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BOUNDARIES AND CROSSING POINTS: CHILDREN, GEOGRAPHY, AND IDENTITY IN FISH HOEK VALLEY

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Map by two grade 6 girls of their neighbourhood

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is based on an ethnographic study with children and young people between the ages of 11 and 19, who attend formerly 'white' state schools in the Cape peninsula, South Africa. Since 1994 these schools have seen an increase in the racial diversity of the student population, but children continue to live in a highly segregated landscape. I take a closer look at the way these schoolchildren work within and around divisions of class and race in this specific place and time in South African history, to understand which factors promote and obstruct the possibility of diversity and integration in their daily lives. How are they negotiating the landscape, discourse and practice around them? And how do they create and verbalise ways of being themselves?

Data for the study was collected by a variety of methods, to enable children to express themselves in various ways by engaging them in the research project through visual, group and individual exercises, focus group discussions and interviews. Initially, maps of the area drawn by and commented on by the children show that apartheid history and an environment shaped by this ideology has a deep impact on these children's lives. Limited mobility and places that are out of bounds to them clearly shape children's perceptions of their environment, and 'standard' stereotypes about places and people prevail. However, by listening and looking more closely at specifically the discourse and to some extent the daily lives of these schoolchildren over a period of more than a year, a more nuanced picture emerges: one of a generation of young South Africans who think about and negotiate physical and social boundaries in particular ways different from their elders; ways which are partly within and partly against apartheid-based structures and divisions; ways which express an ideal of non-racism and equality in a daily environment shaped by racial and class differentiation; and ways which show the possibility of change.

One of the main findings is that friendships and peer relations are based on the premise of equality, but influenced and in many cases obstructed by existing class and race divisions that are deeply entrenched in the landscape. There are only a limited amount of places –one of them school- that enables children from various backgrounds to meet and interact on a daily basis. An underlying conclusion of this dissertation is that research with children and young people is crucial for understanding their perspectives on growing up in a changing society, and to become aware of the role young people play themselves in creating change. Children and young people understand and negotiate their environment in their own particular ways, but there are limits to their possibilities. Further structural transformation is needed to support young people's aspirations for a less racially polarised and more egalitarian South African society.

Chapter One

Introduction

I pulled into the parking lot to pick up Leanne from college in Muizenberg on our way to a meeting. She was wearing a particularly colourful outfit, happy to be free of the ill-fitting school uniform she had been wearing until recently. As she was putting her things into the car she was telling me about all her adventures since she started college, especially about her new friends, and how one of them said such hilarious things to the teacher today. When we drove off she noticed I was playing a CD by India Arie –a young female Motown R&B singer– and Leanne exclaimed: “Oooh I love her!!” She asked me if she could select her favourite song so I said go ahead, and she punched in nr 4 while excitedly repeating how much she loves this music. She pushed up the volume and started singing along to the song: “Brown skin, you know I love your brown skin, I can’t tell where yours begins, I can’t tell where mine ends ...” and I chuckle to myself ...this is a white Christian girl who grew up in Boksburg¹? (Fieldnotes, February 2005)

This dissertation is about children living in contemporary South Africa, eleven years after the official end of apartheid. The children that participated in the study attended formerly ‘white’ state schools² in Fish Hoek valley, schools with an increasingly diverse student population. South Africa’s post apartheid policy is concerned to overcome the enforced segregation of population groups as defined by apartheid policy (see Vally&Dambala 1999: vii), and to integrate previously artificially separated categories in society at large. School is one formal arena in which the state is attempting to implement such policies, however, the legacy of apartheid lives on. I look at the way these schoolchildren work within and around divisions of class and ‘race’³, concentrating on their discourse and identity politics. This study examines the everyday lives of particular schoolchildren to understand which factors promote and

¹ A mining town close to Johannesburg, with a predominantly white Afrikaans image.

² Limited desegregation of white state schools started in 1990, following educational reforms announcing the possibility that white state schools could legally admit black pupils. Formal desegregation came about only in 1993. (Vally&Dambala 1999: 10-11).

³ The hierarchical ranking of the world’s population according to ‘race’ was developed by western Europeans following their global expansion beginning in the 1400s (Gregory&Sanjek, 1994: 1). This system has become a naturalised way of differentiating between population groups. Research has shown there to be no substantial biological basis to distinguish between what is perceived as different ‘races’, and there are certainly no cultural differences that are caused by any bio-genetic differences (ibid.). However, people continue to attach meaning to physical appearance (most notably skin colour), and racial classification and racism continue to be a reality most people live with. In this dissertation, I use ‘race’ in quote marks when referring to the classificatory system, race without quote marks when referring to people’s use of the term, and treat racial classifications and racism as an everyday reality.

which obstruct the possibility of experiencing diversity and integration in their everyday lives. How do children negotiate with, interact with and shape the landscape, discourse and practice around them? And how do they create and verbalise ways of being themselves?

As Western Cape premier Ebrahim Rasool recently stated, South Africa's history of apartheid and decade of transformation has meant that 'race' and colour categories in South Africa are continually undergoing change, constantly being both challenged and defended. At the beginning of 2005, the premier called for a renewed debate around race and racism in South Africa after reports of increased racial tensions in the Western Cape since the beginning of democratic rule. Fanie Du Toit from the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation agrees with the need for debate. He suggests that in order to continue the process of transformation successfully,

...a further need remains - to build trust across divides that defined our past. (...) Branded as among the most unequal cities in the world, Cape Town's socio-economic divisions still run largely along racial lines. (...) Despite integrating schools and workplaces, people continue to retreat to their racially homogenous suburbs at night, only to stare at one another over the fence, road or railway line.

(Cape Times, 07/04/05)

The research setting of this dissertation, Fish Hoek valley, situated on the South Peninsula of Cape Town, seems to be such an area of division. Eleven years after the official end to apartheid, the social geography of the valley still follows racial lines. The majority of the poorer and previously classified 'coloured' and 'African'⁴ population continue to live in distinct and separate communities, spatially contained in an area of ever expanding middle class but still largely 'white' suburbs. Apartheid classifications seem to largely determine where and how people live, work, shop and who they mix with, with little visible evidence of any significant changes towards the more egalitarian, inclusive and integrated society propagated by the post-apartheid government.

⁴ The population classifications (see West in Boonzaier&Sharp, 1988) most used in South African public discourse and by government are 'white', 'coloured', 'Indian' and 'African'. There is an ongoing debate on the accuracy of these labels. For example, the argument that all South Africans are African, sometimes leads to the use of 'black Africans'; all non-whites can be categorized under 'black'; and the term 'coloured' encompasses people from such a wide range of origins that it is essentially a non-category. There is however little public debate questioning the need for using these categories at all, as this division seems engrained in people's understanding of South African society. Most participants in this study use the labels white, coloured, and black, which I have followed here.

However, when listening and looking more closely at the experiences and opinions of schoolchildren growing up in this area, a more nuanced picture emerges: one of a generation of young South Africans negotiating physical and social boundaries in particular ways different from their elders; ways which are partly within and partly against apartheid structures and divisions still in place; ways which express an ideal of non-racism in a daily environment that seems shaped by racial differentiation; and ways which show the possibility of change.

Children, agency and identity

In recent decades, social theories around childhood have been increasingly recognising children's agency and role in society (for example Coles 1986; Hecht 1998; Rapport 1995; Rapport & Overing 2000; Reynolds 1989/1991; Stephens 1995; Yon 2000). Rapport and Overing (2000) state that anthropology has moved from the idea of the child as 'incomplete' and still developing towards becoming an adult, to the realisation that children play a role in the creation of 'culture' and identity; for example adults learn to be parents because of their children. They argue that we should acknowledge children as dynamic agents who learn and create culture and society in interaction with other children and adults, and not as a passive recipient of 'adult' knowledge, (see also Caputo 1995, Reynolds 1995). Children can at once reflect, resist and reinterpret adult conceptions. As Coles (1986) has argued, a nation's politics becomes a child's everyday psychology, and Sharon Stephens (1995) emphasises that children's lived experience can tell us a lot about what is going on in the world. She urges us to acknowledge "...young people as social actors in their own right, engaged in making sense of and recreating the social worlds they inherit...children creatively live from inside complex mixtures of languages and social domains that are external structures for many adults" (ibid: 24). Similarly, Rapport & Overing (2000) emphasize the recognition of children as individuals partaking in a number of ongoing tensions:

To be a 'child' is to be both an agent and a part of a world of socio-cultural structures run by adults: to be both an actor with an identity of its own *and* something which comes into its own only by recognition of its difference from certain consociated others: to be both a symbol of change in a socio-cultural milieu *and* an aspect of continuity in socio-

cultural production; and to be both a phenomenon of local diversity in the world *and* one of global generality.

(Rapport&Overing 2000: 32, emphasis in original)

In South Africa, there is a growing body of research within this paradigm of recognizing the agency and role of children in society (Barbarin & Richter 2001; Bray 2003/2005; Henderson 1999; Jones 1993; Levine 1999 ; Ramphele 2000; Reynolds 1989/1991/1995; Swart-Kruger 2000) but there is only a limited amount of published work on children's (racial) identities and, to speak to the topic of this dissertation, how they experience diversity and integration (Dolby 2001; Soudien 2000). Some South African research on issues of post-apartheid identities has considered the psychological aspects of racial identity and prejudice amongst children (see Dawes&Finchilescu 2002) but most scholars have dealt with adults and the dynamics within a given racial identity, focussing for example on the meaning of 'whiteness', 'colouredness', and 'blackness' itself in a post apartheid society (Distiller&Steyn 2004; Dolby 2001b, Erasmus 2001; Salo 2004; Soudien 1996; Steyn 2001). These studies give insight into the symbolism of and changes within certain racial identities, but take racial identity to be of primary importance in people's lives.

Internationally, a relevant and very interesting study is Daniel Yon's work with high school children at a 'multicultural' school in Canada. Yon specifically emphasises the fluidity of young people's identities, and does not take the primacy of racial identity for granted. Using discourse as a main focus, he looks at young people's strategies in identity formation in what he calls 'global times', how they make, perform and contest identities in their language and presentation, in some instances accepting and emphasizing racial identities as positive, in others contesting them when they are felt to exclude them from certain social realms. In his work he takes young people's agency as a given, and comments on theoretical concepts of identity, race and culture by looking at young people's discourse and flexible use and interpretations of these concepts as opposed to the way adults in the same school environment express more fixed ideas about culture, race and identity.

As mentioned above, there are two fairly recent publications resulting from research projects on young people's racial identity in the 'new' South Africa that connect to Yon's work, and also draw on discourse as a theoretical framework for understanding

identity. 'Constructing Race: Youth, Identity and Popular Culture in South Africa' by Nadine Dolby was based on an ethnographic study in 1996 and published in 2001, and Crain Soudien's 'Certainty and Ambiguity in Youth Identities in South Africa: discourses in transition' was written in 2000 as a result of survey based research involving high school children attending 'mixed' schools in Cape Town over a period of three years in the late nineties.

Soudien is particularly interested in the way young people are thinking their way through what he calls post-apartheid 'identity conundrums' and the role of school and government discourses in these processes. He distinguishes between three modes of discourse on which young people draw: the Official, The Formal and the Informal, respectively the discourse of government, of the school, and of young people themselves. His conclusion is that even though South African society has come a long way since the abolition of apartheid, young people have to negotiate 'old' and 'new' racial identities on a daily basis: "...the identities young people develop are internally divided... Their identities are...of their apartheid past, but simultaneously against it" (2000: 314). Although he emphasizes how young people negotiate their possibilities with regard to identity, his main focus is still on 'race' as a primary marker of identity for children growing up in a post-apartheid society, without much attention to other aspects of identity. He furthermore does not comment on the possible fluidity of racial identities themselves, but maintains that children are defined according to the standard categories white, African and coloured. He concludes that despite the official government ideology of non-racialism, racial tensions have not disappeared, and experiences of children participating in his study show how difficult it was for students to evade the racialising structures in which they found themselves. To a degree, this conclusion is relevant to the everyday lives of children at school in Fish Hoek. My first comment however is that issues of identity, diversity and integration are not only about 'race', and one should certainly consider other elements of identification.

Race never operates alone but articulates with gender, class, nation, sexuality, ethnicity, and other differences to form heterogeneous identities and crosscutting social hierarchies (Gregory&Sanjek1994: 28).

Even though in this study it is also evident that South Africa's history of racial classification is something that continues to be a part of children's and young people's

everyday lives in one way or another, I have found that 'race' is only one aspect of the many identities that young people negotiate, but is not a fixed and clear-cut category, not necessarily problematic and not necessarily the most important. This does not coincide with much existing South African literature on the topic of racial identity, which assumes racial identity to continue to be the main point of identification for South Africans 'grappling' with a post-apartheid environment.

Nadine Dolby, an assistant professor in Education in the US, based her book on a yearlong intensive ethnographic study in a 'multiracial' high school in Durban, a formerly 'white' school that quite rapidly changed to a majority 'black' student population. Her aim was to understand more about young people's construction of racial identities post '94, to look at the dynamics between children themselves, and those between students and teachers within a changing school environment. Similarly to Yon, one of the main points she makes is that racial identities are not fixed, but fluid and changeable, and should be seen in a global context.

[C]ategories of identification (i.e. race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.) are not pre-given, essential traits, but constitute an array of available cultural meanings and identities into which one places or sutures oneself, at the same time internalizing those meanings in an attempt to stabilize both oneself and the surrounding world. Available racial categories shift and move, contingent both on time and space (Dolby 2001a: 9).

In the case of these Durban schoolchildren, racial identity is re-constructed and expressed by young people through their taste in popular culture. Particular styles of local and international music and fashion are associated with a particular racial identity, but there are several case studies which indicate this does not necessarily connect to skin-colour: a girl can be seen to be 'black' because of her style, even though her skin is 'white', and a person's racial identity can change. This flexibility is in marked contrast to the teachers and school administration, who mostly speak in fixed racial categories and try to hold on to a 'white' school identity despite the changing student population. This is expressed, for example, by the choice of sports on offer (rugby rather than soccer, which in South Africa indicates a 'white' versus a 'black' sporting activity) in an attempt to maintain ties with 'white' schools in the district and 'keep up' a certain image of themselves.

In my study I have found that young people's reported experiences of and use of racial categories differ from the way the generation above them interpret the same environment and discourse, but in different ways than described by Dolby and Soudien in the earlier days of 'mixed schooling' in a democratic South Africa. Possible reasons for this could be that the children I work with are five to ten years younger and further 'away' from the apartheid days, and the teachers and schools in this study have moved further along a liberal 'multicultural' approach as proposed by the South African constitution. There is, however, an ongoing tension between ideas around the fixity, and 'reality', of racial categories, and the fluidity, and often unimportance of these same categories in practice. This finding has come to the fore through the use of various research methods: in short, mapping exercises (in which children were asked to draw maps of their environment) have shown constrained movement and stereotyping of places along 'old' racial categories, an expectation of difference between groups of people, and a standard use of racial categories. However, in daily interactions and in speaking about relations with peers and friends of different backgrounds, young people put a strong emphasis on being the same, 'wish away' or ignore race as a factor in their lives, but simultaneously use racial name-calling in subversive and humorous ways. These contradictions in young people's lives will be the topic of the following chapters.

Race in South Africa

One reason for my interest in racial identity is, ironically, my unease around the emphasis on 'race' in South African popular, political and academic discourse. A main point of concern is the neglect of the entanglement of race and class. Too many times, in the media, in political discussions, in academic presentations, and in popular discourse, this leads to interpreting what is essentially a class issue in racial terms, therefore continuing to use 'race' as an explanatory concept for people's way-of-being and a prevailing way to categorize, describe and understand South African society. Daniel Herwitz (2003) concludes in his book 'Race and Reconciliation' that South African society is "...a profoundly overracialized society"; 'racialism' is prevalent in most public analyses of South African society, for example in newspapers and television, and racial categories often given as the only relevant ones. He cautions:

When race becomes a marker of every aspect of life, the rich languages, concepts, ideals, affiliations and emotions people have about things are straightjacketed - as they would by any singularity that cannibalizes the human mind, encroaching itself in our every thought and action. South Africa is racially obsessed...

Race, a virtual fetish item in South Africa, veers between being an item of direct confrontation and one of hostile silence. It is something every South African lives with every day, although not in the same way; something every South African learns to ignore, subdue, maintain, resist, subvert, capitalize upon, identify with, refuse, displace, proclaim, split off.
(Herwitz 2003: 106/7)

In this study I have met many young people who express a desire to change this emphasis on race: change in practice, in language and in ideology. Sometimes they are able to live it, by 'ignoring, refusing, splitting off', but often times they find themselves 'resisting, subverting, maintaining', and essentially always interacting with 'race' in one way or another. As Jenkins (1996b: 815) notes, 'racial' identification on the basis of physical attributes is still about socially constructed difference. The question then is: when do physical differences matter? When and why is skin colour a tool for differentiation? In Fish Hoek valley, for example, things seem simple: Fish Hoek is 'white', Ocean View 'coloured', and Masiphumelele 'black', and in the dominant South African discourse, 'race' in this way is presented as a simple and obvious reality. In fact, it hides differentiation within and between people of a certain skin colour, the fluidity of 'colour' or 'race' itself (a pertinent fact in this respect is South Africa's history of 'mixing', which accounts for the wide range of ancestry in the South African population) and the symbolism of 'race' as a social category.

In this dissertation I address these issues by taking a closer look at the dynamics between children as well as young people's experience of their everyday physical and social environment, and the way they speak about, understand and use racial, and other, classifications within a larger framework of 'identity' in their daily lives. I believe that by examining these children and young people's ambivalent and diverse experiences of, and ideas about, racial identity, we can understand something about the role young people play in creating new ways of being within a rapidly changing society. That understanding might allow us to approach issues around identity, diversity and integration in contemporary young South Africans' daily lives in new ways, breaking with conventional ways of doing so.

Research methods and ethical considerations

This dissertation is based on ethnographic data that emerged from the larger 2004 research project 'Growing Up in the New South Africa', a study carried out by Rachel Bray, Susan Moses and myself with children at schools in Masiphumelele, Ocean View and Fish Hoek for a period of just over a year⁵. We chose Fish Hoek valley as a research setting because the area comprises three communities, historically created and divided by the population classifications 'African', 'coloured' and 'white' of the apartheid era, in close proximity to each other. The overall study was of an exploratory nature that aimed to understand more about the perspectives of young people on their daily lives, roughly a decade after the first democratic elections of 1994. The research team approached schools in these three communities, to gain a point of access to a range of local children⁶. We chose to work with children in grades 6 (11-12 years old), 9 (roughly 15-16 years old) and 11 (roughly 17-19 years old) in order to get a sense of 'growing up', be able to look at ways in which children at different life stages deal with a similar environment, and compare experiences across our research sites.

In general my overall attitude in working with the children was to create platforms for them to speak or express themselves in ways they were comfortable with. All participation in meetings, activities and interviews was voluntary, on the basis of the belief that children have agency, and it is unethical to coerce participants into joining a research activity (see Morrow&Richards (1996) for a discussion on ethical research with children). I am aware that this influenced who took part in the research groups; for example friends would encourage or discourage each other to join, and it meant that certain groups, such as children who are not able or willing to talk freely about themselves, or those without the possibility of staying on after school, were not represented in the sample. In compliance with official Anthropological ethical guidelines and my own convictions around informed consent, I gave out information

⁵ This study was funded by the Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR) at the University of Cape Town. Publications that have currently resulted from the study are: Bray&Brandt 2005, Bray&Gooskens 2005, Moses 2005. We are currently working on a monograph of this study, and possibly a publication for the general public.

⁶ This of course means we did not reach children who are not at school, a choice we had to make to limit our focus.

sheets to inform and explain the project, and the children's participation in it, to all participants. After reading it through together, children signed individual consent forms⁷, and took an explanation of the project and their role in it for their parents or legal guardians to sign. As informed consent is an ongoing process, I spoke to participants regularly to confirm their consent to participation, and made myself available to answer any queries by them or their parents. The following conclusion of an analysis of conducting research with children in this project will explain my overall standpoint with regards to ethical considerations:

What we learn is that young people have an acute sense of how to negotiate relationships, to frame experience, and to manage difficulties that arise in relationships. This does not mean that they do not need protection and guidance, but it does credit them with being active moral agents. An appreciation of the grounded nature of children's responses to research activities allows us to re-consider our definition of ethical strategies. In the light of our analysis, we propose that an ongoing awareness of young people's decision-making regarding consent and confidentiality was a more effective protection than the signing of a consent form.
(Bray&Gooskens 2005: 24-25)

To safeguard their identities, the grade 6 children chose pseudonyms that I have used throughout the dissertation. The grade 9 and 11 children expressed there was no need for pseudonyms; however, to keep to ethical guidelines I have chosen not to use their real names.

