



AFRICAN WOMEN AND APARTHEID

MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT
IN URBAN SOUTH AFRICA

REBEKAH LEE

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APARTHEID

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Urban South Africa

REBEKAH LEE

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*To my parents
with love*

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
AWC	Administrasieraad Wes-Kaap/Administration of the Western Cape
BAAD	Department of Bantu Administration and Development
CDC	Cape Divisional Council
CLPP	Coloured Labour Preference Policy
CTCC	Cape Town City Council
DBA	Department of Bantu Administration
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NBRI	National Building Research Institute
NP	National Party
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SRC	Student Representative Council
UCT	University of Cape Town
ZAR	South African rand

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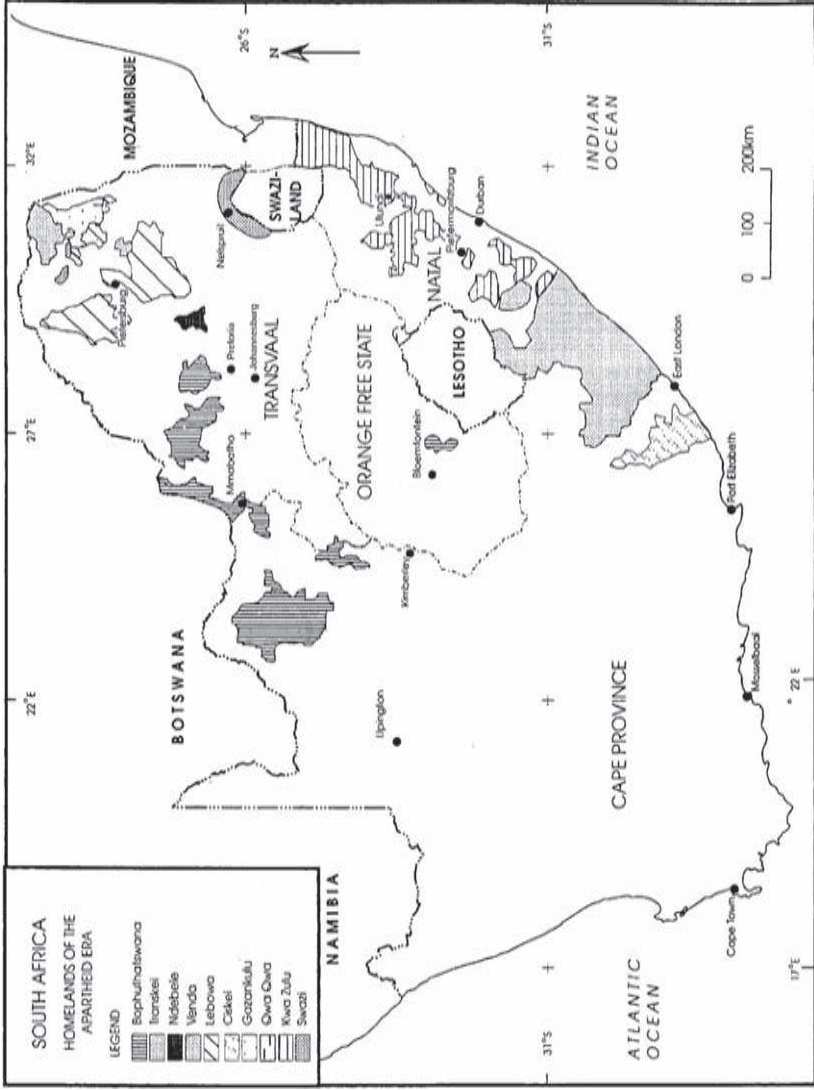


Figure A.1: South Africa, including homelands of the apartheid era
 Source: Cartographic Studio, Department of Geographical and Environmental Sciences, University of Natal, Durban, 1995

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INTRODUCTION: LOCATION, METHOD, MEANING

This book is a social and cultural history of African women in Cape Town, South Africa, between 1948 and 2000. Specifically, it examines the ways in which different generations of African women engaged with the settlement process. How did they create a sense of belonging – of place and space – in a city that for most of the apartheid period actively denied and resisted their presence?

Significant numbers of mostly Xhosa-speaking migrants from the eastern part of the Cape Province (now known as the Eastern Cape) were first noted in the city in the nineteenth century. Little is known about the African women who entered at this time, except that they came largely in their capacity as the wives of labourers who had found employment in the dockyards and roadworks of the city and the surrounding areas.¹ Africans remained a relatively small proportion of Cape Town's population until the mid-twentieth century.² In the latter half of the century, however, the demographic composition of the population was to change profoundly. During the Second World War, Africans began flowing at a rapid rate into Cape Town as the metropole greatly expanded its industrial and manufacturing base, creating a huge demand for male labour.³ Between 1944 and 1955, the estimated African population in the city had more than doubled, from 19,184 to 48,937.⁴

Despite concerted and sometimes successful efforts by the apartheid state to control and limit the extent of African settlement in the city, by the late 1970s it was evident that the 'tidal wave' of Africans entering Cape Town was to be, ultimately, unchecked.⁵ By 1993 the African population of the Cape Town metropolitan area had grown to 735,000, nearly one-quarter of the total population.⁶ This development can be viewed in the context of the growing urbanization of the country's

African populace as a whole – 43 per cent of Africans were recorded by the census as resident in urban areas in 1996, in contrast to 10 per cent in 1904 and 27 per cent in 1951.⁷

However, while Cape Town's demographic composition has begun to resemble those of other South African cities, its historical heritage remains somewhat unique. For much of the apartheid era (1948–94), Africans in Cape Town were subject to an especially acute convergence of policies that militated against their efforts to manage and maintain an urban existence. Among these was the declaration in 1955 of the Western Cape as the 'natural home' of the Coloured population, which put into motion progressively stricter measures that limited Africans' residential and employment opportunities. Despite the city's liberal Anglophone reputation, Cape Town's spatial layout and still-evident racialized residential distribution attest to the city's active participation in apartheid social engineering on a grand scale. This participation has left an indelible impression on its inhabitants as well.⁸

It was an interest in these imprints, on both political and personal landscapes, that led to a consideration of African women's lives in this city. My focus on African women reflects several different motivations. Firstly, simply, is the need to recover their voices as a powerful counter to tendencies to generalize about the nature of urban apartheid. In the southern African academy, scholarship on women still struggles for recognition, creating a situation in which, as Teresa Barnes has soberly noted, 'gender is fully embattled'.⁹ In some senses, then, this study acknowledges a continued debt to older, women-centric histories of resistance that emphasized the gendered character of apartheid legislation and women's distinctive response to it.¹⁰ For much of the apartheid era, gendered access to legal housing and employment contributed to a highly regulated and narrowly defined existence. Nonetheless, despite their marginalized position, African women were vital to shaping the unique social and political contours of Cape Town's geography.¹¹ As we will see, their continuing entry into and residence in the city were critical to fashioning, and eventually ending, municipal and state efforts at managing African urbanization. My approach was guided, then, by the certainty that African women experienced – and understood – apartheid in profoundly different terms to African men.

Secondly, my emphasis on women acknowledges that the apartheid years bore witness to unprecedented, and highly gendered, social and

economic changes. Among these were African women's increasing prominence in civil society, the rise of matriarchal households, and the marginalization of men in township domestic economies. These developments have been underpinned by, and reflected in, shifting patterns of kinship, sociality and commensality that stretch dynamically across rural and urban settings. I was interested in tracing the evolution of women's livelihood strategies as one way to chart these complex changes. My questions to women involved often mundane aspects of their lives – how they provided for and safeguarded themselves and their families; how they managed their everyday social interactions; and how they vented their frustrations and expressed their affection. As I came to see it, the manner in which women crafted, and subsequently remembered, these practices evoked a poignant and often intimate alternative history of survival in this apartheid city.

Finally, by allowing African women's narratives more prominence, new fault lines other than those dividing male and female could surface. As will become evident in subsequent chapters, the household was a key site of contestation through which conflicting values, perspectives and lifestyles were expressed and mediated, not only between men and women, but also between different generations of women.¹² Indeed, generational conflict in particular proved a key dynamic in women's lives. And generational 'difference' was one of the primary ways in which women framed an understanding of themselves in the context of the city.

This study seeks to evoke a visible 'architecture' of everyday urban life, as constructed and managed by African women, as well as to explore more invisible processes of meaning making and social change.¹³ These seen and unseen dynamics I express in the general concept of 'settlement'. The process of settlement was enacted and contested in various arenas and through multiple pathways, including, though never fully determined by, the struggle for material sustenance. I do not wish to imply a narrow determinism to this process – as women's own lives will powerfully attest, the machinations of urban apartheid policy cast considerable doubt as to the permanence of their tenure in the city. However, throughout the last half-century, urban Africans continued to seek a sense of belonging, a reflexive point of location – what AbdouMaliq Simone has eloquently termed 'anchorage' – in the often inhospitable and ever-shifting terrain of the city.¹⁴ As we shall see, such points of anchorage could be deftly formed through the very movement, or stasis, of a given

household's members. It could be embodied in the physicality of the structure of a council house, or assembled through an ever-increasing web of social connections. It could also be tangibly expressed in day-to-day interactions with family and neighbours, coloured by women's own imaginations and perceptions. How women shaped and experienced this process of settlement is the principle focus of this study.

Locating the field: Culture, gender and the city in southern African historiography

This book draws on several strands of scholarship concerned with gender, urbanization and social change in southern Africa. Existing research on labour migrancy has contributed towards a greater sensitivity to the ways in which Africans, and African women specifically, participated in both the migration and settlement processes. Considerable foundation for the study of Africans in town was laid in the 1950s and 1960s, which saw ground-breaking social anthropological scholarship of township life. Studies by the Mayers, based in East London, and Wilson and Mafeje in Langa township in Cape Town examined the ways in which migrant identity and social formation became contested and reworked in the urban setting.¹⁵ Brandel-Syrier's work on the formation of a 'Reeftown' elite revealed that for some Africans, social mobility was one of the benefits of the transition to urban life, while her research on various township-based women's organizations showed the centrality of associational ties in the social lives of urbanizing African women.¹⁶

However, in the two decades following these studies, little research was pursued that followed up on some of the key social and historical trajectories hinted at in earlier work. In contrast to the relatively gender-sensitive and historical scope of work done in the broader southern African context (particularly in Zambia), in the 1970s and 1980s scholars of South Africa were generally silent on women's urbanization and identity formation in urban areas.¹⁷ Studies tended to be located at the rural pole of migrant life.¹⁸ Similarly, work that was pivotal to a gendered understanding of labour migrancy, such as Belinda Bozzoli's seminal study 'Marxism, feminism and South African studies', remained grounded in analysis of rural dynamics.¹⁹

Research in this period that did focus on the particular experiences of women migrants in urbanizing South Africa tended to locate their

analyses in a *pre*-apartheid historical framework.²⁰ Valuable though these studies were to our understanding of the demographic character and survival strategies of this earlier phase of female migration to South African cities, they left unanswered tantalizing questions about how women may have engaged with the settlement process during the apartheid era, when African women's movements were far more closely monitored by the state and the temporariness of urban African life more firmly articulated in legislation.

In scholarship up to the reform era of the 1990s, most references to African women in a specifically urban apartheid setting were situated in the context of the politics of resistance.²¹ Indeed, academics eager to integrate existing scholarship with a more activist agenda used women's political involvement as a crucial way in which the history of Africans and of race, class and gender could be reconstructed.²² Studies such as Cheryl Walker's *Women and Resistance in South Africa* and Julia Wells's *We Now Demand: The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa* located African women's experience within the broader struggle for liberation. Their work was instrumental in giving credit to the many forms of courageous resistance African women undertook, despite the narrow space allowed to them under apartheid. However, this scholarship tended to subsume the life strategies of African women and their attempts to make meaning in a rapidly transforming world under the over-arching mantle of organized resistance against the state. Women's experience, these studies told us, should largely be seen through the prism of defiance.²³

It is important to acknowledge the continuing legacy of this paradigm of resistance in the study of African women in urban areas, because it usefully highlights the scale of regulation engineered by the state and the centrality of 'responses' to apartheid policies as a key dynamic that vitally determined women's life strategies.²⁴ However, as the growth of scholarship across urban studies, history and anthropology from the 1990s attests, alternative dialogues – other than those structured by apartheid's racialized discourse – could provide exciting new lines of enquiry and debate.²⁵ With political reform in the 1990s culminating in the first democratic government of South Africa from 1994, academics were in some ways released from the imperative to show Africans as noble survivors of political struggle. The 'explosion' of scholarship on Cape Town's townships and the rise of a new generation of African researchers heralded

a broader approach to the uncovering of individual townships' political, cultural and social histories.²⁶ Concurrent with this development was the appearance of studies that detailed a far more intricate range of dynamics involved in the fashioning of a modern, and distinctly African, urban landscape. For example, Belinda Bozzoli's work on the life strategies and consciousness of migrant women from Phokeng highlighted the material and ideological aspects of the transformation women undertook from peasant daughters to urban 'matrons', to 'homeland grannies' who managed multigenerational structures of support spanning both rural and urban areas.²⁷ Recent scholarship based in the wider southern African region, such as in Zambia and Zimbabwe, has similarly deepened our understanding of the political economy of the home, and of the changing nature of gender relations in the urban context.²⁸

Work on migrant culture begun by the Mayers in the 1960s experienced a renaissance of sorts in this period, with intriguing new results. Novel household configurations were shown to have emerged as Africans adapted to existing economic constraints in the city.²⁹ Often, innovative perspectives on gendered social processes drove these analyses, such as Leslie Bank's and Dunbar Moodie's studies of how masculinity could be recast and reappropriated among migrant men in town.³⁰ In addition, relatively new fields of enquiry, such as the anthropology of fuel use, have provided much insight into the ways women in particular constructed and negotiated networks of reciprocity to meet daily needs.³¹

How then can we situate a historical study of urban African women in apartheid Cape Town? As can be seen from the historiography presented above, efforts at presenting a detailed picture of everyday life for urban African women were in some senses hindered by political imperatives to show women as victims of racial and patriarchal domination, or heroic resisters in the face of oppressive policies. What was neglected was attention to the complexity of the lives women created for themselves in the city, encompassing their positions as wives, mothers, daughters, workers and women. Also neglected were the intricate orderings and reorderings of women's identities across domestic, social and psychological axes. As explained above, recent studies have to some extent captured these complexities far more thoroughly. Yet findings such as those from the innovative work on fuel use grounded in the present tense, with little reference to a historical framework.³² Ethnographic histories based in other southern African regions have been more successful in this

regard. However, few historians have utilized these new methodologies to enable a reinvestigation into important aspects of life in the apartheid era. Indeed, especially in the South African context, much scope remains for a regionally specific historical analysis of the urbanization process, and of African women's unique role in it.

Methodological considerations: Oral history and the trans-generational technique

This study constructs a social and cultural history of African women in Cape Town from the vantage point of their varied attempts over five decades to locate 'home' in the urban setting. As will become clear in the following chapters, this work draws on a range of new dialogues and methodologies from human geography, urban studies and social anthropology to refine its historical analysis.

Both oral and documentary sources were used to inform the book's structure and content. A dense documentary study – encompassing local and national government records, archives from activist organizations such as the Black Sash, and manuscripts from academic and industrial sources – has been instrumental to fashioning a layered account of African life in apartheid Cape Town. Government documentation in the first 25 years of apartheid rule, when implementation of urban policy with respect to Africans was vested in municipal structures, offered a particularly rich vein of analysis. Records of the Cape Town City Council and its Department of Bantu Administration in this period revealed a fascinating struggle between local and state interests, and among the various structures within the municipality itself, on the issue of African women's entry and residence in the city. As we will later see, the outcome of these struggles vitally shaped the range and character of options available to African women at specific historical moments.

While documentary evidence helped to outline much of the historical and political contours of the city, it was the collected life histories of three generations of African women that provided intriguing glimpses into the particular routes African women travelled through that terrain. Indeed, mapping processes of social change and sometimes rapidly shifting strategies of settlement would have been difficult without this access to the interiors of women's lives, their homes and perspectives. Partly, this can be seen as a 'problem' of evidence. Little exists in the historical

record, apart from a few recent autobiographies, of the thoughts and experiences of African women, who were often consciously hiding from state modes of surveillance.³³ What written record exists of their lives often comes second hand, as objects of state administration or subjects of documented hardship penned through the eyes of activist organizations or male community leaders.³⁴

However, apart from its ability to 'fill the gaps' in historical evidence, the use of oral testimonies has proved transformative to modes of historical enquiry itself.³⁵ For example, in the southern African context, studies tracing the development of the consciousness of migrant Africans owe a particular debt to the oral historical form for new frameworks of analysis.³⁶ In charting individual experience, broader patterns of historical change can be brought into sharper focus.³⁷ Furthermore, because personal narratives are also cultural, social and psychological constructions, they can be seen as texts that do more than merely tell a story – they are able to reveal underlying, and sometimes conflicting, 'conventions of discourse' that respondents used to conceptualize and narrate experience.³⁸ Indeed, oral history has been seamlessly integrated into a feminist methodology because of this potent capacity to reveal and subvert conventional, and often andocentric, knowledge paradigms.³⁹

Certainly, using oral accounts as historical texts does present several areas of methodological concern. Some respondents in this study had difficulty remembering specific dates, names or events that may have provided a more precise historical account. More importantly, if respondents engage with shifting subjectivities and present a 'multiplicity of interpretations' that are themselves a product of complex discursive processes, how can historians search for coherence?⁴⁰ This is further complicated by the relationship between researcher and subject, a relationship that itself draws from a changing set of dialogues influenced by relations of power and cultural difference.⁴¹ Undoubtedly, my position as a Korean-American researcher from a British university often accompanied by a young, female, university-educated interpreter affected the manner and content of women's recollections.⁴² My dependence in many cases on translated versions of informants' original words has introduced another level of interpretation that may temper the findings of this study, which are largely based on a close reading of these texts.⁴³ Respondents who did detail their life histories in English were often speaking in their second or even third language, and this may have altered the content

and expressive range of their testimonies, limiting any analysis of the symbolic language used to colour and frame their experiences.

Despite these constraints, the use of oral accounts remains fundamental to the approach of this work. It is precisely this lack of pretense to objectivity that gives oral histories their authenticity.⁴⁴ Written documents themselves are the product of particular historical and social discourses, and should not be unduly privileged as unbiased evidence.⁴⁵ Even the production of statistics on the African population was inextricably linked with the 'science' of apartheid statecraft, and thus attempts at measurement need to be seen through the imperatives of a self-fashioned modernizing and rationalizing state.⁴⁶ I have not opted for narrative closure as a remedy to the problem of coherence.⁴⁷ Instead, effort was made to refine interpretations in light of sometimes competing testimonies and to allow for dissonance, debate and ambiguity in the presentation of analysis.

Close attention to spoken testimonies has thus made possible a more textured account, which more accurately mirrors the complex and contradictory ways in which history was both experienced and told.⁴⁸ To an extent, the lack of any overriding chronological order in this study is a reflection of the inability to fashion one definitive narrative of urban African women's lives during the apartheid period. Their testimonies, more than any other evidence, cautioned against any teleological view of their 'transition', and it is hoped that the analysis faithfully reflects women's changing responses to this uncertainty.⁴⁹

It is important to note, however, that oral accounts were not always given primacy in this study. The spoken word may sometimes be given undue emphasis by historians, as Megan Vaughan has argued: 'what we do constantly exceeds in some sense our awareness of what is done. History is a sedimentation of practices which work on the human landscape, not all of which are "voiced" or invested with specific meaning by individuals at the moment in which they are performed.'⁵⁰ Indeed, social anthropologists have long emphasized the importance of observation to the construction of an ethnographic present. Moreover, attention to the performance and negotiation of rituals, which themselves embody an unspoken 'practical memory', as Rosalind Shaw has termed, may also aid in the reconstruction of a complex and contested *past*.⁵¹ Throughout the research for this book, I have tried to remain open to these other ways of seeing the sedimentation of the past: through the materiality of

everyday life and through the sometimes mundane practices, habits and movements of women in this study. This helped differentiate between those historical processes of settlement that were consciously enacted and those that derived from a more intricate interplay of environment, agency and memory.⁵²

A final integral aspect to my methodological approach was its trans-generational orientation. My research began with formerly migrant women who entered Cape Town in the 1940s and 1950s and who constitute the 'first-generation' of respondents in this study.⁵³ I have extended the analysis of these core women through an examination of the lives of their daughters and granddaughters, and the complex interactions that developed among them across generations and time. A total of six families were interviewed for this research, after agreement was obtained from six of ten first-generation respondents that their family members could be interviewed.⁵⁴ The 'second-generation' cohort in this study, 11 in number, is thus largely made up of the Cape Town-born daughters of first-generation respondents.⁵⁵ For the most part, the eight women who constitute the 'third-generation' cohort are the children of second-generation respondents.⁵⁶ Detailed life histories were recorded during interviews, including written responses to questions regarding basic personal information; their organizational, employment and housing histories; and a profile of their energy-use patterns. Schematic housing diagrams and a catalogue of home renovations were taken from first-generation respondents, as well as from those respondents in the other cohorts who had established independent residences. Supplementary oral testimonies were collected from 11 male respondents across three generational cohorts in the six families chosen.⁵⁷ Their accounts were used primarily to help reconstruct household livelihood strategies and changing domestic relations (chapters two and six). They also were selectively utilized to provide points of comparison and contrast to the trajectories presented by female respondents.

It was originally hoped that a trans-generational interviewing technique would refine and enhance the methods used to incorporate oral histories as a central element of this research.⁵⁸ As I came to see, trans-generational interviews aptly illustrated the importance of the subjectivity of texts and the ways in which these texts could enter a dialogue when set against one another.⁵⁹ Information from second- and third-generation respondents often filled in gaps left by first-generation

respondents regarding family and personal histories, and vice versa. Some issues around which certain respondents created silences, for example, those around marital infidelity or divorce, were quickly pointed out by other members of the family as influential in determining internal dynamics of communication, affection and conflict. Sometimes respondents within the same family had vastly different perspectives on the same events, as well as different ways in which these events were articulated and internalized. In a very palpable way, respondents created a multiplicity of texts capable of disagreement, exaggeration and collusion. Thus, trans-generational interviewing built a dense set of narratives in sometimes discordant and sometimes harmonious relation to one another, which in a sense bound me to view the history they related in a far more richly textured way.

Utilizing a trans-generational technique enabled Mary Chamberlain to chart how family narratives were created and transmitted across two and three generations of Barbadian immigrants to Britain.⁶⁰ She was able to identify in their narratives key sets of symbols passed on through each generation that helped determine the ways in which future generations established their identities within a 'migration dynamic': 'by tracing a detailed lineage within these families, it is possible to identify some of the ways in which family memory creates an ethos that shapes the lives of its members.'⁶¹ This study similarly uses the trans-generational technique to highlight important themes – what Chamberlain terms 'ethos' – traced through a particular family's history, and how individual families have adopted unique strategies that have distinguished them from others.

However, though my approach draws much from Chamberlain's, differences in context and in the material gleaned from interviews also encouraged a different type of analysis. Chamberlain was exploring continuity; this study highlights social change and conflict between generations. Certainly, generational tension has long been observed as a key marker of social transformation in industrializing societies throughout the world. More recently, the concept of age has usefully informed analyses of the process and consequences of globalization.⁶² However, in the context of southern African history, the issue of generational struggle has thus far tended to be located in analyses of relations between young migrant men and male elders, while relations between different age cohorts of women have been marked by a functionality that I argue obscures the emergence of significant ruptures.⁶³ Each generation

of women in this study came of age in vastly different political and social geographies, whose features intimately influenced these women's attempts to map their own figurative and material 'home'. In this sense, my study is informed by Mannheim's concept of generational consciousness, which he argues is itself historically embedded and has the capacity to initiate and mediate social change.⁶⁴

The testimonies I collected constantly challenged me to refine any gendered analysis in light of generational dynamics, and vice versa, and to locate more precisely transformations in lifestyle and life strategy. To some extent, women's accounts attested the existence of a generational consciousness. However, the inconsistency with which this was invoked in their narratives revealed that, like other identities, generational identity must be historically situated: when did fragments of this consciousness coalesce and why; and when were other identities more strongly foregrounded?

Certainly, there are limitations to a trans-generational approach centred on only six families. Indeed, the narrowness of this study makes it difficult to generalize about the content and character of urban African experience. It also hinders an extrapolation to other regional contexts. However, as I hope will be revealed in subsequent chapters, the specificity of this study represented its greatest strength as well as a fundamental challenge. Detail and depth were achieved through a micro-level approach, and these served the overriding purpose of evoking a layered history of women's participation in and perceptions of the process of urbanization. Furthermore, a trans-generational perspective combined with an orientation towards select families provided a greater degree of sensitivity to the manner in which life stories were told. For example, because different generations of women in the same family were in continual dialogue with one another, I was impelled to recognize the connections between the lives of migrant women and those of their daughters born in town, instead of perceiving them as analytically distinct categories. I was able to see how women inherited, transferred and transformed strategies and discursive frameworks that they received from their mothers and grandmothers.

A brief demographic consideration

The first-generation women interviewed for this study were generally

born in the 1920s and 1930s. They entered Cape Town from the rural areas and the small towns of the Eastern Cape in the 1940s and early 1950s.⁶⁵ Certainly, as mentioned previously, African women resided in the Cape in significant numbers prior to this period. However, these respondents' entry at mid-century coincided with a major increase in the wave of African work seekers moving to the city, and a more forceful articulation by the state of how African women's movements would be regulated. From this point on, women had to manage their existences cognizant of a new political geography. In addition, because these women's lives in town generally spanned the length of the apartheid period, we are able to chart important historical developments alongside important life-cycle developments and changing processes of settlement. First-generation women's narratives thus serve as a treasure trove of information on the dense array of events, relationships and dynamics that have marked their long histories in Cape Town. Their position as established urban residents gives them a unique frame of reference with which they coloured their experiences of the city, and built a sense of their roles within it.

At the time the research was conducted, all first-generation respondents resided in Guguletu township, located approximately 15 kilometres from Cape Town city centre. This decision to locate the first cohort in one township arose out of a need, given the complexity of the generational and historical analysis, to minimize regional variations in the initial group of women. As recent work on the political, cultural and social histories of individual townships in the Cape Town metropole affirms, significant variations with regards to design, and access to housing and key services such as water and electricity existed across the various formal and informal settlements in the Peninsula.⁶⁶ This varied heritage undoubtedly shaped women's perspective of the city and of the relatively inhospitable nature of the urban environment. Established in 1958 initially as an emergency camp, Guguletu (meaning 'our pride') was the first African township in Cape Town created during the apartheid era. Thus, its history reflects key characteristics of apartheid planning and design.⁶⁷ Also, Guguletu's genesis was the result of a proactive campaign of forced removals across the Peninsula; thus its first inhabitants were well versed in state intrusions into their existence in the 1950s and 1960s.

In addition, because Guguletu was an official township, its first inhabitants were granted the rare 'privilege' of council housing. The large

majority of respondents in this cohort came to reside in formal housing there in the 1970s.⁶⁸ Prior to this, their housing histories reflected a high degree of movement. The general pattern appears to be residence in one or more multiracial informal settlements upon first entry into the city. Respondents then experienced forced removal from these areas as a result of state efforts to expel illegal Africans from the area and relocate them into racially homogenized zones. After a period of temporary residence in an 'official' township such as Nyanga or Langa, they moved to Guguletu in the early 1970s.

First-generation women's average educational attainment was standard 6, the highest being standard 8 plus a nursing assistant's certificate.⁶⁹ Six of the ten total respondents in this cohort took up domestic service as their primary occupation. Five respondents reported engaging in some sort of self-employment, as a primary occupation or in order to supplement their waged income. All except one married at some point in their lives. One remarried after a divorce, and six were widowed at the time the research was conducted. The average number of children they had was five. Of the six first-generation respondents who agreed to a more in-depth collection of their life histories, several additional patterns can be seen. These women tended to have built up over the years large families, and presided over multigenerational groups within their council homes. For example, one respondent recorded 26 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren, with 22 dependents living with her. Another listed 23 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Second-generation respondents were born in Cape Town generally in the 1950s and 1960s.⁷⁰ They differed from the first-generation cohort in several ways. Firstly, they were able to attain higher educational standards. Five of 11 respondents obtained their matriculation certificate, and several went on to obtain qualifications in nursing and secretarial work. Their higher educational level was somewhat reflected in their employment histories. Only two respondents were unemployed at the time of the research, with the primary occupations being nursing and domestic service. One respondent became a senior radiographer. Only two women recorded involvement in informal income-generating enterprises, and these efforts were secondary to their waged employment.

Their housing history also exhibited a high degree of movement, though mainly in their youth, as they followed their mothers from multiracial informal settlements to the more regimented structures of

the established African townships. This cohort also experienced to varying degrees a stint in the rural areas, which was generally not recorded in their housing histories, but detailed in the oral interview. Approximately half of this cohort were able to establish homes independently of their mothers, spread across other areas of Guguletu and other predominantly African settlements, such as Khayelitsha. Three respondents in this cohort never married, and of the ten that had married, three were widowed and two had remarried. This figure, however, needs to be considered in light of family patterns. It is clear that some families had a higher rate of marriage among their second-generational members, which affected the degree of marriage of selected respondents – five of Grace Madikane's six children, for example, were married. In contrast, only one of Eunice Fuzile's six children and two of Regina Mhlekwá's nine children were married. The average number of children of respondents in this cohort was four.

The eight women who make up the third-generation cohort were born in the 1970s or early 1980s. All were single and generally expressed doubt as to the future relevance of the institution of marriage in their lives, or the belief that they would be able to find suitable husbands. Three had children, with three of four children born while respondents were teenagers. Two respondents obtained three-year diplomas from technikons, although the rest of the women in this cohort were generally unable to achieve the educational standards of their mothers (age was not a factor in this).⁷¹ Half of the women in this group were unemployed at the time the main fieldwork was carried out, the majority occupation being cashiers. They exhibited a high degree of residential stability in their housing histories, largely because they were born when their parents' and grandparents' housing profile had begun to stabilize. All the women interviewed in this cohort resided either with their mothers or grandmothers. None had established an independent residence.

This brief introduction – to the methodology used for the research and to the demographic characteristics of the three cohorts – is meant to be a starting point from which the outlines of a more complex portrait of African women and generational difference in settlement strategy and identity formation can emerge. Brief family histories, compiled using accounts of various members, and family 'trees' are provided in the Appendix. It is hoped that this information will provide another reference point from which the trans-generational analysis can be understood.

This book does not follow an explicit chronological order. Instead, its structural rationale flows from the dynamics of the settlement process it attempts to map. Beginning with the particular political and social geography of Cape Town (chapter one), the book focuses on a few evocative arenas in which the settlement process took shape. Chapter two catalogues household livelihood strategies across the apartheid and post-apartheid period. It details women's participation in managing and reordering domestic economies, and explores some of the emotional and moral contours of these new structures. The focus then extends outwards to the built environment. Charting the history of home improvements (chapter three) presents an unlikely, yet fruitful, avenue of analysis. Tracing the physical reconstruction of 'home' provides candid snapshots of women's attempts to balance the harsh realities of African housing policy in apartheid Cape Town with their own developing housing designs. Chapter four examines women's 'energy histories' as another pathway to understanding women's evolving material and emotional engagement with their urban environment. Women's perceptions of electricity and other forms of fuel are mapped alongside their changing energy consumption patterns. Chapter five interrogates women's patterns of participation in several of the 'hallowed' social organizations of township life – the Christian mothers' group, the rotating credit association, the burial society. Finally, the study considers how women internalized their participation in these processes and retooled existing frames of reference to accommodate their changing identities as urbanites and a differently felt sense of place (chapter six).

MAPPING CAPE TOWN'S HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY, 1948–2000

THE LAW! The greatest hardship we laboured under was not that we had no protection from the law. No! That was the lesser evil. The worst was that we were burdened with protection by the master race via an unwieldy plethora of laws, by-laws, rules and regulations passed by a parliament with whose existence we had naught to do and whose *raison d'être* appeared to be our exclusive 'protection'.¹

Sindiwe Magona, *To My Children's Children*

This chapter describes Cape Town's shifting historical and political landscape in the latter half of the twentieth century, with particular emphasis on how state policy and practice affected the lives of urban African women. As South Africa approached mid-century, restricting the movement of African women became an integral component of state attempts to structure the African labour force to meet the growing demands of capital. From the early years of African in-migration into Cape Town, the 'free and unrestricted' influx of African women was characterized as an 'evil' that had to be checked.² The very presence of African women in the city was, to the apartheid administrators, a worrying indicator of the growing urbanization of the African populace as a whole. However, limiting their entry and residence presented complex political and administrative problems of control. Influx control, as this set of policies came to be known, was seen as an intrusion into the private sphere of African domestic life, an intrusion that was met with fierce resistance. Furthermore, African women were often more elusive with regard to the state's many modes of surveillance than their male counterparts.³

How successful was Cape Town in stemming the 'tide' of African urbanization, and of African women in particular? Importantly, how did these efforts shape the spatial and political contours of the city? Cape Town's distinctive demographic composition and historical association as the 'home' of the Coloured population powerfully influenced state and local efforts to limit urban African settlement. As we will see, African women in this city experienced this 'unwieldy plethora of laws' as more coercive and effective than in other urban areas of the country. Indeed, the local government could not claim the 'liberal' high ground for its part in the implementation of increasingly stricter and harsher influx control measures, particularly those directed towards African women.⁴ Cape Town was able, albeit for only a brief period in the early 1970s, to lay claim to the distinction that it had 'successfully' checked the flow of Africans into the city and, furthermore, reduced its African population. From the late 1970s, pressures from the collapse of municipal structures and the growing ungovernability of the townships made influx control increasingly difficult to implement. Fundamental shifts in state policy towards Africans in urban areas led to its eventual abolition in 1986, and new patterns of African settlement in the city would emerge.

African women's testimonies provide another test of the effectiveness and relative reach of influx control policy in Cape Town. First-generation women especially foreground their personal histories with descriptions of encounters with state and local authorities over the *dompas* (literally, the 'stupid pass').⁵ In the first two decades of apartheid rule, then, influx control became for African women the single most dominant and intrusive aspect of state authority in the city. Its reach extended into vital issues such as access to housing and employment. Women's particular legal vulnerability was symbolized in the notorious 'Section 10' clause, which effectively made women's rights to urban tenure contingent on maintaining a dependent status with regard to men. This dependence became acutely, and sometimes painfully, highlighted in the arena of marital relations. However, the gendered nature of influx control harnessed political activism, and through this women developed an organizational zeal that they were to beneficially utilize in their future endeavours.

Certainly, state intrusion was not uniformly experienced across all generations of African women. Later generations, born in Cape Town and thus possessing a different relationship to regulatory legislation, framed

their political memories along alternative lines. Second-generation women's narratives of resistance show an eschewing of the politics of gender for an increasingly vocal, yet short-lived, politics of youth. In contrast, third-generation women, who came of age as urban apartheid itself was visibly being dismantled, easily discarded older and outmoded political frames of reference.

'Matters of extreme delicacy':⁶

African women, influx control policy and practice

The National Party came to power in 1948 calling for a programme of firm control over African urbanization, the continuation and maintenance of the migrant labour system, and the institutionalization of territorial segregation.⁷ Up to 1952 there were no statutory influx control regulations applied throughout the country, except those enacted after a direct request from a local authority.⁸ In the early 1950s, with the passage of three key pieces of legislation – the Population Registration Act of 1950, the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act of 1952, and the 1952 Native (Urban Areas) Amendment Act – this 'voluntary' influx control system was to change profoundly in nature and scope.⁹

For African women, the 1952 Native (Urban Areas) Amendment Act was especially significant. By explicitly including women in its provisions, the Act made women subject to the Urban Areas Act for the first time in the same manner as men.¹⁰ It was also crucial because it outlined 'Section 10' privileges, in terms that were to change little over the next two decades. 'Section 10' would become the notorious catch phrase for residential rights in urban areas. These rights were granted under three rubrics: if a person had continuously resided in the urban area in question since birth (called Section 10(1)(a) rights); if a person had lived continuously in the urban area for 15 years or had worked for the same employer for ten years (Section 10(1)(b) rights); and, finally, if a person were the dependent of someone who qualified via the previous two categories (Section 10(1)(c) rights).¹¹ Any 'unqualified' African was required to obtain a permit, valid for only 72 hours, to enter the urban area to search for work. With this Act, the state clearly demarcated the status of the permanent labour force that would constitute the urban population from those who would have to remain migrants.¹²

In this early period of apartheid, Africans in Cape Town resided largely in informal settlements scattered across the Cape Flats area. Many, such as Retreat and Athlone, were multiracial settlements with communities of Africans and Coloureds living side by side. Until the late 1950s, two official African townships existed – Langa (Xhosa for ‘sun’, established primarily as a dormitory township for migrant male workers in 1927) and Nyanga (Xhosa for ‘moon’, created in 1946) – though most Africans preferred shack life to the ‘controlled environment’ and expensive rentals provided by the municipality.¹³ The pattern of African settlement can be seen in Figure 1.1.

In January 1955 Secretary for Native Affairs Eiselen declared the Western Cape the ‘natural home’ of the majority Coloured population, who had the moral right to be protected from African competition in the labour market.¹⁴ His words formed the basis of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy declared that year, which legitimized state intentions to remove African families from the urban areas of the Cape and legislate progressively stricter measures controlling the influx and movement of Africans.¹⁵ Eiselen’s words also provided the apartheid government with the guidelines with which to judge its ‘success’: the Western Cape was the ‘test case’ for apartheid, measured in the capacity of the state to reduce and control the African population, while sustaining an adequate supply of migrant labour.¹⁶

Far from being resistant, the Cape Town City Council, as Greenbank has shown, discreetly safeguarded the transition to apartheid mechanisms of control. Racialized legislation in a sense encouraged this transition. Coloured voters, who until 1970 possessed municipal franchise, were influential in the Council’s acquiescence to state demands, for fear of African encroachment on employment and housing opportunities.¹⁷ In contrast, the disenfranchised minority African population was much more vulnerable to legislative control.¹⁸ The Western Cape region soon became known as the area that utilized most rapidly this new regulatory framework, especially with respect to administering the African female population. By September 1956 over 25,000 women in Cape Town were registered in employment.¹⁹ By December 1959 the Native Commissioner’s Office in Cape Town had distributed about 12,000 reference books, by now a requirement for employment, to African women in the city.²⁰

In comparison to other urban areas in South Africa, then, Cape Town was surprisingly quick to adhere to national dictates. Native

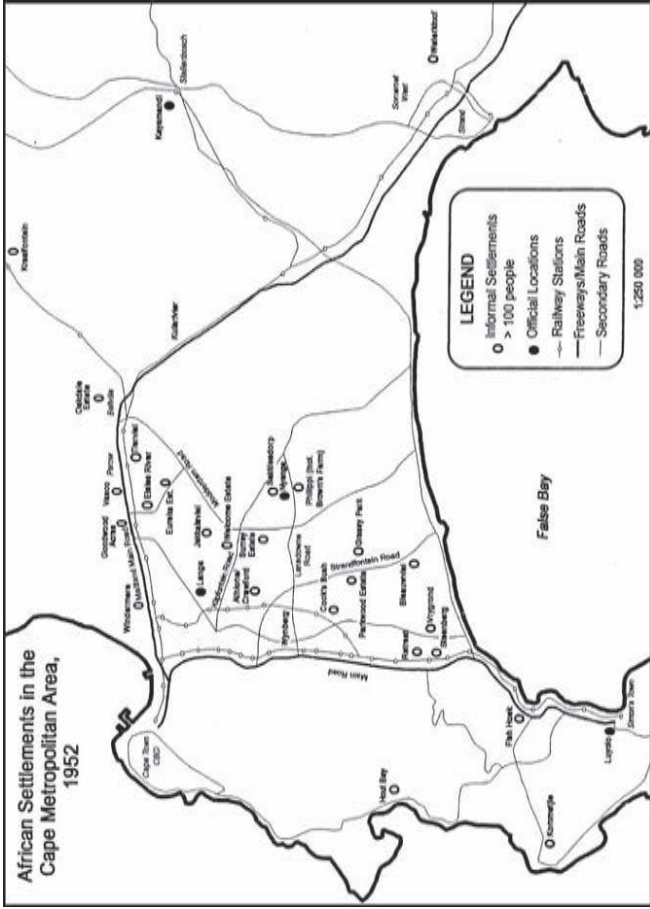


FIGURE 1.1: African settlement in the Cape metropolitan area, 1952
 Source: East, Hildegarde, 'An overview of African settlement in the Cape metropolitan area to 1990',
 Urban Problems Research Unit Working Paper no. 53 (Cape Town, 1995)

Administration Manager Rogers was alerted to the uniqueness of his city's position in 1958, when a deputation of African women from various parts of the Cape Peninsula protested to him that Cape Town was the only major urban centre in the Union of South Africa in which the provisions of Section 10 were being enforced with respect to women.²¹ Managers in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley and East London confirmed that strict application of Section 10 was not enforced at the time in these urban areas, either because an inherited laxity in the documentation of African female residents was too difficult to reverse or because they chose to retain an element of voluntary adherence to the permit system.²² In Kimberley, the provisions of Section 10 were applied to African women only in the case of 'undesirable' women, that is, those known to have committed liquor offences or deserted their husbands.²³

In the late 1950s local authorities in the Cape Peninsula actively moved to erase 'black spots' (illegal squatter camps) and to centralize African settlement through the demolition of shack areas and the relocation of families from declared Coloured areas to official African townships, under the Group Areas Act of 1950.²⁴ By 1958 legally resident Africans in the Combined Area (made up of the Divisional Council area and the northern municipalities of Goodwood, Parow and Bellville) were centralized in Nyanga township, with a population of 18,518.²⁵ By early 1959 all shack settlements in the Combined Area, once numbering 48, were cleared.²⁶ In 1959 the removal of Windermere residents began.²⁷ Guguletu township, where the first-generation women in this study eventually settled, was established in 1958 initially as an emergency camp to house families that were evicted as a result of relocation and shack clearance campaigns.²⁸

The demolition of informal settlements and beginning of forced removals allowed officials an excuse to search actively for illegal residents. Unsurprisingly, the numbers of those endorsed out of the Peninsula during this period rose dramatically. Between January 1959 and April 1962, 26,211 Africans were endorsed out of the Western Cape, 7,251 of them women.²⁹ Of that figure, 909 African women and 3,377 African men were from the Combined Area; while 5,066 African women were endorsed out of Cape Town municipality.³⁰ The effectiveness of this programme of demolition and removals can be seen in Figure 1.2, which shows African settlement in the Cape as it stood in 1966, after the most aggressive period of removals had ended.

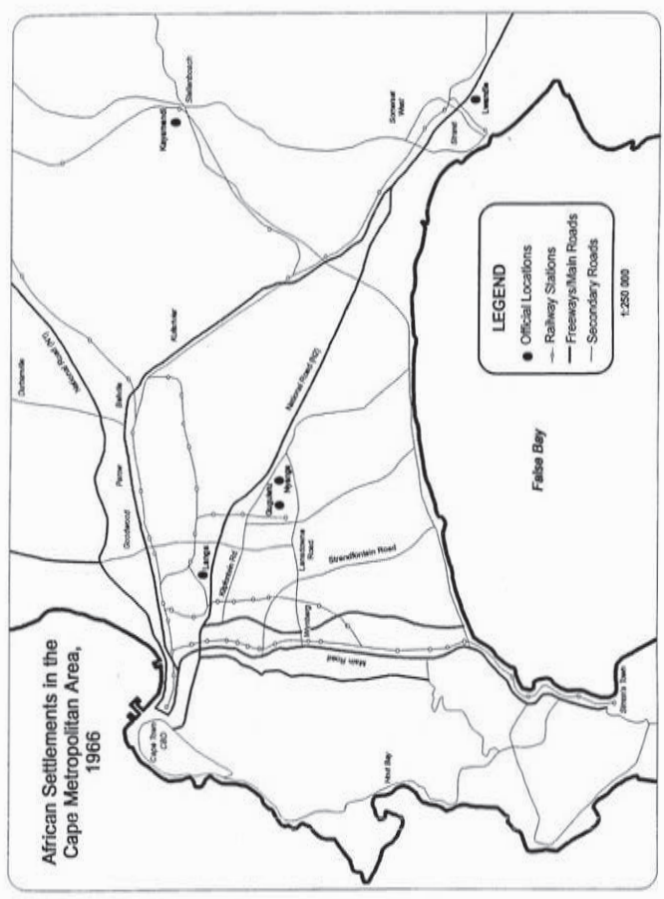


FIGURE 1.2: African settlement in the Cape metropolitan area, 1966
 Source: Fast, 'An overview'

As can be seen, African residence became concentrated in the three official townships of Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga, known collectively as Lagunya.

The 1964 Bantu Laws Amendment Act signified a further radical tightening of apartheid's mechanisms of control over Africans.³¹ Under its provisions, even Africans permanently qualified under Section 10 could be removed from an urban area if they were deemed 'idle and undesirable'. Most significantly for African women who based their claims of residence on their rights as a dependent of a 'qualified' man, the addition to Section 10(1)(c) of the 'ordinarily reside' clause greatly affected their chances of obtaining permanent residence rights. They could claim residence rights as a dependent only if they had entered the area lawfully and already 'ordinarily resided' with the qualified person in town in suitable accommodation.³² The most common form of proof of 'ordinary residence' for an African woman was her husband's lodger's permit, on which her name had to have been entered. However, possession of a Section 10(1)(c) stamp in her reference book was often required *before* a woman could be added onto her husband's lodger's permit.³³ The illogical circularity of this prevented most women from being able to legally, and thus 'ordinarily', reside with their husbands.³⁴ Furthermore, for the great number of Africans housed in squatter settlements, which were considered 'illegal' accommodation, their years of residence in such settlements could not be counted as time in 'legal residence' spent towards accumulation of Section 10(1)(a) or (b) rights.³⁵ This interpretation of 'ordinary residence' was not overturned until 1980.³⁶

The Bantu Laws Amendment Act also removed the authority to issue permits to African women from municipal officers and transferred this wholly to centralized labour bureaus.³⁷ The Black Sash, which took up cases of Africans facing endorsement out of the urban areas of the Cape Peninsula, noted that officials now had little discretionary power in the administration of pass laws, which were more rigidly enforced than ever before.³⁸ Around the same time, an array of policies further attempted to close down any window of opportunity for African women to reside and work in Cape Town: in 1962, the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, which had been first articulated in 1955, came into force. Before a prospective employer in the Peninsula could employ an African, he or she had to obtain a certificate from the Department of Labour stating that no Coloured labour was available for that position.³⁹ In 1961, a

national freeze on African family accommodation in the Cape Peninsula was announced.⁴⁰

Crucial to the eventual tightening of influx control over Cape Town's African female population was the retirement in 1965 of the local Department of Bantu (formerly Native) Affairs manager, Rogers. His replacement, Worrall, was far less ambiguous in his attitude and approach.⁴¹ Worrall stated clearly that there was no 'middle road' with regards to Africans in urban areas: '[i]t must be separate development or complete integration. For myself, it is separate development.'⁴² His aim was to reinforce in the minds of even qualified Africans that they should return to the homelands.⁴³ This was in line with the National Party's shifting stance from the early 1960s on African urbanization, which now focused on the role of the homelands as 'self-governing' ethnic enclaves to which all Africans, even urban residents, ultimately belonged.⁴⁴ Worrall effectively blocked Black Sash attempts to inquire personally about the progress on special cases, and insisted appeals should go directly through to the chief Bantu Affairs commissioner's office, not the local Bantu Administration Department.⁴⁵ From then on, the Black Sash had to follow more convoluted official channels.

One way to assess the relative effects of this cumulative tightening of state and local mechanisms of control is by examining municipal population figures, given in the table below.⁴⁶

Year	Female	Male	Total
1944	--	--	19,184
1949	11,732	24,783	36,515
1955	16,606	32,331	48,937
1961	19,559	39,170	58,729
1965	29,620	48,980	78,600
1967	34,100	55,900	90,000
1969	30,320	54,140	84,460
1970	28,493	57,207	85,700
1974	31,950	63,050	95,000
1978	--	--	107,580
1982	--	--	116,900
1986	--	--	140,652

FIGURE 1.3: African population in Cape Town municipality (including Langa and Guguletu)⁴⁷

As can be seen from Figure 1.3, between 1967 and 1969 there was a decrease in the overall African population in the city. Numbers of African women declined over a slightly longer period, with the female population decreasing from 1967 to 1970.⁴⁸

If we correlate municipal population figures with available tallies of state expulsions of Africans from the region, it appears that the population of Cape Town municipality declined right after a period of particularly aggressive removals of the African female population from 1963 to 1967.⁴⁹ In 1963 alone, 2,033 women and 1,070 men were endorsed out of Cape Town.⁵⁰ Between 1965 and 1967, 5,600 women were endorsed out.⁵¹ This period also constituted a time of markedly higher numbers of women seeking help from the Black Sash Advice Office, an increase the Black Sash noted. Between 1963 and 1965, Black Sash staff interviewed an average of about 5,000 cases per year – of that number, nearly 1,500 were new cases of women endorsed out who came for assistance.⁵²

It is clear that by the early 1970s influx control in Cape Town had become for African women something far more menacing. As detailed above, the aggressive housing policy of the 1960s following a radical programme of forced removals and demolition of informal settlements concentrated Africans in distinct 'locations'. As a result, influx control became more enforceable. In addition, local and national administrative bodies dealing with urban apartheid policy consolidated over the course of this period. An analysis of figures suggests that the aggressive application of influx control measures succeeded in reducing the official African population in the city in the late 1960s. However, as can be seen in Figure 1.3, the continued growth of the African populace in the municipality throughout the 1970s and 1980s suggests that this 'success' was only temporary in nature.

Passed in 1971, the Bantu Affairs Administration Board Act signalled a greater consolidation of control by the central state over urban African policy following a damning assessment by the Van Rensburg report in 1967. The Act essentially transferred responsibility for African housing, influx control and the regulation of the black labour market from the approximately 450 local authorities throughout the country to 22 Administration Boards (amalgamated to 14 in 1979), most of whose members were appointed directly by the minister of the Department of Cooperation and Development. Municipalities retained control over health, transport and traffic matters affecting their African

communities.⁵³ Administration Boards radically altered the manner in which national policies concerning Africans in urban areas were locally implemented. Bantu administration became far more answerable to state dictates, and far less vulnerable to inconsistent municipal application.

The year 1976 marked a watershed in African resistance to apartheid. Riots in Soweto, Johannesburg on 16 June sparked youth-led protests across the country. Cape Town was not left unmarked. In October 1976 Capetonian youth began a schools boycott in solidarity with the grievances of the youth in Soweto. The next month, African school children marched in central Cape Town and were met with armed state response – the death toll that day amounted to 92 Africans killed and 387 wounded by police, with not one white fatality. Rioting in Guguletu in the first week of December resulted in 300 arrests.⁵⁴ During the Christmas period of that year, migrants in the hostels of Nyanga township were reportedly 'encouraged and instigated' by riot police to burn neighbouring houses with petrol bombs and assail residents with sticks and axes, leaving 24 dead.⁵⁵

Events such as these heralded a decade of political and social unrest in the townships. Increasingly in this period up until 1986, when influx control was officially abolished, urban governance under the apartheid regime was severely tested by forces within and external to the state. Government reaction to this environment of uncertainty was contradictory at best. This can partly be explained by the state's insistence on maintaining its twin goals of cultivating a stable labour force to meet the demands of capital while attempting to restrict the growth of the urban African population. The 1979 Riekert Commission report recommended that influx control policies be more strictly implemented alongside a concerted effort to reward 'urban insiders' with privileged rights to residence.⁵⁶ The reintroduction of 30-year leaseholds in 1976, made applicable to the Western Cape in 1980, can be seen as an effort to offer those 'insiders' a stronger guarantee of tenure. In 1978 the 99-year leasehold was initiated.⁵⁷

However, the state increasingly found this distinction between 'legal' and 'illegal' residents difficult to maintain, particularly as declining conditions in the homelands ensured a constant flood of work seekers to the urban area.⁵⁸ Rural Africans continued to face the threat of expulsion, harsh fines and jail sentences by entering urban areas in this period and compromising the ability of administrative bodies to effectively police

influx control.⁵⁹ Pressures from economic recession in the late 1970s extending through the 1980s contributed towards discontent from the industrial and commercial sectors with current controls over the labour market. These sectors saw that the creation of a stable, yet mobile black middle class would be in their best interests. Advances in technology created a need for an increased supply of skilled and semi-skilled labour, and these workers needed to be guaranteed stable employment and residence to ensure optimal efficiency.⁶⁰ Ideological transformation towards a more pragmatic and 'technocratic rationality' contributed to the impetus for reform.⁶¹

Despite these shifts, the contradictory unfolding of urban policy in the 1980s reveals that there was no certain path towards the eventual relinquishing of state control over African urbanization. In 1983 the Black Sash registered its 'disgust' at the government for its two-faced position on the urbanization of families of workers, and for 'side-stepping, evading, manipulating and ignoring' the Rikhoto judgement of that year, which confirmed that contract workers could qualify for urban residential rights if they remained with one employer for more than ten consecutive years. The Black Sash cited numerous instances where Administration Board officials throughout the country were, on 'arbitrary' and 'false' grounds, refusing applications for urban residence rights by contract workers. In addition, the Black Sash claimed that the application procedure had become so complicated in the wake of the Rikhoto ruling that very few Africans could negotiate its 'bureaucratic traps' successfully.⁶²

Changes in the legal status of the homelands seemed to confirm state determination to prevent African settlement on a large scale. By 1981 the two homelands that were the source of the majority of migrants into the Western Cape, the Ciskei and Transkei, were granted quasi-independent status. All migrants originally from these areas lost their South African citizenship and were deemed citizens of these 'independent' states, regardless of how long they had resided in South Africa. Furthermore, even if their children were born in an urban area of South Africa, they would no longer be able to qualify for residential rights in that area once they reached adulthood. Thus, citizenship rather than birthplace became the centrepiece of urban rights to residence laws.⁶³ No wonder one African Capetonian was heard remarking, 'So, we are to be travelers in our own land!'⁶⁴ Africans were issued 'travel documents' rather than reference books, which emphasized the temporary aspect of their 'sojourns' in the urban areas.⁶⁵

Certainly, statistics on the number of arrests due to violations of influx control measures in the early 1980s show that African women continued to be a target in the Western Cape. In each year between 1980 and 1982, more women than men were arrested in the Cape Peninsula, despite the fact that men made up more than 60 per cent of the total African population.⁶⁶ In 1980, out of 16,327 Africans arrested under the pass laws in the Peninsula, 8,262 were women. That latter amount constituted nearly 30 per cent of all women arrested in all major urban areas across the nation. This was, as Savage states, 'clearly a particular attack' on African women in the Cape Town area.⁶⁷

African settlement patterns on the Peninsula reflected the ambiguity of government positions on African urbanization. The housing freeze in place throughout the 1960s set the stage for an acute housing shortage, and Africans increasingly adopted a position of 'open defiance' of state policy in the 1970s by establishing informal settlements to fulfill their housing needs, as shown in Figure 1.4.

Africans in some settlements such as KTC (bordering Nyanga and Guguletu) were given tacit approval to reside there, and the state did not forcibly remove its occupants.⁶⁸ Other informal settlements, such as Crossroads, witnessed several years of aggressive attempts by the state to evict their residents and demolish their shacks. State interference culminated in May and June of 1986, when residents of Crossroads wearing white headscarves, the *witdoeke*, torched shacks and forcefully displaced over 70,000 people from KTC with the assistance of the police and the South African Defence Force.⁶⁹

By the mid-1980s, the financial crisis in urban governance exacerbated the state's 'predicament' with regard to urban African settlement. Because the Administration Boards' financial status was so dependent on a 'booze economy', with 70 per cent of their income derived from beer and liquor sales in townships, the wholesale destruction of beer halls and liquor outlets in the riots of 1976 and 1977 created a widespread financial crisis. This was aggravated by inflation and increased demand from Africans for better quality services to the townships.⁷⁰ By 1982 the 14 Administration Boards had a combined deficit of ZAR 36 million.⁷¹ Significantly, between 1979 and 1983 the Western Cape Administration Board had the worst annual deficit of Boards in South Africa, with its deficit increasing in this period by 349 per cent.⁷²

In addition, the system of African representation set up in the late-1970s collapsed by the mid-1980s. Community Councils, which in 1982 came to be known as Black Local Authorities, were given power to preside over their 'own affairs' in the allocation of housing and the development of townships, and to serve as arms of the state in policing illegal settlements and implementing influx control.⁷³ Because the minister had absolute power over these local structures, the legitimacy of these bodies was always in question, and participating councillors came to be seen by fellow Africans as 'collaborators' with the state. These African local structures were further handicapped, because they were charged with the responsibility for raising their own revenue, yet they lacked a rateable property base, with authority only over the poorest residential areas containing virtually no major commercial or industrial sectors.⁷⁴ Thus, these bodies collected revenue largely through the raising of rents and rates for services such as electricity, which created widespread dissatisfaction and led to political mobilization around this issue as a form of mass protest.⁷⁵ Residents took action against their local councillors, repeatedly burning down suspected collaborators' homes and forcing some to resign.⁷⁶

In 1983 Minister of Cooperation and Development Piet Koornhof declared that a new official township for Africans called Khayelitsha, meaning 'our new home', was to be built east of the Coloured residential area of Mitchell's Plain, approximately 35 km from Cape Town.⁷⁷ This was the first major state initiative on African housing in the Cape Town area since the construction of Guguletu in the 1960s. Originally, Khayelitsha was intended to house the entire African population of Cape Town, with all Africans vacating their homes in Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga to make room for Coloured residents.⁷⁸ However, awareness of the acute African housing shortage, as well as the public outcry against the wholesale resettlement of Cape Town's African population, convinced the state that Khayelitsha would instead accommodate Africans from squatter settlements, as well as those displaced by the demolition of their homes in previous removal campaigns.⁷⁹

By the mid- to late 1980s the tide of African urbanization had indeed turned. Despite state attempts to limit the urban African population in Cape Town, it had grown throughout the 1970s. In 1975 an estimated 97,730 Africans were in the city, increasing to 111,230 in 1980 and 136,186 by 1985. Khayelitsha, administered under a separate Black Authority, was said to house 450,000 Africans by the end of the 1980s

alone.⁸⁰ The increased ungovernability of townships and the financial collapse of administrative structures set up to govern African affairs contributed towards the capitulation of state efforts to control and monitor African entry into and settlement in urban areas. In 1986 the state abolished influx control and, along with it, the Coloured Labour Preference Policy. Africans moved freely into Khayelitsha, as well as into increasingly densified areas on the borders of existing townships (see Figure 1.5 for a map of African settlement in 1990). Instead of the few concentrated squatter settlements that were characteristic of the 1970s and early 1980s, in the latter part of the decade, smaller shanty towns sprang up across the Peninsula and were eventually given legal recognition.⁸¹

In 1991 the Group Areas Act was abolished, removing the final legislative barrier restricting African residence within the city.⁸² By the transition to a democratic government in 1994, the demographic composition of metropolitan Cape Town had altered dramatically from even ten years previously. High migration rates of Africans into the region from the mid-1980s to early 1990s had further increased to nearly one-quarter the proportion of Africans relative to the rest of the metropole's population.⁸³ Most of this new wave of migrants took up residence in Khayelitsha and in the many informal settlements that had developed across the Peninsula and alongside official townships.⁸⁴ To a degree, new 'intra-racial' inequalities were introduced in this transitional period, as recent migrants to the city competed with 'established' African residents. As similarly observed in the Johannesburg context, once-entrenched racialized patterns of residence, employment and access to services have given way to these intra-racial dynamics.⁸⁵

Much of the efforts of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, proposed in 1994 and administered until 1999, were directed towards housing assistance for the burgeoning population in the form of site upgrading and housing subsidies.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the new millennium brought with it fresh state and local pledges to provide free and universal access to water and electricity – for example, in 2001 Cape Town municipality pledged 20 kWh of free electricity and six kilolitres of free water per month to underprivileged residents.⁸⁷ However, these poverty-reduction measures sat uneasily with neoliberal efforts to increasingly privatize those same municipal services and to move away from state provision of core housing structures.⁸⁸ Local and national

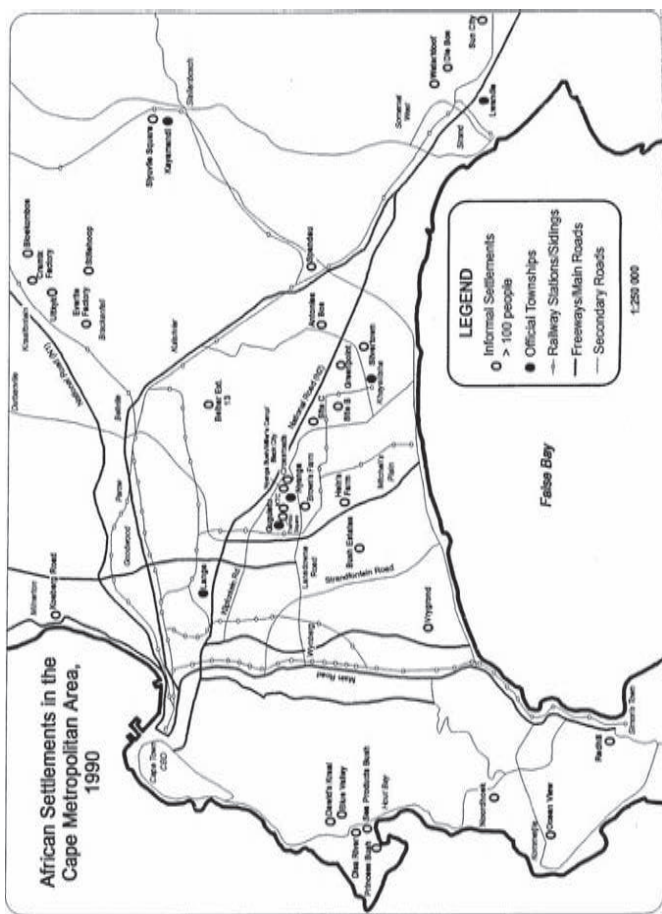


FIGURE 1.5: African settlement in the Cape metropolitan area, 1990
Source: Fast, 'An overview'

structures similarly struggled to coherently respond to the tremendous social and economic toll exacted by the country's burgeoning HIV/AIDS epidemic, which by 2001 had infected an estimated 4.7 million people in the country.⁸⁹ Spurred by grass-roots activism, the Western Cape government proved more responsive to calls for widespread treatment and prevention campaigns than other areas of the country.⁹⁰ The efficacy of these social and economic initiatives – if measured in improved service delivery, more affordable access to basic resources and increased housing capacity – could be characterized as uneven at best.⁹¹ At worst, these initiatives reveal that the dawn of democracy did not bring with it the realization of improved livelihoods for many urban African residents.

