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SPACE, SOCIETY AND CULTURE: HOUSING AND LOCAL-LEVEL POLITICS IN A SECTION OF ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP, 1991-1992

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an analysis of the relationship between social processes, cognitive understandings and the organisation of space, as this pertains to local-level politics in a section of Alexandra township, South Africa, during 1991 and 1992. The context of the thesis is the attempts by the Alexandra Civic Organisation and the Alexandra branch of the African National Congress to elicit support from people living in formal and informal housing during a period of intense violence. The focus of the ethnography is on local-level civic structures and political leadership, which in some ways support and in others contradict the aims and objectives of these two organisations.

The reason for this internal political diversity is that local-level politics is embedded within social maps - cognitive orderings of space that represent patterns of social relations and structures of power. This points to the main theoretical focus of the thesis: the interrelationship of space, culture and society in an urban context. Urbanism is conventionally defined in sociological and geographical terms as the articulation between social process and urban spatial form. The thesis shows how anthropology can make a contribution to this field of study by incorporating a concern with culture. The mutually constitutive relationship of urban space, culture and society presents a way of looking at urbanism that does not depend on a rural-urban dichotomy; a social and cultural dualism which is conventionally fitted into a modernist narrative of urbanisation. The ethnography in the thesis demonstrates the inapplicability of this narrative, and the categories of rural tradition and urban modernity which it implies.

keywords: anthropology, urbanism, urbanisation, rural-urban dichotomy, space, Alexandra, politics, civic organisation, informal housing.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Justine Lucas

(Name of candidate)

11 day of September, 1995.

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List of Abbreviations

AAC	Alexandra Action Committee
ACA	Alexandra Civic Association
ACO	Alexandra Civic Organisation
ALPOA	Alexandra Land and Property Owners' Association
ANC	African National Congress
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
ARA	Alexandra Residents' Association
AYCO	Alexandra Youth Congress
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique
ICC	Interim Crisis Committee
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
KANU	Kenyan African National Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RENAMO	Resistencia Nacional Mocambique
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNIP	United National Independence Party

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INTRODUCTION

ALEXANDRA

Were it possible to say,
Mother, I have seen more beautiful mothers,
A most loving mother,
And tell her there I will go,
Alexandra, I would have long gone from you.

But we have only one mother, none can replace,
Just as we have no choice to be born,
We can't choose mothers;
We fall out of them like we fall out of life to death.

And Alexandra,
My beginning was knotted to you,
Just like you knot my destiny.
You throb in my inside silences
You are silent in my heart-beat that's loud to me.
Alexandra often I've cried.
When I was thirsty my tongue tasted dust,
Dust burdening your nipples.
I cry Alexandra when I am thirsty.
Your breasts ooze the dirty waters of your dongas,
Waters diluted with the blood of my brothers, your children,
Who once chose dongas for death-beds.
Do you love me Alexandra, or what are you doing to me?

You frighten me, Mama,
You wear expressions like you would be nasty to me,
You frighten me, Mama,
When I lie on your breast to rest, something tells me
You are bloody cruel.
Alexandra, hell
What have you done to me?
I have seen people but I feel like I'm not one,
Alexandra what are you doing to me?
I feel I have sunk to such meekness!
I lie flat while others walk on me to far places.

I have gone from you, many times,
I come back.
Alexandra, I love you;

I know
When all these worlds became funny to me
I silently waded back to you
And amidst the rubble I lay,
Simple and black.

Mongane Wally Serote (1972)

Early in 1991, Wally Serote, a poet and ANC activist who had recently returned from exile, took me to Johannesburg's Alexandra township - the home he had left fifteen years earlier - and suggested that I write something about the 'squatter problem'. It was easy to see what he was referring to. As we drove through the township we passed hordes of tiny zinc shacks. Many were clustered around brick houses, but in some areas shacks had taken over the landscape completely. On the river bank, along the main roads bordering the township, beside the graveyard, in stormwater drainage areas and in any other under-utilised spaces, Alexandra was fast becoming a shanty town. Chaotic jumbles of mkhukhus - a slang term for shacks, evocatively derived from the Zulu word for chicken run - were packed together so tightly that one wondered how people could get in and out of their meagre dwellings.

This was surely a very different Alexandra from the one Serote had left in the 1970s: by most accounts a close-knit community where people knew each other well. Now, as we drove past the sprawling informal settlements that were the legacy of the 1980s, he warned me not to venture in among the shacks unaccompanied, saying that I might not come out alive. An exaggeration perhaps, but for many of the older inhabitants

of Alexandra, these shacks represented an invasion of outsiders - unfamiliar, unpredictable and dangerous - into their territory.

Despite years of attempts by the state to control people's lives, Alexandra has a history of autonomy and independence: from its early days as a freehold township that fell outside municipal authority to the years of militant resistance in the 1980s. Consequently its residents have a strong sense of ownership and belonging, epitomised by Serote's poem comparing Alexandra to a mother - cruel and bloody, but exerting an unbreakable bond over her children and providing the emotional security of an identity.

Serote's poem was written in the 1970s. In the 1990s, many returnees felt that the 'squatter problem' was challenging Alexandra's identity, and by association their own, in a way that even the worst of apartheid oppression had failed to do; thus Serote implored me to write something that could suggest solutions to the problem.