After obtaining permission from the Department of Education for research in the three Fish Hoek schools, my introduction to the school was always through the principal, who would speak to teachers about taking their class during teaching hours. In addition to these sessions, I spent time on the school grounds and in the staff room, mostly observing, sometimes talking to staff and children. Fieldwork with children took place in time slots between exams from August 2004 to November 2004, and March to June 2005⁸. I began with classroom-based activities, for example drawing maps, diagrams, and timelines, and used these to lead discussions in class. I worked with a grade 6 after-school Art class (19 children) at the primary school for most of the third and the fourth term of 2004, three grade 9 Life Orientation classes (70 children) for a period of 2 weeks at the Middle school in the third term, and at the Senior High the history teacher gave permission to observe her classes (47 children)

⁷ See Appendix I for an example of the information sheet and consent form.

⁸ For a detailed description of methods and activities, see Appendix II.

for a couple of sessions and a number of workshops and discussions in the third and fourth terms. In the second term of 2005 (March-June), I worked with smaller grade 6, 9 and grade 11 after-school groups, for which children from the above-mentioned classes volunteered. From these groups I eventually established the closest relationships with five grade 6s and six grade 11s. Apart from focus group meetings I worked with a variety of individual research methods with these children, for example making 'hero books', writing diaries, taking photographs and conducting interviews. Another element of the overall research project was to work with a group of six grade 11 volunteer research trainees who called themselves 'Tri', to reflect the three communities (Fish Hoek, Ocean View and Masiphumelele) they live in. Meetings with these six revolved around short training sessions on basic research techniques, combined with focus group discussions around relevant topics for youth in the area. Also, as part of their training, and data collection for our study, the trainees conducted interviews with peers on general topics we agreed upon beforehand⁹.

Due to time constraints, the difficulties of 'immersing' one-self in children's lives as an adult researcher, and a theoretical preference foregrounding children's agency, the wide range of research methods were in a sense a short cut to 'hanging out', and designed to take the children's own point of view as a lead for the direction of the research as much as possible. I used data from the various visual and verbal research activities to cross-reference, inform and validate each other, often using data from one source to provide direction to subsequent methods and discussions. Overall I can conclude that these diverse methods allowed for a good insight into different aspects of children's lives, and that children were honest and consistent in their articulation of their attitudes, aspirations, and experiences.

From my data it became clear that school as a social arena is one of the few places in the Fish Hoek valley that provides an opportunity for children to meet and make friends across colour and class divisions. However, as mentioned above, the social geography of the valley is still very much along apartheid lines, and the continuing overlap between class and 'colour' in contemporary South Africa reinforces the perception that all 'difference' is racial. Schools in the valley serve communities that

⁹ For a discussion on this particular aspect of the research project, see Bray&Gooskens (2005).

are to a large extent still segregated along the apartheid categories 'African', 'coloured' or 'white', and these divisions continue to reflect general differences in income and class. A small number of children from Masiphumelele attend school in Ocean View, and a minor percentage from Masiphumelele and Ocean View attend school in Fish Hoek. No children living in Fish Hoek attend school in Masiphumelele or Ocean View¹⁰. This means that despite a majority of white middle class students, schools in Fish Hoek have the most diverse student population in the area in terms of class and 'race', and therefore provide an interesting context in which to examine young people's discourse and experiences of diversity and integration.

The geography of Fish Hoek Valley

In order to adequately contextualise children's experiences and understanding of their environment, it is necessary to describe the current local geography and history of segregation in some detail. The following maps, Figure 1: Cape Peninsula and Figure 2: Fish Hoek valley, will give readers an understanding of the position of Fish Hoek valley in relation to the rest of the peninsula, and the relation between the suburbs within the valley. They will also provide some orientation to the maps drawn by children presented in Chapter 3.

¹⁰ There is a major difference in fees charged by schools in the respective areas. Fees at Fish Hoek Middle and Senior High are just over R7,000 per year, at Ocean View Secondary R350 per year and at Masiphumelele High R200 per year. The fees reflect the vast differences in resources available to children at these schools as well as the historical inequalities between schools in 'white', 'coloured' and 'black' areas. Fish Hoek schools do offer the possibility to apply for fees exemption for those accepted at the school but unable to pay the fees, and there are a number of students from Masiphumelele sponsored by American and British funds.

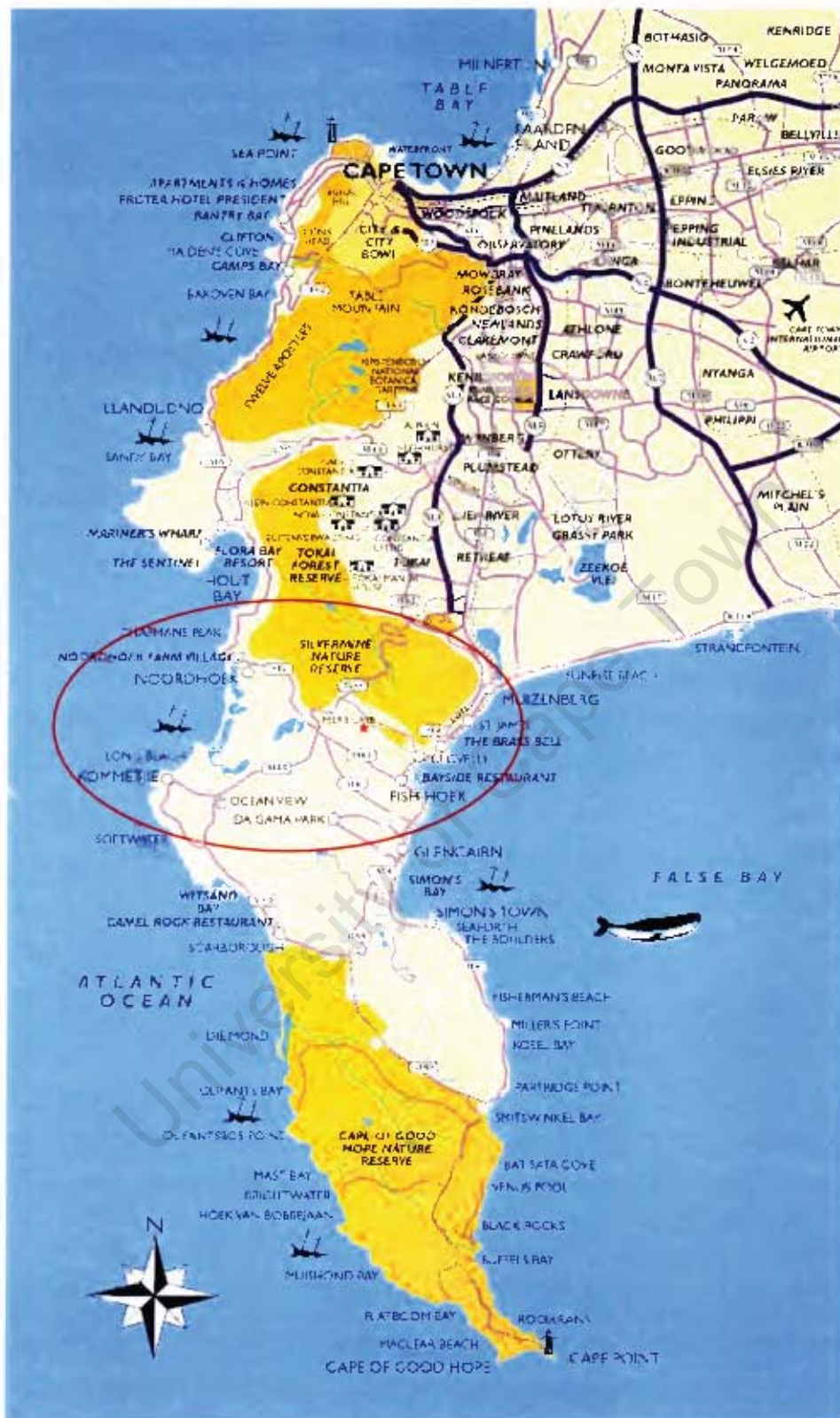


Figure 1: Cape Peninsula¹¹

¹¹ Source: www.fishhoek.com. Note the absence of Masiphumelele, as is the case in most published maps. It is situated between the wetlands to the west of the 'M65', 3 km from Ocean View (see Figure 2).

Fish Hoek valley is situated on Cape Town's South Peninsula, about an hour's rail or half an hour's road journey (35 kilometres) from the city centre. The term Fish Hoek valley is generally understood to mean the area along the Kommetjie Road, stretching from Ocean View and Masiphumelele through Noordhoek and Sun Valley to Fish Hoek. The valley is connected to Cape Town by two roads that run over the mountain and along the coast and through the southern suburbs, and by the railway line that runs from Simonstown through Fish Hoek to Cape Town central station. Valley residents often speak about the rest of the Cape peninsula as 'up the line' and 'over the mountain', signifying a sense of distance and separation from the rest of Cape Town.

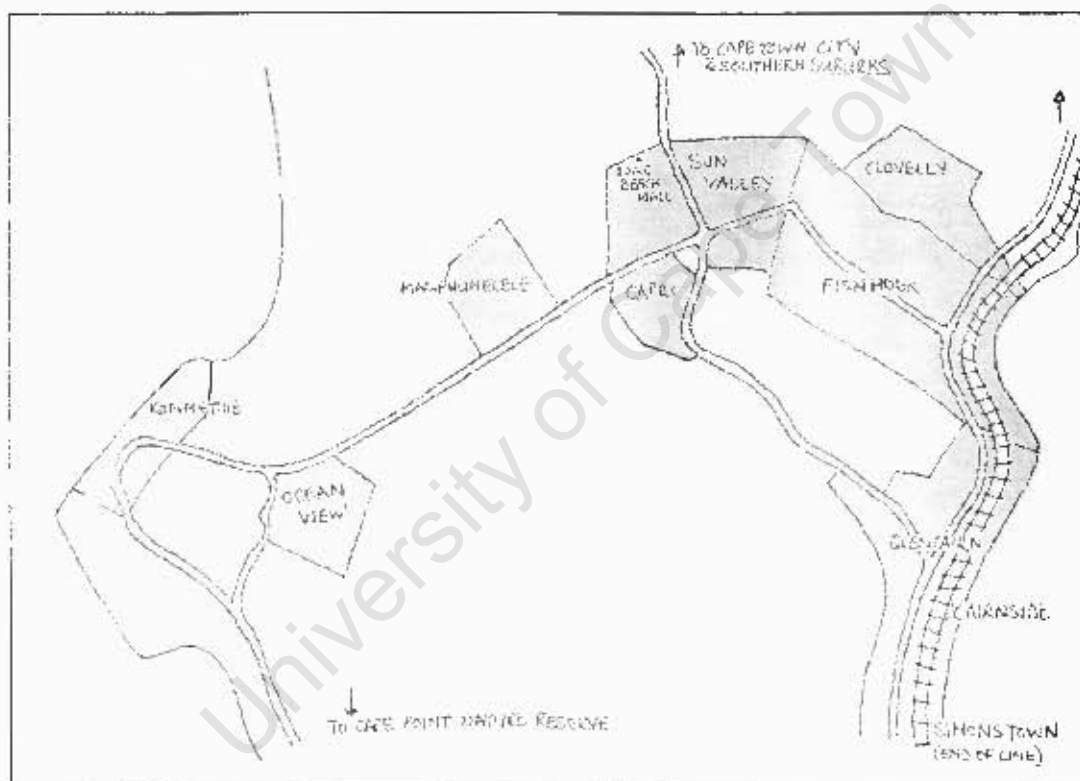


Figure 2: Fish Hoek valley (© Sue Moses)

Apartheid history is highly visible in the residential geography of the valley. The implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Land Acts of 1954 and 1955¹² by the apartheid government saw non-white people forcibly removed from their homes and relocated to separate communities established according to the official population categories 'African', 'coloured' and 'white'. Fish Hoek was designated 'white', and Ocean View was established in 1968 for local 'coloured'

¹² Source: www.africanaencyclopedia.com/apartheid/apartheid.htm

residents who were being removed from throughout the valley. People classified 'African' had been removed to Guguletu in 1965, and new settlers continuously removed to Khayelitsha up to the end of the 1980s; Masiphumelele is a more recent settlement formed by mainly Xhosa speaking migrants from the Eastern Cape in the early nineties¹³.

The geographical location and physical characteristics make it very easy not to 'see' Ocean View or Masiphumelele if one doesn't live there. There is no thoroughfare of traffic as they are both just off the main Kommetjie Road, and Masiphumelele particularly, is concealed from vision and not signposted at all. This 'invisibility' clearly extends to more than geography, as shown later. Except for a few church groups and OIL, a local NGO, there are no organized activities in these areas that strive to include young people from all neighbourhoods. Only a small percentage of schoolchildren from Fish Hoek have been to Masiphumelele or Ocean View, usually because of their involvement in 'community' and charity projects organised through a number of schools, churches and the local library in Fish Hoek.

The socio-economic environment¹⁴

According to the 2001 Population Census figures, Fish Hoek had a population of just under 16.000, of whom 96% were classified 'white', and Ocean View, an area of about one square mile, had a population of just over 16.000, of whom 98% were classified 'coloured'. The Population Census figures give an estimated 8000 residents of Masiphumelele in 2001, of whom 97% were classified 'African'. However, current unofficial estimates by the City of Cape Town and local service providers are much higher: for Ocean View around 35.000, for Masiphumelele between 12.000 and 20.000. Masiphumelele, also known as 'site 5' and established in 1992, is a formal settlement with mostly informal housing. This small area on the border of the wetlands between Kommetjie and Noordhoek has had a steady influx of people immigrating from the

¹³ Ocean View residents have many ties with residents of other formerly classified 'coloured' areas; for example Mitchells Plain on the Cape Flats, an area created during the forced removals at a considerable distance from the formerly 'white' zones of Cape Town, and sometimes described as 'apartheids dumping ground'. The township of Guguletu ('Our Treasure') was established in the 1960's on the Cape Flats; Khayelitsha ('New Home') is a more recently established and currently third-largest township in South Africa. Masiphumelele was formerly known as Site 5, and then renamed 'We Will Succeed' by its residents (Wikipedia Encyclopedia [16/04/06] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>).

¹⁴ The source for the statistical data in this paragraph is Seekings, J. (2004) "Profile of Fishhoek-Ocean View-Masiphumelele Area", an unpublished paper analysing data from the 2001 Population Census.

Eastern Cape in the past decade¹⁵. Fish Hoek has also seen a rise in new residents from all over the country in the past decade, while the 2001 census indicates a generally stable population for Ocean View with only 3% of adults having lived outside of Ocean View five years previously.

Racial classifications in the area largely overlap with differences in class: there are substantial inequalities in household incomes within and between the three areas. According to the 2001 population census, the average household income in Fish Hoek is approximately three times the average household income in Ocean View, and eight times that of Masiphumelele households¹⁶. Fish Hoek has the largest range of household incomes (ranging from 'no income' to over R200.000 a month), with the majority earning between R3.200 and R12.800 a month. In terms of occupation, 16% of the working population in the valley as a whole are managers or professionals. Almost all of these live in Fish Hoek. Another 11% are associate professionals, including teachers and nurses. Again, most of these live in Fish Hoek. One quarter are white-collar workers, evenly divided between Fish Hoek and Ocean View, 18% are skilled or semi-skilled workers, mostly in Ocean View, and 23% are labourers, mostly in Ocean View, but with a large number in Masiphumelele also. Unemployment rates are highest among younger people. Of the generation in their late twenties, unemployment rates are about 50% among men and women in Masiphumelele, 20% among men in Ocean View, a slightly lower rate among women in Ocean View, and less than 10% among both men and women in Fish Hoek.

In contrast to the rest of sprawling suburbia in Fish Hoek valley, both Masiphumelele and Ocean View are more clearly demarcated and constrained neighbourhoods. Ocean View is a formally constructed suburb, with mostly brick buildings, tarred roads and a formal infrastructure. However, only 15% of Ocean View residents own their own houses, while the rest live in blocks of council flats, in semi-detached houses, or in backyards and shacks. There is a considerable difference between the cramped conditions of the flats and informal housing, and the wealthier part of Ocean View

¹⁵ Under apartheid, the Western Cape was a designated 'coloured labour preference area'; this meant no housing was made available for black workers, and their influx strictly policed. The Influx Control Act was lifted in 1986, and there has been a considerable increase in job seekers since then. (Wikipedia Encyclopedia [24/03/06] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>).

¹⁶ See Appendix III for statistics on individual earnings, household incomes and education levels.

consisting of freestanding houses further up the mountain. In Masiphumelele, an initially formal settlement with a large informal section, shacks continue to fill up most of the space between the originally established small area of brick houses, buildings and streets, and people live in very close quarters to their neighbours. There is an expanding area of informal housing without services towards the wetlands, and shack fires or flooding are a regular occurrence. As an indication of differences in service provision between all three communities, in Masiphumelele almost no households have water taps in the house, in Ocean View most households do -only a small number of houses have taps in the yard- and almost all Fish Hoek houses have indoor taps. There is no police station in Masiphumelele, only in Ocean View and Fish Hoek, and the public hospital is situated in Fish Hoek. In terms of political allegiances, in the 2004 local elections the Democratic Alliance came out as the largest party in most areas except for Masiphumelele, where the ANC¹⁷ won an absolute majority; the Independent Democrats also has a substantial following in Ocean View. Christian political parties have a relatively large following in the valley.

For a long time Fish Hoek was home to mostly seafarers, tradesmen, and fishermen, and is known for its Christian ethos; there are at least 13 registered churches in Fish Hoek itself, and banners and boards around the village remind one of the 'presence' of God¹⁸. In recent decades there has been a steady influx of people from a wide range of economic backgrounds, often said to be attracted by the quiet lifestyle and the beauty of the natural environment. According to long term residents many young families return to their birthplace after some time spent elsewhere. A school principal commented that there are a considerable number of children at school from single parent families, who have come to live close to grandparents to share the responsibility of taking care of the children: Fish Hoek is a popular place for retirement. Many 'new' residents come from around the Western Cape, but also as far a field as Gauteng (one of the northern provinces incorporating Johannesburg) and Zimbabwe. Migration into Fish Hoek has thus had a considerable impact on the

¹⁷The African National Congress, in government since 1994.

¹⁸ Fish Hoek itself used to be a small fishing village, which grew out of an estate granted by Lord Charles Somerset (then Governor of the Cape) to an Andries Bruins in 1818. An (in)famous condition of this gift was the prohibition of the sale of alcohol; active Christian residents later formed the 'Defenders of Fish Hoek' to uphold this decree (Cobern 1984). The first liquor licence was given out to a pub only a few years ago, but there is as yet no bottle store in the valley, and a fair amount of resistance from the residents committee to any changes in this respect.

diversification of the world the non-white population.

Fish Hoek

All three Fish Hoek schools¹⁹ that the children featuring in this study attend are situated in the middle of Fish Hoek proper. This area has a quiet suburban feel to it; the physical lay out of most of Fish Hoek consists of a grid of roads lined with neat gardens and family homes, as does most of suburbia in the valley. Early in the morning and around half past two in the afternoon groups of children in burgundy red school uniforms spill out into the streets on their way home, but otherwise there are few children to be seen in the streets. This is in marked contrast with Masiphumelele and Ocean View, neighbourhoods with a lively street life, where children spend a lot of time 'hanging out' or playing in public spaces after school.

Fish Hoek school grounds are all fairly large and well kept, with sports fields and playgrounds, and the schools offer after school care and a wide range of extra curricular activities. Out of school, however, there are very few facilities or entertainment spaces for young people in the valley. Furthermore, Fish Hoek has a high percentage of elderly people, and is typified by teenagers as 'Grannyville', a "boring place where you have to be quiet and behave". In letters to the editor of *The People's Post*, a local newspaper, elderly writers regularly complain of 'hooligans' skateboarding on the streets and pavements, and how 'the youth of today' have no respect and misbehave in public.

