 12 years. I wonder what is going to happen to such a child when he is old. [Nolandela: "The Place Where I Live"]

The final proviso is that the 24 children are still relatively young. Even though most of their relationships with their parents appear to be fairly free of serious rifts, and even though their emotional ties to one another are still strong, this could well dissolve into the type of situation described by Hellmann as the children grow older, and as their independence and exposure to life in the hostels are extended.

CHAPTER 7

VIEWING VIOLENCE: THE PERSPECTIVES OF CHILDREN

Children's involvement in what is generically dubbed as 'political violence' is becoming an increasingly prominent focus of public and academic concern in South Africa¹. Chikane has evocatively summed up children's exposure to political violence:

[The above] description of the war situation in South Africa depicts the conditions under which the township child is growing up. They have affected children more than many people realise. The world of the township child is extremely violent. It is a world made up of teargas, bullets, whippings, detention, and death on the streets. It is an experience of military operations and night raids, of roadblocks and body searches. It is a world where parents and friends get carried away in the night to be interrogated. It is a world where people simply disappear, where parents are assassinated and homes are petrol bombed. Such is the environment of the township child today (1986:342).

The structural origins of violence such as that described by Chikane, and the long-term psychological and normative effects which it *might* have on children, are widely recognised and justifiably condemned. Yet there are other arenas of violence to which children are subject, both passively and actively, which are not overtly political but which ultimately have the same structural origins as does 'political violence'. I refer specifically to domestic or conjugal violence, and the violence which constitutes or accompanies acts of suburban crime. The frequency and intensity of these sorts of violence have remained largely untracked in South Africa, particularly in the African townships, and we therefore have little substantive

¹ See Robertson (1989:2), Tribute (June 1989:30-60; December 1989:50-69), New Nation (June 2-8 1989:10), and South (May 25-31 1989:8).

information about the extent of children's exposure to them². Studies elsewhere in the world have demonstrated quite conclusively that incidents of suburban and domestic violence are highest in situations of economic deprivation (see Gelles 1979; Parton 1985). Given the general impoverishment of Africans in this country, it is important that researchers and lobbyists for children's rights begin to examine the ways in which these other less visible but equally pernicious forms of violence impinge upon the lives of children.

This chapter begins to provide such a perspective. A number of authors have observed that violence is a particular feature of urban hostels³. In their study of hostels in Johannesburg, Peskin and Spiegel found that

[b]esides (these) feuds and the minor disputes associated with living together, such as drunken brawls, arguments about noise and other such flare-ups, there is also a high rate of crime and violent assaults (1976:28).

Peskin and Spiegel also remarked that they heard reports of the murders of six hostel residents over the four month period during which their research was conducted. Wilson's (1972:181) observations with regard to migrants in towns were similar, as were those of Moodie (1983) in his study of mine compounds.

The Lwandle hostels are no different. Children at Lwandle are regularly witnesses to wife-beating and other forms of conjugal violence, to stabbings, to murders, and to assaults on people around them by the police. These things occur in the

² The Minister of Law and Order disclosed to parliament that 305 'Whites' as opposed to 11 445 Africans were murdered in South Africa during 1989 (Weekend Argus 26 May 1990). Moreover, the figure for Africans represents only those cases which were made known to the police, and it also does not include people who were killed as a result of confrontation with police or the military, since these are not classified officially as murders. The figure for Africans is therefore likely to be even higher than the official one.

³ See particularly press reports for the months of August and September 1990 on violence in Witwatersrand hostels.

rooms in which they sleep, they occur outside their windows at night, and they occur whilst they are playing outside over weekends. Children are also themselves both recipients and perpetrators of violence: they tell of beatings which friends receive at the hands of drunk mothers and fathers; they tell of assaults with knives and bottle-necks upon themselves by other children; and young girls tell of the sexual harassment to which they are subject by older boys and men. Children describe their fear at having to leave their rooms at night to visit the toilets, to attend church, or to run errands for their parents. And they tell of how they long to return to the places from which they have come so that they may escape the violence which surrounds them. This is part of the environment in which children in the Lwandle hostels live and grow up. The chapter provides an account of this everyday violence, as it is viewed and experienced by children themselves.

Two things must be stressed at the outset. Firstly, although I have included certain *emic* views about the consequences of violence for children's normative development, the purpose of this chapter is not to enter into debates, or to speculate, about the long-term psychological effects which violence might or might not have on children. Levett (1989) has recently warned that psychologists should not be too hurried in ascribing the term 'trauma' to children; as anthropologists, we should leave such diagnoses to those who are best qualified to make them. Accordingly, the chapter is an ethnography of violence; it is a synchronic, and not a prognostic, account. Secondly, I have not witnessed any of the incidents of violence which are referred to in the chapter.

The ethnography for it is derived almost exclusively from the children's written testimony, and from interviews and informal discussions with them. It is therefore very much the children's own account of violence.

Local-level structural contributors violence

It is necessary at the outset to outline briefly some of the factors which contribute to violence in the hostels. Firstly, overcrowding in the hostel rooms was cited often by residents as a prime source of conflict and violence. The physical conditions in the hostels, and the social conditions consequent upon them, have been described in earlier chapters; suffice it to say that one can only imagine the tensions which arise in circumstances where space is so limited, where overcrowding is so severe, and where there is virtually no chance of privacy of any sort. Xolisile's analysis was along these lines:

There is so much violence because different kinds of people stay in the hostels. People who come from many different places must live together, but if they do not know each other then this causes many fights. People who do not know each other must not live in the same place. [Xolisile: Boys' Group Interview]

The wider physical conditions which pertain at Lwandle township are also clear contributing factors. The densely-bushed buffer strip, through which many people walk to and from their places of employment, the inadequacies of the external system of lighting, the distance of the toilets from the hostels, and the lack of doors and lighting in the toilet blocks all afford ample opportunity for those who engage in robbery and assault. As far as toilet facilities are

concerned, many residents claimed that they avoid making use of the toilets at night because people are frequently attacked whilst doing so. Peskin and Spiegel documented the same problem amongst hostel residents in Johannesburg. One of their informants told them that

....there are thugs inside the hostel who wait for you to go to the toilet at night. They wait for you to take off your trousers, then they strike. If you do not resist they will not stab you but if you do, they will kill you....From eight in the evening we pass water just outside near the door, or else you've got to ask some of you friends to escort you to the toilet, and they must all be well armed. Otherwise at night we urinate in bottles (Peskin and Spiegel 1976:28).

The Lwandle residents did not go into as much detail as did Peskin and Spiegel's informants, but we have already heard from some of the children how people "urinate and excrete in the hostels" at night; it seems as though it is the lack of external security at Lwandle and their fear of assault from clandestine quarters which cause some people to relieve themselves inside the bungalows when it is dark.

The third factor which contributes to violence is alcohol. According to residents, much of the violence which takes place at Lwandle is associated in some way with drunkenness, and occurs at night and over weekends⁴. Fridays at Lwandle are conspicuous for their festive spirit: many of those who do not work full-time begin drinking early in the morning, and I conducted a number of interviews on Friday mornings in shebeens in which those present were already inebriated. Drinking on a large-scale continues throughout the weekend until Sunday evening, when things begin to quieten down. On Mondays there

⁴ I was warned by the Men's Committee before I began the research that it could be dangerous for me to visit the hostels at night and over weekends. Although I never came to any harm, there were a number of hair-raising occasions on which I very nearly did.

are always a few remaining drunks leaning against walls, sleeping outside on the ground, and tottering around seeking a further supply of alcohol. Some of the children made direct links between alcohol and violence:

The big problem is that the liquor is cheap in the Cape, so there is much more drinking. Another problem is that people get wages every week, and that also makes them drink more....When there is more drinking, there is more violence. [Anonymous: Boys' Group Interview]

A fourth factor which is significant in considering violence at Lwandle is the emic system of order and discipline which exists in the hostel rooms, and in particular its inapplicability at a cross-bungalow level. As we have already seen, where it is operative the *mteto* system performs the contradictory functions of controlling conflict and deterring physical fighting in the bungalows on the one hand, and sanctioning violence in the form of beatings on the other. In addition, where it is operative the system of a particular bungalow operates in isolation from that of other bungalows. Although the Men's Committee has requested that inter-bungalow cooperation be forged between *ibhodi*, in practice this is seldom achieved. There are thus no effective means of cross-bungalow discipline. As a result, *ikundliwa* is not formally meted out to outsiders, who are thus not bound to abide by the *mteto* of the bungalows which they visit. The corollary to this is that those who live in a particular bungalow can deal with outsiders in any way that they choose without deference to *ibhodi* or anyone else. This most often takes the form of beatings, which are sometimes severe.

Finally, there are no rules or authoritative bodies which govern and control behaviour outside of the hostel buildings themselves. Statutory legislation is largely ineffective when it comes to criminal offences against other residents which occur internally. Although the police are more than conscientious in their drug and shebeen raids on Lwandle (these will be dealt with later in the chapter), I was informed by residents that they make only token investigations when residents themselves report crimes. Sometimes they pursue charges, but residents claim that 'investigations' are not generally taken very far. There is perhaps more in Ntobeko's comment than he realised:

In the rural places there are many police. Here the police are very far from the township. [Ntobeko: Boys' Group Interview]

Case 7.1 Retributive justice⁵

Yesterday I saw people who were stabbing each other. The one killed the other. He was also killed. [Siphiwo: 24-7-89]⁶

Robert was generally well liked by the people of Lwandle. His mother holds a respectable job within the community, and his family are known for their devoted service to the Methodist Church. Robert's father is a lay-preacher, and he and his sons have been resident in the Lwandle hostels for many years.

One Sunday Robert was drinking beer with his friends in a shebeen in one of the bungalows. There was another man there called Mzwale. Most of his waking hours since early on Friday afternoon had been spent wandering from shebeen to shebeen. He was very drunk. Unlike Robert, Mzwale was not well liked at Lwandle. It was rumoured that he had killed three people in the past, and there was also some suspicion that it was he who

⁵ As mentioned earlier, the names of all people who feature in this dissertation have been changed. As far as this case study is concerned, the personal details of those who appear in it are fictional although similar to those of the people who are represented in it.

⁶ Xolisile's diary entry of the same day read as follows (see Chapter 2): "On Sunday there was fighting. One man stabbed another to death. He then came to our house and drank beer. The family of the dead man arrived at our house and stabbed the one who had killed him. He died near the door. People called the ambulance. They asked who killed the man, but nobody would tell them. My older sister knew the man. He lives at room [XX]. She says she does not know the man's name or surname. She only knows his nickname." [Xolisile: 24-7-89]

had raped a woman in the brush close to the beer hall a few months previously.

Robert knocked Mzwale's beer over. An argument began, the two started to fight, and suddenly Mzwale had broken a bottle and stabbed Robert in the neck. He died on the floor of the bungalow, and Mzwale disappeared to another shebeen to drink more beer. Robert's two brothers were informed about his death, and went looking for Mzwale. They found him drinking beer, drew knives, and stabbed him. Mzwale died shortly afterwards.

The following day the police arrived to make enquiries about the killings. They visited the room in which Mzwale was killed, and were supplied with an account of what had happened, from start to finish. However, everyone who had been present at the time denied that they knew or would be able to recognise Mzwale's killers. Robert's brothers spent a few weeks in the Transkei immediately following the incident, and then returned to Lwandle. They were never apprehended, or even questioned, by the police.

Aside from the clear ambivalence of the police as far as protection and security in the hostels are concerned, the events surrounding Robert's death demonstrate a number of things which arise out of the lack of a cohesive and all-embracing system of law enforcement at Lwandle. Firstly, they show how violence is in certain circumstances socially sanctioned. In this particular instance, the violence which took place was about as extreme as it could possibly be, and yet residents refused to disclose to police who had killed Mzwale. There are other less sensational but equally pertinent examples of violence which is socially accepted. The beatings which men give to their wives and girlfriends is one: as long as they take place outside of the bungalow where they will not disturb other occupants, such beatings are generally deemed to be acceptable, and outsiders will not intrude. Another example is that of beatings by *ibhodi*. We have seen in Chapter 6 how people in the children's bungalows have been dragged outside by

ibhodi (usually with the aid of other men from the bungalow) where they have been beaten severely.

Secondly, the killing of Mzwale by Robert's brothers was not only socially sanctioned, it was also considered to be *just*. It could be argued that residents refused to disclose who had killed Mzwale for fear of retaliation, but I was told by a number of people that Mzwale had simply got what he deserved, and that Robert's brothers had every right to kill him. It would therefore seem as though the absence of formal mechanisms for controlling and resolving conflict has given rise to a situation of retributive justice. Violence, moreover, is really the only means available for achieving retribution.

Finally, the murders of Robert and Mzwale were first revealed to me by two of the children who had witnessed them. They are but two examples of the extreme violence which surrounds children in the Lwandle hostels. The remainder of this chapter examines the specifics of this violence from the point of view of children.

Witnessing violence: the children's accounts

The most difficult thing about Lwandle is what happens in the rooms because people fight and stab each other. I have seen people being stabbed....It is usually during weekends. One day I saw two men fighting in our room. The one stabbed the other one. I went out of the house and I hid myself. I hid because the man wanted to beat everyone in the house. He even beat another woman who did nothing to him.
[Niombosi: Interview]

The frequency with which violence occurs in the hostels was evident from Xolisile's diary extracts in Chapter 2. The

writings of the other children are not very different to that of Xolisile with regard to either the frequency or intensity of violence⁷. Lumka's entry for one Monday morning read as follows:

On Friday I saw two men fighting. The people stopped the fight, but the two men did not want to stop fighting. Instead they wanted to fight with the people. On Saturday there was also fighting in the shebeen. The people were fighting about beer. We heard how the empty bottles were broken. Some people were hiding under the beds, and others were crying. The one man almost damaged the eyes of the other. On Sunday night another man was stabbed by his wife because of money to buy beer. The woman stabbed her husband in his head, and he was full of blood.
[Lumka: 17-7-89]

Khosi missed school frequently whilst the diaries were being written, and she therefore completed far fewer entries than did most of the other children. Two read as follows:

Yesterday I went to church. It was good at church. The verse was from John 4. Yesterday some children were locked in after school. We went back to see the other children and the teacher said that she would also lock us up. When we were at church we saw a man who wanted to beat his wife. The man was not ashamed in front of the reverends. He beat his wife in front of the people. [Khosi: 21-7-89]

The day before yesterday a woman was stabbed with a bottle. She came to our house. Blood was all over the place. I washed the blood with hot water. The lady who was bleeding does not like me, but I helped her. She always sends me to buy beer. [Khosi: 24-7-89]

In her autobiography, Nodazibona described the people who live in her room:

The people in our room like to fight when they are drunk. There is a man who likes to fight and make a noise when he is drunk. He sometimes beats his wife. His wife also drinks. Both of them do not have manners. Even their children are undisciplined.
[Nodazibona: "The Place Where I Live"]

⁷ As I stated in Chapter 3, the children were not prompted to write about anything specific in their diaries. These accounts of violence were thus unsolicited. Given this, the extent to which they occur in the children's diaries is itself significant.

Those children who live in rooms which are shebeens seem to experience violence more regularly than others. Two of the residents of Xolisile's room sell bottled beer; we have already heard about the extent of the violence which takes place there. Similarly, Mphumzi and Siyabulela's mother runs a shebeen from the room in which the Nkosati family lives. Mphumzi does not seem to approve of his mother's activities:

If people would stop selling liquor then everything would be alright here at Lwandle. Almost every weekend people stab each other. Something else is the hostels which do not have 'mteto'. The people do not sleep at night in them. The fights always start in these hostels. [Mphumzi: 10-8-89]

Children who live in rooms which are not shebeens might be exposed to violence slightly less than those who do, but residents of their rooms visit the shebeens and often return home drunk. This frequently gives rise to conflict of various sorts, either with family members and other fellow bed-users, or with other residents of the room:

A man called Fisher was fighting. He lives in my room. He was fighting with his wife and children, and he had a knife. He said that he is tired of working for groceries, but when he comes home there is nothing to eat. He was drunk when he was fighting, and he wanted to eat some food. But there was no food. The people were frightened and screaming. His wife calmed him down and took the knife from his hand. [Nomsingisi: Class Discussion]

Similarly, those children who live in rooms in which *mteto* are adhered to and strictly enforced seem to be more sheltered from violence than are others. In these rooms, if residents wish to settle a dispute themselves without recourse to *ibhodi*, then they do so outside: "When a person is drunk and he makes a noise, the other men take him outside and beat him" [Siphiwo: Interview]. Nevertheless, even if violence does not take place

in their own rooms, children are still frequently witnesses to it outside and in the rooms of their friends and others whom they might have visited. Niombosi moved to Lwandle from Keiskammahoek in the Ciskei in January 1989, and she had thus been living in the hostels for only about six months when her diary was written. Violence of the calibre which takes place at Lwandle was new to her. The shock which she felt is clear:

The things I saw were unbelievable. I saw two people fighting hard. Both of them fought with spades. People said that they must not be stopped because anyone who interferes will be stabbed. The one who stopped the fight will get hurt. It happened that somebody did try to stop the fight. He was hurt. I mean to say that the one who stops the fight always gets hurt. [Niombosi: 12-7-89]

Yesterday I saw something I never saw before. I saw somebody who was hit with an axe. The people warned the person who was axed not to fight, so he got what he deserved. We were running away and crying. My uncle ran to phone the police. [Niombosi: 24-7-89]

Adult on child violence

Although the children wrote and talked far more about the violence which takes place around them than they did about violence which is directed against themselves, the latter also does not seem to be uncommon in the hostels. The extent to which children were assaulted by their parents and other family members is difficult to distinguish, since most of the children were reluctant to talk about these things. Moreover, the children were told that their diaries and autobiographies would be made accessible to others, and they might have felt that beatings received by themselves at the hands of older relatives were too private to be revealed to outsiders.

On the whole, the few accounts of violence against children by family members which I came across were ones which children themselves seemed to consider fair. They arose out of 'misbehaviour' or irresponsible actions by the children concerned, and did not seem to be associated with drunken or unbalanced behaviour by parents. Mandisa tells of two such incidents:

Yesterday I lost our keys. My 'mother' [actually father's girlfriend] beat me. I ran away, and came back later. I sat outside. My mother gave me money to buy sweets. I also fought with Xoliswa. I hit her on her head with a stone. My mother beat me again. My father gave me some fish to eat. [Mandisa: 21-7-89]

Ntobeko and Xolisile are exceptional in that they did mention briefly assaults by older family members. In his autobiography, Ntobeko disclosed that:

My brother is not working. Sometimes he drinks with his friends. He likes to beat us when he is drinking. [Ntobeko: "My Family"]

Similarly, Xolisile stated in his diary that when his mother "becomes drunk she starts to beat us" [27-7-89]. During my interviews with him Xolisile would not go into any detail, and was only prepared to tell me that he is beaten far more often at Lwandle than he ever was before. However, his friends told me that one of the reasons for his frequent absence from school is that he is embarrassed to be seen with the bruises induced by the beatings he receives. The fact that he said that children "must not be misused", and that he wants to be a policeman so that he can "protect children", is perhaps a comment about the way in which he, and perhaps other children around him, are treated by adults.