'From the cradle to the grave':

The social impact of influx control on women

In 1955 Rita Mfiki left her home in Middledrift district in the Ciskei in search of her husband Ndikbo, whom she had married in 1939. She had little to keep her in Middledrift at the time – four of their children had died and her husband had long stopped any form of contact or aid. Armed only with his last address at a hostel in Cape Town, Rita eventually found, with the assistance of the police, that he had begun living with another woman.⁹² She described their first encounter in the city: 'he was shocked to see me . . . when he saw me, he said, "Am I dreaming, is this really my wife, am I dreaming?" He didn't believe that I was there, it was me.' Rita gave him an ultimatum – 'I said I'm not going anywhere.' She remained with Ndikbo in Cape Town until 1960, when they separated.

They legally divorced in 1967 and Rita soberly recounted the consequences of such a decision: 'In Cape Town, if you were divorced, you had to have a pass. But then in {19}69, I had to go back home to Middledrift because I was running away from the police . . . {19}67 was when we got divorced . . . that's when I was worried about the pass.'⁹³ Her encounters with the police had a familiar, yet distressing pattern: 'they would take me to jail. They would catch me and then I would just stay in jail, and then come out again, and they would catch me again. Over and over again . . . If I came out, I would get a very nice job and then I had that job, then they would catch me and then I would have to go back to jail again.'

That the years on the run from the authorities had affected Rita's psyche was clear: 'I was living a terrible life . . . when I see a police van, I think that I am going to be arrested. You cannot eat properly.' Her children also suffered as a consequence. She went back to Middledrift in 1969 with her children. In 1971 she returned to Cape Town, but stated that 'they (the police) were still chasing me. They were chasing me everywhere.' Rita remarried Ndikbo soon after her return to the city, though his persistent infidelity remained a painful flashpoint in their relationship until his death in 1995.

Especially in the early decades of apartheid, urban life in many ways became synonymous with the *dompas* and all its attendant difficulties. For urban Africans, the pass system's existence was not an abstract concept in their minds; its perniciousness was felt in even the smallest facets of their lives. As we have seen, influx control regulations affected one's movements and the ability to own property, work and reside with one's chosen partner. Africans faced the ever-present possibility of arrest on the street, even as they coped with the threat of random and aggressive 'pass raids' at home. Furthermore, Africans had to sacrifice precious time to deal with the labyrinthine bureaucracy that characterized urban African administration, and this contributed to their already vulnerable position in the workforce. The increased commuting distance necessitated by forced removal to increasingly further-flung townships imposed a heavy financial burden as well.⁹⁴ Indeed, many contemporary observers noted the pass system's 'totality' – the way in which it invaded both the public and private spaces of African lives:⁹⁵

Anyone called upon to carry a reference book has his [sic] whole life regimented from the cradle to the grave, truncated, restricted and controlled by this right of free travel, one's freedom of living where one chooses, one's freedom of selling one's labour to the best market, etc.⁹⁶

Arguably, however, as Rita's story powerfully illustrates, the impact of influx control and its tightening in the 1960s and early 1970s fell disproportionately on the lives of African women. Though seemingly 'privileged' because they possessed precious rights to residence largely through their qualified husbands, first-generation respondents were

particularly vocal about the extent to which influx control, as they experienced it in Cape Town, directed their lives. Doris Vala said the pass system was 'nonsense', as she recalled the 'pass-busy' time of this period: 'it was not nice to come and work and go to jail for nothing.'⁹⁷ Regina Mhlekwa bemoaned a 'terrible' pass system that interrupted women's everyday pleasantries like visits from relatives.⁹⁸ Though seemingly trivial, this greater likelihood to be present at home during the working week meant that women were more likely to witness, and be subject to, invasive pass raids by the police. As Rita Mfiki testified:

Yeah, they would come any time, just come into the houses They were looking for people who had businesses, like if you were to sell liquor unlicensed I mean, they never knew which house so they would just go in all the houses and just check. And while they were doing the routine check, they would check for passes as well.⁹⁹

Eunice Fuzile was equally emphatic about the pass system's unforgiving and unjust nature: 'Even if you had the pass, if you just forgot it at home by mistake, they would still catch you and put you in jail. And you wouldn't get any kind of job without a pass.'¹⁰⁰ Eunice remembered one moment around 1956, in particular, when she was arrested with 'a baby at the back.' It was these very images of African mothers in jail with their babies tied to their backs that prompted considerable outrage among organizations such as the Langa Women's Vigilance Association and the Black Sash.¹⁰¹ The Langa Women's Vigilance Association in 1959 lamented that 'children will be reared in gaols, and those not young enough to go with their mothers, will suffer both mentally and physically from neglect.'¹⁰² Even Cape Town's Department of Bantu Administration acknowledged that the government could easily be seen as being party to the break-up of African family life.¹⁰³

Moreover, African women in the apartheid system were defined in terms of their relationship with a man, whether father, husband or guardian. This relationship was by nature subordinate and characterized by dependence.¹⁰⁴ When the 1952 amendments to the 1945 Urban Areas Act were promulgated, given the relatively small permanent African population in Cape Town in the first three decades of the twentieth century, few African women could claim exemption under Section 10(1)

(a) or (b), because they had not yet accumulated ten years of continuous work or 15 years of residence.¹⁰⁵ Those women who had not acquired permanent residence in their own right could then only obtain those rights by virtue of marriage to or dependence on a qualified person. Thus, as Rita's case clearly exemplifies, women with Section 10(1)(c) rights were by nature in a vulnerable position, because their right to be in the area was contingent on maintaining their status of dependence on a qualified man. Daughters remained Section 10(1)(c) eligible as long as they did not marry, and wives if they did not divorce. In addition, divorce not only nullified Section 10(1)(c) status, it also often meant loss of physical residence, because divorced women could not obtain tenancy of a house.¹⁰⁶ As Posel colourfully describes, state insistence on marriage as a necessary qualification for family housing led some urban Africans in the 1950s and 1960s to participate in the ritual of 'The Hats'. Africans in need of prospective housing would, through the luck of the draw, be paired up and immediately married at the Native Commissioner's office.¹⁰⁷ Such drastic measures made sense particularly for women: only from 1978 were African women able to rent houses in their own right, and only then if they could prove that they had dependents to support.¹⁰⁸

For women, then, preserving their ability to live and work in the urban area sometimes involved a careful calibration of risk – the burden of enduring a difficult or hastily created marriage measured against the perils of independence.¹⁰⁹ Rita's eventual decision to return to her unrepentant ex-husband, after several years of a tortured life 'on the run' from state authorities, is emblematic of these struggles. Her divorce in 1967 resulted in her life narrative becoming intimately bound up with state intrusion and surveillance. Yet it also harshly underlined for her the centrality of the marital union in sustaining an urban existence. Rita returned to her marriage, at great personal cost. This accentuation of marriage as an urban survival strategy would lose much of its relevance as the framework of influx control was challenged and, eventually, dismantled. However, as we will see in later chapters, for first-generation women, the marital bond was to have a significant, if not lasting, effect on the ways in which they crafted and mediated their livelihoods and social networks.

For many first-generation women, the gendered nature of influx control shaped not only their personal experiences, but marked the coming

of age of their political consciousness as well.¹¹⁰ In the mid-1950s, with large-scale implementation of influx control over women in the nation's urban centres imminent, African women organized campaigns of resistance, culminating in 1956 with a march in Pretoria of 20,000 women. Across the nation, African women marched from their locations into city centres to place petitions into the hands of town clerks, Native Administration officials or local magistrates. Women of Cape Town followed suit. In June 1957 approximately 1,000 women marched through the streets of Cape Town to present to the chief Native Affairs commissioner pledges of women who committed themselves to defiance of pass laws.¹¹¹

It is important to stress that not all respondents in this study were politicized to the same extent. Doris Vala stated that 'we all had to have a pass. There was no reason for me to *toyi-toyi* [a term in use from the 1980s to denote protest].'¹¹² Ellen Gqozo did not join in any form of resistance, preferring to concentrate instead on her growing business and her family: 'I always keep myself busy on that business making.'¹¹³ However, for some women, personal hardship under the pass system led to political action. Rita Mfiki explained her involvement in the march to Cape Town on 31 March 1960, which was held in response to the deaths of two protesters killed by police during a mass meeting of 10,000 Africans in Langa:¹¹⁴ 'I had to be there because I had also had problems with the pass and I wanted to go there.'¹¹⁵ Her long history of adversity under the pass system, exacerbated by her divorce, created a bond with other protesters who also suffered. Regina Mhlekwla also marched to Cape Town that day, though she explained it was because she wanted to support her husband, who was one of the march's leaders. But her activism was evident in other, perhaps more individualized ways: she burned her pass and frequently helped hide members of the African National Congress (ANC) when they came to Cape Town, giving them clothes to disguise their appearance so that the police would not recognize them.

These smaller instances were testimony to the minor battles African women in the townships engaged in on a far more frequent basis than they did marches and large-scale protests. Sometimes resistance entailed merely evading officials intent on arresting them or ignoring orders to leave the area, as Grace Madikane did, or burning the symbols of their restricted lives. Regina Mhlekwla recalled: 'there were like these big bins and people would just throw in their passes. They had like big,

big passes, this big, and I also threw mine in that bin as well.'¹¹⁶ The sense of community provided by the township largely shaped the type of everyday resistance that was possible. Proximity aided their cause: 'Whenever maybe there was one kid in the street that we all knew and he was maybe he or she was taken by the police. And we would all gather together and *toyi-toyi* all the way to the police station and demand for the kid to be out.'¹¹⁷ When asked whether this tactic was successful, Rita Mfiki replied 'it used to work . . . because there were a lot of us . . . a lot of people.' This type of protest occurred 'so, so, so many times, because sometimes they would just be sitting at home eating and they would see a whole lot of people *toyi-toyi*-ing, saying that hey someone else has, this has happened . . . so let's just all go.'¹¹⁸ The nature of this protest was communal, reinforced by the sheer numbers of others in the community and encouraged in those terms: 'let's just all go.'

From this experience, first-generation women forged a strong sense of their organizational power, which was put to use in other realms of their lives even after apartheid ended. Eunice Fuzile explained why women were currently at the forefront of participation in her local street committee and in local organizations generally: 'during the time of the apartheid government, it was women who were strong. Because we were throwing the stones, we strike the policeman . . . So we saw that it should be us forward.'¹¹⁹ As we will see in chapter five, first-generation women's vigorous and multilayered involvement in burial societies, rotating credit associations and church groups is a further manifestation of the abiding organizational strength harnessed through their participation in resistance campaigns. Thus, the pass system created an environment that highlighted women's vulnerabilities, yet also provided the medium through which women could define and express their growing political consciousness.

For first-generation women, the encounter with influx control was the dominant lens through which they viewed the state and interpreted their personal responses to changing historical events. Intrusive pass raids and unjust arrests, the constant fear of capture and the familiar dynamic of pass-related protests formed a central component of these women's political memories, particularly in the first three decades of apartheid rule. It is easy to see why, for many in this group, the simple absence of the pass system and its regulatory apparatus constituted the primary difference between the apartheid and post-apartheid eras: 'it's better now,

like these years, because during the 1950s and '70s, I mean, it was like really hard because of the pass thing and we were being shot, being run after, you know. So it's much better now, we live much, much better now than we did then.¹²⁰

Second-generation women, born largely in the period of the harshest application of influx control measures, experienced a different relation to the pass system, and consequently developed a different perspective of its place in their life narratives. The majority of comments concerning the pass system were connected with police raids of the homes of their youth. Some, like Sylvia Valashiya's, were framed in a humorous, almost nostalgic light:

I was born in Retreat [in 1950], so we were still very young that time [around 1960] and one day we go and play outside with my friends. And then the police came, the African women used to run away when they see the policemen because of the pass. So, my aunt was coming from Transkei, she didn't have any pass. So she was inside the house, then we see the van and we ran. 'Auntie there's the van!' And then she says to me, 'what am I go[ing] to do, what am I going to do?' We said go under the bed, and then she said 'no, they will see me under the bed.' I said, 'okay, I'll open the wardrobe, you go to the wardrobe then I'll lock' And then we play, we play, I'd forgotten about my aunt. The police are gone, long time ago, I'd forgotten about my aunt in the wardrobe. After hours then my friends said, 'hey man, Sylvia, what about your aunt in the wardrobe?' Then we ran to the house and opened the wardrobe and the aunt was sweating there. There's no air coming in [laughter] . . . she just faint.¹²¹

It appears that youth were particularly helpful in attempts to evade arrest, especially during daytime raids when working adults were away from their homes. Second-generation respondent Nomthandazo Ntisana recalled:

when the police van appears we know that the people that they are looking for are people who haven't got pass. Then we will scream, you know, as kids [to warn others] And then the people, you know, who don't have passes, they will go to the forest . . . they used to run into the forests when we scream.¹²²

Clearly, their youth helped second-generation women view the pass system in a different light from their parents' generation. Because they were still minors during the period of the harshest application of influx control measures, these women did not find themselves the direct target of the police or state modes of surveillance. As such, they did not internalize the particular invasiveness of the pass system as their mothers had. Indeed, the respondent whose political memory followed the most similar historical trajectories to first-generation women was the eldest of those in the second-generation cohort, born in 1947. For the most part, second-generation women attained adulthood during the reform period of influx control. In addition, because these women were born in Cape Town, they independently held rights to residence and employment in the city and thus did not experience the same legal vulnerability or dependence on qualified men as did their mothers. Though, like all Africans, they lived under the watchful eye of the state, they did not appear to be as fearful of its reach.

Their political consciousness was not inspired through participation in pass-related protests. Instead, those second-generation women who did become politically involved traced their participation to other dynamics, in particular youth-led resistance from the late 1970s through to the schools boycotts of the early 1980s.¹²³ Ngcokoto's study of youth subcultures in Guguletu similarly indicates that the stories of the 1960s 'did not mean much to these teenagers', who were instead inspired by the events of Soweto and by their personal experiences of state repression in the months following.¹²⁴ Resistance was to be waged on different terms. This development is significant in that unlike their mothers' generation, the main axis of participation was not structured along gendered lines. For example, Hazel Sukwana stated that she first became involved in politics as a school student through the counsel of her boyfriend:

I was a physics/maths student so these things were not in my mind until my children's father told me, 'Do you know why we are struggling, do you know why a black person's struggling like this?' We started discussing things. I just knew that the white person rules the country and the white person is better than a black person. And our mother and father worked for the white people. And I knew that we were struggling because this country was ruled by the white person. And to me, that was it. I didn't know

I could do anything to change until he opened up my mind and said, 'you know, we can do something. Do you know we can do something?'¹²⁵

Hazel recalled that attending youth meetings presented opportunities to learn other 'tools of the trade', such as knowing how to conceal the meeting place from observant police and to use 'checkpoints' before reaching the actual venue: 'I learnt a lot in those meetings . . . it was young people all together, boys and girls', where gendered issues were raised, but in the context of the larger political issue of democratic freedom.

Thus, second-generation women followed a different avenue in the path towards politicization. Their involvement with primarily youth-orientated resistance may explain why some second-generation women found it difficult to remain politically active in later years. For example, though Zanele Mvambo has been part of the ANC Youth League since 1986, she attributed her recent decreasing involvement to conflicting interests with the younger cadre of members: 'The youth, they're taking the things in other way. We've got different opinions. So I don't think it's worth to go to the meetings anymore because we don't learn.'¹²⁶ For Zanele, the differences between the youth of today and the ANC Youth League she remembered have made it difficult to continue her involvement. Because second-generation women associated their politicization with a particular period of their lives (their youth) rather than, as first-generation women did, with an enduring aspect of their identities (their gender), it became easier to discard this identity with the changing of political circumstances and the passage of time.

In contrast to their mothers and grandmothers, third-generation women, born largely in the late 1970s and early 1980s, had little if any recollection at all of the pass system. Most reached adolescence in the early 1990s, when many of the most oppressive features of the apartheid state were being dismantled. Only one respondent out of eight recorded involvement with any political group, and that was from 1999. By in large, these women had little interest in developing that aspect of their lives – as Hazel Kadie maintained, 'I never think about being involved with that kind of things.'¹²⁷ Many were still students after the removal of the Group Areas Act in 1991, which resulted in their being able to attend schools in formerly white and Coloured areas. For third-generation women, then, their political awareness was framed not

through the guise of resistance, but through the gradual, yet increasingly confident exercise of their new-found freedoms. As we will see in later chapters, these experiences were to profoundly shape their identities and understanding of 'home'.

Conclusion

In Cape Town, implementation of urban apartheid policy with respect to African women was an imperfect process, especially in its early years. However, in comparison with other urban areas, Cape Town was surprisingly quick in its adherence to national regulations. With the departure of key individuals from within the local administration, the passage of stricter legislation controlling rights of entry and residence in urban areas and the consolidation of the administrative mechanisms of control under a stronger national mandate, many of the initial loopholes in the system disappeared. By the early 1970s influx control as practised in Cape Town could be said to be a powerful and relatively effective means of controlling the entry and residence of the African female populace.

Although evidence indicates that a particularly aggressive campaign to endorse out 'illegals' in the latter half of the 1960s successfully reduced the number of Africans in Cape Town, this was only a temporary halt. Indeed, the urban African population grew steadily from the 1970s through to the mid-1980s, when Cape Town weathered escalating political violence and social unrest brought about by mass protest, wide-scale boycotting of rents and other services, and the demise of local structures set up to administer the townships. This turbulent period was marked by increasing manifestations of internal contradiction in urban policy, as different sectors of the state and local apparatus struggled to come to terms with the 'tidal wave' of urban Africans entering the city. By the beginning of the 1990s political reform had given birth to a new set of dynamics, no longer focused clearly along racial or even gendered lines, which had helped determine previous patterns of African residence.

Ultimately, influx control profoundly shaped the political and historical geography of Cape Town. Its influence also carved prominent contours in the more personal landscapes of memory and experience of African women in the city, particularly of first-generation women who

reached adulthood and attempted to maintain livelihoods in a period when the urban political environment was at its most inhospitable towards Africans. Later generations developed a less complex and arguably less intimate relationship with influx control, and were able to interpret their personal histories and political involvement in the city along different lines.

STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY IN AFRICAN HOUSEHOLDS

The Mhlekwá household straddles two adjacent four-roomed council houses in Guguletu. First-generation Regina Mhlekwá and her family have lived on this plot since 1972. All five of her sons and two (of four) daughters resided with her. Regina remarked that she looked after a further 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. That meant a total of 22 members were housed within the cramped confines of the two sparsely decorated buildings and a small backyard shack.¹

Regina sustained this household with her pension money, which she began to receive in the 1980s, and with various longstanding informal business enterprises, in which she was aided by a daughter and granddaughter.² Another daughter, Selina, whose husband had a steady income as a bank messenger, contributed occasionally in an emergency. Selina lived with her husband and family in a neighbouring area of Guguletu. Of the seven children residing with Regina, all were formally unemployed and unmarried (one divorced) during the main research period. Regina's husband, who had been a plumber for the University of Cape Town, died in 1989 after a protracted ten-year illness. When asked about her hopes for the future, Regina confided, 'I wish that God would help my children find work . . . You always have worries – the children, their drinking habits.' Although in her later years ill health has limited involvement in her various income-generating activities, Regina never relinquished her responsibilities for supporting her large household. She pointedly admitted that she was under constant strain: 'I wish that when I am dead I should find rest.' In 2001 she turned 81 years old.³

As we have seen in the previous chapter, urban Africans faced an ever-changing set of political and economic challenges to their very

existence in the city. These experiences became powerfully, and personally, inscribed in the memories in particular of elderly first-generation women. Changing political dynamics in the declining years of apartheid removed some of the restrictions limiting urban African participation in the housing and labour market. However, new uncertainties were created in the late apartheid and post-apartheid period, as a rapid influx of migrants and an altered set of political and economic forces transformed the landscape of the city. Given this historical context, it is vital to turn our attention to the mechanics of survival and sustenance. In the face of an ever-changing set of legislated realities, how did urban African households, like Regina Mhlele's above, organize and control their members and their resources? Importantly, how did larger structural forces mesh with more intimate social dynamics within the home? And how can we characterize the livelihood strategies that resulted from this process?

There exists in the scholarship on household structure in southern Africa an understanding of the complexities involved in mapping networks of support. Research into the changing nature of both urban and rural households under labour migrancy has shown how traditional systems of household organization interfaced sometimes unevenly with the demands of emerging capitalist economies. As a result, household units became 'stretched' geographically across sometimes great distances.⁴ This fluidity destabilized household boundaries. It also forced a reformulation of the very term 'household', initially welcomed by economists and anthropologists as a useful and discrete unit of decision-making, a locus through which to understand social change.⁵

Understanding how the household is ordered becomes more complex because kinship structures that underlay household organization were themselves being reworked and reconceptualized. Networks of support may not necessarily map neatly onto kinship structures, as scholarship in the southern African context has shown. Furthermore, these networks were neither stable nor permanent.⁶ Focusing on households made up of recent migrants in Khayelitsha township in Cape Town during the transitional and post-apartheid period, Spiegel and Mehlwana argue that the notion of kinship became reconfigured as sporadic migrancy removed meaning from some kin relationships while adding meaning and form to others. They conclude that kinship 'is most certainly neither biology nor simple genealogy.'⁷ It is clear that a different conception of household

needs to be utilized, one that accepts permeability and instability as core attributes, not exceptions.⁸

Valuable as their insights are to our understanding of the dynamism inherent in urban African households, these analyses largely fail to acknowledge that different members *within* a household may have competing ways of using and signifying support networks. Internal cleavages along generational, class or gendered lines can form an uneven terrain with unequal relations of power. A strategy used by one member of a household to purportedly optimize resources may disadvantageously affect another. And members of the same household may have diverse notions of what constitutes an appropriate or effective strategy at any given time. These dynamics can profoundly change the manner in which members engage with each other across time and geographical distance, and with the external world.⁹ Furthermore, as Karen Hansen demonstrates so convincingly in the *Zambian* context, the effects of urban development and macroeconomic change can be differentially spread. In Lusaka, members within a given household exhibited vastly different levels of educational attainment, income and economic opportunity. In short, they had different class orientations. This heterogeneity both reflected and fed the evolution of domestic economies.¹⁰

This chapter traces key developments in African livelihoods in Cape Town during the apartheid and immediate post-apartheid period. Central to this will be charting the evolution of gender roles and relations, as well as women's changing class positions vis-à-vis their own households. As Hansen details in depth for Lusaka, the class trajectories of women did not necessarily mirror their own household's developmental cycle. External factors, such as economic downturns and political crises, had a powerful influence on women's changing ability to command and control resources.¹¹ Equally important was the more intimate internal reordering of family relations. Certainly, existing literature tends to neglect how women may have differently constructed kinship networks and imbued them with social value.¹² Women may have renegotiated kinship on profoundly different terms.¹³

In particular, my research points strongly towards the emergence, in the latter decades of apartheid, of matriarchal households in the urban setting. The formation of these multigenerational structures was, as we shall see, the consequence of a shifting approach to 'mobility' – the movement of members across households or across geographical

distance. I argue that household 'immobility' became a vital strategy to consolidate limited resources. Its development depended in large part on elderly women's access to state old-age pension payments and council housing, and their relative ability to command the resources of their mobile daughters and granddaughters. Conspicuously missing from these more recent efforts at establishing a foothold in the city was the presence of African men. The shift towards matriarchal structures and the 'disappearance' of African men as active participants in domestic and civic spheres have resonance in many other regions in Africa, as well as the Caribbean and the inner cities of America. However, much research into male 'decline' has hitherto tended to place blame in somewhat nebulous terms on the legacies of apartheid – including unemployment, landlessness and disenfranchisement. Clearly, there exists a need to demystify, and historically locate, the evolution of male decline and the transformation of gender roles.¹⁴

Finally, this chapter outlines the contours of an emergent moral economy of the home, as new 'intimate tensions' were created in response to changing household structures and underlying kin relations.¹⁵ African women in my study voiced in no uncertain terms how men had absented themselves from their obligations as husbands, fathers and sons. Often men were depicted in women's narratives as shadowy figures, present only as alcoholics, abusers or chronic philanderers. In contrast, it is evident that women have become both bastions of multigenerational structures of care and key figures in community and ritual life. However, as Regina's story poignantly emphasizes, new fissures have been created out of this changing material and moral landscape. I argue that these fissures became most acutely expressed in generational conflict between women. This chapter will consider some of the pathways through which such conflicts were played out.

Gender, class formation and household development cycles

How, in effect, is class created and recreated within specific households? Importantly, how have women's positions within these households changed over time, as urban households themselves formed and were then restructured? Rather than provide a comprehensive class-based analysis of African livelihoods in the urban context, the following section charts, in broad strokes, the trajectories of selected families. Based on the recorded

testimonies and written work histories of forty women and men across three generational cohorts, this micro-level analysis provides a detailed view of specific livelihood strategies, and the complicated negotiations of social and kin relations that underpin them.¹⁶ I suggest that there are three broadly mapped 'phases' in the life cycle of these households, each evolving from a particular material basis and its own internal dynamic.

Phase one: Growing homes, 1950–70

As seen in the previous chapter, the first two decades of apartheid witnessed a rapid and effective escalation of controls over the urban African population in Cape Town. In this difficult period, despite an array of legislative challenges to their endeavours, migrant Africans continued to seek the means to maintain a daily existence. For African women who came of child-bearing age in this period, their livelihood strategies were strongly shaped, and limited, by the more personal choices of partnership and motherhood:

In 1963, 16-year old Gertrude Mvambo married a man 15 years her senior who had first spotted her at a local shebeen. She completed standard 6,¹⁷ though she now wishes she had gone further in her education so that she could have qualified as a nurse or teacher. Gertrude gave birth to six children between 1966 and 1983, and worked in domestic service for two years in the early 1960s, and then again between 1976 and 1978 and in 1981. She was unemployed from 1981 to 1989, until she started her current job as a cleaner at a major retailer in 1989. Her husband held a long-term job at a liquor distributor, where he was first a delivery driver and then a stock-taker.¹⁸

First-generation respondent Grace Madikane was married in 1950 to Zibonele, who later became a pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission Church. They had six children between 1950 and 1965. In the same time period, she was employed as a domestic worker between 1950 and 1952, and 1961 and 1963, and part-time between 1954 and 1956. She did not have steady, permanent employment until the 1980s, when she began work as a nursing assistant.

Gertrude Mvambo's and Grace Madikane's sporadic work profiles until

the 1980s are emblematic of other first-generation women. Certainly, a low level of educational attainment – the average level of education achieved by this cohort was standard 6 – may have contributed to the nearly uniform choice of domestic service.¹⁹ In addition, the workings of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, as we have already seen, made entry into the formal sector particularly problematic. African women were barred from competing for factory jobs largely dominated by Coloured women, such as in the Cape's prominent leather, canning and textiles industries.²⁰ However, it is evident that child-caring concerns were equally paramount. Women in this cohort had on average five children, which meant that helping to nurture a family became a central, and time-consuming, concern. Domestic service, especially as part-time or temporary employment, afforded women the opportunity to periodically supplement their husbands' incomes while maintaining their maternal responsibilities. As Sindiwe Magona recounts in her autobiography, some 'madams' in Cape Town even allowed for their domestic workers to have their young babies with them, something Magona recalled was 'a luxury and a privilege.'²¹ These benefits allowed working women to uphold cherished notions of domesticity inculcated, as Cock has shown, since the earliest days of Xhosa women's participation in domestic service in colonial society.²²

The relationship that most clearly shaped women's material existence in this period was the conjugal bond. Recent scholarship on urban southern African women has already highlighted how pivotal this relationship was to household livelihood strategies.²³ However, in Cape Town, the particular centrality of marriage was heightened by the increasing coerciveness of the pass laws, which legislated the dependence of African women on their husbands to maintain rights of residence in the city. As we have seen with Rita Mfiki in chapter one, women renounced these bonds only at their peril. In the private sphere, women's dependent status was in some senses reinforced by their inability to secure a separate or equal income stream.

In contrast, Section 10-qualified men within these households were able to obtain steady, if not lucrative, employment. For example, Zibonele Fuzile was a labourer at a slaughterhouse from 1956, and remained there for the next 24 years. Regina Mhleka's husband Jack worked as a plumber for the University of Cape Town from the late 1940s for over three decades, until cancer left him homebound until

his death in 1989. These jobs not only provided a stable source of income over the long term, they also enabled the consolidation of their positions as core providers for their families. Women's work provided at best a supplementary income. Xolisa Mvambo, Gertrude's grandson, remembers about his grandfather: 'a man in the house is always the head of the house . . . he knew how to make money.'²⁴ Instead, for Rita Mfiki, motherhood intertwined in frustrating ways with efforts to create a measure of financial independence from her wayward husband:

there were problems in a way that he liked to go out and I had to stay because I had to look after the kid. Just when I tell myself that I am going to stop breast-feeding and go find a job, I conceive another child again. It was very difficult He was working and always went [away] with his money.²⁵

Regina Mhleka did not pursue domestic service, but has been variously self-employed since 1956. She expressed how the city itself provided her inspiration: 'I just decided on my own. I saw that now that I am here in [an] urban area, there is a lot that can be sold, things you can do and make a living. I just did that and also my children grew up in that situation.' She started by selling new and second-hand clothes in a market at Saldanha Bay, a town 140 km from Cape Town along the West Coast. She also initiated a meat-selling business in Langa township. Certainly, as Bozzoli has argued, by becoming 'hawkers' or vendors, African women could avoid the 'disciplines of time, productivity and monotony' that characterized other sectors of the more formalized work force.²⁶ Regina's autonomous declaration that 'I just decided on my own' should be seen in this light. By and large, however, first-generation women did not pursue petty entrepreneurial activities in this earlier period. The marked instability in their residential profiles partially explains this. As related in the previous chapter, female respondents' housing histories show a high degree of movement in this period, out of multiracial informal settlements and into designated 'Africa' areas. By the late 1960s respondents resided in a variety of accommodation. Some had used their privileged Section 10(1)(c) status to secure with their qualified husbands temporary council housing in proclaimed African townships such as Langa and Nyanga East. Others resided in zinc shacks in hastily constructed emergency camps or bordering on official townships. Still

others, such as the Fuziles and the Madikanes, experienced considerable difficulty securing a place of their own, and stayed with people in scattered locations.

This shifting residential pattern was generally not conducive to the types of small business enterprises that women found more attractive later on in life. As Rita Mfiki, who tried to maintain a small clothing business while on the run from pass authorities in the 1960s, relates:

It was better to employ yourself but that became a problem too because you sell and people buy on credit. Then there is a lot of people owing you and then at the end of the month when you are collecting you find that a person is not there she has run away from you and there is also a danger that some people speak rudely with you and you get your pressure up.²⁷

Relationships of trust on which much of the informal economy relied were difficult to maintain in a period of residential flux – you never knew when you or your neighbour would be forcefully removed.²⁸ Pass insecurities further compounded the temporality of these ventures. A closer inspection of the timing of Regina Mhlekwá's meat-selling business shows that she began it when in relatively secure accommodation in a council house in Langa township, where she lived from 1959 to 1972.

In the rare instances when first-generation women did engage with the informal economy, their husbands' influence could still be felt. Regina's self-proclaimed entrepreneurial spirit was tempered by her reliance on her husband for start-up funds. Also, her husband remained firmly in control of household finance, even though Regina's income from her various small business ventures soon outstripped his plumber's salary. She said of her husband, 'I got from him the capital to start the business . . . It is my husband who will say the money will do this and that and he will also say I should take the money I will need for whatever. I will take it and give him the rest.'²⁹

Notably, enacting household 'mobility' was an important strategy from the earliest years of urban tenure. Clearly, the initial migration to Cape Town had signalled for these households not the end, but the continuation of a complex relationship to movement. Examining how households 'managed' mobility over time provides another window into understanding African responses to the ever-evolving political economy

of the city. As mentioned earlier, scholarship has shown how the mechanics of the labour migrant system initiated a high degree of dispersal and realignment of members and dependents. However, even long-urbanized households exhibited continuing affinity to strategies of movement. As AbdouMaliq Simone compellingly argues, movement has increasingly become part of the logic that defines and describes African cityscapes:

Movement in this sense indeed reflects a kind of 'dispossession,' but it is one in which the migrant seeks to figure a certain capacity for improvisation so as to best capitalize on economic and social opportunities opened up by the very inability of the city to fully incorporate – house, employ, and service – all those who make demands on it.³⁰

In South Africa, urban apartheid policy certainly reinforced the inability of the city to sustain its African population. Consequently, urban African households displayed a marked 'capacity for improvisation' by choosing particular mobility (and, as we shall see later, immobility) strategies at particular historical junctures.

In the early decades of apartheid, it is evident that urban African households employed extended kin networks and other resources available in the rural areas and small towns of the Eastern Cape. One of the primary functions of maintaining these networks was so that urbanites could 'disperse dependents'; that is, distribute the responsibilities of child-rearing to 'home'-based carers who were normally elderly female kin.³¹ Eunice Fuzile, who arrived in Cape Town in 1945, sent five of her six children to her mother in Burgersdorp (a small town in a white farming district in the Eastern Cape) for several years. She explained her motivations:

At that time [in the 1960s], there was nobody to hire for keeping my children, so there was no one who would just sit in the township and look after the children, like I do [she was running an informal crèche out of her home at the time of this interview]. Everyone was working and so the easy way is to send a child home Mother was the only person I could trust with my children.³²

Eunice sent money home to her mother regularly to help care for the children, thereby maintaining strong links of reciprocity with her rural

kin there. Importantly, this dispersal enabled Eunice to obtain much more consistent employment in domestic service than other women in her cohort during their child-bearing years – she was able to work for the same employer for 12 years.

In this period, the small towns and rural areas of the Eastern Cape remained the most utilized ‘place’ to which these urban African households could practice mobility. This was for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the presence of proximate kin in these areas probably made it easier for individuals to send dependents there. Also, due to the restrictive nature of influx control, other urban centres were effectively out of practical reach for at least the first few decades of apartheid rule. Until the ending of influx control in 1986, the only areas in which these Cape Town-born children could be placed with relatively little interference from the state were in the homelands.

However, urban Africans’ ‘capacity for improvisation’ with regard to movement went beyond merely economic considerations. We can see this in Miriam Madikane’s first sojourn, of many to be taken over the course of her lifetime, in the Transkei:

Miriam, the daughter of Grace Madikane, spent most of her young childhood with her doting grandmother in Nyanga township in Cape Town. When she was 13 years old, Miriam was called back to stay with her parents, who by then were relocated to a council house in Nyanga. Soon after returning to her parents, Miriam was sent to Mt. Fletcher in the Transkei to stay in the household of her father’s brother.³³ The parents had decided that Miriam needed a moral re-education. One sister explained, ‘She {Miriam} was being spoiled and she was, like, she was being too big for her boots. And my father took her and sent her to the Transkei, to stay in the country.’³⁴ Another sister provided a similar view: ‘She was so naughty and they had to take her to Transkei so that she must change.’³⁵ Miriam completed her standards 5 and 6 in Mt. Fletcher and married there in 1965 at the age of 18. She subsequently returned to Cape Town with her husband to settle in the city.

Miriam Madikane experienced her first move to the rural areas as a spoiled Cape Town-born teenager sent to learn proper values far from the reaches of an over-attentive relative. At the time, the rural areas seemed to offer an appropriate antidote to the ‘unhealthy’ moral climate of the city. While

living in the countryside, Miriam made the transition from teenage student to wife, and returned to Cape Town a married woman. For her parents, then, this mobility strategy had fulfilled its instructive purpose.

Overall, urban African household efforts at sustenance in this period can be seen as revolving primarily around the needs and responsibilities derived from nurturing families and the conjugal bond. These familial ties were strengthened and reinforced by gendered legislation, and served as an important bulwark against extreme residential instability. Child-care responsibilities coupled with this residential insecurity in turn limited women's options in the field of work. For the most part, first-generation women who came of child-bearing age in this period were left the choice of sporadic employment in domestic service or no work at all. However, urban households proved already to be adept at activating rural-based networks, and these were incorporated, sometimes imaginatively, into livelihood strategies.

Phase two: Negotiating the 'urban-rural nexus', 1970-late 1980s

Important political and economic developments at both the local and national levels were to tangibly shape the domestic economies of urban Africans in the 1970s and 1980s. For first-generation respondents, a significant development was the acquisition of permanent council housing in Guguletu township, generally in the early 1970s.³⁶ Later chapters will explore how this permanent physical base became a key marker of women's urbanizing selves and a vital cornerstone upon which women formed lasting social networks and an abiding sense of an African community. However, obtaining these council homes also served as a launching pad for a more diversified set of income-generating activities. In Lusaka and colonial Harare, Hansen and Barnes have respectively shown how secure housing became a formidable asset in women's economic strategies.³⁷ For first-generation women in this study, a stable residential base enabled them to consolidate and expand their entrepreneurial endeavours from their stoop-fronts. When Grace Madikane was finally reunited with her husband and children in their four-roomed council home in Guguletu in 1975, she was able to resume selling home-baked goods, second-hand clothing, meat and vegetables, activities that had been interrupted by the revocation of her husband's pass in 1972 and the ensuing break-up of her family for the next three years. Regina Mhlekw

promptly began selling peaches from her new house in Guguletu when she moved there in 1972. She added this to her existing meat and clothing businesses. Significantly, by this time her children were old enough to assist her. Regina's eldest daughter Patricia sold meat with her mother in Langa. Last-born daughter Nobesuthu accompanied Regina to Saldanha Bay on weekends to sell clothes. Regina's son Samuel, the only household member with a vehicle, would drive them.

However, despite the tangible benefits provided by a stabilizing residential profile, in the late 1970s African households had to contend with what would become a prolonged period of political upheaval, as the repercussions of the 1976 Soweto uprising reverberated throughout South African cities. Mass action, including student boycotts and workers' strikes from the late 1970s through to the mid-1980s, galvanized anti-apartheid protest, but also brought into play the omnipresent spectre of violence. Urban African households responded diversely to these challenges. Networks in rural homelands and small towns of the Eastern Cape were again activated, if in decidedly different ways than in an earlier period. Consider the mobility profiles of Miriam Madikane's siblings, as well as her own second major journey to the Transkei:

*Miriam's sister Pauline went to a government school in the Transkei in 1970 when she was 16. She boarded there for her entire high school career, though school strikes in 1974 forced her to write her matriculation exams back in Cape Town. The decision to attend high school in the Transkei was, according to Pauline, a 'family decision'. Despite being on the waiting list for two consecutive years, she had failed to gain acceptance to Fezeka High School in Guguletu, just across the street from their home. 'I couldn't get a place, I couldn't get any schooling in the Cape. . . . They didn't have enough teachers. So, my family didn't have any choice but to send me there (to the Transkei). But I wanted to, I also wanted to.'*³⁸

*In 1976, in what she called 'the worst year', Miriam left Cape Town with her three children and stayed in Mt. Fletcher for a year. This was because she was anxious about their safety in the city in the wake of the violence sparked by the Soweto riots.*³⁹

Miriam's brother Thabo was the sole member of the Madikane household who was actively engaged in anti-apartheid politics in the 1970s and

1980s. After the local high school burned down in 1976 and his photograph appeared in a local newspaper, he was hunted by the police, resulting in several narrow escapes. Nombulelo, another sister, recalled: 'My mother did have a heart attack that time, she couldn't sleep. We used to take her to the doctors every time. I used to come back from work and look after the children because my mother, she used to get sick every time.'⁴⁰ Thabo, with the help of his parents, stayed in the Transkei from 1976 until 1979, where he studied under an assumed name, Katiso. He completed standard 9 there and then left to work on the mines.

We have already seen how the Madikanes had previously viewed the rural areas as a morally imbued space where spoiled children could be 're-educated', as Miriam had been. But it is clear that in the 1970s, the Transkei represented something decidedly different – a safe haven from the police and a solution to urban school overcrowding.

Threads from the Madikanes' narratives find resonance in other informants' accounts, in particular the sending of dependents to homeland schools. This was a recognized strategy across five of the six families surveyed. For example, second-generation respondent Hazel Sukwana (daughter of Eunice Fuzile) went to King William's Town in the Ciskei to complete her standard 9 and matric in 1990.⁴¹ Zanele and Nomonde Mvambo stayed in Transkeian boarding schools from 1981 to 1982, because 'that time there was boycott here in Cape Town. So we had to go to boarding school.'⁴² Lumka Kalipa sent all but one of her four children to get their matric and university degrees from the Transkei. She claimed, 'There was too much riots at that time [in the early 1980s]' in Cape Town. Her daughter was not able to write her Junior Certificate (standard 8) exams because of the disturbances. At least in the Transkei, they could write regularly every year.⁴³ Indeed, homeland schools provided what seemed to be the only solution for an array of dilemmas posed by an unstable urban educational system. They were seen as less prone to boycotts, and it was hoped that students there would be less tempted to drop out of school.⁴⁴ It also appears that in this occurrence, old 'home'-based kinship networks were not necessarily reactivated when households 'stretched' across space. Sending children to boarding schools in the Transkei, for example, did not necessarily entail contact with natal kin.

It is important to periodize this particular mobility strategy. Homeland schools represented a viable alternative to urban-based

education primarily during the 1970s until about 1990, and this was largely influenced by the political instability and overcrowding that were endemic in Cape Town schools at the time. With the onset of a democratic government and a more open educational system in the 1990s, these African households opted instead to send their children to historically better funded schools in predominantly Coloured and white areas in Cape Town. Thus, almost all third-generation women in this study do not have the window through which many second-generation respondents viewed rural landscapes and rural livelihoods. As we will see in chapter six, such experiences helped form a basis upon which second-generation respondents could construct relations with the rural environment and profoundly marked their conception of sometimes competing rural and urban identities.

It is evident from accounts concerning this period that young men were especially vulnerable to the violence exploding in the townships. The particular challenges facing male youth were another force prompting households to stretch their boundaries across to the rural areas. We have seen above how Thabo Madikane ended up in a Transkeian school to escape the police. Gang warfare was an equally powerful consideration. Selina Mteto (daughter of Regina Mhleka) sent her eldest son Herbert to her in-laws in Keiskammahoek, a district in the Ciskei, because she was worried that rivalry in the mid-1980s between the Intsara and Adali gangs in Nyanga and Guguletu, respectively, severely threatened his personal safety. Her fears proved justified when the Adali gang stabbed another son who had remained in Cape Town.⁴⁵ Rita Mfiki's son Mbongeni died at the age of 32 from a stabbing during the same gang wars.⁴⁶ Eunice Fuzile recalled the disturbances in 1986 in the neighbouring settlement of KTC caused by the *witdoeke* from Crossroads, and suggested in her account that the rural areas represented the most secure place where worried residents could send their children: 'we were hiding the children and the children would run away, and we took some to the rural areas because we were being beaten by the people, by hostels. So there was no one who was safe.'⁴⁷

By the end of this period, when the country stood poised on the brink of dramatic political transition, a degree of economic differentiation had become manifest between and within urban African households. Firstly, it is evident that to some extent the African women in this study emerged in a stronger economic position vis-à-vis male members in the

same households. Partly, this was because women were able to participate in the informal economy at a more significant level. In addition, African men suffered disproportionately in this period, as the impact of the wave of strike action fell largely on men who were in formal employment – first-generation women continued to work in the largely non-unionized domestic service sector. Some men in these households lost their once stable, and to some extent privileged, jobs. For example, first-generation Zibonele Fuzile, who had been employed steadily in a local slaughterhouse for more than two decades, was laid off in 1980 when he participated in a strike. From then on, he was an active trade unionist for the General Workers Union and the Construction Allied Workers Union, though he did not receive a steady paycheck from either until 1991. Similarly, second-generation Wilfred Mhleka lost his job at a slaughterhouse in 1986, when a strike led to the retrenchment of its entire staff. Second-generation Miriam Madikane's husband sustained a serious head injury during a two-day strike in the mid-1980s – blinded by a stone thrown to his head, he never recovered and passed away in 1985.

According to first-generation Regina Mhleka, the ending of influx control in 1986 was, at least for a younger generation of Capetonian African men, a mixed blessing. Once-‘privileged’ young men faced competition from the ‘flood’ of African migrants, who were now able to enter freely into the city to find formal employment. Regina lamented, ‘when the passes were banned people flocked in because there were no passes It was open.’⁴⁸ She noted that 1986 marked a noticeable decline in the ability of her five sons to find employment.

Second-generation women, in particular those who were able to complete their education, despite the chaos of school boycotts and overcrowding, emerged with a better range of economic opportunities as compared to both men of their age group and their own mothers. This is reflected somewhat in this cohort's improved educational profiles. Five of 13 female second-generation respondents obtained their matriculation certificate, and several went on to obtain qualifications in nursing and secretarial work. In this period, then, second-generation women became well poised to contribute significantly to household income. In contrast, these two decades helped sow the seeds for male members' increasing marginalization in household economies.

Interhousehold differentiation is also worthy of further consideration. It is clear that some households fared better through this tumultuous

time than others. One of the key determinants was how adeptly and extensively mobility strategies were used. Effective mobility management was not only reflective of greater access to socioeconomic opportunities, but also instrumental in creating those opportunities in the first place. In this regard, mobility should be seen, as Izzard suggests, as a vital 'asset' in household strategy.⁴⁹ Of the households interviewed, the Madikanes used mobility strategies to most effectively negotiate what Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson term the 'rural-urban nexus'.⁵⁰ The Madikanes skillful use of such tactics allowed for careful management of limited household income and provided for the continuing education of its members, which gave them a decided edge in the Cape Town job market during the recession years of the 1980s and the increasing competitiveness in the face of the rapid in-migration of Africans following the abolition of influx control in 1986. Two of Grace's daughters were able to obtain nursing qualifications, while another became an administrator at a technikon in East London. Thabo, who, as we saw, used a Transkeian school as a safe haven from police and later fled to the mines, eventually used his work experience to become a trade union organizer in Cape Town upon his return. Thus, mobility strategies were crucial in the acquisition of skills, which in turn ensured the fiscal independence of later generations.

Phase three: Household immobility and the shift to matriarchy, late 1980s–the present

By the time of the main research period of this study – 1998 to 2001 – several characteristics of first-generation respondents' household structures had become strikingly evident. Two of the most prominent features, as illustrated at the beginning of this chapter in Regina Mhleka's account, were its multigenerational character and its decidedly matriarchal aspect. Five of the six families interviewed employed this type of strategy – which in a sense was an 'immobility' strategy, that is, a choice not to move. It is worth pointing out that the multitiered structure this immobility created could no longer be attributed solely to rural households as the defining feature. Recent research has shown that, ironically, rural households have transformed and instead exhibited the opposite tendency towards a dispersal of members and a reduction in household size.⁵¹

The reasons for Regina's household arrangement were varied. After several short-lived attempts at living away from Regina's home, her eldest daughter Patricia moved permanently into her own residence after her marriage in 1990, at the age of 43. She stated she was 'happy' now that she had a house of her own. Patricia left three of her children with her mother. When asked why her children did not accompany her to her new home, Patricia replied, 'I didn't want them to come here, though they wanted. They grew up there {at Regina's house} and I thought there would be problems if they come here because my husband has his children and I have mine.'⁵² Patricia's daughter Zoliswa had her own reasons for staying with Regina: 'I can't leave my grandmother,' Zoliswa explained.⁵³

Regina's daughter Selina had moved out of Regina's house upon her marriage in 1972. Seven of Selina's children, ranging in age from 12 to 27 years, stayed with Selina and her husband. Selina's four grandchildren also resided with her.⁵⁴ However, her two eldest children were, at the time the research was conducted, residing with Regina. One of them, her daughter Buyiswa, born in 1971, began to stay with Regina early on in her teenage years, because she had a chronic stomach ailment and believed the condition eased in severity while staying with her grandmother. By 2000 Buyiswa had developed an arrangement in which she alternated three months living with her mother Selina with an extended period in Regina's house, where she shared a backyard shack located on Regina's property.⁵⁵

Note that maintaining a multigenerational household served a multiplicity of functions – to conserve individual resources, to prevent domestic tensions in newly formed conjugal units and simply to physically ease a painful medical condition. Also, as Selina Mhlekwa's case shows, when second-generation women were able to establish an independent residence, their households over time began to exhibit a multigenerational structure of their own.

Testimonies confirm that matriarchal multigenerational households are an inescapable feature of the urban African landscape in present-day South Africa. However, tracing the pathways of their historical development has proved somewhat more problematic. In their interviews, women were often forceful in their assertions that men had long since 'disappeared' from their primary roles as caretakers and authorities, but were not specific about when and how male members had actually

vacated their responsibilities. Second-generation Nombulelo Monco authoritatively summed up many women's current, and rather generalized, views on male absenteeism: 'I say that [in] Cape Town, most of them [the men] they're drinkers and the women are hard workers.'⁵⁶ Similarly, one would be forgiven for assuming that three- and four-generational structures have always been the marker of urban African household formation. Not only has scholarship tended to affirm that extended family care was an enduring strategy, but household members themselves were inclined to discuss the existence of multigenerational structures as a *fait accompli*, an ingrained part of their traditional culture.⁵⁷

I want to suggest that these ahistorical assertions mask what can be more accurately described as an evolution of gender roles and a shift towards a multigenerational configuration. Both are products of a unique convergence of historical forces in a pivotal period around the time of the transition to democracy. As we saw in the previous section, first- and second-generation women emerged in potentially stronger economic positions in their households by the late 1980s as compared to male members. Several factors within and outside the home gained force in the transitional period and contributed to the further marginalization of men within domestic economies. Observe second-generation Wilfred Mhlele's story:

Wilfred Mhlele, born in 1955, is one of nine children of Regina Mhlele and has resided with her for virtually his entire life. He left school at standard 4 in 1972 and obtained odd jobs in 1973 and 1974. After an extended period of unemployment between 1974 and 1985, he took up a job delivering meat for a slaughterhouse. There was a strike in 1986 that closed down the slaughterhouse, and its workers were retrenched. From 1986 to 2003 he had a series of casual jobs in building and construction, until he found a permanent job in the catering and cleaning services at the University of Cape Town in 2003.

Wilfred claimed it was in 1989 that he became an alcoholic, as eventually did several of his siblings. The death of his father, who himself did not drink, was a pivotal event: 'The changes were with us, after my dad died in 1989. Because we were drinking a lot, and before when our dad was still alive we were not drinking as we do.' When asked why he turned to alcohol, he remarked candidly, 'I drink to forget the worries that I have.

Later I realized that it's not right what I am doing, I am just killing myself by drinking so much. Also it doesn't help my worries that I got It was hard to face the pain at that time. To lose a father is not easy, so I didn't manage that pain in fact.⁵⁸ His brothers helped fuel his alcoholism, especially when work was scarce for him: 'My brothers were working and gave me money if I needed it for alcohol.' The emotional and economic burden on Regina was clear. She remarked in 1998, five years before Wilfred had changed his habits and found a regular job, 'it is very difficult with them now, why, they are drinking. In the old days it was not like this because liquor was controlled and now it is free and a person could drink as much as you like.'⁵⁹

Since finding his permanent job, Wilfred has been able to contribute a portion of his salary regularly to household expenses. He has two children from two different women: his ex-wife and his current girlfriend, who lives on a neighbouring street in Guguletu. Both of his children reside with their mothers. Wilfred admitted that he only began to pay maintenance for the son he had with his ex-wife in 1989 'when I started working.' He also mentioned that his sporadic income had caused trouble with his current girlfriend – she took him to court for failure to pay maintenance for their daughter, born in 1993.

Several features of Wilfred's story resonate with trajectories at work in other families. A crucial shift occurred with the death of Wilfred's father in 1989. The repercussions of this event were both material and emotional. The Mhlekwes collectively lost the income derived from his steady work as a plumber at the local university. First-generation men in these households tended to have maintained throughout the apartheid period stable if low-paying jobs in the mould of responsible household 'head'. Their early deaths (three out of six husbands of first-generation women had passed away by 1995, and another husband was gravely ill and died during the course of my research) further shifted the responsibility of managing domestic economies to their wives, a process whose roots could arguably be found in an earlier period.

In addition, as Wilfred's testimony reveals, the father's death sparked the sons' long spiral into the depths of alcoholism. This in turn helped to perpetuate young men's further withdrawal from familial responsibilities, such as Wilfred's failure to consistently pay maintenance for his

own children.⁶⁰ Alcoholism's sheer destructive capacity was made further manifest through its role in the death and illness of some second- and third-generation men. For example, first-generation respondent Lumka Kalipa blamed marijuana and alcohol for exacerbating her son Mkhusele's mental illness. This occasionally culminated in violent behaviour: 'he comes and shouts at me, getting in that door.'⁶¹ Lumka said Mkhusele once beat her over gaining access to the family car. Second-generation Patricia Mhlekwa's firstborn son contracted tuberculosis and died in 1998. His excessive drinking worsened his condition and contributed to his non-compliance with the drug treatment programme. Patricia remembered he was 'drinking all night and he was not taking his treatment.'⁶² First-generation Rita Mfiki's son Jongisizwe died in an alcohol-related car accident in 1996. His widow recalled how when Jongisizwe was alive, 'On Fridays, I know Fridays he is not my husband,' in reference to her husband's weekend drinking binges. It was during one of these binges with friends that Jongisizwe was killed. It is no wonder Thabo Madikane, himself having struggled with alcoholism until 1999, commented: 'this thing is killing men.'⁶³ In a very literal sense, he was right.

Alcohol certainly made for a potent, and often violent, brew. Alcohol-related altercations were frequently mentioned, with the men of the families in this study as both perpetrators and victims. According to third-generation Vuyani Fuzile, his father Andile got slashed across the neck during a drunken brawl: 'they fight for that alcohol, you know. They drink and they want some more alcohol.'⁶⁴ Similarly, first-generation Gertrude Mvambo's son Sandile was stabbed by a drunken man during an argument. Gertrude's husband was also stabbed, this time by robbers. However, second-generation Nomonde blamed the incident on her father's own drinking habits: 'We were not happy about it. He was always violent. He would be out at night on Fridays. He was even stabbed by robbers at night on a weekend.'⁶⁵ Nomonde believed that her father's drinking encouraged him to wander, which exposed him as a clear and easy target. Indeed, the performance of male mobility – in cars, or on foot in township streets – entwined in destructive ways with alcohol-fueled activities. Third-generation Michael Richards, the grandson of Rita Mfiki, was tried for attempted murder in the early 1990s. Though he declined to discuss the specific incident, Michael recalled how alcohol played a central, and ritualistic, role in motivating him and

his friends towards criminality: 'First we would . . . drink certain drinks. Drink, then we would light up. We would walk around, do that stuff which I'm not proud of.'⁶⁶ By 'walking around', men expressed both their capacity for, and their vulnerability to, spontaneous acts of violence. In turn, as will be further explored later in this chapter and in chapter six, aggressive male mobility further removed men from material and emotional obligations within the domestic sphere.

From the late 1980s, then, when apartheid's screw-tight mechanisms were finally loosening, these urban African families had to cope with the economic consequences of much more personal tragedies, embodied in the loss of male members' labour to death, injury and alcoholism. Certainly, we should be wary of overstating the extent of male 'disappearance'. Nicholas Townsend's longitudinal research in Botswana has shown that male absence from the day-to-day running of their households hid what was in fact a complex series of claims made on their labour and resources over their lifetimes. Far from having disappeared, men in fact were constantly renegotiating their various contributions.⁶⁷ We can see this in Wilfred Mhlekwa's case, as he was able to halt a two-decades long slide into alcoholism and unemployment, and at the age of 50 began to contribute regularly to the running of his mother's home and to the well-being of his own children.

Nevertheless, there were a constellation of factors at work that deprived these households of male labour at a particular historical juncture. Concurrently, other forces perceptibly shifted women's rise to prominence in domestic economies. These twin dynamics further removed men from central control of, and central consideration in, household structures. In particular, elderly first-generation women's economic positions within their households became consolidated in this period as they reached pensionable age, which throughout the latter decades of apartheid was 60 years.⁶⁸ Pensions themselves played a pivotal role. Indeed, several studies of contemporary African households in both rural and urban settings have noted the impact of pensions as a poverty relief measure, and more specifically in creating and sustaining multigenerational household structures.⁶⁹

However, this reliance on old-age pensions needs to be historically situated. State payouts for old-age pensions for Africans experienced a shift in the latter decades of apartheid. At its lowest period, the relative value of African pensions was only 13 per cent of those given to whites

in the mid-1960s. At this stage, the maximum pension payable to Africans was ZAR 3.70 per month, which was acknowledged by the state to be inadequate to cover even the monthly food needs of one person.⁷⁰ However, this was to change from the 1970s, when the value of African pensions in relation to those of whites began to increase, so that by 1980, the former were worth 30 per cent of the latter. In addition, the real value of pensions rose by an average of 7.3 per cent a year between 1970 and 1993.⁷¹ Reform measures instituted in the 1980s during the Botha administration reflected a greater emphasis on redistributive practices, particularly in education and social services. This was partly designed to ameliorate hostility among Africans, particularly in the urban areas, and to create in its place a supportive African constituency who would contribute to economic growth.⁷² By 1991 African pensions were 70 per cent of white pensions,⁷³ and racial discrepancies were eliminated entirely in 1993. Benefit levels were equalized across the board, though racial divisions remained in the administration of pension payments.⁷⁴ In 1995, 42 per cent of the poorest quintile of Africans received an old-age pension, which suggested that this was a well-targeted redistributive mechanism.⁷⁵

With the new Constitution in place in 1996, all South Africans were guaranteed access to social security. In that same year, the Social Assistance Act's regulations were promulgated, giving the state power to administer a revamped pension system. By 2000 pension payments were regularized across racial groups.⁷⁶ Africans could choose to receive payments via the post office or a banking institution, from a clerk at a designated pay centre, or from an automated machine at specified paypoints.⁷⁷ Thus, we can see that old-age pensions could increasingly be utilized by Africans as a component of their household finances, particularly from the mid-1980s. For first-generation women who came of pensionable age in this period of reform, the increasing real value of payments, as well as more convenient and safer means of access to those monies, contributed to their ability to use pensions as a viable and vital tool of urban survival. In conjunction with their stable residence in council homes from the early 1970s, first-generation women were thus able to affirm their place as relatively stable cornerstones upon which multigenerational households were built.