The most popular local shopping complex is Long Beach Mall, recently built and upgraded with a cinema, a large supermarket that caters mainly for a middle class population, and a fair range of stores and coffee shops. For the youth in the valley, the mall is the most popular local 'hang out', even though often for lack of alternatives, and a place to find casual jobs. Adjacent to the mall is a space for band practice pointed out by a number of young people as a 'hang out', and a small skateboarding rink -the only one in the valley- set up by the recently established 'Connections' church. Only one main road connects Ocean View and Masiphumelele to Sun Valley

¹⁹ Fish Hoek Primary (grade 1-6), Middle (grade 7-9) and Senior High (grade 10-12).

and runs further along a stretch of mainly residential areas through to Fish Hoek²⁰. The main road in Fish Hoek is lined with shop fronts and apartment blocks in a functional style of architecture, without the quaint Victorian charm of neighbouring Kalk Bay and Simonstown. Fish Hoek station is the junction for public transport, essentially the 'gateway' to the rest of the valley for those without private vehicles. Many people from Ocean View and Masiphumelele choose to shop at the cheaper stores in Fish Hoek, rather than the more upmarket Longbeach Mall. The diversity and number of people at the station and main road show a marked contrast to the quiet residential areas directly beyond, where there are few people walking around, and perhaps the odd gardener in blue overalls cleaning the yard.

The range of shops in Fish Hoek Main Road show some interesting contradictions and reflect the history and present diversity of the valley: an old fashioned haberdashery with a wide range of lace and buttons in the windows opposite a Halaal take-away; a health food store crammed full with organic vegetables and colourful African crafts against the retired atmosphere of the adjacent 'Windsor Tearoom' decorated with mint green wallpaper and matching frilly curtains and tablecloths, advertising milk tarts and 'bangers&mash'. A couple of street vendors sell knitted Rasta scarves and beanies, bags, sun glasses and wire crafts close to 'AP Jones', a large well known local department store established in 1928, serving largely the elderly and more conservative customer. Further down the road, the relatively new and popular evangelist Valley Christian Church is situated on the first floor of the 'OK Bazaar' building, and has a security gate and buzzer to get in; the more traditional Full Gospel church building is situated on the opposite side of the road, a few meters away from 'Dungeons', a surf shop decorated with black gothic symbols and one of two places in the road where local youth hang out to play pool.

From the busy main road one crosses over the railway line to the sound of waves and smell of the sea, teenagers surfing on the far end of the beach, people walking their dogs, elderly people resting on a bench in the shade looking out to the horizon. There is a restaurant and take-away at the shallow end of the beach where children can play under the watchful eye of parents and grandmas. A fully equipped lifesavers station is

²⁰ See figure 2: Fish Hoek valley.

Chapter Two

School as a site of integration in a post-apartheid landscape

My first day here was very interesting; there were two coloured guys in the class and they say "Hey Chester so what's the weather like in Ocean View today!" [laughs] ...and Ocean View is just like 10k's away, no not even...3 or 4! And we did a comparison between where you live, like socio-economic class, and one boy who lived on the mountainside [in Fish Hoek] said 'where is Masiphumelele'... he's been living here since he's been in his huggies! He didn't know, was completely unaware; a lot of the kids are completely unaware of life in someone else's culture. And that's particularly so, I find, in this valley. We're in the backwoods... It's changed a bit now in the school because we've got different people coming in the last couple of years. You've got people of different races, and different economic groups as well. I think the kids have become desensitized...they are not so aware, and more accepting of kids from different cultures.

(Interview with Middle School teacher, September 2004)

School is clearly an important part of children's lives, and a place where children spend a lot of time with other children of a range of backgrounds and age groups. For these and for practical reasons this was the best place to gain access to a wide range of children. In consultation with school principals and teachers, fieldwork with children took place in time slots between exams from August 2004 to June 2005, so as not to disturb the curriculum and children's study time. I spent most of my time at the Middle and Senior High schools, and the overall attitude I observed is that the school principals and teachers take their students education very seriously. In the staff room, teachers would often speak to each other about the best way to teach certain parts of the curriculum, where to find teacher support materials, how to approach an especially difficult student, or how to help someone who is not doing well. In individual discussions with teachers, they confirmed this impression and displayed an interest in their students' general lives and wellbeing. I did however speak mostly to the younger generation of teachers, and heard from both teachers and students that the 'old style' teachers were less involved, and more authoritarian in their teaching methods and approach to students.

Teachers were positive about the increasing diversity at school over the past ten years, but also acknowledged that having students whose first language was not English,

and/or came from a different schooling background (mostly students from Ocean View and Masiphumelele schools) was an added burden to their job:

We have to teach a bit harder, because if they come from other schools in those areas we generally find that they haven't had the advantages that children have had at say Fish Hoek primary. It's a cultural and a language thing, and you have to teach hard and help, give them extra help. You often find even after a year their language skills pick up and they get better. And then their comprehensive skills get better. Often it just comes right.

(Interview Senior High school teacher, September 2004)

The appearance of the school grounds and buildings demonstrates that time and money are spent on the school; the Middle School campus is in a less groomed state than the Senior High campus, which was newly built in the 1980s when the student numbers outgrew the old building. Both schools have large school grounds with space for sports fields and playgrounds, and have a reception area, assembly hall, staff room, space for students' lockers, a courtyard with a tuck shop, designated art rooms and computer labs, and classrooms generally in a good state. Children at the Middle School did complain about the bad state of the classrooms and the old furniture, and expressed that they have less respect for a school that does not look good.

The main mission statement for the Middle and Senior High Schools is "Learning to make a difference". The schools place a strong emphasis on responsibility and discipline, and have a code of conduct for each student to sign at enrolment. Uniforms, the school emblem, song, and events like the yearly Founders' Day nurture the school's history; the importance of keeping up the school's name and high pass rates is made clear in assemblies and other events. There is also a strong emphasis in the written rules on respect for each other, and penalties for racist, sexist and blasphemous language and behaviour. Fish Hoek schools' ethos is based on the Christian faith, although this is not stated in their mission statements. However, bible studies are compulsory for all students unless parents request otherwise. Many teachers are Christian, and many of the children I met are active members of church youth groups, often referring to the importance of God, church, and their faith as supports in their lives. Two teachers, themselves not Christians, commented that religion is perhaps filling a void in children's emotional and spiritual lives, especially since many of them have to cope with difficult family situations such as parents

getting divorced, and the Christian faith and church youth groups are a stabilizing factor in their lives. Churches are also the main source of ‘community outreach’ programmes in the valley, and many children involved in the school’s outreach project have a Christian background.

Diversity at school

Diversity is not only about ‘race’, and as shown in the general statistics of the area in the previous chapter, there are substantial class differences within and between the communities these schoolchildren come from. Although class is difficult to determine, judging from what children and teachers have told me about parents’ occupations and financial situations, there is a clear indication that in each classroom there will be children from diverse economic backgrounds ranging from an unemployed single parent to double income professionals. Due to the history of apartheid, class and ‘race’ inevitably overlap to a large degree, but certainly not in all cases. Another aspect of diversity is religion; the majority of children and teachers are Christian, but there are a small number of Muslim children at the school. Children also come from a wide variety of household types. Just under half the children in my sample live in nuclear families with both biological parents; the rest live in various family compositions, including stepparents, single parents and the extended family, which typically includes grandparents. From the data it is clear that this range in family composition is a normal feature in children’s lives across the overall project’s research sites (Fish Hoek, Masiphumelele, and Ocean View).²¹

The formerly ‘white’ Fish Hoek schools opened up to non-white students in 1991, but have only had a significant influx of non-white students since 1994. One of the teachers pointed out, “Just look at the school photographs hanging in the hallways, you see a few more coloured and black faces each year”. At present, an estimated 20% of the schoolchildren are not ‘white’. Many of the non-white students live in Ocean View (‘coloured’) and Masiphumelele (‘black’), but a fair number live in

²¹ This variety in family structures and children’s experiences of home life is a topic outside the scope of this paper, and will be addressed in a forthcoming monograph on the overall findings of the ‘Growing Up in the New South Africa’ project, to be published at the end of 2006. Suffice to say here that these similarities in economic and family circumstances across the board add to the need to look at diversity and similarity in children’s lives in more respects than along ‘population groups’, as is often the case in research publications.

formerly 'white' areas. For example Fish Hoek Senior High had 713 students in 2005, of whom 43 are registered as living in Ocean View, and 9 in Masiphumelele. However, when going through the list of students, there are at least 17 Xhosa or other 'African' names with addresses in other suburbs than Masiphumelele. Postal addresses and surnames are, of course, not necessarily an indication of ethnicity, but the object of this example illustrates that not all 'black' students live in the 'black' township of Masiphumelele. From my own sample it is also clear that certainly not all 'coloured' children live in Ocean View.

The teacher population at schools in the valley largely follow the historical apartheid divisions between neighbourhoods²²: there are almost exclusively black teachers at Masiphumelele schools, a few black but a majority coloured teachers at Ocean View, and a small number of black and coloured teachers at Fish Hoek schools. The opening up of schools has not resulted in any white children going to a non-white school in the area, and generally expectations around school admissions rely largely on 'race'. For example one Fish Hoek teacher relayed the story of a white couple from Kommetjie (situated on the other side of the valley) who came to enroll their child. They were upset to have to go through an admission procedure, and complained about the fees. When the principal explained that according to the official Department of Education's zoning, Ocean View Secondary would be the closest and therefore designated school for their children, they were silent, and then exclaimed "You have got to be joking!". They could not believe that anyone would expect their child to attend a 'coloured' school and sent their child elsewhere.

Discourse at school: interpreting diversity and integration

Inevitably discussions about diversity and integration with school staff led to speaking about racial groups, even when not specifically requested. At the same time, at all three schools, the principals and teachers were reluctant to speak in terms of race. When asked if they know what percentage of the students are not white, they were

²² As noted in the report on a countrywide study by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) on racism in schools: "Schooling continues to be largely spatially defined. Relatively well-resourced state schools are located in middle-class, predominantly white suburbs. The under-resourced public schools, which constitute the vast majority of schools and serve most black learners, are located in working-class areas or impoverished rural areas" (Vally&Dambala 1999: 47).

quick to point out that they do not like to categorise on the basis of race but that the Department of Education insists on such statistics²³. It is noteworthy that the department does not require indications of ‘class’ or ‘income bracket’. This lack highlights a larger discourse in which the population of South Africa is typically categorized only according to ‘race’. In the past some schools have refused to fill in the sheets that ask for racial classification, and used to write ‘other’ until the Department removed this option and insisted that schools report on the classification of their students according to ‘old’ apartheid categories. One principal mentioned that a recent call from the Department of Education for new numbers according to race again met with resistance from the teachers, and they had to be convinced of the necessity of doing this to enable the department to keep track of transformation at schools.

Fish Hoek schoolteachers reported they do not feel there are many problems around racial discrimination at school, and believe it is not the children but parents that cause any existing tension:

Teacher 1: I am impressed with the lack of it; the amount of cross over and how comfortable children are with each other. A lot of children are good friends, best friends across different groups and stuff...there’s racism, there’s negative stuff around...but overall I think it’s pretty good.

Teacher 2: But you see they haven’t grown up with it, they’ve been born into ...when Mandela was freed they were 3 years old. The racism that does come out I think, is from their parents, they don’t get it from each other because they don’t know it.

(Interview with two Middle School teachers, November 2004)

Most teachers also expressed the opinion that race is unimportant and should not be given too much attention. One teacher however, while acknowledging the progressive nature of the school and herself wary of using racial categories, expressed frustration with the silence around ‘race’ at school. She feels that the presence of racism, which she does observe occasionally, is not acknowledged and not dealt with appropriately, and racism is not a topic for discussion in staff meetings since it is not considered a problem at the school. Her example of a racial incident, in which a teacher reported

²³ The ‘non-racial’ attitude or ‘colour blindness’ of principals of formerly white schools has been noted in the SAHRC study, where it is mainly interpreted by the researchers as a strategy to avoid discussing the issue of race (Vally&Dambala 1999: 6. 27).

that two (white) guys pushed a (black) girl is however rather ambiguous, and I have not heard of any clear examples of racial discrimination. This certainly is not to say it does not happen, but, as children have told me, it does not seem to be a common occurrence. The teacher furthermore commented that there is some space in the timetable to deal with race discrimination issues in the classroom, although it is left to teachers to broach the subject. When I asked a school councillor what she picks up about discrimination among students, her initial comment was: "I don't know...I am so busy trying to get them to look at each other for good qualities, to look at people as people and not as race, status or anything". After some thought she suggested the most obvious division was the Xhosa speaking children from Masiphumelele:

I think socially they struggle a little bit because when they are out of class they will only speak Xhosa because they are comfortable with it; they will only have Xhosa friends. It's hardly a train smash but I do think it isolates them a little bit... [at Senior High] I think they have adapted. They are the same kids but they have gotten used to the system.

IG: Do you see any difference between black children from Masi or those living in Fish Hoek?

There is a difference in coping, because they are living locally they would have gone to Fish Hoek or Sun Valley primary...their English is quite strong. It's a language thing where they can cope better and they are used to the society. Kids from Ukhanyo Primary [in Masiphumelele] they come here and they are learning in a third or second language and they struggle. And then they also have to adapt to a different system, to a majority white kids, to being a minority...it's frightening for those children. We try to put in a couple of things to assist them and it's slowly working²⁴.

IG: What about children from Ocean View who come to school here?

Now they have less of an issue. Their language skills are fine, they are half Americanised in any case [laughs]! I call them the Americans, they watch so much TV and get the lingo and everything. Culturally they click in very easily. There is a lot more mixing, you'll see coloured and white children all together.

(Interview Middle School councillor, April 2005)

These comments by the school councillor convey some attitudes around integration that I have found more generally: firstly, she believes it is language that obstructs integration; as soon as children learn to speak English fluently there is no longer a problem. Secondly there is a sense that children 'adapt to a different system', recognized to be that of the white majority. She furthermore refers to a difference in

²⁴ The school offers extra English tuition and the possibility of a Xhosa-speaking councillor.

'culture' between children from Masiphumelele, Ocean View or Fish Hoek, and children from elsewhere will have to adapt to 'the society' at school to be able to integrate successfully. This illustrates the way many people see Fish Hoek valley, and diversity in general. Differences between people in the valley are often framed in terms of 'culture' rather than 'race', but the inference remains racial difference. Many adults I spoke to were hesitant to use the words 'black', 'coloured' and 'white' and very careful not to allude to any kind of racist attitude, and would say 'It's a different culture'. Such caution was less apparent among children.

The caution around using apartheid categories suggests a perceived need to portray a politically correct 'new South African' non-racism and create distance from being associated with upholding 'old' apartheid segregation. In many cases the content of discussions pointed to a genuine interest in change, but in a few cases the careful avoidance of these words did seem intended to avoid being branded a racist. One teacher explained there is a great deal of shame and guilt within the white adult population around the apartheid era, guilt which is not spoken about but often taken over by children themselves. There are, however, a number of children from clearly racist families. The teacher gave the example of a student from an AWB²⁵ family who, on occasion, challenges the content of the school curriculum. But generally the topic of race is not tackled directly at school. This 'talking around' the issue means that many underlying (in many cases racist) assumptions about difference go unchallenged, and are expressed through comments alluding to a difference in 'culture'. In these cases 'culture' is perceived as an obstacle to people mixing, and not something that can (or should) change. For example two church youth workers from Fish Hoek commented thus on the lack of inter-community youth events within their church:

Yw 1: We are affiliated slightly but don't really get together. They have their own church in the area they can walk to so they don't bother coming here and we are not going to trek out there...

Yw 2: They have a youth fraternal that runs in Ocean View, all the churches in Ocean View are a part of that. The things that the youth do there are very different...

²⁵ The 'Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging' (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) is a national fascist movement of white Afrikaners led by Eugene Terre Blanche, established in 1973. According to several residents, they have had a substantial following in the Fish Hoek valley.

Yw 1: It's a total cultural thing. Some of their kids came along to one of our worship evenings and they hated it, they don't like the music, its not their style...then they want our kids to come to a fashion show in Ocean View and our kids are like....fashion show?! They don't enjoy the same things. It's a cultural thing; if you don't enjoy the same music it doesn't work.

(Interview with two church youth workers, November 2004)

On the other hand there is some attention to racism and a movement towards embracing cultural diversity. For example, the schools organise drama evenings with a multicultural theme, as a way of familiarising and including children with 'different backgrounds':

We still come from different perspectives and backgrounds... but ya...there's tension sometimes. It's something we haven't really looked at that close. I have thought about it because there's people I know that have these racism workshops; we have learnt that there is more stuff, anxiety, more people feeling a bit of cultural exclusion, their traditions aren't really recognised in the same way. Although this year we did a big June 16th celebration²⁶. The kids from Masi did dances, it was quite beautiful because there was about 20 girls dancing, 10 African girls, 3 or 4 coloured and 6 or 7 white, all doing this wild African dance... and the girls... it was not uncool not to be skinny, there were all these girls that were getting into this thing where it was OK to be a little big, just to be OK with your body. Plus the whole African thing...

(Interview Middle School teacher, November 2004)

The school also staged 'District Six' as the 2005 school musical, which depicts the imagined heyday of a mixed township in Cape Town and the subsequent pain of its destruction and forced removals of coloured and African people from this area. This focus on diversity and in some ways addressing historical divisions, however, is limited to performances²⁷ and can actually reinforce the idea of difference²⁸. It does not extend to political or practical interventions to actively overcome segregation in

²⁶ A public holiday commemorating the June 16th Soweto student uprising in 1976 against the implementation of Afrikaans as the language of instruction at all state schools.

²⁷ For example, in December 2005 the 'Mzansi' carnival parade from Masiphumelele to the shopping mall in Sun Valley was meant to "celebrate the multi-cultural valley". However, there are few events or places in which people from different communities are brought together, nor events in which existing divisions are really challenged.

²⁸ As stated in the SAHRC report, "...this form of multicultural education does not acknowledge that there could be differences within perceived 'racial' or 'cultural' groups, and that the identity and culture of individuals and groups are temporal and changing. According to Kalantjis et al., (1990), "the multicultural approach may delineate ethnic groups iconographically and stereotypically, so contradicting reality. This can increase, rather than reduce racism and social division." (Vally&Dambala 1999: 43)

the valley. For example, schools in the area have no connection with each other, save a sporadic girls' volleyball game between Ocean View and Fish Hoek secondary schools, and a 'community' project run by the Primary and Middle school for children in Masiphumelele in which Fish Hoek schoolchildren bring sandwiches to young children in an after care program. Moreover, the latter 'community' project—although between Fish Hoek and Masiphumelele so often depicted in the local press and found in the general discourse of people in the valley. For example, when I asked a teacher about children's awareness of their community, she immediately translated this to mean 'community work', clearly connecting the concept of 'community' to charity work. She further commented that children at school were not very aware of 'the community', and gave as an example the children's ignorance of Youth Day, which commemorates the historical event of the Soweto student riots in 1976, essentially indicating community to mean 'black people'. Understanding community in this sense indicates a process of othering and talking about 'them', and is not used as an inclusive category 'us'.

The following chapters will show how this discourse of difference is, to a certain extent, adopted by children and young people, and simultaneously purposefully contested by repeatedly pointing out that 'we are all the same'. Students in general resent being reminded by teachers and school about 'race' and racism. They are aware racism exists, but proclaim "not at our school! We are all friends". This expresses a genuine wish for equality, but can also be attributed to political correctness, and to a certain kind of ignorance, in expecting classmates to be the same as oneself. As one teacher explained:

The majority of the kids at this school are white. When they talk about 'us' they really mean it, they mean everyone in the class, and then they talk about 'them' when talking about black kids. I think that's just because of numbers; if it were the other way around they would be more aware and question what they were saying. What's distressing is that the kids won't ask a black child that comes from Masi...white kids won't have a personal conversation but will make sweeping comments about what people are prepared to accept in Masi. And they don't think of asking [their classmate] what's going on...

IG: But I don't think they really make that connection.
No they don't because as far as they are concerned that kid is not the same as the rest of the people in Masi.

(Interview Senior High school teacher, Mav 2005)

One reason for this could be the adjustment of children to the dominant school culture and behaviour ('they get used to the system') that then diminishes difference. This includes wearing a school uniform and abiding by the school rules, which are enforced by signing an agreement when they enrol. Most students I spoke to are happy with the school rules and understand the necessity for them, to avoid 'total chaos'. Whilst keeping up a certain pride in their heritage, which essentially harks back to apartheid days, the school management consciously carries out a non-racial as well as the above-mentioned multi-cultural approach.