Children are also subject to violence, and threats of it, at the hands of adults generally. Thembeni and some friends were playing *mchina*:

We were playing outside my house. A man came to us and shouted at us. He said we were making too much noise, and he took our money away from us. Then he opened his pants and urinated on our board. We ran away and shouted at him. The man started to run after us, but we hid so he could not catch us.
[Thembeni: Sub B Boys' Group Interview]

Another source of violence at Lwandle is a group of unemployed males in their late-teens and early twenties who are affiliated to the Guguletu-based Ntsara gang. The group specialises in armed theft, and is active primarily at night. Its members wait in shadowed and dark areas between buildings, and rob and assault those who are unfortunate enough to be outside. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, there is almost invariably at least one area of Lwandle where the external lights are not functioning. It is here that the Ntsaras go to work. They steal anything from money to the clothing which their victims are wearing. Victims are often beaten up, and females are sometimes raped. Inebriated workers, with their pay packets still fairly intact, provide particularly rich pickings on Friday evenings. The Ntsaras apparently hide themselves in the brush of the buffer strip on Friday afternoons, and rob workers who are returning with their wages. Bodies are not irregularly found in the buffer strip; although there may have been more, I heard of three such discoveries during the period that I worked at Lwandle. Most of the Ntsaras live in one particular hostel building, and their identities as such are common knowledge amongst residents. One of the girls told me about Ntsaras:

They rob money from people. After they have taken your money they beat you and sometimes even stab you....It usually happens at night and over weekends. People have money over the weekends because they are paid wages on Friday. That is why the Ntsara attack people at the weekends. They block the people when they are coming home from work and take their things. Sometimes they even take their clothes. They also steal radios and TVs. [Anonymous: Girls' Group Interview]

Mphumzi mentioned Ntsara gangsters in his diary:

On Friday another man was robbed of his money. He was drunk at the time. He went to the police. The police arrived and arrested the person. Another old man was stabbed on Saturday at the soccer field. It was so packed and full of people, we did not know who killed him. On Sunday I went to church with Ntobeko. [Mphumzi: 31-7-89]

....On Saturday we were sent to the shop. Nyameka was wearing a hat of the Ntsaras⁸. The gangsters blocked us and asked him where he got the hat. He refused to tell them. He was hit by the gangsters. We started to run away. On Sunday my mother went to a funeral. [Mphumzi: 7-8-89]

....Yesterday I saw a policevan from Cape Town arresting gangsters. I was so happy because we could not move around. [Mphumzi: 10-8-89]

The last form of adult-on-child violence which was brought to my attention, and which was only mentioned to me by girls, is sexual abuse and intimidation. During her interview with me, Fundiswa told me that she longed to go back to her grandparents in Eliot:

The people are not rude to small children. In the Cape they are rude to small children. They think of a small girl as a big girl. [Fundiswa: Interview]

I asked Fundiswa to elaborate what she meant by 'rude':

People call you, and when you refuse they say bad words to you. One day I was even chased with a knife. At night when I am outside the young guys call to me. I am small, and I do not want to listen to them. Sometimes they grab hold of me and want to love me. [Fundiswa: Interview]

⁸ Ntsaras wear a distinctively shaped and coloured hat as part of their membership insignia.

Fundiswa stopped here. I asked her whether the 'young guys' had ever made her do anything that she did not want to do. She replied that they had done so "many times". I asked her when this had first happened, and she told me that it was around the time that she first went to school (when she was 13 years old). When I asked her outright whether she had ever been raped, she hung her head and would not look at me.

Fundiswa's testimony is not the only example I have of young girls who have been sexually molested or, at least, intimidated at Lwandle. Khosi described very much the same type of abuse by men and older boys:

Men often call to me and give me problems. Some of them stay in my hostel. At night when I am sent to do things they sometimes follow me and chase me. They shout bad words at me while they chase me. Sometimes they call me *umpundu* [vagina]. They have never caught me. I run back to my mother and tell her. She shouts at them. [Khosi: Interview]

I do not know whether or not Fundiswa is being or has been raped; nor do I know if Khosi was holding back on things which have happened to her⁹. Whatever the case may be, the fact is that young girls are subject to verbal abuse and sexual lunges, that they are pawed and molested, and that, even if Fundiswa and Khosi have not been raped, the potential for it is there. Given their testimony, it is not unlikely that others have been. Parents know about sexual attacks on their children, but there seems to be little that they can do about it:

There are men here who are sexually troublesome to children. This is very bad for children. [Group Parental Interview]

⁹ It may be significant that Fundiswa and Khosi both live at Lwandle for much of the time without adult supervision (see case 5.6 and their family profile in Chapter 4); they may therefore be more vulnerable to such abuse than other children.

Intimidation and the police: abuse by 'protectors'

Intimidation and raids by the police have become very much part of everyday life at Lwandle. Few days pass without some kind of police presence. Uniformed and plain-clothes police often make their presence felt by simply driving slowly between the hostel buildings. Every now and then a police vehicle speeds into Lwandle along the access road, screeches to a halt, turns around, and speeds out again; to the onlooker, there seems to be little valid purpose in this exercise. Raids on shebeens take place regularly, sometimes two or even three times per week. The police know which rooms and which individuals operate shebeens, and there are certain shebeen-owners who are harassed more than others. I was told that this is because they have refused to submit to police bribery. Conversely, there are other shebeen-owners who are not harassed at all; similarly, people said that this is because the police receive pay-offs from them. Some of the boys mentioned police bribery to me:

Sometimes the job of the SAP [South African Police] is good, but not all of them are good. They use their jobs for themselves to get money and drink and dagga [cannabis]. They come to the hostels when they are not working. They tell us that they have powers, and they will use their powers if we do not give them what they want. [Anonymous: Boys' Group Interview]

Sometimes the police conduct 'general' raids, and enter rooms in what seems to residents to be an indiscriminate fashion. They turn them upside down: they break cupboard doors open, rip the mattresses on to the floor, turn pots upside down, and sometimes tear down the strips of cardboard which

residents have pinned up to insulate the walls and roof.

Mphumzi provides some indication as to why this might happen:

Yesterday I saw some coloured guys who were selling a bicycle. It was very cheap. The coloureds like to sell things here at the hostels. The people like to buy stolen goods. The police come to search for stolen things and take them away, but the people still do not listen. [Mphumzi: 4-8-89]

Although there might at times be justification for searches, we have also heard from Xolisile that the police assault people indiscriminately and violently, and that their identification of 'criminals' is sometimes somewhat amiss. Children are visibly frightened when the police are present, shrinking behind walls and into the toilets and ablution blocks.

Case 7.2 *Police abuse of children*

Kosie is a 13 year-old boy; sometimes he lives with his father in a backyard shack in Rusthof, and at others he stays with his sister in her hostel room at Lwandle¹⁰. One morning Kosie was strolling down a street in the Strand, when two policemen pulled up beside him in their vehicle. They asked him what he was doing, and he told them that he was looking for work. The policemen put him in the back of the van, and took him to the police-station.

At the station they purportedly roughed him around, and then put him back in the van and drove to the entrance to Lwandle. Here they gave Kosie R15, and instructed him to go to a particular room at Lwandle where he should attempt to purchase a bag of dagga. Kosie was terrified but did as he was told. He went to the room, made the purchase, and then walked back to where the policemen were waiting for him about a kilometre away. The policemen then took Kosie to the room which he had just visited, telling him to point out the man who had sold the package to him. He identified somebody, and both Kosie and the man were placed in the back of the van. By this time a crowd had gathered, and somebody who recognised Kosie went off to call his sister. The sister arrived and began to reproach the policemen for using her brother, a child, in such a scheme. She told them that they had endangered his life by forcing him to inform in this way, and that he would never be able to set foot in the hostels again.

¹⁰ Kosie was living with his father at the time that these events occurred. Although he was not a hostel resident then, the case still provides an example of the type of abuse to which children at Lwandle may be subject by police.

The policemen took Kosie back to the station, paid him R2, and sent him on his way. He went back to the shack behind a house in Rusthof where he was living with his father. Some time afterwards it became clear that Kosie had identified the wrong person. The man who had sold him the dagga had not been in the room when he returned with the police; Kosie had been so frightened of what might happen to him if he did not expose somebody that he simply identified somebody else - the wrong person. I do not know what eventually happened to the man who was wrongfully arrested. Two weeks after the incident he was still being held in custody by the police¹¹.

There is another example of police abuse of children which was told to me¹². A woman from Somerset West donated a small bicycle for use by the children at the school. During the school lunch-break one day a Sub B child was arrested by police whilst riding the bicycle. The police suspected that the child had stolen the bicycle. He was taken to the police-station, and held for some hours until the teacher at the school managed to contact the woman who had donated the bicycle. She telephoned the police, and they released the child. He was left to find his own way back to Lwandle, which is situated at least five kilometres by road from the Strand police-station.

None of the 24 children in my sample had been abused by the police in this way. Clearly, though, on the whole the police show scant regard for children or, for that matter, anybody who lives at Lwandle: they do not seem to be concerned about crime which is internal to the township, and their treatment of hostel residents goes well beyond the bounds of the law.

¹¹ The Somerset West Legal Advice Office notified the police that they had arrested the wrong person, but this information was ignored. The Advice Office also attempted to get Kosie's father to lay a charge against the police for making use of his child without his consent. However, both Kosie and his father disappeared a few days later - the Advice Office was not able to find out where they had gone - and the case therefore had to be abandoned.

¹² This incident took place prior to the fieldwork.

Violence between children

Parents are concerned about the influence which the violence which takes place at Lwandle may have on their children. One father told me:

The children grow up seeing fighting and other bad things. They grow up being used to these things. They accept them. We do not see it much now, but we will see it in them when they are older. [Group Parental Interview]

Other parents believe that children's exposure to violence is already visible in their attitudes and behaviour:

When I was a child I had respect for adults. Children never thought of hitting their parents. I am amazed because I see children beating their parents. Even girls of 16 beat their mothers. [Group Parental Interview]

One young mother described the interest which children show in dead bodies:

In the old days people feared to look at dead people. We ran away from a dead person. Now even the children do not worry. They turn the head around to see the eyes so that they can tell if the person is dead. Sometimes they turn the bodies over with their feet. Even the older people are more scared of dead people than children are¹³.

Another parent told me that some children regard fights as entertainment. When there is a fight outside or in a neighbouring room, she said that the younger children who live in her bungalow, some of them three or four years old, rush off excitedly to watch the proceedings.

But violence is more than entertainment to children; it is also something which they practice and themselves put into effect. A number of parents told me that a common, and

¹³ This mother's observation is interesting in the light of Reynolds's comment about Crossroads mothers' childhood experiences of death: "As children the women were not told about death. They were not allowed to see a corpse and were forbidden to talk about death or play dead. Children learnt to fear the dead - doors that rattled in the night were thought to be touched by corpses raised by witches" (1983:129).

traditionally expected, pastime amongst boys in the rural areas of the Transkei and Ciskei is stick-fighting (see also Hunter 1979:160). At Lwandle, however, they said that young boys no longer fight with just sticks - they do so with knives, screw-drivers, broken glass, scissors, and sharpened sticks. Parents also told me that the movements which the children employ no longer follow the lines of ritual fighting, but rather that they mimic the fighting which they see around them.

My observations bear this out. There is something quite distinct about the physical action which is employed to stab a person, and children at Lwandle know and perform the lines of that action. I often watched girls and boys, usually the younger of the children at the school, play-fighting with pencils and ball-point pens. Their movements were frightening. They would chase one another around, waving their 'weapons' clasped like knives above their shoulders and lunging as they ran. When the 'victim' had been caught they would lift their 'weapons' high above their shoulders and plunge them down in an arc-like movement, grunting with effort, into their shoulders or backs. It is an action which I have previously seen only at the cinema and on television; there are few television sets at Lwandle. My observations of mimicked violence are reinforced by those of Ramphele, who commented that hostel children's games are

focused in their social environment. In role play fixing blocked toilets, imitating the staggering walk of drunken persons and administration of corporate punishment on children by their parents...(1989c:17).

As one mother said:

The children who grow up in the Cape see people stabbing, swearing, and throwing stones. The

children become used to it. As they grow, they do not think these things are serious. They play with them. [Group Parental Interview]

What is more, such games are more than just childhood fun; they are at one and the same time exercises in violent behaviour which do not await adulthood to transform into actual violence¹⁴.

Case 7.3 *Childhood violence (1)*

One Sunday Christophy and Xolisile were sitting outside Xolisile's room. A friend of the two boys, Dedisa, came along and sat down with them. Dedisa, who is about a year older than Christophy but quite a lot smaller, began to mock Christophy about his mother's antics with a cow-hide drum (she is a diviner). According to both himself and Xolisile, Christophy ignored Dedisa, and shortly afterwards went back to his own room.

Later the same afternoon Christophy and Dedisa met up again. Once more, Dedisa mocked Christophy about his mother, and this time Christophy hit him. A fight ensued, but was soon broken up by passing adults. Dedisa returned to his room, where he armed himself with a screw-driver. He hid the screw-driver under his jacket, and went off in search of Christophy. When he found him, Dedisa began to taunt Christophy saying that he did not have the courage to face him when there was nobody else around to stop the fight. Christophy moved towards Dedisa; as he did so, Dedisa drew the screw-driver from under his jacket and stabbed Christophy a number of times in the shoulder. The wounds were fortunately not very deep. Christophy managed to wrestle the screw-driver away from Dedisa, and ran with it back to his room.

Dedisa was still not satisfied. He called his two older brothers, and this time all three of them went in search of Christophy. One of the brothers was armed with a knife. Christophy saw them approaching, and hid in his room for the remainder of the day. He said that Dedisa will not try to come after him again because the latter's father, who was told about the events by Christophy's mother, beat Dedisa and his brothers.

Case 7.4 *Childhood violence (2)*

Thembeni is very small for an 11-year-old child. He was playing on one of the make-shift soccer fields on the outskirts of Lwandle with a friend called Boysie. They were joined by a boy, marginally older than them, whom they knew only slightly.

¹⁴ This contrasts with Reynolds's observation that there "was a notable lack of violence, actual or pretended, in the children's games" in Crossroads (1989:67).

The older boy pulled a set of nail-clippers out of his pocket, and opened the knife-like extension which is used for filing and cleaning nails. It had been sharpened to a point. The older boy demanded that Thembeni and Boysie show him their 'underparts', threatening to stab them with his weapon if they did not comply. When they refused, he grabbed hold of Boysie and stabbed him in the arm. Boysie wrestled himself free, and fled with Thembeni in the direction of the hostels.

These are but two of the many accounts of the violence which children engage in between themselves which filtered through to me. Fundiswa took a knife to her older brother during an argument in 1988; she was apprehended without causing any harm to him:

Fundiswa came to the hostels from Strand. She came into the house and Siyabulela told her that she must clean the house. She argued with him. Then he told her that she must go to school. She argued with him again and he hit her. Fundiswa tried to hit him back, but he was too strong for her. Later, she took a knife while he was not watching her and wanted to stab him. He was too strong for her. After that she walked back through the bushes to Strand. [Khosi: Interview]

Khosi also told me about an adolescent girl, in her middle to late teens, who stabbed a friend to death during a drunken argument over a man. Nolandela's story was similar:

Two women were fighting. One went home and she sat and cried. The other came with a knife and stabbed her to death. I ran away because I knew both of the women, and I did not want to see what was happening....They were very young, only a few years older than me...They were drinking when they fought. [Nolandela: Interview]

One mother described her horror at the activities which children engage in:

Children fight all the time in the hostels. The children use their fists when they fight. When they are Bonelwa's age [12 years old], then they use fists. When they are Mphumzi's age [14 years old], then they start to use stones and knives. Last week a child the same age as Mphumzi broke both arms of another child with an iron bar. It happened in room 83 [the other room in the informant's bungalow]. [Group Parental Interview]

Nancy is a parent who told me that she once had to disarm a six-year-old boy who was chasing two children more or less the same age as himself with a knife. She does not know how he came to be doing so, only that he was in such a rage that other adults nearby had to help her to keep him pinned to the ground.

Conclusion: the violence of space

Many of the children told me that they longed to move back to their places of origin, or to other places in which they had lived. And violence was the factor cited most often, above even the horrific physical conditions of the hostels, for wishing to do so:

The Transkei is better. People stab each other all the time here. They argue about small things, and then they just stab each other. A person can be stabbed at any time at Lwandle. [Nandipha: Interview]

Nolandela's sentiments were similar:

We are here because my mother must work. If she did not have to work, we would go to the place where we live in Dordrecht. This place is bad. The people are bad people. It is better in Dordrecht....There is always fighting in the hostels. Every weekend people are stabbed and bleeding. The people in Dordrecht are not the same as the people in the Cape. [Nolandela: Girls' Group Interview]

Clearly, not all children at Lwandle are exposed to the same degree of violence. Not all of them are incessantly assaulted, not all of them have parents who beat and stab one another, and not all of them live in rooms in which extreme violence is a regular state of affairs. Nor do all of the children behave violently themselves. But the crucial point is that at Lwandle exposure to violence is *inevitable*: even if a child is fortunate enough to live in a room in which there is a complete lack of violence - which is highly unlikely

considering the number and variety of people who are packed together into such a small space - there is still no chance of he or she avoiding the violence which takes place in other locations. That this experience is unavoidable rests upon what is probably the foremost feature of life in the hostels - the impossibility of any clear spatial divide between public and private. Both practically and theoretically, this renders distinctions between domestic and other forms of violence largely meaningless: at Lwandle, domestic violence, in the sense that it is commonly understood, is invariably a public affair, and what would normally be termed suburban violence often occurs in what, for all intents and purposes, is domestic space. The overlap between public and private space, combined with the immense overcrowding of the hostels, opens children to a far wider experience of violence than would be the case in more normal circumstances. Quite simply, parents cannot shield their children, and children cannot always shield themselves, from the violence which takes place around them. Parents feel this acutely:

The people here have no respect for children. They swear and fight, and they do not care if there is a child in the room. It is wrong for my children to grow up with these people. Sometimes I want to tell them to stop, but I do not because then they will fight with me, and I do not want my children to see me fighting. [Group Parental Interview]

Another parent explained that violence would not occur, and hence that children would not be exposed to it, if there was enough space to allow families some privacy:

[In the rural homes]...when there is fighting between members of the family the older people are there to solve the problem. If the situation is serious, then they will build a house to separate the people who are fighting. When a son is married, his father

builds a house for him. Here we cannot separate people who fight. Sometimes my husband's sister comes to stay with us. Her children fight with my children, and this makes us [informant and sister-in-law] fight. At home this would not happen because we would not be staying in the same house. [Group Parental Interview]

Children also recognise the need for private space. Lumka and Christinah summed it up:

What I observed at Strand is the beauty of it. My mother said that she would like to have a house. If the people would stop selling beers and wine, there would be less fighting and death. If only houses could be built...[Lumka: 10-8-89]

We are not living comfortably here because people stab and fight each other. Many people go to hospital during the weekends. So many people would like some houses so that we can live in peace. [Christinah: 21-7-89]

CHAPTER 8

OF RITE AND ROTE: THE CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL

There are two broad diagnostic streams in the recent literature on what is commonly referred to as the 'education crisis' in South Africa. First, and numerically foremost, are those accounts which adhere to what Graaff (1990:9-11) has called the 'educational paradigm' (see De Lange Commission 1981; 'Opinion 2', Sunday Times, 8 July 1990). Such work is on the whole characterised by an analytical predisposition towards the "internal, educational aspects" of schools, and by the consequent notion that "we do not need...to go beyond the school for solutions to educational problems" (Graaff 1990:9,10). De Clercq's position exemplifies the assumptions inherent in this school of thought:

In Africa...studies have shown that school factors, such as the school's quality, are more influential than non-school factors, such as children's socio-cultural background and the parents' level of education....school factors are more important and therefore useful to concentrate on if more educational equity and equality are to be achieved for all (De Clercq in Graaff 1990:10).