In 1995, a year after South Africa's first democratic election, there are now plans to begin to address the housing shortage in Alexandra. The 1991 Alexandra Accord set aside land on the far east bank of the Jukskei river for low cost housing.[1] Four years later, no houses have yet been built on this land, but some sites have been demarcated and allocated. In July 1995, squatters invaded the land and erected shacks, claiming that they had already been living in the bush on the far east bank, and therefore had

[1]The Alexandra Accord was an agreement on rent, services and the development of housing in Alexandra. It was signed in February 1991 by the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO), the Transvaal Provincial Administration, the Alexandra town council and the councils of neighbouring Randburg and Sandton. See Appendix 1.

rights to the land. As in the case of most land invasions, the first group of squatters have been joined by others from further afield, and the settlement continues to grow. This has prompted the Gauteng provincial government to threaten to take action against them.[2] The 'squatter problem' is consequently more acute than ever.

There is of course no quick-fix solution to the housing problem in Alexandra, or anywhere else in South Africa, and in this thesis I make no attempt to find one, preferring to leave that unenviable task to the planners and politicians who have undertaken to implement the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). But the question of housing does not exist in isolation. Where, how and with whom we live is central to our social and cultural existence. In Alexandra, the extreme shortage of housing heightens the importance of these questions, particularly in the spheres of power relations and local politics.

The question of how to allocate housing on the far east bank, for example, and what to do about the land invasion, should be addressed in the context of these broader issues. How will the type of housing envisaged impact on the nature of the community it will house? Who is being allocated this land, by what criteria, and by whom? What effect will this have on the rest of the township? One effect of this programme has already been seen in the incidence of land invasion. While it is fruitless to suggest this could have been anticipated, one should still ask who the squatters are and how they relate to the township population before deciding on action that may create further unanticipated problems.

---

[2]See The Star (3.8.1995).



fig.1: Shacks bordering the river bank in Alexandra.

While not addressing the far east bank problem specifically, since it falls outside the time-span of my research, I set out to explore these kinds of issues in my thesis. Without attempting to answer the question of what to do about informal housing, I look at the context in which shack-dwellers live in Alexandra: a context which is, or at least should be, relevant to the kind of community-based development envisaged in the RDP.

Alexandra - a background

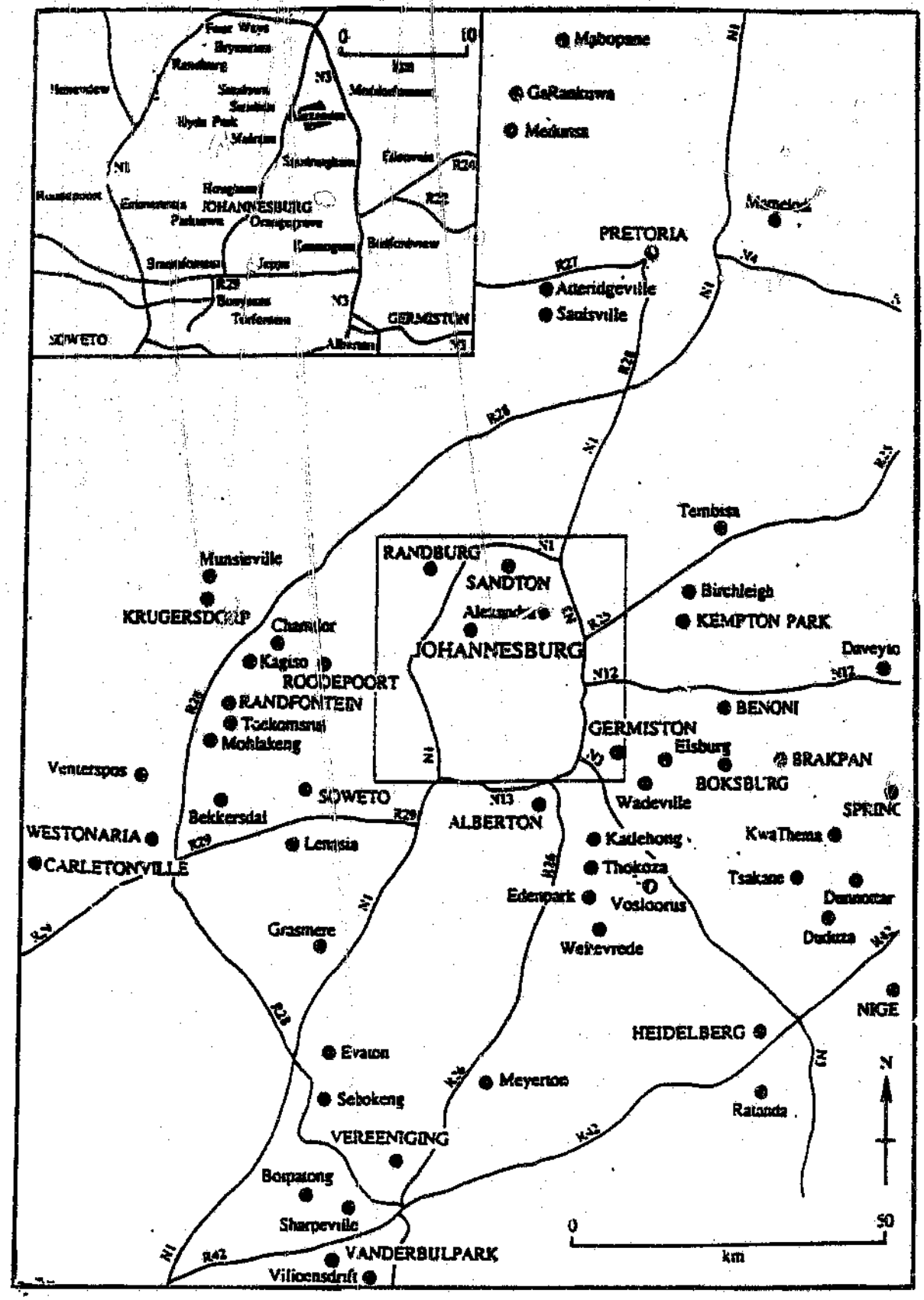
Alexandra is situated in the heart of Johannesburg's north-eastern suburbs (fig.2). It was established in 1912 as a freehold township for 'natives or persons of colour' (Sarakinsky 1984:i). This granting of property rights, a year before the introduction of the Native Land Act,[3] began Alexandra's anomalous history as a township that for a considerable period of time remained free of much apartheid legislation, while at the same time its population experienced some of the worst poverty, squalor and oppression of apartheid South Africa.