As noted, school management generally avoids race issues, and there is a definite 'race fatigue' among many young people, with little desire to discuss the topic. However, at the time of this study the school organised a screening of a documentary about the rigidity and arbitrariness of racial classification during apartheid, and how this ruined a family's life by separating a daughter from her 'white' parents on the basis of her darker skin colour and curly hair. The screening was not appreciated by many of the students, and emotions in the grade 11-class discussion the next day ran high. A number of students expressed they are 'tired' of hearing about apartheid, as it is not their reality. "It is being dragged out; even in English class there are always exam questions about apartheid!" Some also felt strongly that Afrikaners get blamed for everything, and that bringing up the issue of race and apartheid creates animosity where there was none. "Yes it's important to know history, but this is not applicable to us". Young people themselves (of all colours) often repeat that they have no racism issues. "It's made a big issue by the older generation, not by us". This includes the government legislation around preferential treatment based on racial categories, disapproved of by the majority of students. But one (black) student commented that most people in her class do not understand or think about the background and reasons for BEE (Black Economic Empowerment), and assume everyone has the same chances in life. She herself, however, refuses to use the fact that she is black to be able to get a scholarship for university, and is adamant that she be judged on her abilities and her grades. As will become clear throughout the dissertation, there are many cases such as this where young people reiterate the discourse around them, but do not feel it is necessarily applicable to themselves or their peers.

apartheid past in adults' discourse and the school curriculum, and the 'normality' of diversity in their environment makes them less concerned with addressing issues of integration; they rather 'get on with their lives'. Young people are sensitive to history, but use racial categories and identities in a new way, or ignore 'race' purposefully, putting a strong emphasis on individuality and equality among their peers. More on the topic of young people's discourse and the normality of diversity in their daily lives will follow in Chapter 4. However, these young people are still 'children of their time', and a closer look at the mapping process will reveal children's continuing stereotypical ways of speaking about 'other' communities.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Three

Maps, stereotypes and mobility

Michael, a blond and blue-eyed 15-year-old boy, takes the bus to school every day. The bus drives from Kommetjie ('white') through Ocean View ('coloured'), past Masiphumelele ('black') to Fish Hoek ('white'), picking up schoolchildren. He told me he had never really been to Ocean View even though he travels through it every day. "They are racist towards whites, even the small children in Ocean View already act like little gangsters, using gang symbols and rude gestures, and shouting at me 'hey whitey'". He then said with a wide grin: "I got out of the bus only once, just to be able to say that I have been to Ocean View". This provoked some laughter from the rest of the discussion group, who showed an ambiguous reaction to the depiction of the dangers of Ocean View and its people. None of the participants live in Ocean View themselves, and only one of the boys (who is white) actually goes there regularly: "I go to church youth meetings, and I visit my friends there..." -he shrugged his shoulders- "...and it's not dangerous at all!"

(Notes from grade 9 discussion group, November 2004)

Mapping

During the course of this study, young people often expressed a desire to make connections with other young people. There are, however, a number of spatial and social constraints that prohibit children from moving freely within (and beyond) Fish Hoek valley, and thus limit children's options. As explained in chapter one, the continuing residential segregation according to 'race' (and therefore, usually, class) means that the geography of the valley is not conducive to people meeting across these historically constructed boundaries. In the 'Anthropology of space and place', the authors define places as "...meaningful localities constituted through practice" (Low&Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 227). In other words, bodily experiencing or not experiencing a place will influence what one knows and the way one feels about a certain place. To understand more about children's levels of mobility and perceptions of their neighbourhood and community, I conducted mapping exercises with children from all three age groups; grade 6 (11-12), grade 9 (15-16), and grade 11(17-19 years old). Observing differences and similarities between children's maps, and talking to them about it, revealed general attitudes the children have towards different communities in the valley, levels of integration across 'race' and class, and issues of identity connected to place. This approach follows what Low&Lawrence-Zúñiga

postulate, that "...places act as means of shaping conceptions and producing experiences of self and identity" (ibid.).

The mapping exercises were designed to create a platform for children and teenagers to give their visual interpretation of the valley²⁹. Participants were asked to indicate the boundaries of what they thought of as 'their' neighbourhood, and to identify places on their maps according to the categories 'fun', 'needs', 'important' and 'dangerous'. The exercise aimed to investigate their perceptions and knowledge of the area, how, where, when and why they do or don't go to certain places, and to make a start in understanding more about the specifics of children's lives in the valley. As can be seen in Figures 1-4, some perceptions about who and what constitutes 'my' neighbourhood are evident in the drawings themselves, others were elicited through talking about the maps, mostly during the drawing sessions and in some cases in separate sessions. The maps indicated quite clearly children's sense of mobility and their knowledge and perceptions of their environment. Access to various places, the level of mobility and ideas about certain places differ by age group, and certainly by residence and familiarity with certain areas. Three case studies will illustrate these different levels, and bring out some of the connections between mobility, familiarity and stereotyping.

²⁹See Fordred et.al. (2004) in a special edition of *Anthropology of Southern Africa*, vol. 27(1/2) for discussions on the anthropology of space and place, embodied knowledge of place, and mapping as a research tool.

CASE STUDY 1: How Ocean View and Masi 'fall off' the map (Grade 6 club)

At the primary school I was given permission for the grade 6 art club to participate in the research project. The teacher told me she had included some children who did not normally participate so I would have a more diverse group, for example, two girls from Masiphumelele (which she had trouble pronouncing). In this group of 19 children, there were 13 girls and 6 boys. Four are not white, two of whom live in Fish Hoek and two in Masiphumelele. Five of the 19 children live in Simonstown, Noordhoek, and Masiphumelele, neighbourhoods that are outside the school's catchment area.

To draw the group maps, the children formed four groups: one group of six girlfriends (all blonde, middle class and white) considered to be the 'popular' group with a hanger-on, the six boys, the two girls from Masiphumelele, and a rest group of four girls. The 'popular' girls group were the first to start drawing the outline of their map, under supervision of Helen, the group 'leader' who was a prefect and considered to be best at art. The girls very soon started to disagree with each other about the borders of the map and which places should feature within 'our neighbourhood'. The main problem was Muizenberg, for Alex too far 'out' to be considered their neighbourhood, for Carol and Anita very important because of 'Girl Zone', a girls-only surf school that they go to every Saturday. The argument became a bit of a power struggle between Carol and Alex in particular, but after some tears it was agreed that everyone was allowed to draw in their own important places, which would then determine the borders of the map.

When the girls were busy with the rough outline, I asked if they could show me where Ocean View and Masiphumelele were located. There was silence and some hesitation: none had ever actually been to either place, only Helen sometimes went with her mom by car to drop off the domestic worker. She had an idea where Masiphumelele was, guessed the position of Ocean View, and pencilled in both areas. However, when the group started colouring and painting, Ocean View and Masiphumelele both very quickly 'fell off' the map. In their place arose a large colourful drawing of Long Beach Mall in Sun Valley, a fairly new shopping mall and favourite place for all the girls that represents the categories fun, important and needs. The end result is a very

pretty map of the valley, showing all of the girls' homes, a local shop, school, the mall, horse riding in Noordhoek and surfing in Muizenberg, and no reference to the existence of Ocean View or Masiphumelele (see Figure 3).

The map by the group of four girls was relatively similar, with elaborate drawings of their own houses, and the beach, school and the mall featuring as the main places they visit. In talking about the maps, it soon transpired that even though many of these girls are friends, they do not visit each other's houses much. This was mostly attributed to transport, since they live far from each other. Even during the holidays most of their time is spent with the family. The girls do occasionally have group outings, for example to the cinema at the Mall, and many have after school activities, for example piano lessons, girl scouts, dance classes, horse riding and surf school. At weekends they mostly go to visit relatives or friends with their parents, and some occasionally stay with their grandparents. Melissa, an Afrikaans girl, told me her family is part of a group called the 'Trekkers': "We all meet up once a month to go camping. Our group has families from all over Cape Town and I have a best friend from Tableview. I loooove it, it's so nice to meet all my friends. I am going on a three day camp again this weekend, I'm counting the days!"

The six boys, of whom three are very good friends, were grouped at their own table. The area they had sketched out was much smaller than the girls' map, featuring only Simonstown, Fish Hoek and Sun Valley. The borders were decided by where the members of the group lived. Taariq started with an elaborate roadmap of Fish Hoek, where he lives, and Jake and Damien were arguing about the whereabouts of connecting roads through the mountains in between their houses. Eventually their map consisted of many roads and even more mountains, a few small houses, the school, and Longbeach Mall on the top border of the map. No-one drew in Ocean View, Masiphumelele, Kommetjie or Noordhoek (the other side of the peninsula), as they said they don't go 'that side' much. Taariq, who is 'coloured' and lives in Fish Hoek, has relatives in Ocean View "...but we don't go there much" which is why he didn't want to draw it in. All the boys like to spend their free time at home playing computer games or watching videos, and many mentioned the video store as one of the few places they go to regularly. One of the boys sometimes goes hiking in the mountains or goes out to play with his brother, but this does not seem to be a regular

activity for many others. Jake, who lives in a navy compound in the mountains said: “I don’t go anywhere much. Only on Saturdays I go with my dad to play Yu-Gi-Oh³⁰ at the mall”. And in reply to my question about places that were out of bounds to him, Damien answered “my parents’ bedroom” and could not answer the question in a broader sense. This reflects the general trend in this group of grade 6 children that they have a very limited view of the valley. As a result, they also do not have much of a sense of places that are dangerous or out of bounds, since they do not go out without their parents.

Thando and Lindiwe, two (black) girls from Masiphumelele, are an exception among this group of 19. They take a minibus taxi to and from school every day and are very independent in their mobility; all the others (coloured and white) are fetched by parents. These girls are allowed to stay out and play in the streets with friends, but all the other children live in houses surrounded by a yard and a wall or fence, and are very rarely allowed to venture out of this space by themselves. Some may go to a friend next-door or perhaps a few houses further down the street, but even then are usually escorted by an adult or older sibling. One girl explained: “I go to friends sometimes, but I have to ask my parents to take me there. So I don’t often ask because my parents don’t want to take me”. Their parents’ approval or willingness therefore largely determines which places they will visit. The two girls from Masiphumelele, on the other hand, they are left relatively free and just need to be home by a certain time. Thando: “I take a taxi to school and can go home anytime I want... and I always go to play soccer with my friends in Masi until late”.

When I asked Thando and Lindiwe to draw a map of their neighbourhood, Thando inquired if they could draw Masiphumelele; both girls were really excited as if they had not expected this. The most detailed part of their map was of Masiphumelele itself, showing some streets, their own homes (important), friends’ houses (fun), a number of spaza shops (needs) and a couple of shebeens as dangerous³¹. The rest of the map consisted of Fish Hoek beach (fun), Fish Hoek primary school and hospital, and the shopping mall and garage ‘where dad works’ in Sun Valley (categorised

³⁰ A Japanese computer action game, also a popular TV series.

³¹ A spaza shop is a small local shop usually at someone’s house; a shebeen is a pub, often unlicensed and situated in a person’s house or back yard.

important and needs). Their surprise and enthusiasm about permission to draw Masiphumelele is better understood by Thando's comments in a later conversation: "I don't like school... I can't speak my language. The teachers won't allow me and my friends to speak Xhosa, they say 'we speak English here'. But Afrikaans is allowed because they can understand it". She does not have many friends at school or in Fish Hoek. Until recently she used to stay the night at a school friend's house in Fish Hoek once a week, but most of her friends live in Masiphumelele. After two or three mapping sessions she stopped attending. The others in the group have -over time- made some comments on both girls in their absence. Jake is friendly with Thando, but Lindiwe is generally disliked and is said to behave badly, to fight and to be very rude. For example, she speaks in Xhosa deliberately and makes jokes about people that the others cannot understand. Jake did show compassion for Lindiwe: "I think she has problems at home, that's why she behaves badly". Language differences arose most frequently when talking with grade 6 children about discrimination, their main point being that it is rude to speak in a language other people cannot understand. To my comment that they all learn Xhosa at school, most replied that they disliked these classes the most and did not feel them to be useful³².

³² At the Middle School, Xhosa language class is optional and at Senior High it is not available as a subject at all. However, of the three schools, the primary school does not seem to uphold a multicultural, non-racial policy as actively as the Middle and High schools do.

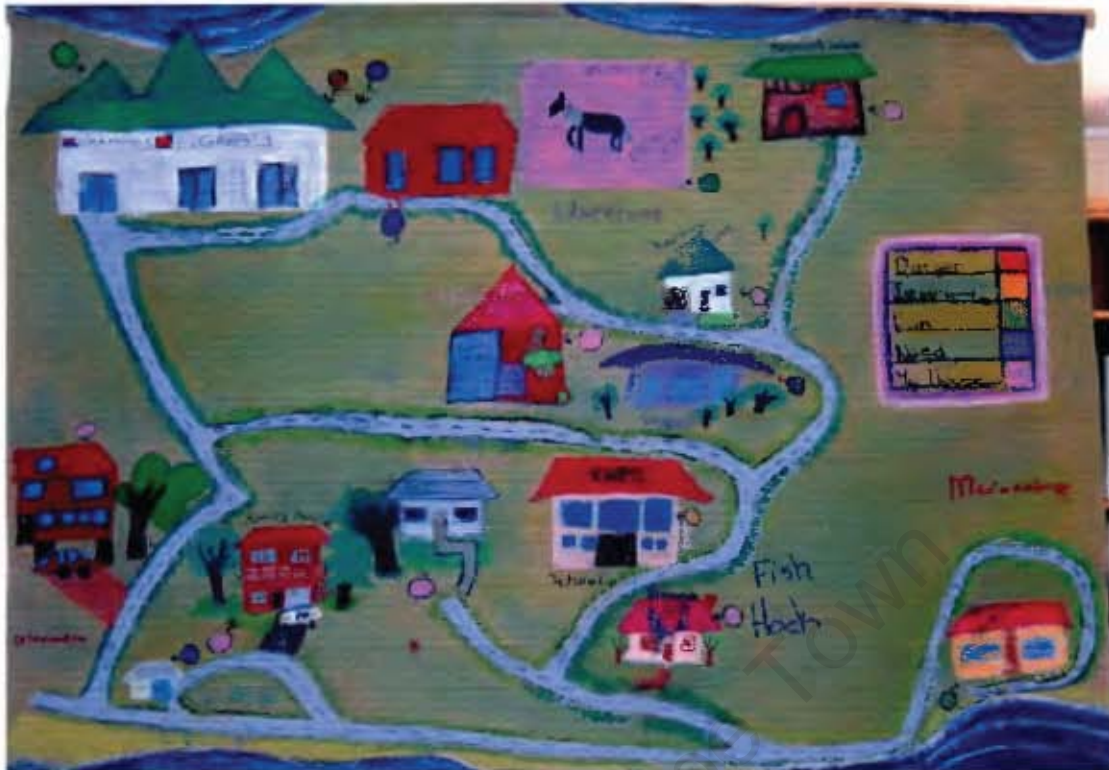


Figure 3

Map of Fish Hoek valley by seven grade 6 girls.



Figure 4

Map of Fish Hoek valley by four grade 9 girls from Fish Hoek and Masiphumelele.

CASE STUDY 2: Safer in the place you know (Grade 9 workshops)

The grade 9 workshops consisted of two classroom sessions for each of four 'Life Orientation' classes, and contact time was therefore less intense than with the much smaller grade 6 art club. This gave less detailed data, but the larger number of participants gave a better insight into general trends. The group consisted of 44 girls and 26 boys. Most of the 70 children that participated live in the formerly 'white' areas: just under half are from Fish Hoek itself, nine of the 70 live in Ocean View and five in Masiphumelele. For clarification, and to repeat an earlier point, not all of the children who live in 'white' areas are 'white', and it is mostly someone's place of residence that determines their mobility, knowledge and stereotyping of other places in the valley.

Most of the participants felt they could walk around by themselves and that the valley is safe. One boy commented: "I sometimes walk home from Sun Valley to Fish Hoek at two in the morning and it's fine". In many of these accounts, however, children considered their own neighbourhoods to be safer than others, and would not go to unknown and therefore 'unsafe' areas by themselves. Four girlfriends from Fish Hoek and Masiphumelele drew their neighbourhoods, shaded everything in red and wrote: "Everywhere u go is dangerous, but most of the time, in our areas, it is safe" (see Figure 4). This indicates the general feeling that as long as one knows a place, one is safe, but at the same time one must be on guard everywhere.

In general, the places actually featuring on the maps clearly depended on the group composition, and show stereotyping of areas unfamiliar to the group members. When I asked the class to indicate dangerous places with a red colour, two boys were arguing over their map because the one (white) was joking with the other (who is coloured): "Your whole neighbourhood should be coloured red, it's full of gangsters!" The boy in question was not amused and said he actually lives in Simonstown (which was formerly zoned 'white'). Children not living in or accessing Ocean View and Masiphumelele (also called Site 5) marked either or both places as an area shaded in red, with no features like roads or houses, or specifics as to what was dangerous there (see Figure 5). Most groups drew a fairly comprehensive map comprising the peninsula, with various places they visit spread out over a large area, but places in

Ocean View and Masiphumelele only feature in any detail if one or more of the children in the group live there. Of a group of five girlfriends from Fish Hoek and Ocean View, the two girls from Ocean View told me they mostly meet with their school friends in Fish Hoek or at the Mall (see Figure 6). This does not happen the other way around, but they accept this and enjoy spending time elsewhere since “there is nothing to do in Ocean View”.



Figure 5

Map of the peninsula by two grade 9 boys from Simonstown and Fish Hoek. Dangerous places are indicated in red, important places in green, and fun places in blue.

To complement the maps, I asked the children to list places considered important, needed, fun or dangerous. In the category ‘dangerous’, ‘townships’ in the valley and greater Cape Town came top of the individual lists, followed by places like shebeens, bottle stores and clubs, and streets at night. Many children also wrote ‘anywhere alone’, strangers’ houses, the beach, the sand dunes and the mountains alone. Most children not living in Ocean View and Masiphumelele almost immediately wrote both down as ‘dangerous places’, usually without having been there and without specific knowledge or insight into the dangers. On the other hand, the lists of categories indicate that some of the teenagers from Ocean View for example, consider Fish Hoek to be unknown and dangerous and will not walk there alone. Other ‘out of bounds’ places include ‘townships’ around 10 to 20 kilometres away from Fish Hoek. A few of the responses are based on personal experience, for example that of a (white) boy who, when visiting a friend, was attacked and robbed in Mitchell’s Plain (a formerly zoned ‘coloured’ suburb); he marked the area as dangerous (see Figure 5). Most of the children say they know places are unsafe on the basis of other people’s stories and opinions: “The other day someone on the school bus told us about a gang in Lavender Hill [a notorious ‘coloured’ gang area] who had cut off four people’s heads”. Some had more direct information, mostly from domestics or gardeners who live in Masiphumelele: “Our domestic was attacked by a gang close to her house and they tried to rob her. She says there is a lot of violence and even murder in Masi because of drinking”. Many of the children gave reports of violence and crime in the media as an important influence on their image of certain places. Examples ranged from general stories about violence in ‘townships’ on TV -which they connect to any township known to them- to police statistics and stories published in the local paper. For example one of the (white) boys said “I know that people get killed regularly in Masiphumelele, and I read in the paper that they also do strange things with animals, something to do with witchcraft”. In discussing these stories, the children articulated their awareness of sensationalism, and that these reports colour their perception of certain places. Nevertheless, they largely accept that such depictions are true.

CASE STUDY 3: Crossing boundaries (Grade 11 research group)

As part of the ‘Growing Up’ project, the research team decided to train a group of six grade 11 volunteers, two from each of the three schools, in research skills³³. The group called themselves ‘Tri’ to express their origins in three different communities. We agreed to rotate our place of meeting between Masiphumelele, Fish Hoek, and Ocean View. This turned out to be a novel experience for the young researchers; most had not spent any substantial amount of time in any of the other neighbourhoods, even though they did have friends there. The ‘unusual’ situation of getting to know each other in each other’s neighbourhoods and homes shed light on the limits of normality in the valley, opened their eyes to the similarity between them, and strengthened a felt desire to cross boundaries.