In particular, analyses of this type have tended to focus almost exclusively on the quantitative inadequacies of the education system. It is taken as more or less self-evident that factors such as badly-qualified teachers, low per capita expenditure by the state, and high pupil-to-teacher and pupil-to-classroom ratios are the root causes of the crisis in education, and that by rectifying them this crisis will in time be averted. The call from these general quarters has therefore been for more classrooms, higher expenditure on education, and

more, better-qualified, and higher paid teachers. As Graaff has wryly observed,

the debate on Black education has effectively been colonised by the (very extensive) statistical tables at the end of the Department of Education and Training's (DET) Annual Report (1990:11).

The second diagnostic stream is constituted by the work of the small number of scholars who, to their credit, have begun to go beyond the naivety and analytic simplicity of the educational paradigm (see Nasson 1984; Kallaway 1984; Bot 1985). Although some of their interpretations differ fundamentally in certain respects, and by no means constitute a single, cohesive school of thought, these scholars are characterised generally by their attempts to conceptualise education in terms of the wider relations of power in society¹. By far the most comprehensive and outstanding study to have emerged within this more analytic school is Kallaway's (1984) seminal collection of essays which, by and large, are concerned to develop a Marxist political economy of education in South Africa. Kallaway sums the major thrust of this compendium:

...the implementation of schooling systems is to be interpreted as representing a history of losses and gains for the mass of the people rather than the unfolding of a scheme for the promotion of the betterment of society as a whole....far from providing a mechanism of social mobility for the majority of students, schools act to crystallise class divisions and preserve the interests of the middle class (1984:6,7).

In short education in South Africa has been approached from two angles: the first examines the internal and, very often, quantitative dimensions of the problem, and the second views education functionally, and at a macro-level, as part of

¹ Nasson (1986), for example, has classified the Kallaway (1984) anthology as "radical", and clearly distances himself from the approach taken by these authors.

the wider matrix of social organisation. Each of these approaches is valid and useful in its own right. Adherents of the educational paradigm are without doubt fully justified in attributing the poor state of learning in this country to the quantitative inadequacies of the education system; their calls for internal improvement and in some instances a complete restructuring of the education system are thus worthy of urgent attention. Similarly, there is certainly value in attempting, as Nasson, Kallaway, and others have done, to develop sociological theories of education in the South African context. Indeed, theirs are particularly welcome additions to a domain of pedagogical theory which until recently has been seriously lacking in sophistication.

This extant literature is as a whole still limited in two significant respects. Firstly, most of the literature is abstract in the sense that it all but ignores those with whom education is after all ultimately concerned: the educational paradigm views children as no more than statistics to be manipulated until the optimal educational formulae are found, whilst in the liberal and Marxist work they are generally lost within what is often theoretical discourse. As a result, there is little in the literature which provides any in-depth insight into the *qualitative* dimensions of children's experiences of the schooling system; there are few empirically-derived, descriptive accounts of schools in everyday operation. The second limitation, which derives in part from the first, is that few serious attempts have been made to relate schooling to the *micro-level* social and economic contexts in which it takes place (or, in many instances, fails to take place). On the one

hand, the educational paradigm attends to education within a social (and sociological) vacuum: apart from influences such as nutrition and intellectual stimulation, which have been internalised by educationalists, it takes virtually no cognisance of the local level social and economic determinants of education. On the other hand, the more sophisticated analyses cited above are generally so preoccupied with macro-level theory that when all is said and done they reveal little about the ways in which wider relations of political and economic power translate into reality at the micro-level of experience. The literature on education in this country is thus impoverished at the level of description by its lack of attention to the qualitative details of children's experiences of schooling, and at the level of context by its failure to examine, document, and perhaps even recognise the direct role which micro-level social and economic factors - factors external to the education system *per se* - play in attenuating children's receipt of education.

This chapter provides a descriptive account of Lwandle School in routine operation. The school is a prime example of the state's neglect of African education, and of the quantitative inadequacies of the education system. It receives no support whatsoever from the Department of Education and Training (DET), and is funded primarily from within the hostel community itself. It caters for between 80 and 100 children from Sub A to Standard 4, all of whom are served by one teacher and are taught together in one small classroom. The teacher, Jennifer, has minimal qualifications and experience in the teaching profession; she has a school-leaving certificate, and

has completed one year of a three-year teacher training course. Funds are sufficient to pay her a monthly salary of R250. The school has few furnishings or educational aids worth speaking of, and the building in which it is housed is damp, cold, and extremely unhealthy. In providing an account of schooling in circumstances such as these, the chapter begins to develop an experiential perspective of the poverty of education in this country.

The following chapter, Chapter 9, examines some of the personal social and economic factors which have impinged upon the Lwandle children's educational progress. It is an attempt to demonstrate the critical importance of a broader, more context-conscious vision by both scholars and policy-makers in the field of education.

Forcing self-help: the backdrop to education at Lwandle School

Lwandle School was established by the Men's Committee in 1987 following the refusal of the Department of Education and Training (DET) to provide such a facility in the township. Prior to 1987 there was no school in the entire Hottentots-Holland Basin which was open to African children. In accord with the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, and due to Lwandle's status as a township reserved for men, a school was never planned, nor even contemplated, for the township. Moreover, the application of school apartheid prohibited children who did live in the hostels from attending any of the numerous 'White' or 'Coloured' schools in the area². As a consequence, such children either did not receive education at

² The state policy whereby children of any particular 'racial' category may only be admitted to schools which are reserved for that category.

all whilst they were living at Lwandle, or had to commute daily, at great cost to their families, to the closest other African schools more than 25 kilometres away. Parents whose children were resident at Lwandle during this period said that the former was most often the case: most families could not afford for their children to commute (in 1989 a round-trip by taxi to Khayelitsha cost R5), and children simply did not attend school. The only other alternatives were for parents to send their children to live with friends or relatives elsewhere in the Peninsula, or for children to remain at their rural homes where education was more likely to be available to them. This still remains the most cost-effective option for children who require education above the level which is offered at Lwandle School (that is, above Standard 4).

The establishment of Lwandle School

The campaign to establish a school at Lwandle was a response to these circumstances, and to the steadily increasing number of children living in the hostels. The story of this campaign clearly reflects the state's ambivalence as regards African education in the area, and even its efforts, by means of threats and harassment, to prevent children from gaining access to education³. That the school was established and has survived in the face of such opposition by the authorities is a statement of the tenacity of the people of Lwandle who have

³ It is also part of a larger story of resistance by the Lwandle community to threats by the state to enforce stringently hostel single-sex regulations (see Chapter 4 for these regulations), and perhaps even to disrupt community life completely by removing Lwandle residents from the Hottentots-Holland Basin altogether. This story will be recorded in a paper, presently in preparation, which assesses the proposed upgrading of Lwandle to family accommodation, and the manner in which it has been approached by the authorities.

been associated with it. In many ways, the school is a symbol of political resistance.

In 1986 a group of mothers approached the Men's Committee with the request that a lobby be initiated to set up a school at Lwandle. Consequently, the DET was approached by representatives for the Committee, who submitted that the number of children then resident in the township clearly warranted educational facilities. The DET responded with a flat refusal, stating that children were not legally permitted to be living at Lwandle, and that the state was therefore under no obligation to provide facilities of any sort for them. Further deputations were sent to a number of different DET officials, as well as to the then Minister of Constitutional Planning and Development and Member of Parliament for the Helderberg constituency, Dr Chris Heunis⁴. The response was in all instances the same: the state would not establish a school at Lwandle. Matters eventually came to a head when the DET declared that, should Lwandle residents continue to press for a school, the state would be forced to recognise that there were women and children resident at Lwandle, and that they would be arrested and charged in terms of regulations governing state hostels. The threat was clear, and with the trespassing raids which had taken place at Lwandle earlier that year still a very recent memory, deputations to the state with regard to a school ceased.

With official support for a school ruled out, the Men's Committee resolved to go ahead and itself establish a crèche and a primary school in the township. The Methodist

⁴ The Helderberg constituency incorporates most of the Hottentots-Holland Basin.

congregation at Lwandle, which had been donated a corrugated-iron shed by a local company for use as a church, offered the structure for use as a school during the week. Funds were canvassed from foreign embassies and service organisations in the Hottentots-Holland region, a small number of old benches, chairs, and desks were donated (many of which were in very bad condition and have since broken), and the school was staffed with a matriculated but unqualified teacher (Jennifer's predecessor).

Acquiring a location for the crèche was more difficult. The Men's Committee initially proposed to house the crèche in the community hall, which is generally vacant. Sloth-Nielsen has described the reaction of the on-site CPA administrator of Lwandle to this request:

Permission has to be obtained in order to use this last community facility [the hall], and as such was refused when attempts were made by the community to use the hall for the pre-school crèche. The hall was not being used for any other purpose at the time, and the reason given for the denial of permission by the official...was (as he surveyed some 50 children from his office window) that the children did not exist officially! (1987:15)

The Dutch Reformed Church subsequently volunteered the use of its building for a crèche. The crèche is now staffed by two local mothers who have been trained by the Early Learning Resources Unit (ELRU) in Cape Town. It is securely-enclosed, well-equipped, and warm and comfortable.

State opposition to these schooling facilities went beyond mere lack of co-operation and support, and did not end with their independent establishment. Approximately a month after the school had been opened it was visited by officials from the DET who summarily closed it down on the grounds that it was not

registered with the DET and was therefore an illegal operation. The teacher was threatened with a fine of up to R1 500 or 12 months imprisonment if she continued to operate the school. It re-opened the following day, and no legal action was taken (Sloth-Nielsen 1987:47). A more sympathetic DET official subsequently advised that an attempt should be made to register the school as a 'farm school' (Sloth-Nielsen 1987:47). The preliminary papers were duly completed and submitted, but no response was ever forthcoming from the DET. Over the two years since that time requests for support in the form of teaching aids and equipment have been made repeatedly to the DET by Somerset West residents who assist with the administration of the school. Once more, these requests have either been ignored or turned down, and the school still received no support whatsoever from the DET at the completion of fieldwork towards the end of 1989.

Administration of the school

The school and the crèche are administered by a committee which comprises members of the Men's Committee and three or four residents of Somerset West. There were no parents on the committee during the time that I worked at the school, although efforts were constantly made to lure parents on to it. The initial donations for the establishment of the school and crèche were one-off payments, and members of the committee are constantly in search of further donations to supplement the finite funds which they have at their disposal. In addition, children at both the school and the crèche are required to pay a fee of R2 per week to attend these facilities. The committee

does not consider this payment to be desirable, but it is nevertheless vital in order to maintain the facilities.

The school building and its facilities

The building which houses the school is constructed out of corrugated-iron, and is situated close to the Greenpoint hostels on the southern edge of Lwandle (see Diagram 4.1). It is divided into two sections: the larger section, which is approximately four metres by seven metres in size, is used as the classroom; the smaller section, which is around four metres by two metres, is used as a kitchen and for storage.

The building was in a state of chronic disrepair until mid-1989. There were gaps in the walls where pieces of corrugated-iron had loosened or been bent, there were large holes where screws which had kept the structure together had fallen out or been removed, there were broken panes of glass in the windows, and the roof leaked in a number of places. There was no ceiling, and the floor was cold, rough concrete. Wind, cold air, and rain flowed easily into the building, and there were times when at least half of the surface area of the floor was covered by water. In extreme weather the building was either very hot or very cold. Although the building was wired for electricity, the system had not been in working order for well over a year, and there was therefore no artificial lighting. Requests to mend the electrical system were lodged frequently with the CPA official responsible for general maintenance at Lwandle, but nothing was done throughout the first half of the year. The school-room was therefore often extremely dark in cloudy weather.



Front view of the school, with my shed to the right.

These conditions were alleviated to a certain extent when a substantial donation for the renovation of the building was received from a local food-processing company. Repairs were effected to the school during the mid-year vacation: holes in the roof and walls were mended, a ceiling was installed, the internal walls were painted, broken window-panes were replaced, and three florescent lights were fitted. While the renovations were in progress the responsible CPA official was finally persuaded to repair the electrical system, and so for the second half of the year the new lights which had been fitted were in working order. Conditions in the school were very much improved when the children returned after the holiday; nevertheless, the building is still extremely cold, and in very wet weather the floor still floods in places. Many of the

children have no shoes, and when this happens they spend much of their time at school wading through water.



Interior view of the school, prior to its renovation, taken from the smaller (kitchen) section of the room.

In the context of a complete absence of material support by the state for the school, and of severely limited funding from other sources, the school has only the most rudimentary of educational equipment and teaching aids. The classroom is equipped with a blackboard, a raised table for the teacher, and a variety of desks, chairs, and benches, most of which are broken, for the children. Pupils in Standards 1 to 4 each have a desk of their own, whilst those in the lower Standards either kneel on the floor using the benches as surfaces upon which to write, or sprawl on the floor itself to do their work. Due to various factors - mainly distance and the glare of the sun - some children cannot read the blackboard from their usual

places, and frequently move to the floor or to benches elsewhere to do their school-work.

There are few textbooks worthy of mention, and most of those which are available have been donated by English schools in the area, and are therefore written in English. Jennifer occasionally makes use of these to guide her lessons, but there are nowhere near enough of them to be distributed amongst the children; they are also too valuable, because there are so few, to be used by the children themselves. For the most part, Jennifer anyway relies on her own knowledge for what she teaches the children. Paper, exercise books, pens, and pencils are purchased and allocated by the school committee; these items are scarce, and have to be cherished and cared for well by the children. There are almost invariably some children who do not have pens and pencils, and who therefore have to alternate use of these with their fellows. There are no sporting or other recreational facilities provided at the school.

The everyday operation of Lwandle School⁵

During the time that I worked at Lwandle the number of children in Sub A and B fluctuated between a total of 60 and 80: some children dropped out of school or moved away from the hostels during the course of the year, some were frequently absent, and others joined the school at odd times. The numbers of children in the more advanced Standards were more constant, although there were a few who left the school during the course

⁵ This section, and those which follow in this chapter, refer primarily to the period before the second half of the school year, i.e. before the classes were split. The ethnography was gleaned from my observations in the classroom.

of my fieldwork. There were 13 children in Standard 1 who were at school consistently, two in Standard 2, five in Standard 3, and two in Standard 4⁶.

The general school routine

The school day begins at around 8h00 and continues until 14h30. Although the children spend about six and a half hours at the school every day, in that time they are tutored and do written or other exercises for generally no more than two hours. School opens with a reading from the Bible, a prayer, and a hymn, and Jennifer then takes the register and collects whatever contributions children might have brought with them towards their school-fees. Most of the children do not pay the weekly fee in a lump sum, and the money generally trickles in on a daily basis at anything from 5c to 50c per day. Jennifer has to keep a record of the money which is paid, which is time-consuming. The opening worship and the payment of fees generally account for the first hour of the school day until around 9h00.

During the next half-hour Jennifer sets exercises on the blackboard for the children in Standards 1 to 4; the exercises usually take about a half-hour for the children to complete. From about 9h30 to 10h00 she devotes her attention to the Sub A and B groups, doing counting and alphabetical exercises with them. After that the latter are left either to write out the alphabet or a sequence of numbers, to draw, or simply to amuse themselves, and the children in the more advanced classes queue at Jennifer's desk to have their written work checked over by

⁶ Along with Fundiswa and Thembeni, the children in the latter four Standards were the 24 children with whom I dealt.

her. The break period begins at 10h30, and lasts for an hour to an hour and a half. By this stage each of the classes has done only around a half-hour of school-work.

At between 11h00 and 11h30 a bell is rung to signify the end of the break period, and the pupils gather once again inside the school-room. After the break period Jennifer collects payments for the midday meal, which comprises a mug of soup and a slice of bread. The children are required to pay 10c per day for the meal, which totals at 50c per week. Once more, the children do not generally pay the exact amount every day: some contribute 20c or 30c at a time, which covers their meals for the following few days, whilst others contribute as little as 2c, promising to make up the difference later. As with the school-fees, Jennifer has to keep track of these contributions; this takes up much of her time between the break and lunch periods. Jennifer sometimes instructs the children to revise the work of the previous day or that which they did before the break, to recite multiplication tables, or to browse through some of the old story books which have been donated by libraries in order to keep the children busy whilst she is collecting and recording the payments. More often than not the children are given no instructions at all, and simply chat and play amongst themselves. Thus the children generally receive no contact teaching and perform no written exercises at all between the break period and when lunch is served at 12h00.

At 12h00 most of the children queue for the meal which is provided. A small number of children do not receive the meal: some of them bring sandwiches to school, and others do not receive the meal because they have not been able to pay for it.

After the meal the children play in and around the school or go to their bungalows until 1h00, at which time they return for the last hour and a half of the school day. Once again, Jennifer spends approximately a half-hour with the Sub A and B children, and a half-hour with the Standards 1 to 4 classes collectively. The last half-hour of the school day is spent cleaning the classroom, and school ends at 14h30. In total, the children in each class have had approximately two or, at most, two and a half hours of teaching and written or oral exercises.

Noise and disruptions occur throughout the school-day. Every now and then a group of children moves benches out of the classroom to make place to sleep or conduct some kind of activity. Much of the time there is at least one class which is required to sing or cite in unison what they are learning, and there is constant chatter, laughter, and playfulness. Children leave the classroom often, disappearing for periods of time to the hostels; drunkards sometimes wander into the school-room; and parents interrupt when they please, bringing messages to their children or younger siblings to be cared for by older pupils. There are always at least two or three toddlers wandering about - Jennifer's child is always there - and others simply arrive at the door and come in to see what is happening. A number of the children regularly bring younger siblings of non-school-going age to school because they are in their care for the day.

Teaching and class organisation

Due to the impossibility of dealing adequately with each Standard individually, Jennifer ideally teaches at least two consecutive Standards, and sometimes three Standards, together as one class. Sub A and B are always taught together; for all intents and purposes, the children in these two Standards therefore constitute one large class - the Sub A/B class. As far as I could discern, the Sub A/B class is taught only the alphabet, counting, and elementary arithmetic. The only time that these children ever do any writing is when they copy the alphabet from the blackboard. Although they are taught the sounds which are represented by each individual letter, they do not know how to combine the letters into words. Because there are no suitable reading books available for them, and because Jennifer simply does not have the time to write up sentences on the blackboard and get each individual child to read the sentences, the children in the Sub A/B class do no reading whatsoever.

Standards 1 to 4 are taught in various combinations of classes, depending usually upon the particular subject which is being dealt with at the time. Table 8.1 shows the subjects which are covered by every Standard, as well as the combinations of Standards to which each subject is supposed to be taught.