Significantly, many attempts by younger members to move out of these households were often short-lived. For example, prior to her

marriage, Patricia Mhleka's efforts at establishing herself some distance from her mother Regina's residence involved 'going around and living from place to place.'⁷⁸ She had tried living with friends from time to time, but did not enjoy that itinerant lifestyle and each time returned to her mother's home. Similarly, two daughters who did move out of Eunice Fuzile's house did so on a very temporary basis:

Four of first-generation respondent Eunice Fuzile's six children lived with her in her home in Guguletu, which consisted of the original council house and two backyard structures. Six grandchildren and one great-grandchild also resided with her. Thus, four generations resided within the Fuzile home. Eunice and her husband have been receiving state pensions from 1995 and 1993, respectively. Two daughters residing with them were in full-time employment – one as a till operator and another as a senior radiographer at Grootte Schuur Hospital. The remaining children and grandchildren have had sporadic employment.

Two of the daughters who were staying with Eunice had at various points in the past lived away from her house. Nomthandazo left on a few occasions for periods of one to three months, usually because of quarrels she had had with her mother. But she continued for the most part to remain with Eunice, living there with two daughters of her own and one grandson.⁷⁹

In 1990 daughter Hazel moved to Mowbray, which was closer to the town centre and her workplace at Grootte Schuur Hospital. However, she moved back in with her mother after a year: 'the fact that I had to rent somebody else's property to me is not a good idea. Because you're losing out.' When asked whether she wanted to find a place of her own for herself and her two children – Hazel was by far the most stable income-earning member of the household by virtue of her permanent position as a senior radiographer – Hazel replied, 'yes I will move out. But with me, things are very slow. Everything with me is slow. Moving out or buying a house, or getting a job, everything moves very slow with me. So I just have to take things as they come and give them time.'⁸⁰

Certainly, some of the difficulty second-generation women faced in establishing their own households can be traced to sporadic employment

histories and a housing crisis that dated back to the 1970s.⁸¹ The freeze on new city council African housing schemes from 1962 onwards helped ensure that second-generation women did not have the same access to the basic, though limited resources that their mothers used to establish independent households.⁸² Burman argues that the relative absence of crèches in which working mothers could leave their children combined with the lack of housing for Africans endemic during the apartheid period, and compelled a greater reliance on elderly women who had legal title to tenancy.⁸³ Testimonies from third-generation respondents, who were born in the 1970s and early 1980s, further reveal that the transitional period yielded little in economic opportunities for young women. Interestingly, with the exception of two women who obtained three-year diplomas from technikons, the rest of the women in the third-generation cohort were generally unable to match the educational standards of their mothers. Half of the women in this group were unemployed at the time the research was carried out, with those working employed as cashiers. Indeed, the difficulty in finding reliable employment was a prominent theme echoed by the respondents. That none had been able to establish an independent residence can be partly explained by this. One of the women who received a three-year diploma claimed her position as a cashier in Woolworths (a South African department store) was the only job she was able to find, despite her qualifications.

However, we should be careful not to overemphasize the lack of options created under the apartheid regime. From the example above, we see that Hazel, who, although since becoming a radiographer in 1995 had the financial means to head her own household, had decided to stay with her mother Eunice in Guguletu. Approximately ten years had passed since her last attempt at moving out, a reflection of her own stated preference to bide her time and move 'slow' in decisions of this nature. Renting separate accommodation was seen as a waste of money, since, as Hazel pointed out, you 'lose out', because you are not investing in your own or your family's home. Hazel was at the time of her interview involved in a serious relationship, which she hoped would evolve into marriage. Perhaps that would enable her to create a permanent base outside of her mother's house.

It does seem that marriage constituted one of the main forces that mobilized second-generation women to move out of their parents' households.⁸⁴ The only two children who left Regina's household (out of nine)

did so upon marriage. Patricia made this connection more explicit. Her response to the question of what made her decide to marry was, 'I was tired of living with my family, I wanted to stay on my own.'⁸⁵ Thus marriage for her was the only sure ticket out of her mother's household on a permanent basis. Given the particularly skeptical nature of unmarried second and third-generation women's opinions regarding the possibility of marriage and the ability to find suitable partners, it is suggested that members would continue to delay leaving the homes in which they were raised.

The decline of marriage among second- and third-generation women (eight of 11 in the second-generation cohort were married, none in the third-generation cohort) was not accompanied by a corresponding dramatic decrease in child-bearing rates. Burman claims that the last-published figure on illegitimacy from the Cape Town City Council Health Department of 69.8 per cent for Africans in 1989 was probably an underestimate.⁸⁶ Because African custom dictated that illegitimate children usually remained with the mother's family, second- and third-generation women's children contributed to the growth of multi-generational households. Even if the mother were to marry and establish a residence of her own, these children would not normally accompany her to her new home, as earlier exemplified in Patricia Mhleka's case.⁸⁷ Children of unwed male members of these households did not normally reside with them, which helped contribute to the feminization of multigenerational household structures, now dominated by second- and third-generation women and their children.

Thus, various forces shaped the growth of multigenerational households and the shift towards a decidedly matriarchal character for them. Because of coinciding political reform beginning in the late 1980s that increased the real value of payouts and formally ended racialized state payments in 1993, it became possible to increasingly incorporate old-age pensions as a viable part of urban African households' financial management. Concurrently, the relative difficulty of the majority of second- and third-generation respondents in finding equally regular sources of income resulted in continuing reliance on both the physical and material security provided by first-generation women's homes. In addition, as we shall see later in this chapter, the shifting values of latter generations made it problematic to compel regular contributions towards household finances, even when work was found. Elderly women thus

became and remained core providers in a multigenerational structure of care.

It is vital to stress that household 'immobility', as expressed in the development of multigenerational structures, was a temporary strategy for some households. For example, though first-generation Grace Madikane had been the primary caregiver for her six children and several grandchildren throughout apartheid, all six of her children eventually moved out and established their own households. Her daughter Nombulelo moved out permanently from her mother's home in 1980 with her soon-to-be husband and three sons and eventually settled in 1996 in Mitchell's Plain, a formerly Coloured area. Three other children left Grace's home in the mid- to late 1980s, two to newly established Khayelitsha township and one to her newly-wed husband's home in Guguletu, again accompanied by their own children. Grace's adopted 'son', who was in fact her grandson, moved out, with his wife and child, at the end of 2001. By the time Grace was interviewed for this research, her children were spread throughout Cape Town, and two children had left Cape Town altogether for East London.

Interestingly, this outward spread of second- and third-generation members may be indicative of this family's relative 'success' in the urban environment. If we recall from the previous section, the Madikanes were exceptional in their adept negotiation of mobility strategies to the rural areas through the 1980s. All Grace's children emerged from this period with formal employment, and several of her children and grandchildren achieved tertiary degrees or diplomas. Stable employment and a higher level of marketable skills, and also a higher rate of marriage among the second generation (five of six of her children, and all four daughters, were married) allowed members to actively take advantage of housing opportunities in outlying areas as these opportunities opened up.⁸⁸ Consequently, Grace's household size greatly diminished in the last 15 years. A crucial factor, then, appears to be the timely use of both mobility and immobility strategies in response to prevailing political and economic circumstances.

However, household 'immobility' was not the only strategy available. Though families for the most part no longer regarded the rural areas as a valuable resource in the transitional period, it does appear that there has been a greater mobility to other *urban* areas in recent years.⁸⁹ In the waning years of apartheid, influx control measures had been removed

and temporary out-migration to another urban area no longer carried with it the spectre of insuperable legal and logistical difficulties. Third-generation Nandipha Ntisana at age ten stayed in Johannesburg for one year with a cousin in 1990. When asked why she went there, she replied, 'Because my cousin [who was 26 years old at the time] asked me to go there and stay with her.'⁹⁰ In the post-apartheid period, both children and grandchildren of the first-generation cohort have been able to visit and sometimes permanently settle in cities such as Johannesburg and East London. For example, Pamela Madikane, a third-generation respondent, went to Border Technikon, a predominantly African technikon in East London, to pursue a diploma in management studies, which she received in 2000. Because she joined the Student Representative Council there, she was able to tap into funds to finance trips to conferences in various areas throughout South Africa, which took her for the first time to such places as Johannesburg and Durban. On her way to a conference in Durban, she was able to view the area surrounding her grandmother's natal home in the Transkei for the first time.⁹¹ Thus we can see the growing flexibility in mobility patterns of latter generations.

'Intimate tensions' and an emergent moral economy of the home

There was no inexorable march towards matriarchy, just as there was no inevitable road to the marginalization of men in domestic economies. Neither was there a smooth, unchallenged transition to multigenerational structures. These gendered and generational shifts in household structure and strategy were forcefully contested at different stages. Moreover, these battles were enacted not only on a material landscape, but on ideological grounds as well. Theresa Barnes shows how in colonial Zimbabwe at mid-twentieth century, African women were self-consciously engaged in what she termed 'social reproduction.' Integral to this was the transmission of 'righteousness' as a fundamental part of a new urban African identity. This righteousness was embedded in family relations, especially through the conjugal bond, as well as performed for the wider society. She concludes, 'women undertook ideological and material work that was as influential in the shaping of the urban community in class terms as the labour of men.'⁹² Fiona Ross similarly argues that righteousness was invoked in the idea of *ordentlikheid*, or 'respectability', that Coloured

households in impoverished neighbourhoods in Somerset West sought so determinedly to preserve. Individuals with the prospect of acquiring formal housing engaged in the creation of households in both material and conceptual ways, by reorganizing terms of membership that balanced state dictates of what constituted a 'model community' with their own internal understandings.⁹³ Household strategy thus entailed a strongly articulated moral dimension, as well as an economic one.

What then are the contours of this new moral economy of the home? In surveyed urban African households, disputes over 'authority' and 'responsibility' were certainly expressed in gendered terms.⁹⁴ In particular, the failings of men to carry out familial responsibilities were an important, and painfully voiced, theme. First-generation Eunice Fuzile's sense of exasperation was evident when asked to comment on the contributions of her six children: 'I can say they are not talented . . . my children are drinking strongly. That is what I can tell you about them because you said I should speak plainly so now I am coughing out, because they are drunks.'⁹⁵ When pressed to clarify who in her family was drinking heavily, she responded, 'more especially those who are men.' Eunice's account accords with research in Durban, which has shown how household tensions were generated when husbands and sons in African households spent the majority of their income on 'own-use' expenses (such as liquor, tobacco and girlfriends, among others), instead of contributing to a 'common pot'.⁹⁶ Furthermore, for Eunice, curbing her sons' debilitating drinking habits was clearly something she viewed as her husband's responsibility:

I quarrel with my husband that the children think that it is me who is cruel and so you shout 'try to be a father!' . . . at least just to show that he is the father . . . He can't talk even if something is wrong. Maybe there is something wrong that is happening, like the drinking habits of these children, like Andile, he does not take action as the father. I should be the one who will pick up things and throw at them and beat someone but he does nothing.⁹⁷

Eunice Fuzile viewed her husband's meek response as painfully representative of the crisis of male authority in her own household, a crisis she herself attempted to (violently) redress. Her injunction to 'try to be a father!' is emblematic of her frustrations, as well as of an acutely felt sense

of what a father ought to be.⁹⁸ Eunice's actions – throwing objects at her children and beating them – pose an interesting counter to the type of male domestic violence Campbell has shown to be symptomatic of the erosion of patriarchal power within the home.⁹⁹ Alcoholism again threads through these narratives as a destructive undercurrent.

Third-generation respondents, male and female, were equally forthright in their condemnation of 'absent' fathers, invoking in the process a guarded, but distinct set of expectations of 'proper' parental behavior. Matumo Madikane's bitterness about her alcoholic father's lack of parental concern was evident, though 15 years had passed since his death in 1985: 'My father didn't know we were eating, we were wearing clothes or anything. My mother was doing everything for us . . . Even now I do hate my father.'¹⁰⁰ Matumo reminded us, 'I needed to have a father then as a child.'¹⁰¹ Similarly, despite Xolisa Mvambo's casual dismissal of his father's existence – 'to me he doesn't exist' – his explanation of why he and his father no longer remain in contact revealed his own expectations: 'I wouldn't go and look for him because he's supposed to do that, not me. So that's why we are not close.'¹⁰² Thato Madikane refused to be moved by his father's recent explanations for why he had 'disappeared' from his life when Thato was between seven and 15 years of age: 'I believe like he left me. That's what I believe. I don't believe any crap that he says. That's the only thing that I believe, that he left me. And he was running away from his responsibilities.'¹⁰³ These youth remind us that the shift towards matriarchal structures was not without its lion's share of disappointment.

Similarly, despite the widespread nature of multigenerational households in the families surveyed, we cannot necessarily assume that this strategy had an equally beneficial effect for individual members. Consider Regina Mhlekwa's household:

Regina's granddaughters residing with her in Guguletu complained forcefully about the effects of their uncles' alcoholism. Buyiswa said, 'I have many uncles and they drink. You know that when a person is drunk he is rude and arrogant.'¹⁰⁴ Their drinking fuelled their petulance. Initially hesitant and tearful when asked how her family life was, Buyiswa's cousin Zoliswa eventually admitted, 'My uncles like to beat . . . They like beating people.'¹⁰⁵ When asked what she would get beaten for, she responded that sometimes they were unhappy with the portions of food she would dish

*out for them at mealtimes. However, as long as Regina was present, those uncles who were resident in Regina's home would not beat anyone. Buyiswa explained: 'We will not get beaten, no one will beat us. Grandmother is always there.'*¹⁰⁶

Certainly, these new – and violent – tensions between young women and their uncles can be attributed to the effects of confined living within multigenerational households, in destructive conjunction with chronic alcoholism and unemployment. In this context, food allocation at mealtimes became a site for larger generational and gendered power struggles. Interestingly, Regina's presence deterred, though not always successfully, the aggressive actions of her own sons.¹⁰⁷ In Manenberg township, elderly mothers in particular played an integral part in policing moral boundaries through their centrality in domestic economies and in the community.¹⁰⁸ In this study, it is evident that the prevalence of male alcoholism enhanced this role as 'policer'.

However, it is important to stress that younger women did not always welcome first-generation women's growing authority in the home. Tensions arising from competition over household resources and conflicting ideas of household management were exacerbated as second-generation children became mothers and even grandmothers themselves – in a sense, heads of mini units within the overall household structure. Domestic units have the capacity to become 'closed', that is, less engaged in networks of reciprocity, when members acquire relatively stable sources of income.¹⁰⁹ We can see this 'closure' exemplified *within* households as well – for example, in the mini units within multigenerational homes led by working second-generation women. The Fuzile household's troubles were indicative of the strain that this 'closure' created:

Nomthandazo, the daughter of first-generation Eunice Fuzile, was herself a mother and grandmother (two daughters and a grandson). Nomthandazo emphasized how her views of child-rearing conflicted strongly with those of her parents. One issue of disagreement concerned the relative freedom of movement of Nandipha, Nomthandazo's elder daughter, who was born in 1980. Another area in which there was contestation was control over household finances. Eunice complained: 'The girls {her daughters}, I can describe them as people who are working for themselves They buy whatever they want to buy when they have money and then we eat it at

*that time. But we don't have money they put on the round table because they all depend on my shoulders and that old man {her husband}, the pension money.*¹¹⁰

*When asked whether her job as senior radiographer at Grootte Schuur Hospital made her feel more obligated to contribute towards the Fuzile household income, Eunice's daughter Hazel replied, 'I am under pressure. But as I said, I changed last year and became assertive and I could say this is what I can give and I have to do things of my own and the kids.'*¹¹¹

Though her daughters were clearly to some extent sharing resources with other members of the household, Eunice felt that the absence of some sort of collective pooling – to 'put on the round table' – meant that her and her husband's pensions remained the only dependable source of household income. Thus she concluded that they were failing her in their duty as daughters.¹¹²

We can trace how Eunice came to this position if we look at her own parents' financial management practices. When asked whether she sent any remittances back to her parents in Burgersdorp when she first began paid work in Cape Town in 1945, she responded, 'We sent it every month and we could not even buy ourselves some shoes because you should send the money home and you remember that the parents were very strict at that time.' She went on to explain that if she did need shoes, she would have to ask her parents to take spending money out of the remittance she sent to them and then 'they would give it to me and say I should buy that thing that month.'¹¹³ Clearly, by comparison, Eunice's children have excluded her from the same degree of control over household finances.

These fissures were echoed in other households. When asked whether her children were doing well in terms of jobs and education, Gertrude Mvambo responded immediately, 'You see, Nomonde [her daughter], she's working, but she's not working for me. Zanele [another daughter] is working for her[self], not for me.'¹¹⁴ Though Zanele and Zanele's son still lived in Gertrude's house, Zanele used her income as a cleaner at a local golf club, a position she has held since 1992, to buy items for the household as she saw fit.¹¹⁵ Clearly, Gertrude disagreed with this strategy: 'You see, that's why I say there's a complete difference, because in our time you would give the money. You're supposed to give her [the

mother] the wages and she will give the money for you that will be enough for you.¹¹⁶

Wilson and Mafeje noted in the early 1960s in their study of Langa township that a crucial element in urban African household finance was the contribution of working daughters. They stated that in town, daughters were even more important than sons, and were expected to add to family wealth and provide for the welfare particularly of the mother.¹¹⁷ Bozzoli's and Izzard's studies expand on this in the contemporary context of female migrancy by showing that the livelihood of multigenerational structures depended in large part on the ability of elderly women to compel their urban-based daughters to remit wages back to them.¹¹⁸ Izzard notes that elderly mothers agreed to look after their daughters' children as part of a strategy to exert control over the labour of their unmarried daughters.¹¹⁹ However, the continued emphasis on the functionality of mother–daughter relationships has encouraged a sort of gendered blindness to the emergence of generational ruptures. While generational struggles over labour, remittances and resources between young men and male elders have been well documented, particularly in southern African scholarship on migrancy, similar tensions between women have been less explored.¹²⁰

As testimonies reveal, younger generations of women were sometimes reluctant to surrender control of their wages. In the example above, Eunice Fuzile's daughter Hazel decided to become more 'assertive' by thinking first of her own children's welfare before contributing to any household pool. This type of assertiveness set into motion a process of contestation and conflict fought along generational lines, as first-generation women attempted to enforce some type of reciprocity from daughters and granddaughters living under their care. The prevalence of alcoholism coupled with unemployment among many male members of surveyed households reinforced first-generation women's reliance on their daughters for financial assistance. And when those daughters resisted 'pressure', tensions became exacerbated. Eunice Fuzile said of her daughters, 'The women are not drinking, but there is nothing they are helping me with as their parent.'¹²¹ Equally, Gertrude Mvambo lamented that her daughters were not working 'for her.'¹²² When Gertrude Mvambo's daughter Nomonde remarried in 1996, Gertrude insisted that Nomonde's daughter Novuyo stay as a member of Gertrude's household. This was despite the fact that Nomonde and her new husband both

wanted Novuyo to move into their new home. When asked why Novuyo was still with her, Gertrude replied that 'she is the one who must look after me.'¹²³ Thus, we can observe the disharmonies created within these multigenerational households as the growing independence of second- and third-generation women, who had differing ideas of how best to share resources and raise their children, clashed with long-held family traditions of household management.¹²⁴

A final, and important, consideration is the potential effect of HIV/AIDS on these tenuously negotiated relations. Although the long-term demographic impact of the epidemic in South Africa is yet to be fully assessed, we are beginning to understand how the particular gendered and demographic character of HIV/AIDS has affected domestic economies of care.¹²⁵ The elderly, and in particular elderly women, have borne the overwhelming burden of care for family members who suffer from AIDS-related illness. They have also shouldered, despite meagre resources, the consequences of providing for grandchildren whose parents have died from AIDS.¹²⁶ Although this is part of a recognized global trend, it has a special relevance for the matriarchal multigenerational households that we have examined above. In 'stretched' domestic units already experiencing gendered and generational tensions, the long-term illness (or death) of one of its members, in particular female members, may provoke new and differently articulated fault lines. Julie Livingston has powerfully illuminated these dynamics in her study of debility in southeastern Botswana, where elderly women appealed to an idealized trope of 'motherhood' as part of a complex restructuring of domestic economies of care in families with disabled members.¹²⁷

In this study, the shaping of household dynamics through HIV/AIDS is perhaps less clear. During the main research period, none of the households surveyed reported any cases of HIV/AIDS. However, an example reported afterwards may prove suggestive of broader developments occurring in households outside the small sample of this study. First-generation Eunice Fuzile disclosed to me on a return visit in 2004 that her daughter Hazel had contracted HIV and had stopped working. We have seen that Hazel was by far the most prominent wage earner in the Fuzile household, by virtue of her job as a radiographer. We also know how her determination to control and limit her contribution to the 'common pot' had provoked the ire of her mother Eunice. HIV had, at least temporarily, ended Hazel's ability to channel her own economic resources

towards her children and her long-term goal of an independent residence. By submitting to the care of her mother and living with a disease whose problematic social connotations are still distressingly widespread, Hazel had relinquished some of her moral authority as well.¹²⁸

Paradoxically, even as Hazel lost ground in a long-running struggle of attrition with her mother, other young women found in the very precariousness of life in this time of AIDS an opportunity to gain moral leverage within their multi-generational households. As will be detailed further in chapter five, with the spectre of death seemingly ever-present in their lives, third-generation women were able to assert a small but vital degree of fiscal autonomy in their homes through their careful efforts to prepare for the 'dignified' burials of themselves and their loved ones. That these two brief examples can suggest such divergent dynamics cautions against any simplistic measures of the social impact of this devastating disease.

Conclusion

Overall, it appears that the very terms and bounds of household were being renegotiated, and sometimes across great distance. Profiling household management across three generations reveals a far more textured story of a multiplicity of methods, contested within households and utilized to varying extents at different points in time. This enables us to see how households and individual members imaginatively crafted their livelihood strategies, often in the face of overwhelming political, economic and personal hardship.

Over the course of the apartheid and post-apartheid period, urban African household structures proved responsive to the ever-shifting set of economic opportunities available to them. In the 1950s and 1960s, first-generation women were largely unable to acquire independent incomes. Gendered influx control legislation and the Coloured Labour Preference Policy encouraged reliance on male members for both legal status in town and a sustainable income stream. Residential instability, which was a significant feature in this period, further reinforced women's tenuous legal status and limited the opportunities for entry into the informal economy. Households as a result concentrated in this period largely on 'growing families'. This was underpinned by the centrality of the conjugal bond. Women's work was sporadic, and for the most part confined to the domestic service sector.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the residential profile of first-generation households stabilized considerably with the acquisition of council housing. This enabled women to engage in a more diverse set of activities within the informal economy. However, the debilitating economic impact of the strikes, boycotts, school overcrowding and gang warfare endemic in this period were felt in various, immediate ways. Male members suffered disproportionately – opportunities in the formal sector became limited, and long-held jobs were disrupted. In addition, the toll of urban violence fell worryingly onto the bodies of young men. In contrast, first-generation women tended to be able to continue work uninterrupted in this period. And it is evident that second-generation women were the primary beneficiaries of household mobility strategies involving the rural areas. These young women emerged from this tumultuous time as viable contributors to household resources.

During the transitional period, stretching from the loosening of influx control in the late 1980s through to the ending of apartheid and the establishment of democratic rule, housing in Cape Town remained a severe limiting factor in the outward expansion of these households. Unmarried second- and third-generation members, especially those with their own dependents, found it very difficult to leave. Household ‘immobility’ became a key urban survival strategy. And first-generation women’s council homes became the lynchpin of an expansive multi-generational economy of care. This shift was encouraged by male alcoholism and unemployment, which adversely affected men’s capacity to contribute to domestic economies. While wholesale male ‘absenteeism’ is not an accurate reflection of these developments, it is enough to say that men became removed from the central economic and moral axes of these households. The intimately waged struggles of elderly women to compel contributions from younger generations of women within their households became a key site of tension.

Finally, the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that mobility management provided central and essential methods of survival, but it also suggests that mobility manifested itself in a tremendous variety of ways. African households creatively used mobility for a variety of economic and strategic purposes: to define household membership, to create safe zones for dependents to go to school, and to access existing bases of support in both urban and rural areas. Household members also applied these strategies selectively and temporally. Some households

immersed themselves in mobility strategies more thoroughly than others. In fact, the ability to adeptly negotiate mobility and immobility strategies over time was an important determinant in a given household's relative 'success' in the urban setting. Certain developments, such as the establishment and persistence of multigenerational household structures, can be more clearly understood when mapped against the changing political economy of the city. But they also mirrored key transformations within members themselves, as younger generations grew up with differently conceived notions of membership, and the rights and responsibilities such membership entailed. Second- and third-generation women evinced an inclination to defy financial and other obligations that first-generation women considered essential to supporting multigenerational household structures. Marriage appears a determining factor, alongside higher levels of education and stable employment, in enabling second-generation women to reverse trends towards household immobility. Third-generation members also exhibited a greater tendency towards geographical mobility in some directions – within the Cape Town metropole and outwards towards other urban areas. But they demonstrated less mobility towards rural areas. The discursive implications of these movements will be considered in detail in chapter six.

HOME IMPROVEMENT, SELF IMPROVEMENT: RENOVATIONS AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF 'HOME'

Thirty years ago, when many of the elderly women in this study first moved into their homes on NY100¹ in Guguletu, the street would have provided a candid snapshot of apartheid-era urban engineering and design. Long and wide, treeless, with sand perpetually being whipped around by the Western Cape's strong winds, NY100 was lined with a starkly uniform series of government issued houses – the standard NE ('Non-European') 51/6s, which constituted the least expensive of the series of plans the National Building Research Institute (NBRI) had developed in 1951 for housing Africans. In their original form, the 51/6s were made of concrete blocks and brick, with 40 square metres of space spread over four rooms, encompassing two bedrooms, a kitchen and lounge. A backyard toilet completed the structural picture.² In her autobiography, Sindiwe Magona recollected the general impression that these 'matchbox' houses in Guguletu conveyed: 'Bleak, same-looking matchboxes. Soulless and soul-destroying. Sub-standard. Uninspired. Hopelessly uninspiring.'³

Walking down NY100 in post-apartheid Guguletu, one can still sense that whiff of mass production, which was a unique coalescence of 1950s garden suburb planning ideas, subeconomic standards and an apartheid-era obsession with social control.⁴ One cannot help but take in the dull concrete facades, the absence of greenery and plot after same-styled plot.

However, one's gaze can adjust to see also how different these houses look from those early years, as well as how different they have come



FIGURES 3.1 AND 3.2: Typical street and council houses in Guguletu township
Source: Japha, Derek and Marie Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships in Cape Town, 1920–1992', *The Integration and Urbanisation of Existing Townships in South Africa Working Paper no. 2* (Newcastle and Cape Town, 1995)

to look from one another. Walk down this street now and one notices a veranda here, a galvanized fence there, elsewhere a new driveway leading up to a whitewashed garage. One house on NY100 stands out from the rest – with an imposing shoulder-high iron gate supported by elaborate fencing across the front, a multi-coloured brick face, a large bay window and an enclosed driveway. Such shows of ostentation are rare on this particular street, but subtler touches of individuality are evident everywhere.

The genesis of this chapter lay in those frequent walks I took up and down this street, and in the visits into the homes that lined it. I came to discover that for all the alterations visible from the outside, these Guguletu homes displayed far more variation in design once I crossed their thresholds.⁵ Internal walls were torn down, rooms rearranged, ceilings fitted and refitted, extensions added, freestanding backyard structures erected – the list goes on and on. Respondents were often eager not only to catalogue renovations completed over the years, but also to provide evidence of the struggles encountered in the process. In addition, they were keen to voice, in sometimes very specific terms, their dreams for future upgrading projects. It was this constant language of renewal, an expressed and evident desire for change, that impressed itself upon me.

This chapter concerns itself with home improvements – both as internalized process and externally visible practice – in African households in Cape Town carried out throughout the apartheid years. Oral testimonies are supplemented by written chronologies and schematically drawn floor plans that detail renovations of predominantly council housing. The chapter draws on interviews with mostly female respondents based in 11 different houses in Guguletu, as well as material from respondents with housing in other areas of Cape Town.⁶ The focus is on those council homes that now-elderly women entered in the 1960s and 1970s. How were ‘homes’ constructed out of the concrete and brick ‘shells’ that Africans received, how did these homes ‘grow’, and what can we learn from these processes?

Chronicling changing ‘homestead biographies’ can be helpful in understanding the interaction between the built environment and shifting social and economic norms and practices. Households in the urbanizing village of Maun in Botswana, for example, adjusted their building and rebuilding practices to accommodate changes in access

to natural resources and transport. Implicit in these changing modes of construction were shifting social relations – in this case, the move from male-dominated ways of collecting and transporting materials to approaches that the increasing number of female-headed households could readily utilize.⁷

In the South African context, several studies have directly addressed African households' attempts at home improvement in the apartheid years, and their social and political implications.⁸ Rebecca Ginsburg goes far in uncovering the motivations behind renovations to 'match-box' housing in the period between 1960 and 1976, focusing on how working-class Sowetans attempted to upgrade 51/6 houses. She stresses the piecemeal nature of renovations, restricted by limited household budgets and tempered by municipal warnings that the costs of any structural improvements would not necessarily be reimbursed if the tenants were ever forced to vacate their homes. Households willingly renovated despite the lack of secure tenure for Africans in urban areas, suggesting that the act of renovation was in and of itself an attempt at creating a semblance of permanence, albeit without guarantees: 'housing activity served to reinforce one's claim to urban residence where other forces conspired to deny it By investing in the land, Sowetans earned the right to stay there.'⁹

Though the majority of informants cited in Ginsburg's study are female, her analysis fails to include any reference to the role of gender in the initiation and execution of upgrading, or the way in which African women's perception of respectability differed from men's, and how those notions may have been expressed through renovation priorities. In addition, Ginsburg does not acknowledge the internal dynamics within households that may have affected how house structures evolved. Nolulama Gwagwa's study, by contrast, involving over 200 households in the relatively new 'site and service' settlement of Newtown, Durban, reveals how gendered relations of power within households affected, and often compromised, women's abilities to realize their upgrading aspirations. Her findings also illustrate how women have extended the idea of being 'home-makers' to include practical efforts at home improvements, and she sets this shift in the context of women's increasing role as the primary breadwinners of their households.¹⁰

This chapter seeks to extend the historical scope of Ginsburg's case by including an examination of home improvement and its changing 'ethos'

among African households in the waning years of apartheid, and to explore these issues in relation to the distinctive historical geography of Cape Town. African households faced a particularly thorny challenge to their settlement endeavours there, in the form of state efforts throughout much of the apartheid period to limit their entry and residence. As we will see, this consequently affected the ways in which women timed their improvements and derived meaning from them. Elderly women's acquisition of council housing in Guguletu in the early 1970s created a very different relation to their structural homes and the renovation process than was possible for those residents in other African settlements who would later experience state housing assistance only through the site and service schemes increasingly advocated by the authorities from the 1980s. Thus, household attempts at home improvements reflected both geographic and historical specificity.

This chapter also applies Gwagwa's gendered understanding of household dynamics to suggest how African women in more established townships participated uniquely in the renovation process, both materially and ideologically. Trans-generational testimonies allow us to historically locate this process and also subtly indicate ways in which housing design and housing aspirations revealed more deeply rooted processes of signification for succeeding generations of women. For first-generation women, moving into their council homes marked an end to lives led in constant motion. They participated, and mediated, the process of urbanization simply by staying still and building their aspirations into the physical structures of their homes. Consequently, their homes became expressions of their evolving understanding of their presence in the city. For younger generations of women, in contrast, it was 'moving out' rather than 'staying still' that became a marker of upward mobility. These desires reflect not only changing political realities brought on by the dismantling of apartheid restrictions on urban residence; they also reveal a radically altered mapping of urban space, one based no longer on rigid racial demarcations, but on a practised orientation to a more anonymous and mobile consumerist lifestyle.

Gender and housing in Cape Town

In order to contextualize how African women attempted to construct and reconstruct their homes, it is necessary to look at urban housing policy

and practice during the apartheid era. As shown in chapter one, influx control policy as realized in the Western Cape presented a severe set of obstacles to African attempts at maintaining residence and a livelihood in urban areas. This was particularly the case in Cape Town during the 1960s and early 1970s, when the Department of Bantu Administration coordinated aggressive expulsions of 'illegal' Africans from the city and the destruction of many informal settlements, subjecting the entire African population to a heightened level of surveillance and control. The operation of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy undermined African efforts at obtaining viable employment, while the freeze on African family housing in place in the Cape Peninsula from the early 1960s laid the groundwork for an acute housing shortage that was all too visible in the severe overcrowding of both official and informal settlements in later decades.

However, within this context, African women faced distinct gendered challenges to their settlement in the city. We can see this clearly in their troubled relationship to state housing schemes. Legislation passed in 1967 prevented women from placing themselves on state waiting lists for housing.¹¹ As we have seen, African women's position largely as dependents under Section 10 increased their vulnerability to eviction from their homes and expulsion from the city. As we will see in the next chapter, their dependent status also hindered women's attempts to access municipal services such as electricity, which had been slowly introduced into official townships from the early 1960s. In addition, the workings of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy effectively prevented women from independently earning rights to residence in the city by virtue of ten years of continuous 'legal' employment. Because they were largely unable to acquire legal title or tenancy to houses in their own names, divorce often resulted in the loss of residence.

Widowed women were in similarly difficult circumstances. If a man died, and his wife did not qualify for rights to urban residence under Section 10 in her own right, his wife and children were liable to be sent to the reserves.¹² Even if they were qualified, widows had considerable trouble maintaining rights to accommodation. In practice, Bantu Administration officials actively reconfiscated homes registered under the names of deceased men and did not allow their widows with children to remain in the same residence. Only in 1971 was it firmly stated by the Assistant Director of Bantu Administration that there would be no

repossession of houses in cases where the widows themselves qualified for residence and had children.¹³

The reintroduction of the 30-year leasehold in 1976 was an important indicator of the state's shifting position on African urbanization beginning in the late 1970s. Made applicable to the Western Cape in 1980, this leasehold was a stronger guarantee of tenure than options available previously. The 99-year leasehold, initiated in 1978, was applied to the Cape Peninsula in 1985, allowing 'legal' Africans the right to purchase their homes and renovate or tear them down as they saw fit. However, though guaranteed site possession and rights of inheritance, such 99-year leaseholders did not technically own the land on which their houses stood.¹⁴ Significantly, this changed in 1985, when the state accepted the concept of African freehold tenure in urban areas.¹⁵

Despite these developments, African women remained at a disadvantage in terms of access both to registered tenure and home ownership. Privatization benefitted a small, and usually male, elite.¹⁶ Women who wanted to buy publicly released property in the 1980s had difficulty accessing state-sponsored subsidies to finance home ownership because they earned lower wages than men. Divorced women and widows were further excluded from financial assistance schemes if their husbands had ever owned any property. This exclusion was exacerbated by the legacy of gendered housing legislation noted above, which made it difficult for women to register houses in their own names, access waiting lists for new housing being built in the 1980s, and remain in that housing if subsequently widowed or divorced.¹⁷ This legacy, as Susan Parnell explains, made tenancy of public housing overwhelmingly male in character, which meant that once public housing stock was up for sale, male tenancy translated into male ownership of those same houses.¹⁸ Even in relatively recent site and service developments, such as Newtown in Durban, the number of African women with registered title to their homes lagged behind that of men.¹⁹

Notwithstanding these challenges to obtaining legal residence and title to property, urban African women actively involved themselves in the physical transformation of their living spaces. By using women's testimonies centrally in her analysis, Ginsburg's work acknowledges, albeit tacitly, women's important role in Sowetan home improvements in the early decades of apartheid rule. Similarly, Gwagwa's study emphasizes that even in those households where men had official title to the

home, women played a substantial role in housing investment.²⁰ Women may have drawn from rural traditions in which their participation in the construction of homes was vital – as Belinda Bozzoli notes, when huts in Phokeng were built of mud, women were expected to help construct the walls and then plaster the walls and floors.²¹ And as female-headed households became a more central feature of township landscapes in the latter decades of apartheid, elderly women in particular became important initiators, investors and designers in the renovation process.

Home improvement: Desire, design and practice in urban African households

How can we place African women's testimonies and their record of housing acquisition and improvement in the historical context noted above? Figure 3.3 and the following homestead biography illustrate the renovations done to the Mvambo family house over the years.

The Mvambos first moved into their basic four-roomed house in Guguletu in 1972. A front door leading into the lounge was the main entrance. There was a back door leading out from the kitchen. There were no doors separating the four rooms. There was no ceiling, only an asbestos roof, and the floors were cement screed. Four small windows, one in each room, provided some light. The walls consisted of unfinished brick. An in-house cold water tap, backyard toilet and weekly garbage collection were the amenities provided by the City Council.²² In the year of their arrival, the Mvambos were able to put in a ceiling and a floor made of wooden blocks. For privacy, they used long curtains to enclose the bedrooms until they bought doors in 1973.

In 1993, they added a garage in the backyard. In 1994, they undertook their next major renovation, which involved a forward extension of the house to form a type of veranda. The positions of the lounge area and the front bedroom were switched. The family employed various contractors and had to hire someone to fix adequate trenching and foundations to support the structure. In addition, they paid a contractor from a predominantly Coloured area, Bellville South, ZAR 10,000 to convert the garage at the back into a two-bedroom flatlet, which Gertrude's two sons now occupy.

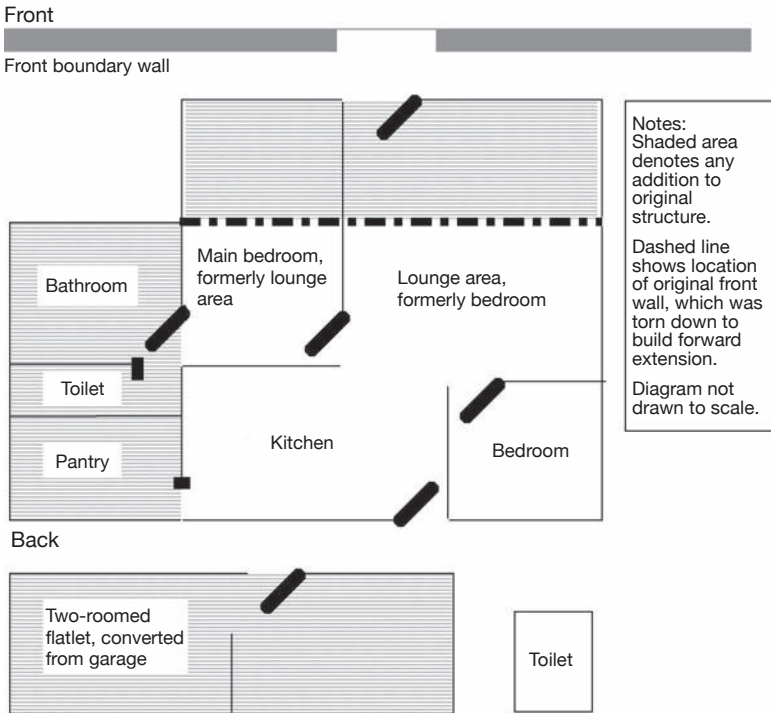


FIGURE 3.3: The Mvambo family house floorplan, Guguletu

In 1999, another extension adjacent to the kitchen and the dining room was added on, to accommodate a pantry and an in-house bathroom and toilet with running hot water. The cost of this extension amounted to approximately ZAR 15,000–20,000, inclusive of plumbing and construction work. That same year, a brick wall along the front of the property was erected, with gates, at a cost of ZAR 1,500. Asked if she wished to make further improvements, Gertrude replied, ‘If I could get money, I would get another room or maybe two rooms. But now, nothing.’ Zanele Mvambo, Gertrude’s daughter, has continued to renovate her mother’s home while living there. However, Zanele claimed that most of these so-called ‘new’ improvements were repairs to fix previous work.²³

There are several important issues that the Mvambo homestead biography raises. The first observation may be, simply, that the Mvambo

engaged in extensive renovations over the last thirty years and desired to do more. However, upon closer inspection, we can see that home improvement did not necessarily follow a linear progression, with improvements done gradually year by year. Instead, there were distinct stages where various types of upgrading were completed in clusters: the first stage of household improvements conducted within a short period immediately after moving-in, and the second stage many years later.

This observation is strengthened when we look at the chronology of other first-generation efforts at home improvement. There was a uniform tendency towards four types of renovations in the initial stage of upgrading homes – plastering the unfinished brick walls, adding a ceiling and some type of flooring (usually involving wooden blocks or tiles) and installing internal doors. Often these types of improvements were done by family members themselves and not by contracted labour.²⁴ In Guguletu, there was no consistent ranking among the four mentioned types of home improvements – the order in which households did them varied. What did not vary was that households undertook to accomplish this set of changes immediately and seemingly with little debate, before any other household improvement was undertaken. In contrast to the ‘slow by slow’ approach Ginsburg noted for some Sowetans engaging in similar improvements, the majority of these Guguletu households finished these basic improvements relatively swiftly, in the same year they moved in, with only one exception completing the work within two years.

This sense of immediacy can be easily understood when considering respondents’ perceptions of their houses when they first moved in. As Grace Madikane dryly noted about her first impressions of her home in Guguletu: ‘It was just a stable, just bricks and cement, there was no ceiling, there was no floor, there was nothing.’²⁵ Lumka Kalipa described what she did when she moved into her house in 1972: ‘The first thing I did was to put some doors because it was just open. And then I put some ceiling, some plastering.’²⁶ A sense of ‘openness’ was deemed a negative feature of these houses; indeed, the lack of privacy and separation (between male and female, older and younger inhabitants) was often cited as one of the greater indignities African families had to bear in urban housing.²⁷

Clearly, these matchbox houses were seen as shells, not as complete houses in themselves, and certain upgrades were fundamental to basic

living. Improvements were crafted, often by residents' own hands, to 'show that now you are living in a house. When you live in a house, house should have ceiling, it should not be like you are living in a shack. Even if you live in a shack, you make it a decent, attractive place.'²⁸ Thus the first stage aimed at decency, at creating a house out of the 'stables' offered by the state, and ensuring the type of respectability Ginsburg and Meintjes noted was so evident in Sowetan sensibilities as well.²⁹ Importantly, testimonies reveal that monetary constraints did not halt this particular cluster of improvements, nor were any household disputes or dissatisfaction with these renovations registered, whether along gendered or generational lines. It appears that households regarded this expenditure as absolutely necessary and made provision for it within their limited budgets.

Looking closely again at Gertrude Mvambo's chronology of improvements, we see there is a latent period from the mid-1970s until 1994 where no significant upgrading project was entered into. After this, the family undertook two major expansion projects involving hired labour, in 1994 and 1999 – extending the house forward, expanding laterally to allow an in-house bathroom and toilet, and conversion of the backyard garage to a two-roomed flatlet. When taking into account other first-generation respondents' homestead biographies, we see that, again, the Mvambos' story reveals a common trend. African households embarked on a second stage of improvements usually involving an extension built onto the house and/or a flatlet built in the backyard, an undertaking that often involved considerable (and sometimes extreme) financial sacrifices.

Interestingly, every single household that undertook the first phase of upgrading embarked on large-scale structural additions only from 1989, the majority of renovations occurring recently, in the mid- to late 1990s. The issue of the timing of this second stage of renovations is key. Households were only able to accumulate enough money for new and often costly projects many years after they first moved in.³⁰ More importantly, in the later years of apartheid and certainly in the post-apartheid era, African households in Cape Town no longer feared losing rights to tenancy of their homes or rights to residence in the city, as the state removed influx control measures and introduced leasehold and freehold tenure in the mid-1980s. Attempts at major structural improvements to matchbox houses, which could arguably be classified as

definitive 'statements' of authority over one's own residence, were only initiated once households had a reasonable guarantee that their efforts would not be in vain.

For residents of Guguletu, as indeed for township inhabitants in most urban areas of South Africa, that guarantee did not materialize for many years. Testimonies show that the years from the mid-1970s through to the 1980s were indeed turbulent times, marked by invasive police raids, frequent school boycotts, gang violence and political turmoil. Residential instability was pointedly emphasized in the disturbances of 1986, when nearly 3,500 shacks in the neighbouring informal settlement of KTC were destroyed.³¹ Because the majority of first-generation respondents in this study lived within only a few streets from the borders of KTC, the tremendous fall-out from this event was particularly visible.³² In the late 1980s, the Kalipa's home was petrol-bombed on at least three occasions, by youth claiming to be with the Pan Africanist Congress. According to Lumka Kalipa, this was because her husband's position as a community councillor had branded them as 'sell-outs'.³³ Such events exposed how tenuous residents' claims over their own homes actually were, even while state restrictions on African housing and residence appeared to be relaxing.

A final factor that influenced the timing of this second stage of upgrading was a shift in housing ethos and perception of housing needs. This second phase could roughly be categorized as 'expansion', where the aim was not necessarily to achieve basic levels of decency, but rather, as Eunice Fuzile phrased it, 'building for my children'.³⁴ Indeed, by the time these households attempted the second phase of renovations, largely in the 1990s, the issue of space had already become paramount, as households burgeoned and lack of alternative accommodation forced multiple generations to be housed under one roof. As we saw in chapter two, 78-year old Regina Mhlekwana counted 22 members residing in her household (including 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren) in 1998, occupying two adjacent four-roomed council houses in Guguletu.³⁵

In stark contrast, these elderly women drew upon childhood memories of wide-open spaces that were accentuated by the freedom of movement afforded in the rural areas and small towns of the Eastern Cape. In comparison, city living offered cramped residential zones and a constant sense of restricted movement. As domestic workers, first-generation women

were certainly exposed to the more spacious interiors of suburban white homes. These experiences, combined with ever-present responsibilities to care for children, grandchildren and sometimes great-grandchildren, contributed to the premium first-generation women placed on space.³⁶

It is little wonder, then, that they espoused spaciousness as the primary virtue of housing, over and above standards of cleanliness and decency that may have been of more importance in the first phase of transforming sand-filled matchboxes into respectable 'homes' three decades previously. Eunice Fuzile explained her current sentiments: 'When I go to someone's house, what I see as a good thing is that a people are extending, is to see a big house, because I would also like to stay in a spacious place.'³⁷ When asked to judge the quality of the recent extensions to her house completed in 1999 and funded by her daughters at a cost of ZAR 45,000, Lumka Kalipa stated, 'I just wanted something big, I didn't care how they are, as long as they're bigger. As long as the house is bigger.'³⁸

Importantly, the layout of these council homes provided the structural foundation upon which households could practise expansionist designs. In line with NBRI principles prevalent in township planning in the 1950s, Guguletu's 51/6 homes were placed in the middle of relatively large plots,³⁹ as can be seen in the original concept design in Figure 3.4.

While not quite conforming to the idyllic suburban image conveyed in this design, first-generation women's homes did enjoy a proportionately large amount of space around their perimeter.⁴⁰ Although my informants had generally not used their plots for any attempts at 'urban greening', it was clear that they did utilize the space afforded by adding free-standing backyard structures or enlarging the original house itself.⁴¹ The landscape of the township was irreversibly altered as fellow residents similarly embarked on expansion projects – by 1995, the City Planners Department had recorded that in Guguletu, 9,981 backyard shack structures had been erected on the plots of 8,156 formal houses, a ratio of over one backyard shack to each house.⁴² Such structures were normally used to house family members, or rented out as an extra income source.

Residents in newer settlements such as Khayelitsha were not able to follow similar agendas. In the 1980s through to the early 1990s, the state redefined its role in housing provision for Africans away from primary provider of core structures to supplier of 'site and service' units with no or minimal 'top structure'.⁴³ The emphasis on site and service schemes

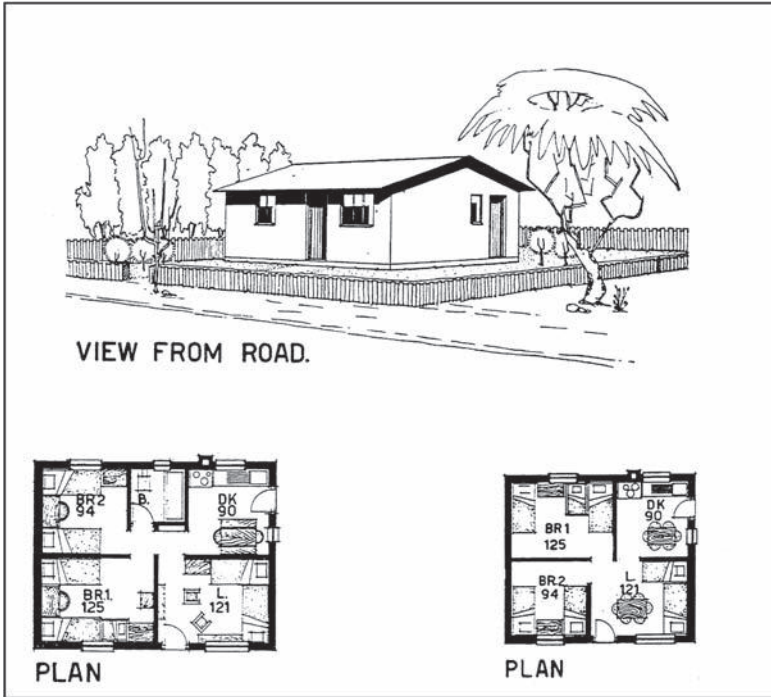


FIGURE 3.4: Original NBRI concept design, NE 51/6
 Source: Japha and Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development
 of townships'

coincided with state moves to privatize African housing and encourage greater reliance by Africans on the private sector for the purchase and improvement of homes.⁴⁴ By 1994 Africans in Cape Town were housed predominantly in site and service areas – 42.7 per cent of Africans in the city lived in serviced shacks, compared with 22.2 per cent in formal houses and 16.5 per cent in unserviced shacks.⁴⁵

Africans living in site and service settlements had a far different relation to home improvement. Because they were normally provided with only the site and a cement slab on which to build, residents had first to marshal resources to build the house structure itself before embarking on any major improvements. In Khayelitsha, few residents were able, in actuality,

to undertake any significant upgrading beyond the building of the basic shack structure.⁴⁶ In addition, because sites were relatively small – for example, they ranged from 78 to 90 square metres in Site B in Khayelitsha (compared to the 400 square metres of respondents' homes in Guguletu) – residents were much less likely to envisage expansion projects of the same magnitude as those in the older, established settlements. Overall, through the latter decades of apartheid, the increased residential density in Cape Town's townships in concert with a trend towards decreased plot size heightened the uniqueness of first-generation women's home improvement endeavours.⁴⁷ These women were able to pursue a specifically expansionist agenda in part because the properties that they resided in afforded them the space to do so.

Expansion provided the added economic incentive of increasing the value of a home.⁴⁸ But beyond economic considerations was the simple desire to stay in the same place. Indeed, in order to understand more fully why these households would choose to invest their money and time so heavily in extensive upgrading projects rather than moving, we need to look beyond economics and into the complex dynamics that lay behind the settling process, because, in many cases, as women's testimonies affirm, it was decidedly *uneconomical* to renovate. Time was a costly consideration – major renovations often took years to accomplish, causing disruption of daily household routines in the process. And financial sacrifice was another. Even if funds were secured, there was no necessary guarantee of success. Township building practices were at best uneven in delivery and quality, and at worst, corrupt and hazardous. Selina Mteto's lament was often echoed in respondents' stories of township construction:

The things I want, I don't get them. Like I can't finish my house. The people who are working leave the job half-done and quit. Like the people who were doing the paving quit in the middle of the work. Even the people who were putting tiles, the tiles are still here inside the house, you see. So they left the job half done and quit.⁴⁹

As Eunice Fuzile commented sagely on her personal experiences with contracted work, 'If you build a house, you will finish with a third builder.'⁵⁰

It does appear that township construction, particularly in the last 15 years, has been a highly unregulated and inconsistent business with few opportunities for Africans to secure reputable and affordable contractors.⁵¹ Though households could still, to a limited extent, bypass such obstacles by relying on their own labour and purchase of materials, evidence indicates that, at least for these established residents, the ethos of 'self-help' that was advocated in site and service settlement schemes had not transferred to their attempts at major structural improvements.

If the economics of township renovations often provided compelling reasons to abandon the process altogether, why did these households resolutely persist in choosing to remain and engage in expansion projects instead of moving? According to Pauline Mboniswa, the answer lay in the legacy of forced removals under the Group Areas Act. Simply put, urban Africans did not like 'moving around'. Pauline stated, 'we are not that types of people that like to move around. I know for a fact white people, they prefer moving around.' She went on to explain:

We have been put together for long time, and then we are told, 'You are black, you have to stay together in one area' So now, when I'm here in Langa, I'm used to staying in Langa, then I can't think of going to stay in Khayelitsha and starting new life in Khayelitsha now I just stay here rather than moving all around So now you are stuck here, and you've made yourself comfortable here, you don't think of moving any other place I think that this Group Areas Act, plus the apartheid made it so we can be like that. And we cannot change now You think now you cannot survive without these people surrounding you. With me, I don't think it's the way that we were, it's the way that we are.⁵²

Pauline's comments illuminate how a sense of place and belonging was radically altered by the workings of apartheid machinery. She clearly felt that forced removals and highly regulated living conditions had a powerful influence on the urban African psyche, so much so that Africans became 'stuck', yet 'comfortable', and the thought of moving was no longer a desirable option. That this transformation could be historically located in urban apartheid policy was evident in Pauline's assertion that 'it's the way that we are' and not 'the way that we were'.

Indeed, frequent movement and instability of tenure marked most first-generation women's housing histories prior to establishing residence in Guguletu. Grace Madikane's story is indicative of this pattern:

Between 1952 and 1975, before Grace Madikane took up her final place of residence in her council house in Guguletu, she moved on seven separate occasions. Some moves were decided on the basis of space constraints or factors such as marriage or employment. However, Grace recalled that she was forcibly removed from her residence twice. The first removal occurred when she, her husband and their young children were evicted from the multiracial settlement of Crawford in 1959 as part of the forced removals being conducted throughout the Peninsula at that time. Her parents were forcibly removed from their home in Goodwood as well.

After ten years in Nyanga, the Madikanes moved into a council house in Guguletu in 1969, a move they thought would be their last. However, political infighting between various heads of the Apostolic Church in which Grace's husband William was a pastor resulted in church officials cancelling William's pass in 1972. Immediately, the family's fortunes changed. They were summarily evicted from their council homes without any notice – both parents were away at work when the police came to empty the house of their possessions. By the time Grace was alerted and returned home, her household contents had been relocated to the pavement in front of the house, watched over by her children. Her son Thabo remembered his parents' main reaction to the scene: 'They felt embarrassed, everybody felt embarrassed.'⁵³

In the next three years, the family was split up, with Grace's husband living on his own in Stellenbosch 50 kilometres away, while Grace attempted to find suitable accommodation for herself and her children. Sometimes, she and her children were able to stay together, with Grace's parents and neighbours. However, at other times, she had to 'rent different places for my children', sometimes spreading them out over the city. William's pass was subsequently reinstated, which enabled them to move back into Guguletu's council housing in 1975.'⁵⁴

In Grace's case, obtaining a council house in Guguletu represented in some respects the end of an enforced mobility, and she welcomed this

release despite the stark quarters of her new home. Though in the same interview she referred to her new house in Guguletu as a 'stable', Grace clearly located her ability to settle with the acquisition of a house where all the members of her family could be. This power finally to gather her family under one roof accounted for her overriding sense of joy: 'You know, when I got this house, I really cried.'⁵⁵

Ellen Gqozo expressed similar sentiments of gratitude when she received notice to move into her council house: 'They gave me, they found a place for me now to stay. My own house. Let's stay together. That's my own house.'⁵⁶ The preciousness of these homes was only magnified by the passing years, as the supply of state housing stock continued to be drastically short of the burgeoning population.⁵⁷ African women were able to find a sense of rootedness within the spare confines of their four-roomed houses and took the first tentative steps towards an actively felt ownership – 'that's my own house' – that belied the insecurity of their tenancy. In addition, as will be detailed in chapter five, first-generation women heralded their new lives in Guguletu with the creation and faithful maintenance of dense and layered associational networks. These ties reinforced a sense of community and contributed to their allegiance to fellow residents and fellow Africans. This in turn bound women on a deeper level to their built existence in the township.

When political reform in the late 1980s opened up the possibility for these women to move residence through market transactions, they chose not to capitalize on this development. Instead, first-generation women affirmed the tenacity of their felt links to both their structural homes and their residential area by deciding to remain. They could finally begin to construct home on their own terms. Expansion became both necessary and desirable in this endeavour, and in most cases, a never-ending project. It is evident that first-generation women not only actively participated in upgrading projects, but also actively incorporated the spirit of renovation into their self-understanding. Ultimately, this may probably be why, even late in life, home improvement was so central to these women's urban existence. Even after two major expansion projects, Eunice Fuzile replied that what she wished most was to 'extend' again. Two years after the Mvambos completed both an extension to the house and an addition of a backyard flat, Gertrude Mvambo expressed a desire to expand further to accommodate her three sons and granddaughter. At the age of 78, when asked about general dreams for her future, Rita

Mfiki replied, 'I wish I can get money, if I can get money and make that four-roomed house bigger.'⁵⁸ Ellen Gqozo, also at age 78, most aptly summed it up: 'There are lots of things which I would need to be done in this house . . . to renew the place where I am staying.'⁵⁹ Home improvement thus became instrumental to personal as well as residential renewal.

Gendered and generational implications

Several interesting findings with regard to the gendered aspect of township improvement projects have emerged in this research. Women engaged in the home improvement process in unique ways. For example, financing is one area where women used existing informal associational networks open to them. They often relied on participation in *umgalelo*, a rotating credit association, to supply the funds necessary to build. Their use of this particular channel made financial sense because access to bank loans was difficult to obtain, given that many of them did not have formal, sustained employment. Building societies were able to make loans directly to African leaseholders only from the mid-1980s for building and improving their homes.⁶⁰ However, the use of local *umgalelo* may have also been seen as a preferred option, not the only option, because it allowed the participant greater autonomy in deciding how the money could be used.

As Gwagwa stresses in her study, internal (and often gendered) household dynamics are important to understanding how and why some improvements were realised and others were abandoned entirely. For the Mvambo family, for instance, the role of Gertrude's husband as the primary breadwinner and sole decision-maker contributed towards the poor quality of renovations that resulted from other family members' inability to oversee the process he had initiated. Zanele Mvambo related that her father's attempts at saving money at every turn resulted in inferior workmanship, something that in subsequent years she had to redress many times over, stating:

He [her father] was earning a lot of money but what did he do about that money? That's what I am regretting. Look now at this house. I don't know how many times this house has been built. Because he didn't want to give the money to my mother. He kept

the money in his pocket. He wanted to take the cheap labour to do the things and they did it. At the end of the day, those things were collapsed again.⁶¹

However, several informants testified to strong mutual consideration between spouses in the decision-making, and this cut across generational divides. First-generation respondent Eunice Fuzile, for example, stated, 'Whoever came with the idea and raises it and say let us do such and such a thing. And then I will say maybe I think we should start with such and such a thing. But we always discussed it together.'⁶² Second-generation respondent Pauline Mboniswa concurred: 'It was always a joint decision, even if he came up with the idea, then he'd sit down and discuss it.'⁶³ Even in those families where female respondents appeared to have little control over the decision-making process, upon further inspection it emerged that women played a large role in moving large-scale renovation forward, particularly when they were involved in financing such projects.