One of our first focus group discussions took place at the community centre in Masiphumelele. It was the first time the two girls from Fish Hoek joined the group. I had fetched them at their homes and told their parents we were meeting in Masiphumelele, anticipating that this might be a problem. They, however, did not express any concern, even though I heard later that neither of the girls, nor their parents, had ever stepped out of the car in Masiphumelele. As we were driving into the neighbourhood, the girls saw a friend from school. We stopped to say hello, and they discussed the whereabouts of some mutual friends. Later, in our discussion on different communities, Leanne said:

I have a few school friends in Masi, and have come in the car to drop them off. But this is the first time I am actually sitting in Masi...usually I feel scared when we drop friends off at night and all these people are wandering about in the streets. But now that I am here it feels so much nicer and livelier compared to Fish Hoek, where the streets are really dead!

Some of the others in the group spoke about their hesitation to come to a place they don’t know, but about which they have heard bad stories and rumours. Chloe, who is from Masiphumelele, related:

³³ For an extensive description and discussion of working with this group of young researchers, see Bray&Gooskens (2005).

I have only been to Ocean View once, and was very afraid of getting mugged. I took a taxi and then ran from where the taxi dropped me to the school for a meeting. When Gift [a friend who attends school in Masiphumelele] invited me to see his place in Ocean View I thought it must be OK as everyone knows him. But I still felt a little nervous walking there...

After holding workshops in public spaces like a community hall or classroom, we started meeting at people's homes. For most of the Tri members this was the first time they were in someone's home in another neighbourhood. In the beginning they were a little uncomfortable and quite subdued, curiously looking around the streets and the house, and unsure how to behave. In the course of time, however, they became more and more 'at home' in each other's houses, speaking to family members, sometimes hanging out in the streets and behaving in a much more relaxed manner. All Tri members spoke of these meetings as an invaluable experience, as they discovered many similarities in the issues they each deal with at school and at home, could challenge stereotypes they held about each other's communities, learn new things, meet in each other's homes as friends and feel more comfortable in places they previously feared. Some of the aspects most valued in these meetings were: "Meeting new people that otherwise I would not have met" and "The fun we have together and we working together no matter our differences".

Safety, mobility and stereotyping

The main conclusion to be drawn from the mapping exercises is that there is little knowledge of and/or movement between the historically separated ‘white’, ‘coloured’ and ‘black’ neighbourhoods. The children thus spoke in very general terms and stereotypes about ‘other’ communities. The most evident example is that those that don’t live in Masiphumelele or Ocean View label both places as ‘dangerous’ without any specific reasons; they just ‘know’ it is not safe to go there. This means children not living in Masiphumelele or Ocean View generally do not go to either, even though they have friends who live in both. The children clearly accept restrictions, since they do not protest or secretly go anyway. In the few cases where children do go to either place, transport needs to be arranged in some manner; Fish Hoek children (and their parents) do not usually consider the minibus taxis and public bus services operating in the area as a means of getting around by themselves. This is due to perceptions of danger with regard to the younger children, and for teenagers it is not considered ‘cool’ to take these modes of transport. Even though many of them use the public Golden Arrow school bus service, public transport is otherwise avoided and all efforts will be made to arrange private transport.

Negative stereotyping of Ocean View and Masiphumelele was not exclusive to white children; rather, the determining factor is the children’s own place of residence and unfamiliarity with either place. An important factor supporting prejudices and generalisations about Ocean View is classism. Darren, a ‘coloured’ grade 11 boy, was warned by his father that “...the car taking you to the matric ball will not pass by Ocean View”, telling him he could not take a girl from Ocean View on a date. Darren indicates that his parents, like many other middle class coloured people, disassociate themselves from Ocean View residents and discourage their children from going there, as they feel ‘above’ the place and its residents. He tentatively agrees with his parents, and his friends accuse him of being a ‘wannabe white’ because of this attitude. “But colour is not the issue; I just don’t want to associate myself with uncivilised people”. This indicates both his acceptance of negative stereotypes of ‘coloureds’ and his resistance to the label for himself. Darren and his friends speak about ‘the coloureds’ at school as a group of people that misbehave, are rude,

disrespectful, and noisy, but do not classify their own (coloured) friends in this manner³⁴.

As mentioned before, there are marked differences between Fish Hoek valley's 'suburbia' and the 'townships' of Masiphumelele and Ocean View. Despite many differences between these two neighbourhoods, compared to 'suburbia' they are both characterised by higher levels of population density, poverty, and crime. However, our data show that despite seeming less safe, the particular physical lay out of houses and streets combined with a public community life, gives children much more freedom of movement within the neighbourhood than children in 'suburbia'. Children living in Masiphumelele and Ocean View had an informed view of danger and identified only specific places as unsafe, for example the shebeens in Masiphumelele, and the 'drug dealers' flats in Ocean View, but did not typify their whole neighbourhood as dangerous. They learn to negotiate around these dangers, and have much more independence in maintaining contact with neighbours, friends and relatives. They also identify more strongly with their neighbourhood as 'their' community, and are more knowledgeable of and connected to places and people in their neighbourhood than children living in other Fish Hoek valley suburbs.

Peer networks and friendships

The data indicate that spending time with peers without adult supervision gains importance with age, and that teenagers make more conscious choices about friends and associates. As children grow older, more friends are made outside of school or neighbourhood, for example, through jobs, going out and older friends, and young people meet an increasingly diverse range of people. Whether teenagers can expand their horizons depends heavily on their degree of mobility. One of the grade 9 boys' strategies is thus: "You need to find someone older with a car to make friends with and then you can use them to go out... Over the mountain it's like a whole different world! We go clubbing in Claremont and meet lots of people". 'Going out' increases in importance with age, and the desire to meet new friends from different places grows as teenagers start feeling bored with people at school, the valley itself and the little it has to offer them. Teenagers stress the importance of choosing friends who

³⁴ The following chapter will elaborate on young people's use of language and racial categorisations.

have the same 'style', or are interested in the same things. Thayo and Leanne, two grade 11 classmates and good friends explain:

Most of our friends are not from school (...) We are open to anyone, but being Christian affects our choice of friends and people we hang out with. For us it is important that friends have the same morals; friends have to be real, and really care. We stopped seeing a friend who was taking drugs because we did not agree...

Groups at school are categorised by their 'style', indicating common criteria such as interests, activities, behaviour and dress code, for example the surfers, the jocks, hippies, punks, druggies, wannabe's, and 'plastic people'. Although different groups that seem based on 'colour' can be identified in the school grounds, it is -for example- not their 'blackness' but their 'Masiphumelele-ness' that draws a group together. Prudence (who is black and lives in Fish Hoek) recalled: "When I first came to school, the Masi group expected me to join them...but I just held back to see which people I would relate to". She subsequently made good friends with a couple of (white) girls who live in her neighbourhood. Candice -a 'white' grade 11 girl- explained that she can recognise "my kind of people" by the way they behave and dress:

If there is a group of girls walking around all wearing clothing of the same brand, I know what kind of girls they are, and I know I will not feel a connection with them. My kind of people are the ones who don't really care and can look like they just got out of bed. How many people do you see at school who have dreads? There are not many people like me in the valley....I have felt the odd one out ever since I was young.

Now that she has a boyfriend with a car, and has been going out to for example trance parties and alternative music events in greater Cape Town, she feels she has found 'her' community, and much more of a sense of belonging.

Communication by telephone

Telephones, particularly cell phones, play an important role in these children's lives, for social and security reasons. Cell phones are given to children as young as 11 years old, so parents can keep in touch and allow their children some freedom of movement. Leanne, a grade 6 girl, said: "If I want to go to the beach after school I can phone my dad to come and fetch me there later". Cell phones are a treasured commodity, often taken out to compare, to see which music, pictures or ring-tones the other has. Children are not allowed to have their cell phones turned on at school but do it anyway: "...we just keep them hidden in our pockets and send each other

messages in class”, keeping connections going within and beyond the classroom. Cell phones are extremely important for teenagers’ social lives. This is increasingly so when they grow older, as they communicate extensively by SMS³⁵ and can easily make arrangements to meet. Darren (who is now 17) recalls:

I have had a cell phone from the age of 11, and from the time I was in grade 9 everyone at school had cell phones... we use mostly SMS for social reasons, to tell friends about parties, to make plans to go out and so on.

The cell phone is the one medium that is in the control of young people themselves and could truly transgress boundaries, but is clearly limited to those who can afford it. This means most of the children from poor backgrounds cannot participate in this way of communicating, and will not be in touch with what is happening outside of their direct environment. A telephone at home is often indicated as crucial for keeping in touch with friends and family not living close by. Perthenia, a grade 11 student, showed me a picture of the phone table in her photo essay about her daily life: “My mum complains that I am always on the phone... it’s true I talk every day on the phone to my friends that are not at school with me”. Concentric circle and network diagrams have shown that many of the children from all age groups have friends at different schools, and most have friends and relatives elsewhere in the country and overseas. Keeping in touch over the phone is considered very important to keep an ongoing emotional bond with those further away.

Keeping boundaries

Children from grades 9 and 11 are generally allowed to go out by themselves. For two 17 year old girls from Masiphumelele “...there are no rules, we just have to be home by nine”, as is normal for other children living in Masiphumelele. Some of the children from Sun Valley and Fish Hoek pointed out that “...we are allowed anywhere as long as our parents know where we are, with whom and that we will be back home at a certain time”, although they recognised that parents are more protective over girls. Teenagers become increasingly independent from their parents’ social world and therefore have more choices and experiences of ‘different’ spaces and people. However, most show more interest in going ‘over the mountain’ (i.e. clubs and malls in the southern suburbs or beyond) than to somewhere like

³⁵ Short Message Service, or text message.

Masiphumelele. It is important to note that even though having friends from different social backgrounds is considered normal for these young people, this familiarity rarely extends to their homes if they are not from the same neighbourhood. There is an obvious hierarchy in this: on the whole Fish Hoek is the accepted location for any meetings, activities, parties or sleepovers, and a few children may have a church activity or visit friends in Ocean View, but no-one from outside Masiphumelele seems to go there on a social call, even though young people have frequent social get-togethers. This hierarchy seems generally accepted and engrained in people's minds and behaviour, even though children did show sensitivity and discomfort around these divisions. One of the grade 9 boys commented: "Our friends from Masi would not invite us, and we wouldn't go anyway. We don't want to say this in their face but we would never come to sleep over".

There is an obvious lack of organised activities outside of school where children and young people from across the valley meet. Small numbers of young people from Masiphumelele and Ocean View have joined sports clubs in Fish Hoek, but in general most after school activities in Fish Hoek valley (for example scouts and guides, life savers, art clubs) are not very accessible for children without the necessary financial resources, and with the added problem of transport. A number of church youth groups are the most 'integrative' in this respect, often actively bringing children from different communities together for events and outings. Many young people appreciate this:

I go to the New Apostolic church in Sun Valley, and we often have events and outings with youth groups from churches in Ocean View and Masiphumelele, as well as churches from other areas in Cape Town. I really enjoy this, because I really like meeting new people from different places.

(Interview with Perthenia (17), May 2005)

On the other hand there are also many churches in the valley that keep to their 'own' congregations. As mentioned earlier, a youth worker from a church in Fish Hoek was of the opinion that "cultural differences" make it hard to organise events that will appeal to youth from "different communities". One local youth organisation that actively promotes connections across communities is OIL. This NGO trains peer educators at all high schools in the peninsula, and organises the 'LubeLounge', a regular event for which they transport children in from all participating schools for an evening of workshops and celebrity presentations on youth issues. Children who take

part in these events speak very positively about the 'LubeLounge' as one of the few opportunities to meet people from other communities. Members explained: "It is so nice to be in a place where we don't even think of the colour of our skin and hug our friends from different communities". They realise this is not something that is available to many children in the valley. It is important to note that these events usually take place in Fish Hoek or Simonstown, and not in Masiphumelele or Ocean View. This again highlights a hierarchy in people's minds about the accessibility or appropriateness of certain places for valley community events, and in this way even the most well-intentioned initiatives inadvertently keep reinforcing existing boundaries.

Stereotypes and classifications

What stands out in the children's accounts presented thus far is the way in which general stereotypes and 'blank spaces' in young people's experience of their surroundings inform specific embodied maps of the area they live in. The social geography of Fish Hoek valley, the negative association with, limited availability and cost of public transport, the lack of organised activities connecting young people from different communities, and parents' warnings and restrictions severely constrain children's mobility and knowledge. Negative depictions of certain neighbourhoods arise partly from actual crime figures published weekly in the local paper, but are in large part due to general taken-for-granted prejudices prevalent in the discourse in the valley. Children police themselves according to these stereotypes, to the extent that they do not even consider visiting friends living in certain areas considered 'too dangerous'. For those living elsewhere in the valley, this avoidance applies mainly to Ocean View and Masiphumelele, as well as between these two places. On a practical level it is evident that it is mostly the schools, some church youth groups, and the youth organisation OIL that enable, and in some cases encourage, connections between people across boundaries of class and race. Children are not enabled to get to know 'unknown' neighbourhoods and most of their residents on equal terms; in most instances of derogatory statements about 'other' people, these negative associations actually show an internalised perception of place rather than people. Stereotypical depictions are only challenged once they experience places first hand, and those who do, like the 'Tri' members, express genuine surprise at the distorted picture they had internalised, and acquire a new, more positive sense of their environment.

Rapport & Overing point out that classification of things and people in the world around us are a means of creating order and identity: “Classification serves the need for more concrete identification by people of their bodily circumstances, their selves and those of significant others” (2000: 38). At the same time, assigning people to categories and understanding people through categorising, creates paradox and tension between groups and individuals. Moreover, the act of classification empowers us to be able to think about and know the world and our own place in it, but simultaneously limits what we can know by the same ‘classificatory schemata’ we use. This depiction of the circular nature of human interpretation is similar to the concept of discourse:

[D]iscourse is defined as a collection of statements and ideas that produces networks of meanings. These networks structure the possibilities for thinking and talking and become the conceptual framework and the classificatory models for mapping the world around us. Discourse shapes how we come to think and produce new knowledge, and facilitates shared understandings and engagement. Important to note however, is that even as discourse facilitates thought and actions it may also work to constrain, as it sets up the parameters, limits and blind spots of thinking and acting. (Yon 2000: 3)

Rapport & Overing further explain that through systems of anticipations we ‘fix’ our world, as we name things that are actually in flux. Systems of classification are always uncertain and contingent: they can be multiple and contradictory, and need not determine practices by which humans manoeuvre through life.

This last point is important, as in the next chapter I look at the fluidity of identity in a group of teenagers’ everyday lives against the rigidity of classifications made by adults and indeed the children themselves. In some cases, children have experienced different environments since an early age. In many cases, as children grow older and have more freedom to move around, they have more opportunities to maintain mixed friendship groups (in gender, age, class and ‘colour’) in and out of school, and are less in their parents’ realm. Because of higher levels of integration, their notions of ‘difference’ are not the same as those of adults around them. As Jenkins emphasises: “...the more people have to do with each other in everyday life, the more likely they will be to identify each other as fellow individuals” (Jenkins 1996: 118).

Chapter Four

Crossing boundaries: identity, discourse and everyday relationships

Boundaries, to those who have experienced crossing them, become a matter of play rather than an obsession.

(Steyn 2001: 149)

I have many white friends, but sometimes someone will join our group and make racist comments about black people! When I say something about it they would say: "...but I don't mean you, you don't act like a black person. You know you are not like them, you are white".... And even when colour is not an issue someone will mention it at some point. I will get comments like "Oh you think you can do that because you are black". I just turn it around, tease and make jokes, I say: "I can do this because I'm black!". Or I do 'black' accents on purpose...

(Francis, 19)

When a boy in my town was asked what it was like to be a Zulu at Glenwood High School, he responded, "At school, I am not a Zulu, I am a Glenwood boy". What should one make of this? Is he embarrassed or just tired, fed up with a blanket stereotype that gives him no room to maneuver in his way of thinking of himself? (...) Or is it that at school he is "just a boy" (...) and that it is only when the crushing lodestone of race is yet again brought down upon him that he reacts?"

(Daniel Herwitz 2003: 125)

This chapter explores young people's play with identity in the everyday, their experiences growing up in a changing society, what they have to say about their ideals and experiences in peer relations and friendship, and the interplay between discourse and identity. Drawing on discussions with young people about their lives, for example the quality of friendships, family relations and their ideals, this chapter is about the normality of change, diversity, contradictions, and the crossing of boundaries; about fluidity of everyday experiences as opposed to the fixity of ideas and concepts around racial identity that have been discussed so far; and about the ways in which young people speak about and negotiate these spheres. This is similar to Daniel Yon's findings about speaking with young people in his study of a school in Toronto, Canada, from which he draws the following conclusion:

The tensions of race and identity suggested in these conversations are partly the effects of fixing race in discourse while it is lived as fluid and shifting. This is paralleled by the tension between the discourses of culture as inheritable attributes and group property and the more elusive ways by which youth are continually making and remaking culture and their identities.

(Yon 2000: 83)

Yon emphasizes the importance of looking at young people's discourse to be able to challenge the idea of culture as fixed, and "attempt to gesture towards a more open and pervasive view of culture, which is not only a set of attributes that can be claimed and neatly recorded, but more significantly, a process that is ongoing"(ibid: 5). In the post-modernist movement within anthropology, Abu Lughod (1991) has propagated this focus on discourse as a mode of writing against 'culture' as a bounded entity:

[Discourse] draws attention to the social uses by individuals of verbal resources...it allows for the possibility of recognizing within a social group the play of multiple, shifting and competing statements with practical effects. Both practice and discourse are useful because they work against the assumption of boundedness, not to mention the idealism of the culture concept (ibid: 149).

Rapport & Overing offer this definition of discourse: "Ways of speaking which are commonly practised and specifically situated in a social environment" (2000:117), indicating intrinsic ties between speech and behaviour, between the linguistic and the socio-cultural, and between individual speakers and social conventions. This resonates with Dell Hymes (1974) who speaks of 'speech communities', in which rules of speaking form a community.

The young people in this study form such 'speech communities', and for this chapter I have chosen to draw primarily on data obtained from eight grade 11 teenagers, three boys and five girls between the ages of 17 and 19, who have taken part in this study. I use data from focus group discussions, their life histories, data gathered through circle and network diagrams and a diary and photography project (see Appendix II for a description of these research methods) to contextualise their discourse. All eight took part in grade 11 classroom discussions at the end of 2004, and six of the eight volunteered to take part in an after school discussion group. I met with these six about seven times in the second term of 2005, for creative exercises and discussions on diverse topics such as friendships, schooling, family life, ideals, and future expectations. The exercises consisted of concentric circle diagrams to indicate which people are close to them, network diagrams to understand their connections to family and friends, and a diary and photography project to document their daily routine for about a week. In individual interviews with each participant I used a timeline of events in their lives in order to understand the chronology of their lives, as a handle to

talk about events they remember as significant, and to speak about issues such as their memories, schooling, friendships and family relations. I also used their photographs and diaries to talk about their current daily lives. Thayo and Leanne, the other two of the eight main characters, were in the same grade as the rest of the group but were members of 'Tri', the young trainee researchers with whom the 'Growing Up' research team held regular focus group discussions throughout our fieldwork.

This chapter is largely centered on Steyn's observation that "Boundaries, to those who have experienced crossing them, become a matter of play rather than an obsession" (Steyn 2001: 149). She suggests that by looking at experiences of boundaries, edges and borders, we will understand more about transitions, and the way people create and define new subjectivities. As Rutherford (1990) explains, when meaning becomes fixed, the margin is established and becomes a place of resistance, a place for the creation of new identities in opposition: "It is here, where power relations and historical forces have organised meaning into polar opposites that language becomes a site of struggle" (Rutherford 1990: 22). In the 'new' South Africa, this approach seems relevant for the study of the lives of young people, who are growing up in a rapidly changing society, negotiating their environment and shaping their world. Furthermore, because of their life stage of adolescence, these young people are searching for their place in the world and are therefore a good 'barometer' to understand processes of, and possibilities for, change. I concentrate on the way this group of eight young people speak about their lives to understand their ideas and experiences of keeping or crossing boundaries as set by broader society. Yon (2000) emphasises that identities are made, unmade and contested in language: "I pull most from conversations because it is in the social memories and the representations that are invoked by these conversations that the perceptions and anxieties of the present are read" (ibid: 32).