The conditions that led to Alexandra falling outside any central government or municipal control, the attempts by the state to demolish the township and build hostels, and the subsequent reprieve and development of civic organisation have been comprehensively discussed in several detailed dissertations (Tourikis 1981; Sarakinsky 1984; Jochelson 1988;[4] Carter 1991). Demolition plans were halted in 1979 after a

[3]The general provisions of the 1913 Act did not apply to existing 'native townships', where the continued acquisition of property under freehold tenure was protected (Sarakinsky 1984:2).

[4]Jochelson's dissertation was followed by a published paper (Jochelson 1990).

fig.2: Townships in Gauteng Province (formerly PWV).[5]



[5]Reproduced from (Carter 1991:iv).

successful campaign by the Save Alex Party, led by Sam Buti. When the Black Local Authorities Act was passed in 1983, Buti and his associates were elected onto the new Alexandra Town Council. People's rejection of this organ, and of the apartheid state as a whole, took the form of an unprecedented level of mobilisation and organisation in the mid-1980s, resulting in the creation of several different civic and youth organisations. This political diversity continued into the 1990s, although by then the two most powerful organisations were undoubtedly the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO) and the recently unbanned African National Congress (ANC).

Despite its history as a site of struggle and resistance to apartheid, Alexandra has never been a homogeneous community. During the period of freehold tenure, landlords crammed their stands with shacks and charged exorbitant rents, exacerbating already clearly marked social and class divisions in the township (Tourikis 1981).

Socio-economic differentiation continues to be marked, but the main division in the 1990s is between residents of formal and informal housing. The apartheid state played a role in creating this divide, through its selectively implemented upgrading plans and 'hearts and minds' campaigns in the 1980s. In 1980, after the township's reprieve from demolition, it was re-planned for family housing under 99-year leasehold. The 1986 urban renewal plan consolidated this effort to transform Alexandra into an area of middle-class property-owners, and residents were encouraged to buy houses they had been renting from the municipality. Shack-dwellers who were originally from Alexandra and those who had been in Alexandra for over a decade were eligible for

housing if they could afford it. If they could not, shacks were available for R35 a month in a temporary serviced transit camp near the graveyard. 'Aliens' who had arrived since 1986 were not eligible for any type of accommodation, and the council unsuccessfully tried to remove them. Redevelopment plans also resulted in the demolition of many people's homes, but finances ran out before the plans could be completed (Jochelson 1990).

The consequence of these aborted plans is a muddled geography with little sense of order. Surrounding the few areas of recently built middle-class family housing, blocks of flats and three hostel complexes, are the b houses and overcrowded yards of 'old Alexandra', overflowing with zinc shacks.[6] The graveyard transit camp has developed into a huge sprawling shack settlement similar to many others in the township. One effect of this urban environment is that people with widely different socio-economic statuses live almost on top of each other. This contributes to the vibrancy of the area, just as the same phenomenon did in Sophiatown (Gready 1990), but it also heightens the potential for social tensions and assertions of identity difference: a theme that recurs throughout this thesis.

The historical context that people will remember most from the early 1990s is of course that of violence. While political leaders talked peace, in Alexandra, and in other townships of the PWV and Natal, apparently politically-motivated murders and massacres happened almost daily. One of the main participants in the violence, the

[6]Yard is the popular term for Alexandra's formerly freehold properties, or stands, which accommodate people living in brick houses, terraced rooms and, latterly, zinc shacks.



fig.3: Discarded toilets on Alexandra's far east bank.



fig.4: Alexandra's east bank development



fig.3: Discarded toilets on Alexandra's far east bank.



fig.4: Alexandra's east bank development

Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), in some areas became synonymous with criminal gangs, while in other areas local peace committees were hampered in their work with Inkatha-supporting hostel dwellers by their inability to determine who had political authority in hostels which were frequently divided into 'clan'-based factions.