Table 8.1: Subjects taught per Standard - Std 1 to 4⁷

SUBJECTS	S T A N D A R D S						
	1	2	3	4	1&2	3&4	2&3&4
English					*	*	
Afrikaans					*	*	
Mathematics					*	*	
History					*	*	
Geography	na						*
General Science	na	na				*	
Health Education	na	na	*	*			

It can be seen from Table 8.1 that children in Standard 1 cover only four subjects - English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, and History; children in Standard 2 do the above four subjects, as well as Geography; the Standard 3 children do all subjects but General Science; and the Standard 4 class covers all of the subjects listed in the Table. According to Jennifer, she teaches English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, and History to Standards 1 and 2 together as one class, and the same subjects to Standards 3 and 4 as one class; in other words, the content of what she teaches to Standards 1 and 2 is the same, and the content of what she teaches to Standards 3 and 4 is the same. Similarly, Jennifer aims to teach Geography to Standards 2, 3, and 4 together, and General Science, which is covered only by the Standards 3 and 4 children, in the same way. Health Education, which is done by the Standards 3 and 4 children, is supposed to be taught separately to each group. It is noteworthy that Xhosa is not part of the curriculum, and that it was never taught to them in any form whatsoever whilst I worked at the school (although Standards 1 to 4 did write Xhosa tests before the mid-year vacation).

⁷ The abbreviation 'na' stands for non-applicable.

In practice, Jennifer's teaching seldom aligns with her intended organisation of Standards according to subject, and she almost invariably teaches all of Standards 1 to 4 together, regardless of what subject is being taught. Distinctions between the Standards are therefore largely meaningless: the children are taught at the same time, they are taught the same things, and there is little differentiation in the levels or quality of performance between the Standards as a whole. In addition, although the school routine is itself structured, Jennifer admits that she does not plan her lessons beforehand, and that what subject is taught, and when it is taught, is an arbitrary decision. There is thus no academic structure to the day; nor is there a long-term curricular plan to guide progress through each subject.

As far as Standards 1 to 4 are concerned, disproportionate amounts of time are spent on certain subjects as compared to others; moreover, the children usually deal with only two and, occasionally, three subjects every day. Mathematics, History, and Geography receive the most attention, whilst the languages and subjects such as General Science and Health Education are broached as infrequently as every fortnight. The period before the break is almost invariably devoted solely to Mathematics, and during the remainder of the day the children generally deal with only one other subject. In addition, the children are taught new aspects of particular subjects only once every four or so weeks; interim attention to each is concerned merely with revision of the current topic. In sum, Mathematics is taught virtually every school-day, History and Geography are dealt with fairly frequently but usually only for the purposes of

repetition of old material, and other subjects receive very little attention at all. Given that only around two hours per day is spent attending to schooling *per se*, progress through even the most commonly taught subjects is extremely slow.

Learning by rote

Due to lack of books, the number of children with whom Jennifer has to cope, and perhaps also to her own experiences of education, pupils at Lwandle School are taught primarily by rote. This applies to all children in all classes, and to the content of most of the subjects which are covered. For example, multiplication tables are plastered to a wall at one end of the classroom. Large groups of children gather around these charts, and with Jennifer pointing to each sum as they progress they recite in unison, and without stopping, all the way through from the 1-times-table to the 10-times-table. This exercise takes place at least once and often two or three times every day, and each child in Standards 1 to 4 participates in it. When it is happening, all of the children in the group join in loudly and enthusiastically, and the recitation becomes almost chant-like, with some of the children swaying and dancing to it. The Sub A and B classes are required to perform a similar exercise, except that they count from 1 to 100. Sometimes the more advanced classes are told to join the younger children in the exercise, which is often repeated a number of times, over and over again, as with the multiplication tables.

Content subjects are taught in exactly the same fashion. A section from the History 'course' which covered the 'Bushmen'

was taught as follows. Jennifer began by writing ten sentences on the blackboard:⁸

1. The Bushmen come from Afrika.
2. The Bushman live in the Kalahari.
3. Their work was hunting.
4. The Bushmen were short.
5. They like to eat meat.
6. The Bushmen were yellow in colour.
7. The Bushmen wear skins.
8. They like to eat berries.
9. They make grass mats.
10. The Bushmen were artists.

All of the children in Standards 1 to 4 were required to repeat, in order, these ten sentences over and over again. This exercise was repeated during the days and weeks which followed until the children knew the sentences by rote. After a while, and when she was satisfied that they were fully versed in the lesson, Jennifer rephrased the sentences as questions: 'where do the Bushmen come from?'; 'are they short or tall?'; 'what colour are the Bushmen?'; and so on. Once again, the children answered each question in unison: 'the Bushmen come from Africa'; 'the Bushman are short'; and 'the Bushmen are yellow in colour'.

The same method of teaching is applied to all other subjects, including English and Afrikaans. As a result, the children's real knowledge of what they are taught is very limited. In Mathematics for example many of the children are unable to recite any particular multiplication table without looking at the chart, and some are also unable to do so individually even when they are faced with the chart. If questioned on an individual basis, a large number of them

⁸ These sentences, and all of Jennifer's written work which is quoted later in the chapter, are recorded exactly as they were written; spelling mistakes and grammatical errors have not been corrected.

usually cannot provide the answer to any single sum (for example, 6×9 or 3×7). In addition, all subjects, apart from Afrikaans, are taught in English. All of the children understand virtually no English, and Jennifer does not explain the meaning of, or translate into Xhosa, the sentences which she writes on the board. It is therefore likely that even those children who *might* be able to answer many of the questions posed in the content subjects actually do not understand the meaning of the answers which they give.

The effects of this general type of repetition overflow into other activities, and are particularly noticeable in activities which are normally associated with, and allow scope for, originality and innovation. When I first began to work with the children, I presented them with pictures and taught them the English words for whatever was featured in the picture. One morning I presented a picture of a beach with people, boats, fishermen, a dog, and so on featured in it. The English words were all written below the poster, and we matched each word with each item in the picture. When the exercise had been completed I attached the poster to the wall for future reference. The following morning I gave the children paper and crayons, and asked them to draw something about their lives at Lwandle. Some drew other things, but most copied my picture of the beach used in the lesson of the previous day. They put everything featured in my picture in exactly the same place as I had done, and made no additions to it at all. This picture of the beach was often produced by some children months afterwards, even when the topic of the drawing was something completely different.

The composition tests which were written in June provide a further example. Compositions were written in two languages, Xhosa and English, by the children in Standards 1 through to 4. The topics in each instance were written up on the blackboard in the front of the classroom. The Standards 1/2 English composition test was as follows:

Write on each topic:

1. *My dog*
2. *My cat*
3. *My school*

Example:

The name of my dog is Lion. Lion is white in colour. Lion sleep on the kennel. Lion is a clever dog. It is a hunter.

The children in this class all copied the example on the board when writing about "my dog". Most of them copied it incorrectly, making spelling errors and leaving out words; many took an extraordinary long time to complete this first section of the exercise. Most did not even attempt the other two topics - "my cat" and "my school" - and those who did managed only a few phrases or one or two sentences.

The Standards 3/4 children generally did not fare much better. Their English composition topics were as follows:

1. Write on one of the following:

- a) *My cat*
- b) *My house*
- c) *My school*

2. Write a letter to your father and mother telling what happen at school.

Example:

Lwandle School
P.O.Box 129
Strand
22 May 1989

Dear father and mother,

School is very good. We went to Durban.
We drive in a bus. We saw many things. It
was good.

Most of the children chose to write about "my cat" in the first question, and some just copied the Standards 1/2 example about Lion the dog, simply replacing the word "dog" with "cat" (although a number of children did not remember to do even that). Two of them chose to write about "my school", and none wrote about "my house". In the second question - the letter to their parents - all of the children copied the example on the board, and only very few of them attempted to elaborate it.

The mid-year tests

It is apparent from the above that mere replication, with hardly any originality or input by the children themselves, seems to be what is both generally acceptable and, indeed, even required: the children are taught by rote, and are expected to reproduce, orally and on paper, exactly what they have learnt. A perusal of the test papers which were written prior to the mid-year vacation endorses many of the above observations; it also makes clear the fact that Jennifer does indeed generally teach all of the Standards 1 to 4 children together.

Tests were written by all of the children in Standards 1 to 4, and were set in accord with the class combinations under

which each subject is supposed to be taught. Children in the Standards 1/2 class thus wrote tests in English, Afrikaans, Mathematics, and History which were set specifically for them, and those in the Standards 3/4 class wrote different tests in these subjects which were set specifically for them. In addition, children in Standards 2/3/4 wrote the same Geography test, those in Standards 3/4 wrote a General Science test together, and the Standards 3 and 4 classes each wrote separate tests in Health Education.

In all of the subjects which are common to each Standard, but which are supposed to be taught separately to different combinations of Standards, the substance of the tests were nigh on identical. The History tests provide a good example:

Standards 1 and 2: History Test

Question 1: The Bushmen

1. Where did they live?
2. Where did they come from?
3. What work do they like?
4. Were the Bushmen short or tall?
5. What do they eat?
6. What colour are they?
7. Were the Bushmen strong?
8. What type of clothes did they wear?
9. What fruit do they eat?
10. What type of mats do they make?
11. What types of pots do they make?
12. Were they artists?

Question 2: The Hottentots

1. Where did they come from?
2. Were they shorter or taller than the Bushmen?
3. Were they drivers or hunters?
4. What type of fruit did they eat?
5. Were the Hottentots here

Question 3: Historical Dates

1. In what year did Da Gama discover the sea route to India?
2. In what year was the Union of South Africa formed?
3. In what year was the wreck of Haarlem?
4. In what year did Diaz discover the Cape?
5. In what year did the Dutch East India Company come to the Cape?
6. In which year did the D.E.I.C.?
7. In which year did Van der Stel arrive at the Cape?
8. In which year did Van Riebeeck arrive at the Cape?

Question 4: Van Riebeeck

1. Give the names of Van Riebeeck's three ships.
2. Give five aims of Van Riebeeck.

- before the Bushmen?
6. What clothes did they wear?
 7. What colour were they?
 8. What did they do to their cattle?

Standards 3 and 4: History Test

Question 1: The Bushmen

1. Where did the Bushmen come from?
2. Where did they live?
3. What food did they eat?
4. What clothes did they wear?
5. What colour were they?

Question 2: The Hottentots

1. Where did the Hottentots come from?
2. Where did they live?
3. What food did they eat?
4. What colour were they?
5. Were they weak or strong?

Question 3: Van Riebeeck

1. In which year did Van Riebeeck arrive at the Cape?
2. What were the names of Van Riebeeck's three ships?
3. Give five aims of Van Riebeeck at the Cape.

Question 4: Van der Stel

1. In which year did he arrive at the Cape?
2. Give five towns established by Van der Stel?
3. Give four of his aims at the Cape.

Question 5: Historical Dates

True or False -

1. Van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape in 1652.
2. Van der Stel arrived at the Cape in 1652.
3. Da Gama discovered the sea route in 1597.
4. Diaz discovered the Cape in 1910.
5. The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910.

Clearly, the content of each of the History tests is very similar: each of the classes had a section of questions on 'The Bushmen', 'The Hottentots', 'Historical Dates', and 'Van Riebeeck'. All that distinguishes the two are firstly that the Standards 3/4 test has an additional section on 'Van der Stel' which was not included in the Standards 1/2 test, and secondly that many more questions were in fact asked of the Standards 1/2 class than of the Standards 3/4 class. As far as the latter is concerned, the Standards 1/2 class had to answer 12 questions on 'The Bushmen', eight questions on the 'The

Hottentots', and seven on 'Historical Dates'; on the other hand, the Standard 3/4 class only had to answer five questions on 'The Bushmen, five on 'The Hottentots', and five on 'Historical Dates'. In addition, the true or false questions which the Standards 3/4 class were asked with regard to dates are clearly less demanding than the questions put to the Standards 1/2 class: the former were required only to decide whether or not the dates cited in the questions were correct, whilst the latter actually had to recall specific dates themselves⁹.

An examination of the tests which were set for other subjects which are also supposed to be taught to Standards 1/2 and Standards 3/4 separately suggests that the same applies (see Appendix 2 for other tests papers): the tests for the different groupings of Standards are very similar, and in some instances those set for the lower Standards may even be more complex than those set for the higher ones. The significant inference to be drawn from all of this is that the content of what the children are taught in the classroom is the same for all of those who are in Standards 1 to 4: the substance of Jennifer's teaching does not differ between the Standards or combinations of them. Assuming that circumstances remain as they were when I worked at the school, this means that children who were in, for example, Standard 1 in 1989 will for the next three years be taught the same things, in most subjects, as they were taught during 1989. Unfortunately, the fact that some of the tests for the lower classes are more difficult than

⁹ Question 3(2) in the Standards 1/2 test is quoted as it was in the test; the question does not make any sense as it is written.

those for higher ones also seems to indicate that little thought was put into their formulation.

There are three further points with regard to the tests which are worthy of notice. Firstly, the questions which are contained in the History tests, and, for that matter, those in the tests of all other content subjects, were not selected from a wider range of topics or possible questions which were covered in each subject; on the contrary, the substance of the tests represents the full quota of what was taught in each subject during the entire five months which constituted the first half of the school year. Whilst most of the children appeared to have *remembered* what they had been taught very well by the time the tests were written - although they probably understood little of it since the material was recited in English - their actual progress in terms of content and intake was minimal.

Secondly, Jennifer's teaching method, and her expectations of the children, are evident in the way that the test questions were set. As far as content subjects and languages are concerned, most of the questions are exactly the same as the sentences which the children learnt by rote, except that in this context, as in the more advanced stages of teaching a particular topic, the sentences were rephrased as questions. A glance back at the lesson on the 'Bushmen', cited earlier, confirms this: the questions are nothing more than rephrased statements.

Finally, it is also apparent from the History tests, and from the lesson on the 'Bushmen' cited earlier, that Jennifer is perpetuating the content of Christian National education in

her teaching: the questions which she asked the children all pertain to landmarks in 'White' South African history, or are derived from the 'White' educationalists' interpretations of African history and culture.

Conclusion: the poverty of education at Lwandle

This chapter has attempted to provide some insight into the qualitative dimensions which underlie the so oft-cited quantitative inadequacies of the education system in South Africa. The story of the establishment of Lwandle School, and of the state's reaction to it, is indicative of nothing less than contempt on the part of the state for the educational needs of the people of Lwandle. Far from wishing to promote education in the township, it is abundantly obvious that the state was in fact concerned primarily to ensure that education was not available to hostel children. Despite its public commitment to educational advancement, it seems as though education is still largely subservient to the dictates of oppressive politics.

The results of this neglect are clear. The 'education' which is offered at Lwandle School is severely impoverished: it is rudimentary, unstimulating, extremely repetitive, and shows clear, although certainly unwitting, allegiance to the goals of Christian National Education. In this context, the children who attend the school make little educational progress in any meaningful or useful sense, and their attendance there is largely wasted time. In reality, Lwandle School is little more than an outside crèche.

Although the school is unusual in that it is not supported by the DET, it is nevertheless possible to infer much from it about those which are. Firstly, it is true that mean pupil-to-teacher and pupil-to-classroom ratios for African schools, whilst by no means good, are very much lower than those of Lwandle. In 1988 for example the average pupil-to-teacher ratio in African schools, excluding the TBVC states, was 41:1; figures for all of the TBVC states are not available, but in 1988 the same ratio for primary schools in the Transkei was 63:1 (Race Relations Survey 1989:245). Given that the pupil-to-teacher ratio in the Transkei was very much higher than the so-called 'national' average, had TBVC schools been included in the reckoning it is likely that the gap between the real national average and that at Lwandle School would have been substantially smaller. Additionally, the 'national' figures are only averages, which means that there are individual schools in which pupil-to-teacher ratios are higher than this (how much higher, we do not know). A similar situation pertains with regard to pupil-to-classroom ratios; for example, there was a pupil-to-classroom ratio in 1984 of 96:1 in primary schools in Gazankulu (Kotzé no date:5). In these regards, Lwandle School is therefore not alone in its predicament.

Secondly, Jennifer has a matriculation pass, and one year of teacher training. Given her lack of teaching experience, and her lack of full formal training, it is more than likely that she models her teaching, in terms of both method and substance, on her own experiences as a pupil. There is a large number of teachers in schools throughout the country who, like Jennifer, have only matriculation passes; there is also a large

number who have not achieved even that¹⁰. Moreover, they too will have passed through the DET or Bantustan education systems, and in all likelihood they too model their teaching on their own experiences as pupils. Once more, the children at Lwandle School are probably not alone in their predicament.

Given these considerations, it is more than likely that Lwandle School is but one example, amongst a host of others of its general kind, of the micro-level make-up, and poverty, of education in this country. If this is so, then there are very many children in South Africa who emerge from the schooling system every day, every week, every month, and every year having accumulated little which will be of any use to them in their future lives. Exactly how many such children there are, and what their particular experiences of education are, requires urgent investigation.

¹⁰ The Main Report of the De Lange Commission (1981:63) cited figures which stated that at that stage 19% of teachers in African schools had no formal teaching qualifications, and 10 688 had themselves passed only Standard 8 or lower.

CHAPTER 9

EDUCATION IN CONTEXT: THE EXTERNAL DETERMINANTS OF THE CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING

Virtually no works exist which view the education systems in an interrelated way as part of South African society as an integrated whole (Crewe 1981:139).

In stressing the urgency for educational reform in South Africa, the De Lange Commission of Inquiry into Education (1981) cited comparative statistics which show the numbers of children in each of the four major classificatory categories - 'White', 'Coloured', 'Asian', and African - who had failed or dropped out of school over a four year period immediately subsequent to entering Grade 1 (or Sub A). Excluding the Transkei and Bophutatswana, the figures show that only 42% of all the African children in the country who entered Grade 1 in 1975 had completed Standard 2 by the end of 1978; in other words, 58% of these children had either failed or dropped out of school by the end of the four year period immediately following their initial entry into the schooling system (see Table 9.1 for the trends for 'White' and African children)¹.

Similar statistics are scattered throughout the literature on education. The 1986 DET Annual Report, for example, revealed that 36.4% of African children between the ages of six and 14 years did not attend school that year. The findings of a recent report by the Third Alternative are even more startling². After what appears to have been extensive

¹ Four years is the amount of time which is normally expected for a child to advance from Grade 1 to the end of Standard 2.

² Cited in The Weekly Mail (3-5 August 1990). It has not been possible to gain access to the report of the Third Alternative before completion of this study.

research, the Third Alternative found that approximately 10% of African children drop out of each Standard every year, and that there are presently some 1.6 million children between the ages of six and 17 years who are not attending school. The Cape Argus (6 August 1990) recently cited a figure of 3 million for the latter category of children³.

Table 9.1: Percentage of pupils in 'White' and African categories who reached Std 2 without repetition or drop-out⁴

'WHITE' CHILDREN: 1974-1977

Year	Grade 1	Grade 2	Standard 1	Standard 2
1974	100%			
1975		96%		
1976			95%	
1977				92%

AFRICAN CHILDREN: 1975-1978

Year	Grade 1	Grade 2	Standard 1	Standard 2
1975	100%			
1976		65%		
1977			51%	
1978				42%

Yet despite overwhelming evidence of such appallingly high drop-out and non-attendance rates, there is disconcertingly little in the literature which provides any real insight into how these circumstances arise. Indeed, the De Lange Commission included the above figures merely to demonstrate the need for *internal* attention to the education system, and its recommendations were directed almost exclusively at schools and schooling provision themselves. But is it really credible that all, or even a majority, of the children who fail, drop out of

³ Source not revealed.