When asked to describe how a particular builder was chosen, many female respondents noted the informal nature of the process.⁶⁴ One of the major techniques women employed was simple observation. Pauline Mboniswa noticed someone working on a house in a neighbouring street and spoke with him personally to arrange a plan, ultimately resulting in a completed backyard flatlet, front wall and garage in 1999.⁶⁵ Word of mouth was also important. For example, Eunice Fuzile used a recommendation from a friend in Khayelitsha to find someone to install a new ceiling in 1992.⁶⁶ Thus, finding and securing a contractor was an informal affair and women largely chose to rely on their own observational skills and existing social networks rather than opting to consult any regulatory body, an established building contractor or the state for assistance. This was the case despite the many examples given of theft and poor workmanship among some contractors.

In recent years, some African women have attempted to overcome problems with the male-dominated construction industry by building houses themselves. The Victoria Mxenge Housing Development Association, begun in the early 1990s, supports its mostly female members through every stage of the housing process, from the acquisition of sites to the initial pooling of financial resources, designing the house and the final construction. However, women in my research have by and

large not appropriated the self-help ethos Victoria Mxenge members exhibited, largely because of the time-consuming burden of their 'triple role' (as breadwinners, carers and active community 'managers'), which Caroline Moser affirms can be a serious impediment to women's participation in such projects.⁶⁷

Generational factors also merit consideration. Second-generation women were instrumental in their mothers' success at the second stage of home improvements. For example, Lumka Kalipa's daughter Buyiswa, who worked for a major petrol company, was able to fund entirely the extensions and indoor bathroom additions undertaken in Lumka's house between 1997 and 1999. Buyiswa contributed though she no longer resided in her mother's house. These were the first renovations completed since the initial set of changes to the doors, ceilings, floors and windows done in 1974. When asked who made decisions on the types of renovations undertaken, Lumka replied that it was both her daughters – Buyiswa and Bulelwa. Pauline Mboniswa had already moved out when she had a small shack built in the back of her mother Grace Madikane's house in 1978. And as already mentioned, Zanele Mvambo actively funded attempts to salvage previous renovations done to her mother's home. Importantly, as we will see in the following chapter, second-generation women were equally pivotal in shifting household energy acquisition and consumption towards electricity and electrical appliances.

Those second-generation women in this study fortunate enough to move into their own housing in adulthood seem to have carried with them their mothers' enthusiasm for renovation, actively pursuing the upgrading of their own homes. It is difficult to characterize a set of renovations that were done across the board as we could with first-generation women's council homes, largely because the initial structures these second-generation women moved into varied in form, appearance and quality. The most that could be inferred from interviews was that the general tenor of renovations was expansion of the type evident in first-generational homes. No new dynamic or sets of priorities were apparent here.

It is also not easy to assess how third-generation women engaged in this upgrading process, because, at the time the research was conducted, none of them had yet established independent residence. What is evident is that these young women possessed a desire to help improve the homes

in which they lived once they had sufficient financial resources. Zoliswa Mhlekwá said, 'If I can win the Lotto, I will renovate my home . . . for Mama [her grandmother, Regina Mhlekwá, with whom she lived].'⁶⁸ Among the first things Matumo Madikane said she would do were she to find employment was to buy a new ZAR 7,000 bedroom suite for her mother.⁶⁹ Thus, there is a sense that third-generation women were aware of the costs entailed in home renewal and expressed some willingness to help their parents and/or guardians offset these costs eventually.

As for their own personal housing needs, third-generation respondents evinced a greater readiness to simply 'move out' in order to find a desirable residence in a suitable area. For some of these women, faced with inadequate access to a regular income for rent and a long legacy of insufficient public housing stock in the Western Cape, that first step could simply mean moving out of the main house and into their grandmothers' backyards.⁷⁰ Buyiswa Mteto erected a small free-standing shack on her grandmother's property. She filled it with her own personal appliances – a large refrigerator, television, stereo system, microwave and stove dominated the interior. These afforded her a margin of social independence in the crowded confines of her grandmother's home. What is interesting is that although she had bought and furnished the prefabricated structure herself, Buyiswa expressed the desire to move out as soon as possible to a larger rented two-bedroomed shack somewhere else in the neighbourhood.⁷¹ The ease with which she contemplated this move may be indicative of the relative lack of emotional investment Buyiswa made in her home – she saw the shack as a necessary but temporary step towards a more autonomous housing arrangement.

Most third-generation respondents expressed a keenness to reside in other areas of the city, particularly in multiracial neighbourhoods. They also exhibited a willingness to live in other urban areas in South Africa. This readiness was explained in various ways. Rachel Mhlekwá stated, 'I want mix . . . I want to see how I am going to live with other people.'⁷² Zoliswa Mhlekwá thought that she would prefer to be in town because of feelings of not being safe in Guguletu.⁷³ Matumo Madikane stated, 'If God gives me the money, I want my mother [with whom Matumo lived] to live elsewhere. Maybe I want her to live maybe in Maitland [a former Coloured group area], out of our black community where she is.'⁷⁴ It is possible to attribute third-generation women's willingness to explore other neighbourhoods and their lack of attachment to their

current places of residence simply to their youth. However, their housing histories suggest that for them, unlike their grandmothers, insecurity of tenure caused by the threat of forced removal or eviction was not a major factor in shaping their association to 'home' and 'place'. Third-generation respondents' housing histories showed a marked uniformity and stability – all the women surveyed spent the majority of their lives in either their mothers' or grandmothers' homesteads, or alternated between the two. Thus, they were less apt to connect residential mobility with state intrusiveness and instability.

Instead, as we will explore more in chapter six, mobility became something third-generation women actively embraced as a marker of newly won political freedoms and their growing consumerism. Mobility's positive features were emphasized through their educational experiences, as third-generation girls moved to better-resourced schools in formerly Coloured and white areas in the transitional and post-apartheid period, and through greater access to consumer markets, and thus consumerist lifestyles. It may be that for third-generation women, *residential* mobility could have been similarly connected to a positive trend towards increased consumer choice. In this light, we can understand the observation that younger Africans were more likely to leave African settlements as part of a desire to move 'upmarket'.⁷⁵

The relative lack of commitment of third-generation women to community-based social networks further served to dissociate them from a strong identification with their current residential areas. Townships such as Guguletu and Khayelitsha were not repositories, then, of strongly felt social links and an abiding sense of community – third-generation women were far more apt to focus instead on negative aspects of African social interactions or on issues of crime that plagued their areas. Matumo clarified why she wanted to move herself and her mother out of Khayelitsha and into Maitland: 'You see Coloured people, I see them, they do not mind other people's business. They mind their business. We blacks, I would want to say, would say, "I don't like your jersey, you shouldn't have worn that jersey," all those things.' Matumo was suggesting that social intimacy among Africans constituted a decidedly negative aspect of her life in Khayelitsha. In contrast, the anonymity she perceived as part of life in Maitland seemed a welcome respite from 'neighbourly' intrusiveness.

Nomphelo Fuzile, who lived in Guguletu (where community participation was acknowledged to be stronger than in Khayelitsha), similarly

focused on negative aspects of her residence there. In her interview she repeatedly raised the issue of crime: 'You know these roughies, it's not nice staying in the township. You're not safe wherever you are going.'⁷⁶ High levels of crime had a negative impact on the lifestyle that Nomphele tried to cultivate in the township, one particularly irksome consequence for her being that she was prevented from joining an aerobics class offered in a community hall on the other side of Guguletu: 'You know, you risk a lot to go to that side.'

Thus, the desire for a safer, more anonymous lifestyle helps explain the readiness of third-generation women to explore neighbourhoods with different racial and social dynamics. Combined with their eager embrace of the virtues of mobility in a democratized and consumer-orientated world, we can see how third-generation women were able, far more easily than first-generation women, to entertain thoughts of relocating 'home'.

Conclusion

Analysis of trans-generational testimonies affirms that Africans did indeed 'grow' and improve their houses in particular ways, and that these tended to reflect distinct historical trajectories. First-generation women described an initial aggressive phase of home improvement immediately upon taking up residence in their council homes. Because they had experienced high residential instability and forced removals in the years preceding their arrival, these new homes represented a step, albeit tentative, towards a more settled urban existence. Their choice of renovations in this initial stage reflected both their need to fashion dwellings according to very basic standards of comfort and respectability, and their hesitations over the insecurity of their tenure. After a dormant phase coinciding with increasing levels of political unrest and instability in Guguletu from the late 1970s until the mid-1980s, first-generation respondents catalogued a new wave of renovations that were far more ambitious in nature. These improvements testified to a growing ethos of expansion and a desire to craft a sense of 'spaciousness' in homes, markedly different from the wish, prevalent earlier, to construct modest and 'respectable' homes. Their aspirations were encouraged by state confirmation in the 1980s of their rights to tenure and property ownership in the city. Their homes thus increasingly became a marker of the

urbanizing ambitions of first-generation women and a testament to their rootedness in the city.

In contrast, in a radically altered political environment, younger generations developed differing notions of housing requirements and housing need. More distanced from community-based networks and more attuned to the benefits afforded by mobility in a broader sense, third-generation women freely contemplated and enthusiastically embraced future movement to other parts of the city or even to other urban areas in the country. That they have as yet been unable to move out of predominantly African settlements should thus be seen more as a reflection of financial constraints rather than any positive commitment to remain linked to their current area of residence.

Finally, it is evident that women developed unique methods to fuel their home improvement endeavours, whether through accessing community-based credit associations or using informal informational networks to help select appropriate contractors and avoid corrupt ones. In Cape Town, the creation of the Victoria Mxenge Project signalled a greater emphasis on women-centred and -supported home building, while providing an alternative to the male-dominated construction industry. Undoubtedly, because the overwhelming majority of respondents in this study are female, certain gaps in the gendered aspects of the analysis will emerge. For example, it would be difficult to conclude definitively that a home improvement ethic was decidedly women-driven without also considering oral evidence from men to some degree. And, as African women themselves attested, their relationships with the men of their households helped determine the quality and pace of the renovations undertaken.⁷⁷

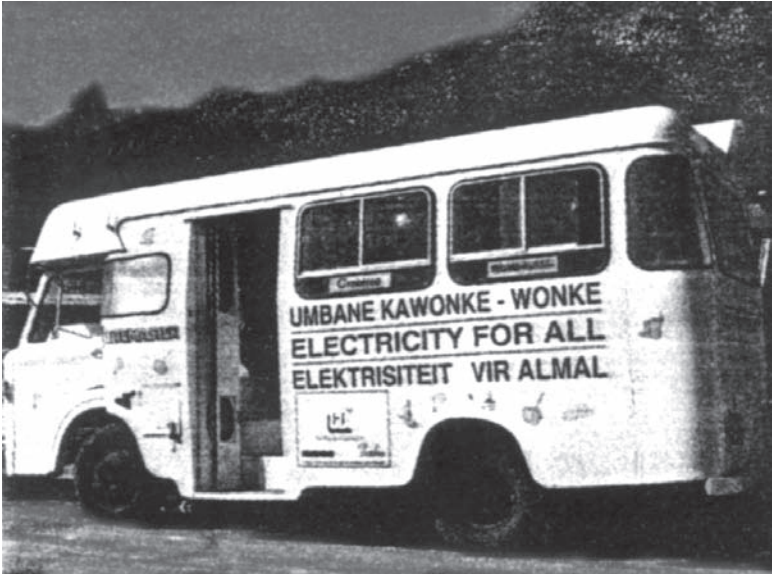
An historical analysis of home improvement provides important indicators not only of the structural changes to the homes in which urban Africans lived in apartheid Cape Town, but also of the underlying processes of settlement they undertook. Furthermore, sensitivity to gendered and generational dynamics has revealed with greater clarity African women's internalization of their differing housing designs.

HEARTH AND HOME: ENERGY RESOURCING AND CONSUMPTION IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Within the fiscal year 1993/4, Cape Town City Council introduced its 'Electricity for All' campaign. The Electricity Department dispatched to Cape Town's settlements a roving bus, which served as a demonstration unit and a mobile office to distribute and receive applications to connect to the expanding electricity grid. Some promotional photographs of this campaign appear in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.

The campaign's drive to also reach residents in informal housing evidenced a significant shift in municipal thinking regarding electrification.¹ All previous electrification efforts in black areas had been aimed at formal settlements such as Langa, Nyanga, Guguletu, and Khayelitsha.² On the heels of this shift in policy came an affirmation that basic electricity was a cornerstone of development in poor areas – the municipality agreed in 2001 to provide 20 kWh (kilowatt-hours) of free electricity per month to underprivileged households.³

To some extent, these local developments reflect a broader national trend. Historically, electricity was in fact a rare energy resource for most urban Africans during the apartheid period. Even by 1991, only 10 per cent of black South Africans in urban areas had access to domestic electricity.⁴ Democracy in 1994 brought with it fresh pledges from the government and new public-private partnerships to provide universal access to basic electricity in the country. The task ahead proved difficult, partly due to apartheid's legacy of arrears and mismanagement in black areas. Significant logistical, financial, and administrative hurdles had to be faced with Eskom (the parastatal established through the Electricity



FIGURES 4.1 AND 4.2: Promotional photographs for the 'Electricity for All' campaign
Top, mobile bus; bottom, Deputy City Electrical Engineer Munro with a new prepayment meter customer
Source: Cape Town City Council Electrical Engineer, *Annual Report* (1993/4)

Act of 1922 and now the major supplier of electricity in South Africa) and formerly white municipalities undertaking to absorb the electricity infrastructure of black areas.⁵

In recent years, both the public and private sector have acknowledged that ushering South Africa into the electrical age will require more than a broadening of access, as difficult a task as that may be.⁶ Perceptions and practices need to be considered as well. Africans in particular, over the course of the apartheid era, came to view segregated and mismanaged electricity providers as emblematic of state-sponsored corruption and racialized privilege. 'Stealing electricity' by illegally tapping into municipal power lines became one popular, if potentially hazardous, response.⁷ In addition, factors such as inconsistent electrical supply created 'energy insecurity', preventing many from completely relying on electricity to fulfill daily needs.⁸ Lack of familiarity with electricity also contributed to hesitancy on the part of consumers and exacerbated already tense relationships between township residents and service providers such as Eskom.⁹ Furthermore, the continuing widespread prevalence and persistence of multiple-fuel use even among wealthy and long-urbanized households in South Africa means that simplistic 'energy transitional models' based on income levels or degree of urbanization cannot capture the complexity of whether and how Africans negotiated the shift to electricity.¹⁰ Fuels such as paraffin, gas, coal, and wood have continued to figure, in sometimes unexpected ways, in the everyday lives and survival strategies of Africans.

This chapter seeks to add to the now considerable literature on energy consumption in South Africa primarily through the contribution of a historical and gendered perspective. Its particular focus, however, is on how differing generations of African women resourced, consumed, and related to various types of fuels. Analysing the history of energy usage from a gendered perspective is essential because it is clear that African women were, and remain, largely responsible for the acquisition and usage of household energy.¹¹ Furthermore, women often depended upon household energy expenditure to secure their economic livelihoods in the informal sector, for example, by ensuring an electricity supply for a rented backyard shack or selling goods cooked on a paraffin stove. Energy's centrality in women's daily social and economic lives means that high prices or disruptions in such basic municipal services as electricity can have a disproportionately disadvantageous effect on women.¹²

Underlying this research is the notion that energy should be seen as a commodity that has social value, not only economic value, and may serve to cement or break down communal networks.¹³ As recent scholarship on the social determinants of energy use in low-income townships reveals, energy use patterns are embedded in social relations and meanings.¹⁴ Fiona Ross has shown that in Die Bos, an informal settlement outside Somerset West in the Western Cape, women used fuel consumption strategically to demarcate rights in domestic labour and clarify social boundaries. Even interpersonal and intergenerational tensions within the domestic unit could be expressed through fuel activities.¹⁵

Recent studies also affirm that certain types of energy such as electricity were seen as the domain of men, while such fuels as paraffin were in some areas constructed as distinctly feminine and domestic.¹⁶ Leslie Bank points out that in Duncan Village township in East London, paraffin demand stayed surprisingly high, despite its major role in a series of destructive fires in the period 1986 to 1997, precisely because its use and exchange helped women cement social and economic networks of interaction within their community.¹⁷ In contrast to the 'social power' of paraffin, electricity was perceived as being a deterrent to social interaction. Electrical appliances, because of their high cost, were often not shared. Residents in electrified homes were seen as too individualistic. However, its marker of high status and upward mobility made it desirable as well. Thus, consumers had to weigh the benefits of prestige with the negative effects of decreased access to social networks in the community.¹⁸

Though the work above has provided valuable perspectives on the social dynamics surrounding energy exchange, acquisition, and consumption, it has largely failed to contextualize those dynamics historically.¹⁹ Using archival material gleaned from the state, the municipality, and electricity providers, this chapter examines the historical development of electrification in African areas in the last five decades within the specific political environment of Cape Town. It then considers shifts in patterns of energy use as shown through the lives of women. Twenty-five 'energy histories' form the basis of this study. These histories include not only detailed profiles of fuel use over time, but also oral testimonies on aspects related to the meaning and management of those fuels.²⁰ Their collected life histories, some spanning seven decades, provide a sharper focus on how issues intimately related to energy provisioning strategies such as

household dynamics, housing, and gender played out across years and into subsequent generations.

While this approach does not have the breadth of other studies, its selective historical perspective may allow us to consider how and why certain energy shifts happen at particular times in the life span of a person and a household. What and who, in the end, determined energy choice? Finally, the cross-generational perspective employed here may also reveal changing perceptions of certain fuels, and the ways in which household members differently utilized appliances to broker power relations. As urban households themselves evolved, and younger generations of women gradually influenced household fuel choice and use, what key dynamics emerged? The answers to these questions have implications for the history of African women in urban areas, for this history of fuel use becomes more than a useful economic history. It provides a deeper story of differential access to valued resources, and of how succeeding generations of African women have differently constructed notions of themselves and their needs around fuel choice.

A brief history of electrification and electricity administration of African townships in Cape Town

Early attempts, 1958–80

Official inquiries into the possibility of electrifying African townships in Cape Town were made as early as 1958.²¹ By 1962, when control over the supply of electricity to Guguletu was transferred from Eskom to Cape Town City Council, where it remains to this day, the only electricity made available to the township was for street lighting, with the exception of a few shops and the Native Administration Office in Section I.²² Between 1964 and 1968, the number of street lamps operated and maintained by the City Council's Electricity Department more than doubled from 350 to 725 in Langa and from 604 to 1,417 in Guguletu.²³

Compared to this activity, the provision of domestic access to electricity lagged behind. As early as 1960, the City Council's Manager of Native Administration Rogers submitted a report suggesting that a domestic supply of electricity be made available in the official townships within Cape Town municipality.²⁴ In December 1961, Rogers again inquired about the progress of connecting a domestic energy supply to the township. Much of Rogers's resolve can be attributed to persistent

African demands for electricity: 'My reason for enquiring is because I am constantly receiving enquiries from tenants of the brick dwellings in Nyanga West about the possibility of installing electricity.'²⁵ Despite administrative delays, Africans in both of Cape Town's official African townships had potential access to electricity supplies by the latter half of the 1960s.

However, from the standpoint of African residents, negotiating the administrative labyrinth to connect to that supply and ultimately maintain that connection was another story entirely. The system for electricity distribution and administration set up between the City Council structures and its local Department of Bantu Administration was complex, involving extensive coordination among several administrative bodies.²⁶ Installation delays were characteristic of the electricity system in place. In 1969, Director of Bantu Administration Worrall asked the City electrical engineer to investigate why nine Africans who had gone through all the necessary procedures were still waiting for installation, some having endured a wait of nearly two years.²⁷ Furthermore, from the outset the council made it very clear that regardless of the money invested by Africans to install the necessary wiring in their homes, they would still be regarded as only temporary dwellers, and that ownership of their homes would remain vested firmly in the council.²⁸

A significant feature of this system since its inception was the difficulty African women faced in gaining access to electricity, given their relative marginal economic status, and even more importantly, the difficulty in securing rights to tenure or residence *in their name* in the city. Miss J. Mashela in 1967 attempted to have wiring installed in her house in Guguletu. The superintendent of her section told her that 'as you are not the registered occupier . . . your application cannot be considered.'²⁹ Only the registered tenant, who happened to be her father, had the right to request installation. The superintendent informed her that he had already written to the father, unbeknown to the daughter, asking him to visit his offices in order to discuss the situation.³⁰ This case is significant not for its uniqueness – indeed, many such applications by African women were probably refused. However, it exemplifies the fact that the implications of the infamous 'Section 10' regulations (see chapter two) reached far into issues of house and home.³¹ Thus, not only were women largely dependent on men for rights of residence in Cape Town, but they were also dependent on the same men to decide whether

to access services newly offered by the city. This dependence affected relations between partners within a household, as well as their relationship to certain types of energy bundles, since acquiring sufficient fuel was normally the domain of women, yet access to that energy was firmly placed in the hands of men. Perhaps this partly explains the association of African men with electricity and women with other fuel sources.

It is difficult without further research to assess the financial viability of the council's fledgling electricity administration system in the townships, but there is evidence that electricity was a difficult service for Africans to afford even after installation, and many fell into arrears.³² There are numerous instances in the electricity files of the City Treasurer's Office sending requests to the Department of Bantu Administration for aid in issuing summons to delinquent account holders. Sometimes account holders became delinquent simply because busy work schedules prevented them from traveling to Electricity House in town to make payments.³³

From 1973, responsibility for Bantu administration shifted from municipal structures to centrally controlled Administration Boards that were far more answerable to the Department of Bantu Administration and Development.³⁴ The new Administration Boards inherited much of the same confusion that characterized electricity provision under the old system. Problems with African account holders remained an important feature.³⁵ Continuity with the old system existed in several ways, not least in that the Administration Board reaffirmed the former Bantu Administration's position that any new electrical works done to residences would remain property of the board, even if the resident were to lose permission to remain in the dwelling, 'and treated thereafter in all respects as though the Board had itself erected the buildings at its own cost.'³⁶

Electricity distribution and consumption among Africans in Cape Town, 1980–2000

By the late 1980s, government Acts had regularized electricity provision throughout South Africa. By 1987, when the Electricity Act was introduced, three major players had emerged in the distribution system: Eskom, the white municipalities, and the Black Local Authorities. By virtue of the Electricity Act, white municipalities were granted the sole right to distribute electricity within their area of jurisdiction. By 1989,

more than 520 white municipalities existed in South Africa. Significantly, for most white municipalities the sale of electricity was a major, profitable, and reliable source of income. For example, Cape Town's Electricity Department reported consistently rising surpluses, from ZAR 1.25 million in 1960 to over ZAR 10 million in 1976.³⁷ In 1985, the electricity surplus contributed ZAR 20 million to general rates, and in 1990 over ZAR 44 million.³⁸

In contrast, by 1991, electricity provision and distribution was a source of high instability and financial loss for Black Local Authorities, which were created in 1982 and served as the urban counterpart to the homelands' indirect rule system.³⁹ Black Local Authorities usually bought their electricity in bulk either from Eskom or from a nearby white municipal electricity department. In this way, many township residents unknowingly subsidized rates payable in white areas, since white municipalities sold their electricity at a level that ensured at least a 10 per cent surplus when traded. In addition, Africans had to bear the capital costs of electrification indirectly, as well as help repay loans used to pay for the creation of electricity networks. As a result, electricity rates in newly electrified townships were generally higher than in white areas throughout this period. Many residents could not afford electricity after these hidden costs were added onto electricity rates. Inflated electricity rates, poor quality of service and supply, and generally poor accounting practices on the part of the Black Local Authorities compounded cost control problems and contributed to general consumer dissatisfaction with and distrust of electricity.⁴⁰

We can see these contentions realized in the Cape Town case. By 1984, only a quarter of the houses in Guguletu were connected to the electricity grid. In Langa, though the area was connected, many individual households did not have electricity because of the prohibitively high cost of connection and wiring installation, or because their supplies had been cut off because they defaulted on their electricity bills. In 1981 alone, the City Treasurer issued 72,000 disconnection orders because of unpaid electricity accounts.⁴¹ Some 80 per cent of households surveyed in Langa, Guguletu, and Khayelitsha said blackouts occurred 'often' in some areas. Tellingly, in 1992, the average arrears for electricity accounts in Langa and Guguletu was ZAR 1,200 per household.⁴²

Developments since democratization have only tentatively signalled a transition to a new electrical age. Certainly, large-scale electrification,

which had its roots in the creation of the new township of Khayelitsha, had by the early 1990s greatly increased the percentage of electrified African homes in Cape Town.⁴³ In addition, a key area of recent development has been the installment of prepayment meters, which in Cape Town have nearly entirely replaced the billed credit meters used previously. By 2001, one Electricity Department official estimated that of the approximately 250,000 electrified households under its administration, 230,000 were operating under the prepaid system.⁴⁴ Similarly, Eskom, which is the distribution authority for Khayelitsha, reported in 2001 that it administered only 39 billed credit meters in contrast to 45,400 prepayment meters in the township, with the goal of installing 10,000 more by the end of the year.⁴⁵ Supporters of the prepayment system count among its key advantages the ability of consumers to visibly monitor their own electricity expenditures and buy electricity only as needed, preventing arrears from developing and avoiding any disputes about billing.

However, as the multiyear, multi-institutional Municipal Services Project has revealed in ongoing research, the government's drive in recent years to privatize such essential services as sewerage, electricity, and water has undermined previous commitments to provide universal and affordable access. The advent of prepayment meters in Cape Town, then, could be seen less as a victory for African consumers and more as symbolic of the state's shift to 'cost recovery' over and above obligations of service delivery.⁴⁶ Furthermore, as Maj Fiil-Flynn has shown convincingly, in Soweto promises of 'free electricity' were hardly the bold poverty-reduction measure residents had hoped for when it was introduced during the 2000 local election campaigns. In practice, the bundle of 50 kWh per month (30 kWh more than offered in Cape Town) provided only a marginal 10 per cent savings in the electricity expenditures of the households surveyed. In addition, Sowetans continued to be deeply dissatisfied with the cost and quality of electricity service delivery, and sometimes resorted to illegal connections to ensure a steady supply.⁴⁷

Given this historical overview, we can begin to see how Africans in Cape Town developed a correspondingly uneven and sometimes uncertain relationship with electricity. During the apartheid era, gendered legislation restricting African women's access to housing made for an especially challenging set of hurdles when it came to their ability to access the electrical supply. Most African women's first exposure to

electricity was in the workplace. In addition, African residents saw financial and administrative difficulties attendant with the distribution of electricity as being vitally linked to larger issues of distrust regarding state control and intervention in urban life. In some ways, intensive electrification efforts in the post-apartheid period and the promise of 'free' electricity heralded a much welcomed commitment to ideals such as universal access and transparency, ideals similarly conveyed by the newly elected democratic government. However, it is clear that despite public and private initiatives in recent years, many urban Africans with the 'privilege' of access to electricity continued to experience this energy source as unreliable, a drain on precious financial resources, and a bone of contention between themselves and local structures.

Historicizing energy use among African households

If we begin with first-generation respondents' energy histories, some common patterns emerge. Figure 4.3 charts Grace Madikane's primary sources of household energy over the years and presents a brief profile of her energy use patterns.

As a child in rural Lady Frere in the Eastern Cape, Grace remembered that they used wood for their cooking and heating needs. At night, they would light cloths dipped in fat. And she recalled that a wind-up gramophone was used for entertainment. When she moved to Cape Town in 1949 with her parents, her family switched to paraffin to provide for cooking, heating, and illumination. They used a paraffin-powered Primus stove and a Beatrice stove (a safer variation of the flame stove) for cooking, and the Primus stove served a secondary function of heating the room. For light, they used paraffin lamps. When she moved out of her parents' house with her husband to Rylands in 1952, they acquired a coal stove, which was then added to the existing paraffin-fueled appliances. The coal stove, called a 'Welcome Dover', served a dual function, as did the Primus, to heat up a room. Grace used this trio of appliances – Primus, Beatrice stoves, and the Welcome Dover – for her cooking needs until 1972. A significant substitution occurred in the ten years the Madikanes lived in Nyanga (1959–69) – they used wood combined with the secondary heat from the coal stove to provide for the majority of heating needs.

FIGURE 4.3: Grace Madikane's energy use profile

Years/place of residence	Cooking fuel	Heating fuel	Lighting fuel	Recreational fuel
Pre-1949 Lady Frere	Wood	Wood	Fat	(Gramophone)
1949–52/ Cape Town centre	Paraffin	Paraffin (stove)	Paraffin	(Gramophone)
1952–9 Rylands & Crawford	Paraffin & coal	Paraffin & coal (stoves)	Paraffin	(Gramophone)
1959–69 Nyanga	Paraffin & coal	Wood & coal (stove)	Paraffin	Batteries
1969–72 Guguletu	Paraffin & coal	Paraffin & coal (stoves)	Paraffin	Batteries
1972–5 various places	–	–	–	–
1975–80 Guguletu	Paraffin, then gas from 1976	Paraffin (heater)	Paraffin	Batteries
1980– present Guguletu	Gas, then electricity from 1980	Paraffin (heater)	Electricity	Electricity

From 1972 to 1975, the members of the Madikane family were split up, due to Grace's husband being ousted from his position as pastor of a local church and the cancellation of his pass, which led to their eviction from their house in Guguletu. Grace lived in various places during this period (only occasionally and briefly with her children and husband), among them a small room in Guguletu that had space enough only for a bed. Because of these space constraints, Grace lent the coal stove to someone for safekeeping, but that person also had no room for the stove and instead left it outside. Needless to say, the stove was damaged beyond repair by rain. When the Madikanes moved back to Guguletu in 1975, into the house where Grace lives currently, they used a Beatrice and Primus stove for

*cooking until she bought a gas stove in 1976. Grace sold the gas stove after her daughter Pauline bought her an electric stove in 1980. She purchased her first paraffin heater in 1975 and uses it to this day for her heating needs. They were connected to electricity in about 1980 and switched to prepayment meters sometime after 1994.*⁴⁸

Much can be gathered from Grace's history, if taken in conjunction with other testimonies. First-generation women were unanimous in recalling that wood was the primary fuel used for cooking and heating in the rural areas as they were growing up. Paraffin was also available, though its use was predominantly restricted to fueling lamps – Grace Madikane's case of lighting fat-dipped cloths was exceptional among first-generation respondents. Gramophones were the only type of entertainment available, if that, among respondents. Battery-operated equipment was only in use once respondents entered the city; five of six first-generation women reported the first use of batteries in the 1950s.

Once in the Cape Town area, first-generation respondents actively pursued a complex pattern of multiple fuel use and multi-appliance use for a particular task such as cooking, as well as multitasking of appliances. For example, when Grace Madikane acquired her coal stove in Rylands, she did not throw away her paraffin-fueled stoves. Instead, she developed a way to use all three: 'when I am cooking little things, like porridge . . . I used a Beatrice. And a Primus stove maybe when I cook samp sometimes.'⁴⁹ It appears that the Primus stove had a stronger flame than the Beatrice, and thus was suited to certain types of cooking, but was also not as safe. 'Sometimes I put meat on the Primus stove and put rice and veg on the Beatrice. Sometimes, I would also bake bread with a pot [on the Beatrice].' The coal stove was advantageous because it could hold many pots: 'I cooked meat and everything, I put all my pots there, meat and veg, when I am cooking on the coal stove.'⁵⁰

Stoves such as the Primus and coal stove were particularly valuable because they were able to serve two functions – to cook and to heat the room. Second-generation respondents growing up with their mothers' Welcome Dovers remembered them fondly: Grace Madikane's daughter Miriam recalled that the 'Welcome Dover was a nice stove and it make the whole house warm',⁵¹ and Miriam's sister Nombulelo also remembered that 'it was so nice . . . like a fireplace.'⁵² However, those same respondents also remembered the labour-intensive aspect involved in

maintaining them, particularly because as young daughters, the task of cleaning the Welcome Dovers largely rested on them: Nomonde Dashika related that 'the coal stove is strenuous to operate' and Miriam also said, 'the problem is to clean the stove, it's a big job.'⁵³

For the majority of Grace Madikane's tenure in Cape Town, paraffin was the fuel of choice for heating, whether it was through secondary heat from using the Primus stove or through the paraffin heater she bought in 1976, which she has used to this day. However, it is noteworthy that during the ten years that she resided in Nyanga township, the primary source of fuel for heating was wood and coal. As soon as she moved out of Nyanga, she returned to the paraffin- and coal-based heating regime she had left. Gertrude Mvambo, who lived in Nyanga from 1959 to 1972, similarly used wood as a central component of fulfilling her household needs in those years. When she left Nyanga for Guguletu in 1972, Gertrude switched to paraffin for heating, and paraffin and coal for cooking. One possible explanation for this temporary shift is that wood, though labour-intensive to collect, was readily available and free in the area surrounding Nyanga. Respondents noted that in the 1950s and 1960s, trees were a memorable feature of that landscape.⁵⁴

This instance is important to note, because the Madikanes and the Mvambos showed a readiness to switch fuels, recognizing the different resources available in the natural environment around them. Moving against the transitional model's progression, they opted to switch to a predominantly biomass-based fuel regime to satisfy their needs and were willing to let some appliances lie dormant in the process.⁵⁵ Once these women moved to Guguletu, a far different relation to the environment emerged. As Sindiwe Magona remarked about Guguletu in her autobiographical account, it was a 'wind-swept, treeless, miles-from-anywhere township In the three decades I have lived in Guguletu, I have never seen one squirrel there.'⁵⁶ Diminishing wood resources in outlying areas made this type of fuel resourcing an even remoter option.⁵⁷ It is no wonder, then, that households in Guguletu, prior to the availability of electricity, overwhelmingly turned to coal and paraffin in the 1970s.

Once the Madikanes were connected to the electrical grid around 1980, however, they did not turn to electricity exclusively. Paraffin heaters remained the preferred heating method, despite Grace's acquisition of an electric heater in 1996 from her daughter-in-law. When pressed to explain this, Grace replied that an electric heater 'wastes

electricity'.⁵⁸ Indeed, in all electrified households surveyed, regardless of generational cohort or how long they had been connected to electricity, paraffin heaters were used for heating requirements. Respondents saw paraffin heaters as valuable for their superior ability to heat a room for less cost. Lumka Kalipa stated, 'yes, there's more heat in this [a paraffin heater] than electricity, more heat without the bill for electricity . . . and it's more comfortable than electricity.'⁵⁹ Paraffin heaters were not only valued for the room-filling warmth they generated, but also for their ability to serve multiple purposes – Pauline Mboniswa, Grace Madikane's daughter, stated:

I go to church and if it's cold in winter, then they [her children] don't need to put my food in the warmer. They can put it on the heater here, on top of the heater. By the time I come back from church or wherever I am, my food is still warm. It doesn't burn.⁶⁰

Importantly, this comment reveals that respondents continued to value an appliance because of its ability to accomplish multiple tasks – it was this quality that electrical appliances, with all their advantages, could not mimic.

Perceptions fueled the willingness to persist with multiple fuel strategies. Certainly, paraffin was regarded as an imperfect fuel option. As Pauline commented, 'paraffin on its own, it's not healthy.'⁶¹ Others voiced dangers associated with unpredictable explosions. Still others focused on annoyances such as a lingering smell and black smoke that soiled kitchen walls. Most users also regarded gas somewhat negatively, citing its potential to kill unwary or careless people. However, even electricity was not necessarily a risk-free alternative. Grace Madikane admitted freely that 'electricity is troublesome'. Part of this 'troublesome' aspect had to do with new worries and complications associated with its use.⁶² Nosizwe Mfiki commented on her own hesitancy to fully embrace electricity and cautioned that replacing a flawed but known fuel with something else may invite a whole host of new dangers: 'Electricity is good. At the same time, it's not good. It's dangerous . . . because like now, my neighbour's house was burning, I think last month, about the plugs. . . . Her kitchen was beautiful. But now they've got nothing, they must start it from the roots, you see.'⁶³ Beneficiaries of electrical connections thus had to contend with new concerns regarding safety. As

women acquired electrical appliances that had their own complexities, their purchases further added to feelings of anxiety.

In addition, electricity was not necessarily more reliable than other forms of fuels. Those African households that could afford electrical connections were not necessarily guaranteed a regular supply of energy, day in and day out. Several respondents agreed that, in their experience, electricity 'cuts off sometimes'.⁶⁴ And some users suspected that they were being overcharged on their accounts, particularly first-generation respondents, who retained vivid memories of those initial years of access to electricity, largely in the turbulent 1980s. Grace Madikane insisted that her bills were not correctly assessed: 'they were charging, because they stood there – the one who counted meters, he just stands there and writes something and go without coming to the box [meter]'.⁶⁵ Regina Mhlekwana concurred: 'we did not trust them, but you always wondered why were you paying a high bill whereas you know that you were using your electricity sparingly'.⁶⁶ This suspicion was all but eliminated with the onset of prepayment meters, made available in Cape Town in the mid-1990s.

Thus, the energy transition model provides only a rough framework in which to understand a household's fuel consumption trajectory. As seen in the examples above, some households returned to a biomass-based fuel regime when the opportunity presented itself. Households in general seemed to adopt a far more flexible attitude than the transitional model would predict. Even in households with access to electricity for over two decades and the financial means to purchase electric heaters, paraffin heaters remained a consistent feature over the years. In addition, it was evident that electricity was not necessarily welcomed whole-heartedly, as households struggled to adapt to a new set of demands and constraints, as well as relying on what was in its early years an unpredictable and poorly administered system.

A combination of better services, the takeover of electricity from defunct Black Local Authorities and widespread transfer to a more transparent system of billing through prepayment meters, and the influence of younger generations' embracing of this new energy source contributed towards a significant shifting of attitudes and an evident move towards electricity. In some cases, such as that of the Madikanes, direct intervention by a second-generation member was necessary to facilitate the household's shift to electricity. Pauline Mboniswa, Grace's daughter,

single-handedly undertook to electrify her parents' home around 1980, despite significant opposition from her father. She recalled:

I personally installed the electricity at my parents' house As you know, it was a council house, and the house was owned by the council. My father used to say, 'this isn't my house, I'm not going to install electricity. Once they chase me out of the house, then I leave my electricity and my expenses here.' So when I started working, I thought if we're being chased out, then I'm the one who's going to be the loser, so . . . I installed it. . . . Before I wasn't really working, and then he refused and then I buy the gas stove. And later, I just force, force my way into this.⁶⁷

It was Pauline's willingness (derived from her steady income as a nurse) to shoulder the financial responsibility and risk associated with electrifying a council house without any guarantee of tenure that proved to be the fundamental driving force in changing the Madikanes' energy profile. Pauline's father clearly voiced the risks involved. Despite this instilled reluctance on his part, Pauline proceeded to 'force' her way into acquiring household electricity. And she backed up the initiative she displayed in electrifying the house with appliance purchases – she subsequently bought her parents a refrigerator and an electric stove.

Interestingly, Pauline's testimony also reveals that she was responsible for providing her family with the gas stove that replaced existing paraffin-fueled stoves in 1976. This, combined with her later pivotal role in connecting her parents' house to electricity, suggests that individuals with access to financial resources can single-handedly change a household's energy profile, sometimes in multiple ways. This example is also important because in the shift towards electricity, the primary actor was a female and her chief opponent was a male (her father) – this would suggest that at least in this household, no felt association between men and electricity was evident. Perhaps the fault line was more along generational lines, with older generations less willing to risk financial loss and perhaps more wary of their security of tenure than younger generations. Indeed, second- and third-generation women were effusive about electricity's advantages: Grace Madikane's daughter Miriam claimed, 'Now we are free, we have electricity.'⁶⁸ Nombulelo, Miriam's sister, remarked that: 'It's very convenient, electricity is very easy.'⁶⁹

Others recognized electricity as 'modern' and providing access to the 'easy life'.⁷⁰ Third-generation women generally expressed an awareness of the wider range of lifestyle choices available to them in a democratic South Africa. Their embracing of electricity as one of these choices can be seen in this light.

However, even first-generation women, though perhaps initially hesitant, came to see electricity as an essential part of their lives. I suggest that this shift was probably facilitated by the adoption of prepayment meters, which removed the stigma of overcharging that first-generation women attached to their earlier years of access to electricity. First-generation women cited the lack of effort and time involved in using electricity – 'you just switch on', as well as its ability to power several appliances at one time – as key advantages.⁷¹ In addition, a stated awareness that in the new democratic era even their natal homes were being electrified enhanced perceptions that the evolution towards electricity was a universal trend, and not something that had to be confined to particular people, areas, or generations. We can see with the Madikanes that Pauline's initiative was infectious – in the mid-1990s, her mother Grace Madikane personally petitioned the City Council to install a prepayment meter, she claimed the first in the area, after seeing them in operation in Nyanga. It is clear that Grace considered electricity a permanent feature of her household and actively strove to improve the type, reliability, and accountability of her own access to electricity.

Appliances and social dynamics

A key development that emerged from testimonies is the use of appliances to broker power relations. Control over the use of certain appliances was not just an implied power dynamic – it was actively negotiated by those involved, and respondents had a clear understanding of its social connotations. For example, because women's paraffin stoves were both a symbol of their domestic duties and an expression of female-orientated social networks, men's temporary appropriation of such stoves as weapons was a potent way to assert dominance over female partners.⁷² Patricia Mhlekwā was severely burned in 1986 when her boyfriend at the time threw a flame stove at her, which set her alight. Reconstruction of her arm and back was necessary, using grafts of skin from elsewhere on her body. To this day, her body aches just before every rainfall. When

asked to explain the motivations of her boyfriend, who died in Fort Beaufort (in the Eastern Cape) on the run from police, she explained it was 'because I liked meetings', referring to her frequent attendance at various political and community meetings.⁷³ In Patricia's case, her mobility appeared to threaten her partner, who retaliated with a symbol of her own domestic duties.

As women became more accustomed to using electricity, electrical appliances also became implicated in power dynamics. Those women employed in domestic service became increasingly aware of the availability of electrical appliances that could reduce domestic chores, and this awareness affected their relations with employers. For example, Nobambo Mfeketo related a story of a short-lived domestic job in Sea Point in the 1960s:

You see this lady did not have equipment for cleaning. Like for scrubbing I had to kneel, use my knees. And then for washing, she didn't have any washing machine so I also had to kneel using the big bath, you know, I couldn't bend all the time. So it was, the floor was very cold My knee was very painful, it was not swollen, but it was very painful, I couldn't walk I went to her doctor He asked me about my working conditions so I told him everything, so he asked the lady to buy [a] washing machine, to buy not the scrubbing brush, but something with a handle to scrub the floors. I mustn't use my knees. So the lady thought that, that was too expensive, so she chased me. I had to leave that job, so I left.⁷⁴

Such accounts of 'madams' refusing to alleviate their domestic workers' workload by purchasing appliances are not unique, and may have been part of a strategy used by less affluent households to capitalize on cheap labor and minimize expense on 'unnecessary' appliances.⁷⁵ Miriam Madikane related a similar story in which she left her domestic job in 1978 after a failed attempt to urge her employer to purchase a washing machine:

When I asked her to buy a washing machine, she said to me she saw somebody in the paper – an old lady of 101 – who does washing by herself with hands. But I told her maybe that lady was

washing a petticoat or a panty . . . but here, every day, the washing basket is full.⁷⁶

What is noteworthy in both Miriam's and Nobambo's accounts is their sensitivity to how pivotal a role such an appliance could play not only by drastically altering their workloads, but also by changing the relationship between employer and employee. This was an issue clearly worth fighting vocally for. It became a material embodiment of the contestation over available resources, wages, and investment. Interestingly, respondents did not prioritize the purchase of a washing machine for home use. This may be because, as Helen Meintjes has shown in Soweto, labour-saving appliances were widely avoided as domestic purchases because of the connotations of 'laziness' they imparted to women. Younger women were expected to fulfil their obligations to senior women and their husbands through the 'proper' washing of clothing by hand.⁷⁷

In later years, as African households slowly gained access to electricity and to their own complement of equipment, electrical appliances also perceptibly expressed certain power dynamics. For example, third-generation respondent Buyiswa Mteto's ability to acquire and house a host of her own electrical appliances was a key aspect of her maintaining a degree of independence from the many household members who competed for limited space on her grandmother's property. In the late 1990s, Buyiswa was able to acquire a refrigerator, television, electric stove, microwave, stereo system, and other small appliances, which filled her prefabricated zinc shack in her grandmother's yard to capacity. She explained that the refrigerator in particular helped her to manage her own independent social schedule; she was able to entertain friends and visitors on her own terms, without permission from elder members.⁷⁸ These appliances and the small but personal space she had to keep them in were essential to Buyiswa's ability to maintain her own social boundaries within the domestic arena, especially if we consider, as we have already seen in chapter two, the extent of the intrusion into her life of her 22-member extended household.⁷⁹

Along these lines, respondents also described contestation over domestic use of the television.⁸⁰ Television became a key arena where domestic tensions and disputes were expressed and mediated. This may be a social consequence of the advent of the television age throughout the world, and not necessarily specific to urban African households – certainly

in the USA, the remote control has become shorthand for establishing household pecking order. However, in South Africa, the introduction of televised programming to the country in 1976 had particular resonance. The beginning of the television era coincided with other cultural developments among Afrikaners, including increased consumerism and divorce rates.⁸¹ Jonathan Hyslop argues that television viewing allowed white South Africans the opportunity to more easily absorb new discourses of race, self, and politics that were contradictory to those echoed in apartheid ideology. In particular, he points to the introduction of *The Cosby Show* on a weekly basis as pivotal to eventual middle-class white acceptance of desegregation.⁸²

In the context of this research, Africans similarly acknowledged the power of television in both a practical and symbolic sense. It appears that even a relatively low-income household considered a television a required purchase once the electricity connection was established. Every single household interviewed for its energy profiles owned a television, a unanimity that could not be applied to any other major electrical appliance.⁸³ In addition, television has had a profound impact on urban African sensibilities and their ordering of domestic space.⁸⁴ Matumo Madikane, Miriam Madikane's daughter, related how her alcoholic father would create domestic tension after a night of drinking: her father would 'just stand in front of the TV', blocking his children's view. Her mother Miriam would then complain, and the two would quarrel.⁸⁵ Similarly, Nomonde Dashika remembers her father whenever he would get drunk:

He liked to fight. Like if when he comes back, the TV's on, he would say the children should go to sleep. Or if maybe both the TV and the radio were on, he would start a fight just out of that. When he is sober, those things do not happen.⁸⁶

These instances reveal a gendered dynamic in which men attempted to assert authority over their wives and children by controlling the use of entertainment equipment. However, women also tried to aggressively appropriate control of televisions to mediate domestic tensions or disputes. First-generation respondent Eunice Fuzile admitted that she once threw the family television at one of her children in order to discipline him: 'I take that TV because that time I was cross.'⁸⁷ As we saw in chapter two, Eunice defended her violent actions in light of an

apparent vacuum of authority in the household created by her husband's ineffectiveness as a disciplinarian. The implicit message Eunice attempted to convey by throwing the television at her son was multilayered, because her husband was known to spend much time in front of the television – Nomphele, one of Eunice's daughters, noted that her father 'just keeps quiet. He just answers her [meaning Eunice]. He just looks at the TV. She likes to shout but my father doesn't raise his voice.'⁸⁸ In addition, she revealed that her mother was the main reason the household did not have a stereo system – 'my mother hates them.' Thus, Eunice throwing a television at her son had a dual significance: it was both a statement of defiance against her husband's unwillingness to participate in disciplinary responsibilities and a direct way of preventing both her children and her husband from enjoying electronic entertainment.

We can see from the above few examples that appliances exhibited a powerfully ascribed social value. They could express gendered and generational dynamics within households, and provided an arena where power relations could be questioned and brokered. As Africans gained increasing exposure and access to electricity and electrical appliances, individuals as well as households developed new connections and a new sense of connectedness to those appliances now surrounding them.

Conclusion

In the everyday lives of the women in this study, the management of household energy was a significant, and signifying, process. Women were active shapers and interpreters of the urban environment around them, a revelation that is important for our understanding of South African history. Indeed, African women's 'energy histories' show a broad and complex engagement with the material fabric of the apartheid and post-apartheid city. A generational perspective further confirms how different generations of women both appropriated and contested elements of 'modernity'. Historically, these dynamics were played out in the larger context of apartheid service delivery and limited economic and political opportunities. However, they were also enacted within, and were ultimately evocative of, the more intimate terrain of the household.

In an era of globalized access and technological change, Africans increasingly saw electricity as being essential to a modern, 'easy' lifestyle. Yet women also revealed a tenacious loyalty to older patterns of energy

use. African women thus found themselves watching the evening news on television while sitting in the warm glow provided by their paraffin heaters. They urged their employers to purchase labour-saving appliances at work, while prioritizing other non-labour-saving expenditures at home. Perhaps it is this ability to actively negotiate in a social setting this new, more technological terrain that best reveals how African women entered the electrical age.

‘BELOVED’ UNIONS? ASSOCIATIONAL LIFE IN TOWN

In 1954 the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) commissioned Mia Brandel (later Brandel-Syrier) to uncover the ‘needs’ of urban African women. Brandel-Syrier, in conjunction with SAIRR, defined need as ‘the requirement of African women to find, as wives, mothers, homemakers and human beings, their own creative responses to the challenges of their new environment.’¹ Interestingly, the chosen lens through which these needs were to be examined was African women’s associational involvement. What followed was a comprehensive 523-page investigation into urban African women’s organizations in the 1950s. Brandel-Syrier assessed the structure and significance of many associations that to this day have remained central to our understanding of African women’s process of urbanization and settlement in South Africa – *umanyano* (plural *iimanyano*, Christian women’s groups), *umgalelo* (plural *imigalelo*, informal savings and credit groups), burial associations, welfare societies and others that were less recognized, such as the Girl Guides. Remarkably, few subsequent studies have addressed the central arguments raised, or utilized the in-depth organizational blueprints Brandel-Syrier provided in this particular work.²

One of the fundamental principles underlying her research was the close connection of African women’s identity to their associational involvement. Brandel-Syrier credited these local associations with providing urbanizing African women with a core framework around which they could construct new identities in the urban setting. It was through such organizations, she claimed, that African women for the first time engaged in what she saw as a vital process of transition from the ‘primitive’ to the ‘civilized’. Through these organizations, women could express awareness of their external environment and collectively attempted

to will it to change according to their needs. For Brandel-Syrier, such actions deserved worthy and almost mythic status in the annals of urban African life: 'it is a tremendous event indeed. It is the dawn of creation.'³ She recalled that in her first visit to an African location in 1948, she had noted in field reports that 'the women, they're perplexed, and their eyes are so vacant They've lost their sense, their aims, their souls. . . . ' Reflecting on this seven years later, she wrote, 'What can one do to give it back to them? This soul? This integrative force? That which gives significance, purpose and direction to human beings? In this context, the answer is unequivocal: let them have their beloved societies.'⁴ Thus, only these 'beloved societies' had the power to provide the animating spirit that displaced African women needed.

Brandel-Syrier's study does have its weaknesses. Among them is a lack of reference, both historical and anthropological, to other important work being published during the same period on Africans in town. She equates 'primitive' institutions with rural ones and 'civilized' ones with those in the urban areas, in the process ignoring important continuities between rural and urban areas that have shaped African women's associational involvement. In addition, her stern criticism, often bordering on naive astonishment, of some of these societies and the women who formed them does little to help us understand their continuing appeal among African women, an appeal that has lasted five decades since her research. However, despite these weaknesses, Brandel-Syrier's work remains the most comprehensive and wide-ranging study of African women's associational life in South Africa. Some of its basic and bold propositions remain unchallenged by subsequent research, which has tended to focus on the functional role of these informal associations in African communities or on the workings of particular organizational types.⁵ Few have attempted to address African women's involvement broadly across these groups, or critically assess how that involvement has shaped women's identity formation.

This chapter is a somewhat uneasy heir to Brandel-Syrier's study, translated to Cape Town from the environs of Johannesburg and Durban. It will examine how African women during the whole of the apartheid period have engaged with some of the same classic urban associations that Brandel-Syrier studied nearly half a century ago: the burial society, the rotating credit association, the church group. Trans-generational oral testimonies from 31 respondents will be utilized, including a total of 26 detailed written histories of organizational involvement.⁶

These organizational histories compiled basic details of involvement in local associations that spanned religious, political, social and economic life. The analysis will be aided by the wide range of anthropological, sociological and historical literature that has subsequently examined the link between women and associations in town. Have these groups, and African women's relationship with them, changed significantly over time? How do young African women in contemporary South Africa view their involvement with these forms of association? Importantly, how do women manage their membership in particular societies over the course of a lifetime?

Finally, several larger questions regarding the sum total of African women's associational involvement will be addressed. How do these groups relate to one another? How do women combine their involvements in these associations? Ultimately, can we still argue that urban African women still constitute their identities around their 'beloved societies' – that is, through associational links? Testimonies reveal that younger generations of women have developed different channels through which they can conceive of themselves. In a world of increased uncertainty, exacerbated by violence, unemployment and the spectre of HIV/AIDS, younger women have developed a more selective, distanced and critical stance towards the hallowed and 'beloved' organizations that their mothers created. In the process, they have fashioned their associational involvement as a dispassionate strategy, a necessary if unreliable means to an end – for example, to fuel their participation in an increasingly consumerist society – rather than a well-deserved end in itself.

**'If you are a *manyano* woman, you die a *manyano* woman':
Modernizing *umanyano* in Cape Town?**

Perhaps our study should begin where Brandel-Syrier herself chose to begin – with *umanyano*. *Umanyano* is a 'mothers' union' or 'women's group' that formed an integral part of most Protestant, Catholic and Independent African church structures.⁷ *Iimanyano* meet weekly, and their meetings ostensibly give participants the opportunity to pray, and encourage and instruct one another. Often, they engage in a variety of activities, from visiting sick members to fund-raising.⁸ Brandel-Syrier acknowledged *umanyano*'s primary role, above and beyond other groups, as the key instrument of African women's progress towards 'civilization'.

She noted: 'When the first desire for development moves her, it is in the Church that she finds the initial *milieu* [original emphasis] in which to express her new and strange ambitions, and it is in Christianity that she finds the self-assurance to start the long and hard struggle towards *the light*.'⁹

Brandel-Syrier developed this theme in her monograph *Black Woman in Search of God*, published in 1962. She maintained that the preaching, praying and singing integral to *umanyano* meetings had a cathartic effect on its participants, allowing women to ride waves of increasingly higher emotions that let out feelings of frustration and anger.¹⁰ But alongside this emotionality was *iimanyano*'s meticulous attention to detail, law and structure. These qualities afforded African women a new, stable moral basis for action in an uncertain environment.¹¹ The organizational force harnessed within *umanyano* structure was apparent in the array of socially conscious activities that *iimanyano* sponsored: '*Manyanos* apprentice women in the art of organizing, and have given them their first taste of its joys and satisfactions, as well as its immense power and status.'¹² Notably, Brandel-Syrier argued that such 'power' was not applied in the political realm, as *iimanyano* were not used as vehicles for political resistance.¹³ This view of the *umanyano* as an apolitical form of organization has since been challenged by, among others, Gaitskell and Beinart, whose work reveal *umanyano*'s pivotal role in inspiring effective resistance in both ecclesiastical and political spheres.¹⁴

How can we place women's trans-generational testimonies and organizational profiles in the context described above? Firstly, there can be little doubt that for the wave of African women who settled in Cape Town in the middle of the twentieth century, *umanyano* did provide a key – and often the first – locus of cohesion, interaction and support. Seven out of ten first-generation women claimed long and dedicated involvement with *umanyano*, most dating back to the 1950s and one since 1944 (the remaining three women claimed lengthy church, but not *umanyano*, membership).¹⁵ For some women, their involvement in *umanyano* in Cape Town was a continuation of active participation in their natal areas of origin. Indeed, as Gaitskell stresses, rural women's participation was an integral part of the continuing strength and longevity of *umanyano* membership throughout the early decades of apartheid – for example, the diocese of St. John's in the Transkei accounted for over a quarter of the Catholic Church's Mothers' Union branches in the entire country in

1970, and nearly one-quarter of total membership, at 7,644 members.¹⁶ By the time Eunice Fuzile entered Cape Town in 1945, she carried with her the experience of being a member of the Methodist *intombazana manyano* (young girl's *umanyano*) in Burgersdorp that met weekly under an elder woman's supervision. Rita Mfiki was part of a Methodist *umanyano* in Middledrift for five years before her arrival in Cape Town in 1955. Their familiarity with Christian forms of organization in their areas of origin thus probably was a strong determinant of first-generation women's early and relatively speedy involvement in *iimanyano* in Cape Town. Surveyed women tended to join *umanyano* as soon as they fulfilled the base criteria of marriage and motherhood – Lumka Kalipa, for example, joined her Methodist *umanyano* in 1956 at the age of 23, two years after her marriage and one year after the birth of her first son.

This initial participation developed into a relationship with *iimanyano* that has continued uninterrupted to this day. Organizational profiles of first-generation women confirm that no other women's association can claim *umanyano*'s ability to inspire as lengthy or continuous an involvement. Certainly, participating women had a wealth of positive comments with which to describe their *iimanyano*. Gertrude Mvambo stated, 'It's a place where, like, we cry there for all our problems.'¹⁷ Rita Mfiki claimed that '*manyano* is where you take your problems to other women and you pray together.'¹⁸ Beyond the cathartic effects of participation, *iimanyano* were attractive because they helped women maintain a respectability based on order and domestic responsibility. This respectability has already been noted as a key, albeit contested, feature of Witwatersrand *iimanyano* in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹⁹ Doris Vala explained, 'I liked it . . . there was order. And discipline.'²⁰ Grace Madikane stressed that were it not for her active involvement in the church, she would have fallen into alcoholism and infidelity long ago.²¹ Certainly, a type of solidarity was engendered. Gertrude Mvambo said that *umanyano* was 'where we talk about issues affecting women.'²² Emy Kondlo believed, 'this is the way. I must join the Presbyterian Women's Association and teach others too, not me alone.'²³

Once a part of *umanyano* structures, women never left. No wonder Lumka Kalipa stated, 'If you are a *manyano* woman, you die a *manyano* woman . . . you don't leave.'²⁴ Such pronouncements underscored how women internalized their involvement with the church – one did not just attend; one *became* a '*manyano* woman'. This identification enabled Rita

Mfiki to declare confidently, 'in actual fact, in church, I am everything – I am a *manyano* member In church, I am number one.'²⁵ Through *umanyano*, women could definitively locate who they were, and what they could offer others. Because of this particular power, for these elderly women, *umanyano* seemed to be the 'base-layer' of association upon which all other networks had been built. *Umanyano* membership remained the strongest and most enduring form of association, and women developed an abiding sense of loyalty to it, as well as a high level of expectation of the social, spiritual and psychological benefits they were entitled to in return for their efforts.²⁶

Analysing responses from second- and third-generation women, one can see that the general expectations and experiences of *umanyano* membership have remained effectively unchanged from when Brandel-Syrier began her research almost fifty years ago. Second-generation respondents, whose profiles unanimously attest some involvement with the Christian church, concurred that in their experience, *iimanyano* were generally helpful because of the collective nature of the support they offered in times of sickness and hardship, and the solace provided through other women's company.²⁷ As Miriam Madikane said, 'To be in the *manyano* I can say it's where you pick up a lot and grew up in the word of the Lord. It's where the mothers, they are together, each and every mother come with all her pain in front of other mothers and we pray for each other.'²⁸ Third-generation women interviewed generally have not inherited the religious fervour of their mothers and grandmothers, as is indicated by their relative lack of involvement in church and associated activities. At the time they were interviewed, only three of eight informants in this cohort claimed regular attendance in church. Despite this, they too had clear and remarkably similar ideas of what *umanyano* should be, what it should teach and who should belong in one. Interestingly, no second- or third-generation respondent engaged in the type of negative commentary Wilson and Mafeje observed among youth in Langa in the 1960s, who saw Christianity as a form of exploitation associated with white supremacy.²⁹

Respondents across all generations were not able to pinpoint any significant structural, theological or administrative changes in *iimanyano* over the five decades of their recollections. It appears that the only significant change regarding *iimanyano* was the development of a Saturday *umanyano*, to augment the traditional Thursday meeting, to

cater for working women's schedules.³⁰ Little had been done to update or adapt the style or format of meetings themselves to accommodate younger generations' changing lifestyles and social norms. In fact, most third-generation women perceived that *they* were the ones that needed to change, not *umanyano*. Matumo Madikane, born in 1977, explained:

At least you have to enjoy life first. Then you can try to be serious after that . . . I have to enjoy life a little bit, because I'm not married for one, I'm young. And then when I get older, I'll be a mother who's responsible, more responsible than I am right now because maybe I'll have my own house, a job, everything. For the time being, I would not consider myself getting serious, going to church, like getting into *umanyano* – it is early for me.³¹

Interestingly, though Matumo had been a mother for seven years at the time of this interview (she has two children, born in 1994 and 1998), she felt that it was too early to enter into an association known for being the 'mother's union'. She judged that she was not 'serious' enough to consider herself for membership, the basis of her lack of seriousness being her age and, more importantly, her marital status. Several other third-generation women expressed similar sentiments. Nandipha Ntisana responded, when asked if she would ever join *umanyano*, 'No, not yet . . . I will go to church when I'm married because when you are married, you have to be straight.'³² This attachment of 'straightness' and 'seriousness' with marriage is fundamental, because it signifies that wives rather than mothers should stand as guardians of the domestic responsibility and moral rectitude so cherished in *iimanyano*. This represents a significant change from the 1950s, when Brandel-Syrier stated, 'for the women themselves, it [*umanyano*] has but one meaning: "mothers".'³³ It appears that third-generation respondents, including those who have children, have reinterpreted membership, and the criteria for membership, as something more elusive.