At the height of the violence, ANC leaders were chased out of the East Rand Phola Park shack settlement by their own supporters. Residents of Khutsong township in the West Rand threatened to resign from the organisation in protest against assaults and intimidation from local ANC activists, prompting the chairperson of the ANC PWV region to 'fire' the local branch executive committee. Allegations of police partiality and complicity in the violence abounded from all sides.

Commentators increasingly questioned the ability of leaders in all parties to control their followers. The reasons suggested for this situation were many: poverty and unemployment; the 'lost generation' of militant youth; agents provocateurs and 'third force' destabilisation; criminal elements; popular disillusionment with compromises made in negotiations; and so on. While all these explanations have some validity, they focus on the relationship between national leadership and their supporters, missing out a crucial factor: local leadership. While the ANC and IFP were publicly calling for peace, what were local leaders saying? Who were they, what were they doing and why did people support them?

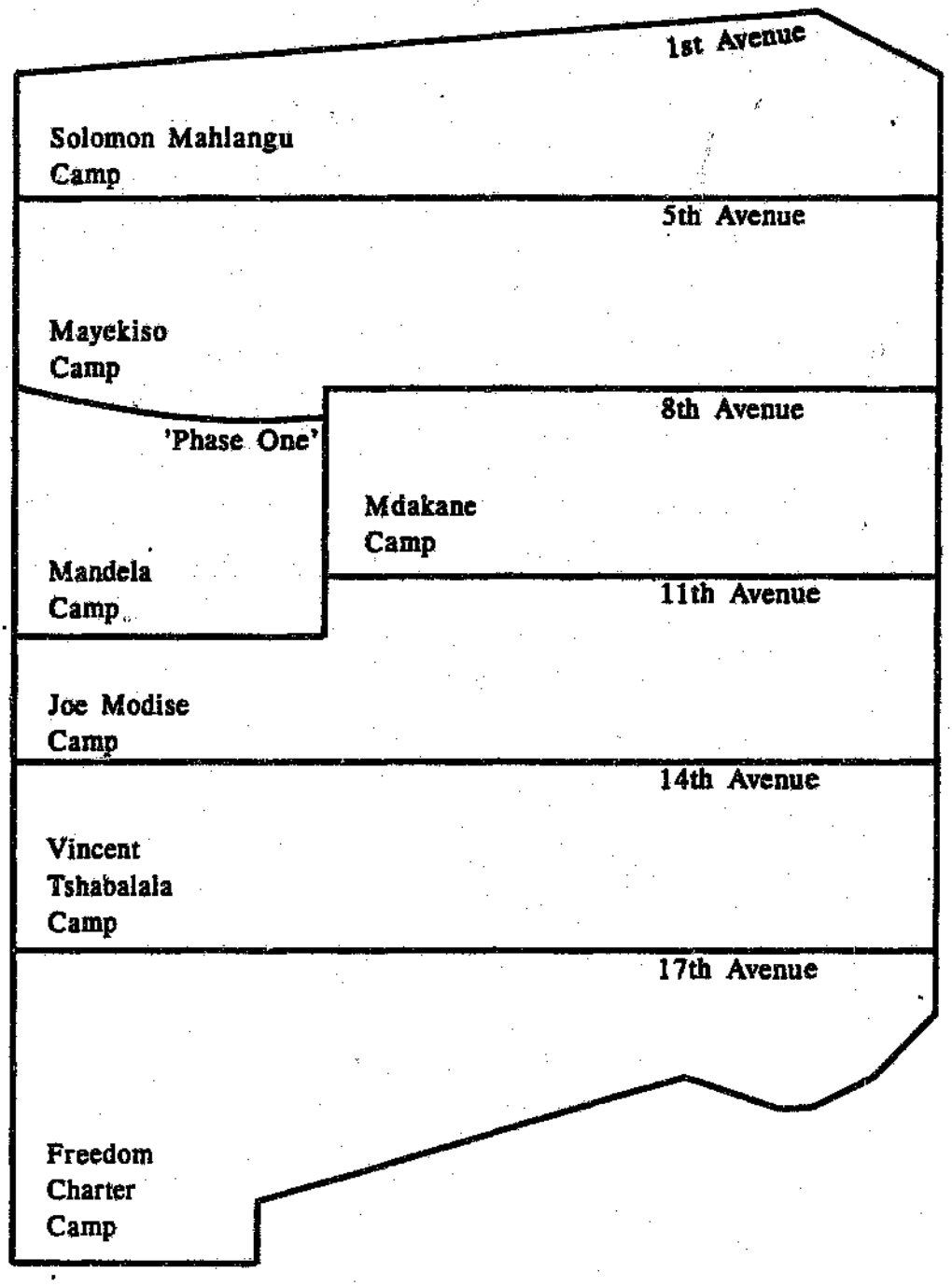
In chapter 4 in particular I address these questions as they pertain to Alexandra, where violence was particularly severe. Beginning in March 1991, the conflict was long and drawn-out, resulting in huge numbers of dead and injured. At the centre of the violence lay the Madala men's hostel on 4th Avenue - newly transformed into an Inkatha stronghold. Hundreds of people fled the hostel, and later the many shacks and houses in the surrounding area. At the same time, other people moved into Madala. Some were from outside Alexandra, but there were also Zulu-speaking refugees from the township who feared being accused of supporting Inkatha.