⁴ Extracted from the De Lange Commission Main Report (1981:28). The Transkei and Bophutatswana are excluded.

school, or never even enter the schooling system do so entirely due to factors internal to the system itself? The silence of the Commission in this regard, coupled with the almost exclusive focus of its recommendations on internal educational factors, certainly implies that in the Commission's view it is these internal factors which are the overriding determinants of low school attendance rates.

The experiences of the children of Lwandle indicate quite the contrary. Allowing for initial entry into school in the year of their eighth birthdays (when they were seven years old), there were only four of the total of 24 children who at the end of 1988 had completed the Standard at school which would be expected of children of their age (see Table 9.2)⁵. The remaining 20 children had all fallen behind in their schooling: one child was seven years behind the Standard expected of children of her age; three children lagged behind their immediate peers by five years; four children were four years behind; five were three years behind; three were two years behind; and four were one year behind the level of education which is expected of African children of their age. The schooling histories of 19 of these 20 children were available to me⁶: four of the 19 children had failed a Standard at school (one of them had done so twice), 10 had entered school later than the year in which they turned seven years old, and no less than 15 had dropped out of school for periods

⁵ Graaff (1990) has noted that it is common for children who are not classified as 'White' to begin school when they are seven years old. This is confirmed by the Lwandle children; none began school at the age of six years. The age from which 'White' children are required to attend school is six years.

⁶ Kholeka was the one exception. She is one of the illegitimate children whose full life histories were not obtainable since she is now living with guardians who do not know the finer details of her past; in addition, she was unable herself to match years with Standards at school with any degree of coherency. I therefore have neither a record of her progress through school, nor of the circumstances which have obstructed it.

sufficiently long to forfeit at least one, and very often more than one, educational Standard. In addition, all of the children who had failed a Standard had also either entered school when they were older than seven years of age, or had dropped out of school at some point.

Table 9.2: Children's educational backgrounds⁷

Child	Age at end 1988	Age when began school	Passed Std end 1988	Expected Std End 1988	Number of times failed	Number missed years of school since age seven ⁸
Ayande	12	8	B	4	2	2 out of 6
Christinah	14	7	3	6	0	3 out of 8
Christophy	13	7	2	5	0	2 out of 7
Fundiswa	13	13	0	5	0	7 out of 7
Thembeni	10	9	A	2	1	2 out of 4
Khosi	12	11	B	4	0	4 out of 6
Kholeka	13	?	B	5	?	? ?
Lumka	13	7	3	5	0	2 out of 7
Mandisa	10	7	B	2	0	2 out of 4
Mphumzi	13	7	B	5	0	5 out of 7
Siyabulela	11	9	B	3	0	2 out of 5
Nandipha	12	8	2	4	0	2 out of 6
Niombosi	9	8	B	1	0	1 out of 3
Nkosnathi	11	7	2	3	0	1 out of 5
Nosipho	9	7	B	1	0	1 out of 3
Nodazibona	11	(9)	B	3	(1)	3 out of 5
Nolandela	10	7	2	2	0	0 out of 4
Nomsingisi	10	7	2	2	0	0 out of 4
Nomvuyo	9	7	1	1	0	0 out of 3
Ntobeko	10	7	1	2	0	0 out of 4
Siphiwo	9	7	B	1	0	1 out of 3
Thembela	12	8	B	4	1	3 out of 6
Xolisa	12	(9)	B	4	(1)	3 out of 6
Xolisile	13	7	B	5	0	5 out of 7

Long-term absenteeism from school, and late entry into it, have clearly been the major causes of the children's curbed

⁷ As at the end of 1988. As was the case with the figures on separation from parents, these are estimates which were calculated from the interviews with the children and their parents or guardians. They do nevertheless begin to provide some insight into children's attendance at school over the long-term. For reasons discussed in Chapter 5, in the cases of Nodazibona and Xolisa I was unable to confirm their own accounts with adults who were intimately acquainted with their histories. Figures for these children were therefore derived solely from their own accounts, and have been included in brackets. The failures are minimal; it is possible that some of the children may have omitted telling me about failures.

⁸ Calculated as if each child started school at age seven; in other words, this column represents the number of years a child has missed school out of the number of years for which they should have attended school.

educational advancement, whilst failure at school has played a relatively minor role. And in the overwhelming number of instances extensive absenteeism and late entry have had nothing whatsoever to do with schools themselves. As Graaff has observed,

[t]he social and economic environments in which children and their families find themselves determine a great deal about their school performance before they even walk in the school door (1990:10).

The same environments also determine to a large extent when children first enter the school door, the *frequency* with which they do so, and whether or not they in fact ever enrol at school. The experiences of the Lwandle children attest to this: their attendance at school has been obstructed primarily by social and economic factors - factors external to the education system *per se* - and relatively little by factors internal to it.

This chapter explores some of these external determinants of the children's education. Although there is a multiplicity of extra-school factors which have attenuated the children's receipt of education, there are two fields of influence which, more than anything else, are accountable for the predicaments in which they now find themselves. The first is migrant labour and the social conditions which are attendant upon it; the second are vicissitudes in the economic circumstances of the domestic units to which the children are, or have been, attached. The chapter focuses particularly on these two external fields of influence. In so doing, it begins to demonstrate the significant impact which extra-school factors have on children's education, and underlines the need for far

better cognisance to be taken by educationalists of the context in which education does and, even more importantly, does not take place.

Migrant labour and schooling

The effects on children of parental involvement in migrant labour, and of their own geographic and domestic mobility, have been examined in some detail in Chapter 5. It was shown that most of the children had been separated from both of their parents for significant amounts of time, and that, as a consequence, most had been fostered at some stage by grandparents, other kin, or non-relatives. It was also evident that many of the children had experienced extreme spatial mobility in the past, and that this mobility had often involved shifts from one set of parental figures to another. Migrant labour has therefore caused many of the children extreme residential mobility; it has caused them to be separated from their parents, often for extended periods; and, contingent upon this separation, it has required that they be placed in foster-care.

All of these consequences of migrant labour - mobility, separation from parents, and fostering relationships - have affected detrimentally the children's education, and have obstructed their attendance at school in various ways. The case of the Lekhota children begins to demonstrate how these factors may militate against children's receipt of education.

Case 9.1 *Schooling and the multiple impacts of migrant labour*

Fundiswa and Thembeni Lekhota are 14 and 11 years old respectively. Fundiswa is presently doing Sub A, and is seven

years behind the Standard which is 'normally' expected of children of her age; Thembeni, who is doing Sub B, is three years behind his immediate peers. Khosi, the illegitimate daughter of the Lekhota children's older sister, is 13 years of age and is doing Standard 1; she is four years behind in her schooling (see case 5.6 for Khosi's life history, and LHS 8 and 9 for those of Fundiswa and Thembeni).

Mr Lekhota is employed by a construction company, and his family have generally travelled with him wherever he has been sent to work. Prior to Mr Lekhota's entering his present employment the family lived first in Cala in the Transkei, and then in Eliot in the far Eastern Cape with Mrs Lekhota's parents. Khosi remained with her paternal grandparents in Cala when the move from Cala to Eliot took place; similarly, Fundiswa remained in Eliot with her mother's parents when Mr Lekhota found employment in the Western Cape.

Khosi lived in Cala until she was eight years old, as did Fundiswa in Eliot. Although there were schools in both of these places, neither Khosi's nor Fundiswa's grandparents sent the child in their care to school. Khosi said that her grandparents were very poor, and Fundiswa did not know why she was not sent to school.

Early in 1983, the year in which she turned eight years old, Fundiswa joined the remainder of her family in the Western Cape. The Lekhotas were then living in a corrugated-iron hostel at a place which they refer to as 'Rivier', which is apparently close to Hermanus⁹. There was no school at Rivier and none of the Lekhota children there attended school whilst they were there. Mr Lekhota was transferred back to Hermanus at the end of 1983, and his family accompanied him. Khosi joined the family a few months later, in early 1984. Although there were a number of schools in Hermanus, none of the Lekhota children attended school that year. Mrs Lekhota explained:

I went to the school and asked them to take my children. They told me that the school was for Coloureds. They said it was the law, and they would be in trouble if they let black children into the school. [Parental Interview]

The family stayed at Hermanus into 1985. Thembeni turned seven years old that year; like the other children, he did not attend school because there was no facility which permitted entry to Africans.

Midway through 1985 Mr Lekhota was transferred to Lwandle, and the remainder of the family moved to a room in a house in Guguletu. They joined Mr Lekhota at Lwandle early in 1986, but returned to Guguletu following the 'trespassing raids' which occurred during that year. During 1985 and 1986 the children had on both occasions not registered at school in Guguletu because they had arrived too late in the year to do so; there was no school at Lwandle at the time, and, even if there had

⁹ I have been unable to locate a place of this name on a map of the area.

been, the children's eviction from the hostels would have caused their schooling to be interrupted. Thembeni and Fundiswa remained in Guguletu with Mrs Lekhota, but shortly after their arrival Khosi was sent to stay with Mrs Lekhota's parents in Eliot. She rejoined Mrs Lekhota and the other children when they returned to Lwandle in early 1987.

Fundiswa was 12 years old, Khosi was 11 years old, and Thembeni was nine years old when the family moved to Lwandle the second time. All three of the children had yet to attend school.

Lwandle School was opened in 1987, and Khosi and Thembeni registered at the school. Khosi however did not spend much of that year at school:

I was looking after my brothers...Somnci ['older sister' - her biological mother] was working on the farm, and there was no-one here to look after them....Siyabulela [an older Lekhota child] sometimes helped, and then I went to school. But he was always looking for piece-work, and when he was looking I had to stay with my brothers. [Khosi: Interview]

Fundiswa did not register at the school along with Thembeni and Khosi. Mrs Lekhota had found employment as a live-in domestic worker at the Strand, and returned to Lwandle only over weekends. Fundiswa and Mrs Lekhota's youngest child, who was only a year old, stayed with their mother at the Strand during the week. During this time Fundiswa helped her mother with her wage-earning duties and in caring for her infant brother. Fundiswa explained why she did not go to school:

I missed my mother. I did not like to be away from her....When I was at the Strand my mother said that it is too far to walk to school everyday....She said I must not go to school. [Fundiswa: Interview]

Mrs Lekhota's account was slightly different. She said that Fundiswa had cried at the prospect of being separated from her, and that she had been so upset that Mrs Lekhota had in the end allowed her to accompany her to the Strand. She did however admit that it had been useful having Fundiswa with her to care for her youngest child when she performed her duties.

Fundiswa returned to Lwandle in 1988, and all three of the children registered at school. Khosi was promoted to Sub B in 1988 despite her frequent absences from school the previous year. Thembeni was however not promoted to Sub B, and he and Fundiswa therefore entered Sub A. Fundiswa was 13 years old; this was the first time that she had ever been to school.

Khosi and Thembeni continued with their schooling consistently and were promoted to the subsequent Standards. Fundiswa however dropped out midway through the year. Initially she played hooky to visit her mother at the Strand, and was sometimes absent from school for weeks on end. She eventually ceased to attend school altogether, spending all but weekends

away from the hostels at the Strand. Mrs Lekhota claimed that she had attempted to make Fundiswa attend school:

I told her that Khosi and Thembeni were already above her at school. I said that Khosi would be her "madam" one day if she did not go to school...She did not want to listen. She said that she would go to school and stay in the hostels, but then she always started to come back to me at Strand. There was nothing I could do, so she stopped going to school and stayed with me. [Parental Interview]

Thembeni's account of his sister's extended absences and eventual drop-out from school was consistent with that of Mrs Lekhota; it was also very disapproving:

She did not like to go to school, that is why she went to Strand. Before she stayed at Strand she always used to run away from the school; she said she wanted to be with my mother. When we went to school in the morning, she ran to my mother at Strand....My mother was angry with her, and sent her back to Lwandle. But she would not listen, and she still went to my mother when she should go to school. In the end my mother said she must just stay at Strand. [Thembeni: Interview]

Towards the end of 1988 Mrs Lekhota's employer reprimanded her, saying that there were too many people staying in her quarters at the house in the Strand. Mrs Lekhota had little choice but to insist that Fundiswa return permanently to the hostels. Fundiswa therefore began Sub A for the second time in 1989. She attended school consistently throughout the year, but Jennifer was dubious that she had made sufficient progress to advance to Sub B.

There is a multiplicity of factors which have interacted to obstruct the Lekhota children's attendance at school. Firstly, in three of the places in which they have lived there were no schooling facilities available to them: in 'Rivier' there was no school at all, whilst in Hermanus and Lwandle during 1986 there were no schools which would admit African children. Secondly, the extreme mobility which the Lekhota children have experienced has clearly impeded their attendance at school. Between the time that Mr Lekhota obtained employment in Hermanus and when the family finally took up residence at Lwandle - a period of approximately six years -

the core nucleus of the Lekhota family, consisting of Mrs Lekhota and the children, moved residence no less than six times: from Hermanus they moved to Rivier; from Rivier they moved back to Hermanus; from Hermanus they moved to Guguletu; from Guguletu they moved to Lwandle; from Lwandle they moved back to Guguletu; and then, finally, they moved back to Lwandle. In addition, many of these moves were not commensurate with the beginning or end of school terms. Thus, even if there had been schools open to the children at Rivier, Hermanus, and Lwandle there would have been little chance of the children attending school consistently in the context of such residential flux, and consequently of their making any substantial progress with their education.

The third determinant, which is evident in the case of Fundiswa, is separation from parents and the emotional anguish which this causes children. Although the Lekhota children's separation from Mr and Mrs Lekhota during 1987 and 1988 was not absolute - both stayed, and continue to stay, at the hostels over weekends - in Fundiswa's case this separation was the direct cause of her even further delayed entry into school, and also of her subsequent drop-out from school when she eventually did enrol. As Fundiswa explained, she missed her mother and "did not like being away from her". She had initially objected so strongly to being separated from Mrs Lekhota that the latter decided to allow her to stay at the Strand; similarly, when she entered Sub A for the first time the following year it was again Fundiswa's separation from her mother which caused her to run away from school, and eventually to drop out altogether for the remainder of the year. There may certainly have been other

contributing factors, such as the stigma of being an older child in a Standard constituted by children who were generally very much younger than herself. Nevertheless, the likelihood of Fundiswa not attending school along with Khosi and Thembeni when they first began Sub A, and of her withdrawal the subsequent year, would have been reduced had Mrs Lekhota been at Lwandle where she could have provided Fundiswa with the emotional security for which she has clearly been so desperate.

Finally, there are also indications that Fundiswa's presence at the Strand was useful to Mrs Lekhota. Fundiswa has stated that "my mother....said I must not go to school"; in addition, although Mrs Lekhota denies that she explicitly instructed Fundiswa to stay away from school, she did say that Fundiswa was a great help to her, both in caring for her youngest child whilst she engaged in her wage-earning duties, and even at times in aiding her with those duties. Whilst Fundiswa's utility to Mrs Lekhota may not have been the foremost reason for her absence from school, it probably at least played a minor role in it.

Case 9.2 *Schooling, separation from parents, and fostering*

Christinah Mbewu began school in 1981 when she was seven years old (see LHS 6). She was living in Mount Fletcher in the Transkei with her mother and siblings, and her father lived and was employed in Umtata. Christinah completed Sub A at the end of that year, and Sub B at the end of 1982. Towards the end of the following year, when Christinah was nine years old and was doing Standard 1, Mrs Mbewu left Mount Fletcher to visit her husband, who had secured employment in the Western Cape. Christinah and her siblings were left in the care of Mrs Mbewu's sister and her husband. She completed Standard 1 at the end of that year.

Mrs Mbewu remained in the Western Cape with her husband during 1984. Christinah's three older brothers and her aunt's 10-year-old daughter registered at school that year, but Christinah did not. She explained:

My aunt told me that there was not enough money for me to go to school. She said I must stay at home with the other [younger] children. My brothers were angry with her; they said that my mother always sent enough money for us so that we could go to school. My aunt told us that my mother did not send enough money. [Christinah: Interview]

By the time that Mrs Mbewu learned about Christinah's predicament when she returned for a short visit during 1984, it was already too late in the year for Christinah to be admitted to school. She was exceedingly angry with her sister, claiming that the money which had been remitted to her had been sufficient for the maintenance and schooling of all of her children. There was however little that Mrs Mbewu could do at that stage of the school year.

Following a subsequent visit to Mount Fletcher over Christmas at the end of the same year, Mrs Mbewu took Christinah back to Lwandle with her in the hope that she would be able to register her at a school in Khayelitsha. She approached a number of schools, but all were unwilling to admit Christinah: one school official told Mrs Mbewu that places at the school had been filled some months before the end of the previous year, and another informed her that Christinah required a letter from her previous school principal (which she did not have). Christinah therefore remained with her parents at Lwandle for the year of 1985 and, once more, did not attend school.

In 1986 Christinah returned to her aunt in the Transkei; more or less simultaneously, her two older brothers joined Mr and Mrs Mbewu in the Western Cape, where they intended to seek employment. Mrs Mbewu and her sister had apparently overcome their differences, and the latter had given Mrs Mbewu her assurance that Christinah would attend school. Christinah therefore entered Standard 2 in 1986, after having been away from school for two years. She was 12 years old, and should have entered Standard 4 that year.

Some time during 1986 Christinah's aunt's husband left Mount Fletcher to seek employment on the Witwatersrand. After he had been away for a few months, Christinah's aunt decided to join him. She sent her own children to stay with her husband's parents in Mount Fletcher; however, according to Christinah her aunt's parents-in-law had not wished to care for her, and nor did she want to live with them. Her aunt therefore put her on a bus to her family in the Western Cape. Once more, Christinah lost a year of school.

Lwandle School opened the following year, and during 1987 and 1988 Christinah completed Standards 2 and 3. She is presently 15 years of age, and is doing Standard 4. A child of her age should ideally have already completed Standard 6; Christinah has passed only Standard 3, and is therefore three years behind the expected level of education of children of her age.

Christinah's impeded progress through school has clearly had nothing whatsoever to do with her ability; indeed, she completed the first three years of her schooling without failure, and for the last two years has shown that she is amongst the most able of the children at Lwandle School. Nor has lack of appreciation of the value of education on the part of her parents played any part in frustrating her schooling. On the contrary, the importance which Mrs Mbewu places in education for her children is evident in her anger at her sister's actions during 1984, and in the efforts which she made to secure a place for Christinah at schools in Khayelitsha. It is also clear from Christinah's diary that her parents actively encourage her in her schooling:

My father advised me to read my books and not to play at school. He said he spends a lot of money for me to be at school. I always listen to my parents when they advise me. I am really worried because I want to satisfy my parents. [Christinah: 1/8/89]

The factors which have obstructed Christinah's educational advancement are primarily twofold, and are both derivative ultimately from apartheid and the system of migrant labour. Firstly, Christinah's schooling was interrupted in 1984, and again in 1986, as a direct result of her separation from her parents. Mrs Mbewu left her children in the care of her sister in order to spend time with her migrant husband. Had Mrs Mbewu not been away during 1984 and 1986, and had there been no cause for her and her children to be separated from Mr Mbewu in the first place, it is highly improbable that Christinah would have been permitted by her parents to lose these two years in her schooling. Secondly, Christinah had failed to attend school during 1985 because there was no place for her at schools in

Khayelitsha, and because, as in the case of the Lekhota children, there were no schooling facilities either at Lwandle or elsewhere in its immediate vicinity which were open to African children. Moreover, if there had been a school in the area which could have admitted her, then it is quite likely that she would have remained there during 1986, and would therefore now be only one year instead of three years behind in her schooling. Christinah thus missed school during the latter two years as a direct consequence of the application of apartheid in education.