SECTION 1: The ordinariness of change and diversity in young people's lives

To get a first sense of this group of teenagers, I give the following table with some background information. These data already indicate the vast diversity in origin, background and current lives within a group of only eight young people from one grade. I then present short life histories of each to understand more about these teenagers, to provide a context to their utterances and practices discussed in section 2

of this chapter, and to demonstrate through the variety in personal histories that racial identity is but one aspect of the diversity in young people's lives and identities.

Table 1: Research group of eight grade 11s ³⁶

NAME	AGE	SEX	BORN	RESIDENT	MOVE	FAMILY	SCHOOLING
Virginia	17	F	Sun Valley	Sun Valley	0	Father, mother, brother. elder sister out	Sun Valley primary, FHM, FHS matric
Justin	17	M	Fish Hoek	Marina da Gama (outside FH valley)	3	Single mother, stays w dad sometimes. elder brother out	Sun Valley primary, FHM, FHS matric
Lara	17	F	Fish Hoek	Glencairn	0	Grandmother and 2 siblings, visits father sometimes	Simonstown primary, FHM, FHS matric
Darren	17	M	Woodstock (Cape Town)	Fish Hoek	3	Father, mother. 2 elder sisters out	Bay primary (FH), Sun Valley primary, Wynberg grade 8+9, FHS matric
Konrad	19	M	Woodstock (Cape Town)	Sun Valley	1	Father, mother, 2 siblings. elder sister out	Pinelands primary, Sun Valley primary, FHM, FHS repeat grade 10, matric
Leanne	17	F	Boksburg (Johannesburg)	Fish Hoek	2	Father, mother, brother.	Boksburg primary&high, FHS, failed grade 11, False Bay college, pass
Francis	19	F	Tanzania	Fish Hoek	8	Lives alone, stays with mother and 2 siblings on weekends	Woodstock primary, OV primary, FHP, OV high, Mitchell's Plain high, FHS repeat grade 11, matric
Thayo	19	F	Zimbabwe	Fish Hoek	3	Father, mother 2 siblings. elder sister out	Zimbabwe/Mozambique primary & high school, Grade 10 FHS matric

³⁶ 'Age' refers to age at the beginning of the study in 2004; 'Move' refers to the number of times children moved house; 'Family' indicates the household composition including siblings who moved out; 'Schooling' is an indication of level and place of schooling. Matric is the national examination in grade 12, ending secondary education.

For most of these children moving around has been a part of their growing up to some degree, and most have experienced changes in neighbourhoods, schools, homes, or family. For some this has meant change in country or province of residence, or moving to distinctly different neighbourhoods, in some instances crossing cultural, racial, and class boundaries. Five of the eight grew up in a family with their biological parents and siblings. Lara was raised by her grandmother, Justin's and Francis' parents divorced early in their childhood, and Thayo's parents divorced during the time of this study. Only three of the eight were born, raised and schooled in the Fish Hoek valley, and have relatives living close by. Of the other five, Konrad and Darren were born in Woodstock³⁷ and moved to the Fish Hoek valley with their families when they were still young; some of their close relatives continue to live in Cape Town, and some have moved overseas. The last three girls come from out of Cape Town, Thayo and Francis from foreign countries and Leanne from Johannesburg, and they do not have close relatives nearby. Thayo and Leanne will be moving to the UK with their families in the year after finishing school, and Justin and Virginia are planning a working holiday in the UK, where they will stay with relatives. In most of these young lives, therefore, change, movement and diversity are considered a normal part of life.

Resisting racial classifications

One of the main themes of this dissertation, the ambivalence and negotiations around racial identities and classifications in these young peoples lives, arises clearly in attempts -both by these young people and by myself- to describe 'race' in this group. Classifying according to 'race' is not clear-cut, nor something these young people are necessarily comfortable with or interested in. At the same time, as mentioned above, the need to refer to racial identity in this context seems inescapable. Ironically, as a writer of a dissertation about young people's ambivalence around racial identities, using these labels seems unavoidable in order to be able to make the point that these same labels are increasingly irrelevant in young people's self-identification. According to conventional South African apartheid classifications used by people in the valley and based on physical appearance, Virginia, Justin, Konrad and Lara would

³⁷ A Cape Town suburb that has historically been a relatively mixed community, despite the Group Areas Act of the apartheid era.

be classified 'white', Darren 'coloured' and Francis 'black'. However, the following short profiles will demonstrate the arbitrariness of these labels, and locate young people's expressions around their identity within their life histories.

Darren, who would be considered 'coloured' by his physical appearance, is often labeled a 'wannabe white' by his friends (among whom are Virginia and Justin). He is resistant to this label, but also resents being associated with what he calls 'common coloureds'. By this phrase he means lower class 'coloured' people, and agrees with his friends that he doesn't 'act coloured' (the meaning of these kinds of labels will be discussed further on in this chapter). Darren's parents are from areas formerly classified 'coloured', but he was born in Woodstock, a fairly mixed area of Cape Town. He has two older sisters and the family had a full time maid when the children were still little. His father is a navy commander and when he was four years old the family moved to Da Gama Park, a 'mixed' navy staff housing estate outside Simonstown. He portrays his parents as middle class, and often commented on their change in attitudes towards different people. For example, his mother's accent and behaviour are different when she is with 'coloureds' or with 'white people'; he does not think this appropriate or necessary, and speaks the same way to everyone. He associates himself with people who take education and pursuing a successful career seriously, and distances himself from people who, in his view, make no effort in this regard and 'get stuck' in menial jobs. He and his parents value education enormously, and his main drive is to get a good education to secure his future: "Being the last child, I benefit and appreciate what my parents do for me a lot. That [a good education] is the goal!" His attitude towards his future informs who he befriends:

If my friends would drop out of school I wouldn't be friends with them anymore because they are being stupid. I don't know anyone who dropped out completely. I don't associate with them ... Friends must realise what is important, like me, people that can see further, that want to do something with their lives. Not people that turn out as a waiter, or doing petty jobs.

(Interview Darren, March 2005)

His group of friends is racially mixed, and most of them live in Fish Hoek or in Wynberg, where he attended school for a couple of years. This was a valuable experience for him: "Going to Wynberg made me more free, knowing people over the mountain".

Virginia, who looks 'white', and upholds this identity in group discussions, told me in our individual conversations that she has a coloured line in her family. However, when I asked what she considered herself to be she said adamantly:

I am white! In my dad's family up the tree there's coloured people but my mum's white, my dad's white, I am white.

IG: Just out of curiosity, if there's coloured people in the family when does this change? When do you 'change' from coloured to white?

Uhm... I don't know...it's just somewhere in the family, like my dad's father's brother is...My dad's father, he looked a bit coloured, and then his brother looked major coloured, and he has a coloured wife, and a daughter that's coloured. I don't know, it's just like in the family... I don't know the real background.

IG: Is that something that's important?

No it's nothing, I don't mind, I have other colours in me, it's interesting.
(Interview Virginia, May 2005)

This quote alone is a clear example of contradictory and ambiguous feelings around a racial identity. Virginia 'is' white, but has coloured heritage; her grandfather looked 'a bit' and his brother 'major' coloured. In her last remark 'no, it's nothing, I don't mind' there is some hesitation in acknowledging a coloured heritage, but at the same time it has become a potentially interesting identity. However, not many of her friends know about her heritage, and she has only recently discussed this in class at school. Virginia lives in Sun Valley with her parents and younger sibling, and has lived in the same house since birth. She told me it is has been normal for her to 'hang out' with coloured people since she was little; her father is a lay priest at a church in Ocean View, and her older sister was married to a 'coloured' man with whom she has a baby. This has given her a reputation at school of a 'wannabe coloured'.

I made friends with [she gestures the apostrophes with her hands] 'the coloured people', that's when I got classed as a wannabe and all that...My sister influenced me, she lived at her dad's and went to school in Kraaifontein³⁸. She mixed with coloured people and she came here and said you should mix with them... She is my older sister I look up to, so ever since then I just hang out with them, like sleeping at their houses, being with them most of the time.

(Interview Virginia, May 2005)

³⁸ A largely 'coloured' suburb of Cape Town.

Some of these friends live in Ocean View, others further away in a suburb 'over the mountain' where her sister lives. Currently she has a white boyfriend, and has broken with her (coloured) best friend, which has prompted people at school to say she has 'gone back to white'.

Konrad, who is Virginia's cousin, did not classify himself or others in a racial sense and never used any racial categories voluntarily. Even when directly asked if school was mixed, he avoided answering in any detail and said, "Probably most people are white". I assumed him to be 'white' but when I visited his home and saw his photographs I realised some family members have 'coloured' physical traits, and he has a surname indicating a possible 'coloured' heritage. However, he clearly demonstrated not to be interested in classifying along racial lines, and it was therefore inappropriate to ask him about his racial classification of himself or his family. He was born in a 'mixed' area of Cape Town and has lived and attended school in Sun Valley since moving there when he was four years old. A photograph of his church youth group shows what he called 'a mixed bunch'. He indicated that his faith and his long-term friends from church are very important to him: "We help each other, we are quite close... [when you have a problem] you can go to whoever you are comfortable with". Fish Hoek Middle school has also brought him into contact with new categories of people: "I only met Xhosa speakers in the last few years. There were also some foreigners, like I had a friend from Zaire... there were some Chinese, and some from Belgium, Canada, US, Germany".

His is a close-knit family and Konrad spends a lot of his free time either out with his younger brother or looking after his siblings at home. A very important relationship in his life is his girlfriend of three years; she is 'white' and lives in Fish Hoek. He expressed the hope to be able to keep the relationship going, even though his whole family is most probably emigrating to Canada next year.

Lara has been raised in her maternal grandmother's conservative white household, to which she is clearly resistant in many respects. Lara lives quite separately from the rest of the household (which includes her two younger siblings who also do not live with either parent) in the basement of her grandmother's house, and feels 'stifled' by family life upstairs. She does not see her mother much even though she lives in Fish

Hoek, but has good contact with her dad and his wife. Lara has suffered from severe depression over the years, “My dad’s wife has helped me through that a lot. I mean she is more of a mother to me than my own mother has ever been and that has really helped me out”. Her stepmother is ‘coloured’, which Lara only mentioned when asked for examples of her experiences with racism. She indicated that she is different from most people at school and in the valley, who are “very conservative”. She recently met her new boyfriend in the alternative music scene, where she claims to feel much more comfortable:

You can be yourself, rather than having to live up to certain norms around looks and behaviour. My friends from Simonstown they are more of the ‘be this way’ sort of friends; my other friends are more carefree. My group... there’s a few punks in the group, a lot of hippies... a Rasta... that group is a wide variety, they have more of an open mind. I get along better with them and spend more time with them.

(Interview Lara, May 2005)

Justin has a typical South African/British heritage, and sees himself as white without it being anything to comment on. In discussions he largely reiterates the dominant discourse around ‘race’ as a given, but is sensitive to the influence of apartheid history on current economic imbalances, often commenting, “It’s only been 10 years of democracy, that’s why there are still many problems, especially with racial issues”. When speaking about groups at school he recognized that although colour is obvious, it is mostly people’s place of residence that influences who is friends with whom. He lives with his mother in an up-market suburb close to Muizenberg, spends a lot of his free time at home alone, but sometimes stays at his father’s house in Sun Valley. His parents divorced when he was four years old, but he has no traumatic memories of this and is close to both of them. He grew up and attended school in Sun Valley, and a number of relatives on his mother’s side live there. Most of his friends are from school and live in the valley; he is close friends with Virginia, whom he has known since pre-school. Currently, Justin is staying with his aunt in Sun Valley until he goes to the UK after matric.

Thayo and **Leanne** are good friends, and neither of them spoke in racial terms about others or themselves. Both of them identified themselves primarily as Christians: “It’s about a lifestyle and keeping certain values”. They agreed this influences who they are friends with, but has no bearing on skin colour or background. Thayo mentioned the fact that she is Zimbabwean, pointing out she did not grow up with the South

African way of categorizing people. Both indicated that most of their best friends are from church, although Thayo has a mixed group of friends at school. Over time, Leanne's Christian identity turned out to be ambivalent, as she at one point said, "You know, I think I am going to be Hindu!" The remark was due to an incident at her church community that made her question Christians' integrity, and she was ready to give up the faith altogether. During the fieldwork period, Leanne had dropped out of high school to go to college, started identifying herself as an artist, and expressed the desire to have dreadlocks, tattoos and piercings now that she was almost free of the authority of school and her parents. She made a lot of new friends at college, started smoking and drinking, and did not spend as much time with Thayo and their group of friends from church anymore. Thayo, in the meantime, decided to join a different church 'over the mountain' which has led to meeting many new people. However, she still spends most of her time with Francis and another friend who both live within walking distance of her house in Fish Hoek.

Francis considers herself an African, not in the sense of 'African' as a racial category, which is not used by young people in daily conversations, but because of her Tanzanian and South African heritage. She resents people using the label 'black' in categorizing herself or anyone else. Francis lives in Fish Hoek and in her daily life she speaks English with most of her friends at school and in her neighbourhood; with her family she speaks mostly kiSwahili. She also speaks isiXhosa, her father's language, but does not really identify with 'being Xhosa' and says most people in Masiphumele (where her father lives) consider her an outsider because of her English accent. I present her life story as an extended case study to end this section. Her story is an extreme case that nevertheless highlights some of the key points of this chapter: the contradictions in, and fluidity of, identity in a young person's everyday life in contemporary South Africa.

CASE STUDY

Francis: a life of movement and boundary-crossing

This is a story about the resilience and agency of a young person in adverse circumstances, and the determination of a young person to follow her path despite little support from others. Movement has been an integral part of Francis's life. Adapting to new environments and the crossing of boundaries shape her strong personality, and at the same time were made possible by her strength. "Crossing boundaries" refers to many aspects in her life: the physical boundaries of places, the symbolic boundaries of race, and the social boundaries of childhood. She has made some remarkably adult decisions at a young age, and shown a lot of understanding and compassion for her parents' difficulties in supporting her, despite the often negative influence of their decisions on her life.

Francis was born in Tanzania as one of twins, has a South African father and Tanzanian mother and a younger sibling. They returned to South Africa in 1992 after the release of Nelson Mandela and the un-banning of the ANC, and lived in a church building in Woodstock (a mixed area in Cape Town) for returning exiles. Her father managed to find a job but subsequently left the family, leaving her mother to look after the three children by herself. Francis and her brother attended the local primary school, and her mother managed to make ends meet by setting up a small sewing business, and finding things to buy and sell. Francis, despite her sometimes-strained relationship with her mother, is very impressed and proud of her mother's strength, and names her as her role model because of her achievements.

A few years later, the family, joined by her father, moved to Hillside (a farm opposite Masiphumelele). Francis spent six months at school in Ocean View, until her mother enrolled the twins at Fish Hoek primary school, wanting her children to get a better education. "It was very strange, there were only about three other black kids there! But I never had any problems, and remember this time most by my best friend Liesl, a white girl". Her parents divorced when she was 13 years old, and her mother moved to Khayelitsha. Since this time, Francis has been moving back and forth to Fish Hoek valley. She moved between her mother's home in Khayelitsha (a 'black' township) and then Summer Greens (a post-apartheid 'mixed' area), her father's homes in Hillside and Masiphumelele, a family friend's house in Hillside, and finally to her

own place in Fish Hoek (a 'white' area), often deciding to change schools, from Ocean View ('coloured'), to Mitchell's Plain ('mixed but mostly coloured') and eventually to Fish Hoek ('mixed but mostly white') because of moving house. Sometimes she took the decision to move house because of the distance and transport costs to school from her place of residence. These decisions were in some cases made by her mother, but mostly by Francis herself.

Francis has shown great strength and independence, from a young age. Sometimes she was forced to do so, for example when she was 14 and living with her father, uncle and brother in Hillside. At that time she was not speaking to her mother, and blamed her for much that had happened. Francis was attending Ocean View High at the time, which she did not like at all. She could not recall much about that period, and acknowledged she has probably blocked it out of her memory. "It was a bad experience... they didn't like me, they thought I was stuck up because of my accent". This was the first time she had been directly confronted with racial prejudice, despite having attended 'mixed' and 'white' primary schools. Living at her father's house was also difficult: her father usually stayed with his girlfriend in Masiphumelele and Francis was responsible for the household, cooking and cleaning. Her brother then failed grade 9 and went to live with their mother, who had re-married and had another child. And then one day: "I went on a church youth camp in Kimberley, which I really enjoyed. When I came back home there was nobody left in the house... so I lived there alone for a while and found a job at St Elmo's [a restaurant] in Longbeach Mall".

From this time, at the age of 16, she took responsibility for her own schooling and subsistence. She realized her parents were not managing, and was determined to get a good education. After a while she had to stop working because she could not manage her schoolwork. "My mother didn't really know what was going on at my father's house, and my dad". When her mother finally found out about this situation, she took Francis back to her house in Khayelitsha and enrolled her at a school in Mitchell's Plain (a 'coloured' school).

It was actually quite nice, by now I was used to adapting and I made friends easily. I did really well at school, never left the house because I wasn't allowed out -it was dangerous there- so I studied hard and was concentrating on getting good marks, because in grade 11 you really

have to do well for the final year in matric. I didn't have to worry about anything, just did the cooking every day but didn't have to worry about
(interview Francis, November 2004)

It was a relief for her not to have any responsibilities, and she came top of her class that year. But then her mother decided things were getting too dangerous in their neighbourhood, and moved the family to a house in Summer Greens, on the other side of town. Francis subsequently had to deal with very complicated travel arrangements to get to school. "It was very stressful, I had to take two buses, and walk, because the transport was too expensive for my mom, and I would only get home at seven at night every day". She realised this was not going to work in her matric year, had a big argument about this with her mother and moved back to her father, who now lived in Masiphumelele. She tried to get to her school in Mitchell's Plain from there, but the distance proved too great and the fare too expensive. "My dad only earns three or four hundred Rand a week working at the petrol station so I thought it was unfair to him. I got a job at St. Elmo's [a pizza place] to pay for transport and so on, but I was going straight from school to work". She knew she would fail if this carried on.

Her father left for Zambia for a few months, and she moved to a friend's house in Hillside, where they expected her to pay her way and help out in the house. She tried to get back into Ocean View Secondary but they wouldn't admit her. She then tried to register herself at Fish Hoek Senior High, who also wouldn't take her in the matric year and 'strung her along' for a while without any decisions. She didn't go to school at all for 1,5 months and was "really stressed out", until finally she was admitted to repeat grade 11 at Fish Hoek Senior High.

By this time I was working two jobs, St Elmo's in the weekends and Mnandi's [an upmarket restaurant in Hillside] at night. I had agreed with my dad that we would pay the school fees together, but he didn't manage for long...but I understand because he has another family to keep.

I almost failed grade 11 because I had to choose some new subjects, was working and helping out at the house. It was a stressful year but fun: I made new friends, and just fitted in. Balancing social life, work and school was the main thing in that year... But last year and this year I have made good solid friends for the first time in a long time...

(Interview Francis, November 2004)

She finally decided to move to her own place in Fish Hoek, a cottage on the premises of a teacher's house, where I met her for this interview. She has her life organized, a place for herself, and is happy with the way things are now. She patched things up

with her mother, and spends every other weekend with her twin brother and her mother's new family, but continues to pay her own way, for her fees, subsistence and books. Not many of her friends know about this. "I don't tell people about my life, just like I don't want any help; I can manage". Since our interview, Francis has passed matric, and is planning to study Law. She is hesitant to have to use her situation and being 'black' to 'beg' for a bursary and would rather be admitted on merit. As she has been offered a job at a Cape Town advertising company, she hopes to earn enough money to enrol at university next year.

SECTION 2: Young people's discourse and everyday relationships

In contrast to general ideas and perceptions about difference as set out in the last chapter, talking with these teenagers about individual friendships and peer relations reveals that these young people show little concern with 'race', and in this regard emphasise 'being the same' in their ideals and expectations of everyday peer relations. Personality, sharing the same morals, and trustworthiness are said to be the basis for good friendships, and external factors such as skin colour are unimportant. At the same time they cannot escape the 'reality' and language of racial categories. For example, when asked to elaborate on the composition of groups at school, 'colour' is indicated as an obvious element for group formation, but still dismissed as unimportant in their own lives. There is a constant friction between observing and labeling people according to colour, and the desire for this not to be relevant.