The violence was covered widely by the South African media, who labelled the conflict Inkatha versus ANC, or hostel-dwellers versus township residents. Other public accounts likewise explained the violence in terms of clear-cut spatial and political distinctions.

It was during this period that I was trying to set up a fieldwork site in Alexandra, and I was advised by ACO to work in Lusaka, an area which lies in the east of the township, far from the dangers of Madala.[7] Lusaka encompasses several streets, running from the north to the south boundaries of Alexandra. It comprises hundreds of yards and thousands of shacks, both in yards and in free-standing shack settlements. The area was named in the 1980s, by youth activists who divided the township into a series of 'camps' (fig.5). Today it forms the boundaries of one of ACO's fourteen area committees, which are represented on the organisation's central committee.

[7] Lusaka is a pseudonym, as are all names and places within this locality.

fig.5: Alexandra Youth Camps, 1986[8]



[8]Reproduced from (Carter 1991:v).

After beginning my fieldwork, it was not long before I discovered that the initial fighting - the spark that ignited the township - had begun not at the hostel, but in Lusaka. David Shabangu, a civic and ANC leader in the area, claimed that violence had first broken out on March 9th after Inkatha members from the hostel had attacked people attending a street committee meeting in Lusaka. According to him, a second attack the following day prompted local 'comrades' to fight back, and the conflict subsequently escalated.[9] An alternative version of events appeared in local newspapers, which attributed their accounts to Inkatha supporters and one resident of Lusaka. These reports suggested that on March 10th youths in Lusaka had necklaced a hostel-dweller who was suspected of spying on the ANC, leading to revenge attacks emanating from the hostel. These two versions, although opposing in the apportioning of blame, are clearly not completely contradictory, and other local accounts incorporated elements of both.

Subsequently, the intensity of the violence decreased, despite periodic outbreaks, until March 1992. It was in that month that an Inkatha funeral procession marched through the township, attacking residents on the way, until they were ambushed by gunmen wielding AK47s, again in Lusaka.

The ensuing violence which engulfed Alexandra was the worst yet experienced, and necessitated the formation of an Interim Crisis Committee (ICC), set up under the auspices of the National Peace Accord. Thousands of people were displaced from

[9]The word comrade in its broadest sense is a term of recognition among supporters of all anti-apartheid democratic organisations. However, in popular idiom it has come to refer to local activists - mainly youths and young men - who represent the visible face of organisations in the townships (See Carter 1991:231). I use the term in this sense.

their houses in an ever-growing area around the hostel. The media had a field day, with first-hand accounts from 'Beirut' - the 'war-zone' around Madala.

Once again, however, there were inconsistencies in accounts of the conflict. At numerous meetings of the ICC, the Inkatha representative insisted that something be done about Lusaka. Eventually a press statement announced that police were establishing temporary police stations at the flashpoints of violence - one near the hostel and one in Lusaka. Residents of Lusaka were understandably bemused by this statement, since no clashes with hostel dwellers had occurred in the area since the funeral ambush. In any case, no police station materialised.

The entire duration of my fieldwork was characterised by ongoing violence and virtual occupation of the township by security forces. The ANC and ACO - major political players in the area - tried to organise in the face of these obstacles, their problems compounded by the confusion and uncertainty of national political developments relating to the stormy process of negotiating a new dispensation.

The worst of the conflict was over by 1993, but by that time violence had permeated every aspect of people's lives. Consequently any anthropological study during this period would have to recognise the powerful and pervasive influence of the ongoing 'war', particularly in the Lusaka area.

13 DIE AS ALEXANDRA EXPLODES



Blood pours down the face of a man who was injured in clashes between residents and hostel dwellers in Alex yesterday. © Pius Utomi Ekpei

Bloody fighting spreads to Tembisa

By ELIAS MALULEKE and SAPA

HUNDREDS of people fled their Alexandra homes yesterday after fighting between residents and hostel inmates left at least 13 people dead and about 34 injured.

Police feared the death toll could rise as many of the injured were in a critical condition. At least one of the dead had been necklaced.

Late last night there were reports of skirmishes at the Masakeng Village/squatter camp – a mainly Xhosa and Sotho area – next to Alexandra's 4th Avenue men's hostel. There were also reports of clashes in nearby Tembisa.

Earlier in the evening Captain Hermien van der Walt, in charge of a heavy police and SADF contingent in the township, told *City Press* he had ordered the troops and police to surround the hostel. Police were setting up razor-wire barricades in the area.

Security forces were also monitoring the movement of hostel inmates – believed to be mainly Inkatha supporters – by erecting emergency high-mast lights.

Thousands of angry residents had also moved closer to the hostel in an attempt to attack inmates, but security forces had the situation under control.

Inkatha Witwatersrand leader Humphrey Ndlovu last night said he had managed to persuade Inkatha members to return to the hostel.