There is one further feature of Christinah's case which is worthy of note. Christinah said that she was forced to stay at home with the younger children of the household when her aunt kept her away from school in 1984. She did not say whether she had been charged explicitly with the care of these younger children, but it could have been that part of her aunt's motivation for keeping Christinah out of school was that it was advantageous to her to have her help in day to day domestic work. There were also hints of similar circumstances in Fundiswa's case: although Mrs Lekhota was adamant that Fundiswa was with her in the Strand because Fundiswa wished to be there, she also admitted that she welcomed her help in caring for the youngest Lekhota child.

Amongst other things, the case of Mandisa demonstrates clearly how child-care by children contributes directly to children's long-term absence from school.

Case 9.3 *Child-care by children*

Mandisa Sonamzi is 11 years old (see LHS 3). She has six siblings, of whom four are older and two are younger than

herself. Only one of the older siblings is female: she is double the age of Mandisa, and is married. The two younger siblings, a sister and a brother, are seven and four years old. Mandisa's father has been living at Lwandle since before her birth.

Mandisa began school in 1985, the year in which she turned seven. At the time she lived with her mother and her siblings at the home of her paternal grandmother in Lady Frere in the Transkei. Mandisa passed Sub A at the end of 1985, and entered Sub B at the beginning of the following year. Mrs Sonamzi left Lady Frere for an extended visit to her husband shortly after the school-year had begun. Mandisa's sister had married at the beginning of that year, and her oldest brother was employed on the mines. When Mrs Sonamzi left, one of Mandisa's remaining older brothers stayed with his grandmother, but Mandisa, Sidney (the brother immediately older than Mandisa), and the two younger siblings were sent to live with their maternal aunt. The latter lived in the Lady Frere district, and the move did not therefore involve a major geographical disruption for the children.

Sidney continued to attend the school which he had been attending prior to the children's move to their aunt. Mandisa however did not continue with her schooling after the move. Her younger sister and brother were at that stage four years old and one year old. The youngest child had not yet been weaned by Mrs Sonamzi, and one of the reasons for sending the children to Mandisa's aunt had been that she was suckling a child herself, and could therefore act as wet-nurse to Mandisa's infant sibling. In addition, Mandisa's aunt had a number of other very young children of her own. It was therefore agreed before Mrs Sonamzi left that Mandisa would remain at home to help her aunt care for her younger siblings. As a result, Mandisa did not complete Sub B that year.

Mrs Sonamzi returned to Lady Frere towards the end of the year, and the children moved back to live with her. Mandisa re-entered Sub B in 1987; she was then nine years old. She completed Sub B at the end of that year, and entered Standard 1 in 1988.

Some time during the course of the year Mrs Sonamzi removed Sidney and Mandisa from school, and sent them to Lwandle. Asked why her mother had sent her to Lwandle, Mandisa claimed that she had been ill and that her mother wished her to receive medical treatment in the Western Cape. Mr Sonamzi's explanation was very different. Whilst at Lwandle a year and a half previously Mrs Sonamzi had discovered that her husband had a permanent girlfriend who usually lived at Lwandle with him. Upon her return to Lady Frere she had written a number of letters to the girlfriend bidding her to leave Mr Sonamzi alone. According to Mr Sonamzi, Mandisa's health was perfect when she arrived at Lwandle. He thus believes that his wife

sent Sidney and Mandisa to Lwandle to spy on him and his girlfriend, and even if possible to sever the relationship¹⁰.

Whatever the case may be, Mandisa dropped out of Standard 1 when she went to Lwandle; her schooling was therefore interrupted once again. The following year, in 1989, she entered Standard 1 for the second time at Lwandle School.

At one level, Mandisa's case is similar to that of Christinah in that she initially dropped out of school as a consequence of her mother's visit to her father: because Mandisa's siblings required care whilst Mrs Sonamzi was away, Mandisa stayed away from school in order to provide that care. At this level, therefore, it was her father's involvement in labour migration which was the fundamental cause of Mandisa's withdrawal from school during 1986. The same can be said of her withdrawal from Standard 1 the following year. Mr Sonamzi had been separated from his family since before Mandisa's birth, and had taken a girlfriend in the enforced absence of his wife. Given these circumstances, and the fact that Mandisa appears to have been in good health when she arrived at the hostels, it seems as though Mrs Sonamzi sent Mandisa and Sidney to Lwandle in the hope that they would in some way deter or dissolve this relationship¹¹. On this count, therefore, Mandisa's schooling was interrupted as a consequence of the pressures which migrant labour place on marital relations.

At another level, there is in all of this a more immediate contributing variable which distinguishes Mandisa from Christinah. When Christinah's mother left her children in the

¹⁰ Mandisa initially referred to the girlfriend as her mother. When we could not make sense of her life history because she also referred to a mother in the Transkei, she eventually admitted that the person to whom she was referring at Lwandle was her father's girlfriend. She said that she had been embarrassed to tell us of the girlfriend, but denied vehemently that she and Sidney had been sent to encourage the girlfriend to leave.

¹¹ Ramphela (1989a:12) has suggested that a common ploy used by women who wish to visit, check on, or exact remittances from their husbands is to feign illness as an excuse for coming to the urban areas.

Transkei, she did so having satisfied herself that their schooling would continue. Mrs Sonamzi, on the other hand, made arrangements which specifically precluded Mandisa from continuing with her schooling. Moreover, she sent Mandisa to Lwandle fully cognisant of the fact that her daughter would lose yet another year of her schooling. Whilst the circumstances which have led to Mandisa's hindered educational advancement certainly arose in the first place as a result of Mr Sonamzi's involvement in labour migration, the more immediate reason for it is that her mother seems to place scant importance on Mandisa's education. Parental intervention such as this, and the attitudes and values which inform it, may themselves be significant determinants of education. I shall return to these variables later in the chapter.

Children's mobility, their separation from parents, the need for child-care when mothers are absent - all of which are ultimately derivative of the migrant labour system - have clearly had an immense impact on the educational advancement of Mandisa, Christinah, and the Lekhota children. The same impact is evident when schooling is considered in relation to the life histories which were presented earlier in the study.

The experiences of Xolisile (see Chapter 2) and the Nkosathi brothers (see case 5.2) have been remarkably similar to those of the Lekhota children with regard to mobility. Between the ages of seven and 12 years, a period of about five years, Xolisile moved residence six times; in addition, he spent almost a year travelling with his father when he was 12 years old. Xolisile registered at school twice during this five year period: first when he was seven years old in Hanover,

and second when he returned to Hanover and lived there in the absence of his parents. On the first occasion Xolisile left school during the year because his father had ceased to remit to the family and his mother decided to move to her sister in Victoria West; on the second occasion he completed Sub A, the only Standard he completed during this five year period.

Similarly, the Nkosathi brothers moved residence very frequently, fluctuating continuously between the Western Cape and their grandparents in the Karoo: Mphumzi is now five years behind in his schooling, and Siyabulela is three years behind.

Like Christinah and Mandisa, several of the other children missed school whilst in foster care, even though there were schools open to them in the places where they were living. Thembela's experience (see case 5.5) was virtually identical to that of Christinah. She entered school at the age of eight years when her family were living with friends in the Transkei. She passed Sub A, and entered Sub B the following year after her parents had separated and her mother had taken her and her siblings to live with their maternal grandmother. Earlier that year her mother had moved to Lwandle to seek employment to support her family, leaving Thembela and some of her siblings in the care of her grandmother. Thembela's grandmother prevented her from attending school in 1986, the year in which she should have entered Standard 1. As had been Christinah's experience, Thembela's grandmother claimed that she could not afford the expense, and she therefore remained at home with her younger siblings. In 1987 Thembela's mother remitted extra money to the grandmother, and Thembela entered Standard 1. The

grandmother however died during the year, and Thembela had to leave school to join her mother at Lwandle.

Lumka is another child whose retarded progress at school derives from fostering (see case 5.7). She began school when she was living with her grandmother in the Transkei, and completed Sub A to Standard 2 without failure or interruption. She was doing Standard 3 when her grandmother died in 1986. For the remainder of that year, and for part of 1987, Lumka lived with neighbours of her grandmother. Her foster family did not permit her to attend school; Lumka therefore did not complete Standard 3 that year, and did not register at school the following year. She thus lost two years of schooling during that time.

In addition, although they never mentioned this to me in the context of schooling specifically, it is quite likely that the anguish which children experienced when their parents were absent substantially affected their performances at school: if children pine after their parents when they are gone, and if they worry about their safety, then they do so also when they are at school. Similarly, even when parents were *present*, the uncertainty with which the parent-child relationship was so often imbued due to past experiences of separation may also have affected children's schooling: if children fear that they will awake in the morning to find that their parents have left, as some have testified they had done, then they will also carry that fear with them into the classroom, worrying that their parents may no longer be at home when they return from school. These are intangible aspects of migrant labour. As we have

seen in Chapter 5, however, they are very significant to those who experience them.

Finally, the extent to which apartheid in education has affected the children's attendance at school is self-evident. It has played a role in attenuating the Lekhota children's attendance at school, it has affected Christinah, and it has affected all of the children, amongst whom are Xolisile, Mphumzi, Siyabulela, and Nosipho, who lived at Lwandle prior to 1987. In the absence of apartheid in education, all of these children would have been permitted to attend schools in the places where they were prohibited from doing so. Moreover, the absence of *African* schools in rural areas of the Western Cape derives directly from the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, and from attempts by the state to discourage completely African permanent residence in the region. In this respect too migrant labour policy has contributed to children's delayed entry into school, and to their withdrawal from it for long periods of time.

The impact which both migration and separation from parents have upon children's receipt of education is reinforced further by the experiences of those few children who had been *neither* mobile *nor* separated from their parents before coming to Lwandle. In Chapter 5 it was shown that the three children whose parents were *not* engaged in labour migration before moving to the Western Cape, Nomvuyo, Ntobeko, and Niombosi, were distinctive in that they had been separated very little from either of their parents. The same applied to the two children, Nolandela and Thembela, whose parents were matrimonially separated: none of their parents had migrated

before the break-up of their marriages, and consequently neither of these children had been separated from their parents, and neither had moved around extensively. As is evident from Table 9.2, there are four children of the total of 24 who have never missed a year of school. Three of these children, Nomvuyo, Ntobeko, and Nolandela, are amongst the five who are mentioned immediately above. All of their residence had been relatively stable before moving to Lwandle, and none had been separated significantly from their parents. None of them has missed any schooling.

It is apt to return briefly to the findings of the De Lange Commission in summing up the impact which migrant labour has on children's schooling. In its Report on Demography, Education, and Manpower, the Commission emphasised that "[p]opulation migrations have far-reaching implications for the provision of education facilities" (De Lange Commission Report on Demography, Education, and Manpower 1981:4). Reading further, however, the naivete and, in this regard, the incompetence of the Commission becomes clear:

The migration pattern is dominated by two characteristics, namely a move to the north and north-east and greater concentrations of especially Whites in the large metropolitan areas. (De Lange Commission Report on Demography, Education, and Manpower 1981:5)

This is the sum total of the attention which is paid to the topic of migration in the Report; it is clear, moreover, that the Commission's concept of migration is of a one-way movement, which demonstrates either complete ignorance of certain of the demographic realities which have been present in South Africa for decades, or shrewd avoidance of them. Nowhere are migratory oscillation, or the high mobility of large numbers of

South Africans, discussed or even raised as factors which might be worthy of consideration in the planning of education facilities for the future.

It is abundantly clear that the mobility of the Lwandle children, which in the large majority of instances has been consequent upon parental involvement in labour migration, has greatly impeded their progress through school. It is also clear that the social features which are so often associated with migrant families - conjugal separation, marital breakdown, foster relationships, and child-care by children - have been significant determinants of the educational circumstances in which the Lwandle children now find themselves. These are factors which are external to the education system itself; their impact upon children's schooling has nevertheless been immense.

The domestic economy of schooling

I want to build a big house for my parents. I cannot go further; it is a long time since I have been at school. I want money now. I want to live in a beautiful house like other children. I can see how the other children are working for their parents.
[Nandipha: "What I Want to Be"]

The only study that I know of which has made any significant attempt to deal with education in the context of micro-level extra-school influences is that of Graaff (1987). In a paper in which he attempted to explain school enrollment rates in three villages in rural Bophutatswana in terms of local-level social, economic, and political factors, Graaff (1987) related enrollment and withdrawal rates to domestic variables such as household type, dependency ratios, material

resources, and income levels. Although he did find general correlations between levels of impoverishment and levels of school attendance, Graaff also found that enrollment rates were highest in the two villages in which household herds were largest, whilst school enrollment in the third village, in which herds were smaller, was significantly lower. In addition, contrary to studies elsewhere in Bophutatswana which suggest that young children are commonly employed on farms in harvesting time, Graaff's work showed that there were in fact very few children in any of the three villages who engaged, either temporarily or permanently, in wage labour. Amongst other things, Graaff was thus led to conclude that

whatever it is that pushes or pulls children away from school, it is not the prospect of employment at a young age nor the need for herders of a relatively young age (1987:37).

There are clearly fundamental structural and economic differences between rural Bophutatswana and Lwandle, and it would be pointless to make direct comparisons between the two; for one thing, Lwandle residents have neither livestock nor land, and for another there are far more wage-earning opportunities and far more funds in immediate circulation in and around Lwandle than there are in rural Bophutatswana. In addition, my research included only those children who were attending school, and I therefore do not have data on the domestic circumstances of children who *should* have been at school but were not.

Nevertheless, the experiences of a number of the *school-children* at Lwandle suggest that children are withdrawn from school, or are absent from it frequently, during times of

particularly acute economic hardship. In this respect, the general circumstances surrounding withdrawal from school at Lwandle are the same as those in the Bophutatswana villages studied by Graaff: children leave school because their parents or guardians cannot afford for them to be there. However, the experiences of the Lwandle school-children also indicate that they are not withdrawn from school merely as a result of severe impoverishment; rather, they are withdrawn because they are able to make direct *financial contributions* to their bedholds, and thereby to assist in *alleviating* this impoverishment. In this latter respect children at Lwandle, unlike those in Bophutatswana, thus often miss school precisely because they have income-generating potential.

The children's attendance at school was monitored over the six week period during which they wrote their diaries. Many of them were absent for a few days during this time, and they ascribed these absences to a variety of factors such as illness of either themselves or their parents, short-term inability to pay school-fees by the due date, or the need to remain at home either to care for younger siblings or to guard the family's possessions because mothers were called away from Lwandle for a day or two. But there were also four children - Xolisa, Nodazibona, Khosi, and Xolisile - who were absent far more frequently than others: Xolisa was absent for 18 out of the possible 30 school-days, Nodazibona was absent for 11 days, and Khosi and Xolisile were both absent for 15 days. In each of the above four instances, the children were absent from school as a direct result of economic pressures, and in three instances the children were called upon to make direct

financial contributions to their bedholds. Xolisa's case demonstrates something of this.

Case 9.4 *Children and piece-work*

We are poor at home. We are really starving. [Xolisa: "Who I Am"]

Xolisa Lalile is 13 years old, and is doing Standard 1 at Lwandle School. He received the lowest marks in his Standard in all of the mid-year tests which the children wrote. Xolisa's father is a municipal employee, and Mrs Lalile retails a small selection of goods from the family's bedhold. Other members of the bedhold include Xolisa's two younger brothers, aged one and five years, and two adult male friends of the family, both of whom are unemployed. There are thus eight bedhold members who are all dependent on Mr Lalile's income and whatever Mrs Lalile's business brings in.¹²

Xolisa explained his frequent and often extended absences from school:

There is sometimes not enough money for food for everyone....When the money is low, my mother sends me to work at the taxis...If there is no work at the taxis, then I go to the houses of the white people to look for piece-work. [Xolisa: Interview]

On two of the days for which Xolisa was absent he went looking for work in the surrounding 'White' settlements; on the remaining occasions he spent each day at the taxi-rank.

There are generally two types of work which Xolisa might obtain at the taxi-rank. When he is lucky he is able to attach himself to one particular taxi, acting as its 'caller' for the day. This job involves travelling with the taxi wherever it goes, recruiting passengers at its stops by shouting out (calling) the taxi's destination, and collecting fares from passengers before they disembark. Payment for work as a caller varies generally from R5 to R10 per day. The taxi-drivers prefer to employ children in this work because they are lighter and take up less space than adults. Xolisa is not often able to find such work, since most drivers have regular callers (children who do not attend school).

The second type of work which Xolisa obtains at the taxi-rank, and which he does far more frequently, is the washing of vehicles. When there is no calling work available, Xolisa simply waits around the taxi-rank with other opportunistic children whilst the taxis come and go. When taxis arrive he approaches drivers asking them if they wish him to wash their vehicles. Sometimes he has to compete with other children who make the same offer, but more often than not the children form

¹² According to employees of Somerset West municipality who were covered in the survey, municipal workers of their general status earn R350 to R400 per month.

small cartels, bidding for washes together and splitting the proceeds between them. They are paid anything from 50c to R2 per vehicle. According to one taxi-driver:

I could wash my bus myself, or I could make my caller or my children do it. It would be cheaper for me....But the children need the money, and they wait the whole day for 50c or R1. I like to help them, so I let them wash the car....The problem is that the children must eat, but their parents are not working. If we are lucky ourselves then we must help our own people. [Interview]

It is only when Xolisa can find no work with the taxi-drivers that he resorts to seeking odd jobs in the surrounding towns. I asked him why he does the latter if he cannot find work at the taxi-rank, and why he does not simply return to school when this happens. He replied that his mother becomes angry if he goes home with no money to give her. However, he said that it is very seldom that he makes no money at all at the taxi-rank, and that it thus does not happen often that he has to go to Somerset West or the Strand. He said that it is very difficult to find work in these places, and that he has never found anything but garden-work; even this he has found only twice¹³. Sometimes the people who he approaches for work take him to be a beggar and give him small amounts of loose change; more often they take him to be a vagrant or thief, and set their dogs on him. As a result, Xolisa avoids this course of action if he can possibly help it.

Although Xolisile would not himself reveal why he was absent, according to his friends he also seeks work at the taxi-rank; like Xolisa, too, he is apparently instructed to do so by his parents when times are particularly bad (see Chapter 2). It is thus reasonable to assume that Xolisile was absent for the same reasons as was Xolisa.

The third child who was absent frequently, Nodazibona, missed school for 11 out of the possible 30 school-days over which the children's school attendance was monitored; six of these days were Fridays, and the other five were other days of the week¹⁴.

¹³ Xolisa is one of the few children who speaks a little Afrikaans, and this puts him in a better position than many other children when it comes to seek working in surrounding settlements. Nevertheless, his knowledge of the language is slight and very basic, which probably exacerbates the difficulty of finding such work.

¹⁴ Nodazibona in fact missed school virtually every Friday whilst I was at Lwandle.

Case 9.5 *Children in the informal sector*

Nodazibona lives at Lwandle with her maternal grandparents, her maternal uncle and maternal aunt (John and Bheli), and two of her mother's other siblings' children. The latter children are both four years of age. Nodazibona's grandfather is unemployed, her grandmother is engaged in full-time domestic work, and John is a construction worker; Bheli sells home-cooked foods to hostel residents to supplement the income of the bedhold. Nodazibona is 12 years old, and is presently doing Standard 1.