Delaying membership until one reached a perceived level of 'maturity', whether through age or through marriage (or both), seemed the preferred tactic. Nomphele Fuzile also stated that she would join *umanyano* 'when I get old . . . Because I won't be doing the things that I'm doing now, you know, going to parties.'³⁴ Nomphele hoped that age would bring the necessary changes in her lifestyle to prompt regular church attendance,

though she was unspecific as to what becoming older meant. To engage in this process too quickly, before one 'gets old', would only create obvious hypocrisies.³⁵ Buyiswa Mteto similarly stated that she would delay joining because she did not want to join the ranks of those women who have already harmed *umanyano*'s reputation: 'what we see is that women of *umanyano* are not afraid to drink. She just comes back from church and takes off her uniform and then calls her friends and [they] drink.'³⁶ Buyiswa would rather be a genuine member later than a false one now, for it was not a decision to be made lightly: 'I hope that when I join *manyano*, I want to be sure about it.' Third-generation members seemed aware that *umanyano* membership entailed a permanent discarding of 'youthful' lifestyles, in many respects heeding first-generation Lumka Kalipa's call that 'you die a *manyano* woman' once you become one.

Overall, one can argue that *umanyano* was indeed the 'milieu' in which first-generation women initially found animating breath as organizational beings in a new urban terrain. They embraced the *umanyano* form, and incorporated its precepts and practices into their identities, beginning a relationship that would hold steady over the ensuing decades. However, second-generation women have unevenly embraced its virtues, while third-generation women have not become involved at all. Much of this can be attributed to the static nature of *umanyano* itself, as well as the subtle but significant shift in what was generally understood to constitute *umanyano* membership. Women across all generations appeared reluctant to contest either the *umanyano* format or the increased perception that marriage, rather than motherhood, was a prerequisite for admission. Because of these factors, many women did not consider attendance of *umanyano* relevant to their current lives, but merely something they needed to consider for the future.

The seeds may have been sown for *umanyano*'s eventual dissolution. Among established younger urban residents, it has become increasingly difficult to place it as a central and relevant fixture in their lives. Second- and third-generation women who choose to eschew marriage may in the process forsake their opportunity to join *umanyano*. Thus, the trajectories presented by this study's women may be indicative of larger shifts in urban African church involvement.

It is worth noting that in the younger and less-established settlements of Cape Town (such as Philippi, New Crossroads and Khayelitsha), *iimanyano* could be losing out on a potential new pool of members from

which to draw. As I have argued elsewhere, Christian church participation entailed demanding financial obligations that recent migrants to Cape Town found particularly difficult to meet. Thus, far from being the tool through which they could embrace urban life, many found the Church a mechanism for social ostracism. Migrant African women began to look for other means of establishing communal ties. Some chose Islam, as an antidote to the exclusion and financial demands incurred through unsuccessful involvement with the Christian church and its attendant social groups.³⁷

‘All the money comes forward’: Informal finance in the townships

Associations that engage in various forms of informal finance, or as Erik Bähre has recently called them, ‘financial mutuals’, have long been studied as one of the most enduring and widespread features of township social and economic life.³⁸ These organizations – *umgalelo*, *stokvel* (also *stockfel*), *mabodisana*, *goi-goi*, *umasingcwabane* – use members to save and/or generate pooled income. Groups are formed for a wide variety of ends, the most common being the purchase of goods, cash accumulation and assistance for funerals. In 1944, when Kuper and Kaplan looked at African involvement in voluntary associations in Western Native Township, they noted that fully 65 per cent of the 218 households surveyed had participated in informal burial societies to help offset the costs of funerals. In addition, 20 per cent of households belonged to some form of informal credit and savings associations.³⁹ In contrast, only 5 per cent of households surveyed held registered bank accounts.

Recent research has confirmed the continuing centrality, vibrancy and complexity of these structures. In a 1989 study by Markinor, an independent market research group, it was estimated that there were approximately 24,000 informal finance associations in major metropolitan areas, with one-quarter of the African adult metropolitan population involved. Contributions, including burial society contributions, amounted to ZAR 52 million per month.⁴⁰ Both credit and savings associations (hereafter referred to by the Xhosa name that covers both of them, *umgalelo*, plural *imigalelo*) and burial societies have multiple forms and a vast array of differences with respect to size, membership, structure, distribution of monies and control mechanisms. They are also

intertwined in origin, with mutual assistance as the binding impetus, which often makes the study of one impossible without the other.

'It's the craze here': Managing burial society membership

Burial societies have been in existence since the early days of labour migration in nineteenth-century industrializing South Africa. African men who left their rural homes had to find ways to finance the high cost of transporting the deceased over long distances.⁴¹ The first Bantu Burial Society recorded was founded on the Rand in 1932, and burial societies enjoyed increasing popularity throughout the 1930s.⁴² Financing for death became a firm fixture of life in town. Brandel-Syrier noted that burial societies by the 1950s appeared 'to be the most stable, the most widely spread and popular, the most desperately serious of the women's organizational efforts.'⁴³

Women were from the outset centrally placed in burial societies' rapid rise to prominence.⁴⁴ This may be because participation in a burial society was seen as a financial manifestation of women's primary role in traditional funerals, though mourning and involvement in burial rites. The financial aspect was only a small part of the spectrum of support offered by the local burial society. Women sewed the shrouds to cover the deceased, and arranged round-the-clock company for the principal mourners. They supplied the herbs needed for funeral rites and provided for the coffin, the principal mourners' car, buses for mourners, and even smaller items such as flowers and candles. They often supervised the ritual cleaning of the house, and the washing of clothes, floors, curtains and blankets. They also helped cater for the funeral.⁴⁵

Five decades ago, Brandel-Syrier observed that 'death in town is expensive.'⁴⁶ High costs associated with the coffin and transport of the body or of the deceased's relatives from far-flung places, as well as catering expenses, were even reasons for concern in 1955. Brandel-Syrier added wryly that another explanation was that Africans had a penchant for elaborate funerals: 'life in town is dull and a funeral provides as good a form of entertainment as anything.' In contemporary South Africa, mounting mortality rates from HIV/AIDS and the growing consumerism among aspiring urban Africans have only served to increase this tendency.⁴⁷ As Lukhele notes, 'blacks like to give their dead big send-offs: indeed, one could be forgiven for mistaking funeral arrangements

for wedding preparations in the black areas.⁴⁸ Intense social pressures from neighbours and kin to provide the best coffin or the most bountiful victuals meant that for many of the respondents in this study, funerals were an exasperating but unavoidable drain on household resources.

Recourse to formal sources of funding for burials was, during a large part of the apartheid period, never really an option. Formal insurance schemes did not allow for late payments, and most Africans perceived white-owned companies as inflexible on this front. African burial societies, in contrast, allowed 'a poor member quite a considerable latitude in her payments.'⁴⁹ This was central to its appeal among African households needing to balance the demands of funeral cover with the reality of often unstable flows of income. In contemporary Cape Town, flexibility remained a central attraction of burial societies. Members could make payments in cash without having to hold a bank account, and societies made allowances for irregular incomes, extended families and changing household structures. By the 1990s they had also become differentiated in form and function, which broadened the range of services societies could offer.⁵⁰

How, then, have households in Cape Town, given the choice of burial societies available as well as the financial pressures on them to provide for an 'elaborate' ritual, managed their membership in such societies? Let us take the Madikane household profile as an example:

Grace Madikane's first involvement with a burial society was in Nyanga township, around 1965, when she joined the 'Three M's', a group dedicated to helping those originally from Matatielle, Mt. Fletcher and Mt. Frere districts in the Transkei. Grace's husband was from Mt. Fletcher. As soon as she moved to NY100 in Guguletu in 1975, she joined a burial association offered through her street committee there, while continuing her membership in the Three M's. In addition, she joined a burial society called Noxolo, which was based in Khayelitsha, but also met in neighbouring Nyanga. She had heard of Noxolo through her sister. When asked why she became involved in three burial societies, she replied, 'because it is very expensive to have a burial . . . we saw that we should join a burial society so that when a relative dies, you won't be having many problems.'⁵¹

When interviewed in 2000, Grace was paying in ZAR 10 per month in return for a ZAR 1,500 payout from the street committee. She was also

contributing ZAR 22 per month for the Three M's, for a ZAR 2,200 payout. For Noxolo, she was contributing ZAR 50 per month in return for a ZAR 2,500 payout, ZAR 2,000 of which is earmarked for groceries and ZAR 500 to contribute to the funeral itself.

All three of Grace Madikane's daughters who were interviewed had funeral insurance of some kind. Pauline, who lives in Langa, was involved in the formation of Phase Three Women's League in 1995, which began as an area burial society and has since expanded its services to include money lending. Nombulelo has been involved in a burial society since 1986 at White City, where she lived from 1980 until 1996. Though she moved to a new neighbourhood, she retained her White City membership and immediately added onto it membership of a burial society in her new area. Miriam had policies with two insurance companies, Metropolitan and Clientele. She joined these only after her burial society in her section in Khayelitsba failed. She cited lack of interest from her neighbours as the key reason for its failure: 'We did struggle in this place with those burial things, but they drop it before the year ends. I think then some of these things, they are not interested in doing anything like that, they don't care.'⁵²

The fact that her children were involved in burial societies helped Grace manage the costs of her husband's funeral in 1998. Each daughter was able to contribute approximately ZAR 2,000 each. The day of the funeral itself, according to Grace, cost the family approximately ZAR 22,000 in total – ZAR 2,000 for ten sheep that were slaughtered, ZAR 1,000 for general groceries, ZAR 4,000 for the tombstone and approximately ZAR 15,000 for the undertaker's services (including a ZAR 4,000 coffin, embalming, administration, transport for all mourner, and extras such as portable 'green grass' on which the family could sit at the cemetery). Five double-decker buses, a hearse and two family cars were needed as transport for the funeral procession. The Madikanes did not regret the money that was spent, though William himself had stressed he wanted to be buried simply, with the money saved to be given to Grace afterwards.

There are several significant aspects of Grace Madikane's membership profile. Firstly, it is evident that she built up a long-term and layered involvement with burial societies, which culminated in simultaneous

membership in multiple associations. Once one was part of a burial society, it became a permanent fixture, regardless of whether one changed residence. When Grace moved from Nyanga to Guguletu, she merely added a street-based burial society onto her existing membership in the Three M's. In Grace's case, the close association of the burial society with her husband's natal area made it beneficial for her to retain such links. This accords with research that has shown that burial societies in Cape Town were used to reaffirm rural ties, such as those based on regionally specific 'homeboy' migrant networks.⁵³

It is also worth noting that despite living in various settlements in Cape Town since 1949, Grace did not join a burial society until more than 15 years after her arrival, when she lived in Nyanga, an African township. Most first-generation women can trace their first membership to their arrival in established African townships. In the Cape Town context, African burial associations largely did not exist where households were living in multiracial communities alongside Coloured and Indian families, and where the threat of forced removals was increasingly present. These societies could only firmly take root once the households themselves had a sense of permanence of community. This concurs with the statements of some of the older respondents, who noted that burial societies only formed once people could connect and communicate with one another. As Eunice Fuzile stated, 'This thing started when we were used to one another and living in the brick houses, it started.'⁵⁴ As with home renovation strategies, then, participation in local networks of support was influenced by the perception of residential stability and cohesion.

Like Grace, other first-generation women show lengthy and multiple levels of involvement with burial societies. Rita Mfiki claimed membership in four burial associations. She noted that some of this multiple membership was due to her own sense of moral obligation. She stated:

The reason I have many burial societies is that I was working but I can't quit because they have buried for me and I have not yet covered the money by which they buried for me. So when you have been helped in a funeral, you can't quit, because you have not helped other people.⁵⁵

Rita acknowledged the strength of the principle of reciprocity that

underlay participation in any informal financing organization. She received help early and felt it was her obligation to remain with the society in order to help others as she had been helped. Lumka Kalipa's membership profile shows an interesting mix of community-based and formal company policies. She obtained a funeral policy with Old Mutual Insurance Company while retaining membership in two burial societies – one within Section 4 of Guguletu and the other based in Khayelitsha.⁵⁶ When asked why she joined these informal burial societies in the first place, she replied, 'I think it's the craze that is always around here. Then, I also want that if something happens to me, I don't have to run short. My children mustn't run short.'⁵⁷

It appears that insurance companies have only in the last few years caught on to the enormous market potential partially captured by these informal burial societies. For example, in 1998 it was estimated that informal burial societies generated more than ten times the six-million-rand formal sector.⁵⁸ However, by this time, companies had begun to make their mark in the funeral industry by underwriting the policies offered by informal societies, or taking over the management (though not the overall direction) of burial societies' schemes.⁵⁹ Larger developments in the same period in the insurance industry, such as giant mergers of financial institutions such as Liberty/Standard and Rand Merchant Bank/Anglo, contributed towards further transformations. Unions, for example, were encouraged to develop their own 'companies' under these giant parent insurance companies, through which they were empowered to formulate funeral policies specific to the needs of their union members. Another development was a shift in how funeral policies were marketed. Previously, companies had offered funeral cover only as an 'add-on' to life insurance cover. Increasingly, companies began to operate funeral insurance as a 'stand-alone' scheme.⁶⁰

Sanlam Insurance, a major South African company, ran television adverts in 2002 to promote its 'Funeral Help Plan'. The descriptive brochure outlines benefits and services, including a dedicated telephone help line, a complimentary 'burial guide booklet', free transport of the body to any funeral parlour in South Africa, free transport of one relative to accompany the deceased, assistance with arranging video and photographic services, and discounts with selected undertakers. The presentation is concise and to the point: 'Can you afford a dignified funeral?', hoping that customers would equate 'dignity' with the type of services

the plan offers. African estimations of the costs of financing funerals are indirectly acknowledged in Sanlam's statement that 'funerals are not cheap'.⁶¹ We can see from this example that insurance companies have proved adept at tapping into the ever-present fears – like Lumka's that her children would 'run short' – that have continued to shape African involvement with funeral financing institutions.

Some second-generation respondents have exhibited a growing trend towards the use of formal policies with insurance companies. This appears to be partly a result of dissatisfaction with the fiscal instability and unreliability of some burial associations, a complaint voiced by a significant proportion of second-generation respondents. Brandel-Syrrier noted similar complaints five decades previously.⁶² As can be seen in the Madikane profile above, Miriam Madikane acquired two formal policies after her burial society in Khayelitsha folded due to lack of interest. Hazel Sukwana, who acquired a funeral policy through a bank, stated, 'I've seen one [a burial society] just diminishing out of the blue, so I, being one of the unlucky people in this world, I think I wouldn't be lucky enough.'⁶³ Zanele Mvambo claimed that her reasons for joining an insurance policy offered through her union rather than through her local street or community sprang from the corrupt practices of committee members.⁶⁴ It does appear that internal mechanisms of control based on trust eroded as group size increased and new, unknown members began to be drawn from outlying residential areas. Some groups were unable to weather such changes.⁶⁵ 'Free-rider' practices could easily bankrupt a small association in which reciprocity and trust tended to rule.⁶⁶

Thus, second-generation respondents on the whole continued the active and layered involvement of their mothers. However, there can be seen at this level an increased wariness, and a shift towards inclusion of insurance policies offered through companies as either a supplement to existing membership in local burial societies or as the sole form of funeral finance. Aggressive campaigning by the companies themselves has spurred on this trend, aided in no small measure by women's growing awareness of the corruption and instability that have plagued some burial societies. It is important to note here that burial societies themselves could evolve, and this may have affected how women chose to manage their membership in them. Successful burial societies could over time increase payouts without increasing contributions, and this increased women's allegiance to them.⁶⁷

Third-generation respondents show strong continuity with the second generation. Six out of eight women said they would join a burial society if they had the funds (all except two were unemployed at the time of the interview). And every respondent exhibited a strong awareness of the costs associated with funerals, as well as their responsibility in this regard. Pamela Madikane, who was most vocal about the inadequacies of local burial societies, still conceded that she did 'believe in insurance' of some form as long as it was with 'reputable organizations'.⁶⁸ Those third-generation respondents with children were particularly concerned. Rachel Mhlekwa, who has three children, stated, 'we die in mysterious ways, even a small thing can cause your death.' Her observations of the vulnerability of others in her age group are shockingly direct, and this underscores why burial societies may continue to enjoy active membership for years to come:

What I see happening is that they get raped and they get raped by someone with AIDS. They will contract AIDS and die. Or they get stabbed or another getting shot by her boyfriend. Those are the things that are happening with people our age. It is AIDS, boyfriends shoot them. Aishhh.

Given the precarious nature of her and her peers' lives, it would seem logical that she should prepare for death now: 'My worry is that what will my children do?'⁶⁹

When asked why she joined a burial society for two months (limited because of funding) at the age of twenty-three, Matumo Madikane stated, 'number one, I'm afraid of death. I am afraid of dying . . . and at the same time, I don't want to bother my mother while living and bother my mother when I'm dead . . . I wanted to do something myself, without my mother's help.' For Matumo, joining a burial society, albeit temporarily, was a way of responding to her fear of death and emphasizing her own self-sufficiency, something she was particularly eager to do because she and her two children had been dependent on her mother for years. Both Matumo and Rachel were formally unemployed. Thus we see that by actively preparing for their own deaths and the deaths of their children, third-generation women such as Matumo and Rachel, who relied on their mothers to a large extent for material support for themselves and their children, could exhibit some measure of autonomy in their own lives.

'Umgalelo is my life': Informal finance in action

In earlier accounts of African involvement with informal credit and savings groups, anthropologists were decidedly lukewarm about the social and economic benefits such groups conferred. In their 1944 study, Kuper and Kaplan ultimately concluded that despite the popularity of these groups among households, their actual purchasing power for Africans was negligible. They went on to suggest that only those with regular and sufficient incomes could benefit from the rotating credit system.⁷⁰ By 1955 informal finance groups had already developed into a complex system of individual and sometimes interlocking units. Brandel-Syrier identified no less than 15 different types of pooling arrangements, with variations based on whether the pool of money was distributed to members in rotation or remained in a central fund; whether money or goods were distributed, and at what amounts and frequency; and whether money was lent out, and under what conditions. Brandel-Syrier's assessment of the *stokvel* system, in all its variants, was even more damning than Kuper and Kaplan's, though she more specifically placed the blame on what she called 'that terrible sense of equality', or the notion of reciprocity, which she felt crippled any enterprising or transformative potential of these types of associations.⁷¹

In contrast, as Bähre correctly notes, much recent research has tended to affirm the constructive nature of these pooling groups, especially for women migrants in their process of urbanization.⁷² This has partly been because of the widespread acknowledgment that these forms exist, and have persisted to exist, throughout many parts of the world. In recent literature, emphasis has been placed on such groups' effectiveness at marshalling scarce resources, controlling corruption and encouraging a supportive yet acquisitive group identity.⁷³ Andrew Lukhele provides several fascinating examples of *imigalelo* that have seamlessly adapted to the new demands and needs of an increasingly wealthy black middle class. Young African women joined *imigalelo* whose image was shaped by international boutiques – Benetton and Palazzo Pitti, among others – that filled Johannesburg's more fashionable districts. Members were encouraged to shop from these boutiques and sometimes even wore uniforms with a store's logo emblazoned on them.⁷⁴ The message is that informal savings and credit groups are alive, numerous and well.

Though this research has gone far to illustrate the instrumentality of informal finance, it has tended to ignore important complexities of

women's involvement with these organizations. Bähre's ethnography of 'financial mutuals' helps to redress this imbalance in the contemporary Cape Town context. He illustrates that rivalry and anxiety were as much a part of the social web that was created as were mutual support and encouragement. Aggression, fear and jealousy sometimes became manifest through witchcraft accusations and physical intimidation of members.⁷⁵ Bähre writes of the bonds formed between members: 'But these ties could gag as well as they could bind: the organization and its criss-crossing obligations came to be, for some members, a source of stress, sleepless nights, and indebtedness.'⁷⁶ Hierarchies were used and exploited, and the demands of reciprocity sometimes became an almost unbearable burden.

Bähre's in-depth work provides a compelling glimpse of urban Africans' engagement with financial mutuals. However, his focus on recent migrants to Cape Town who tended to live in informal settlements may obscure longer, historical processes at play in both the development of informal finance groups in established townships and in the ways urbanized Africans selected – over time and across generations – their membership in them. In this respect, then, the organizational histories of respondents in this study provide new avenues of analysis. All first-generation women interviewed had some experience of *umgalelo* in some form. Some have embraced it more thoroughly than others:

Rita Mfiki's profile showed active involvement since 1977, when she joined a rotating umgalelo where twelve members would contribute ZAR 20 weekly with one person receiving the entire pool each week. She stopped her involvement with this group in 1992. However, she has been continuously involved since 1980 in a groceries umgalelo, which has involved monthly contributions to a group of sixteen members. The groceries umgalelo is a type of savings umgalelo, with all contributions saved until a specified time, in this case the end of the year. In 1980, contributions were ZAR 50 per month, but currently she pays in ZAR 100 per month. With the accumulated savings, at year end the group is able to purchase Christmas groceries.

Low-risk savings *imigalelo* such as the Christmas grocery *umgalelo* appear to be the most popular form entered into among the 26 respondents surveyed for associational involvement. Eleven of the 22 *imigalelo* that

women recorded in their organizational histories belonged to this group. Other popular options within the 'savings' category appear to be those tied to a singular purpose or event, such as the 'back-to-school', 'birthday' or 'initiation' *umgalelo*. These encouraged female participants to save constructively towards a specific event. They were relatively low-risk, because all members received the full amount of money on a predesignated date, avoiding the risk involved with rotating payouts. In addition, the amount of money released was relatively small, such as the money gifted towards helping women off-set costs associated with the celebrations after a son has passed through initiation rites.

Within the savings *imigalelo* group, the Christmas groceries format was the most common entered into by respondents. This should be of little surprise when considering how central Christmas was to the urban African calendar. Women aggressively saved to provide for a bountiful Christmas, whatever their households' financial circumstance.⁷⁷ Some Christmas grocery *imigalelo* helped women do more than save. The pooled money could over the year gain interest in the bank, or could be lent out to members on an informal basis, often with interest. If members were faithful in returning the money with interest, the fund grew over the course of the year.⁷⁸ Thus, members would be able to pool together greater amounts than they could have saved individually. Women were then able to bulk-buy at large discount stores or hypermarkets. Hiring a truck enabled these women to reach stores that would otherwise have been beyond their normal means. Any leftover money was put to further good use, for example, to pay for utilities like electricity.⁷⁹ This effective economic rationing maximized the limited financial and temporal resources available to these women, in stark contrast to the extreme consumerism evident in funeral participation. It is perhaps worth commenting that often the same women practised both.

There is evidence that women, particularly first-generation women, approached involvement with *imigalelo* in much the same way as they did burial associations – that is, with a tendency towards extended as well as multiple involvement. Rita Mfiki was involved in a rotating *umgalelo* from 1977 until 1992, and then added a grocery *umgalelo* in 1980, which she is still involved in to this day. Eunice Fuzile has been in a savings *umgalelo* since 1983, tried a 'back-to-school' *umgalelo* in 1998, and was part of a rotating *umgalelo* for one year in 2000. However, despite these profiles, participation in general has not approached the

consistency and length of membership as in *imanyano*, nor of burial societies.

Women were far more apt to 'dabble' in *imigalelo* than, for example, in burial societies, testing them out for one or two years, and then leaving. Partly, this was because women did not seem to consider an *umgalelo* as a necessity, as they did their burial societies, though both operated on similar principles. A woman joined *umgalelo* if she happened to have extra income. First-generation respondent Eunice Fuzile explained that membership in *umgalelo* was something she sought only when she was gainfully employed.⁸⁰ Gertrude Mvambo ended her ten-year involvement with a rotating *umgalelo* in 1998, because 'now, I'm not working.'⁸¹ However, she has continued her membership in her street burial society, which she has maintained since 1973. Thus, first-generation women may have considered membership in a burial society as part of necessary household expenditures and directed scant resources from pensions towards that. *Imigalelo*, in contrast, were for the working population.

Second-generation women show a broader range of opinions on the relative usefulness and security afforded by *imigalelo*, though most admitted to having been an active participant in such schemes at least once. One woman, Nomonde Dinwa, related how she began a small-scale *umgalelo* at the age of twelve, among her girlfriends on the street. They apparently mimicked their ideas for how to run it from what they saw around them: 'we copied other people.'⁸² Nomonde said she normally used her winnings to buy clothing of some sort: 'I would probably get a pair of jeans and then my mother would add some money for a top.' Despite this head start, Nomonde has not been involved in *umgalelo* since, largely because of distrust: 'People are bad now, they are not like before. Some people would not come back now with other people's money.' Other second-generation respondents had disenchanting experiences that have fueled their scepticism. Miriam Madikane stated emphatically, 'if you want to break your heart, you can join *umgalelo*.' She related how corruption had dissolved her Christmas *umgalelo*, and with it ZAR 27,000 of collective savings. Now she chooses to save on her own for Christmas groceries by regularly buying special stamps provided by the major supermarket chains. She has sworn off any future involvement.⁸³ Another second-generation respondent, Nosizwe Mfiki, stated how she limited her current involvement to a 'back-to-school' savings group, after a disastrous experience with a more lucrative *umgalelo* that practised

aggressive lending to its members. Nosizwe lost her contribution, and any hopes of a profit from it, when members failed to repay the money they had borrowed.⁸⁴ Patricia Mhlele was part of a notorious pyramid scheme called 'push-push' in the mid-1980s, which 'just disintegrated' without any recourse for her.⁸⁵

Most third-generation respondents recorded generally favourable opinions of *imigalelo*, though these were not based on long or active participation. This may possibly be because they have not had exposure to the pitfalls and potential hazards of involvement. For example, Matumo Madikane, Miriam's daughter, had no negative comments regarding *imigalelo*, though her mother had lost money in her groceries *umgalelo* and had been so emphatic that joining one again would 'break your heart'. Perhaps in these instances, mothers and daughters have not actively spoken to each other about their experiences. Matumo believed *imigalelo* were 'useful', and if she were employed, then she would be involved in one, but not to support what she considered frivolous expenditures such as clothing: 'if I would go, I would have *umgalelo* now, it would be because I want to do a certain course . . . maybe if I get this computer course, maybe I will be interested in another course. So that money would help me to get, to have that course, you see.'⁸⁶ Possibly, then, involvement in *imigalelo* was seen as another tool with which third-generation women could assert a degree of economic autonomy in their households, an appeal similarly noted with burial societies. Young women could channel *imigalelo* funds to advance their own personal circumstances or development, such as the acquisition of skills to be used for the job market, rather than for general household welfare.

Thus, the urban African women in this study have exhibited both a long and sometimes troubled involvement with *imigalelo*. First-generation women again showed the longest and most layered involvement. Third-generation women were positive about the potential of *imigalelo* in some respects, but were largely inactive because of their lack of continuous income. Second-generation women were generally more sceptical about, or had more negative experiences with, *imigalelo*. On the whole, it appears that women practised selective membership. They attempted involvement for a few years and would then quit when income fell or a bad experience made it necessary. Those who continued to experiment with *imigalelo* for the most part chose *imigalelo* that required neither large sums of money nor entailed substantial risk. These *imigalelo*

were structured around expenditures that were considered 'necessities', much like funerals – initiation expenses, Christmas groceries, school uniforms and supplies. And though these *imigalelo* also had the potential to fail, for the most part women found a manageable solution to small-scale financing needs.

Putting it all together: The bigger picture

Little research exists on the 'bigger picture' of urban African women's organizational life in the South African context since Brandel-Syrier's pioneering work. Subsequent scholarship has generally taken the form of detailed analyses of single organizational types – for example, of *iimanyano* or *imigalelo*, but never both. Such studies, though valuable in creating in-depth snapshots of particular associations in action, have obscured our understanding of the historical trajectories these groups have undergone. Furthermore, they have failed to examine the important ways in which women, over the course of their lifetimes, have alternately sought out or discarded these groups. In a sense, then, Brandel-Syrier's assertion that African women's identity was constituted through their associational links has remained essentially uncontested. This concluding section pieces together a different picture, one that does not reject that our understanding of urban African women's identities should begin with a consideration of the societies they have joined, but also does not assume that this is necessarily the case.

First of all, it is important to stress that women's organizations have continued to figure prominently in township life. The same associations that Brandel-Syrier chronicled in 1955 continue to exist to this day and remain easily recognizable features in the urban African landscape. However, the ways in which women positioned themselves with respect to their involvement differed markedly from generation to generation, as did the ways they internalized this relationship. First-generation women experienced a convergence of factors that made their involvement in organizations a central, and in many respects an all-encompassing, feature of their lives. Part of this was due to their experience as migrant women during the early decades of the apartheid period. Their involvement in *iimanyano* in particular was part of well-rehearsed rituals of Christianity already practised in their natal areas of origin. Their readiness to join *iimanyano* in the urban setting could be understood as an expression of

this familiarity, as well as a desire for continuity across great distance and vastly different settings.

Groups such as *iimanyano* and *imigalelo* enabled this cohort of women to gain a sense of cohesion, and provided materially when institutions such as banks and insurance companies were largely inaccessible to them. Their organizational involvement was also aided by residential stability. Women began, and to some extent entrenched, their organizational roots once their home roots were planted – apart from *umanyano* involvement, which began when they got married, most first-generation women traced the bulk of their organizational activity to the moment they set foot inside those council homes in Guguletu. Previous to this, first-generation women had lived in unstable situations in areas mixed with people from other racial groups. With the ever-present threat of forced removal hanging over them, they did not form these densely layered networks of reciprocity and interaction. Only after their move to an established African township did these networks begin. Once communities were formed, their associational lives could flourish.

First-generation women used *iimanyano* to inculcate strong values of stability and solidarity. These core values were reproduced to a large extent in their own homes, because of their marriages and their commitment to their domestic obligations. In addition, their early baptism into politics and political organization reinforced women's ability to work as a unit under their own direction. First-generation women, far more so than second- or third-generation women, recounted instances of political action where they mobilized as women for issues that specifically concerned them. As seen in chapter one, in the 1960s and early 1970s, when the pass laws were at their most repressive, women found voice and a sense of collective power.

First-generation women tended to keep these associational ties over decades. Even upon retirement, pension money could still be directed towards contributions to their associations. And the added time made available by decreased workloads meant a renaissance in terms of social activity. For those that weathered the storms of poverty, political strife and personal hardships, long-lasting membership with various associations has remained a part of their everyday existence, as well as a core feature of their identity. Statements regarding their relationship to these groups tended to reflect how deeply first-generation women internalized their involvement. As Rita Mfiki emphatically stated, '*umgalelo* is my

life.⁸⁷ Such comments reflect not only that associational commitments were seen as lifetime commitments, but also a deeper process of signification. In essence, these women found that their associational involvement did provide that 'animating' spirit, a framework around which they could understand and incorporate themselves.

For second-generation women, their relationship to organizational life has been more troubled and, in some senses, more complicated. Again, residential stability may be key. Those women who left the confines of their parents' households in Guguletu have encountered sometimes less coherent networks of interaction in their new homes. Miriam Madikane, for example, said that in Khayelitsha, the absence of a sense of community (of the sort that she had known growing up in Guguletu) contributed towards the breaking down of groups such as burial societies and street committees. Without the element of trust in her neighbours, Miriam was not willing to hazard membership in groups that depended vitally on such links. The one time she did take a risk, as when she joined a grocery *umgalelo*, the results were disastrous.

Second-generation women tended to be far more critical about women's associations than their mothers, partly as a result of negative experiences, partly because of an increased awareness of available alternatives. For example, formal funeral policies have only recently entered into the equation, and women have begun to experiment with these in concert with their involvement in burial societies. Some second-generation women have abandoned burial society membership altogether. In general, these women have experimented far more with their involvement in these associations – by limiting their membership, mixing and matching among established groups, and considering wholly alternative means of providing for their needs. This process has revealed their more dispassionate relationship to the 'beloved societies' so integral to the identities of first-generation women. One senses that membership did not constitute any type of coherent identity for second-generation women. Instead, membership was something to consider carefully and attempt with caution. Second-generation women's uneven organizational profiles have reflected both the abiding strength of established women's associations and the potential alternative ways women have re-tooled their relationship to them.

First and second-generation women have tended to affirm the gendered character of these associations. When critical of their failures,

they have not framed their disapproval in terms of these groups' shortcomings as women's organizations, but rather as failures by individual members to observe rules of reciprocity, trust and communication. Indeed, a strong element of first- and second-generation women's testimonies was the necessity for these organizations to remain in the hands of women. Participation by men, particularly in the financial matters of *imigalelo* and burial societies, was characterized as detrimental to the livelihood of these organizations. Second-generation respondent Nosizwe Mfiki recalled that as presiding secretary she was forced by male officers in her *umgalelo* to release funds before the required waiting period had ended. Her *umgalelo* decided the next year that they would not admit men, as 'they give us problem. The men need some manners.'⁸⁸ For second-generation informant Pauline Mboniswa, experiences with joint involvement with men when residents in her area of Langa agreed to form a burial society were equally instructive. She recalled the results when the management of the organization was split along gendered lines, with men focusing on one area of administration and women on another: 'the one that the males had went down and it failed . . . there were no females in it. The mens [sic], they can't survive without us.' Pauline went on to say, 'I don't think they [men] can organize themselves alone. They need to mix with us, to get our ideas as well.' Alcoholism among men contributed to women's negative attitudes of the fitness of male involvement. First-generation informant Eunice Fuzile mentioned that in her street committee,

now, we have a chairperson who is male and the way he drinks is excessive. It is difficult to even call meetings, and even if the meeting does sit, you see that he is drunk. And what can you reap out of a drunken person? That is why we [the women] see that we should rather overtake them, and take the initiative as women.⁸⁹

For first- and second-generation women, their continued, though sometimes troubled, interaction with women's associations was justified in light of these experiences.

In contrast, third-generation women have experimented with other types of associations that did not necessarily tie them to their community or to other African women. Nandipha Ntisana said the only organizations she was ever involved in were the environmental society

and the yacht club at her local school. Exposure to schools based in predominantly Coloured or white areas have given these women a decidedly different orientation to their urban environment, and this influenced the types of associations they have chosen to attend. From 1987 at age seven, Nandipha was part of the Girl Guides, something she claimed none of her local friends belonged to. She rose to the rank of 'patrol leader' from 1996 to 1998 and learned to enjoy hiking, sailing and camping. Her involvement took her to beaches and mountains, and to other cities such as Johannesburg, for camps and training courses.⁹⁰ Pamela Madikane said her organizational coming-of-age occurred when she was involved with the Student Representative Council (SRC) at the technikon where she pursued a diploma in management. She said of her involvement with the SRC:

Sometimes we'd go to conferences, probably in Jo'burg [Johannesburg], in Durban, Cape Town, you know. And we'd fly, something that I'd never used to do when I was at home. I never flew until I was in the SRC It gave me sort of an independence, because I would do things on my own.⁹¹

This experience honed Pamela's organizational skills, but did not reinforce her connection to her home area, nor did it affirm ties to other women. Thus, while third-generation women have to some extent acknowledged a desire to continue in the groups their mothers and grandmothers have participated in for so long, their intentions have not yet translated into committed practice.

Third-generation women's organizational profiles have thus continued to illustrate some of the contradictory processes of consolidation and dissolution shown in those of second-generation women. Apparent throughout most third-generation testimonies was a general apathy towards their membership, and a lack of membership, in certain groups. For the most part, associational involvement was spoken of in hypothetical terms – 'maybe if I were older' was a typical way of ending a statement on their futures in *iimanyano*, indicating they do not feel 'ready' to join. Young women have reconstructed the terms of membership to effectively exclude their own participation. Financial circumstances were another important, and often decisive, factor in shaping their involvement. Third-generation women invoked another hypothetical – 'maybe if I had

a job' – to explain their relative lack of participation in financial mutuals. The inability of women in this cohort to obtain steady employment (see chapter two) may explain their sporadic involvement in *imigalelo*.

However, despite the impression of apathy towards the 'classic' social organizations that their mothers and grandmothers relied upon, young women's actual patterns of involvement relayed a different message. Their determination, in the face of very meagre resources, to obtain some form of continuous funeral insurance cover for themselves and their own children is testimony to both the precarious nature of life as they see it and their submission to the culture of consumption that a 'dignified funeral' now demands. Indeed, in communities visibly affected by crime, violence and HIV/AIDS, provisioning for death appears to be a central part of the organizational strategy of women across all three generations.

Finally, as we saw in chapter two, third-generation women faced sustained pressure to contribute to general household expenditures. In the context of continued reliance on parents and grandparents for material sustenance, young women used their involvement in *imigalelo* and burial societies to influence an ever-evolving moral economy of the home. Their efforts to join and sometimes maintain membership in financial mutuals were important expressions of economic autonomy within the restricted arena of their multigenerational households. By saving money towards job skills training or by providing for a secure burial for themselves and their own young children, third-generation women were able to illustrate and act on, albeit in a limited sense, their own fiscal priorities.

‘MOVING’ MEMORIES: URBANIZING IDENTITIES

More than four decades after the search for her husband occasioned her arrival in Cape Town, Rita Mfiki paused to reminisce about her natal home, Middledrift, where she was raised by her grandparents. She said, ‘You can never forget the place in which you were born, you think of it from time to time.’ Rita recalled with some nostalgia her youth in Middledrift, remembering it as a place of plenty where ‘there were cows and sheep and goats and horses. We did not buy milk, we got it from our cows.’ However, that nostalgia did not translate into a desire to return to Middledrift in her old age. She claimed positively, ‘Now I am a Capetonian . . . I am known better on this side.’ Through continuing contact with her brother and his family in Middledrift and regular visits (which ended when retirement exhausted her travel funds), Rita has kept abreast of transformations there. She soberly admitted, ‘even Middledrift is not the same as when I left it.’

Rita refused to blame her own personal misfortunes on her migration to Cape Town. When asked whether her philandering husband, who passed away in 1995, would have remained faithful had they both never left their rural area for the greater temptations and opportunities of the big city, Rita responded resolutely that in Middledrift, ‘he would do what (he) wanted to do even there.’ Instead, she asserted that the theme of change was part of the script of their lives: ‘I say there is no more nice life in the rural areas because it is the same as here in the township; because we left those places of our fathers and we are given different places. So now, the place you start to live in when you are adult is not the same as the place in which you grew up.’¹

As we have seen, in the course of their lives in the city, African women participated in the reconfiguration of their households, the renovation of their places of residence, and the construction and consolidation of an array of social and economic networks. The pace and character of these various developments reflected in part the historical vagaries of apartheid itself, especially the trajectory of urban apartheid policy. However, as Rita Mifiki's account reminds us, these historical processes influenced women's perspectives and identities as well. This chapter more closely examines the ways in which African women have created, dismantled and adjusted a range of conceptual frameworks to make sense of their urban existences.

In some senses, we are revisiting familiar terrain. As noted in the classic anthropological work done on South African migrant culture and identity in the 1960s and early 1970s, Xhosa-speaking migrants in town were already engaging in a vigorous, and self-conscious, debate about their places in a new urban geography. In East London, the Mayers argued that one outcome of such debates among migrants was the delineation of two cultural subgroups, 'Red' and 'School', the former oriented towards preservation of rural livelihoods and values, and the latter embracing a more urban outlook. Both groups re-tooled notions of 'Xhosaness' and the practice of certain Xhosa traditions to reflect these differing outlooks.² Similarly separated along a perceived urban-rural divide, migrants in Cape Town signalled their membership in groups through their apparel and demeanour, among other traits. Wilson and Mafeje observed that *amagoduka* migrant men dressed in 'shabby' trousers and the women wore modest clothing. In contrast, 'townees' were denoted by their sophistication and their 'extravagant' dress, and by their penchant for conspicuous smoking and drinking.³

Though these studies provided a compelling foundation on which to build an understanding of how urban Africans signified cultural difference, little work was done in this area in the years immediately following such studies. As noted earlier, in contrast to the growth of scholarship on similar developments in the Zambian Copperbelt, scholars of South Africa exhibited a marked reluctance to engage with issues of migrant identity in its urban context.⁴ Anthropologists instead focused on its rural pole. By avoiding any enquiry into the possible tenacity of ethnic and rural identities among migrants in town, scholars were able to sidestep any implicit endorsement of notions of ethnic difference used

by the state to justify apartheid policies.⁵ Indeed, the Mayers' work came under powerful criticism because it *did* try to engage with urban traditionalism. As a consequence of academic dissent in this period, scholars were less enthusiastic to extend or revise the analyses presented in these earlier studies.

Thus, large gaps of knowledge persisted, until political reform in the late apartheid era heralded a wealth of new literature on key aspects and processes of African identity formation in urban areas of the country.⁶ Scholars re-engaged with the discursive framework of the 'classic' urban anthropology of earlier decades, with intriguing results. These studies showed how migrant culture in urban South Africa, as elsewhere in southern Africa, exhibited a complexity that could not be expressed neatly in dichotomies of rural versus urban and traditional versus modern. Practising a particular cultural mode – what Ferguson has termed 'style' – was not contingent upon total immersion in a distinct, and separate, social system. Even life-long urban residents could practise a 'localist' style, which emphasized rural 'frames of reference' rather than an actual relation to rural life and ideology.⁷

Leslie Bank has recently argued for a new 'anthropology of urbanism' that better captures this 'messy', 'hybridized' world of urban African culture.⁸ Migrant identity, in fact, could be aggressively reappropriated by those who no longer practised migrancy at all. Bank charts how *amaqaba* culture became reconfigured in Duncan Village, East London among a group of 'lapsed' migrants who had in fact lost any real social and material connection to a rural base.⁹ Similarly, 'home'-based associations in town that emphasized rural customs and connections could instead represent a key adaptation to the urban environment. Deborah James shows that, far from being a mechanism to entrench conservative ideologies, the *kiba* women's dance group as it has developed over the last twenty years instead afforded women the means to autonomously create their own sense of 'home' in the urban setting – a decidedly non-traditional project.¹⁰

And in some cases, Africans did not actively engage with their cultural 'origins' at all. According to Campbell et al., Umlazi township residents in Durban exhibited an 'inarticulateness around ethnic identity' that contrasted strongly with Inkatha Freedom Party leader Buthelezi's coherent evocation of 'Zuluness' based on a heroic warrior past. Respondents were instead far more articulate about their identities

in other realms – especially family, church, gender and age – evidence perhaps of a failure of ethnicity to provide useful reference points to help township residents navigate their daily lives.¹¹

This chapter will re-examine some of the complex processes explored by the studies above, through an analysis of African women's life histories and life strategies.¹² This project is by no means a straightforward one – as Bozzoli has already shown, the sources through which identities were configured may indeed have been 'inconsistent and fragmented'.¹³ And certainly, influential historical studies of identity formation among the Afrikaner and Coloured population have illustrated the somewhat eclectic manner in which identities could be produced and rigidified in the South African context. These identities were at times brokered 'from above' by politicians and intellectuals, and at other moments contested, refined or reproduced 'from below'.¹⁴ Similarly, African women in Cape Town drew from sometimes contradictory well-springs of memory and experience, and the identities that were constructed could be ephemeral and vulnerable to change, not least because of these women's tenuous legal and economic position throughout much of the apartheid period. Trans-generational testimonies suggest that, similar to processes evident among Zulu residents in Durban, a specifically 'Xhosa' ethnic identity was not foregrounded in women's narratives and did not emerge as a significant factor in their articulation of their life strategies and experiences.¹⁵ Thus, we need to examine other possible 'identities' – or perhaps more aptly descriptive, 'dialogues' – through which African women could colour, frame and understand the unfolding of their lives.

This chapter will begin with an examination of how African women, particularly migrant women, made sense of the 'rural–urban divide'. How did urban African women with origins in the small towns and rural areas of the Eastern Cape mediate between their cumulative and sometimes contradictory loyalties? Where did migrant women locate 'home', and how did this location change (or remain) over the course of their lifetimes? Furthermore, how did urban-born younger generations orientate themselves to these frameworks? Like Rita Mfiki, African women proved adept at refashioning their internal 'scripts' to make sense of an ever-evolving social and political landscape. They engaged with the discursive possibilities of the rural–urban divide, yet ultimately found such markers of limited utility in comprehending processes of historical change at work in both their urban situations and their natal areas of origin.

The latter half of this chapter outlines a different 'dialogue' that has become far more foreground in older women's narratives of transition, while providing younger generations with the language to describe and incorporate a growing sense of their physical and political independence. For these formerly migrant women and their daughters and granddaughters, it was the very notion of mobility – of movement – that more effectively signified intergenerational conflict and divergent views on modernity. First-generation women's memories of forced removals and their own experiences of household instability encouraged them to regard mobility, and especially the mobility of their male partners and children, as particularly threatening to their efforts at maintaining a cherished, and controlled, respectability in a corrupt urban environment. In contrast, younger generations rebelled against the physical controls placed on them by their mothers and grandmothers, and embraced the very language and performance of mobility. The ability to 'go everywhere we want to go' became a marker of third-generation women's new-found political freedoms, and helped them fashion fluid identities more in tune with the fast-paced, globalizing world unfolding before them.¹⁶

Identity formation and cohesion along the rural–urban divide

At the outset, it is important to stress that women migrants' perceptions of the 'rural–urban divide' may have reflected the relative 'ruralness' of their areas of origin. Several respondents had already experienced urbanizing environments and Western institutions and economies in the small towns of the Eastern Cape – such as Burgersdorp, Cathcart or Healdtown – before their initial migration to Cape Town. In some ways, these small-town origins attest to the shortcomings of a dualist approach (and even revisions of this approach) to migrant identity that assumed migrants' homes were of a standard 'rural' type, and orientation towards that home must then have been an orientation towards traditional institutions and practices.¹⁷ Women migrants' natal homes could not be uniformly characterized as 'rural', nor could their experiences of urbanized life be solely located in the context of the cities to which they migrated.¹⁸ Thus, the terms of the debate regarding migrant women's changing identification to the urban areas must be refashioned to include their more diverse origins.¹⁹

When looking at first-generation women's opinions about their current felt connections to their natal areas of origin in the Eastern Cape, we may be inclined to think that they have totally shed their migrant identities. In general, women were insistent about their lack of connection to their natal homes.²⁰ Typical among responses was Grace Madikane's views on Lady Frere: 'I don't even think about it, even staying there.'²¹ Ellen Gqozo was equally resolute: 'no, no, no. I'm not thinking of Bedford anymore.'²² However, though we need to acknowledge these potent affirmations of their urbanized identities, it would perhaps be too easy to conclude that the process these women underwent to 'forget' their rural or small-town origins was as complete or as smooth a disconnection as these comments suggest. As Bozzoli notes in assessing the life histories of migrant women, 'cumulative' meaning could indeed be gradually distilled from a lifetime of experiences across various phases.²³ However, a process that in retrospect possessed continuity and linearity was in practice far more uncertain and disjointed, as indeed women's own narratives attested. Surveyed migrant African women were deeply doubtful of the permanence of their tenure in the urban areas, especially in the first few decades of the apartheid period, and their detailed recollections markedly reflect a hesitant and sometimes halting embrace of the possibilities of an urban existence.

For example, most first-generation women stated that in their first few years of living in town, they maintained and reinforced an active connection to their natal homes. Remittances, letters and the rare trip back for holidays and important life-cycle rituals provided the initial means through which that orientation was sustained. Some women scrupulously obeyed strict instructions by parents to forward their income towards the upkeep of the family homestead – Eunice Fuzile stated that when she initially began employment in Cape Town in 1945 at age 13, she regularly sent the entirety of her wages to her parents, receiving from them in return a living allowance, which they subtracted from the income that she sent.²⁴ We saw in chapter two that as migrant women became mothers, these initial relationships developed a type of reciprocity when their children were sent to live with natal kin or to attend school in the less politically charged setting of a rural boarding school. Apart from the financial assistance these tactics afforded, first-generation women were also thus able to renew their rationale for maintaining these 'home'-based links. Certainly, the vagaries of

the pass system itself (see chapter one) encouraged migrant women to keep their orientation to their areas of origin alive. Gender was a key determinant of migration patterns, as studies based in southern Africa have shown – women displayed often widely divergent methods and reasons for migration into urban areas from men, by virtue of their indirect relation to the waged system of labour and their more dubious legal status.²⁵ When asked whether she thought, in her first few years in Cape Town, that her sojourn in the city would become a permanent one, Regina Mhleka replied, 'I never thought I could stay here, not at all. The way the situation was so strict, I only knew that I came only for a short time and I will go. My pass will expire and I will have to go home and stay in the countryside.'²⁶ This fear was made manifest by the reality of frequent pass inspections, on the street and inside the confines of their homes. Their sense of vulnerability was enhanced by dependence on their conjugal links to maintain their rights to residence. For some, such as Rita Mfiki, as seen in chapter one, expulsion from the city was the final realization of their fears.

Thus we can see at this stage that women's actual patterns of urban settlement did not conform to the larger narrative of transition. As Ferguson has suggested in the Zambian context, women migrants instead practised a mixed set of 'co-existing strategies', some of which reaffirmed channels of reciprocity with kin based in their natal homes.²⁷ Also, the workings of the apartheid state made an orientation towards their former areas of origin an issue of personal survival. As Bozzoli's work among migrant women of Phokeng affirms, forced removals and pass laws were a powerful deterrent to enacting and validating urban-based life strategies. Such policies 'strangled' African households' economic and social bases in the city, and essentially forced a reconceptualization of their life project to incorporate the financial and emotional investment in homesteads back in Phokeng and the prospect of a rural retirement.²⁸

However, it is important to stress the key difference between these women's life histories and those presented by Bozzoli – all first-generation women in this study achieved an *urban* retirement. Despite political and social factors mitigating their presence, they came to conceive of their lives, and their families' lives, as intimately bound up with the rhythms of the city. And, as was seen in their initial statements regarding their perceptions of their natal homes, they developed an internal logic that justified their new orientation. How did this fundamental shift occur?

It is clear that changes exacted in both their areas of origin and in Cape Town had profound consequences on the level of connectedness women felt to institutions and relations based in their natal homes, which in turn allowed them to view their sojourn in the city with increasing permanence.

One of the key developments was the death of natal kin. Many first-generation respondents echoed Doris Vala's logic when she said, 'my mother is no more there so I don't care for Healdtown.'²⁹ Eunice Fuzile's mother passed away in 1990, effectively ending Eunice's financial obligations that she had undertaken so faithfully in her initial years in town. Importantly, the death of her mother also removed the multigenerational structure of care that had straddled two provinces and formed a key facet of Eunice's urban survival strategy. As we saw in chapter two, several of her children spent some of their youth with her mother in Burgersdorp, enabling Eunice to pursue waged employment as a domestic with fewer financial burdens and time constraints. A pensioner from 1995, Eunice herself eventually became the lynchpin in her household's own multigenerational structure of care, though this structure now was wholly based in the city.

The relative presence or absence of non-kin relations was also vital for respondents' conceptualization of 'home'. Rita Mfiki spoke somewhat wistfully of her friends in Middledrift: 'many of the people I left there have passed away. Those I was growing up with, they have all passed away.'³⁰ In some senses we can contrast the removal of these layers of relational networks – the death of kin, the death of friends – with Rita's aggressive construction of a different set of layered social networks in Cape Town, through her active involvement in her church, her four burial societies and her *imigalelo* ('*umgalelo* is my life', we can recall her saying in the previous chapter), which combined with her role as mother and grandmother. With a host of roles to positively enact, and a dense web of filial and social ties to fall back on, Rita was thus able to validate her decision to stay in the city: 'I am known better on this side now.'

Thus, the existence of networks based on kin and non-kin relations was central to maintaining migrant women's orientation to their areas of origin. In the urban setting, women often used these networks as an active part of their household survival strategies. And once these relations disappeared, so too did their commitments to their former homes. We may contrast this with studies of migrant men, which show

that orientation to 'home' was expressed not through the activation of reciprocal networks, but rather through investment in the physical homestead itself.³¹

Conjugal relationships also had great power to influence the nature and course of women's allegiances. This was affirmed early on in the lives of several respondents, who undertook their initial migration to Cape Town in order to join their husbands who were already resident and working in the city. Indeed, even the Langa Advisory Board saw the issue of African women's entry into Cape Town as a 'natural' consequence of wives wishing to accompany their husbands.³² Even in cases where women actively maintained coexisting strategies, the wishes of their husbands had a lasting impact. For Regina Mhlekwana, whose life history attests a tenaciously ruralist orientation, her husband's desire to remain in Cape Town even in death proved to be more resilient. She explained, 'I want to be buried at home [Middledrift] but now, because my husband is buried here, I cannot be buried there.'³³ Thus, the obligations of marriage effectively impeded an orientation towards one's natal home.

Children, equally, played a prominent role. The presence of children in the city, and the children's own identification as urbanites, often proved a potent counter to continued rural connections. For example, when asked whether she ever intended to move back to Middledrift on a permanent basis, Regina Mhlekwana stated, 'I can't stay because the children are here [in Cape Town]. I just visit and come back.'³⁴ She later complained, 'These children don't want to go to Middledrift. They say they are born in Cape Town.'³⁵ Thus, her children's active claiming of their urban-born status – 'they say they are born in Cape Town' – emphasized to Regina that her allegiance had to remain primarily, albeit reluctantly, urban in character.

Changing economic and political circumstances provided impetus towards a realignment of loyalties, and a perceptible shift towards a framework not necessarily guided by the opposition between urban and rural. As first-generation women acquired jobs, they were able to establish new identities as workers that were firmly rooted in the urban setting. Eunice Fuzile said of her first job in Cape Town, 'I got this job and then I decided to work . . . until I got familiar, and I was not scared anymore.'³⁶ Though her meagre earnings as a domestic were immediately sent to her parents in Burgersdorp, her employment also enabled her to become more familiar with her urban surroundings and to face the daily

challenges of city living without fear. As shown in chapter three, the acquisition of council housing was key to the formation of an established urban identity. This was not only implicit in the undercurrent of respondents' testimonies, as they explained how their homes enabled them to experience stability and relative security of tenure for the first time; it was also directly asserted by first-generation women themselves, as could be seen in Grace Madikane's claim, 'when I got this house, I got settled.'³⁷

With each enhancement and addition to the structure or design of these match-box homes, migrant women were investing in their urban livelihoods. Such visible improvements added an element of satisfaction to women's lives, which they used to further justify their increasingly urbanizing outlooks. When asked to consider in retrospect their migrant origins, women expressed the view that, overall, their economic situations had been improved, albeit not dramatically, by their decision to migrate and remain in the city. Doris Vala more positively stressed, 'I think it's [life] getting better . . . I do sleep nicely . . . *Ewe* [yes]. And get up nicely. And eat nicely. And dress nicely.'³⁸ Ellen Gqozo was more sober in her estimation: 'The life is very poor there [in Bedford]. I wouldn't take that poor life to where I am now. Because now here is more better for me . . . As poor as I am now here . . . there is no other home but here.'³⁹

Concurrent with the understanding that their productive selves were rooted in the urban context was an awareness of the lack of economic opportunity in their natal homes. Through visits, letters and dialogue with neighbours, respondents remained cognizant of developments concerning their areas of origin. And this consciousness shaped their belief in any lasting (or diminishing) roles they could play there. Eunice Fuzile stated, 'I am a Cape Town person because I have no future there [in Burgersdorp].'⁴⁰

First-generation women practised this sort of reluctant orientation to a decidedly urban geography partly because they saw that few alternatives were available to them. Even in terms of moral decline, a prominent theme voiced by most first-generation respondents, women expressed the view that a return to their natal homes would not pave the way towards a return to simpler, nobler ways of living. In contrast to Zulu residents who evoked a powerful rural-based nostalgia when speaking of the 'shortcomings of the urban present', most women in this study

possessed a marked soberness about the present condition in rural areas and small towns where, they felt, there had been an equivalent moral decline.⁴¹ When explaining why she did not think a rural upbringing would have changed the moral fibre of her children, Regina Mhlekwa said, 'there is not much difference now between there and here. It is all the same.'⁴² This echoes the sentiment expressed earlier by Rita Mfiki: 'I say there is no more nice life in the rural areas because it is the same as here in the township.'⁴³ While decrying the actions of 'the youth today', Eunice Fuzile admitted that 'also in Burgersdorp, the situation with the children, it is like this.' Symptoms of moral decline such as infidelity were for Eunice a product of what she termed 'these new times', a feature of the *modern* world but not strictly an *urban* one: 'even there in the rural areas, in the villages, they do the same.'⁴⁴

Thus, first-generation women refused to glorify the moral situation in their rural and small-town homes and generally remained unwilling to use a language of rural–urban opposition to frame their complaints. For them, rural environments were also subject to historical change.⁴⁵ By rejecting the location of moral degeneration in the confines of the city, these women avoided invoking the type of ruralist call to arms lapsed migrants in East London used to increasingly isolate themselves from the changing world around them.⁴⁶ Instead, African women used their knowledge of the 'actual' circumstances of life in their natal homes as further reason to entrench their households, and their own hopes for the future, in the city.

Ultimately, perhaps the lesson to be learned from these women's testimonies is that despite the romance of the narrative of transition and migrants' own hopes for greater and greater rewards, the actual process of urbanization was a sometimes uncertain affair. Despite severe political pressure, especially in the early decades of apartheid, to view their sojourn in the city as 'temporary', first-generation women actively sought to legitimize their place in the city and strove to create layers of networks and relationships that further tied them to the urban landscape. As was seen in the preceding chapter, first-generation women drew a strong sense of identity from the urban associations they created, which further added to the layers of connectedness they felt to their urban existences. Their struggle to establish themselves as workers and as residents in formal council housing fomented a determination to 'settle' that tenaciously remained throughout their lives. However, in some senses,

respondents framed their choice to settle as the 'only' viable option, rather than a desirable one, given the lack of economic opportunity in their natal areas of origin, as well as the absence there of an alternative moral haven offering solace from the encroachments of unruly youth and modern moral decline.