Late afternoon, police and SADF reinforcements had been rushed to the tense township amid fears the situation could explode any moment.

The residents were reportedly arming themselves in anticipation, while township youths organised themselves into defence units.

Police earlier intervened, possibly preventing a bloodbath when thousands of angry residents attempted to attack hostel-dwellers.

Both sides were heavily armed.

Police kept their cool even when residents were stoning their vehicles.

Residents said the death toll could have been much higher had police not intervened.

Later, while police were attempting to persuade ANC supporters to go to the stadium for a rally, a man opened fire at police and journalists.

Several policemen returned fire, but failed to hit the gunman, who escaped.

A man who had apparently been caught in the crossfire was later found and taken to hospital in an ambulance.

A few minutes later AK-47 shots were heard near the hostel, but the source could not be traced.

Van der Walt said the death toll could rise because some of the victims were critically injured.

While the two groups were engaged in running battles, senior leaders of the ANC and Inkatha held talks with their supporters in a bid to defuse the situation.

"Let us stop the killing, because there is nothing to gain from fighting," ANC regional organiser Popo Molefe told hundreds of heavily armed ANC supporters at the Alex stadium.

Ndlovu urged Inkatha members to stay indoors.

"Let us give peace a chance. Our leaders are busy talking and there is no sense in us fighting," he said.

Negotiations between leaders of the Alexandra Civic Association and Inkatha continued throughout the day.

Molefe said he would ask for joint Inkatha, ANC and police patrols.

fig.6: (City Press 10.3.91)

There are many competing accounts of the violence, as illustrated by the various explanations for the onset of fighting in March 1991. My thesis thus addresses the impacts of violence, rather than attempting to unravel the causes of specific incidents. In particular, the general atmosphere of violence had a significant influence on local political dynamics. The positioning of Lusaka in the main conflict led to the formation of armed self-defence units. In chapter 4 I discuss how this militarisation of township politics was then extended to local-level power struggles within Lusaka itself, so that actual patterns of conflict were much more complicated than press reports suggested, and were open to multiple interpretations. Specific episodes of violence were consequently appropriated as symbols expressing changing social identities and relationships: a theme I explore in chapter 6.

Methodology

Anthropologists face a considerable challenge when trying to adapt the technique of participant observation to large, densely-populated and socially heterogeneous cities. Urban anthropologists have been criticised for their tendency to seek out 'urban villages' - communities that resemble rural field-sites - and for employing rural research models in urban locations rather than investigating urbanism per se (Leeds 1968; Hannerz 1980). Alexandra's position as an impoverished ghetto in the heart of Johannesburg's affluent northern suburbs might seem to characterise it as just such an urban village. Its size, however, precludes Alexandra from falling into this category. With a population of probably at least 400 000, Alexandra has until recently

had its own municipality.[10] The population size of course meant that the township as a whole was too large a unit of study in which an individual could conduct participant observation, and I was forced to limit my study to a smaller section of the township.

My choice of area was constrained by the outbreak of violence in March 1991, which rendered parts of the township unsafe, and resulted in the declaration of Alexandra as an 'unrest area' subject to regular patrols by security forces with 'emergency' powers. After discussions with ACO, I was directed to Lusaka and introduced to David Shabangu, a local civic leader who undertook to help set up my project.

The intervention of ACO had the effect of defining my unit of study in terms of the civic's own organisational structures: yard committees, block committees and area committees. The man who was to assist me - David Shabangu - was nominally the chairperson of ACO's Lusaka area committee, and his knowledge and influence were largely confined to this territory. My study thus took place almost entirely within the boundaries of Lusaka. Shabangu had, however, never been formally elected as chair of an area committee, and his real sphere of influence was limited to a block - the area bounded by two avenues and two streets - where he had been elected as chair of the block committee, and he also exerted influence over a neighbouring block which had no elected chair. I started my research in a free-standing shack settlement and several yards in the vicinity of these two blocks. The overlap of social networks and

[10]While official estimates are in the region of 360 000, local organisations claim a population of at least 500 000.

civic structures meant that my most detailed research continued to be located in this area.

This approach has had both advantages and drawbacks. The localised nature of my research obviously limits the extent to which my findings are applicable to Alexandra as a whole. Consequently my description in chapter 4 of Shabangu's corruption should not be read as an indictment of all local civic leaders. By the same token, the inspiringly well-organised yard committee discussed in chapter 3 is not necessarily typical. Nevertheless, I would argue that the conditions underlying the social and political processes that I have identified are broadly similar throughout Alexandra, so that my conclusions are qualitatively rather than quantitatively relevant to broader investigations. And, of course, my material has enabled me to engage with theoretical debates that extend beyond any one unit of study.

The positive aspect of allowing the subjects of my study (or at least some of them) to define my unit of study is that it directed my research towards those categories and boundaries that were important to local people. Of course this statement has to be qualified by noting that it was a group of power-holders who initially influenced my work in this way, and their ideas and discourses were not necessarily the same as those of other local people. This limitation is however an almost inevitable consequence of trying to get established and accepted in any neighbourhood, and one can circumvent such obstacles only after a successful entry has been made. The people who appear in my study often challenged the ideas and actions of the political

leaders who initially facilitated by research, and I hope this emerges in the thesis.