Fridays mark the beginning of the weekend shebeen trade, and the bulk of Bheli's food sales take place in shebeens. Although she sometimes cooks and sells food at other times, Fridays and Saturdays constitute her busiest and most lucrative period. As a consequence, Nodazibona stays away from school on Fridays to help Bheli with her business.

The two begin cooking on two small primus stoves early in the morning, so that by midday they have prepared a large quantity of fried chicken pieces and *vetkoek* (buns fried in oil), the two most popular of Bheli's wares. When they have prepared sufficient food for Bheli to manage the cooking on her own, Nodazibona fills a large plastic basin with chicken and *vetkoek*, and sets of around the shebeens to sell the food. This continues until late in the evening: Bheli cooks, and Nodazibona moves from shebeen to shebeen selling the food. The same procedure is repeated on Saturdays¹⁵.

Bheli usually pays Nodazibona a small amount (R1 or R2) for her efforts over the two days¹⁶. Although she could not estimate how much money she makes from her business, Bheli did claim that its proceeds constitute a vital part of the family's income. Nodazibona accounted for her other absences from school (those which did not take place on Fridays) by saying either that she had been sick, or that Bheli had required her to stay home to help her with cooking and domestic chores.

The above children, Xolisa, Nodazibona, and Xolisile, and others of the twenty-four who at different times may have been absent from school for similar reasons, are by definition not yet full school drop-outs; they still attend school, even if they do so sporadically. However, their cases provide some

¹⁵ Schildkrout (1978) has documented how Hausa children sell the wares of their mothers and foster-mothers in markets during the day. She has also suggested that women actually take in children for fostering in order to be able to use them for this purpose.

¹⁶ Nodazibona has used this money to initiate a small enterprise of her own. Every time that she receives payment from her aunt, Nodazibona invests the money in cheap sweets which either she or her aunt purchases when one or both of them shop in Somerset West. Nodazibona then sells these sweets, at a mark-up of 100%, at school and around the hostels. In so doing, she generates an income for herself of between R2 and R4 per week.

insight into the material circumstances which might lead to children dropping out of school altogether: either such children eventually withdraw from school because they are absent so frequently that there is little point in their continuing, or they withdraw so as to engage in income-seeking activities on a full-time basis. Either way, it is poverty, and often desperation on the part of their parents, which leads to these circumstances. The case of Sipho, the only child in the Standard 1 to Standard 4 category who withdrew from school but who continued to live in the hostels (whilst I worked there), endorses this.

Case 9.6 Children as full-time earners¹⁷

Sipho lives at Lwandle with his mother, her boyfriend, and a number of siblings; at 11 years of age, he is the oldest child in the bedhold.

Sipho entered Standard 1 at Lwandle School at the beginning of 1989. At this juncture his mother's boyfriend was employed in construction work, but his mother was unemployed. Sipho was absent from school far more than he was ever present during the period for which he was registered. Like Xolisa, his friends said that he spent much of his time seeking and every now and then acquiring work at the taxi-rank. Some time in April Sipho's mother's boyfriend was fired from his job, leaving the bedhold with no regular source of income. It was at this point that Sipho ceased to attend school altogether. His mother explained that she no longer had money to pay his school-fees, although she would have liked him to continue at school.

Sipho procured permanent employment as a caller for one of the taxi-drivers shortly after withdrawing from school. He has worked for this driver since that time, and has not returned to school at all. According to children who know him, he remains the only member of his bedhold who generates a regular income: both his mother and her boyfriend are still unemployed, although the latter apparently occasionally obtains piece-work.

¹⁷ Sipho left Lwandle School after I had been there for no more than a few weeks; he was therefore not included in the core sample of children. I was nevertheless interested to find out why he had ceased attending school, and made enquiries about him with his mother, with Jennifer, and with other children at the school. I spoke to his mother only very briefly.



Siphoniso, who left school to work on the taxis.

Siphoniso's case is informative in a number of respects. Firstly, it provides an example of the way in which poverty leaves parents little choice but to remove their children from school: even if Siphoniso had not found employment, he would still have been withdrawn from school because his mother could not have afforded to continue paying his school-fees. Secondly, before leaving school Siphoniso had been employed on a number of occasions in the taxi business, and had thus already demonstrated his ability to generate some form of income. Even though his mother claims that she withdrew Siphoniso from school due to her inability to pay his school-fees, it is probable

that one of her immediate intentions was that Siphso should leave school in order to provide the bedhold with some means of survival. Finally, Siphso's case provides an example of what could well eventually happen to others of the children whose domestic material circumstances are similar to those of Siphso's bedhold; it is a potential conclusion to the cases of others of the children who have been discussed above.

What of Khosi, the fourth child who missed school for much of the time? The reason for Khosi's absence during the six week period was the same as for her frequent absences during her first year of school (see case 9.1). During 1987 Khosi did not attend school for much of the time because she had to mind her younger half-siblings whilst Sylvia, her biological mother, was at work. Sylvia subsequently employed a child-minder to care for her children during the day, and Khosi has been free to attend school. However, in the period under discussion the child-minder had returned briefly to the Transkei, and Khosi had therefore had to stay at home to mind the younger children.

What is significant about Khosi's absences, during both 1987 and 1989, is that Siyabulela (who is now 18 years old) was unemployed on both occasions: Khosi told me that in 1987 he "was always looking for piece-work, and when he was looking I had to stay with my brothers". When I worked at Lwandle Siyabulela had still not found full-time employment, yet Khosi was called away from school even though Siyabulela had still not found employment. It is likely that Khosi's gender had something to do with it, but another possible inference is that Siyabulela's *potential* income-generating capacity was prioritised over Khosi's schooling: the bedhold stood to lose

nothing materially if Khosi was withdrawn from school, but it did stand to lose if Siyabulela had to forfeit job-seeking and piece-work for three weeks. It therefore seems as though in certain circumstances school-children may be deemed to be readily available for child-care purposes precisely because they are at school and are not potential breadwinners themselves. It is quite likely that there are a number of children at Lwandle who do not attend school because by remaining at home they enable other bedholders to engage in income-generating activities.

In conclusion, the cases of Xolisa and Nodazibona, and the circumstances surrounding the absenteeism of Xolisile and Khosi, demonstrate some of the ways in which domestic economic considerations impact upon children's receipt of education. These children, and at different times others like them, make significant, even vital, contributions to the economic survival of their bedholds: they either generate income themselves, or, where they are involved in child-care, they free mothers, older siblings, and other adults to seek or engage in wage-earning activities. In addition, Sipho's experiences have demonstrated just how easily, and how suddenly, these children may be forced to cease attending school altogether: although the children at Lwandle School are by definition still school attenders, and although those discussed above have not withdrawn completely, this could change for any of them at any time. In the context of such precarious economic circumstances, children's continued attendance at school is vulnerable to even the smallest vicissitudes in the economic conditions of their domestic units.

Parents' attitudes and the opportunity costs of education

The parents whom I interviewed were unanimous that it is important for their children to attend school. In general, they cited two reasons for this importance: firstly that schools teach children discipline which they are often not able to receive at home, and secondly that there is nowadays little work for people who are not educated. Mrs Ndlovu, Nandipha's mother, expressed the feelings of many parents:

I want Nandipha to be educated. She must not be like us. The most important thing for me is to have money to send her to school. I want her to be able to speak English to the white man and to be able to use a pencil. We did not have the opportunity to do that. She will get bread if she can speak English....You can tell the children who are at school - they have manners. The ones who are not at school are rude. That is because they do not get discipline from the school, and they do not get it from their parents because they are outside all the time. [Parental Interview]

The sentiments of other parents were the same:

Schools help parents to discipline their children. They also prepare them for bread....A child must go to school until he can get a job so that he is able to bring bread for his family. [Mrs Nkosathi: Parental Interview]

The time is right now for educated people. Only educated people get jobs....We want our children to go to study until they can have a profession. [Mrs Bathathu: Parental Interview]

It is also evident from what many of the children have written that their parents encourage them at school. Nomsingisi and Lumka are two examples:

When I was still young I thought that education was a waste of time, but it is not so. My mother always encourages me to go to school. She always tells me that if I want to go to school I will be able to speak to whites. [Mandisa: "What I Want to Be"]

The happiest days of my life are when I go to school. I know that education will help me to be successful.

When I stop going to school, I become worried, and my parents also because they know the hardships of the future. [Lumka: "The Happiest Times of My Life"]

Although all of the children's parents say that they lay much store by education, there are differing levels of understanding amongst them about what education actually is. Many of the parents value education because they have not had it, and because their experiences of living without an education have demonstrated its importance to them. At the same time, such parents often also have little idea of what education really means and what it involves: if their children are attending school, then they are being educated. Factors such as achievement in terms of marks, progress through Standards, and the quality of teaching at school hardly enter their consideration.

On the other hand, there are also parents who demonstrate a keen awareness of what education should involve. Whilst unschooled or low-schooled parents are on the whole unable to specify which Standard they think is adequate for a child to reach before withdrawing from school - they usually defer to their children's judgement, saying things like "Ayande must decide for himself when he has had enough school" [Mrs Sibutha: Parental Interview] - schooled parents on the other hand speak of tertiary education being necessary for their children to lift themselves out of poverty. Mrs Gece, mother of Nkosnathi and Nosipho, has passed Standard 8:

School is important because it gives children broader ideas and it makes them aware of the world. There are things that my children know that even I do not know....My children must not stop school before Standard 10. They must even go to university if the money is there for them to go. [Parental Interview]

Nomvuyo's mother, Mrs Qiqimana, said much the same:

Education is the most important thing for a child.... When a child is at school he misses some of the bad things that happen in the townships....We can only give our children education up to Standard 10. If a child is clever and can get some bursaries, then she can go further. But even with only Standard 10, she can be a nurse. [Parental Interview]

It could be argued that in many of the cases which have been presented above there was room for better attempts by parents to ensure that their children attended school. It could be said that parents had choices: they could have sent their children to live with responsible relatives instead of trailing them around the countryside; they could have been more insistent about their attendance at school; or they could have motivated themselves and other bedhold members to seek employment. And because these options may at times have been available, it could be argued that what parents say about the value of education is not consistent with what they do, or fail to do, about it.

There *might* in a few instances be elements of truth in this. Perhaps Mrs Nkosathi *could* have left Mphumzi and Siyabulela with her parents in the Karoo, as she did her other children; perhaps Fundiswa's mother *should* have insisted that Fundiswa attend school along with Khosi and Thembeni; and perhaps Mrs Sonamzi *should not* have visited her husband at Lwandle if it meant that Mandisa would have to leave school. At the same time, such scenarios are incomplete because they fail to consider the contexts in which parents' decisions regarding their children's schooling, and intervention in it, take place. Quite simply, circumstances sometimes demand that parents *choose* between their children's education on the one hand, and other factors which, to them, are equally important

on the other. Mrs Nkosathi thus chose to have her children with her so that they could be close to her and her husband; Mrs Lekhota allowed her daughter to live with her because Fundiswa was so reluctant to live apart from her mother in the hostels; and Mrs Sonamzi visited her husband, and eventually sent Mandisa to Lwandle, because she valued her marriage and wished to preserve it.

On the whole, it has therefore been children's emotional needs, child-rearing and other familial ideals, and baseline economic circumstances which have determined the decisions which parents make regarding their children's schooling. In the contexts of migrancy and economic deprivation, this has meant that parents have at times chosen their children's health, peace of mind, and emotional stability, their need for food, clothing, and a roof under which to live, and their desire to live together as a family, over and above their schooling. It is not that parents devalue education; it is simply that they have to weigh the immediacies of its material and immaterial opportunity costs against those of other equally pressing considerations¹⁸.

Conclusion: building schools or building education?

It is clear from Chapter 8 that the children at Lwandle School would benefit greatly from more classrooms, improved facilities, and more and better qualified teachers. It is also likely that there are very many other schools in this country in which conditions are similar to those at Lwandle School; like the Lwandle children, those who attend these schools would

¹⁸ Graaff (1987) has discussed the economic (financial) opportunity costs of education, but he did not consider its immaterial opportunity costs.

gain much from improvements in these conditions. Many of the children have not attended school because in some places there have been no schools which are open to them; availability of schooling facilities is thus an extremely important element within the educational matrix. The critical significance of the internal dimensions of education, and in particular of educational provision, should therefore not be underestimated.

At the same time, it is equally important to recognise that 'school' is not just a building, and that overall advances in educational performance in South Africa will not be achieved merely by filling classrooms with equipment and better qualified teachers. Real progress in education can only take place in circumstances of geographic and conjugal stability, of economic and material security, and where there are demonstrable and humane opportunity costs in its favour. Contingently, improved access to education requires far more than simply erecting schools in every neighbourhood, in every farming district, and on every Bantustan koppie. It also demands access to housing and home-ownership, to durable employment, to wages which provide adequately for an entire family, and to a stable home environment. Whilst they may lead to improved education for some, policies and programmes which fail to address external determinants such as these will have little effect in achieving the parity in education which is the ostensible goal of the state; there will still be vast numbers of children who, by virtue of other debilitating effects of apartheid, will benefit little from such improvements. The efficacy of education policy in the long-term will therefore be dependent upon whether, and how well, the external determinants

of education are dealt with. The consequences if they are not have been neither contemplated nor recognised fully by educationalists. They need to be faced.

CHAPTER 10

THE FUTURE: ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE LWANDLE CHILDREN

An implicit objective of this study has been to demonstrate that children deserve a place in anthropology, that they are capable of assessing, analysing, and commenting on the world around them, and that they have much of value in the way of experience, knowledge, and perception to contribute to an understanding of the communities of which they are a part. The Lwandle children have begun to demonstrate these things. We have seen *some* of the important contributions which they make to their social and cultural milieus; their involvement in child-care; their economic activities; the emotional and sometimes even material support which they give their parents and other adults and children; and the games which they develop and play. Children's ability to appraise their social world, and their ability to articulate their appraisals, has also been apparent throughout the study. Something more of this is evident from a discussion in class when I asked the children how they would define apartheid. Ayande's hand was first in the air: "Apartheid" - he paused to think further - "...apartheid is something in the brain". Christinah was shrewd. Instead of answering the question, she asked one: "How are you and Themba friends?", she said looking devilish and a little smug. We asked her what that had to do with apartheid. She replied:

Because that is not apartheid. Everywhere else there is apartheid, but there is no apartheid between you. Apartheid is when black people and white people cannot be friends together. It is when blacks and

whites will not talk to each other as friends. But you and Themba are friends. I want to know how you beat apartheid. [Christinah: Class Discussion]

There were many more answers and many more definitions; they came so quickly that I did not have time to record many of them before Themba was translating the next one. Ntobeko's image captured the wider divisions and real experience of apartheid so very simply:

Apartheid is when you go into a shop and the shop has two sides. The one side is for white people and the other side is for black people. The white side is always beautiful, but the black side is ugly.
[Ntobeko: Class Discussion]

Clearly, children are important social actors, and they are capable of acute perception and insight. Yet the integral part which children play in perpetuating and transforming the social world, and their perceptions and expressions of it, have been ignored, avoided, or simply not recognised by anthropology. Reynolds has observed that

[c]hildren merge with, contribute to and are integrated into the cultural whole, but the culture does not directly represent them (1989:2).

It is certainly true that children are as much part of culture as anyone else, but to suggest that culture does not represent children misses a crucial point. And that is that it is not culture itself which fails to represent children; rather, it is anthropology's exclusion of children which intimates their lack of cultural representation. In other words, it is *anthropology* which has on the whole failed to recognise children's integration into culture, *anthropology* which has not deciphered and uncovered the ways in which culture represents children, and *anthropology* which has not incorporated children into its representations of culture. If children are integrated into

the cultural whole, then they are also represented by it. Anthropology needs to include children in its representations of culture; this study has attempted to begin to do so.

The anthropological study of children may require some degree of methodological innovation and circumstantial adaptation. In this study, children's written testimony has provided an invaluable source of raw data about their lives. A number of authors in a recent collection of papers proposed that fieldworkers' children may be fruitfully employed to gain insights into childhood in the communities within which their parents are working (see Butler and Turner 1987). Huntington, for example, suggested that

[a] most obvious area in which our children were essential was in the study of Hutterite children's informal culture. The rigidity of Hutterite social structure kept me away from the children's culture: as an adult participating in the system, I was never free to observe them when the children were most actively engaged in their own culture...(1987:69).

Certainly, anthropologists' own children may make useful contributions in the collection of data on children. But as a method in itself such means of research is inhibiting because of its reliance on second-hand data rather than data gathered from first-hand observation, interaction, and anthropological experience. Such a method is also evasive because it perpetuates anthropologists' avoidance of dealing directly with children. The only means of satisfactorily conducting research on children, if we are to do so as anthropologists, is to engage children as fully as possible ourselves. If anthropology's primary distinguishing features are its 'immersion' in the lives of its subjects and the depth of description and insight which this allows, then in the final

analysis the only way that we can study children in an anthropological manner is by employing anthropological research methods.

In dealing with children anthropologically there will always be aspects of childhood which remain elusive because they fall outside the ambit of anthropology's methodological and theoretical scope. But these are the points at which other disciplines should take over. There are aspects of children's lives covered or raised in this study which would be greatly illuminated by input from other disciplines. Psychologists, for example, could assess the long-term impacts on children of separation from their parents, exposure to overcrowding and violence, and domestic mobility and abandonment by parents and guardians. Educationalists could record and evaluate the content and quality of education in the classroom far more thoroughly and authoritatively than I have been able to do; they could also begin to develop innovative ways of educating which fit the demographic realities of South African society. These and other disciplines need to pick up at the points at which anthropology can go no further.

There are also aspects of this study which deserve fuller attention from anthropology than I have had space to grant them, and there are elements of childhood which I have not examined at all. There is much scope for anthropological work on children's play and the games which they invent: what do children's play-activities reflect about wider society; what do they tell us about children's home- and family-life; and how do children interpret society in their play? This study has focused primarily on children's relationships with parents and

other significant adults. What, though, of children's relationships with one another; what is the nature of interaction between siblings and how do siblings' relationships to one another change over time; how do children develop and exhibit leadership roles amongst themselves; and what are the rites of passage, formal or informal, which children impose on one another when moving from one circle of friends or some other social set to another? The study has dealt briefly with changes in household and family composition through time and across space. How is children's domestic labour affected by changes in household structure; how much do children contribute to the material upkeep of their families; what are the effects on children of childhood within female-headed domestic units; are the childhood experiences of abandoned, illegitimate, or orphaned children significantly different from those of other children? Indeed, what happens to orphaned children in the towns and in the countryside? There is also a need to know much more about those aspects of childhood in South Africa with which this study has dealt. The study has begun to illuminate segments of childhood experience amongst only a very small number of children. But there are millions more children in this country whose lives remain shuttered to us; we need to find out about these other children. We need to know about *their* mobility, *their* relationships with their parents, *their* experiences of education, and *their* everyday experiences in the townships, on farms, in homelands, in other hostels. There remains much work to be done.

In sum, we need to devote far more attention to children. They are significant innovators, contributors, and actors

within society and culture. We ought to display these things. Children also offer vast reservoirs of fresh information, opinion, and sociological perception which have yet to be properly tapped, and they hold insight and wisdom which is worthy of acknowledgement and expression. We ought to acknowledge them and facilitate their expression; there is much to be learnt from children. Very importantly, children's obscurity does not derive from their lack of cultural representation; it is a product of anthropological blindness. We need to develop a vision of children. An anthropology without children is only part anthropology, for in neglecting children anthropology neglects a large part of what defines it as a discipline -- humanity. Finally, from a methodological point of view, when all is said and done the only means of researching children anthropologically is to approach them in the same basic ways in which anthropology approaches everyone else.