Through this process, women weathered internal contradiction and the financial and emotional challenges of 'coexisting strategies'. Women maintained connections to their natal homes generally as long as close kin were alive, and as long as the financial means were available. Ironically, it was through the continued sustenance of these relationships that women were able to soberly view developments in their former homes, enabling them to ultimately abandon their use of the lens of rural–urban opposition to 'connect personal with social change'.⁴⁷ Other dynamics, such as generational conflict, were to come increasingly to the fore.

Importantly, second-generation respondents show a different relation to the rural–urban framework that they inherited from their mothers. Obviously, being Cape Town-born, they had a different entry into this framework. However, as we have seen in chapter two, many (eight of 11 in this cohort) experienced rural and small-town life through a stint either in rural-based schools or under the care of their mother's natal kin. This allowed second-generation respondents to also develop a sense of and an independent relation to this different landscape, based on actual experience. Those who left Cape Town as teenagers to spend a significant period of their lives in the rural areas developed an abiding dislike for it. As Zanele Mvambo, who with her sister Nomonde spent 1981 and 1982 in a Transkeian boarding school, said, 'it was a very bad place. I will never take my child to that place.'⁴⁸ Miriam Madikane, who if we recall from chapter two spent five years in Mt. Fletcher with her father's relatives from the age of 13, also confirmed, 'I don't want even my kids to go that place.'⁴⁹ In general, these respondents framed their sojourn there as a disruptive contrast to their lives in Cape Town. Nomonde stated, 'the way of living there, it's scary with thunderstorms. It's cold and snowing . . . There was a dam where we got water from and some children would drown.'⁵⁰ Such water sources posed hazards especially to young girls, who were primarily responsible for fetching water, sometimes over long distances. Thus, second-generation women came away from these teenage experiences with negative perceptions of the quality of life possible in the rural areas, and framed their narrative very

much as a contrast between the comforts of the urban setting and the burdensome, even life-threatening, aspects of the rural areas.

As we have seen with first-generation women, conjugal relationships influenced profoundly the place in which 'home' could be located. A few second-generation women with more ruralist husbands have not become too 'settled' in their urban lives. Selina Mteto, a second-generation respondent, confessed that though she would prefer to remain in their house in Cape Town, 'I can't say I am settled because my husband wants to take pension and go and stay in the rural areas [in the Ciskei].'⁵¹ The Madikanes, as we have seen in chapter two, displayed the most adept use of the rural areas in their mobility strategies. They also evinced the most persistent agnatic orientation, and this was in large part because of the high rate of marriage among second-generation members. Nombulelo, Grace Madikane's second daughter, married in 1981 and had five children. She sent all five of her sons to the town of Alice (a Ciskeian town that was a centre of the African elite up to the 1950s), her husband's natal home, where they completed on average two years of schooling each. When asked why she sent her sons to Alice, she replied, 'I wanted them to know where their father comes from and know their rural area, how they stay. And they must also keep on going because that, it's not their father's home now, it [is] also their home . . . They mustn't know only Cape Town.'⁵² Interestingly, Nombulelo referred to Alice somewhat inaccurately, given its size, as 'their rural area'. This characterization made more explicit Nombulelo's perceived contrast between Cape Town and the more instructive atmosphere of Alice, and also meaningfully conveyed the sense of her sons' connectedness to the land, and implicitly to a patrilineal heritage.

In some senses, then, second-generation women were far more apt than their mothers to embrace a rural-urban opposition in their accounts. Many expressed this opposition in terms of the poor standard of living possible in rural areas, an impression possibly exaggerated by the discomforts of dormitory living or strict rural supervision. But an oppositional framework was also used by some women, who saw the rural areas (whether they were 'rural' in actuality or not) as a welcome haven of moral uprightness. Again, the role of husbands was instrumental in guiding this process.

In contrast, third-generation respondents were unanimously negative in their appraisals of their grandparents' areas of origin, though some

of these opinions were based on second-hand information rather than on actual experience. Buyiswa, who had been to visit her father's family in Keiskammahoek, said succinctly of that rural area, 'it's very, very lousy.'⁵³ Other characterizations of small towns and rural settlements were similarly damning: 'it's very difficult'; 'it's a horrible place.'⁵⁴ Some respondents were more specific in their reasons why they would not live there. Matumo Madikane, who said she had never been to the Transkei, but would like to visit, stated, 'In Transkei, I don't think most things happen.'⁵⁵ She stressed that her primary prejudice against the Transkei was a practical one: simply, she had noticed that youth who grew up in the Transkei were disadvantaged in the job market later in life because they did not have to learn to regularly converse in English, as urban-born Africans had.

In general, third-generation respondents were far more apt to view the rural areas and small towns of the Eastern Cape in wholly negative terms than their mothers and grandmothers. However, they also possessed a greater enthusiasm for, and a greater awareness of, other *urban* geographies – namely other South African cities, particularly Johannesburg and Pretoria. Third-generation respondents expressed in far more voluble tones their opinions of these places, in contrast markedly to the often short, clipped phrases – 'it's very, very lousy' – that they used to describe their grandparents' natal homes. As Nomphele Fuzile stated, 'I wish I were in Joburg [Johannesburg], I wish I were in Joburg . . . I hear about Joburg . . . That's where it's happening. It's the city of gold, it's where the money is. It's in Joburg.'⁵⁶ Nomphele went on to say that she had friends who went to Johannesburg and were immediately able to find a job, a situation she found enviable, given the racism she felt that she faced in her workplace, and her inability to find employment in Cape Town commensurate with her education: she has only been able to find gainful employ as a till operator, though she graduated from a three-year technician course with a national diploma in public management in 1999.

Similarly, sisters Hazel and Matumo were equally enthusiastic about Pretoria, though only Hazel had been there in person. Hazel stated, 'it was very nice, man. People there were nice and like, nobody have a problem with you . . . Like here in my street [in Khayelitsha], we don't greet with each other.'⁵⁷ Matumo emphasized the low crime rate: 'they said that crime is not that high there, so they do make me feel as if Pretoria is the place I would rather be.'⁵⁸ Evoked in both their

statements was a dissatisfaction with an aspect of their life in Cape Town, and the idealization of a different city as a possible solution to it.⁵⁹ Third-generation women have thus engaged in a language of contrast and a type of idealization, but the reference points have shifted from rural–urban to urban–urban poles of understanding and experience. Increasing access and exposure to these other urban centres, particularly since the 1990s, provided fertile imaginary ground on which to build newly conceived notions of contrast.

As the commentary above has suggested, African women have differently engaged with the rural–urban discourse prominent in previous studies of urban African identity formation. Some of this difference can be attributed to women's varying levels and lengths of actual experience in rural areas, and the varying levels of 'ruralness' evident in the areas in question. Though some second-generation women have adopted a rural–urban dualism to signify a deeper perceived moral divide, it is evident that even first-generation women who maintained sometimes resilient connections to their areas of origin have largely discarded this oppositional framework to comprehend processes of social change and moral decline. In the following section, we will explore another avenue along which African women have articulated perceptions of division, decline and difference.

Mobility and the language of 'difference'

One of the strongest recurrent themes voiced through respondents' recollections was one of movement. Chapter two has shown how mobility was made manifest in the shifting of household boundaries and household members. This movement encompassed great geographical distance, but it also traversed mental and emotional landscapes as well. We have also seen how household 'immobility' was positively expressed and asserted in the expansionist designs of first-generation women's council houses (chapter three). These belied first-generation women's initial experiences of migration and forced removal in their early years in the city.

Certainly, mobility (and immobility) strategies had manifold consequences for household structure and conception. However, a subtler, though perhaps more far-reaching, consequence was that movement itself became metaphor. AbdouMaliq Simone has persuasively argued that powerful dynamics of migration and displacement at work in the

fluid environment of African cityscapes have resulted in a conceptual reorientation around notions of movement. According to Simone, mobility (and its opposite, 'waiting') has become for urban Africans an inextricable part of their constructions of selfhood: 'the proliferation of movement comes close to constituting its own enlarging and self-reproducing logic With both increased affiliation and affinity with movement, a highly mobile collective subject is configured.'⁶⁰ Indeed, my own research suggests that mobility, and debates around mobility, have become deeply embedded in women's consciousness and firmly integrated into the text of their lives. I argue that mobility has become a marker of urban 'style' with the power to signify difference across a range of social categories.⁶¹ African women have employed these markers as metaphors for a wide variety of transformations experienced in the course of their lifetimes.

First-generation women from rural areas were quick to use distance to explain the key differences between their rural homes and Cape Town. Regina Mhlekwa related: 'In the past during the time of our fathers, when they were still alive, it was traditional Xhosa houses, rondavels We walked from the mountain in the scorching sun to fetch water from the river. It is better now because here is a tap in the yard.'⁶² Grace Madikane also gave account of the impact of distance on her sense of well-being as a child in Lady Frere: 'it was difficult because some days, we go to bed on an empty stomach. There was no food, there was no work . . . and we also fetched firewood from a distance. And also we fetched water from far away.'⁶³ Similarly, younger generations of women complained that distance was a considerable obstacle in the rural areas, particularly regarding the task of fetching water.⁶⁴

Such experiences of task-related mobility over large distances in their years growing up in the rural areas inevitably coloured migrant women's initial encounters with the urban landscape. For many first-generation women, that initial encounter was seen through a process of restricted movement, created and enforced by the state. Rita Mfiki recalled, 'Yhuu! The place that is bigger is the rural areas. Cape Town is very restrictive whereas there in the rural areas, you go anywhere and you are not asked for . . . passport. There is no passport in the rural areas, you go all over, unlike Cape Town.'⁶⁵ Thus, the fact that her movement was restricted changed Rita's perception of the relative size of Cape Town, whose population numbered over 500,000 (with nearly 50,000 Africans officially

recorded) by 1955 when Rita first arrived there.⁶⁶ Her lack of mobility in the urban area was instrumental in shaping her perceptions of relative space and scale – in comparison to the limitless boundaries of the rural areas, Cape Town was 'small' indeed.

Interestingly, images of movement and restrictions of movement went far beyond descriptions of influx control policy, which, as we saw in chapter one, coloured the depictions especially of the first generation of women, who were able to recollect the harsh pass laws of the 1950s and 1960s. This sensitivity to mobility was certainly enhanced and made acute by apartheid era mechanisms of social control, which focused a special gaze on mobile African women. However, internal mechanisms of control were also being harnessed, as first-generation parents, confronted by perceptions of crime and moral decay in urban South Africa, attempted to restrict the movement of their children. By far the most common way urban-born women described their childhood upbringing was through the restriction of movement:

All the interviewed daughters of first-generation respondent Grace Madikane mentioned in some way how 'strict' their upbringing was. As Nombulelo emphasized, 'they were strict, they were strict, they were so strict.'⁶⁷ According to Miriam, 'we grew up inside the house, not outside.'⁶⁸ Nombulelo commented that she and her siblings could not visit friends and their very movements were highly regulated. After they got home from school, they would have to fetch the groceries, an errand that was timed by their parents: 'They look at the time. If you go to the shop, you must run, at what time you have to go there. But you must, I must run straight away.' And if she did not run or happened to speak to people along the way, she would be late returning home and then 'my father is going to hit me.' With regularity, at four in the afternoon, her father would usher any visiting friends out of the house: 'He comes in the house and he finds you sitting with a friend. If maybe it is around four, he would ask, "Have you prepared the lamps at your home while you are here now? Go, my child and prepare the lamps at your place."' Nombulelo remembered that she was not allowed to go to her own school concerts in which she would be singing unless the teacher gave considerable notice. Pauline similarly recalled that her father did not allow them to participate in any after-school sporting activities: 'And if it's sports day, we can't go to a sport because my father believed in God only and all those things, sport and everything, it was

*devilish.*⁶⁹ *School trips to the zoo or the showgrounds were also off-limits. Instead, on occasion, her parents would bring the whole family together on an outing to a museum, the zoo or the Company Gardens in town.*

Several things are apparent from the Madikane family history. Second-generation respondents were unanimous in their appraisal of their parents' methods of upbringing. Their language suggested a conceived synonymy between a 'strict' rearing and restricted movement. To have strict parents meant that you were not able to move freely, especially in the evenings, and your movements outside the home would be closely regulated. This type of discipline was echoed in all six of the households interviewed. It was, however, strongest in the recollections of second-generation respondents as the defining feature of their childhood. Of being raised by her mother Gertrude, Nomonde Dinwa said, 'Our mother doesn't talk much, but we knew that we were not allowed to leave the house We knew that at six we should be at home. So we could only be with friends before six.'⁷⁰ Zanele, Nomonde's sister, remembered a household ritual similarly invoked by the Madikanes that involved children returning home at four in the afternoon, to make sure the glasses for the paraffin lamp were cleaned and ready to be lit: 'I know if we went to play, at four o'clock we must be back, [to] clean the glasses.'⁷¹

The uniformity with which most second-generation respondents related this aspect of their childhood suggests that parents had a vested interest in a high degree of surveillance and control over their children's movements. First-generation women expressed a multiple and layered motivation for this strategy. Lumka Kalipa explained her child-raising ethic: the children must 'go to church, when they come back, do housework and things. Don't stay in the street with others doing nothing, they must try by all means to have something to do, so that they don't have outside things.'⁷² Implicit in this ethic seems to be the understanding that if a child were left 'doing nothing', something would go awry. Regina Mhlekwa, another first-generation respondent, employed a similar logic. Of her fears of raising children in the urban setting, she said, 'children are not looked after, they are just left to run loose all over The child will grow in that environment.'⁷³ Here, Regina equated running 'loose' to parental negligence – they 'are not looked after' and not 'taught'.⁷⁴ Left unsupervised, children would be unduly influenced by their environment.

This notion of the city as a haven of moral decay and 'undesirable' behaviour is well documented in the literature on African encounters with urban areas in southern Africa, as far back as the first few decades of the twentieth century.⁷⁵ Moreover, women tended to link urban mobility with the rise of perceived social 'evils' such as alcoholism and infidelity. Grace Madikane explained that alcohol would make one 'just go up and down with nothing to do. One would drink alcohol and another would just be a wife to all the men and have no place of her own.'⁷⁶ Here mobility – expressed cogently in the phrase to 'go up and down' – is part of the same moral 'looseness' that Regina Mhlekwa feared.⁷⁷ This had consequences that struck at the heart of first-generation women's fears: to 'have no place of her own.' As migrant women settled in Cape Town and became heads of their own households, external factors especially prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s reinforced a tremendous sense of insecurity – frequent night-time pass raids, forced removals, arrests and nearby rioting coupled with the day-to-day restrictiveness and surveillance of influx control policy. 'Living around' or 'staying all over' became synonymous with failed attempts at residential stability and were to be avoided.⁷⁸ The space enclosed by the family fence provided a sense of internal stability amid external chaos, and that stability was a treasure first-generation women fought hard to preserve. The home was a stable centre, and children, but mainly girls, were expected to conduct all their primary relationships within its boundaries.

For Christianized migrants newly arrived in the city at mid-century, the impulse to protect their daughters against moral degeneration was enacted primarily through the close supervision of their movements, in particular to prevent unsupervised contact with males, or 'so that we are not with boys', as second-generation Nomonde succinctly stated.⁷⁹ In East London among Xhosa migrants in the same period, 'school' parents were enacting similar mechanisms of regulation over their daughters, underpinned by a commitment to maintaining a 'prudish sexual code'.⁸⁰ For first-generation women, policing young girls' movements was a costly, but necessary exercise in the performance of urban respectability, and the centrality of this task only increased as women further consolidated their position in domestic structures. We have seen in chapter two how elderly first-generation women became gatekeepers of a new moral economy of the home, and this was directly related to their ability to compel financial assistance from their daughters and granddaughters.

Older debates around protecting daughters' sexual purity were then re-enacted through new generational struggles over household resources. Controlling younger girls' bodies remained central to this tension.

As Elaine Salo convincingly shows in the context of a Coloured township, elderly *moeders* (mothers) vigorous regulation of their daughters' sexuality was essential to maintaining 'proper' social relations of production in the township. Policing daughters' movements enabled older women to legitimate their positions as 'respectable' matrons and heads of increasingly feminized domestic economies. Transgressions of these strictly guarded moral boundaries came at a high price. The older women of Manenberg collectively condemned a young Coloured woman from the community who had been raped on the way home from a neighbouring African township. The young woman spoke Xhosa and had been on one of many clandestine visits with Xhosa-speaking friends. Thus, her defiant mobility carried with it the spectre of blurring ethnic boundaries. For *moeders*, this heady mix of mobility and miscegenation threatened not only their notions of respectability, but their cultural identities as well. As a result, the rape was constructed by *moeders* as a fitting punishment.⁸¹

Relations between elderly first-generation matrons and their mobile granddaughters followed similar, if perhaps less tragic, trajectories. For example, we saw in chapter two how first-generation Gertrude Mvambo succeeded in preventing her granddaughter Novuyo from moving out of her house. This was despite the efforts of Novuyo's mother, who had recently remarried and wanted to include Novuyo in her newly formed household. Compelling Novuyo to remain can be seen as a significant strategy on Gertrude's part, if we consider it in the context Gertrude's own stated frustrations over controlling the wages and movements of her daughters. Novuyo's continuing presence not only signalled Gertrude's authority as household head; it also ensured that Novuyo would remain to help care for Gertrude's own needs in her old age: we can recall Gertrude's assertion, 'she is the one who must look after me.'⁸²

Similarly, the relative mobility of third-generation Nandipha became a bone of contention between Nandipha's mother, Nomthandazo, and her grandmother, Eunice. We saw earlier how Nomthandazo expressed her resistance to Eunice's authority in their multigenerational household by withholding her income from the common pool. Eunice attempted to consolidate her position in other ways. Nomthandazo complained, 'You

see now, maybe she [Nandipha] wants to go to a certain place maybe and she will not be allowed to go anywhere.' Nomthandazo felt compelled to acquiesce to her parents' wishes to restrict Nandipha's movements, 'because I have no place to stay, you see because you know that this will cause a fight and in the end they will lock her [Nandipha] out.' Nandipha's transgression – excessive mobility – was punished by being physically 'locked out' of the Fuzile home. We can see in these examples palpable manifestations of Simone's contention that in African cities, 'movement has been appropriated as a multifaceted strategy of urban survival, accumulation but also control.'⁸³

Despite first-generation women's vigilant efforts, it is evident that both the ability to regulate the movement of urban youth and the rationale for doing so became eroded in the latter decades of apartheid. Increasingly evident from testimonies of women across all generations was a growing awareness that youth were more willing and able to freely move, interpreted by older generations as an act of defiance and by younger generations as an assertion of their modern and mobile identities. For example, Regina Mhleka, a first-generation respondent, stated:

Now I know that my children differ Before you had to ask for permission and say 'Mama, I want to go to such and such a place' and she will say, 'wait, I will speak to your father.' If the father says no, you are not going, you do not go. With these kids nowadays, you look for a child and you find that the child is already gone.⁸⁴

This exasperation is echoed by other respondents. When the Mvambo family managed to get access to electricity in 1981, Zanele related that her mother Gertrude rued the loss of paraffin lamps that had once compelled young people to return home promptly in order to clean them: 'That's why my mother used to say sometimes . . . 'oh these youngsters of today, they don't worry about coming back home early to come and clean the glasses because they know they can just press on the wall.'⁸⁵ Evident in this comment is Gertrude's nostalgia for an era with simpler rituals, when parental control over children's movements seemed more secure.

There is a sense that older generations actively embraced a discourse of declining control over third-generation youth. This discourse of decline closely associated increased movement with moral ambiguity and even

higher rates of crime and youth violence. Thabo Madikane claimed that 'too many urban recreational facilities' and the fact that 'you can go anywhere and study elsewhere' gave youth 'too much choice', which greatly hampered their ability to distinguish right from wrong.⁸⁶ In contrast, while third-generation women expressed awareness of the decreasing levels of control that parents and grandparents were able to exercise over their movements, such a shift was emblematic of something far more positive. Pamela Madikane asserted, 'I go everywhere I feel like going at the time.'⁸⁷ Such statements attested third-generation women's growing mobility, made possible by the ending of influx control and a greater exposure to other neighbourhoods and environments, such as through attending schools in formerly white or Coloured areas or visiting other South African cities.

Importantly, deregulation of the transport industry in the late 1980s dramatically increased the number of privately owned kombi-taxis used by commuters in the Cape Town area. By the late 1980s, the number of commuters using these 'black taxis' grew to approximately 80,000 people per day.⁸⁸ Given the element of flexibility, frequency, coverage and convenience provided by the burgeoning taxi industry, it was no wonder that Africans used taxis increasingly, instead of limited train and bus services.⁸⁹ Such developments in the transport industry, though not uniformly positive, effectively multiplied the travel options open to urban Africans who had been historically relegated to peripheral areas of the city, and undoubtedly reinforced an awareness of increasing freedom of movement.⁹⁰

Indeed, some third-generation women explicitly framed new experiences of democratic freedom in the context of increased mobility. Matumo Madikane's primary memory of life under apartheid was that 'we are not allowed to just go around.' In contrast, Nandipha Ntswana heralded the dawn of a new democratic age in South Africa with a spirited 'bus-run' during the 1994 elections. She related:

We wanted to vote, but we were still young. We were watching people all the day, voting And also there were buses from Guguletu to Gatesville [to transport voters] – we also went with the buses, you know, go up and down, because every house was also empty. And we decided to go up and down, watch people . . . just for fun.⁹¹

Nandipha's use of the phrase 'go up and down' is a striking reappropriation of the same term we saw Grace Midakane invoke so colourfully to describe a fearful moral laxity. Such statements revealed that third-generation women saw mobility as an affirmation of their stake in a newly democratized society, and something that symbolized greater access rather than heightened danger.⁹²

Nandipha clearly identified the hallmark of her generation as the ability to 'go everywhere we want to go.' She used this to accentuate the difference between her generation and that of her mother. When asked to compare her life to that of her mother's generation, Nandipha, a third-generation respondent, stated,

I mean at their age, at like twenty, they didn't go to the clubs or to the cinema and we go everywhere we want to go. And we come back later, and they didn't do that. They had to ask and if they weren't given permission, they didn't go. And we don't ask, we just go, sometimes, but not all the time. We don't ask.⁹³

And her own life exemplified this confidence – as a part of the Girl Guides, she has visited Johannesburg and some of the more rugged areas of the Western Cape. And for leisure, she related that her favourite pastimes involved clubbing at 'Dockside' or 'Club Gijima', made possible because her friends now possessed cars to take her there.

We can see that Nandipha's embrace of mobility as both a marker of generational and political change was largely exercised through participation in rituals of consumption popular among her peers. Buyiswa Mteto similarly related, 'let's say, in Wynberg [a suburb], neh, every year, they used to have a carnival [the Maynardville Carnival]. Before the elections, I didn't know anything about the carnival. But now I can go there to the carnival. And see what is happening to the carnival.'⁹⁴ As observed in other contexts, third-generation women were more ready to embrace an overt consumerism than older generations of women. Mobility was an important enabler in this enterprise.⁹⁵ It is interesting to note the rise of the 'mega-mall' complex in recent years in urban South Africa has encouraged this shift, offering the prospect of a more anonymous style of consumerism that could be safely exercised within the confines of gated boundaries, vast fields of parking lots, and patrolled lanes of shops.⁹⁶

Male mobility in the city

Though not the central focus of this chapter, struggles over male mobility contrasted with and complemented in many ways those enacted over female mobility. For example, first-generation parents' regulation of the movements of second-generation children was clearly enforced more strictly for young African girls than for boys. We can see this by comparing Thabo Madikane's recollections of childhood to those of his three sisters described above:

*When asked to recount his primary memories of growing up, he offered this snapshot: 'We {he and his friends} used to listen to parlour music that was played by these tsotsis {gangsters} . . . they used to go around with long knives. A spoiler used to carry a long knife in order to be seen that he was a spoiler And we admired them. And we can just say they were our heroes because we used to see those guys. And we used to go to the movies, especially in Nyanga . . . when the centre, I think it was built after 1960-something, the 1960s, we used to go to Nyanga two to five {in the afternoon}, to go and watch films We used to go around and go to the bushes. Just to go around to the bush because there were no other playgrounds for the kids. We used to play rugby I can just say, we used to go to the bush, especially Crossroads here, it was still a bush. There were no houses during that time. It was a big forest. We used to go inside and sometimes we used to come across big snakes. Either we run or else we attack it. That's what we used to do.'*⁹⁷

*Thabo, like his sisters, recalled his parents as being unusually strict with regard to mobility, but he was able to easily recall many instances of defiance, particularly when he began working as a machine operator in a blanket factory in 1975. He stated, 'That's when I became at least intolerant . . . going out with friends, coming back the next day or don't come at all.' He and his friends would roam the streets and engage in crime, 'taking out the tires if the car is parked outside. Take the tires, take the battery and leave. Sell it somewhere else. Just to enjoy . . . it was fun. Even robbing people. Outside maybe you see a person, a man walking in the night coming from where else, coming from, with all his friends. Grab him, search him, run away, go and drink some, you know, all those things.'*⁹⁸

Thabo's account suggests that second-generation males may have

enjoyed greater mobility in their childhood than females. Thabo differed profoundly from women in the way he framed his childhood experience. His sisters in the Madikane family and other female respondents overwhelmingly emphasized types of physical seclusion and parental attempts at 'strictness', which they translated to mean a restriction of movement. In contrast, Thabo framed his childhood narrative as one of carefree movement and adventure, centred on his boyhood friends rather than his family. In addition, the level of his interaction with the urban environment was far greater – walking the streets, playing in 'the bush', going to watch movies. His perceptions of urban life and the neighbourhood of his childhood days were thus far more textured and detailed than those his sisters could provide. Interestingly, Thabo's nephew Thato remembered his childhood in strikingly similar ways. He recalled, 'on Saturdays we [the boys from his street] would go to the bushes and we go hunt like we do' while 'the girls stayed.'⁹⁹ This suggests that male youth's mobility remained largely unhindered in later decades.

Furthermore, Thabo's story reveals that his carefree childhood wanderings translated as a teenager into participation with friends in petty crime. Mobility enabled these more reckless, and sometimes drink-fueled, forays. As we saw in chapter two, second-generation Michael Richards similarly participated in aggressive group mobility, involving drugs and alcohol and culminating in a threatening 'walking around'. Third-generation Thato also recalled how he and his friends had traded in play-hunting 'in the bush' for the more risky game of harassing strangers and slashing tires: 'we did hang around, like staying having fun, making fun of people walking the streets and we can chase them away, all this. Like throwing stones at people . . . We all played about tires. Like cars and bicycle wheels. That's the way we used to have fun in those days.' Salo argues such demonstrations of seemingly reckless mobility were in fact carefully enacted displays of streetwise 'toughness'. In Manenberg township, male youth had to engage in the performance of a certain fearless mobility, to show that they had the 'strong bones' necessary in order to become a man.¹⁰⁰ Chamberlain argues that male Barbadian migrants presented a similar emphasis on 'impulse and autonomy', as well as a spontaneous sense of movement and adventure in their accounts of migration, characteristics conspicuously absent in women's accounts.¹⁰¹ In this light, second- and third-generation displays of mobility in their

childhood and teenage years can be seen as a sort of 'rite of passage' into a confident and freely asserted streetwise manhood.

It is evident that men continued to freely emphasize their mobility as they became husbands and fathers. This tended to clash in difficult ways with their increasing domestic obligations. Though women became more central to the domestic economies of their households, their ability to curb the mobility of men (both young and old) continued to remain limited.¹⁰² As we have seen in chapter two, male absenteeism in the running of household affairs exacerbated gendered and generational tensions. Infidelity became a key, and deeply discordant, manifestation of this conflict. Lumka Kalipa related that her husband 'used to leave the house for two, three days . . . when he felt like it, he used to go and come back afterwards. He used to [go] up and down.'¹⁰³ Part and parcel of this 'up and down' behaviour, she explained, were extra-marital affairs and physical abuse. Gertrude Mvambo estimated that her husband's repeated infidelity lasted twenty-five years. Mobility enabled this behaviour, and also provided the painful mechanism through which domestic struggles became public knowledge. Gertrude's daughter, Nomonde, said that the family would find out about her father's numerous extra-marital affairs 'from people around, like the people he drank with would talk about it around.'¹⁰⁴ Third-generation Vuyani Fuzile recalled one of the more disruptive consequences of his father Andile's drunken behaviour was that he would 'talk too much' and 'talk and talk'. This 'talk and talk' was accompanied by physically abusive behavior towards his girlfriend at the time.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the 'talking around' flowed from men's 'walking around', and resulted in a keenly felt social embarrassment. Alcohol fueled both activities.

Pointedly, women emphasized that the declining mobility of men, either through old age or illness, contributed towards domestic harmony, particular in cases where men had once used that freely won mobility to conduct extra-marital affairs. When first-generation respondent Gertrude Mvambo was asked to explain how she coped with discovering her husband's repeated infidelity, she could not bring herself to condemn him: 'But shame, he's old he can't go out in the day anymore, we stay at home now.'¹⁰⁶ These words reveal to some extent her confidence in his inability to continue his unfaithfulness. The result was a semblance of marital togetherness – 'we stay at home now.' Lumka Kalipa's story was markedly similar. She became much more comfortable with their

relationship many years later – ‘he likes to be near me now’ – and she affirmed that their relationship was good ‘because we’re both old.’¹⁰⁷ In her story, Lumka’s assertion that her husband ‘likes to be near’ was emblematic of their different, and improved, relationship.

Children of wayward fathers also recalled how restricted mobility made for brief moments of respite in an otherwise long history (see chapter two) of family strife and separation. Second-generation Malane Mfiki recalled how his father’s unrepentant ‘living out’ and his mother’s fury in response prevented any sense of domestic unity: ‘It was really painful when that thing happened, when my parents could not reach an understanding and stay together in one place.’¹⁰⁸ When his father became terminally ill and was forced by his mistress to return to Rita for shelter and care, the Mfiki family achieved a sense of togetherness under one roof, albeit temporarily. Malane cherished the opportunity to help nurse his father in the last days before his passing away in 1995. Similarly, Matumo Madikane was only able to resolve some of her long-standing feelings of bitterness towards her often absent and alcoholic father – ‘I would act as if I did not have a father . . . I hated him, I hated him’ – when he was hurt in an accident and lost his sight in the early 1980s. She was able to visit him ‘almost every single day’ at a local hospital, and his immobility provided her with the opportunity to engage with him meaningfully for the first time: ‘That is the time I got to love my father, because he was sitting there.’¹⁰⁹ We can see, then, that men’s immobility provided the mechanism by which some sort of domestic healing could occur, and also provided women with the language with which to describe that process.

Conclusion

Thus it appears that mobility was used as metaphor to symbolize a variety of emerging social distinctions in African areas of Cape Town. For these urban Africans, mobility demarcated generation boundaries, represented gender divisions, and illustrated most aptly the perceived differences in life and (lifestyles) within the context of rapid political change. First-generation respondents aggressively used a discourse of mobility to consolidate household control over their children, particularly young girls. Debates around mobility were enacted on a larger terrain of a generational struggle over resources and the role of elderly women as

moral authorities in the home. In contrast, mobility was 'worn' with flair by third-generation females as a confident assertion of greater opportunity and their increasingly consumerist selves in a freer South Africa. Men's profiles revealed a persistent assertion of a streetwise mobility, and this continued into their married lives. First-generation women's more personal experience of their husbands' infidelities in a sense proved that mobility made for bad morality, and destructive consequences for family life. Men's declining mobility in their later years, in contrast, provided the space for domestic solace. Africans' thorough and multifaceted engagement with the language of mobility reveals that the rural–urban dualism discussed above has, at least for these established residents, lost much of its signifying power. Instead, it appears that over the course of the apartheid period, mobility truly became an urban 'style' that, like fashion itself, evolved with and evoked the changing times.

CONCLUSION

African women in Cape Town creatively engaged with both the obstacles and the opportunities presented by the urban environment around them. Taken together, the various strategies of settlement African women crafted and managed over five decades have provided a compelling portrait of adaptation, resilience and change. However, as the analysis has emphasized, sensitivity to generational difference allows both a more precise historical location and a more complex view of how these strategies were conceived, contested and refined.

In the course of their adult lives in Cape Town, first-generation women experienced the restrictive and coercive nature of apartheid policies in a far more personal and immediate way than subsequent generations. Influx control was palpably manifest in forced removals, a much-reduced scope for employment and close surveillance of their movements in the city. Despite – or perhaps because of – this level of control, these women were also to a large extent this study's most 'aggressive' urbanizers. First-generation women built up a dense array of social networks that bound them to their fellow African women and their immediate African community. These associational ties persist to this day. They took to renovating their homes with zeal, first to make them 'respectable' and then to more accurately reflect a changing ethos of expansion and renewal. Their privileged access to council houses on relatively spacious plots furthered this transformation. They adeptly used extended kin and other resources available in their natal areas of origin and in the homelands to relieve financial pressures and provide an element of continuity in their children's education. As pensioners in the urban setting, these women and their modest council homes became the bastions of a multigenerational structure of care.

As they aged, first-generation women resolutely adapted to shifting circumstances by retooling existing practices and underlying ideological frameworks. Aware of historical processes of change in their natal homes and increasingly enmeshed in the fabric of urban life, these women largely released themselves from a felt and practised connection to their natal homes of origin. They also fundamentally reworked notions of themselves as urbanites. This can be seen in their reluctance to invoke a rural–urban opposition in order to articulate processes of urban social change and moral decline. Their increasing adoption of electricity as their energy of choice and their involvement in informal burial societies reflect to some degree their shift towards consumerist and modernist orientations. However, first-generation women also actively contested these developments to some extent, evident particularly in their efforts to regulate the movement of and compel financial support from their increasingly mobile daughters and granddaughters.

The experiences of second-generation women exhibited aspects of continuity and discontinuity with the trajectories presented in the first-generation cohort. Many second-generation women continued to reside in adulthood with their mothers in multigenerational households. This long residence may have accounted for their adoption of certain strategies used by their mothers. For example, second-generation women were pivotal in providing some support to first-generation women's home improvement endeavours. Those women that established independent residences continued, when possible, the ethos of renewal and expansion espoused by their mothers. In addition, despite a more wary and dispassionate relationship to *iimanyano*, burial societies and *imigalelo*, second-generation women continued to view their capacity for organizational involvement as structured along similarly gendered and cultural lines.

However, testimonies from the second-generation group indicate the beginnings of a differently felt and articulated notion of place. Because of their position as urban-born residents, apartheid was both experienced and recalled in distinctive ways. Youth politics featured more prominently in their recollections. These women were not practised as their mothers were in gendered politics of resistance, and this reflected the decreasing impact of gendered influx control legislation in the waning years of apartheid. One significant way in which many second-generation women experienced the consequences of political and social turmoil

during the apartheid period was by leaving the city entirely and taking residence in rural-based schools. Their experience in these schools was to profoundly shape the way in which rural areas were perceived. Far more so than their mothers, these women utilized a rural–urban dualism in their accounts to express perceived differences in life quality and opportunity. In contrast, the city provided an avenue towards a more modern and ‘easy’ life, and some women actively encouraged their households to embrace its features. This can be seen in their role in facilitating a transition to increased electricity use and the purchase of electrical appliances.

Third-generation women’s histories reveal the inadequacy of frameworks used by older generations to understand the interaction of people and place in a rapidly changing political environment. Ideas of community and ‘home’ for these women were constructed on profoundly different terms. Though these women continued to reside in an African township, it was clear that recent exposure to other neighbourhoods and lifestyles fundamentally changed their perceptions of their current homes and desires for the future. The ending of racialized legislation gave third-generation women the unique opportunity to experience better-resourced schools in other neighbourhoods. In addition, access to a better-serviced transport system encouraged women to view mobility as an essential component of their increasing orientation to a consumerist lifestyle.

Third-generation women exhibited a marked tendency for decreased associational involvement in ‘classic’ African women’s organizations, though they used limited burial society membership to carve a type of autonomy for themselves and their children in multigenerational households. Their selective purchases of electrical appliances can be seen as a further extension of this. Third-generation women also evinced a desire to explore social interactions that were not necessarily dictated along racialized lines. Willingness to live in multiracial areas of the city, or even to relocate to other urban areas, was part of this same desire, as well as an affirmation of their relative adaptability to a more anonymous, modern society. Third-generation women’s enthusiastic embrace of electricity as an indispensable feature of urban living can be seen in this light.

Certainly, a generational perspective does not adequately contextualize every aspect of these women’s experiences. Important continuities exist across all generations. For example, involvement in some form of funeral

insurance, whether through involvement in burial societies or formal insurance schemes (or a combination of both), was seen as essential for the overwhelming majority of women surveyed. This underscores the embeddedness of death in the consciousness of urban Africans and emphasizes the centrality of death-provisioning in life strategies. In addition, a discourse of mobility, while differently harnessed by various generations, did in fact draw from a similar language of movement and modernity. Women were thus able to communicate, though sometimes contentiously, across generational divides.

Overall, there is reason to assert that despite the presence of strongly articulated generational difference, a gendered consciousness was still a crucial part of these women's lives. For example, though focus was placed on intergenerational contestation over household resources, African women in this study as a rule showed far more allegiance than male members to their families' material interests. Even first-generation women who displayed strong marital bonds in fact displayed a negative opinion of men, both in their familial and social sphere. Men were characterized as inefficient and corrupt in the handling of organizational finances. Though not consistently evoked in every individual's recollections, the role of alcoholism and abuse perpetrated by male members in certain families is difficult to ignore. And male mobility was seen as particularly problematic when it came to their faithfulness in relationships or in fulfilling fatherly obligations. In this regard, women were in some senses united by a common mistrust of men, which, as a consequence, forged a resilient sense of self-reliance and autonomy.

Finally, the above findings need to be tempered by particular families' histories. Certain families were better able to follow 'successful' settlement strategies in the urban context. The Madikanes, for example, more effectively used mobility strategies to ensure a higher educational standard for their children. Interestingly, the robust organizational ethic shown by Grace Madikane in the first generation was strongly reproduced across both the second and third generations, a unique feature of this family. Third-generation respondent Pamela placed her religious involvement as a central element in her life. This probably led to her ability to articulate, far more than other women in her cohort, the benefits of African community life. Other families, such as the Mhlekwes, had to contend with unemployment, illness, and alcoholism on a large scale, and thus their settlement strategies rarely went beyond

making provision for basic survival. This limited their ability to actively participate in projects, for example, large-scale renovations, to enhance their urban existences. Perhaps this inability to realize a stable urban existence was partly responsible for first-generational respondent Regina Mhlekwa's persistently ruralist orientation.

In the context of the historiography of urbanization in South Africa and urban African life, this research has both revisited familiar terrain and tested new avenues of analysis. A key method was to draw on, and historically locate, the rich anthropology of African social life in town – a theme well explored in South African scholarship since the 1960s. The complexity and selectivity of women's actual organizational profiles influenced the development of an alternative perspective on urban African women's associational involvement, one that did not consider as 'given' that women's associational ties were deeply enmeshed in their identity and life strategies. In addition, African women's use of a conceptual framework constructed along a rural–urban opposition, long the focus of considerable scholarship on migrant identity formation, was found to capture only a fraction of the signification processes taking place. Recent research that emphasizes the plasticity of African household boundaries was used to inform a historically specific investigation of household livelihoods over the course of the apartheid period. And lastly, existing scholarship on African interaction with the built environment shaped an examination of women's renovation efforts and their engagement with different types of fuel resources. This examination yielded new insights into the manner in which women enacted and understood processes of structural renewal and technological change.

Combining perspectives gleaned from anthropology, human geography and development studies with a historical perspective has encouraged a richer evocation of the landscape of Cape Town, and its inhabitants' changing relation to it. It has also necessitated a more flexible stance on what could or should constitute a 'valid' historical source. Because of the limitations inherent in documentary evidence and the challenges involved in collecting and harnessing oral accounts, historians of Africa need to consider casting ever-wider nets in their search for the 'stuff' of history. For example, although the spoken testimonies of Africans remain the centrepiece of this study, the physical structures of women's homes were also validated as repositories of their own type of historical memory. In addition, one can view the

trans-generational interviewing strategy as an extension or elaboration of 'standard' oral archiving techniques, a strategy that has helped widen the scope for interpretation of oral sources.

Overall, this study argues for new paradigms to help capture the complexity of historical processes at work. For example, relations of reciprocity between mothers and daughters, long seen as the lynchpin of household survival strategies in southern Africa, were shown to have become increasingly tenuous. Examining the contours of these new generational fault lines thus became a central preoccupation of this study. I have also argued for the importance of historicizing the material culture of the city. At its most fundamental level, everyday choices Africans made about the type of roof they lived under, the appliance used to cook the evening meal or the mode of transportation used for the weekly shop embodied a type of 'lived history' of urbanization and outlined a particularly African route to modernity. Finally, it is evident that mobility has emerged as both a vital economic strategy and a more deeply embedded signifier of 'difference', identity and social change. In many ways, the Africans in this study exemplified that urban life was lived constantly 'on the move', and historians would do well to continue to seek conceptual frameworks that help sharpen our perception of these dynamics.

Much scope remains for further analysis of the issues raised in this research. Certainly, more comparative work on urban women across the southern African region would yield exciting connections and discontinuities with the trajectories presented here. For example, it is evident that although apartheid South Africa presented in some senses the harshest challenges to African urbanization in comparison with other countries in the region, it also offered useful 'entry points', particularly in the area of state housing and pensions. These 'entry points' were effectively used in particular by first-generation African women to consolidate their position in the city. It would be interesting, then, to compare and contrast how women in cities such as Lusaka, Maputo or Blantyre may have attempted to fashion a sense of place and space without the relative 'benefits' of these resources. A study of female migrancy across national boundaries would be equally valuable in evoking how women may integrate competing conceptions of diverse urban settings.¹

Finally, the experience of urban African men needs to be further conceptualized and charted. A fuller treatment of the trans-generational interviews of male members of these six families, for example, could

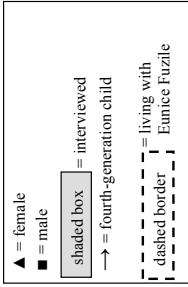
certainly offer an alternative view of settlement. Even a cursory viewing of the sample of male narratives in this study reveals the outlines of different discursive practices involving mobility and different pathways of disintegration and renewal within the city's social and economic fabric. Thus, a trans-generational study focused on the lives of African women can claim to provide only one window on the complex processes of urbanization in the South African context. However, it is hoped that the view obtained contributes to a deeper and more textured history of Cape Town, and of the fascinating transformations in identity and experience that a particular group of its inhabitants underwent.

APPENDIX FAMILY HISTORIES AND FAMILY TREES

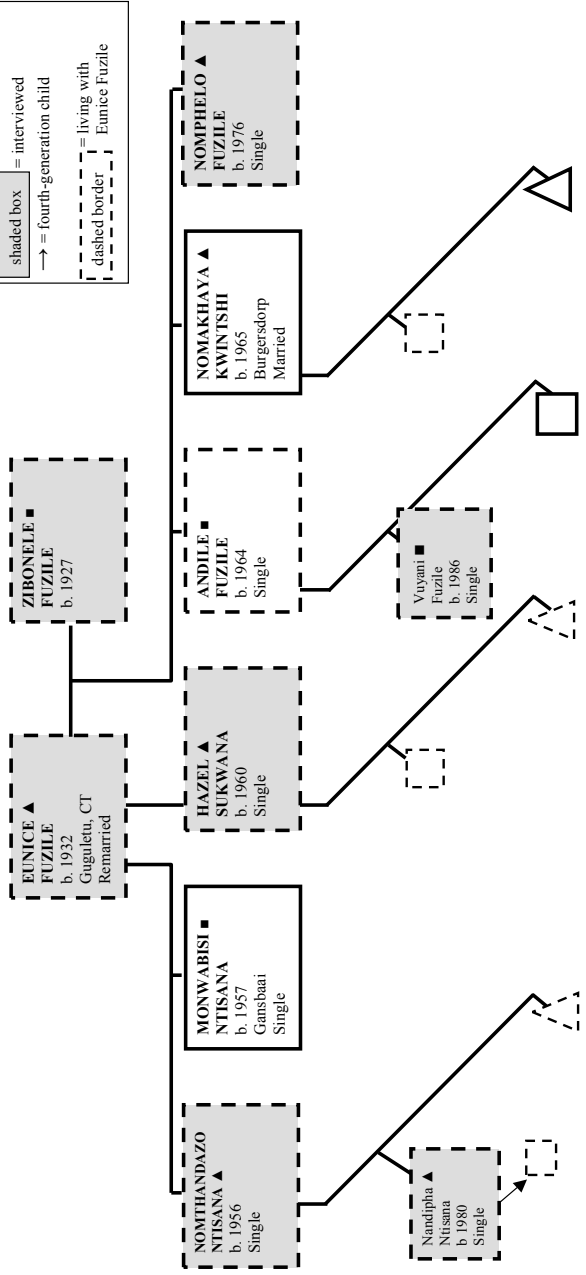
Author's note: While some of the information in this appendix repeats material presented in the book, it provides a supplementary family-orientated reference point to the trans-generational testimonies given. The 'family trees' are a snapshot in time, and reflect family composition in the main period of research. As this study has shown, household arrangements over time were in practice more fluid than any diagram can express. Where possible in the written family histories, I have indicated changes that have occurred after the main research period.

Fuzile

Eunice Fuzile, born in 1932, and her husband Zibonele have lived in their council house in Guguletu since 1972. Eunice is originally from Burgersdorp, and entered Cape Town in 1945 to find work on the recommendation of her family. She has six children, two by her first husband, whom she married in 1950 and eventually divorced, and three by her current husband, whom she married in 1969. One of her sons suffered from polio and became paralysed, and receives a disability grant. Eunice has been a pensioner since 1995; her husband, since 1993. Eunice attempted to supplement that income by running a small crèche for toddlers and operating a small business selling bread from the house, as part of a programme run by the Amy Biehl Foundation. Both these activities had ended by 2003. Previously, Eunice was a domestic servant and Zibonele a labourer at a slaughterhouse until 1980, when he became a trade unionist for the General Workers Union and the Construction



FUZILE

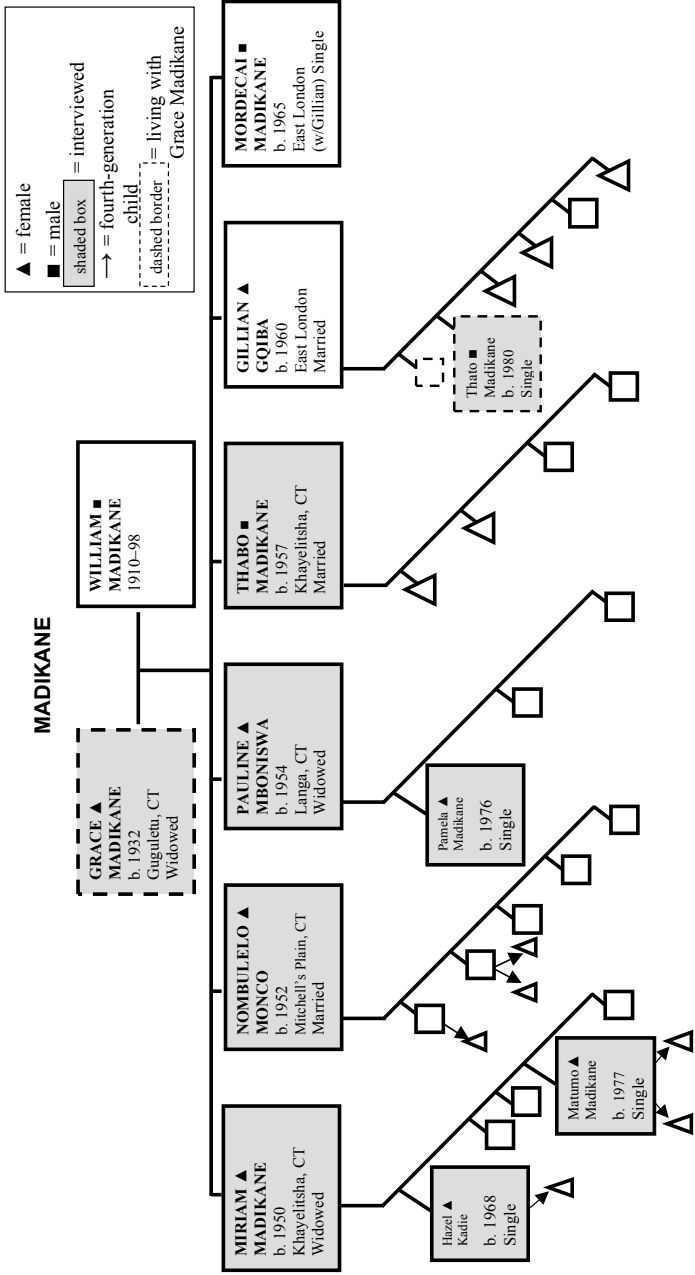


Allied Workers Union. In 1989 the Fuziles built an extension onto the side of the house, adding another bedroom and in-house toilet and bathroom. In 1992 a backyard flat was erected, with three bedrooms. A bullet hole remains in the door, a result of spillover violence from nearby KTC (an informal settlement) when its shacks were destroyed in 1986.

During the period of research, Eunice and her husband presided over a multigenerational household comprising one of their sons and three of their daughters, plus their daughters' children. Her eldest daughter Nomthandazo was unemployed with two children and one grandchild. She helped pay for childcare and transport for her children by selling cigarettes. Hazel (also a mother of two), Eunice's third-born child, was employed as a senior radiographer at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town. However, on a return visit in 2004, we learned that Hazel contracted HIV and was no longer working. Eunice's last-born daughter, Nomphele, was a till operator at Woolworths. Eunice complained that both her sons drank too much and were unemployed. Nomthandazo's daughter Nandipha has a son, born in 1980, residing with them. Eunice has one married daughter (none of her other children are married), who lives with her husband and children in Burgersdorp.

Madikane

Grace Madikane was born in 1932 and has been in Cape Town since 1949, after leaving her home in Lady Frere to be with her parents who were working in the city. She married her husband William in 1950. William, a pastor in the Apostolic Faith Mission church, passed away in 1998. Grace has lived in Guguletu, in council housing, since 1975. Grace is retired and has received a pension since 1992. Grace was in domestic service sporadically from 1950 until 1980, when she became a nursing assistant. From 1960 onwards, when not in full-time employment, Grace also sold, at various times, homebaked goods, second-hand clothing, meat and vegetables from home. Grace has six children – four daughters and two sons. Grace has 23 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Two of Grace's grandchildren, by a daughter who now lives in East London, resided with Grace during the main period of the study. On the Madikane property in Guguletu, a one-roomed shack was built with funds from Grace's daughter Pauline in 1978. In 1991, an extension with an in-house bathroom and toilet was built.

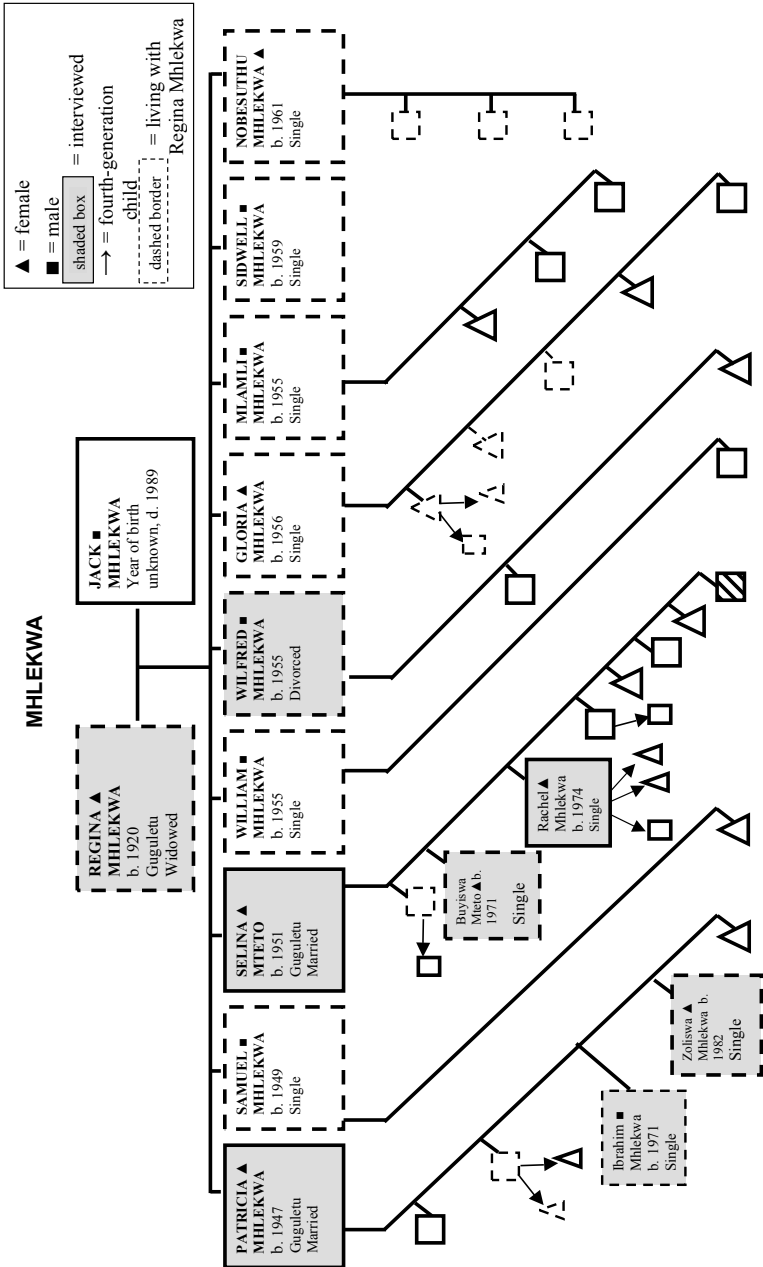


All of Grace's own children live outside of her home, and outside of Guguletu – two live in East London, two in Khayelitsha, one in Langa and one in Mitchell's Plain. Five of her six children were married by the time this research was conducted. Grace's daughters appear to be following in their mother's footsteps – Pauline and Miriam are nurses and Nombulelo is a domestic servant. Thabo, her son, has a long history in the anti-apartheid struggle, and is currently a trade union organizer. Pauline's daughter Pamela completed a diploma in management at a technikon and is now a call-centre operator at a research company. Miriam's two daughters, Hazel and Matumo, are both unemployed. Thato, one of Grace's resident grandsons, gained his matric in 1999 and was unemployed until 2005, when he got a job in the hospitality sector.

The Madikanes are probably the most upwardly mobile of the families interviewed. This is evident in the second-generation's ability to establish independent households in other parts of the city or in different cities entirely. Also, educational levels generally increased with each generation – most of Grace Madikane's children were able to gain matric, and some of her grandchildren obtained diplomas and university degrees, though this was not uniformly the case. Hazel and Matumo did not progress beyond standard 9, for example. Other noteworthy features of this family was the generally strong religious undercurrent of its members, expressed in active involvement with various denominations of the Christian church, and its mixture of ethnic backgrounds – William was Sotho and Grace is half Xhosa, half Sotho. The children and some of the grandchildren speak both languages – Hazel, for example, has a Tswana boyfriend with whom she communicates in Sotho.

Mhlekwá

Regina, born in 1920 in Middledrift, entered Cape Town in 1930 originally to take care of her brother's children after his wife died. In 1944 she married Jack Mhlekwá, who was a plumber for the University of Cape Town (UCT). Cancer forced him out of work in 1979 and he was homebound until his death in 1989. Regina and her family live in Guguletu, in two adjacent council homes. Regina has lived there since 1972. Regina has four daughters and five sons, 26 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. She has no formal employment, but sells



peaches in season and, when her health is good, second-hand clothing in Saldanha Bay with her last-born daughter, Nobesuthu. She has received a pension since the 1980s.

During the main period of research, all of Regina's children were formally unemployed, though this had changed by 2003 when her son Wilfred was employed in the catering and cleaning section at UCT. All five of Regina's sons and two of her daughters lived with her. Only third-born daughter Selina and first-born daughter Patricia lived away from their mother's home, though both were still based in Guguletu. They were also the only two children who were married (Wilfred was divorced). Regina noted that in addition to her own children, 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren were staying with her. Thus, 22 members, including herself, resided in the two houses and one small prefabricated backyard shack, which her granddaughter Buyiswa bought in 1996 to house herself and a cousin.

Patricia lived with her Muslim husband in a house near Regina. Her employment history was varied, with a combination of informal sector work and employment in domestic service and old-age care. Selina also lived nearby with her husband, who was a messenger at Standard Bank, and thus represented the only steady source of income in the entire Mhleka extended family. They contributed occasionally if Regina needed assistance. Selina's home was also multigenerational – seven children and four grandchildren reside there. Her daughter Buyiswa was training to be a *sangoma* (traditional healer) during the course of the research, though finances had limited this to some extent. Another daughter, Rachel, was unemployed, but was actively involved in religious, political and community organizations. She has three children.

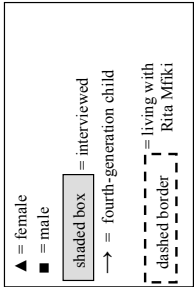
Illness and alcoholism is a strong theme in this family. Various respondents related that most of Regina's sons are alcoholic and tended to exhibit abusive behaviour. One of Regina's sons, Sidwell, was born without the use of his legs and uses a wheelchair. Buyiswa suffered through two ectopic pregnancies in the 1980s, and passed away in 2005 from uterine cancer. Patricia, one of Regina's daughters, suffered a stroke of some sort when she was 15, and has also had to deal with bouts of arthritis, tuberculosis and spinal problems. An old boyfriend threw a paraffin stove at her, which set alight and burned her back and arms. She walks with the aid of crutches. Patricia has been a Zionist prayer healer since 1992 before she converted to Islam in 1990. However,

she occasionally still gets requests to pray over sick people. Patricia's first-born son died in 1998 from tuberculosis, which Patricia claimed occurred because he was alcoholic and did not take his medication regularly. Her second-born son was hit by a car in 1970, which took away the use of one arm, and around 1993 he was stabbed in a family dispute by his cousin, which resulted in paralysis. Patricia's other son had meningitis and became partially brain damaged. Regina herself was occasionally in hospital during the course of the research. She expressed the wish that she would not die with her house in the current state it is in, with her children being out of work.

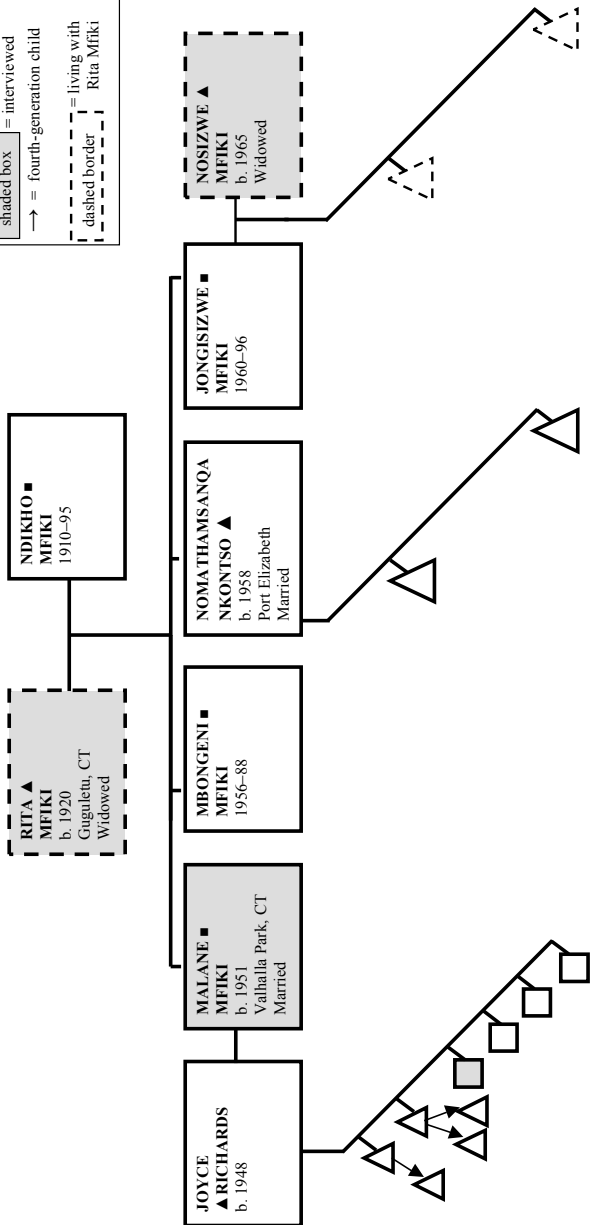
Mfiki

Born in 1920 in Middledrift, Rita married her husband Ndikho Mfiki in 1939. For the first 15 years of their marriage, Rita remained in Middledrift. After Ndikho stopped visiting and sending remittances, and after the death of four of their children, Rita moved to Cape Town in search of her husband in 1955. With the assistance of the police, she was able to find him, and discovered he was with another woman. After informing him that she would not leave, because she was his wife, Rita stayed in Cape Town and they moved in together in the informal settlement of Welcome. She and her husband separated in 1960 and legally divorced in 1967, although by doing this they automatically lost the house they were living in, which was by this time in Guguletu. Because she lost her right of residence in the city, Rita spent the next few years after her divorce dodging the authorities, before they finally forced her to go back to Middledrift with her children.