Practically, there were countless problems in trying to conduct participant observation in Alexandra. My participation in community life was limited to daytime, since it was impossible for me to live in the township while it was legislated as an unrest area, and in any case space for accommodation was severely limited. My research assistant, Mara Ngidi, was a married woman with two children, which meant that fieldwork took second place to washing, cleaning and childcare and was thus limited to a few hours each day.

A central methodological concern in my research was the question of language. Although many of my interviews were in English, the majority were translated from either Zulu or Shangaan. Mara is an extremely skilled translator, but there is no doubt that interviews conducted in this manner involved problems in communication, particularly given the diversity of people's home languages. Fluency in these languages would undoubtedly have enhanced the depth and subtlety of my analysis, although Mara's assistance was invaluable in linking me up with social networks, providing much-needed background information and establishing a relaxed atmosphere for interviews.

It is commonly accepted today that the objectivity of the anthropologist can never be absolute, and is rather a myth which has been used to legitimise both the anthropologist's claim to be the authoritative voice and ethnography's status as the 'true' representation of life in a particular community. I make no such claim. As a

white woman I was clearly an outsider in Alexandra, and the polarised political conditions resulting from the violence meant that I could not maintain a neutral stance if I wanted people to trust me. The population of Lusaka was broadly ANC-supporting, and local ACO structures and leadership overlapped considerably with those of the ANC. Any local support for Inkatha would have been necessarily covert, since exposure would (and did in several cases) lead to expulsion from the area or possibly death. While people knew that I came from a university rather than a political organisation, my association with local leaders, given the general political climate, meant that people assumed that I also supported the ANC. As a card-carrying member of the organisation, I could hardly dispute this, but I emphasised that I had no affiliation to the Alexandra branch of the ANC; that all my material was confidential; and that my final written account would be available to anyone who wanted to read it.

However much I may have tried to limit the extent of my alignment, I am not claiming that my work is the final word on life in Alexandra. There is of course no one 'true' representation of people's lives, but many. To quote the Comaroffs, "ethnography, in any case, does not speak *for* others, but *about* them. Neither imaginatively or empirically can it ever "capture" their reality" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:9). The best one can do is to try to accentuate local voices and representations in one's analysis. I have tried to do this, and while my association with the ANC undoubtedly eased my entry into the community and ensured my safety, I emphasised wherever possible that I was independent of local leaders.

I was in fact pressurised by one particular ANC leader to make my interviews available to the organisation. When I explained that it would be unethical to disclose names and addresses of people who had spoken to me in confidentiality, I was accused of disloyalty. While this issue was confined to a personal disagreement and did not affect my work, it is pertinent to bear it in mind as the kind of challenge increasingly faced by anthropologists who have to engage with 'gate-keepers' to gain access to communities.

In a literate urban community, such ethical dilemmas are often more acute, since one's findings are more likely to be read by and impact upon the people who form the subject of research. I struggled in particular with the question of how much to write about David Shabangu, the corrupt local leader of chapter 4, knowing that members of ACO's executive were keen to read my work, and that my use of pseudonyms would not completely disguise people's identities to those who had participated in my research. I finally decided that since the fact of this man's corruption had become public knowledge, so much so that he had fled the township, there was no reason not to attempt an analysis of his rise and fall from power.

I had similar doubts about exposing the role of Philemon Mathe, who also appears in chapter 4, and who appeared to be complicit in some of Shabangu's crimes. On the whole I had great respect for this man, who assisted me tremendously in my work. Some of the information I gathered about his involvement with Shabangu cannot be verified, since several of the details emerged after his death. I nevertheless attempt to analyze Philemon's role, which was mostly positive and constructive, and hope that

these aspects will stand as a tribute to man whose life was committed to fighting apartheid and defending his community, even though his own misguided actions probably brought about his murder at the hands of fellow activists.

A final methodological and ethical concern is that of the possible application of my research. Ramphele (1991) has strongly argued the case for participatory research, in which research objectives are developed through discussions and workshops with the people who form the subject of research. Other urban anthropologists have noted that the pressure to produce applied anthropology is often greater in urban contexts (Gmelch and Zenner 1988); a tendency borne out by my own experience. I have mentioned the request for solutions to the housing problem that accompanied my introduction to Alexandra, and there is no doubt that the assistance I received from ACO and ANC, as well as earlier advice from Planact, an NGO working with ACO, was predicated on the assumption that my work would in some way be useful.

I initially attempted to employ some of the methods of participatory research discussed by Ramphele, even though I recognised early on that I was not going to provide any solutions to the housing problem in Alexandra. In an effort to involve local people in planning my research, I attended several meetings convened by ACO organisers in Lusaka, where I invited people to discuss my project. I soon realised, however, that this approach was going to cause more problems than it could solve, since people had unrealistically high expectations of what I could achieve. They needed adequate housing and amenities, and were aware that there were plans to develop the empty land on Alexandra's far east bank, but that this land could not

possibly accommodate everyone who needed it. People wanted to know how they could get access to the new development, but since the criteria for allocation had not been established at that point, there was nothing I could do to help. Since the kind of research I was equipped to do offered no direct material benefit to the area, I tried to avoid situations where people's hopes might be unduly raised, although I continued to attend civic meetings. Instead, I explained to them that I was trying to record how people live; that my work could help to inform others what sorts of problems people face in Alexandra, and could contribute to a documented history of the area.