To both Justin and Virginia coloured, black, and white groups are obvious at school; "Especially coloureds stick together, and will also stick up for each other no matter what". Neither of them thinks this is a good thing because people often make something a race issue even when they do not know the context of a certain event. For example, when a grade 12 student was arguing with a grade 11 student who was in the wrong line at the tuck shop (the grade 12s have certain privileges), his 'coloured' friends immediately came to join in the argument and accused the person of being racist. For Justin this kind of attitude is a major irritation, "Black and coloured people make everything about race when it is not!" Both learners insisted that race is not important and certainly resent people accusing them of racism. Virginia added: "How can I be racist if I am friends with coloureds?" However, she spoke of her dad who comments on 'black people' walking past their house making noise and doesn't

appreciate ‘them’ to which Justin remarked that that is racist behaviour, just as it is also racist to talk about ‘them’ as if all blacks are all the same. In their conversations generally they hesitated to call anyone racist, felt they themselves were not, yet found themselves talking in terms of ‘black people’ and ‘coloureds’ or ‘coloured people’ and hesitantly making comments about ‘them’. They confessed they would probably not have spoken so openly if Francis had been present, or “lots of coloured people”, as they “might be hurt or take it the wrong way”. At the same time they persisted in saying that “we are all the same”, and everyone is friends at school.

Some young people do remark that race is a sensitive issue at school, although many say they don’t really understand why, since “we are all equal”. But there is an agreement that the topic is usually avoided, and people will not easily speak their minds. Simultaneously, young people concur that there is actually little racism at school. Lara and Francis put forward that this could also be because at school one is monitored and restricted; it is only ‘out there’ that people speak freely, and in social situations racial issues do come out. Francis has experience of this, as mentioned in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, that “...even when it is not about colour, it always seems to come up”. However, she says does not really experience racism herself, and deals with the issue jokingly if something around race does arise. As noted above, she has attended many different schools. She had bad experiences in Ocean View, where both students and teachers ostracized her, but otherwise has not experienced any other of her environments as racist. Lara’s experiences around race are related to her having a coloured stepmother, and the different reactions she gets whether she is with her, or with her (white) dad. She recalled how she got stared at when she was walking around a shopping mall with her dad, but felt ‘accepted’ when she was with her stepmother, as it was in a mall with largely ‘coloured’ clientele.

Using racial terminology: Top Deck, C.I.T., and wannabe white

One way young people deal with racial categories is by using humorous names for people who ‘are’ one thing and ‘act’ another. These negotiations of categories and naming comments on existing structures: young people play around with racial identities, using ‘old’ categories within an ideal of non-racism, commenting on the way people are mixing up racial identities, and simultaneously re-enforcing stereotypical ideas around racial identity. As mentioned before, most young people

are consistent in saying, “There is no racism in this school, we are all friends”. At the same time I heard many comments about people ‘acting out of their colour’, which indicates an expectation of a certain kind of behaviour linked to skin colour, and reiterates conventional racial stereotypes. The way this language is used points towards a ‘speech community’ (Hymes 1974) with its own rules and understanding, within which young people deal with racial issues in a humorous manner.

In a discussion around friends and friendships, Virginia laughingly told me that a few years ago people around her were calling her C.I.T. The others in the group were amused at my ignorant look, and explained that this means ‘Coloured In Training’, because she used to hang out with a group of ‘coloured’ friends at school. Justin, one of her best friends at present, commented regularly on Virginia’s lifestyle, friends and boyfriends, and was a little disapproving of her association with the coloured group and the way she was behaving at the time. She acknowledged: “I did like speak like them [in ‘kombuis Afrikaans’³⁹] when I was with them ... it was just natural. People still diss me about it, but I don’t take offence to that anymore”. Justin pointed out that coloured boys only want to date white girls who ‘act coloured’, to which Virginia immediately responded: “Are you coloured to know this?” She disputed his views by coming up with examples of girls who don’t ‘act coloured’ at all, and also coloured boys who do not ‘act coloured’ either. She admits that she did behave differently herself. Virginia has recently cut ties with this group after a major argument with her best friend, and no longer goes to Ocean View once she realized people were talking about her behind her back.

Now that I have a white boyfriend I get comments from classmates that I have ‘gone back to white’. My coloured friends tell me to ‘take off my high shoes’ and say I am ‘acting white’ again. By this they mean being all high and mighty...I don’t like this at all, because people see white as higher, which really it is not!

(Group discussion, March 2005)

She subsequently gave the example of her friend Darren who is coloured, doesn’t behave ‘coloured’ at all, and “actually wants to be white because he thinks it is better”. Darren was quick to respond and denied wanting to be white, but definitely does not want to associate himself with the behaviour of ‘coloureds’. ‘Coloured’ in

³⁹ ‘Kombuis’ is Afrikaans for kitchen, in this case indicating a simplified, slang form of the language.

this sense is associated with a particular group at school, mostly from Ocean View, who are considered 'common': "They walk with a bounce like in American movies, speak loudly, use a mix of lazy English and kombuis Afrikaans, are disrespectful towards teachers, and think they are cool but generally act very immature" and, according to Darren, are 'uncivilised'. The students recognize that group dynamics are an important factor in this behaviour: when one of this group is alone or in a mixed group, he/she will act 'normal and mature'. Here again there is a clear indication of a relationship between 'acting a colour' and the internalised stereotypes associated with this colour, but simultaneously an ambivalence around the validity of these classifications.

In the cases described above, 'acting coloured' can be a performance and resistance against the authority of a 'white' school culture, it can be an internal signifier of belonging to a group, and it can be an external categorisation of people. Furthermore, whether the category is resisted or accepted depends on the situation and on a person's self-identification. This finding correlates with the relationship between situational (external) and constructionist (internal) ethnicity as set out by Frankental (1998: 91), between external labelling by others and the agency of the individual. "The selection of criteria for conceptualizing boundaries will depend on the relationship between the actor's objective situation, his/her subjective evaluation of it, and on societal norms (...) the composition of 'us' and 'them' can and does fluctuate, depending on the purpose of any particular interaction" (ibid: 90).

Both Justin and Virginia claimed that many black students at their school tend to hang out with white friends; "Many people, especially the coloureds, call them whitey or coconut". I asked what would make them 'white': "It's the way they speak, and because they are hanging out with only whites". According to them a few really do want to be 'white', for example one girl who Justin thought was perhaps adopted, not knowing that she in fact lives in Fish Hoek with her mother. They were amazed that she speaks about black people as if she were not black; she would, for example, say disapprovingly "Look at that black guy! What is he doing..." and they find it strange, that being black herself she would comment on someone else in such a way. Again this is an example of labeling a person according to skin colour, expecting a certain kind of behaviour, and in this case disapproving of someone who 'denies' her skin

colour. When I asked about the meaning of ‘acting black’, both Virginia and Justin found it very problematic to explain this notion. I suspect this is because there is a much more strongly felt association with racist language and apartheid categorisation of ‘blacks’ as inferior. The term came up only once when Virginia spoke about a visit to the above mentioned classmate’s home in Fish Hoek and described the mother as ‘acting black’. She explained this to mean the way the mother speaks and behaves, but did not want to go into any detail. The hesitation I often felt in these kinds of conversations shows a lesser possibility of using black stereotypes in a humorous way, and indicates both sensitivity and ambivalence towards this terminology.

Other examples of humorous names are ‘Top Deck’ (chocolate that’s half black half white), ‘coconut’ (black outside and white inside), ‘half a naartjie’ (in between, i.e. ‘not an orange and not a naartjie’⁴⁰), ‘model C’ girl (derived from the model C schools that were predominantly white), and ‘wannabe whitey’. Although these examples caused a lot of amusement in the group, Francis expressed her dislike of this labelling: “So what is a black person supposed to be like then? How is a black, or coloured...or even white supposed to act?” She is often confronted with people who say she is ‘leaning over to the white side’, ‘acting white’, and a ‘model C girl’, because she does not speak English with a Xhosa accent and has many white friends. When I asked how they would classify themselves, Francis exclaimed: “I am unique!!” and Virginia responded: “I am normal!” These two answers reveal a lot of their experiences of themselves; Francis looks ‘different’ in most environments she is in, and behaves and speaks differently from what would be expected on the basis of her skin colour. She does not necessarily feel different, but acknowledges her unique history and position. Virginia, who considers herself ‘normal’, will by her appearance most likely be considered normal by people around her, and values being seen as that. For her it is a choice to go ‘outside’ what is expected. The group recognised that it is mostly others who classify one, and these labels do not reflect “who you are”. At the same time one is often confronted with what people think. As Virginia stated, and the group agreed:

In this way you get judged a lot by so-called friends, from people your own colour and of other colours. It’s often something that won’t be said to you directly but people will call you names behind your back.

(Grade 11 group discussion, March 2005)

⁴⁰ ‘Naartjie’ is Afrikaans for a tangerine.

Despite the observed fluidity of racial identity, conventions around romantic relationships shed light on the *limits* of crossing certain boundaries. The group concurred that out of school some white girls do have black or coloured boyfriends, but at school mixed couples are rare, and often attract attention. "People make jokes about being each other's boy or girlfriend, holding hands, but it is not that accepted". Lara gave one example of a white girl dating a black classmate, and there was a lot of 'did you know...' in the corridors. To which Francis added "...and if a black girl would date a white guy...[rolling her eyes]... ooooh!" This has not occurred at their school.

Such labels and conventions point to the identification of stereotypical behaviour and performance as well as skin colour as an indicator for group identity, and the possibilities and limits of what is considered normal. Young people demonstrate consciousness and sensitivity around their use of language and words with respect to 'race'. They speak differently to teachers than to each other, and avoid using certain terminology in the presence of adults who might not understand their use of words. As Konrad explains, race really isn't an issue among his group of friends; they are a mixed bunch and don't talk about each other in 'that way'.

Only when we are joking around we use words like 'nigga', to call each other's attention. It has nothing to do with a racial issue, it's more like from a movie or something. We make jokes like 'why, is it because I am white?' But we really don't see it as colour. Our parents probably see it different because of apartheid; they might take it the wrong way...it's just for us because we are not affected. We are not racist towards each other. But we wouldn't say it to just anyone, you have to know who you can joke with.

(Interview Konrad, April 2005)

He claims that people at school don't openly object to jokes like this but sometimes one can see from their facial expression if they are annoyed. To avoid this they usually just talk this way only within their group, where they understand each other.

Young people's 'play' with racial terminology indicates a lightness around the issue, but simultaneously they report that they struggle with political correctness and the 'reality' of race in their daily lives. In a grade 9 discussion group a number of children pointed out that it is difficult to know how to speak. One of the boys commented: "If

you describe someone as black you are racist! But if he is, what am I supposed to say? Do I say he is really tall anduhm...?” There are also people who actively try to avoid using racial terms because they feel uncomfortable with them, but do not wholly succeed. For example, Francis does not want to use the word 'black', yet in conversations she finds herself not able to avoid using the term 'black people'; or the teacher who is irritated by, and apologetic about, her own use of racial categories when talking about diversity. In general racial terminology is a complicated issue: most people encountered in this study do not want to speak in a way that categorizes themselves or others according to skin colour, but at the same time they cannot find any other way to speak about diversity.

In practice, Lara and Francis assured me that, "...for most people, when they get to mix with each other on a daily basis and get to know each other, things are fine. That is the best way". The girls believe the main problem is that most parents grew up in the apartheid era and are used to the 'old system'. Even though Francis told me she does 'not really' experience racism, she has had first hand experiences of this generation gap: when she was little, she could only go to a (white) friend's house when her father was not around, as he was a racist. More recently, "...a friend's father had said he would never eat with a black person, but not long after that, he invited me over for dinner, and even cooked the meal himself...I don't know, I guess he just got to know me and liked me".

Experiences and awareness of transgressing boundaries

Amongst these young people, racial identity seems to matter most when confronted with it by others or in certain circumstances, and it is not necessarily an intrinsic part of self. Virginia and Darren are seen to 'act out' of their colour by choosing certain friends and through a certain kind of behaviour, and are to some degree aware that this is a choice they can make - because it is possible, it so happened, it is interesting, or to get away from a certain stereotype attached to their skin colour. For Francis, who is also labeled as acting out of her colour, her personality and individuality are the result of her life's path, as she has had the experience of many different environments from a very young age during which she has crossed many boundaries. For her 'self', she is not concerned with difference related to racial classifications, but

experiences it when other people label her, and resists, ignores or trivializes this way of thinking along racial lines when confronted with it.

Konrad, who is not confronted with labeling in the same way, treats 'race' as a non-issue; he lives his life, has a family background that might have different racial origins, and happens to have people from different backgrounds in his group of friends. This is not something he necessarily thinks about or looks for, and he mainly avoids the issue altogether. Lara, by immersing herself in an alternative Cape Town music scene, has chosen people with a certain lifestyle she is comfortable with, as opposed to the mostly 'conservative' people in her neighbourhood, and in this way pulls away from the standard racialised differentiations present in the valley. In her family, she has the experience of someone close to her that others classify as being 'different', but for her is a person more important than her own mother. Leanne has a very open mind, and is experimenting with various different identities. She is quite oblivious of 'race', and unconcerned by any other kind of classifications of life style, religion, and behaviour, just trying out what fits best. Thayo, coming from Zimbabwe, has a different experience of 'race' than the South African situation. She is aware of, but does not attach much meaning to racial labeling. In her daily life she finds people she feels have the same values as her, regardless of their race or class.

In all these young people's stories, it transpires that diversity and change are a part of their everyday lives. They do not experience themselves to be out of the ordinary, and consider their lives and their environment as 'normal'. Coming from within a racially structured society like South Africa, their emphasis on and wish for equality –the expression 'we are all the same' – is encouraging.

A useful concept put forward by Jenkins for understanding identity formation is 'social identity'. He distinguishes between a group – identification from the inside by members based on perceived similarity, and a category – identification from the outside, which imposes difference. The boundary is then a place where a sense of belonging becomes most apparent: a 'community', i.e. a group one belongs to, can symbolise exclusion as well as inclusion. One of Jenkins' main points is that identity is always *in relation to* something or somebody else. He furthermore emphasizes that it is through what people *do* and *say*, in other words their actions, that 'community' is

maintained, and identity is not necessarily only a cognitive process (1996:19-28). This connects to the point made in the last chapter that (cognitive) systems of classification need not determine people's practices, which makes sense regarding young people in Fish Hoek. It is in their 'doing' at schools, clubs, and in friendships, that makes peers part of 'their community' even if they are from a neighbourhood that is generally perceived as 'other'. Group boundaries set by the wider society are not always relevant or wanted by young people, and are sometimes accepted, sometimes resisted, sometimes ignored. Mainstream racial categories do not necessarily 'fit' the young people's experience; they are used as part of a dominant discourse, but not necessarily in the sense of their own group identity. Popularity, values, religion, and style, among others, are often more important bases for group identities. Furthermore, identity itself is fluid and multiple, as Frankental puts forward in citing Homi Bhabha's concept of a 'Third Space', where you can be "both...and.... rather than either....or...." (1998:14).

This way of negotiating identity is similar to, for example, young Sikhs in the UK studied by Hall (1995). These British-born Sikhs 'play around' with their identities, constructing spaces of relative freedom in an otherwise rigid system of identification. Hall finds these young people to be adept at managing contradictions in cultural worlds and sets of oppositions such as traditional and modern, black and white; "...each exist at the level of ideology as objectified forms of culture abstracted from the more fluid, ambiguous, and plural processes of cultural production that occur in daily life" (ibid: 248). However, as Hall argues, there are structural limits to this creativity, mainly because of the ways in which broader society naturalizes the existence of cultural difference (ibid: 29). The young people encountered in this study are conscious of the offensiveness and simultaneously the arbitrariness of racial categorisations, yet continue to use such terminology. Sometimes it is used as a 'normal' way of speaking about people, and sometimes their language is deliberately undermining the significance of 'race', indicating their ambiguity towards a racialised discourse and environment.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Identity marks the conjuncture of our past with the social, cultural and economic relations we live in. 'Each individual is the synthesis not only of existing relations but of the history of these relations. He is a precis of the past'. Making our identities can only be understood within the context of this articulation, in the intersection of our everyday lives with the economic and political relations of subordination and domination.

(Rutherford 1990: 20)

Among the Fish Hoek schoolchildren described in this study, discussions around experiences and expectations of relationships within the peer group are imbued with an ideal of equality, yet exist within a larger context of separateness and inequality. The social geography within which these relationships occur is still largely molded by the history of apartheid's divisions according to 'race' and class. At the same time, young people base –in both their expressed attitudes and their choice of friends- their notions of division and difference amongst their peers on gender, life-style, class, religion, moral values, and language, rather than racial identity as such. 'Race' collapses into these signifiers of difference, and seems to surface mostly as a category when made explicit by 'others' or is used in a subverted and joking manner within a peer context.

Sharon Stephens emphasizes that research on childhood and children is a generative site for exploring contemporary global processes, and stresses the importance of looking at sites where 'deviant', 'flexible' and frequently contradictory processes occur. "How do children themselves experience, understand, and perhaps resist or reshape the complex, frequently contradictory cultural politics that inform their daily lives?" (Stephens 1995: 3). In analysing young people's ways of dealing with 'race' in Fish Hoek, an analytical division between 'objectified' culture and the fluidity of cultural production seems to make sense (Hall in Stephens 1995, Yon 2000). What is apparent is that the way these young people in Fish Hoek use categories of 'race' and 'culture' is simultaneously rigid and fluid, depending on the context in which these terms are used.

In practice these young people are less concerned with 'fixed' categories of difference, and experience identity as changing according to specific situations and in reaction to the way other people label them (Frankental 1998). There is a distinction between abstract thinking about 'race', where separateness and difference come to the fore, and speaking about experiences and expectations of relationships in daily life, in which children emphasise inclusiveness and sameness. These young people create their own world of meaning in an environment of structural racism, sometimes reproducing, sometimes ignoring, and sometimes opposing their racialised environment. There are many contradictions within and between their ideals and realities; for example, between a politically correct way of dealing with 'race' and what children witness in terms of social divisions and hierarchies around them; being good friends at school, but not visiting someone's home because of 'barriers'; a discourse of non-racism and at the same time the persistent presence of apartheid as a subject in the school curriculum; using racist terms in the same breath as challenging them.

The children and teenagers discussed in this study generally do not deliberately separate people out because of 'race', but do in many ways continue to anticipate 'difference' on the basis of a person's skin colour and place of residence. Young people's discourse shows awareness around skin colour and difference, and specifically racial name-calling reinforces racist notions and reiterates the dominant discourse. At the same time young people use these racial categories in a subverted and playful way, which puts the significance and validity of racial classification and identity in perspective. Daniel Yon has found that for young people in Canada, the transitional context in which youth find themselves is "...fraught with complexity and contradictions, because conventional racist practices and old ways of thinking about race coexist with the new signifiers of race which these youth are in the process of producing" (2000: 104). This is a valid statement for children growing up in contemporary South Africa, although I would add that for the children I have worked with, a racial identity is only one of many that young people consider, and certainly not always the most important. Furthermore, they are keenly aware that racial identity is often defined by circumstances, by other people, or a certain incident that makes one aware of 'race'. This means they see racial identity as in a sense superficial, as optional: a person is not defined by his or her skin colour, and can choose to use,

disregard or contest a racial identity. In this way young people 'free up' racial identity, and emphasise that skin colour or race is not "who you are". Children indicate that background, language, individual taste, experience, and attitude are important factors that play a part in determining who will be most likely to 'understand' each other, and are the basis for friendships and groups. A person's identity does not exclude a racial aspect, but living in the same neighbourhood, or having the same goals in life are much stronger elements of identification between children. This points to a different way of dealing with 'race' than for example Soudien (2000) and Dolby (2001) have found, whose main conclusion is that racial identity matters, even though young people construct and express it in different ways.

However, the social geography of the Fish Hoek valley continues to contest many of the ideals of these young people, and often works against them. Their bodily experience of the environment they live in, most notably the restrictions on mobility, puts boundaries on their experiences of different places, and as a result, different people. Adults' discourse and practices continue to largely uphold attitudes confirming the validity of racial differentiation, sometimes in an openly racist manner, many times through the discourse of cultural difference, and are an important influence on what children can and do experience in the valley. At the same time, an increasing diversity at school, through church and youth initiatives, and to a minor extent in neighbourhoods, enable young people to interact, integrate and make friends with a wide range of people. The disjuncture that children experience between a generally racialised environment of 'difference', and their personal experiences of 'sameness' leads to disassociation of individuals from 'their' place and category of 'them', and inclusion into a group of 'us', negating or disregarding experiences and notions that do not fit their ideal of equality. In this way children and young people, as they grow up, make friends and create networks across ideological and social boundaries that are still largely in place, and are thus generating change in a racially polarized society.