According to Malane (Rita's first-born son), Rita and Ndikho remarried in 1970, largely in order to again qualify for housing. However, Ndikho continued 'living out' with his extra-marital partner, except when periods of illness beginning in 1976 would force him to return to Rita to be nursed. Another of Rita's sons, Jongisizwe, was able to acquire a council house in Guguletu in 1991, where Rita currently resides. Rita moved in and, pressured by her son Malane, took in her husband Ndikho, who by this time was terminally ill. She nursed him until he passed away in 1995. Jongisizwe was killed in a car accident in 1996. His widow Nosizwe and their children currently live with Rita. Rita worked as a domestic servant for 17 years in Cape Town. She is retired



MFIKI



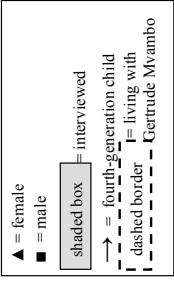
and has received a pension since 1984. Her household's main source of income comes from Nosizwe, who has been working as a cleaner at UCT since 1998. There were no major structural additions to their house reported during the main research period, although it was evident that building an extension had commenced some time after 2002.

Malane lives in a formerly designated Coloured area near Guguletu called Valhalla Park, where he has resided since 1977 after 'passing' for a Coloured person. He is married by common law to Joyce, who is also Xhosa, but also passed for Coloured. She has five children, whom Malane considers his own, who all speak Afrikaans as their primary language. He stated, however, that his children, despite language constraints, have undertaken some Xhosa rites of passage, such as male initiation and female baptism (*imbeleko*). Malane's stepson Michael Richards has had sporadic employment as a labourer between 1996 and 2004, and served in the Defence Force in 1995. He has been working as a truck driver since 2004. Michael's wife is Coloured, and has worked in a jeans factory in Cape Town full-time since 1995.

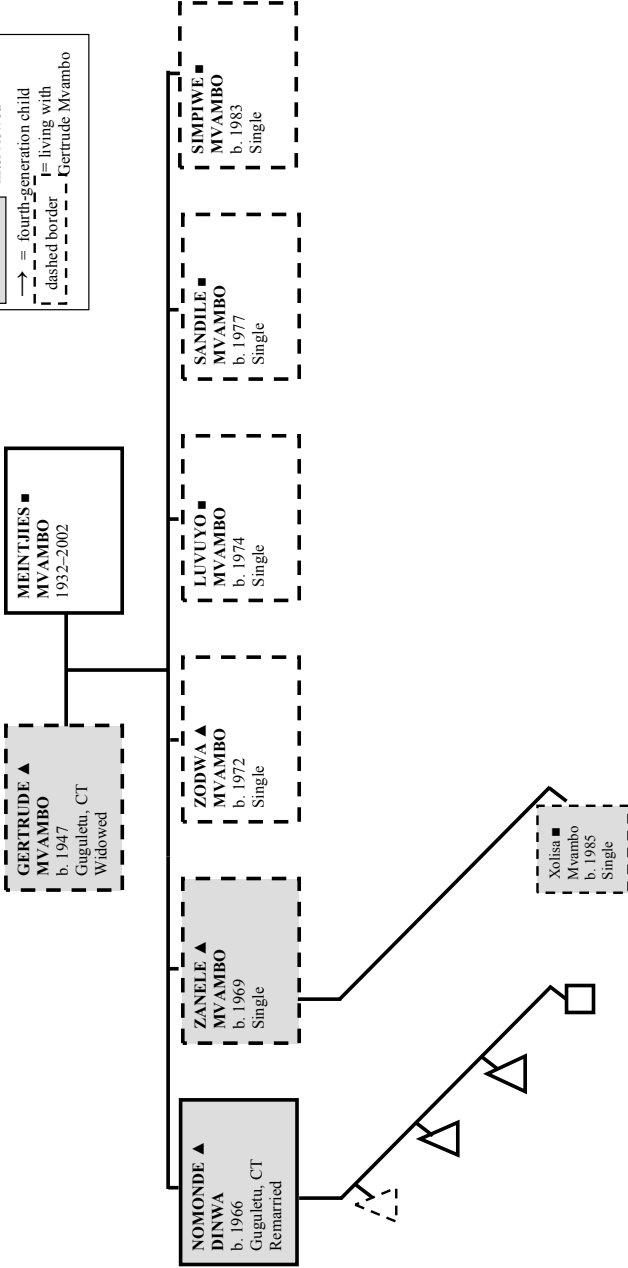
Mvambo

Gertrude Mvambo was born in 1947 in Indwe and entered Cape Town in 1949 with her grandmother, who came in search of work. She married Meintjies Mvambo, who was 15 years her senior, in 1963. Meintjies died in 2002, after the main research period had ended. Gertrude lives in Guguletu NY103, in a council home she moved into in 1972. Two extension projects were undertaken in the 1990s, including an in-house toilet and bath. Also, a two-room backyard flatlet was converted from a garage in 1994. Gertrude has worked predominantly as a domestic servant and is now employed as a cleaner at Woolworths.

She has six children, the first three being daughters and the last three, sons. Although by 2005 all three daughters had established independent residences, during the main research period second-born daughter Zanele stayed with Gertrude with her son Xolisa. Zanele has been working as a cleaner in a country club since 1992. She obtained her matric and passed a secretarial course in 1999, but was unable to find work as a secretary. She married sometime after 2002 and established residence with her husband in Khayelitsha. Xolisa has continued to reside with Gertrude and is a student. First-born Nomonde has been working as a bank teller since



MVAMBO



1995 and lives nearby in Guguletu. She is remarried, with one daughter from her first marriage and three from her current marriage. Her husband works for an insurance company and is a preacher. Nomonde's first daughter stays with Gertrude. She lives nearby in Guguletu and works as a bank teller.

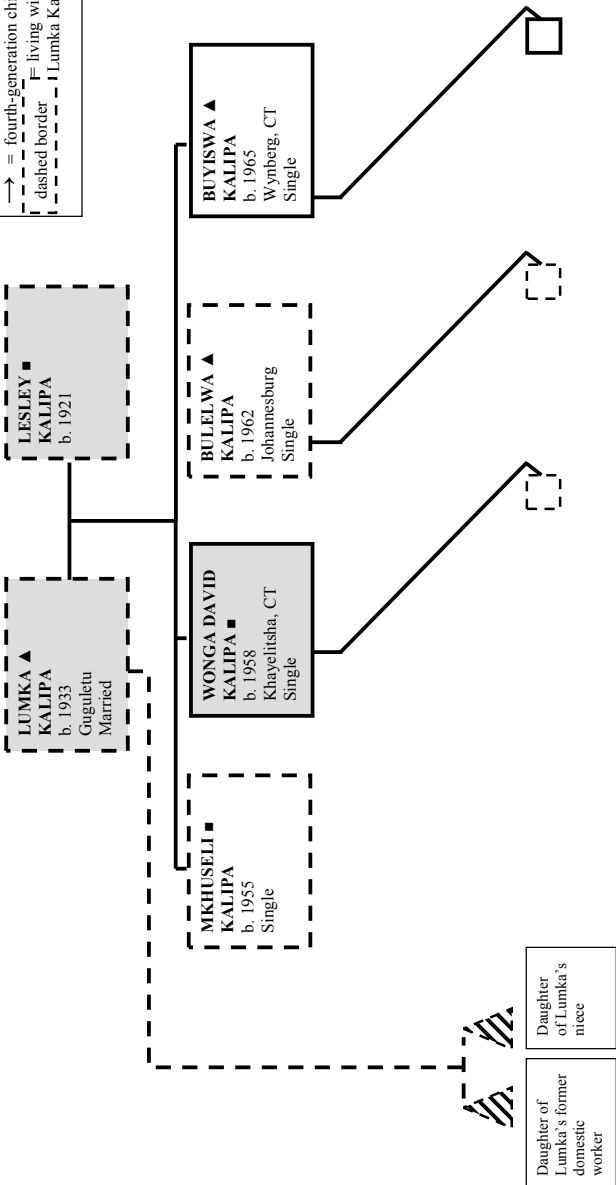
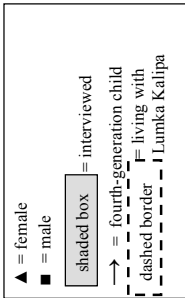
Gertrude's son Simpiwe was a student during the main research period and gained his matric in 2003. He remains unemployed. Luvuyo is mentally handicapped and has never had a job. Sandile was unemployed during the main research period, but by 2005 was working.

Kalipa

Lumka Kalipa was born in 1933 and came to Cape Town from Lady Frere in 1952, originally to visit her sister during a school holiday. On this visit, she met her future husband, Lesley, who convinced her to stay. They married in 1954. Since the 1960s Lesley has run a general goods store in Guguletu that borders on an informal settlement. Lesley was a local councillor under the Black Local Authorities system in place in the 1980s. He has been actively involved in various small business enterprises and in developing and representing the African small business sector in Cape Town. He was a founder and managing director of a company that in 1982 opened and operated a shopping centre in Guguletu. Lumka has a varied employment history. She helped out with her husband's store and was involved in his other business and public enterprises. For example, she was a supervisor from 1988 to 1992 at the home loans agency in Khayelitsha that Lesley created in partnership with the South African Housing Trust. Lumka also worked as a salesperson for about five years in the mid-1980s, and as an estate agent from 1992 to 1996. Although a pensioner, she is currently engaged in small-scale enterprises, such as selling ginger beer and muffins from her house.

Lumka remembers that during her husband's tenure as a councillor, their house was petrol-bombed on three occasions because they were suspected of being 'sell-outs' to the apartheid state. They have four children and three grandchildren. Their son Wonga (also called David) helps out at the store. He began his own photography business in 1985, which he continues to this day. In the future, he would like to buy his first studio closer to the city centre. Lumka and Lesley's first-born son has a mental disability. One of their daughters, Bulelwa, moved to Johannesburg.

KALIPA



Buyiswa was living with her parents during the main research period. She was the marketing director for the Cape Town branch of a major petroleum company before also moving to Johannesburg. Both completed their matric and university degrees in the Transkei.

NOTES

Introduction

- 1 In 1879, 3,778 Xhosa were in the Western Cape, including 1,164 women; Wilson, Monica and Archie Mafeje, *Langa: A Study of Social Groups in an African Township* (Cape Town, 1963). 'African' is meant to refer to the majority black population in South Africa, also historically called 'Native' and 'Bantu'. During apartheid, the South African population was divided into four racial categories: African, white, Coloured and Indian (or Asian). While it is acknowledged these categories incompletely capture the complex dynamics of ethnic and other identities in South Africa, their use during the apartheid period merits their inclusion in this historical study.
- 2 In 1944 the enumerated African population in the city was less than 6 per cent of the total population (whites made up 47 per cent, Coloureds 46 per cent and Asians 1 per cent). In the 1946 Census, Africans constituted 69 per cent of the total South African population; Cape Town City Council (CTCC) Medical Officer of Health (MOH), *Annual Report* (1944); 1946 Census figures.
- 3 Bickford-Smith, Vivian, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century: An Illustrated Social History* (Cape Town, 1999), pp.64–6; Muthien, Yvonne, *State and Resistance in South Africa, 1939–1965* (Aldershot, 1994), pp.14–16, 19.
- 4 CTCC MOH, *Annual Report* (1944; 1955).
- 5 This phrase was used by the manager of Native Administration of the Cape Divisional Council in 1957 specifically in reference to the influx of African women into the area; *Cape Times*, 9 May 1957.
- 6 By this time, the Cape Town metropolitan area included Cape Town; the districts of Goodwood, Parow, Bellville and Durbanville; and the Boland districts; City Planners Department, *Cape Town Metropolitan Area: Statistical and Demographic Information* (Cape Town, 1994), p.2.
- 7 The 1996 percentage is almost certainly an underestimate, because of the way in which the Census defined 'urban'. For example, the Urban Foundation estimated that in 1991, 58 per cent of the African population could already be classified as urban; Population Census for relevant

- years; Beinart, William, *Twentieth-century South Africa* (Oxford, 2001), pp.351–5.
- 8 One 31 year-old African female respondent remarked about Cape Town, 'this is a Coloured place and Boers [Afrikaners]'. This comment is given added significance in light of the fact that she is a third-generation Cape Town-born resident who has lived her whole life there; Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000.
 - 9 Barnes, Theresa, *'We Women Worked so Hard': Gender, Urbanization, and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930–1956* (Portsmouth, NH, 1999), p.xxvi.
 - 10 See Wells, Julia, *We Now Demand: The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1993); Walker, Cherryl, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1982); see also Kros, Cynthia, 'Urban African women's organisations and protest on the Rand from the years 1939 to 1956', *Africa Perspective* 3 (Johannesburg, 1980); Yawitch, Joanne, 'Tightening the noose: African women and influx control in South Africa 1950–1980', Carnegie Conference Paper no. 82, *Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1984); Hassim, Shireen, 'Gender, social location and feminist politics in South Africa', *Transformation* 15 (1991), pp.65–82.
 - 11 Their marginal economic position persists to some extent. The 1996 Census indicated that 65 per cent of employed African females earned less than the estimated subsistence level of ZAR 1,000 per month, compared with 55 per cent of African men and 6 per cent of white men; cited in Planning and Development Department, CTCC, *Municipal Profile: A Social and Demographic Profile of the Population of the City of Cape Town* (2000), p.28.
 - 12 Bozzoli, Belinda, 'Marxism, feminism and South African studies', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, 2 (1983), pp.146–7.
 - 13 For notions of the 'invisible' and the 'spectral' in African cities, see Simone, AbdouMaliq, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities* (Durham, NC, 2004).
 - 14 Simone, *For the City Yet to Come*, p.122.
 - 15 Wilson and Mafeje, *Langa*; Mayer, Philip with Iona Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City* (Cape Town, 1971).
 - 16 Brandel-Syrier, Mia, *Reef town Elite: A Study of Social Mobility in a Modern African Community on the Reef* (London, 1971); Brandel-Syrier, Mia, *Black Woman in Search of God* (London, 1962); Brandel, Mia, *The Needs of African Women*, report for SAIRR (1955), p.8.
 - 17 See Chauncey, George, 'The locus of reproduction: Women's labour in the Zambian Copperbelt, 1927–1953', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 7, 2 (1981), pp.135–64; Moore, Henrietta and Megan Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition, and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890–1990* (Portsmouth, NH, 1994); Parpart, Jane, 'The

- household and the mine shaft: Gender and class struggles on the Zambian copperbelt, 1926–64', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13, 1 (1986), pp.36–56; Ferguson, James, 'Mobile workers, modernist narratives: A critique of the historiography of transition on the Zambian copperbelt', Part I, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, 3 (1990), pp.385–412; Part II, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, 4 (1990), pp.603–21; Izzard, Wendy, 'Migrants and mothers: Case studies from Botswana', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, 2 (1985), pp.258–80.
- 18 James, Deborah, *Songs of the Women Migrants: Performance and Identity in South Africa* (Edinburgh, 1999), p.23; Murray, Colin, *Families Divided: The Impact of Migrant Labour in Lesotho* (Cambridge, 1981).
- 19 Bozzoli, 'Marxism, feminism and South African studies'.
- 20 See, for example, Cock, Jacklyn, 'Domestic service and education for domesticity: The incorporation of Xhosa women into colonial society', in Cherryl Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1990), pp.76–96; Bonner, Philip, "'Desirable or undesirable Basotho women?" Liquor, prostitution and the migration of Basotho women to the Rand, 1920–1945', in Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa*, pp.238–40; Walker, Cherryl, 'Gender and the migrant labour system c.1850–1930: An overview', in Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa*, p.189.
- 21 As Cobley's recent analysis of South African historiography suggests, in the 1980s 'history itself had become a critical site of struggle'. The History Workshop conferences at the University of the Witwatersrand were a crucible of both passionate debate and politically relevant scholarship; Cobley, Alan, 'Does social history have a future? The ending of apartheid and recent trends in South African historiography', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, 3 (2001), p.615; see also Bonner, Philip and Tom Lodge, 'Preface', in Philip Bonner, Isabel Hofmeyr, Deborah James and Tom Lodge (eds), *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1989), pp.i–xiv; Saunders, Christopher, 'Historians and apartheid', in John Lonsdale (ed.), *South Africa in Question* (London, 1988), pp.13–32.
- 22 The landmark Conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa in Durban 1991 proved a focal point for such research, and for heated debates regarding a feminist activist approach to the study of southern African history and experience. See Walker's preface to the second edition of *Women and Resistance*, p.xiii; also, Horn, Patricia, 'Conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa: Another view of the dynamics', *Transformation* 15 (1991), p.83.
- 23 Even those few studies that addressed African women's participation in non-political organizations tended to view these as functional mechanisms through which women could respond to the socioeconomic limitations placed on them by oppressive apartheid regulations; see Gaitskell, Deborah, 'Devout domesticity? A century of African women's

- Christianity in South Africa', in Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa*, pp.251–72; Ardener, Shirley and Sandra Burman (eds), *Money-go-rounds: The Importance of Rotating Savings and Credit Associations for Women* (Oxford, 1995). The limitations of this approach will be argued in chapter five.
- 24 Recent studies such as Scanlon's intimate historical study of African women's political participation in the Western Cape can be seen as a continuation of this line of research; Scanlon, Helen, *Representation and Reality: Portraits of Women's Lives in the Western Cape, 1948–1976* (Cape Town, 2007).
- 25 For example, in 1995 Parnell and Mabin suggested in a special issue of the *Journal of Southern African Studies* devoted to urban studies in southern Africa that integrating theoretical modes of enquiry from the fields of architecture and urban planning would allow for a more complex view of the development of urban South Africa, a development influenced as much by changing international discourses around governance and modernism as by the exigencies of apartheid rule; Parnell, Sue and Alan Mabin, 'Rethinking urban South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, 1 (1995), pp.39–61. See also Sapire, Hilary and Jo Beall, 'Introduction: Urban change and urban studies in southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, 1 (1995), pp.3–17. In the South African context, Maylam argues that social historians focus on Afrocentric microstudies to highlight apartheid's oppressive urban policies obscured an understanding of broader state–capital dynamics; Maylam, Paul, 'Explaining the apartheid city: Twenty years of South African urban history', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, 1 (1995), p.37.
- 26 See Cole, Josette, *Crossroads: The Politics of Reform and Repression, 1976–1986* (Johannesburg, 1987); Ramphele, Mamphela, *A Bed Called Home: Life in the Migrant Labour Hostels of Cape Town* (Cape Town, 1993); Fast, Hildegarde, 'Pondoks, houses, and hostels: A history of Nyanga 1946–1970, with a special focus on housing' (PhD diss., UCT, 1995); Musemwa, Muchaparara, 'Aspects of the social and political history of Langa township, Cape Town 1927–1948' (MA diss., UCT, 1993); Makosana, Solomon, 'Aspects of the historical development of Guguletu, 1958–1987, with special reference to housing and education' (BA [Hons] diss., UCT, 1988); Ngcokoto, Baba, 'The day KTC became Cape Town's Beirut: African squatters' struggles in Cape Town, 1983–1986', paper presented at the workshop on Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid, University of the Witwatersrand, 6–10 February 1990.
- 27 Bozzoli, Belinda, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1984* (Portsmouth, NH, 1991).
- 28 Hansen, Karen T., *Keeping House in Lusaka* (New York, 1997); Barnes, 'We Women Worked so Hard'.
- 29 See Spiegel, Andrew and Anthony Mehlwana, *Family as Social Network:*

- Kinslip and Sporadic Migrancy in the Western Cape's Khayelitsba*, Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life (Pretoria, 1997).
- 30 Bank, Leslie, 'Men with cookers: Transformations in migrant culture, domesticity and identity in Duncan Village, East London', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, 3 (1999), pp.393–416; Moodie, Dunbar, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines and Migration* (Berkeley, 1994); see also James, *Songs of the Women Migrants*.
- 31 See for example, Bank, Leslie, 'The social life of paraffin: Gender, domesticity and the politics of value in a South African township' in Patrick MacAllister (ed.), *Culture and the Commonplace: Anthropological Essays in Honour of David Hammond-Tooke* (Johannesburg, 1997), pp.157–79; Ross, Fiona, 'Houses without doors: Diffusing domesticity in Die Bos' (MSocSci diss., UCT, 1993); Mehlwana, Anthony, 'The anthropology of fuels: Situational analysis and energy use in urban low-income townships of South Africa', *Energy for Sustainable Development* 3, 5 (1997), pp.5–15.
- 32 A notable exception to this is Leslie Bank's recent, historically attuned study of migrant culture in East London, South Africa; Bank, Leslie J. 'Xhosa in Town revisited: From urban anthropology to an anthropology of urbanism' (PhD diss., UCT, 2002).
- 33 See, for example, Magona, Sindiwe, *To My Children's Children* (Cape Town, 1990) and *Forced to Grow* (Cape Town, 1992); Kuzwayo, Ellen, *Call Me Woman* (Johannesburg, 1985); Hermer, Carol, *The Diary of Maria Tholo* (Johannesburg, 1980).
- 34 An example would be the considerable volumes of reports compiled by the Black Sash, an organization that helped thousands of African women who faced arrest and expulsion for pass-law violations. These reports often contained basic information on individual African women, such as their residential, marital and employment status, as well as more detailed descriptions of personal hardships.
- 35 Thompson, Paul, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, 1988), p.99.
- 36 See Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*; Van Onselen, Charles, *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, A South Africa Sharecropper 1894–1985* (Cape Town, 1996).
- 37 Beinart, William, 'Worker consciousness, ethnic particularism and nationalism: The experiences of a South African migrant, 1930–1960', in Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (Harlow, 1987), pp.286–309.
- 38 Kopijn, Yvette J., 'The oral history interview in a cross-cultural setting: An analysis of its linguistic, social and ideological structure', in Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson (eds), *Narrative and Genre* (London, 1998), p.142; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down Trees*, pp.xviii–xxiv.
- 39 Geiger, Susan, 'What's so feminist about women's oral history?', *Journal of Women's History* 2, 1 (1990), pp.169–82. Henrietta Moore and Megan Vaughan, in their gendered study of agricultural change in Zambia, have used this understanding not only to reconstruct a regional history of food

- supply and nutrition, but also to convincingly highlight competing modes of representation that Bemba-speaking people themselves variously drew from for sometimes strategic ends; Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down Trees*.
- 40 Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down Trees*, p.xxiv.
- 41 Ibid., pp.xviii, xix.
- 42 Some of the benefits and disadvantages of my ethnic/cultural background on conducting the fieldwork for this research are detailed in “‘Hey, China!’ A Korean-American researches apartheid Cape Town”, paper presented at Researching Africa Day, University of Oxford, 12 May 2001.
- 43 Approximately ten of 29 female respondents did not take the option of conducting their interviews with the aid of an interpreter. This was generally dependent on educational levels and age (younger and better educated informants were more confident with their spoken English).
- 44 Geiger, Susan, ‘Women’s life histories: Method and content’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11, 2 (1986), p.338.
- 45 Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, pp.101–2.
- 46 Posel, Deborah, ‘A mania for measurement: Statistics and statecraft in the transition to apartheid’, paper presented at the Science and Society in Southern Africa conference, Centre for Southern African Studies, University of Sussex, 10–11 September 1988, pp.13–15.
- 47 Moore and Vaughan, *Cutting down Trees*, p.xxiv.
- 48 Ibid., pp.xxiv–v.
- 49 Ferguson, ‘Mobile workers, modernist narratives’.
- 50 Vaughan, Megan, ‘Reported speech and other kinds of testimony’, *Journal of Historical Sociology* 13, 3 (2000), p.251.
- 51 Shaw, Rosalind, *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone* (Chicago, 2002), pp.8–10.
- 52 Vaughan, ‘Reported speech’, pp.251–2.
- 53 Eight of ten first-generation women whose life histories inform this research were interviewed for my master’s dissertation, which focused on the early history of apartheid Cape Town. Subsequent interviews with four of the original eight women extended the time frame of analysis to the present day and introduced their commentary on a new range of issues that are included in the present research. Two additional respondents who fit the general profile of the first-generation cohort were later included.
- 54 One first-generation respondent, Lumka Kalipa, agreed that her daughters could be interviewed. However, I was not able to follow up on this because one was in Johannesburg during the research period and the other had just given birth to a son and was unavailable. However, one of Lumka’s sons and her husband provided supplementary testimonies.
- 55 One second-generation respondent who was not related to any first-generation respondent, but whose profile generally fitted those of others in her cohort (i.e. Cape Town born in 1950, daughter of migrant parents) was included in this study. The term ‘second-generation’ was used similarly

- by Pauw in his follow-up study of the Mayers' work in East London. He described 'second-generation' Africans as those who were 'town-born' in contrast to the 'first-generation' of Africans who were migrant in origin; Pauw, Berthold A., *The Second Generation: A Study of the Family among Urbanized Bantu in East London* (Cape Town, 1963), p.xvi.
- 56 One respondent in this cohort, Nomphele Fuzile, is the daughter of a first-generation respondent. However, she was included in the third-generation cohort because her year of birth, 1976; the 20-year age difference between herself and her older sister (who was a second-generation informant); as well as important aspects of her testimony merited a reconsideration of her position in this study.
- 57 Two men were in the first-generation cohort, four from the second-generation cohort and five from the third-generation cohort.
- 58 I am indebted to Mary Chamberlain, who introduced me to this tool of research; see Chamberlain, Mary, 'Family narratives and migration dynamics: Barbadians to Britain', *Immigrants and Minorities* 14, 2 (1995), pp.153–69.
- 59 Grele, Ronald J., 'History and the languages of history in the oral history interview: Who answers whose questions and why?', paper presented at the workshop on Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid, University of the Witwatersrand, 6–10 February 1990.
- 60 Chamberlain, 'Family narratives and migration dynamics'.
- 61 Ibid., p.155.
- 62 Durham, Deborah and Jennifer Cole (eds), *Generations and Globalization: Youth, Age and Family in the New World Economy* (Bloomington, 2007).
- 63 This argument is further developed in chapter two. For scholarship on male generational relations, see Harries, Patrick, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Labourers in Mozambique and South Africa* (London, 1994) and Murray, *Families Divided*. On female generational relations, see, for example, Catherine Coles' study of three generations of Hausa women in Nigeria, which revealed how women in one family responded to changing external constraints and opportunities, including the erosion of the practice of seclusion, the onset of economic recession and the influx of diverse ethnic migrants; Coles, Catherine M., 'Three generations of Hausa women in Kaduna, Nigeria, 1925–1985', in Kathleen Sheldon (ed.), *Courtyards, Markets, City Streets: Urban Women in Africa* (Boulder, 1996), pp.73–102; see also Mark Mathabane's more intimate account of the changing fortunes of three women in his own family; Mathabane, Mark, *African Women: Three Generations* (New York, 1994).
- 64 Mannheim, Karl, 'The problem of generations', in Karl Mannheim, *The Sociology of Knowledge* (London, 1952).
- 65 First-generation respondents recorded these as their areas of origin: Indwe, Middledrift, Burgersdorp, Lady Frere, Bedford, Whittlesea, Cathcart and Healdtown. A more detailed description of these locations will accompany the analysis.

- 66 See Cole, *Crossroads*; East, 'Pondoks, houses, and hostels'; Makosana, 'Aspects of the historical development of Guguletu'; Japha, Derek and Marie Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships in Cape Town, 1920–1992', *The Integration and Urbanisation of Existing Townships in South Africa Working Paper no. 2* (Newcastle and Cape Town, 1995).
- 67 Japha and Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships', p.22.
- 68 One first-generation respondent, Nelly Gquma, resided in council housing in Nyanga township from the 1950s and moved to formal housing in Khayelitsha in 1985. She resided in a nursing home in Guguletu at the time of her interview. Another respondent, Rita Mfiki, moved into her current council house in Guguletu in 1991, but had lived sporadically in Guguletu from the late 1960s, her unstable tenure being largely the result of her divorce from her legally resident husband. Her story will be detailed in chapter one.
- 69 The South African equivalents of grades at the time. There are ten standards encompassing both primary and secondary school systems. In the tenth standard, students write a series of examinations called matriculation exams (or 'matric' for short). Passing 'matric' with marks above a specific level is required for entrance to tertiary education.
- 70 One respondent in this cohort, Nosizwe Mfiki, was born in Middledrift in 1965 and migrated to Cape Town in 1984. She is the daughter-in-law of Rita Mfiki, a first-generation respondent. Nosizwe was interviewed because she and her two children are the only kin currently living with Rita (her only daughter lives in Port Elizabeth), and it was hoped that she could provide important information with regard to household dynamics and structure.
- 71 A technikon is a tertiary institution distinct from a university. Technikon qualifications were seen as more specifically industry oriented than a university degree.

Chapter One

- 1 Magona begins her autobiographical account of growing up in Guguletu in the 1950s and 1960s with this observation; Magona, Sindiwe, *To My Children's Children* (Cape Town, 1990), p.1.
- 2 Cape Town City Council (CTCC), Native Affairs Sub-Committee minutes, 11 February 1938, 3/CT GN 5/2/2/1, Cape Archives, GN Transfer Files.
- 3 Few African women entered Cape Town by contracting their labour through state-approved labour bureaux, a fact that made women difficult to trace. As the state increasingly began to legislate against their presence in the Western Cape, African women chose not to be acknowledged by a state that saw their existence in the urban area as 'illegal'.
- 4 Bickford-Smith argues that the myth of a 'liberal', non-racialized Cape

Town obscures the fact that by the turn of the twentieth century, Victorian Cape Town had already begun developing the legal framework for residential segregation; Bickford-Smith, Vivian, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875–1902* (Cambridge, 1995). See also Greenbank, Kevin, 'Urban growth, apartheid and social organisation in Cape Town, 1939–1955' (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1999). On the development of urban apartheid policy in the Western Cape, see Kinkead-Weekes, Barry, 'Africans in Cape Town: State policy and popular resistance, 1936–73' (PhD diss., UCT, 1992); Muthien, Yvonne, *State and Resistance in South Africa, 1939–1965* (Aldershot, 1994).

- 5 This is an Afrikaans term used pejoratively by Africans.
- 6 A legal advisor to the City Council Native Affairs Sub-Committee used this phrase to encourage municipal officers to exercise caution in their early attempts to regulate the entry of African women into the city.
- 7 Hindson, Douglas, *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat* (Johannesburg, 1987), p.61.
- 8 *Cape Times*, 19 April 1964.
- 9 Under the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act of 1952, urban authorities were empowered to issue new, consolidated 'reference books' to replace the system of passes and work permits Africans previously used. These reference books contained information on identity, labour bureaux, influx and efflux control particulars, service contracts and special exemptions from 'Native' law. Identity documents issued under the Population Registration Act of 1950, which classified all South Africans by race, were included in reference books; Muthien, *State and Resistance*, p.6; Hindson, *Pass Controls*, p.61.
- 10 The 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act, which was applied to the Cape Peninsula in 1926, required Africans entering the city to obtain work-seeking permits or visitors' permits, valid for 14 and 30 days, respectively. As a result of the 1937 Native Laws Amendment Act, African women were required to seek permits from their home districts before leaving, and from the urban authority in question to enter or reside there. However, these initial pre-apartheid attempts at regulating African women's movements were not strictly adhered to or implemented; Fast, Hildegard, 'An overview of African settlement in the Cape metropolitan area to 1990', Urban Problems Research Unit Working Paper no. 53 (Cape Town, 1995), pp.4, 6; Muthien, *State and Resistance*, p.49; Yawitch, Joanne, 'Tightening the noose: African Women and influx control in South Africa 1950–1980', Carnegie Conference Paper no. 82, *Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1984), pp.2, 4; Bickford-Smith, Vivian, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century: An Illustrated Social History* (Cape Town, 1999), p.428.
- 11 Horrell, Muriel, *Legislation and Race Relations: A Summary of the Main*

- South African Laws which Affect Race Relationships* (Johannesburg, 1971), pp.35–6; Fast, 'An overview', p.11.
- 12 The time period for permits was reduced from two weeks; Yawitch, 'Tightening the noose', p.4; Hindson, *Pass Controls*, pp.73–4.
- 13 Japha, Derek and Marie Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships in Cape Town, 1920–1992', *The Integration and Urbanisation of Existing Townships in South Africa Working Paper no. 2.* (Newcastle and Cape Town, 1995), p.12; Fast, 'An overview', p.6.
- 14 South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1962* (Johannesburg, 1962), p.110.
- 15 Ibid.; Hendrie, D., 'The Coloured Labour Preference Policy: A chronology', in Dudley Horner (ed.), *Labour Preference, Influx Control and Squatters: Cape Town Entering the 1980s*, South African Labour and Development Resource Unit Working Paper no. 50 (Cape Town, 1983), p.95.
- 16 Muthien, *State and Resistance*, p.207.
- 17 Greenbank, 'Urban growth'; Bickford-Smith, Van Heyningen and Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, p.171.
- 18 In 1955 the city reported 244,510 Coloureds and 48,937 Africans out of a total municipal population of 478,840; CTCC Medical Officer of Health (MOH), *Annual Report* (1955).
- 19 Muthien, *State and Resistance*, p.69.
- 20 Ibid., pp.69–70; *Cape Argus*, 8 December 1959; Fast, Hildegard, 'Pondoks, houses, and hostels: A history of Nyanga 1946–1970, with a special focus on housing' (PhD diss., UCT, 1995), p.181.
- 21 Rogers to managers of Native Administration in Port Elizabeth and East London, AWC 3/71 249, 17 January 1958.
- 22 *Cape Argus*, 8 May 1957; Port Elizabeth Manager Boast to Rogers, 3/CT GN5/2/2/3, 17 January 1958; acting Kimberley manager of Native Administration to Rogers, 3/CT GN5/2/2/3, 3 January 1958; East London Manager Venter to Rogers, 3/CT GN5/2/2/3, 20 January 1958.
- 23 See Bonner, Philip, "'Desirable or undesirable Basotho women?" Liquor, prostitution and the migration of Basotho women to the Rand, 1920–1945', in Cheryl Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Cape Town, 1990), pp.221–50.
- 24 Fast, 'An overview', p.16.
- 25 Ibid., p.14.
- 26 Ibid., pp.10–12; Greenbank, 'Urban growth'.
- 27 See Field, Sean, 'The power of exclusion: Moving memories from Windermere to the Cape Flats, 1920s–1990s' (PhD diss., University of Essex, 1996); Fast, 'An overview', p.16.
- 28 Black Sash, 'The road to Khayelitsha – and beyond', Black Sash National Conference, March 1984, BC 668 E, Special Projects, Khayelitsha 1980s, UCT Manuscripts and Archives Collection, Western Cape Black Sash Archives, p.15; Fast, 'An overview', p.16.
- 29 Figure quoted by minister of Bantu Administration and Development,

- undated Black Sash memorandum, AWC 3/29 104, Cape Archives, Administration of the Western Cape; Fast, 'An overview', pp.13, 16–17.
- 30 Figure quoted by minister of Bantu Administration and Development, SAIRR, *A Survey, 1965*, p.156; an endorsement out could have entailed a stamp in a reference book cancelling a permit or a rail warrant. The Black Sash also suggested that Africans were verbally 'convinced' by pass officials to leave the area; Black Sash Athlone Advice Office *Annual Report*, 1 October 1968–30 September 1969, BC1020, UCT Manuscripts and Archives Collection, Black Sash Archives, pp.2, 6.
- 31 Fast, 'Pondoks, houses and hostels', pp.180–1.
- 32 Horrell, *Legislation and Race Relations*, p.40; Hindson, *Pass Controls*, p.69.
- 33 Yawitch, 'Tightening the noose', p.7.
- 34 Dixon, 'Memorandum of a successful appeal', p.1.
- 35 Yawitch, 'Tightening the noose', p.10.
- 36 Judgement delivered by Chief Justice Rumpff, Appellate Division, Supreme Court of South Africa, *Komani vs. BAAD Peninsular Area*, BC1020 L2, 19 August 1980; 'Influx control', BC1020 M, undated; 'The Komani case and black family life', BC1020 M, undated.
- 37 Horrell, *Legislation and Race Relations*, p.39.
- 38 Black Sash Athlone Advice Office *Annual Report*, 1967, BC1020; Fast, 'Pondoks, houses and hostels', p.248.
- 39 Fast, 'An overview', pp.18, 37.
- 40 The overall effects of this freeze can be seen in the reduction of family houses built, from 8,723 in the period 1960–69 to only 580 houses in the next decade. This housing freeze laid the framework for the housing crisis of the 1970s and establishment of informal settlements in the 1970s and 1980s; Fast, 'An overview', pp.18, 37; Japha and Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the developments of townships', p.30.
- 41 During his tenure, Manager Rogers adhered strictly to national mandates when confronted with broad policy questions, while in practice occasionally allowing for individual exceptions. For example, Rogers allowed African women to come into Cape Town and stay longer than their allotted 72 hours in order to seek medical treatment specifically for sterility; director of Black Sash Athlone Advice Office Robb to town clerk, 3/CT GN5/1/11, 13 December 1965; memorandum from Rogers to Black Sash, AWC 3/29 104, 7 April 1959. For a more detailed analysis of early urban apartheid policy, see Lee, Rebekah, 'Locating home: Strategies of settlement, identity-formation and social change among African women in Cape Town, 1948–2000' (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 2002), chap. 1.
- 42 Worrall to chief Bantu Affairs commissioner, September 1967, cited in Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town', p.530.
- 43 Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town', p.530.
- 44 Posel, Deborah, *The Making of Apartheid, 1948–1961: Conflict and Compromise* (Oxford, 1991), pp.231, 233.

- 45 Athlone Advice Office Director Robb to town clerk, 3/CT GN5/1/11, 13 December 1965; memorandum from Worrall in response, 18 November 1965.
- 46 There is reason to doubt the accuracy of African population figures during the apartheid period. Local authorities may have had a vested interest in under-counting their African populace in order to avoid the costs of housing them. Also, many Africans who were in fact resident in Cape Town were excluded from the final tallies in the process because they only possessed temporary permits. African women had very little desire to be enumerated, because their presence was increasingly legislated against. Also, because most African women were not formally registered with the local labour bureau or the Bantu administration, they were not as easily 'picked up' by the state's supposedly 'panoptic' gaze. However, statistics cannot be discounted entirely. As Posel claims, the search during the apartheid era for statistics to define and categorize the African population was part and parcel of the state's attempts to perfect structures of surveillance and to control the African population, limit its expansion into the urban areas and ensure a stable labour supply. Thus, to an extent, local bodies had an interest in thoroughness and accuracy. Evidence suggests that there certainly existed a large discrepancy between census and locally derived statistics, with census figures consistently, and sometimes significantly, lower. In short, though they most certainly underestimate the extent of the African population, and probably even more so the African female population, it may be fair to use locally derived figures in order to judge the City Council's assessment of its own performance, as much as give us an indication of their estimation of the African population; Muthien, *State and Resistance*, p.17; Posel, Deborah, 'A mania for measurement: Statistics and statecraft in the transition to apartheid', paper presented at the conference on Science and Society in Southern Africa, Centre for Southern African Studies, University of Sussex, 10–11 September 1988, pp.5, 13–25; Greenbank, 'Urban growth'; CTCC MOH, *Annual Reports* (1955, 1960, 1965, 1970).
- 47 Calculated from figures in CTCC MOH, *Annual Reports* for relevant years; these municipal counts by the local Department of Bantu Administration (DBA) are more useful than census figures in tracking significant demographic shifts in this period, because they were largely based on regular monthly tallies and provided a consistently produced set of figures over time.
- 48 Analysis of census totals for Bellville Magisterial District (which had jurisdiction over areas near official African townships) reveals a steady decline in its urban African population over the same period, suggesting that Africans did not move to outlying areas of the city when endorsed out. However, Fast cautions that these figures may not account fully for African attempts to evade enumeration; Fast, 'Pondoks, houses and hostels'.

- 49 Figures for endorsements out of the areas controlled by the CTCC and Cape Divisional Council throughout the first two decades of apartheid are incomplete, and not broken down yearly. Nevertheless, it is possible to piece together a general picture based on ministerial statistics, SAIRR surveys and archival sources.
- 50 Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, cited in SAIRR, *A Survey, 1965*, p.156.
- 51 DBA Manager Worrall to chief Bantu Affairs commissioner, 11 January 1968, cited in Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town', p.543.
- 52 Black Sash, *Annual Report*, 1 September 1970–31 August 1971, BC1020 A9, p.2.
- 53 Bekker, Simon and Richard Humphries, *From Control to Confusion: The Changing Role of Administration Boards in South Africa, 1971–1983* (Pietermaritzburg, 1985), pp.7–19, 31; Bickford-Smith, Van Heyningen and Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, p.436.
- 54 Ellis, G., 'Africans in the Western Cape, 1900 to 1982: A chronology', in Horner (ed.), *Labour Preference*, pp.107–15.
- 55 Minister's Fraternal of Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga, 'Role of riot police in the burnings and killings in Nyanga township, Cape Town, Christmas 1976', University of South Africa Documentation Centre for African Studies, AAS 108; Ellis, 'Africans in the Western Cape', pp.108–13.
- 56 Bekker and Humphries, *From Control to Confusion*, pp.23–7; Savage, Michael, 'Pass laws and the disorganisation and reorganisation of the African population in South Africa', Carnegie Conference Paper no. 281, *Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1984).
- 57 Bickford-Smith, Van Heyningen and Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, p.212; Kahanovitz, Colin, 'Control in the townships and popular resistance: The system of community, town and village councils, 1977–1985, with specific reference to the Cape Town Community Council', *South African Research Papers* (Cape Town, 1988), p.99.
- 58 Japha and Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships', p.34.
- 59 *Ibid.*, p.31; Beinart, William, *Twentieth-century South Africa* (Oxford, 1994), pp.240–2.
- 60 Posel, Deborah, 'Control of reform and reform of control: The South African State after 1978', paper presented at the conference on Economic Development and Racial Domination, University of the Western Cape, 8–10 October 1984.
- 61 *Ibid.*, pp.1, 8–11.
- 62 *Cape Times*, 7 September 1983; *Cape Times*, 28 July 1983.
- 63 Bekker and Humphries, *From Control to Confusion*, p.52; Ellis, 'Africans in the Western Cape', p.110.
- 64 Versfeld, B. to the editor, *Cape Times*, 10 November 1977, BC 668 J, newspaper clipping.
- 65 *Ibid.*

- 66 1980 Census figures show that the African population in the Peninsula was made up of 70,860 females and 112,500 males; October, L. and G. Young, 'The population of the Cape Peninsula: A statistical summary', Carnegie Conference Paper no. 303, *Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1984), p.4.
- 67 Savage, 'Pass laws', p.48; see also Ellis, 'Africans in the Western Cape', p.112; West, Martin, 'Influx control in the Cape Peninsula', in Horner (ed.), *Labour Preference*, pp.15–36.
- 68 SAIRR, *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, 1976 (Johannesburg, 1976), p.86.
- 69 Cole, Josette, *Crossroads: The Politics of Reform and Repression, 1976–1986* (Johannesburg, 1987).
- 70 Bekker and Humphries, *From Control to Confusion*, pp.42–3; Kahanovitz, 'Control in the townships', p.34.
- 71 Bekker and Humphries, *From Control to Confusion*, p.161.
- 72 Kahanovitz, 'Control in the townships', p.48.
- 73 Ibid., p.37; Todes, Alison, Vanessa Watson and Peter Wilkinson, 'Local government restructuring in greater Cape Town', in Wilmot G. James and Mary Simons (eds), *Angry Divide: Social and Economic History of the Western Cape* (Cape Town, 1989), p.201; Development Action Group Archives, 'Black Local Authorities in the Western Cape: A history', in United Women's Congress, *Observatory/Claremont Newsletter*, October 1988; Beinart, *Twentieth-century South Africa*, p.237.
- 74 Kahanovitz, 'Control in the townships', p.49; Japha and Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships', pp.35–6.
- 75 Beinart, *Twentieth-century South Africa*, p.237; Theron, Paul, Anton Eberhard and Charles Dingley, 'Public and private sector roles in the provision of electricity in urban areas of South Africa', Economic Trends Working Paper no. 7 (Cape Town, 1991).
- 76 Kahanovitz, 'Control in the townships', pp.50–2.
- 77 Seekings, Jeremy, Johann Graaf and Pieter Joubert, 'Survey of residential and migration histories of residents of the shack areas of Khayelitsha', Research Unit for the Sociology of Development Occasional Paper no. 15, University of Stellenbosch (Stellenbosch, 1990), pp.8–9; Black Sash, 'The road to Khayelitsha'.
- 78 Bickford-Smith, Van Heyningen and Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, p.212; Kahanovitz, 'Control in the townships', p.99.
- 79 Japha and Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships', p.37; Seekings, Graaf and Joubert, 'Survey of residential and migration histories', p.9.
- 80 Bickford-Smith, Van Heyningen and Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, p.212.
- 81 Fast, 'An overview', p.35.
- 82 Bickford-Smith, Van Heyningen and Worden, *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*, p.219.

- 83 Japha, Derek, 'Townships in Cape Town: Demographics and other statistical indicators', *The Integration and Urbanisation of Existing Townships in the Republic of South Africa Working Paper no. 5* (Newcastle and Cape Town, 1995), pp.3–4; CTCC, City Planners Department, *Municipal Profile: A Social and Demographic Profile of the City of Cape Town* (Cape Town, 2000).
- 84 Japha, 'Townships in Cape Town', pp.3–4.
- 85 Beall, Jo, Owen Crankshaw and Sue Parnell, *Uniting a Divided City: Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg* (London, 2002), p.43.
- 86 Bähre, Eric, 'Housing for the urban poor in Cape Town: A post-apartheid dream or nightmare?', *Global Built Environment Review* 1, 1 (2001), pp.33–44.
- 87 CTCC, press release, 20 March 2001; *Cape Argus*, 23 March 2001.
- 88 McDonald, David A. and Laila Smith, 'Privatizing Cape Town: Service delivery and policy reforms since 1996', *Municipal Services Project Occasional Papers Series no. 7* (Cape Town, 2002).
- 89 In the period 1994 to 2000, the national HIV adult prevalence rate more than tripled, reaching an estimated 15 per cent. Interestingly, throughout the epidemic, the Western Cape has had the lowest HIV prevalence rate of the country's nine provinces. Department of Health, *Summary Report: National HIV and Syphilis Prevalence Survey, South Africa, 2006* (2007); UNAIDS, *Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV and AIDS: Core Data on Epidemiology and Response, South Africa: 2008 Update* (2008).
- 90 Robins, Steven, "'Long live Zachie, long live": AIDS activism, science, and citizenship after apartheid', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, 3 (2004), pp.651–72; for a history of HIV/AIDS in southern Africa, see Iliffe, John, *The African AIDS Epidemic: A History* (Oxford, 2006).
- 91 See Cook, G., 'Khayelitsha: New settlement forms in the Cape Peninsula', in David M. Smith (ed.), *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa* (London, 1992), pp.125–35; Bähre, 'Housing for the urban poor'; Fiil-Flynn, Maj, 'The electricity crisis in Soweto', *Municipal Services Project Occasional Papers Series no. 4* (Cape Town, 2001). A further consideration of shifts in state housing provision will be considered in chapter three, while the impact of electricity provision on women's perceptions and practices is explored in chapter four.
- 92 The contract labour system created large numbers of migrant men, like Rita Mfiki's husband, residing in the townships as 'bachelors' in large hostels. These men would often go for months and even years at a time without returning to their rural homes, for fear that their jobs would not be waiting for them on their return or, worse, that they would not be legally allowed back into the urban area. The Black Sash noted in 1966 that 68 per cent of so-called 'bachelors' living in bachelor accommodation in Langa township were actually married; memorandum from DBA manager to chief Bantu Affairs commissioner, AWC 3/71 249, 30 September 1963; Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town', p.466; Black Sash, Athlone Advice Office, *Annual Report*, 1 October 1966–30 September

- 1967, BC1020 L2, p.2; Black Sash, *Annual Report*, 1 October 1964–30 September 1965, BC1020 L2, p.2.
- 93 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998.
- 94 For example, those moved to Nyanga in the late 1950s spent over 20 per cent of their incomes on transport; Fast, 'An overview', p.13.
- 95 Black Sash, 'What the public thinks', *The Black Sash/Die Swart Serp* 3, 19, BC668 E (June/July 1959).
- 96 Memorandum from Langa Women's Vigilance Association to Rogers, AWC 3/71 249, 25 March 1959.
- 97 Doris Vala, 12 December 1998.
- 98 Regina Mhlekwana, 19 December 1998.
- 99 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998.
- 100 Eunice Fuzile, 19 December 1998
- 101 Memorandum from Langa Women's Vigilance Association to Rogers.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Memorandum from DBA manager to chief Bantu Affairs commissioner, AWC 3/71 249, 30 September 1963.
- 104 Yawitch, 'Tightening the noose', p.9.
- 105 Black Sash, *Black Sash Annual Report*, 1 October 1967–30 September 1968, pp.2–3; Fast, 'Pondoks, houses and hostels', p.255.
- 106 Yawitch, 'Tightening the noose', p.9.
- 107 Posel, Deborah, 'Marriage at the drop of a hat: Housing and partnership in South Africa's urban African townships, 1920s–1960s', *History Workshop Journal* 61 (Spring 2006), pp.57–76.
- 108 Yawitch, 'Tightening the noose', p.10.
- 109 Burman, Sandra, 'Divorce and the disadvantaged: African women in urban South Africa', in Renee Hirschon (ed.), *Women and Property: Women as Property* (London, 1984), pp.131, 132.
- 110 For an in-depth historical analysis of African women's political activism in the Western Cape, see Scanlon, Helen, *Representation and Reality: Portraits of Women's Lives in the Western Cape, 1948–1976* (Cape Town, 2007).
- 111 Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town', pp.367–9.
- 112 Doris Vala, 12 December 1998.
- 113 Ellen Gqozo, 7 December 1998.
- 114 Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town', p.394.
- 115 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998.
- 116 Regina Mhlekwana, 19 December 1998.
- 117 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998.
- 118 Ibid.
- 119 Eunice Fuzile, 20 December 2000.
- 120 Ibid.
- 121 Sylvia Valashiya, 27 and 28 September 1999.
- 122 Nomthandazo Ntswana, 27 June 2000.
- 123 See Bundy, Colin, "'Action, comrades, action!": The politics of youth-student resistance in the Western Cape, 1985', in James and Simons (eds), *Angry Divide*, pp.206–17.

- 124 Ngcokoto, Lizo, 'Guguletu: A township is created, youth cultures emerge, 1959–1986' (BA [Hons] diss., UCT, 1989), pp.37–48.
- 125 Hazel Sukwana, 21 January 2001.
- 126 Zanele Mvambo, 5 April 2001.
- 127 Hazel Kadie, 15 January 2001.

Chapter Two

- 1 Consult the Appendix for more information on Regina Mhleka's family, as well as a family diagram that further illustrates her household configuration.
- 2 Regina was unable to provide a more specific time frame for when her pension payouts began.
- 3 Regina Mhleka, 19 December 1998.
- 4 Spiegel, Andrew and Anthony Mehlwana, *Family as Social Network: Kinship and Sporadic Migrancy in the Western Cape's Khayelitsha*, Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life (Pretoria, 1997), p.17; see also Murray, Colin, *Families Divided: The Impact of Migrant Labour in Lesotho* (Cambridge, 1981).
- 5 Guyer, Jane I., 'Household and community in African Studies', *African Studies Review* 24, 2/3 (1981), pp.87–127.
- 6 Ross, Fiona, 'Houses without doors: Diffusing domesticity in Die Bos' (MSocSci diss., UCT, 1993), pp.i, 89.
- 7 Spiegel and Mehlwana, *Family as Social Network*, pp.45–6.
- 8 In their analysis of domestic fluidity in African households in Cape Town, Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson show that no one single criterion – for example, among others, commensality, co-residence or income-sharing – could adequately characterize the changing groupings of members across time. They found that respondents themselves sometimes altered the criteria of membership during the interview process, yet these criteria were permeable and shifting as well. They advocate the use of the term 'domestic unit' instead; Spiegel, Andrew, Vanessa Watson and Peter Wilkinson, 'Domestic diversity and fluidity in some African households in Greater Cape Town', *Social Dynamics* 22, 1 (1996), pp.7–30. In this chapter and throughout the book, I have used the term 'household' flexibly, in acknowledgment of its multiple and shifting boundaries. By and large, it primarily denotes co-residence – those members living on the same plot of land. When a daughter moves away from the house in which she was raised, she is considered to have established an independent 'household'. However, even this is subject to revision, particularly if the daughter continues to contribute financially to her mother's well-being. Thus, kinship, commensality and income-sharing were also at times considered criteria of membership (by respondents themselves), and this is more specifically outlined wherever possible.
- 9 Bozzoli, Belinda, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in*

- South Africa, 1900–1984* (Portsmouth, NH, 1991), p.237; White, Caroline, ‘“Close to home” in Johannesburg: Sexism in township households’, paper presented at the conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa, University of Natal, Durban, 30 January–2 February 1991, p.5.
- 10 Hansen, Karen T., *Keeping House in Lusaka* (New York, 1997); see also Tripp, Aili M., ‘Women and the changing urban household economy in Tanzania’, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 27, 4 (1989), pp.601–23.
 - 11 Hansen, *Keeping House in Lusaka*.
 - 12 Ross, Fiona, Umntu Ngumntu Ngabanye Abantu: *The Support Networks of Black Families in Southern Africa*, Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life (Pretoria, 1995), p.28.
 - 13 Recent research affirming the tenacity of women’s ties to kin in their natal homes to some extent reveals this; Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*; Izzard, Wendy, ‘Migrants and mothers: Case studies from Botswana’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, 2 (1985), pp.258–80.
 - 14 Townsend, Nicholas, ‘Men, migration and households in Botswana: An exploration of connections over time and space’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23, 3 (1997), pp.405–20.
 - 15 I am grateful to Julie Livingston for the opportunity to participate in her panel on Intimate Tensions: Rethinking Mothers and Daughters in Southern Africa at the 2005 Berkshire conference on Women’s History, which helped me develop some of the ideas in this chapter.
 - 16 Some income-generating activities, especially pertaining to the informal economy, were often not listed as ‘employment’, but were elaborated on during the interview.
 - 17 The first year of secondary school.
 - 18 Gertrude Mvambo, 6 May 2000; 28 and 29 November 2000.
 - 19 Domestic service continues to be a dominant sector within the informal economy. In a 1998 survey, McKeever found that 41 per cent of Africans participating in the informal economy were in domestic service; McKeever, Matthew, ‘Reproduced inequality: Participation and success in the South African informal economy’, *Social Forces* 76, 4 (1998), p.1221.
 - 20 Salo, Elaine, ‘Respectable mothers, tough men and good daughters: Producing persons in Manenberg township, South Africa’ (PhD diss., Emory University, 2004), p.152.
 - 21 Magona, Sindiwe, *To My Children’s Children* (Cape Town, 1990), p.124.
 - 22 Cock, Jacklyn, ‘Domestic service and education for domesticity: The incorporation of Xhosa women into colonial society’, in Cheryl Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Cape Town, 1990), pp.76–96.
 - 23 See especially Hansen, *Keeping House in Lusaka*; Barnes, Theresa, ‘*We Women Worked so Hard*’: *Gender, Urbanization, and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930–1956* (Portsmouth, NH, 1999); and Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*.
 - 24 Xolisa Mvambo, 22 September 2005.

- 25 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998.
- 26 Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*, pp.127–8, 145.
- 27 Rita Mfiki, 11 May 2000.
- 28 On the social relations that underpin informal economic participation, see Roberts, Bryan, 'Informal economy and family strategies', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 18 (1994), pp.6–23.
- 29 Regina Mhleka, 27 September 1999.
- 30 Simone, AbdouMaliq, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities* (Durham, NC, 2004), p.120.
- 31 Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*, pp.220, 234; Spiegel, Andrew, 'Changing continuities: Experiencing and interpreting historical population movements and material differentiation in Matatiele, Transkei' (PhD diss., UCT, 1990); Izzard, 'Migrants and mothers'.
- 32 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 33 Mt. Fletcher is a mountainous area in northern Transkei, bordering on Lesotho. It has a predominantly Sotho-speaking population.
- 34 Pauline Mboniswa, 5 June 2000.
- 35 Nombulelo Monco, 30 May 2000.
- 36 One first-generation respondent, Nelly Gquma, resided in council housing in Nyanga township from the 1950s and moved to formal housing in Khayelitsha in 1985. She resided in a nursing home in Guguletu at the time of her interview. Another respondent, Rita Mfiki, moved into her current council house in Guguletu in 1991, but had lived sporadically in Guguletu from the late 1960s.
- 37 Hansen, *Keeping House in Lusaka*, p.184; Barnes, 'We Women Worked so Hard', pp.27–8.
- 38 Pauline Mboniswa, 5 June 2000.
- 39 Miriam Madikane, 7 January 2001.
- 40 Nombulelo Monco, 30 May 2000.
- 41 Hazel Sukwana, 21 January 2001.
- 42 Zanele Mvambo, 5 April 2001; Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000.
- 43 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 44 Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson note that homeland schools were utilized from the 1980s through to the early 1990s by African women regardless of their relative ability to consolidate an urban base in Cape Town; Spiegel, Andrew, Vanessa Watson and Peter Wilkinson, 'Women, difference and urbanisation patterns in Cape Town, South Africa', unpublished paper; Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson, 'Domestic diversity and fluidity', p.22.
- 45 Selina Mteto, 14 October 2000.
- 46 Rita Mfiki, 11 May 2000.
- 47 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 48 Regina Mhleka, 27 September 1999.
- 49 Izzard, 'Migrants and mothers', p.260.
- 50 Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson, 'Women, difference and urbanisation patterns', p.4.