What of the Lwandle children in the future? On the whole, the children recognise the necessity for urban residence so that they will be able to find employment to support their families, and they acknowledge that they will almost inevitably spend much of the remainder of their lives in urban contexts. Just as they understand that 'we are here because our parents must work', so too do they realise that they will also have to seek employment, and that the metropolitan areas are the places in which employment is to be found. These things are accepted by the children.

At the same time, the children pine for their homes in the Transkei, Ciskei, or farming districts in common South Africa;

the children who have moved frequently and who do not have a particular agnatic or 'home' base in the countryside yearn for other places in which they have lived, places where they were happy or where the quality of their lives was better than it is now. Most of the children are also adamant that they will spend the last years of their lives in the Transkei or Ciskei. Although we have heard from them frequently how they would dearly like to *live* in houses, the large majority said that they do not wish to own or build houses in the Western Cape or in any other metropolitan area. They are uncompromising in their desire to eventually return to the countryside. They said that they will begin to invest in land and fields as soon as they begin to work; that they will build houses on these lands; that they will return to them over Christmas and whenever they have holidays; and that it is to these rural places that they will finally return when they are old.

Most of the children aspire to be nurses, teachers, lawyers, or policemen. Many of them wish to enter these professions because they are concerned to uplift people, their families and others, from the kinds of poverty with which they have grown up, because they wish to alleviate suffering, or because they believe that there are moral wrongs in the world which need to be corrected. Nomvuyo wrote that she wants to "help people so that they will not suffer", and Nolandela wants to

...look after orphans. I want to satisfy and console them so that they will not feel different to other people. [Nolandela: "What I Want to Be"]

The children are immensely sensitive to the hardships of others, they show compassion for those who suffer, and they

express great concern for society and people at large. And they do so in a society which has accorded them none of these things. Lumka's feelings are an appropriate finale:

If I was God the first thing I would do is to turn wine and beer into water. It is this liquor which makes people fight. I would build houses for everyone to live in. I would have made the world so nice that nobody would suffer. I would also give the people whatever they ask from me....If I was God I would be sitting in heaven and answering the calls of my people. I would give them food. I would give everything to my people. [Lumka: "If I Was God"]

APPENDIX 1 S U R V E Y

Question Number _____ Date _____

Hostel Type _____ Room/Block Number _____ Bed Number _____

Bed Type _____ Interviewee Name _____

Interviewee Relationship to Bed-Holder _____

1. BED-HOLDER

Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____ First Arrival _____

Employment Description _____ Income _____

Std Passed _____ Place of Origin _____

Marital Status _____ Type of Marriage _____

2. BED-HOLDER'S SPOUSE

Age _____ Present Abode _____ Std Passed _____

Place of Origin _____ Employment Description _____

Income _____ If resident at Lwandle, date first arrival _____

If not at Lwandle, reasons for absence _____

3. BED-HOLDER'S CHILDREN

Total Number _____ Number at Lwandle _____ Number Elsewhere _____

Children Resident at Lwandle Who Use Bed:

	Name	Sex	Age	Place of Birth	Present Occupation	Place of Occupation
(1)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(5)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Std Passed	If Not At School: Reason	Income	Date of First Arrival at Lwandle
(1)	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4)	_____	_____	_____	_____
(5)	_____	_____	_____	_____

Children Who Do Not Use Bed:

	Name	Sex	Age	Present Abode	Resident With Whom	Place of Birth
(1)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(5)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Present Occupation	Place of Occupation	Std Passed	If Not At School: Reason	Income
(1)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(5)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Reasons For Absence

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____

4. MIGRATION AND MOVEMENT

In rural home, does bed-holder or spouse own: Dwelling ____ Fields ____
 Livestock ____ Other _____

	Frequency of Movement Between Rural and Urban	Reasons for Movement
Bed-Holder	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Spouse	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Children at Lwandle	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Children Not at Lwandle	_____	_____
	_____	_____

5. OTHER ADULT BED-USERS

	Name	Sex	Age	Present Occupation	Income	Relationship to Bed
(1)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Date First Arrival at Lwan	Marital Status	Abode of Spouse	No. Absent Children	Reasons for Absence
(1)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Place of Origin	Std Passed
(1)	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____
(4)	_____	_____

6. OTHER CHILD BED-USERS

	Name	Sex	Age	Place of Birth	Relationship to Bed
(1)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Present Occupation	Std Passed	Place of Birth	If Not At School: Reasons	Income
(1)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Date of First Arrival at Lwan	If Parents Absent: Reasons for Presence
(1)	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____

7. GENERAL PATTERN OF BED USE OVER LAST SIX MONTHS

Casuals: Visitors: Week-Ends

APPENDIX: MID-YEAR TESTS

STD 1 & 2

MATHS

JUNE TEST

QUESTION 1

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. 2×5 | 6. 2×4 |
| 2. 3×3 | 7. 5×2 |
| 3. 4×4 | 8. 4×5 |
| 4. 2×10 | 9. 7×2 |
| 5. 3×2 | 10. 2×3 |

QUESTION 2

1. Set A = { 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 }
Set B = { 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 }
 $A \cup B =$ _____
2. Set C = { 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 }
Set D = { 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8, 10 }
 $C \cap D =$ _____

QUESTION 3

Write the sketch of hundreds, tens, units.

1. 837 2. 444 3. 300 4. 200 5. 127

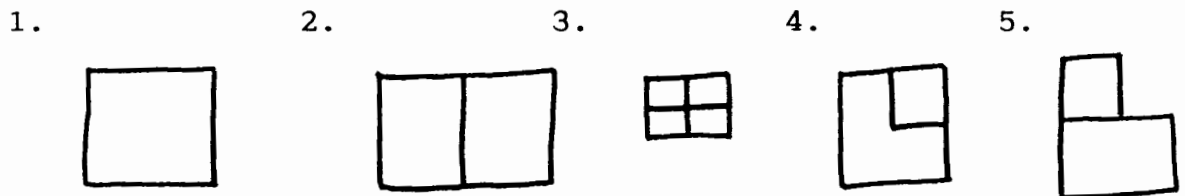
QUESTION 4

Divide the following with no remainder.

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. $20 - 5$ | 2. $15 - 3$ | 3. $14 - 7$ |
| 4. $25 - 5$ | 5. $30 - 5$ | |

QUESTION 5

What are the following fractions?



QUESTION 6

Divide the following with remainder.

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. $36 - 10$ | 2. $44 - 10$ | 3. $37 - 10$ |
| 4. $55 - 10$ | 5. $64 - 10$ | |

QUESTION 7

Multiply the following on a number line.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. 2×5 | 2. 2×3 | 3. 2×4 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|

$4. \quad 4 \times 4$

$5. \quad 3 \times 3$

QUESTION 8

Add the following on a number line.

$1. \quad 4 + 4$

$2. \quad 3 + 3$

$3. \quad 8 + 2$

$4. \quad 1 + 6$

$5. \quad 4 + 5$

QUESTION 9

$1. \quad 10 - 4$

$2. \quad 15 - 5$

$3. \quad 9 - 4$

QUESTION 1

1. What is a set?
2. What are the names of the following sets?
 - (a) { spade, watering-can, fork, rake }
 - (b) { Lizo, Tabo, Siphos }
 - (c) { Nomsa, Zoleka, Nosiphos }
 - (d) { a, e, i, o, u }
 - (e) { a, b, c, d, e, f }

QUESTION 2

1. $A = \{ 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 \}$
 $B = \{ 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 \}$
What is $A \cup B$?
2. $Q = \{ 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 \}$
 $Y = \{ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 \}$
What is $Q \cap Y$?
3. $C = \{ a, b, c, d, e, f \}$
 $D = \{ b, c, d, e, f, g, h \}$
What is $C \subset D$?

QUESTION 3.

Write these number under the sketch of tens, hundreds, units.

1. 9999 2. 4000 3. 7789 4. 3967 5. 1000

QUESTION 4

Multiply the following numbers on a number line.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. 2×5 | 2. 2×6 | 3. 4×4 |
| 4. 5×5 | 5. 6×3 | |

QUESTION 5

Subtract the following numbers on a number line.

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. $15 - 5$ | 2. $20 - 3$ | 3. $19 - 4$ |
| 4. $25 - 5$ | 5. $10 - 5$ | |

QUESTION 6

Divide without a remainder.

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. $20 \div 5$ | 2. $40 \div 5$ | 3. $36 \div 6$ |
| 4. $30 \div 3 = 5$ | 5. $40 \div 2 = 2$ | |

QUESTION 7

Add on a number line.

1. $20 + 5$
4. $3 + 12$

2. $20 + 10$
5. $17 + 11$

3. $5 + 5$

QUESTION 8

Divide with remainders.

1. $46 - 10$
4. $106 - 10$

2. $92 - 10$
5. $34 - 10$

3. $96 - 10$

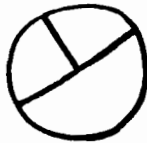
QUESTION 9

What are the following fractions?

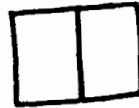
1.



2.



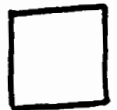
3.



4.



5.



QUESTION 10

Multiplication.

1. 4×4
4. 6×5

2. 5×5
5. 7×4

3. 1×9

VRAAG 1

bler blaf koer miaau koel-keol

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. 'n kat | 2. 'n hond | 3. 'n duif |
| 4. 'n kalkoen | 5. 'n skaap | |

VRAAG 2

Skryf die volgende sinne in die verlede tyd.

1. Ek gaan skool toe.
2. My ma eet haar kos.
3. Ek skryf 'n brief.
4. Ek speel.
5. Die hond hardloop.

VRAAG 3

Skryf die volgende in die toekomstige tyd.

1. Ek praat.
2. Ek speel.
3. My ma eet.
4. Die hond kom.
5. Ek gaan.

VRAAG 4

1. My pa se ma is my_____.
2. My pa se pa is my_____.
3. My pa se seun is my_____.
4. My pa-se dogter is my_____.
5. My ma en my pa is my_____.

VRAAG 5

maer koud kort ryk groot

- | | | |
|---------|----------|--------|
| 1. warm | 2. lank | 3. vet |
| 4. arm | 5. klein | |

VRAAG 6

Wat is die verkleinwoord van elk van die volgende?

(kind - kinder)

- | | | |
|---------|------------|---------|
| 1. pa | 2. dogter | 3. seun |
| 4. boom | 5. kantoor | |

VRAAG 7

Meervoude

(doring - dorinkie)

1. pa
4. boom

2. dogter
5. kantoor

3. seun

VRAAG 8

oe mond kamer bene ore

1. Ek praat met my_____.
2. Ek sien met my_____.
3. Ek loop met my_____.
4. Ek slaap in my_____.
5. Ek hoor met my_____.

VRAAG 1

('n skaap blier)

- | | | |
|------------|------------|---------------|
| 1. 'n kat | 2. 'n hond | 3. 'n kalkoen |
| 4. 'n muis | 5. 'n vark | |

VRAAG 2: ONTKENINGE FORM

1. Pa sit of die stoep.
2. Die mes le op die tafel.
3. Hulle woon hier.
4. Hy sal kom.
5. Hy speel.

VRAAG 3

Gee die naam van die persoon.

1. Wat in die kerk werk.
2. Wat in die apteek werk.
3. Wat by die poskantoor werk.
4. Wat in die huis werk.
5. Wat in die hospitaal werk.

VRAAG 4: GESLAG

- | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 1. dogter | 2. ouma | 3. moeder |
| 4. suster | 5. ma | |

VRAAG 5: MEERVOUDE

- | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|
| 1. leerling | 2. boom | 3. kantoor |
| 4. dag | 5. kamer | |

VRAAG 6: VERKLEINWOORDE

- | | | |
|------------|---------|-------|
| 1. kamer | 2. boom | 3. pa |
| 4. kantoor | 5. seun | |

VRAAG 7: VERLEDE TYD

1. Ek slaap.
2. Ek gaan skool toe.
3. Die dogter gaan dorp toe.
4. My moeder praat met die predikant.
5. Sy eet haar kos.

VRAAG 8: TOEKOMENDE TYD

1. Ek praat met my moeder
2. Thabo eet.
3. Die seun gann dorp toe.

4. Ek lees my boek.
5. Ek skryf.

VRAAG 9

(kort - lang)

- | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|
| 1. stout | 2. warm | 3. leeg |
| 4. vet | 5. vas | |

QUESTION 1

Change to past tense by filling in was.

1. I am going to school.
2. I am eating my food.
3. I am standing up.
4. I am going to church.
5. I am ill.

QUESTION 2: ANIMAL SOUNDS

squeak bellow roar croak cackle
hiss mew bleat grunt bark

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1. dogs | 2. sheep | 3. lions |
| 4. cats | 5. pigs | 6. hens |
| 7. snake | 8. mice | 9. bulls |
| 10. frogs | | |

QUESTION 3

1. A baby horse is a _____.
2. A baby goat is a _____.
3. A baby cow is a _____.
4. A baby dog is a _____.
5. A baby pig is a _____.

QUESTION 4: OPPOSITES

bad open short clever sit

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| 1. stand | 2. shut | 3. good |
| 4. tall | 5. stupid | |

QUESTION 5

Reverend South Africa Post Office Company

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1. S.A. | 2. Co. |
| 3. P.O. | 4. REV. |

QUESTION 6: OPPOSITE GENDER

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1. mother | 2. sister | 3. grand-mother |
| 4. girl | 5. Mrs | |

QUESTION 7

Complete the sentence using either was or were.

1. There _____ many children absent at school.
2. She _____ my mother.

3. Thabo _____ a clever bot.
4. Those people _____ very poor.
5. She _____ absent yesterday.

QUESTION 1: COMPREHENSION

READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

Once upon a time there was a bat. The bat stayed at home during the day. It only flew around at night. The bat said: "I've got wings. I can fly". The bat went to the birds and showed them its wings. It said: "I've got teeth." The bat showed the animals its teeth.

1. When did the bat fly?
2. What did the bat show the birds?
3. What did the bat show the animals?

QUESTION 2: OPPOSITES

Give the opposite of the following words.

- | | | |
|---------|----------|--------|
| 1. poor | 2. sharp | 3. old |
| 4. long | 5. thin | |

QUESTION 3: PAST TENSE

Write the following sentences in the past tense.

1. Peter buys a new bicycle.
2. Mary goes to school.
3. The boy is cutting his finger.
4. The girl tells her name.
5. The boy writes a letter.

QUESTION 4

Fill either was or were in the space.

1. She _____ a good girl.
2. There _____ three sheep in the kraal.
3. Those people _____ very poor.
4. Mother _____ ill yesterday.
5. Peter _____ at home.

QUESTION 5

1. A baby dog is called a _____.
2. A baby sheep is called a _____.
3. A baby cat is called a _____.
4. A baby goat is called a _____.
5. A baby pig is called a _____.

QUESTION 6: GENDER

Give the opposite gender of each of the following terms.

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------|-------|
| 1. boy | 2. grand-father | 3. Mr |
| 4. sir | 5. father | |

QUESTION 7: ABBREVIATIONS

- | | | |
|----------|---------|--------|
| 1. S.A.P | 2. B.A. | 3. Co. |
| 4. P.O. | 5. REV. | |

QUESTION 8

- | | | | | | |
|------|-------|--------------|-------|-----|-------|
| | box | jug | group | tin | bunch |
| 1. A | _____ | of flowers. | | | |
| 2. A | _____ | of matches. | | | |
| 3. A | _____ | of jam. | | | |
| 4. A | _____ | of milk. | | | |
| 5. A | _____ | of children. | | | |

QUESTION 1

Which of the following are living things?

chalk	snake	beetle	pencil	mealie
book	fish	knife		

QUESTION 2

How does fertilization take place?

QUESTION 3

Fill in the missing words.

1. When a single cell divides into two cells it _____.
2. _____ cannot begin from a single cell.
3. The male cell is called a _____.
4. Another name for _____ is egg.
5. When an _____ is fertilized a new life begins.

QUESTION 4

What are the babies of the following called?

frog	sheep	hen	dog
goat	cow	cat	

QUESTION 1: MAP

[Map of Southern Africa]

1. What is the river marked (1)?
2. What is the town marked (2)?
3. What is the province marked (3)?
4. What is the province marked (4)?
5. What is the mountain range marked (5)?
6. What is the province marked (6)?
7. What is the province marked (7)?
8. What is the ocean marked (8)?
9. What is the ocean marked (9)?
10. What are the falls marked (10)?
11. What is the current marked (11)?
12. What is the current marked (12)?
13. What is the river marked (13)?
14. What is the river marked (14)?
15. What is the area marked (15)?

QUESTION 2: SOUTH AFRICA

1. What type of climate is the Mediterranean Region?
2. What type of climate is the Subtropical East Coast Region?
3. What is the capital town of the Transvaal?
4. What is the capital town of Natal?
5. What is the capital town of the Cape?

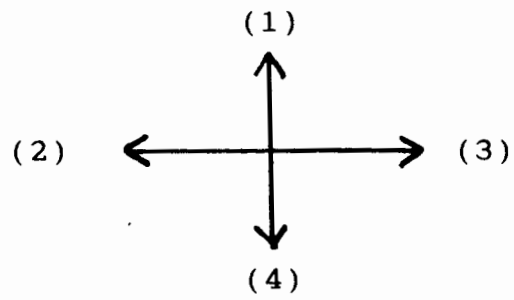
QUESTION 3: CLIMATE AND TEMPERATURE

1. What is climate?
2. Give two (2) factors which determine climate?
3. What is temperature?
4. Give five (5) factors which affect temperature in South Africa?
5. What is the name of the instrument used to measure temperature?
6. What is the name of the instrument used to measure rain?

QUESTION 4: THE SUN AND EARTH

1. Write four lines about the sun.
2. Write four lines about the earth.
3. How long does one revolution of the earth take?
4. How long does one rotation of the earth take?
5. What does the revolution of the earth cause?
6. What does the rotation of the earth cause?
7. What is the name of the place where the earth revolves?
8. What is the name of the place where the earth rotates?

9. How many kilometres is the sun away from the earth?
10. Fill in the words of the following diagram.



QUESTION 1

1. What is air?
2. Does air have mass?
3. Does air have any shape?
4. Warm air rises, and _____ air sinks down.
5. Air can be made to _____.

QUESTION 2

Complete the following sentences.

1. Air is found in the _____ and in the _____.
2. The layer of air which surrounds the earth is called _____ the _____.
3. The air becomes _____ as we go up from the surface of the earth.

QUESTION 3

Are the following true or false?

1. The air on the ground is called the atmosphere.
2. When water is heated, small air bubbles are seen.
3. The upper layer of the atmosphere contains no air.
4. The lower layer of the atmosphere contains more air.

QUESTION 4

Name one animal which depends on air in the water for breathing.

Fill in the missing words.

1. Oxygen is an important _____ in the air.
2. Living things need _____ food and _____.
3. From seeds grow _____. From eggs grow _____.
4. Flies carry _____ which cause disease.
5. Doctors help in times of _____.
6. Food is the _____ of the body.
7. _____ is about our bodies and how they work.

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