It is clear that experiencing diversity as the norm makes young people increasingly less concerned with 'race', which is an encouraging development in a country with South Africa's history. However, there are limits to their abilities to overcome existing barriers in broader society, and unless there are further structural changes to

break down these barriers, young people's efforts and desire for diversity and equality in their daily lives will not get the space they deserve. One way, as suggested by the writers of a South African Human Rights Council report on racism at school, is to capitalize on the integrating role that schools can play, by re-structuring school clusters and ensuring more sharing of resources. "Proper urban planning in the context of the post-apartheid city and town could allow schools to become important instruments for integrating society. The potentialities of this idea should be explored seriously by the education authorities and urban planners" (Vally&Dambala 1999: 47).

As has been evident in this study, children value spaces and initiatives enabling diversity in their lives, and their experiences of growing up in such an environment changes their attitude, as they show that boundaries once thought to be definite are in fact permeable and change is therefore possible. I believe that for this reason researchers and policy makers should pay more attention to the experiences of this generation growing up in the 'new' South Africa. Bukowski comments that, "The social world of childhood is instrumental not in conveying cultural patterns but by contributing to the formation of new patterns of living together" (1996: 30). In practice, in Fish Hoek valley it is largely children and teenagers who are developing the 'new patterns' in contemporary South Africa. I believe furthermore that the findings of this study confirm that certainly in a society like South Africa we must stay aware of the continuing overlap between 'race' and class, analyze this for a better understanding of the real reasons for boundaries and difference, and be very careful in the way we present our data. Racial classifications should not be treated as a given, and it is inaccurate to blindly categorize people into population groups based on 'race' and then draw conclusions from an assumption of the significance of 'race'. In addition, if we continue to speak in predominantly racial terms about the population of this country (or the world for that matter) we will be sustaining the idea that 'race' is the primary, or even only, reason for difference.

To return to the article cited at the beginning of this dissertation, Du Toit concludes (somewhat sentimentally) with the opinion that by, "Listening to one another's accounts of what life is like in this city, and most importantly, by identifying and amending those modes of behaviour that people experience as racist, we may yet

create the kinds of trust that could translate Cape Town's natural beauty into a social one..." (Cape Times, 07/04/05). To further this cause, perhaps including children and young people in this debate will inspire adults to find ways 'out' of their racially polarised minds.

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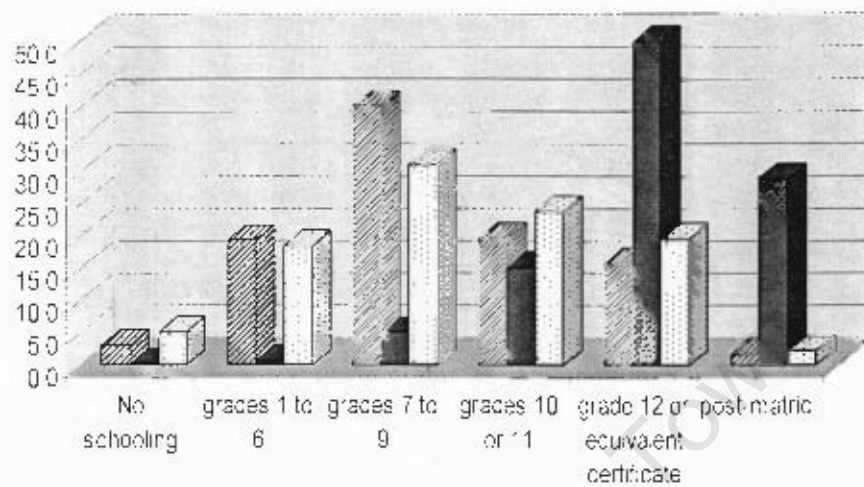
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Highest level of education achieved, adults aged 20+



Appendix I

Information sheets and consent forms (grade 6)

GROWING UP IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA:
Perspectives from children and adolescents in Cape Town
 Research project run by: The Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town

Who are you?
 Hello, I am Imke, I am from the University of Cape Town. We are doing a project about children in the South Peninsula, including their views on school, family life and the surrounding community.

Why are you doing this project?
 We plan to write a book about children growing up in Cape Town, and we hope that this book will help people understand how to improve children's lives. We cannot be certain that children's lives will definitely be improved as a result of our project, or when this might be.

Who is taking part?
 Children who live in Fish Hoek, Masipamaelele and Ocean View.

What will you be doing in this study?
 We will be running some group activities, including art sessions, projects and drama, some of which will take place in school time, and others after school. In these sessions we will talk about people and places that are important to you, what you think you need to do well at school, and some of your hopes for the future.


How will you remember all this information?
 Sometimes, we will make drawings together. Other times we will make a tape recording or video of us talking together.

What will be done with our drawings and the recordings?
 They will be kept in a locked room and we will not show them to anyone else. We will use them to write about children in the South Peninsula, but when we do this we will not use anyone's real name or address. We use imaginary names.

How might I be involved?
 We would very much like you to join in some of these activities. Your parent / carer has given us permission to invite you to join the activities, but this does not mean you have to do it. It is not a problem if you don't want to - just let us know. Also, even if you agree, you can decide to leave the group whenever you want.


What will happen at the end of the study?
 Once we have finished, we will come back to this area and let you know what we found. We will also be talking to teachers, school principals, social workers, parents and health workers about things that are most important to children.

What do I do now?
 If you would like to join the group activities, please sign your name on the form. I will read it to you before you write your name. If you are not sure about something, please ask me - now, or at any other time. You can phone Imke on 021 447 7607 or 022 356 2313.



GROWING UP IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA:
 Perspectives from children and adolescents in Cape Town
 Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town

CONSENT FORM



We will read this to you,
then ask you to sign.


I would like to join the group activities for this project. I understand that I am not being forced to do this, and that I can leave at any time if I don't want to continue. I know I will not be punished for this.

I understand that I will not get anything for myself if I join the activities

I understand that the project leaders will not tell anyone about personal things that we talk about in the group.


.....
Your Signature

.....
Date



GROWING UP IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA:
 Perspectives from children and adolescents in Cape Town
 Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town

CONSENT FORM



We will read this to you,
then ask you to sign.

I would like to join the group activities for this project. I understand that I am not being forced to do this, and that I can leave at any time if I don't want to continue. I know I will not be punished for this.

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I understand that the project leaders will not tell anyone about personal things that we talk about in the group.

.....
Your Signature

.....
Date

Appendix II

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF EACH RESEARCH METHOD

Journal

I kept an ethnographic journal throughout the fieldwork period, writing down general observations, discussions, and notes. I spent time in coffee shops and shops, driving and walking around in Fish Hoek and Longbeach Mall, to get a feel for the public life in the area, and at times to specifically check out places mentioned by children.

Individual and household data

In the first session with each class, I asked the participating children to write down basic socio-demographic information to give an initial insight into household composition, children's place of residence, and an indication of 'class', by ascertaining their parents' professions.

Mapping

The mapping exercises were designed to create a platform for children and teenagers to give their visual interpretation of the valley, indicating the boundaries of what they thought of as 'their' neighbourhood, to investigate their perceptions and knowledge of the area, how, where and when they do or don't cross certain boundaries, and to make a start in understanding more about the specifics of children's lives in this particular place. I suggested a key to indicate 'fun places', 'dangerous places', 'important places', 'places to get things we need' and any additional categories identified by the children. I explained the exercise by saying that we were interested to see where children live and where they go, and what they consider to be 'their neighbourhood'. I recommended they start with a discussion within the group, to determine which places should be on the map, decide on the boundary, and draw all the relevant places in some kind of relation to each other. I left them free in their interpretation of this, and indicated it was not important that maps be geographically exact.

The method needed to be pitched slightly differently for each age group. The grade 6 children were very keen to do group artwork and drawings, whereas with the grade 11 group, attitudes and knowledge of the area were mostly elicited through the individual listing of categories of places, and in classroom discussions. The grade 9s interest was more difficult to gauge and fell somewhere in between. The students all worked on group maps but some with little interest, and in some cases clearly because it was not for marks. For all age groups, more detailed information around the maps and related topics were elicited during the sessions themselves, by walking around the classroom and asking for explanations of certain drawings or categories. Whenever possible or relevant, I noted down and sometimes joined discussions between children as they were working. In the case of the grade 9 classes, I organised an extra focus group meeting with a group of 10 students.

Timeline

The timeline was designed as a classroom-based exercise, to speak about memories of growing up: important and memorable events and experiences, at school, at home, with friends and family, and how children felt at certain times. With the input of the children, the timeline was divided into 4 or 5 sections. In the grade 9 group this resulted in the following age categories: 0-5 years old, grade 1-3, grade 4-7, and 13-

15 years old. The grade 11's used the divisions: 0-6 years, 6-10 years, 10-13 years, 13-18 years and 18 years old and up (i.e. the future). I asked volunteers to scribe and jot down keywords on paper put up on the blackboard during the discussions.

Circle diagrams on supports and challenges

These diagrams were divided into 3 circles: supports, problems and wished for supports. The diagrams were meant to help children determine things and people that they felt supported them, things that challenge them, and their wished-for supports.

Network diagrams

Starting with themselves in the middle, I asked children to draw a spider diagram of important people in their environment, and colour-code who they spend most time with and what their relation is to them. This was to 'track' who they know, and how.

Circle diagrams

In three circles I asked the children to indicate which people they have around them and their emotional closeness to them: themselves and the people closest to them in the middle, people who are important but on a next level of closeness in the next circle, and lastly people who they feel are important in their lives but not necessarily close. I also asked them to write where 'close' people live, to get an idea of the geographical extent of their networks.

Hero books

The method of making hero books with children was developed by Jonathan Morgan (2004), a psychologist, mainly as a tool to help children infected and affected by HIV/Aids to deal with their circumstances. However, many of the activities can be used as a way to understand more about children's life worlds in general. This is an individual visual method, which allows children to tell their life stories through a series of drawing activities. Children drew, for example, portraits of themselves, their earliest memory, diagrams of people close to them, and difficult situations that they have encountered. These drawings provide information on children's perception of themselves, who the important people in children's lives are, as well as what problems children face and how they overcome them.

Focus group discussions

These were conducted in an open manner, and in a 'relaxed' atmosphere, even though they were usually held in a classroom. Teachers or staff were never present. I would often have one or several topics I was interested to talk about (mostly derived from results of other research methods), but would leave ample room for anything the group members would raise. This resulted in interesting stories, discussions and comments, often directed towards me but also between participants. In general most participants were keen to speak about their opinions and experiences, and it was mostly time constraints that limited our meetings.

'Tri' training sessions and focus group discussions

During fieldwork, the research team held meetings about twice a month with the six 'Tri' members at various locations in Fish Hoek, Masiphumelele and Ocean View (at schools, community centres and members' homes). Training sessions consisted of, for example, interviewing techniques, and focus group discussions on a variety of topics that came out of our fieldwork or were put forward by members. Members conducted

and transcribed interviews with peers, which served as additional data to our own fieldwork. The Fish Hoek members did not conduct many of these interviews due to time constraints and a heavy workload.

Diaries and photo essays

Six grade 11s were asked to keep a diary for a week, recording their everyday activities (with a focus on time spent out of school) and their feelings and thoughts during this time. Participants were given a camera with 24 exposures to take pictures to accompany their diaries, and to take pictures of things they thought important. The object of this exercise was to understand more of children's daily routines, which places and people feature in their lives, and which issues occupy their thoughts.

Individual interviews

These semi-structured interviews were held at the participants' homes; I would usually meet one or both parents and/or siblings in the house, and be able to gain a little more insight into a child's home life. I did not, however, spend any time with children at home outside of a scheduled interview. With the grade 6s I used survey forms for general demographics and questions on the topics of schooling, out-of-school activities, peer networks, perception of the neighbourhood, religion, and experiences with violence as a guideline. I usually started interviews with the grade 11s with a timeline to understand the chronology of the child's life, and discuss important events and memories. I furthermore used the diaries and photographs to lead the discussion around their current daily lives. Interviews with the grade 11s were recorded on mini-disk and transcribed.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES THAT PROVIDED DATA FOR ANALYSIS

Grade 6:

7 classroom based sessions with art club (10-19 children, 1 hour). The children

- Wrote down individual and household data
- Compiled individual lists of places categorised according to needs, important, dangerous, fun; indication of how many times visited a week
- Drew some individual, mostly group maps of their neighbourhood, and of the valley
- Three girls made individual drawings of 'their family'

10 after-school group meetings (4-6 volunteers, 1-1,5 hours). Children

- Drew circle diagrams on supports and challenges
- Drew circle diagrams indicating people close to them
- Drew network diagrams of friends and family, location
- Created hero books

4 children gave individual interviews of approximately 1 hour.

Grade 9:

2 sessions with 3 Life Orientation classes (70 children, 40 minutes). Children:

- Wrote down individual and household data
- Listed places they do and do not go to

- Drew group maps of their neighbourhood
- Created group circle diagrams on supports and challenges

2 after school group discussions (10 volunteers, 1,5 hours). Children:

- Participated in a discussion using maps as examples to ask questions around their lives in the valley
- Created a timeline which was used to talk about memories of growing up, and important events and experiences in their lives

Grade 11:

5 classroom workshops with 2 History classes (47 children, 45 minutes). Children

- Wrote down individual and household data
- Wrote individual lists of places they do or do not go to
- Drew individual circle diagrams on supports and challenges
- Drew group circle diagrams on supports and challenges around schooling
- Created a group timeline on memories of growing up

5 after school focus group discussions (6 volunteers, 1,5 hours) Children:

- Participated in discussion topics such as friendship, peer relations, stereotypes, parents, future
- Drew network diagrams of friends and family
- Created individual diaries and took photographs (5 volunteers, 1 week)
- Gave individual interviews (6 volunteers, 2 hours)

Observation at Fish Hoek Middle and Senior High:

- 3 sessions of 2 Grade 11 History classes
- Two sessions of grade 6 'workshops' around adolescence
- School events and assemblies at Middle and High schools
- School grounds and staff room during school and break-time
- Informal conversations with several teachers and staff

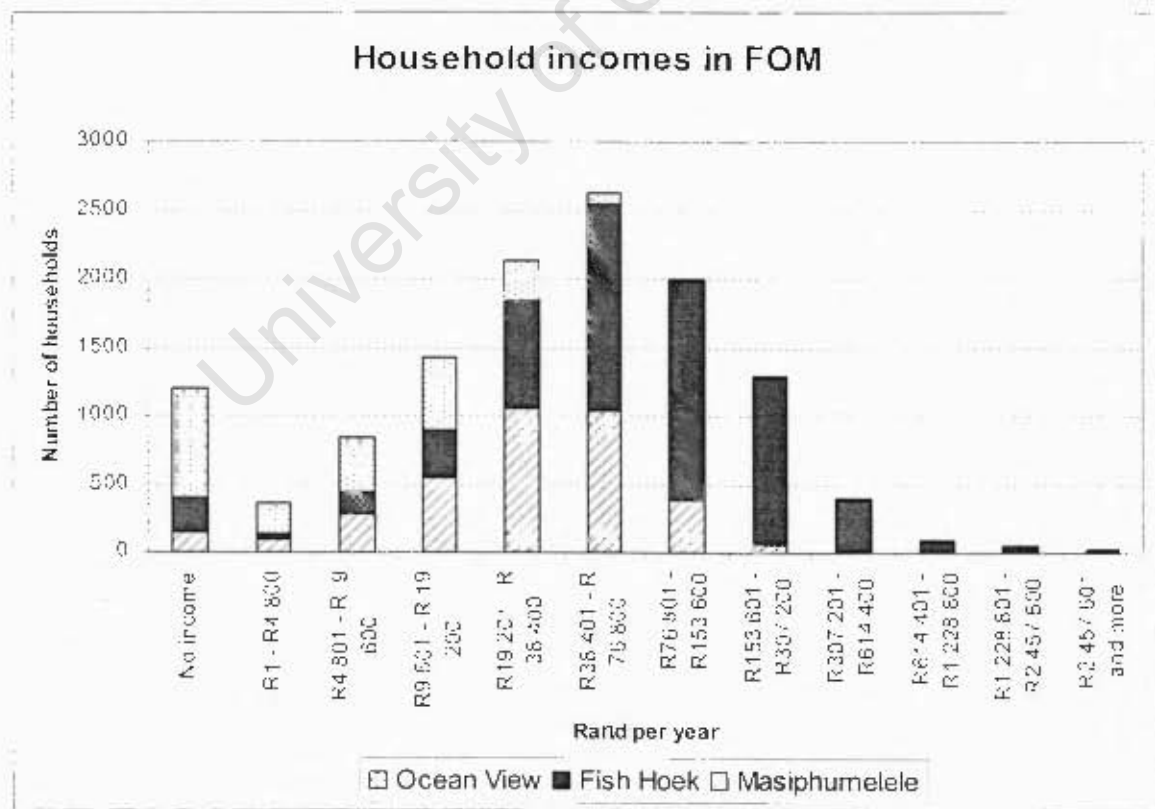
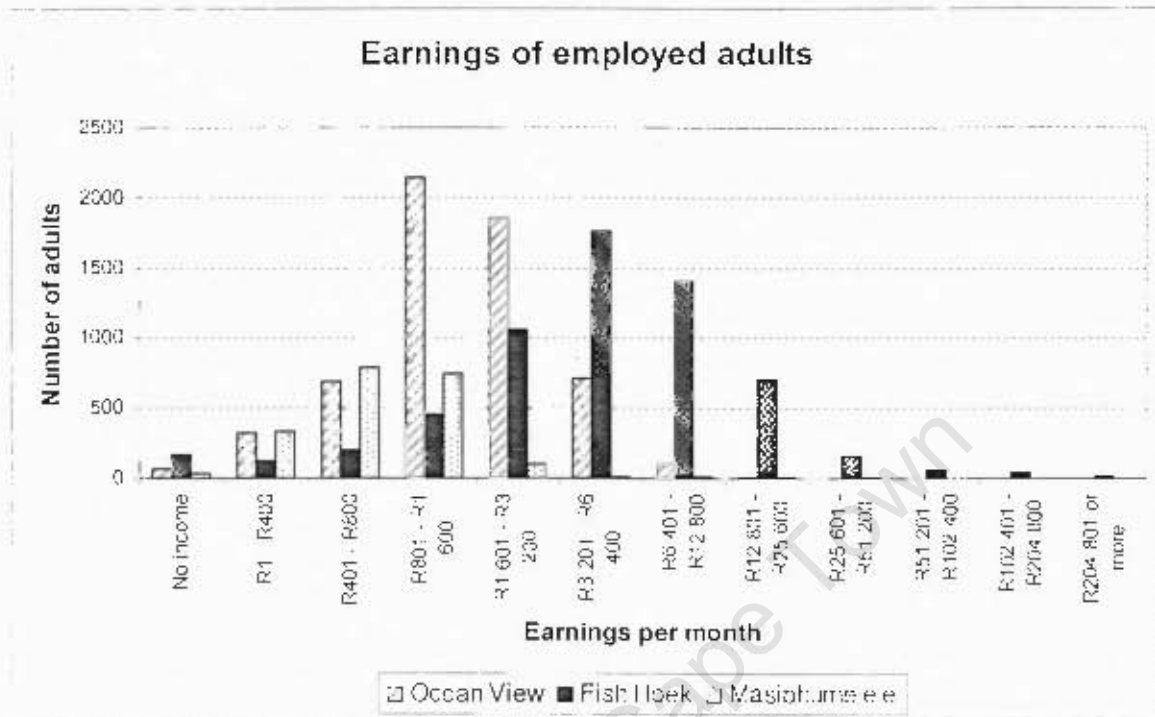
Semi-structured interviews with adults

5 Teachers of whom 2 are school councillors

3 Principals

3 church youth leaders

Appendix III:
STATISTICS ON FISH HOEK-OCEAN VIEW-MASIPHUMELELE AREA¹



¹ Seekings, J. (2004) "Profile of Fishhoek-Ocean View-Masiphumelele Area", an unpublished paper analysing data from the 2001 Population Census.