- 51 Spiegel, Andrew, 'The fluidity of household composition in Matatiele, Transkei', paper presented at the Annual Conference of South African Anthropologists, Durban, September 1985.
- 52 Patricia Mhlekwa, 29 May 2000.
- 53 Zoliswa Mhlekwa, 28 November 2000.
- 54 Selina Mteto, 14 October 2000.
- 55 Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000.
- 56 Nombulelo Monco, 30 May 2000.
- 57 See Walker, Cheryl, 'Gender and the development of the migrant labour system c.1850–1930: An overview', in Cheryl Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa*, pp.168–96; Izzard, 'Migrants and mothers'; Spiegel and Mehlwana, *Family as Social Network*.
- 58 Wilfred Mhlekwa, 20 September 2005.
- 59 Regina Mhlekwa, 19 December 1998.
- 60 As Burman and Berger have carefully detailed, in the late 1980s there was little effective legal recourse for African women when men failed to pay maintenance; Burman, Sandra and Shirley Berger, 'When family support fails: The problems of maintenance payments in apartheid South Africa', Part I, *South African Journal on Human Rights* 2 (1988), pp.194–203; Part II, *South African Journal on Human Rights* 3 (1988), pp.334–54.
- 61 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 62 Patricia Mhlekwa, 30 May 2000.
- 63 Thabo Madikane, 2 June 2000.
- 64 Vuyani Fuzile, 22 September 2005.
- 65 Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000.
- 66 Michael Richards, 28 September 2005.
- 67 Townsend, 'Men, migration and households in Botswana'.
- 68 Nicholson, C. R., R. M. Lyster and A. M. Keely, *A Manual on Social Pensions in South Africa* (Durban, 1988), p.2; Ambrogi, Donna M., *Retirement Income of the Elderly Poor in South Africa: Some Legal and Public Policy Issues*, unpublished report (1994), p.3.
- 69 Ardington, Elisabeth and Frances Lund, 'Pensions and development: Social security as complementary to programmes of reconstruction and development', *Development Southern Africa* 12, 4 (1995), pp.557–77; Naidoo, Ravi, 'Pensions and investment, retirement funds and the dismantling of economic apartheid', in Jeremy Baskin (ed.), *Against the Current: Labour and Economic Policy in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1996), pp.80–100; Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*; Ross, Umntu Ngumntu Ngabanye Abantu; Burman, Sandra, 'Intergenerational family care: Legacy of the past, implications for the future', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22, 4 (1996), pp.585–98.
- 70 Seekings, Jeremy, 'Apartheid revisited: Analysing apartheid as a distributional regime', paper presented at an Africa seminar, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 11 October 2000, p.15. See also

- Seekings, Jeremy and Nicoli Nattrass, *Class, Race, and Inequality in South Africa* (New Haven, 2005).
- 71 Van der Berg, Servaas, 'South African social security under apartheid and beyond', *Development Southern Africa* 14, 4 (1997), pp.481–503; Seekings, 'Apartheid revisited', pp.24–5; Seekings and Nattrass, *Class, Race, and Inequality in South Africa*.
- 72 Schlemmer, Lawrence et al., 'South Africa's ideological football: The development and quality of life and socio-economic reform', in Centre for Policy Studies, *Policy Perspectives, 1989: South Africa at the End of the Eighties* (Johannesburg, 1989), pp.162, 185.
- 73 Van der Berg, Servaas, 'Social reform and the reallocation of social expenditure', in Robert Schrire (ed.), *Wealth or Poverty? Critical Choices for South Africa* (Cape Town, 1992), p.129.
- 74 Even in 1994, there were reports of hardship as a result of discriminatory administrative practices. Africans had to obtain their pensions at special pension payment points, while other racial groups could obtain them through the post office or have the monies directly deposited into their bank accounts. In African areas, long queues of 300–400 people were noted. Elderly people were reported to have to wait for up to five or six hours, sometimes beginning as early as five in the morning. Exploitation and robbery of pensioners immediately after they received their payments were also evident; *The Black Sash Newsletter* 23 (June 1994) cited in Ambrogi, *Retirement Income of the Elderly Poor*, pp.10–12; Department of National Health and Population Development, *Final Report: The Administration of Social Pensions for Blacks in the Republic of South Africa* (1992).
- 75 Le Roux, Pieter, 'Poverty and social policies: Some critical policy choices for South Africa', paper prepared for the Smith Committee (1995), cited in Naidoo, 'Pensions and investment', p.93.
- 76 Despite democratization, administrative problems remained in the pension payout system. In May 2002 the Black Sash secured a R2 billion settlement by the government in order to compensate for lengthy delays in the processing of pension applications, which dated back to 1998; *Saturday Star*, 25 May 2002; Department of Welfare, *You, Social Grants and Pensions, 2000* (2000).
- 77 Department of Welfare, *You, Social Grants and Pensions*.
- 78 Patricia Mhlekwana, 29 May 2000.
- 79 Nomthandazo Ntisana, 27 June 2000.
- 80 Hazel Sukwana, 21 January 2001.
- 81 Burman, 'Intergenerational family care', p.6.
- 82 Fast, Hildegard, 'An overview of African settlement in the Cape Metropolitan Area to 1990', Urban Problems Research Unit Working Paper no. 53 (Cape Town, 1995) pp.24, 32.
- 83 Burman, 'Intergenerational family care', pp.6–7.
- 84 In some ways, this practice follows traditional Nguni custom, in which

- women leave their natal homes upon marriage; Gaitskell, Deborah, 'Devout domesticity? A century of African women's Christianity in South Africa', in Cheryl Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa*, p.262.
- 85 Patricia Mhlekwa, 29 May 2000.
- 86 This figure can be compared to the reported illegitimacy rate in 1965 of 33 per cent for Africans in the city; Burman, 'Intergenerational family care', pp.6–7; CTCC MOH, *Annual Report* (1965).
- 87 Burman, 'Intergenerational family care', p.7; Wilson and Mafeje also note that among Africans in Cape Town, illegitimacy increased the importance of the mother's kin; Wilson, Monica and Archie Mafeje, *Langa: A Study of Social Groups in an African Township* (Cape Town, 1963), p.78.
- 88 The Madikanes activated agnatic structures in the rural areas far more thoroughly than other families. Russell contends that the agnatic principle has remained a stable and stabilizing influence on urban African households. The analysis here would contest this, and shows an agnatic orientation is predominant as an organizing structure only in those households in which marriage itself predominates among its members; Russell, Margo, 'Understanding black households: The problem,' *Social Dynamics* 29, 2 (2003), pp.5–47.
- 89 Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson, 'Domestic diversity and fluidity', p.23.
- 90 Nandipha Ntswana, 29 June 2000.
- 91 Pamela Madikane, 17 January 2001.
- 92 Barnes, 'We Women Worked so Hard', p.56.
- 93 Ross, Fiona, 'Model communities and respectable residents? Home and housing in a low-income residential estate in the Western Cape, South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31, 3 (2005), pp.631–48.
- 94 See Budlender's work on the complications involved in defining 'household head' for an added dimension to the literature on household 'authority'; Budlender, Debbie, 'The debate about household headship', *Social Dynamics* 29, 2 (2003), pp.48–72.
- 95 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 96 Gwagwa, Nolulama, "'Money as a source of tension": An analysis of low income households in Durban', in Anita Larsson, M. Mapetla and Ann Schlyter (eds), *Changing Gender Relations in Southern Africa: Issues of Urban Life* (Lesotho, 1998), pp.33–55.
- 97 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 98 Eunice said she once threw a television at one of her sons in order to discipline him. This action had added implications, given that both her husband and her children enjoyed electronic entertainment. See chapter four for a further discussion of appliances and household dynamics.
- 99 Campbell, Catherine, 'Learning to kill? Masculinity, the family and violence in Natal', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18, 3 (1992), pp.614–28.

- 100 Matumo Madikane, 10 January 2001.
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 Xolisa Mvambo, 22 September 2005.
- 103 Thato Madikane, 15 September 2005.
- 104 Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000.
- 105 Zoliswa Mhleka, 28 November 2000.
- 106 Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000.
- 107 Campbell argues women had difficulty disciplining young men in the home; Campbell, Catherine, 'The township family and women's struggles', *Agenda* 6 (1990), p.8.
- 108 Salo, 'Respectable mothers, tough men and good daughters'.
- 109 Spiegel, Andrew, Vanessa Watson and Peter Wilkinson, 'Domestic fluidity and movement patterns among Cape Town's African population: Some implications for housing policy', paper presented at an Africa seminar, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 11 October 1994, p.19; see also Spiegel and Mehlwana, *Family as Social Network*, pp.31–2.
- 110 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 111 Hazel Sukwana, 21 January 2001.
- 112 Showers notes how migrant income in rural households had the capacity to exaggerate *intra*-familial tensions, if used by one 'faction' at the exclusion of others; Showers, Kate B., 'A note on women, conflict and migrant labour', *South African Labour Bulletin* 6, 4 (1980), pp.54–7.
- 113 Eunice Fuzile, 19 December 1998.
- 114 Gertrude Mvambo, 28 and 29 November 2000.
- 115 Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000; see the Appendix for a more detailed description of this family and a family tree.
- 116 Gertrude Mvambo, 28 and 29 November 2000.
- 117 Wilson and Mafeje, *Langa*, p.84.
- 118 Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*; Izzard, 'Migrants and mothers'.
- 119 Izzard, 'Migrants and mothers', pp.273–4.
- 120 See, for example, Harries, Patrick, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Labourers in Mozambique and South Africa* (London, 1994) and Murray, *Families Divided*.
- 121 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 122 Not all daughters resisted parental pressure. Third-generation respondent Pamela Madikane explained her motivation for remaining in her mother's residence in Langa: 'that's one thing that I didn't see myself doing, moving out, having to pay rent somewhere else, instead of giving my mother the rent money that I would be paying somewhere else. She needs it most, to buy certain things, you know. And it's much cheaper to stay at home than to be in your own home.' She saw this arrangement as mutually beneficial, though her job as a call-centre receptionist at a research company gave her the option to establish her own residence. However, Pamela's case of paying in rent money to her mother was exceptional among other third-generation respondents; Pamela Madikane, 17 January 2001.

- 123 Gertrude Mvambo, 6 May 2000.
- 124 Some of these dynamics resonate with Bozzoli's work; Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*, p.238.
- 125 Steinberg, Malcolm, Saul Johnson, Gill Schierhout and David Ndegwa, *Hitting Home: How Households Cope with the Impact of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: A Survey of Households Affected by HIV/AIDS in South Africa* (Durban, 2002); Udjo, Eric O., 'Demographic impact of HIV/AIDS on the young and elderly populations in South Africa', *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 4, 2 (2006), pp.23–41.
- 126 Makiwane, Monde and Stella Kwizera, 'An investigation of quality of life of the elderly in South Africa, with specific reference to Mpumalanga province', *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 1, 3–4 (2006), pp.297–313; Wachter, Kenneth W., John E. Knodel and Mark van Landingham, 'AIDS and the elderly of Thailand: Projecting familial impacts', *Demography* 39, 1 (2002), pp.189–207; Knodel, John E. and Mark van Landingham, 'Children and older persons: AIDS unseen victims', *American Journal of Public Health* 90 (2000), pp.1024–5; UNAIDS (Joint UN Action Plan on HIV/AIDS), *Children Orphaned by AIDS: Front-Line Responses from Eastern and Southern Africa* (1999).
- 127 Livingston, Julie, *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana* (Bloomington, 2005).
- 128 Carton, Benedict, "'We are being made quiet by this annihilation": Historicizing concepts of bodily pollution and dangerous sexuality in South Africa', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39, 1 (2006), pp.85–106; Ingstad, Benedicte, Frank Bruun and Sheila Tlou, 'AIDS and the elderly Tswana: The concept of pollution and consequences for AIDS prevention', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 12, 4 (1997), pp.357–72.

Chapter Three

- 1 The street name is altered to protect the identities of informants.
- 2 Ginsburg, Rebecca, "'Now I stay in a house": Renovating the matchbox in apartheid-era Soweto', *African Studies* 55, 2 (1996), p.129; Breytenbach, Yvette, 'A socio-spatial analysis of the occupancy patterns of a typical African township plot' (BSocSci [Hons] diss., UCT, 1988), pp.22, 27, 50.
- 3 Magona, Sindiwe, *Forced to Grow* (Cape Town, 1992), p.14.
- 4 Guguletu was the only major African settlement in Cape Town built during the 'high' phase of apartheid state housing production from 1950 to 1980. The main characteristics of township planning in this era were established by the NBRI in the early apartheid years. An 'ideal' township was bounded by 'buffer strips', which were normally rivers, railways or major roads. Only a handful of roads served as access points into the township, which, when combined with its particular positioning, meant that state security

- forces could easily seal off the township in cases of unrest. Residential development was conceived in terms of dormitory neighbourhoods made up of standardized houses with little in the way of commercial zones, and roads were designed for easy vehicular access rather than pedestrian traffic. Guguletu's own design reflects all these elements. See Japha, Derek and Marie Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships in Cape Town, 1920–1992', *The Integration and Urbanisation of Existing Townships in South Africa Working Paper no. 2* (Newcastle and Cape Town, 1995), pp.16–19. For a more detailed discussion of apartheid social engineering through residential design, see Bank, Leslie, 'Xhosa in Town revisited: From urban anthropology to an anthropology of urbanism' (PhD diss., UCT, 2002); Western, John, *Outcast Cape Town* (Cape Town, 1981).
- 5 Ginsburg makes a similar observation in her analysis of Sowetan home improvement strategies in "Now I stay in a house", pp.134–5, 137.
 - 6 One respondent, Georgina Dwangu, is not part of the trans-generational set of interviewees. However, her account of the various renovations to her council house in Guguletu, where she has lived since the 1970s, is used in this chapter as supplementary material. I am grateful to Helen Scanlon for introducing me to her.
 - 7 Morton, Christopher, 'Dwelling and building in Ngamiland, northern Botswana' (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 2002).
 - 8 Gwagwa, Nolulama, 'Women as "home-makers" and men as "heads" of households: Who is responsible for housing improvements?', in Sylvia Sithole-Fundire, Agnes Zhou, Anita Larsson and Ann Schlyter (eds), *Gender Research on Urbanization, Planning, Housing and Everyday Life* (Harare, 1995), pp.42–60; Mather, Charles and Sue Parnell, 'Upgrading "matchboxes": Urban renewal in Soweto, 1976–86', in David Drakakis-Smith (ed.), *Economic Growth and Urbanisation in Developing Areas* (London, 1990), pp.238–50; Meintjes, Helen, 'Poverty, possessions and "proper living": Constructing and contesting propriety in Soweto and Lusaka city' (MA diss., UCT, 2000).
 - 9 Ginsburg, "Now I stay in a house", p.135.
 - 10 Gwagwa, 'Women as "home-makers"', pp.52–60.
 - 11 Parnell, Sue, 'Race, class, gender and home ownership subsidies in South Africa', paper presented at the conference on Women and Gender, University of Natal, Durban, 30 January–2 February 1991, p.19.
 - 12 Fast, Hildegard, 'Pondoks, houses, and hostels: A history of Nyanga 1946–1970, with a special focus on housing' (PhD diss., UCT, 1995), p.260.
 - 13 Langa Bantu Advisory Board, draft minutes, 21 November 1968, 22 July 1969 and 1 September 1971, AWC 3/45 156, Cape Archives, Administration of the Western Cape.
 - 14 Parnell, 'Race, class, gender and home ownership', p.1; Mather and Parnell, 'Upgrading "matchboxes"', p.244.
 - 15 Parnell, 'Race, class, gender and home ownership', p.1.

- 16 Mabin, Alan and Sue Parnell, 'The question of working-class home ownership', Carnegie Conference Paper no. 159, *Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1984).
- 17 Parnell, 'Race, class, gender and home ownership', pp.14–19; Fast, Hildegard, 'An overview of African settlement in the Cape Metropolitan Area to 1990', Urban Problems Research Unit Working Paper no. 53 (Cape Town, 1995), p.36.
- 18 Parnell, 'Race, class, gender and home ownership', pp.20–1.
- 19 Gwagwa, 'Women as "home-makers"', p.47.
- 20 Gwagwa, 'Women as "home-makers"', pp.58–60.
- 21 Bozzoli, Belinda, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1984* (Portsmouth, NH, 1991), p.44–5.
- 22 Information as to the original structure of these council homes was gathered from various respondents, as well as the detailed notations of Breytenbach, 'A socio-spatial analysis', p.50.
- 23 Gertrude Mvambo, 6 May 2000, 28 and 29 November 2000; Zanele Mvambo, 5 April 2001.
- 24 These findings strongly echo Ginsburg's research in Soweto and Gwagwa's findings in Newtown. Ginsburg, "'Now I stay in a house'", p.134; Gwagwa, 'Women as "home-makers"', pp.49–50.
- 25 Grace Madikane, 30 September 1999.
- 26 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 27 See Magona, Sindiwe, *To My Children's Children* (Cape Town, 1990), p.151; Ginsburg, "'Now I stay in a house'"; Doris Vala, 12 December 1998; Gertrude Mvambo, 28 and 29 November 2000; Malane Mfiki, 23 September 2000; Patricia Mhlekwana, 29 May 2000. Helen Meintjes argues that enclosing domestic space in Sowetan council homes enabled households to conceal evidence of poverty. For example, enclosing a kitchen meant that visitors would not be able to see what type or quality of food was being cooked and consumed; Meintjes, 'Poverty, possessions and "proper living"', pp.68–70.
- 28 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 29 Ginsburg, "'Now I stay in a house'", pp.134, 137; Meintjes, 'Poverty, possessions and "proper living"', pp.50–1.
- 30 Respondents were generally vague regarding the amounts at issue in personal and other family members' wages, particularly when asked to estimate household incomes in decades past. Women engaged in self-employment enterprises were sometimes unable to estimate profit margins, as this income was often sporadic. Thus, it proves difficult to map renovations against any definitive rise (or drop) in household incomes. Also, dependents in these council houses were not uniformly contributing to household pursuits, and their involvement (or lack thereof) in home renovations may be another reflection of this.
- 31 Ngcokoto uses first-hand testimonies to detail the complex dynamics among youth comrades, elder community leaders and elected community

- councillors, dynamics that were later manipulated by the state and police to instigate KTC's destruction. See Ngcokoto, Baba, 'The day KTC became Cape Town's Beirut: African squatters' struggles in Cape Town, 1983–1986', paper presented at the workshop Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid, University of the Witwatersrand, 6–10 February 1990; Cole, Josette, *Crossroads: The Politics of Reform and Repression, 1976–1986* (Johannesburg, 1987); Fast, 'An overview', p.27.
- 32 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 33 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 34 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 35 Regina Mhleka, 19 December 1998.
- 36 See Ramphele, Mamphela, *A Bed Called Home: Life in the Migrant Labour Hostels of Cape Town* (Cape Town, 1993) for a discussion of how severe spatial constraints in Cape Town hostels were negotiated by male labourers and the families who were resident with them; for a more theoretical exploration of apartheid-era conceptions of urban space, see Robinson, Jennifer, 'Power, space and the city: Historical reflections on apartheid and post-apartheid urban orders', in David M. Smith (ed.), *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanization and Social Change in South Africa* (London, 1992), pp.292–302, and Bank, 'Xhosa in Town revisited', chap. 3.
- 37 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 38 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 39 Plot sizes of respondents' homes averaged approximately 400 square metres. Size varied depending on whether the house was free standing or semi-detached, and whether it was at an end or in the middle of a row of semi-detached houses.
- 40 Breytenbach, 'A socio-spatial analysis', p.25 notes that the 'considerable' open space afforded by the single corner plot in Guguletu, which was the focus of Breytenbach's research, was used for a vegetable and succulent garden.
- 41 Urban greening initiatives that promote self-sufficiency and income generation through urban-based agriculture have been a prominent feature of recent township development. See Hamann, Hilton, 'The people's garden', in the Green Trust Awards special insert, *Mail and Guardian*, 7 June–13 June 2001.
- 42 Similar ratios were reported in Langa and Nyanga townships as well. See City Planners Department, *Socio-economic Characteristics: Langa, Gugulethu, Nyanga, Khayelitsha* (1995).
- 43 Japha, Derek, 'Townships in Cape Town: Demographics and other statistical indicators', The Integration and Urbanisation of Existing Townships in the Republic of South Africa Working Paper no. 5 (Newcastle and Cape Town, 1995); Japha and Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships', pp.32–3.
- 44 Mather and Parnell, 'Upgrading the "matchboxes"', p.245.
- 45 Cape Town City Council (CTCC) figures, cited in Japha, 'Townships in Cape Town', p.19.

- 46 Cook, G., 'Khayelitsha: New settlement forms in the Cape Peninsula', in Smith (ed.), *The Apartheid City and Beyond*, p.134.
- 47 Japha and Huchzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships', pp.3–4.
- 48 Pauline Mboniswa, 12 September 2000; Georgina Dwangu, 3 October 1999.
- 49 Selina Mteto, 14 October 2000.
- 50 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 51 Indeed, much of the academic and development-orientated literature ignores this aspect of residential improvement schemes, particularly in the rationale for site and service schemes – the sheer difficulty of finding reliable and affordable material, labour and expertise with which to upgrade their homes.
- 52 Pauline Mboniswa, 12 September 2000.
- 53 Thabo Madikane, 2 June 2000.
- 54 Grace Madikane, 20 December 1998.
- 55 Grace Madikane, 20 December 1998.
- 56 Ellen Gqozo, 7 December 1998.
- 57 The superintendent of housing in Guguletu estimated in 1988 that more than 10,000 people remained on the waiting list for housing there. This glut was compounded by overcrowding, weighing in at an average of almost ten inhabitants per house unit. See Makosana, Solomon, 'Aspects of the historical development of Guguletu, 1958–1987, with special reference to housing and education' (BA [Hons] diss., UCT, 1988), pp.37–8.
- 58 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998.
- 59 Ellen Gqozo, 7 December 1998.
- 60 *Rand Daily Mail*, 4 and 5 March 1983, cited in Mather and Parnell, 'Upgrading the "matchboxes"', p.245.
- 61 Zanele Mvambo, 5 April 2001.
- 62 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 63 Pauline Mboniswa, 12 September 2000.
- 64 It is unclear in this research whether men also employed informal approaches or used other means of finding out about and acquiring builders.
- 65 Pauline Mboniswa, 12 September 2000.
- 66 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 67 Moser, Caroline, 'Women and self-help housing projects: A conceptual framework for analysis and policy-making', in Kosta Mathey (ed.), *Beyond Self-help Housing* (London, 1992), pp.53–73.
- 68 Zoliswa Mhlekwa, 28 November 2000.
- 69 Matumo Madikane, 10 January 2001.
- 70 See Meintjes for a similar discussion in the context of Sowetan incorporation of backyard structures into household economic and domestic strategies; Meintjes, 'Poverty, possessions, and "proper living"'.
71 Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000.

- 72 Rachel Mhleka, 11 December 2000.
- 73 Zoliswa Mhleka, 28 November 2000.
- 74 Matumo Madikane, 10 January 2001.
- 75 Spiegel, Andrew, Vanessa Watson, and Peter Wilkinson, 'Domestic fluidity and movement patterns among Cape Town's African population: Some implications for housing policy', paper presented at an Africa seminar, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 11 October 1994, p.15.
- 76 Nomphele Fuzile, 15 October 2000.
- 77 The gendered issues raised here are meant to be suggestive, not conclusive, and, it is hoped, point to several further fruitful avenues of research. For example, given men's (lack of) participation in informal community-based mechanisms of finance, and given the male-dominated nature of the construction industry, we can consider how men may have differently mediated, participated in and perceived the project of home improvement. Apart from male testimonies, African newspapers may provide an alternative, and valuable, source on which to base further analyses of changing African conceptions of house and home.

Chapter Four

- 1 Cape Town City Council (CTCC) Electrical Engineer, *Annual Report* (1993/4), pp.14–15.
- 2 Christo Steyn (Electricity Department, CTCC), in discussion with the author, 23 March 2001.
- 3 Free basic water of six kilolitres per month was also introduced at the same time. Free electricity was funded by a 1.6 per cent across-the-board increase in electricity tariffs; press release, 20 March 2001; *Cape Argus*, 23 March 2001.
- 4 Theron, Paul, 'Public and private sector involvement in the provision of electricity in urban areas of South Africa' (MSc diss., UCT, 1991), p.75.
- 5 Davis, Mark and Grové Steyn, *Electricity in South Africa* (London, 1998), p.41.
- 6 The scale of this task is highlighted by the current crisis in electricity provision across South Africa, which has led to a proposed doubling of electricity tariffs and widespread controlled blackouts throughout the country; Isa, Mariam, 'Inflation "to bust target till 2010" on Eskom hikes', *Business Day*, 10 April 2008. The material in this chapter has not taken into account how the current electricity crisis in South Africa has affected urban African energy perceptions and practices.
- 7 Fiil-Flynn, Maj, 'The electricity crisis in Soweto', Municipal Services Project Occasional Papers Series no. 4 (Cape Town, 2001), pp.22–3.
- 8 Eberhard, Anton A. and Clive van Horen, *Poverty and Power: Energy and the South African State* (London, 1995), pp.67, 69.
- 9 Meintjes, Helen and Caroline White, 'Robbers and freeloaders: Relations

- between communities and Eskom in Gauteng townships', *Social Policy Series* 10, 5 (Johannesburg, 1997), pp.6–7.
- 10 Energy transition theory posits that household energy use can fit into one of three developmental phases: traditional, transitional, and final. Traditional fuels are biomass-based, such as wood or dung. Transitional fuels include paraffin, gas, and coal, with the final phase being electricity. Scholars have challenged the notion implicit in the theory that the process of modernization was necessarily tied to a discrete set of fuels, emphasizing a more dynamic model that acknowledges the diversity of people's choices and the complexity of their social environment. See Eberhard and Van Horen, *Poverty and Power*, pp.66–7; and Mehlwana, Anthony M., 'The anthropology of fuels: Situational analysis and energy use in urban low-income townships of South Africa', *Energy for Sustainable Development* 3, 5 (1997), p.7.
 - 11 See Ross, Fiona, 'Houses without doors: Diffusing domesticity in Die Bos' (MSocSci diss., UCT, 1993); Meintjes, Helen, 'Poverty, possessions and "proper living": Constructing and contesting propriety in Soweto and Lusaka city' (MA diss., UCT, 2000); White, Caroline, "'Close to home" in Johannesburg: Sexism in township households', paper presented at the conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa, University of Natal, Durban, 30 January–2 February 1991.
 - 12 Fiil-Flynn's study further suggests that women experience a higher rate of domestic violence when electricity supplies are shut off; Fiil-Flynn, 'The electricity crisis in Soweto', pp.13, 19.
 - 13 See Appadurai, Arjun, 'Introduction: Commodities and the politics of value', in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), pp.3–63.
 - 14 Mehlwana, 'The anthropology of fuels', p.5; see Bank, Leslie, Bongani Mlomo and Phumeza Lujabe, *The Social Determinants of Energy Use in Duncan Village, East London*, Department of Minerals and Energy, report no. EO9421 (1996); Jones, Sean, Robert Aitken and Leanne Luckin, *Power, Posterity and Poverty: An Ethnographic Study of the Social Determinants of Fuel Use in Cato Manor, Durban*, Department of Minerals and Energy, report No. EO9422 (1996); Mehlwana, Anthony A. and Nomawethu Qase, *Social Determinants of Energy Use in Low-income Urban Households in the Western Cape*, Department of Minerals and Energy, report No. EO9420 (1996); White, Caroline et al., *The Social Determinants of Energy Use in Soweto*, Department of Minerals and Energy, report No. EO9423 (1996).
 - 15 Ross, 'Houses without doors', pp.108, 148; Meintjes, Helen, "'Washing machines make lazy women": Domestic appliances and the negotiation of women's property in Soweto', *Journal of Material Culture* 6, 3 (2001), pp.345–63.
 - 16 Ross, 'Houses without doors', p.90. See also Bank, Leslie, 'The social life of paraffin: Gender, domesticity and the politics of value in a South African Township', in Patrick MacAllister (ed.), *Culture and the Commonplace*:

- Anthropological Essays in Honour of David Hammond-Tooke* (Johannesburg, 1997), p.163; Mehlwana, 'The anthropology of fuels', p.13; Meintjes, Helen et al., 'Paraffin etiquette: The differing social meanings of paraffin in two informal settlements', *Journal of Energy in Southern Africa* 7, 4 (1996), pp.113–17; Jones, Aitken and Luckin, *Power, Posterity and Poverty*.
- 17 Bank, 'The social life of paraffin', pp.168, 174; see also Meintjes et al., 'Paraffin etiquette'; Jones, Aitken and Luckin, *Power, Posterity and Poverty*.
- 18 Mehlwana, 'The anthropology of fuels', pp.12–13.
- 19 For example, the association of electricity as a 'male' form of energy cannot a priori be assumed. Such linkages need to be historically and regionally located. An exception to the trend is Leslie Bank's work on paraffin and identity, which has been placed within a larger history of cultural orientation and change in East London; see Bank, Leslie, 'Xbosa in Town revisited: From urban anthropology to an anthropology of urbanism' (PhD diss., UCT, 2002).
- 20 Interviews with six officials responsible for electricity provision and administration from the CTCC and Eskom supplemented the material gathered for this chapter.
- 21 'Memorandum from Cape Town City Council Housing Committee to Finance Committee', 15 August 1958, AWC 2/3 G9, Cape Archives, Administration of the Western Cape.
- 22 AWC 2/3 G9, 'Memorandum from Cape Town City Council Native Affairs Committee to Finance Committee,' 7 March 1962; Christie, Renfrew, *Electricity, Industry and Class in South Africa* (Albany, 1984); Davis and Steyn, *Electricity in South Africa*, pp.35–6; Don Early (Technical Services, CTCC), in discussion with the author, 2 March 2001.
- 23 CTCC Electrical Engineer, *Annual Report* (1968), p.15.
- 24 'Report from Town Clerk', 7 April 1960, AWC 2/3 G9.
- 25 'Rogers to Town Clerk', 4 December 1961, AWC 2/3 G9.
- 26 'Sample application for electrical installation in Council property', undated; AWC 3/8 24, 'Manager of Native Administration to Mr. A. Ncapai', 19 March 1963, AWC 3/8 24 .
- 27 'Worrall to City Electrical Engineer', 10 January 1969, AWC 3/8 24.
- 28 'Manager of Native Administration to Mr. A. Ncapai, Mr. G. Makupula, Mr. S. Tulwana, Mr L. Panya, Mr G. Godlo', 19 March 1963, AWC 3/8 24.
- 29 'Superintendent of Gugulethu to Miss J. Mashela', 8 June 1967, AWC 2/3 G9.
- 30 'City Electrical Engineer to Director of Bantu Administration', 5 June 1967, AWC 2/3 G9.
- 31 Horrell, Muriel, *Legislation and Race Relations: A Summary of the Main South African Laws which Affect Race Relationships* (Johannesburg, 1971), pp.35–40; Fast, Hildegard, 'An overview of African settlement in the Cape metropolitan area to 1990', Urban Problems Research Unit Working Paper no. 53 (Cape Town, 1995), p.11.

- 32 'City Electrical Engineer to Director of Bantu Administration', 8 August 1967, AWC 3/8 24.
- 33 'City Treasurer to Director of Bantu Administration', 22 June 1965, AWC 3/8 24; 'Reply from Worrall', 5 August 1965, AWC 3/8 24; 'Reply from City Treasurer', 13 August 1965, AWC 3/8 24.
- 34 Bekker, Simon, and Richard Humphries, *From Control to Confusion: The Changing role of Administration Boards in South Africa, 1971–1983* (Pietermaritzburg, 1985).
- 35 'Chief Director of BAAB to City Treasurer', 10 November 1976, AWC 3/8 24.
- 36 'Memorandum of Agreement between BAAB Peninsular Area and K. Solomon', 7 October 1974, AWC 3/8 24.
- 37 CTCC Electrical Engineer, *Annual Report* (1976), p.27; Theron, Paul, Anton Eberhard and Charles Dingley, 'Public and private sector roles in the provision of electricity in urban areas of South Africa', Economic Trends Working Paper no. 7 (Cape Town, 1991), pp.2, 5–6.
- 38 By 1997, the contribution to rates had escalated to nearly ZAR 124 million; CTCC Electrical Engineer, *Annual Report* (1997).
- 39 Theron, Eberhard and Dingley, 'Public and private sector roles'.
- 40 Ibid., pp.6–7, 17.
- 41 Eberhard, Anton A., 'Energy and poverty in urban and peri-urban areas around Cape Town', Carnegie Conference Paper no. 155, *Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1984), p.3.
- 42 As context, state old-age pensions in 1993 were ZAR 370 per month; Theron and Thorne, 'A comparative study of electricity use', pp.19, 21; and Beinart, William, *Twentieth-century South Africa* (Oxford, 2001), p.318.
- 43 Theron and Thorne, 'A comparative study of electricity use', pp.18–19.
- 44 Hishaam Arnold (Electricity Department, CTCC), in discussion with the author, 23 March 2001.
- 45 Monde Moletsane (Eskom), in discussion with the author, 29 March 2001.
- 46 I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of the *Journal for Women's History* for alerting me to this point; McDonald, David A. and Laila Smith, 'Privatizing Cape Town: Service delivery and policy reforms since 1996', Municipal Services Project Occasional Papers Series no. 7 (Cape Town, 2002).
- 47 Fiil-Flynn, 'The electricity crisis in Soweto', pp.22–7.
- 48 Grace Madikane, 30 September 1999 and 11 September 2000.
- 49 Grace Madikane, 30 September 1999.
- 50 Gertrude Mvambo concurred with this; Gertrude Mvambo, 28 and 29 November 2000.
- 51 Miriam Madikane, 7 January 2001.
- 52 Nombulelo Monco, 30 May 2000.
- 53 Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000; Miriam Madikane, 7 January 2001;

- Sylvia Valashiya, 27 and 28 September 1999. These findings echo Helen Meintjes' research, which showed a clear generational divide in women's opinions of coal stoves; Meintjes, "Washing machines make lazy women", p.358.
- 54 Thabo Madikane described the area adjacent to Nyanga as if 'it was a big forest'; Thabo Madikane, 2 June 2000; Pauline Mboniswa, 5 June 2000; Greenbank, Kevin, "'Into the wild bushes of Nyanga': Growth, control and relocation of Cape Town's squatters, 1939-1955' (BA [Hons] diss., UCT, 1993).
- 55 This point is supported by Mehlwana and Qase, *Social Determinants of Energy Use*, p.20.
- 56 Magona, Sindiwe, *To My Children's Children* (Cape Town, 1990), pp.92-3.
- 57 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 58 Grace Madikane, 11 September 2000.
- 59 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 60 Pauline Mboniswa, 12 September 2000.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Grace Madikane, 11 September 2000.
- 63 Nosizwe Mfiki, 15 September 2000.
- 64 Grace Madikane, 11 September 2000.
- 65 Grace Madikane, 30 September 1999.
- 66 Regina Mhlekwana, 27 September 1999.
- 67 Pauline Mboniswa, 12 September 2000.
- 68 Miriam Madikane, 7 January 2001.
- 69 Nomubelo Monco, 30 May 2000.
- 70 Sylvia Valashiya, 27 and 28 September 1999; Pauline Mboniswa, 12 September 2000.
- 71 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000; Grace Madikane, 11 September 2000.
- 72 This phenomenon has parallels in India and Pakistan; see Ananthaswamy, Anil, 'Till death us do part: Dowry killings', *New Scientist* (29 June 2002), pp.12-15.
- 73 Patricia Mhlekwana, 29 May 2000.
- 74 Nobambo Mfeketo, 26 October 2000.
- 75 These accounts are limited to pre-1980, and may indicate that white and Coloured 'madams' who were employing African women as domestic workers by the 1980s had themselves seen that such equipment was essential to 'modern' living.
- 76 Miriam Madikane, 7 January 2001.
- 77 Meintjes, "Washing machines make lazy women", pp.349-50.
- 78 Buyiswa cordially offered my interpreter and me chocolates and sweets from her refrigerator on our visits there; Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000.
- 79 Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000; Zoliswa Mhlekwana, 28 November 2000.
- 80 Mehlwana and Qase, *Social Determinants of Energy Use*, p.28.
- 81 Beinart, *Twentieth-century South Africa*, p.179.

- 82 Hyslop, Jonathan, 'Why did apartheid's supporters capitulate? "Whiteness", class and consumption in urban South Africa, 1985–1995, *Society in Transition: Journal of the South African Sociological Association* 31, 1 (2000), pp.36–44; see also Dixon, Rob, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond* (New York, 1994).
- 83 Mehlwana and Qase similarly found that a majority of households surveyed in Khayeltisha, Langa, and the informal settlement of Joe Slovo owned a radio or a television, or both; Mehlwana and Qase, *Social Determinants of Energy Use*, p.27.
- 84 The success in recent years of black soap operas such as *Egoli*, *Generations*, and *Yizo Yizo*, as Beinart has noted, shows networks' cognizance of changing viewer demographics as well as the centrality of television in African leisure culture; Beinart, *Twentieth-century South Africa*, pp.317; see also Barnes, Teresa, "'Days" and "Bold": The fascination of American soap operas for black students at the University of the Western Cape', in Paul T. Zeleza and Cassandra R. Veney (eds), *Leisure in Urban Africa* (Trenton, 2003).
- 85 Matumo Madikane, 10 January 2001.
- 86 Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000.
- 87 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
- 88 Nomphele Fuzile, 15 October 2000.

Chapter Five

- 1 Brandel, Mia, *The Needs of African Women*, report for the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (1955), p.8.
- 2 The full report remained unpublished for circulation beyond the limited ambit of SAIRR itself, though some findings were briefly cited in SAIRR's *Annual Survey of Race Relations*. Mia Brandel-Syrier's *Black Woman in Search of God* (London, 1962) draws extensively from the 1955 study's findings on *iimanyano*.
- 3 Brandel, *The Needs of African Women*, p.71.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p.330.
- 5 Gaitskell provides a useful survey of African Christian women's organization in the first half of the twentieth century, and references Brandel-Syrier's later monograph on the same topic. Contemporary academic studies, particularly on informal finance and burial associations, have not mentioned Brandel-Syrier's findings on these organizations at all. In contrast to much previous scholarship on the topic; Gaitskell, Deborah, 'Devout domesticity? A century of African women's Christianity in South Africa', in Cheryl Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Cape Town, 1990), pp.251–72; Bähre, Erik, *Money and Violence: Financial Self-Help Groups in a South African Township* (Leiden, 2007).
- 6 Two male respondents contributed organizational histories and testimonies in addition to the trans-generational set of women. Testimonies but no written organizational histories were obtained from five female

- 31 Matumo Madikane, 10 January 2001.
- 32 Nandipha Ntswana, 29 June 2000.
- 33 Brandel-Syrier, *Black Woman*, p.16.
- 34 Nomphele Fuzile, 15 October 2000.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Buyiswa Mtero, 6 September 2000.
- 37 By the 1980s and 1990s, financial requirements for membership had become a somewhat elaborate affair. According to testimonies, along with 'voluntary' tithing, a member was expected to pay for communion 'tickets' (often sold in monthly or quarterly instalments) and other fees such as rental for the property on which the church stood and contributions towards building funds. If women wanted to join *umanyano*, they had to cover additional membership costs, and actively participate and contribute to the various fund-raising activities *umanyano* undertook. These findings are detailed in Lee, Rebekah, 'Conversion or continuum? The spread of Islam among African women in Cape Town', *Social Dynamics* 27, 2 (2001), pp.62–85.
- 38 *Stokvel* is said to be a derivation of 'stock fairs', the rotating cattle auctions of European settlers in the Eastern Cape during the nineteenth century. It was said that black farmers and labourers who attended these stock fairs exchanged ideas and gambled with whatever resources they had; Lukhele, Andrew K., *Stokvels in South Africa: Informal Savings Schemes by Blacks for the Black Community* (Johannesburg, 1990), p.4; *amabodisana* 'let's pay each other back' is a type of savings association; *gooi-gooi* (from the Afrikaans *gooi*, 'to throw') is a general term encompassing both savings and rotating credit associations, as is the Xhosa equivalent *umgalelo*, derived from *ukugalela*, 'to pour'; *umasingwabane* means 'let's bury each other' and refers to burial societies that have a fixed fund; *umasincedane* is a simpler version of a burial society, meaning 'let's help', which does not have a fund; Bähre, Erik, 'Financial self-help organisations in South Africa: An overview', *Papers in Progress* (Amsterdam, 1999), p.4.
- 39 Kuper, Hilda and S. Kaplan, 'Voluntary associations in an urban township', *African Studies* 3, 4 (1944), p.178.
- 40 Cited in Lukhele, *Stokvels in South Africa*, p.2.
- 41 Ibid., p.16.
- 42 Ibid., p.5.
- 43 Brandel, *The Needs of African women*, p.282.
- 44 Kuper and Kaplan, 'Voluntary associations', p.185.
- 45 Brandel, *The Needs of African Women*, p.295.
- 46 Ibid., p.296.
- 47 I have begun research on the contemporary funeral industry in South Africa as part of a larger Arts Humanities Research Council collaborative project, 'Death in Africa: A History c.1800 to Present Day'. See <http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/deathinfrica> for further details.
- 48 Lukhele, *Stokvels in South Africa*, p.17.

- 49 Brandel, *The Needs of African Women*, p.299.
- 50 *Umasingwabane* collected regular, usually monthly, contributions that were normally deposited in an interest-bearing account. Payouts were made when the principal contributor and any registered dependents died. These payouts were normally larger in size than those coming from societies without a fund. *Umasincedane*, 'let's help', or *umasipbekisane*, 'let's cook', functioned chiefly to help manage the considerable food preparation and logistics required for funerals; Bähre, *Money and Violence*, pp.11–12; Bähre, 'Financial self-help organisations', pp.3–4.
- 51 Grace Madikane, 11 September 2000.
- 52 Miriam Madikane, 7 January 2001.
- 53 Bähre, *Money and Violence*, p.11.
- 54 Eunice Fuzile, 20 December 2000.
- 55 Rita Mfiki, 11 May 2000.
- 56 As with Grace Madikane, membership in a society in Khayelitsha may have been made more accessible because societies often had many branches that met in different areas. In addition, some burial societies utilized 'collectors' who would collect monthly fees from members.
- 57 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 58 This latter figure applies only to the *funeral* insurance market and not the significantly larger life insurance market.
- 59 Siqoko, Bongani, 'Burial groups tempt giants', *Mail and Guardian*, 27 March–2 April 1998.
- 60 Magliolo, Jacques, 'Changes for funeral schemes', *Mail and Guardian*, 27 March–2 April 1998.
- 61 'Sanlam funeral help plan: For that unexpected day . . .', product brochure received May 2002.
- 62 Brandel, *The Needs of African Women*, pp.291, 300, 302.
- 63 Hazel Sukwana, 21 January 2001.
- 64 Zanele Mvambo, 5 April 2001.
- 65 Various studies show that informal credit associations follow a similar trajectory; Burman, Sandra and Nozipho Lembete, 'Building new realities: African women and ROSCAs in urban South Africa', in Shirley Ardener and Sandra Burman (eds), *Money-go-rounds: The Importance of Rotating Savings and Credit Associations for Women* (Oxford, 1995), pp.23–47.
- 66 Nomthandazo Ntisana, 26 June 2000.
- 67 Pauline Mboniswa, 12 September 2000.
- 68 Pamela Madikane, 17 January 2001.
- 69 Rachel Mhlekwana, 11 December 2000.
- 70 Kuper and Kaplan, 'Voluntary association', p.184.
- 71 Brandel, *The Needs of African Women*, p.279.
- 72 Bähre, 'The price of a bed: Migrants and money in Cape Town', *Etnofoor* 13, 2 (2000), pp.55–77.
- 73 See Lukhele, *Stokvels in South Africa*; Buijs, Gina and Glen Atherfold, *Savings and Money-lending Schemes: How Rotating Credit Associations Help Poor Families*, Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life

- (Pretoria, 1995); Ross, Fiona, 'Strategies against patriarchy: Women and rotating credit associations' (BSocSci [Hons] diss., UCT, 1990); Ardener and Burman (eds), *Money-go-rounds*.
- 74 Lukhele, *Stokvels in South Africa*, p.32.
- 75 Bähre, *Money and Violence*, pp.127–31, 159–65
- 76 Bähre, 'The price of a bed', pp.60, 69–73.
- 77 See Ngwane, Zolani, "'Christmas time" and the struggles for the household in the countryside', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, 3 (2003), pp.681–99.
- 78 The temptation to engage in this type of lending may be tempered somewhat by recent efforts on the part of banks to reward *imigalelo* with higher interest rates if they maintain high balances in their savings accounts. However, Bähre notes that banks were generally not able to compare with interest that could be accrued through aggressive lending amongst *imigalelo* members – banks were able to offer between 3 and 14 per cent interest, whereas he observed instances of up to 50 per cent interest being charged for borrowing by *imigalelo* members. He also states that having to adhere to banks' minimum balance requirements on savings accounts was a further disincentive to participate in savings-only *imigalelo* through a bank; Bähre, 'Financial self-help organisations', pp.11–12.
- 79 Pauline Mboniswa, 12 September 2000.
- 80 Eunice Fuzile, 19 December 1998.
- 81 Gertrude Mvambo, 28 and 29 November 2000.
- 82 Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000.
- 83 Miriam Madikane, 7 January 2001.
- 84 Nosizwe Mfiki, 15 September 2000.
- 85 Patricia Mhlekwana, 30 May 2000; Sindiwe Magona, in her compilation of short stories entitled *Push-push*, elaborates on the 'push-push' craze that swept through her community when she was a child in the early 1950s; Magona, Sindiwe, *Push-push! and Other Stories* (Cape Town, 1996).
- 86 Matumo Madikane, 10 January 2001.
- 87 Rita Mfiki, 11 May 2000.
- 88 Nosizwe Mfiki, 15 September 2000.
- 89 Eunice Fuzile, 20 December 2000; Bähre notes a similar rationale in the markedly female-only financial mutuals of his study; Bähre, *Money and Violence*, pp.117–18.
- 90 Nandipha Ntswana, 29 June 2000; Brandel-Syrier does speak extensively about Girl Guides in *The Needs of African Women*. However, it does not appear that the Girl Guides enjoyed as strong a following in Cape Town as it did in Johannesburg, where Brandel Syrier based her study. Certainly, Nandipha's own testimony would indicate that it was not a commonly sought option among her African female peers. More research on the Girl Guides in the Western Cape is necessary.
- 91 Pamela Madikane, 17 January 2001.

Chapter Six

- 1 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998 and 11 May 2000.
- 2 Mayer, Philip with Iona Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City* (Cape Town, 1971).
- 3 Wilson, Monica and Archie Mafeje, *Langa: A Study of Social Groups in an African Township* (Cape Town, 1963), pp.16–22.
- 4 James, Deborah, *Songs of the Women Migrants: Performance and Identity in South Africa* (Edinburgh, 1999), p.23; see Chauncey, George, 'The locus of reproduction: Women's labour in the Zambian Copperbelt, 1927–1953', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 7, 2 (1981), pp.135–64; Parpart, Jane, 'The household and the mine shaft: Gender and class struggles on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1926–64', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13, 1 (1986), pp.36–56.
- 5 James, *Songs of the Women Migrants*, p.23; Bank, Leslie, 'Xhosa in Town revisited: From urban anthropology to an anthropology of urbanism' (PhD diss., UCT, 2002), pp.7–11.
- 6 For example, Bozzoli's pioneering study of migrant women in Phokeng argued for the historical location of identities in the context of both individual life cycles and changing social and economic realities; Bozzoli, Belinda, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1984* (Portsmouth, NH, 1991), pp.4, 12; see also Bank, Leslie, 'Men with cookers: Transformations in migrant culture, domesticity and identity in Duncan Village, East London', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, 3 (1999), pp.393–416; James, *Songs of the Women Migrants*.
- 7 Ferguson, James, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, 1999), pp.91, 95.
- 8 Bank, 'Xhosa in Town revisited', pp.14–15, 42.
- 9 Bank, 'Men with cookers', pp.410–11.
- 10 *Kiba* is a seSotho style of performance that had its origins in migrant cultures on the Reef, often involving elaborate costumes, drumming, whistle-blowing, marching and dance; James, *Songs of the Women Migrants*, pp.18, 190.
- 11 Campbell, Catherine, Gerhard Mare and Cheryl Walker, 'Evidence for an ethnic identity in the life histories of Zulu-speaking Durban township residents', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, 2 (1995), pp.87–301; Cornelissen and Horstmeier similarly argue that respondents in selected areas across the Western Cape continued to adhere to racialized identities whose foundations lie in the apartheid era, rather than incorporating new allegiances (for example, to the province or the nation) that Western Cape politicians were brokering; Cornelissen, Scarlet and Steffen Horstmeier, 'The social and political construction of identities in the new South Africa: An analysis of the Western Cape Province', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, 1 (2002), pp.55–82.
- 12 Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*, p.4.

- 13 Ibid., p.12.
- 14 See Goldin, Ian, 'Coloured identity and Coloured politics in the Western Cape region of South Africa', in Leroy Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London, 1989), pp.241–54; Dubow, Saul, 'Afrikaner nationalism, apartheid and the conceptualization of "race"', *Journal of African History* 33 (1992), pp.209–37; Butler, Jeffrey, 'Afrikaner women and the creation of ethnicity in a small South African town, 1902–1950', in Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism*, pp.55–81.
- 15 This similarity between African residents in Durban and Cape Town could suggest that in areas where one African ethnic group predominates, urban residents found little utility in foregrounding ethnicity as a marker of difference. Of course, the emergence or decline of ethnic identities has to be historically located. The relative absence of 'ethnicity' as a frame of reference in these contemporary studies could also reflect the exigencies of post-apartheid urban and national policies. Further comparisons with more multiethnic urban African areas would provide a fruitful avenue of research.
- 16 Nandipha Ntswana, 29 June 2000.
- 17 It may also reflect the breadth and scale of South Africa's urbanization. In comparison, Englund argues that the relative lack of urbanization in Malawi has allowed the notion of the 'village' to remain embedded without contradiction in people's lifestyles and life strategies. He observes no true distinction between 'localists' or 'cosmopolitans' in Lilongwe; Englund, Harri, 'The village in the city, the city in the village: Migrants in Lilongwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28, 1 (2002), pp.137–54.
- 18 This is in contrast to the Mayers, who partly base their use of strictly rural frames of reference among migrants on the statistic that as many as 86 per cent of all adult Xhosa in East London in 1955 were of 'country' (and not small-town) origin. Whether the greater diversity of women migrants' areas of origin in my research is a reflection of gendered differences in the migration process or regional differences in migration at mid-century to Cape Town and East London cannot be conclusively addressed. However, it would be an interesting area of further study; Reader, D. H., *The Black Man's Portion: History, Demography and Living Conditions in the Native Locations of East London, Cape Province* (Cape Town, 1961); Mayer and Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen*, p.1.
- 19 Where relevant, distinctions between rural areas and small towns are included in the analysis.
- 20 Wilson and Mafeje reported that in the 1960s, 'A settled African population without roots in the country is already accomplished in Langa. Only a portion of the migrants remain "incapsulated" indefinitely'; Wilson and Mafeje, *Langa*, p.174.
- 21 Grace Madikane, 20 December 1998.
- 22 Ellen Gqozo, 7 December 1998.
- 23 Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*, p.106.
- 24 An area for further research would be a closer look at the history of

- remittances, and how that history maps onto shifting orientations. Currently, not enough information exists to conclusively characterize the trajectory of informants' remittances.
- 25 See Walker, Cherryl, 'Gender and the development of the migrant labour system c.1850–1930: An overview', in Cherryl Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Cape Town, 1990), pp.168–96; Izzard, Wendy, 'Migrants and mothers: Case studies from Botswana', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, 2 (1985), pp.258–80.
 - 26 Regina Mhleka, 19 December 1998.
 - 27 Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*, pp.80–1; see also Ferguson, James, 'Mobile workers, modernist narratives: A critique of the historiography of transition on the Zambian Copperbelt', Part I, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, 3 (1990), pp.385–412; Part II, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, 4 (1990), pp.603–21; Parpart, 'The household and the mine shaft'.
 - 28 Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng*, 238.
 - 29 Doris Vala, 12 December 1998.
 - 30 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998.
 - 31 Walker, 'Gender and the development of the migrant labour system', p.188; Moodie, Dunbar, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines and Migration* (Berkeley, 1994).
 - 32 Native Affairs Committee Minutes, February 1945–August 1946, 10 May 1946, 3/CT/1/4/10/1/1/11, Cape Archives.
 - 33 Regina Mhleka, 19 December 1998.
 - 34 Ibid.
 - 35 Ibid.
 - 36 Eunice Fuzile, 19 December 1998.
 - 37 Grace Madikane, 20 December 1998.
 - 38 Doris Vala, 12 December 1998.
 - 39 Ellen Gqozo, 7 December 1998.
 - 40 Eunice Fuzile, 19 December 1998.
 - 41 Campbell, Mare and Walker, 'Evidence for an ethnic identity', pp.293–4.
 - 42 Regina Mhleka, 27 September 1999.
 - 43 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998.
 - 44 Eunice Fuzile, 11 May 2000.
 - 45 First-generation women were also aware of key developments such as electrification in the rural and small-town areas; see chapter four.
 - 46 Bank, 'Men with cookers', pp.411–13.
 - 47 Giddens argues that interpreting external experience and social change as part of a self-reflexive process is a hallmark of modern social life; Giddens, Anthony, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.37–9.
 - 48 Zanele Mvambo, 5 April 2001.
 - 49 Miriam Madikane, 7 January 2001.
 - 50 Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000.
 - 51 Selina Mteto, 14 October 2000.
 - 52 Nombulelo Monco, 30 May 2000.

- 53 Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000.
- 54 Hazel Kadie, 15 January 2001; Nomphele Fuzile, 15 October 2000.
- 55 Matumo Madikane, 10 January 2001.
- 56 Nomphele Fuzile, 15 October 2000.
- 57 Hazel Kadie, 15 January 2001.
- 58 Matumo Madikane, 10 January 2001.
- 59 The choice of Pretoria as their ideal destination may reflect their willingness to engage in a more multiethnic African community than is possible in the majority Xhosa-speaking population of Cape Town. Matumo and Hazel have both Sotho and Xhosa lineages, and Hazel has a Tswana-speaking boyfriend. However, it is difficult without more explicit questioning along these lines to argue for an ethnic basis to third-generation respondents' residential choices.
- 60 Simone, AbdouMaliq, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities* (Durham, NC, 2004), pp.65, 120.
- 61 Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*, pp.95–8.
- 62 Regina Mhleka, 19 December 1998.
- 63 Grace Madikane, 20 December 1998.
- 64 Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000.
- 65 Rita Mfiki, 10 December 1998.
- 66 CTCC MOH, *Annual Report* (1955).
- 67 Nombulelo Monco, 30 May 2000.
- 68 Miriam Madikane, 7 January 2001.
- 69 Pauline Mboniswa, 5 June 2000.
- 70 Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000.
- 71 Zanele Mvambo, 4 April 2001.
- 72 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 73 Regina Mhleka, 27 September 1999.
- 74 How and when restricted mobility became so closely associated with moral rectitude are difficult to ascertain. Certainly, it is important to consider that this notion was not solely urban in origin, as first-generation respondents' recollections of their own regulated childhoods in their natal homes confirm. However, it does appear that the possibility for moral decline felt more imminent with the shift to urban areas; Rita Mfiki, 11 May 2000.
- 75 See Bonner, Philip, "'Desirable or undesirable Basotho women?" Liquor, prostitution and the migration of Basotho women to the Rand, 1920–1945', in Cheryl Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa*, pp.221–50'; also Bank, 'Men with cookers'; Walker, 'Gender and the migrant labour system'; Mayer and Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen*.
- 76 Grace Madikane, 20 December 1998.
- 77 The phrase 'to go up and down' was often used by older women as a catch-all phrase for a range of undesirable behaviour, including laziness, infidelity and alcoholism.
- 78 Gertrude Mvambo, 6 May 2000; Malane Mfiki, 23 September 2000.

- 79 Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000.
- 80 The Mayers stated that such strict supervision often resulted in rebellion by daughters and promiscuous behaviour. 'Red' Xhosa in contrast were seen as more successful in regulating the sexual activity of young girls. However, the discarding of *ukumetsba* (external intercourse between the thighs) as an accepted form of pre-marital sexual practice among Red migrants in town and exposure to different sexual mores in the urban setting contributed towards a declining level of control over youth's sexual behaviour. This was a factor in creating what the Mayers perceived as an 'enormous' illegitimacy birthrate among Africans in East London; Mayer and Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen*, pp.240–1, 252–6.
- 81 Elaine Salo, 'Respectable mothers, tough men and good daughters: Producing persons in Manenberg township, South Africa' (PhD diss., Emory University, 2004), pp.303–10.
- 82 Gertrude Mvambo, 6 May 2000.
- 83 Simone, *For the City Yet to Come*, p.118.
- 84 Regina Mhleka, 27 September 1999.
- 85 Zanele Mvambo, 5 April 2001.
- 86 Thabo Madikane, 2 June 2000.
- 87 Pamela Madikane, 17 January 2001.
- 88 The number of minibuses in use in the country grew from 24,000 in 1970 to 73,000 in 1980, and to 174,000 in 1989; Beinart, William, *Twentieth-century South Africa* (Oxford, 2001), p.355; *Cape Business News*, 1988, cited in Awotona, Adenrele and Meshack M. Khosa, 'Transportation and movement in South African metropolitan areas especially as they concern township dwellers', *The Integration and Urbanisation of Existing Townships in the Republic of South Africa Working Paper no. 7* (Newcastle and Cape Town, 1995), p.15.
- 89 Awotona and Khosa, 'Transportation and movement', p.15.
- 90 For more details on the sometimes volatile taxi industry in South Africa, see Khosa, Meshack M., 'Changing patterns of 'black' bus subsidies in the apartheid city, 1944–1986', *GeoJournal* 22, 3 (1990), pp.251–9, Khosa, Meshack M., 'Routes, ranks and rebels: Feuding in the taxi revolution', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18, 1 (1992), pp.232–51; for information on the effects of deregulation on the transport industry, see Innes, D., 'Privatisation: The solutions?', in G. Moss and I. Obery (eds), *South African Review* 4 (Johannesburg, 1987), pp.551–67.
- 91 Nandipha Ntswana, 29 June 2000.
- 92 In contrast, Mieka Ritsema argues that in Botswana, the perceived rise in car accidents heralded for some urban residents a more insecure, mobile modernity. This compounded existing worries over the death toll from the HIV/AIDS epidemic; Ritsema, Mieka, 'HIV/AIDS in the midst of a prosperous city: Gaborone, Botswana', paper presented at the Northeast Workshop on Southern Africa, University of Vermont, Burlington, 5–7 September 2003.
- 93 Nandipha Ntswana, 29 June 2000.

- 94 Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000.
- 95 In research conducted by the Urban Problems Research Unit in Cape Town, taxis were found across all African settlements to be the most preferred mode of transport for shopping trips. The growth of the taxi industry thus certainly contributed to the increased potential for consumerism evident among urban Africans, and youth in particular; Dewar, D. et al., 'An overview of development problems in the Cape Town metropolitan area', Urban Problems Research Unit Working Paper no. 40 (Cape Town, 1990), p.112.
- 96 Sharp similarly argues that the growing 'rave' culture's appeal as an urban style in Cape Town can be attributed to its anonymous and more technological features; Sharp, John, 'Copperbelt and Cape Town: Urban styles and rural connections in comparative perspective', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 19, 1 (2001), p.157; Beall, Jo, Owen Crankshaw and Sue Parnell, *Uniting a Divided City: Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg* (London, 2002), p.56.
- 97 Thabo Madikane, 2 June 2000.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 Thabo Madikane, 15 September 2005.
- 100 Salo, 'Respectable mothers, tough men, and good daughters', p.219.
- 101 Chamberlain, Mary, 'Gender and the narratives of migration', *History Workshop Journal* 43 (1997), pp.92-5.
- 102 Campbell concludes African women's limited authority particularly over young men in their households reveal that patriarchal structures have not been completely replaced; Campbell, Catherine, 'The township family and women's struggles', *Agenda* 6 (1990), pp.8-10.
- 103 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 104 Nomonde Dinwa, 10 December 2000.
- 105 Further research needs to be done on the link between gossip and alcoholism; Vuyani Fuzile, 22 September 2005.
- 106 Gertrude Mvambo, 28 and 29 November 2000.
- 107 Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
- 108 Malane Mfiki, 23 September 2000.
- 109 Matumo Madikane, 10 January 2001.

Conclusion

- 1 This sentiment is expressed eloquently in Barnes, Theresa, 'Virgin territory? Travel and migration by African women in 20th century southern Africa', in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyika Musisi (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington, 2002), pp.172-80.

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- *David Kalipa, 23 September 2005.
- *Lesley Kalipa, 30 September 2005.
- *Lumka Kalipa, 2 November 2000.
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- *Buyiswa Mteto, 6 September 2000, 31 October 2000.
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