It is questionable whether this could be called applied anthropology, although I feel that this kind of research provides an important background for decision-makers. Nevertheless, people accepted the legitimacy of my approach, and where I was able to assist people practically or with information I did so, although this was generally separate from my actual research.

To conclude on this issue: methodology remains a topic of much debate in anthropology, especially among urban anthropologists. There is nothing particularly experimental or new in my methodology, which emerged largely as a series of ad hoc responses to the conditions in Alexandra. This discussion should rather act as a guide to the nature of my ethnography which, like all ethnographies, "is a historically situated mode of understanding historically situated contexts, each with its own, perhaps radically different, kinds of subjects and subjectivities, objects and objectives" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:9).

Theoretical overview and literature review

The main theoretical themes of this thesis are, in fact, the central concerns of urban anthropology; concerns which also preoccupy theorists in such related fields as urban sociology, human geography, political science and town planning.

Broadly speaking, these themes are urbanism, migrancy and urbanisation. Alexandra is an established urban settlement, and its location near industry makes it particularly attractive to work-seekers from all over the country and beyond. Consequently, in addition to the existing population with its natural increase, there is a continuous influx into the township. The growing population continues to include significant numbers of migrants maintaining rural homes.

The only form of housing available to most newcomers (and some new generations of established Alexandra families) is informal. My initial concern with contextualising informal housing, and situating it within an analysis of urbanism in general, thus also directed me to the questions of migrancy and urbanisation. The ubiquitous nature of these three broad themes in urban social science research points to the fact that they are all ways of looking at the complexities of social change in societies experiencing rapid urban growth.

Urbanism is conventionally understood as the articulation between urban social processes and the city as a distinctive spatial form. As a concept it is therefore situated at the interface between a sociological investigation of urban society and a

geographical analysis of urban space. The challenge for social scientists exploring urbanism is then to bridge the gap between a sociological and a geographical imagination (Harvey 1973:23). In the following discussion, I look at how urban sociologists have attempted to do this.

Urban space and social relations

The ecological approach of the Chicago school, which dealt with migration, spatial segregation and acculturation, began to grapple with the problem of combining social and spatial analyses. Park's theory of human ecology has of course been extensively criticised since then, largely on the basis of its overemphasis on spatial relations, or territorial competition, at the expense of social relations. Despite this, his basic premise nevertheless laid the foundations for subsequent directions in urban sociology and human geography. The monographs produced by the Chicago School also influenced developments in anthropology, but this influence was restricted to ideas about migration, ethnicity and urban social organisation in general, rather than extending to the analysis of spatial relations.

The ecological argument developed by Park dealt with the effects of rapid industrialisation and immigration into Chicago in the 1930s. In this model, immigrants tend to group with people of a similar cultural and socio-economic background to themselves, leading to spatially segregated and distinct 'social worlds': ghettos and ethnic enclaves. Park argued that these territories were distributed according to the rules of market competition. He further argued that when individuals

improved their socio-economic status, and were thus better able to compete, they were able both to move out of their ethnically, economically and geographically defined ghettos and to acculturate into the dominant American culture (Park 1952; Park and Burgess 1925).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, urban sociologists made significant adjustments to this model. Rex and Moore (1967) pointed out that market competition is mediated by power-brokers, who control access to housing by defining the criteria for eligibility. The distribution of urban space is therefore not simply a function of income, socio-economic power or class in a Marxist sense. Rex's and Moore's study of a neighbourhood in Birmingham suggested a typology of 'housing classes', where the term class is understood in a Weberian sense. In this formulation, a housing class is made up of people who occupy the same position in the housing market - for example, council tenants - and who thus share certain common opportunities, constraints and interests. It follows from this that membership of a particular housing class is "of first importance in determining a man's associations, his interests, his life-style and his position in the urban social structure" (Rex and Moore, cited in Lambert and Weir 1975:32). The existence of different housing classes can therefore lead to the formation of groups, based on common interests, which could come into conflict.

In Alexandra, the concept of housing classes appears to have some validity in emic discourse and social organisation, where there is a considerable amount of tension between shack-dwellers and occupants of formal housing. These two categories are further subdivided into more specific 'housing classes'. Most of the formal housing

is situated in formerly freehold stands, or yards, whose residents include property-owners and council tenants, some of whom are prospective property-owners. There is also a distinction between former landlords and their tenants, who generally occupy houses and terraced rooms, or 'bonds', respectively. Shack-dwellers are divided into those who live alongside formal housing in yards and those in free-standing shack settlements.

It is, however, important for this thesis to note a qualification to Rex's and Moore's argument. While housing classes may appear as groups, housing is merely one of many possible criteria for group formation. In other words, "it is possible to interpret housing classes not so much as action groups but as *categories* (my emphasis)". Potential lines of conflict between housing classes can, then, be blurred by other cross-cutting categories and forms of organisation (Lambert and Weir 1975:32).

In Alexandra, categories associated with housing do in some cases form the basis for interest groups, such as the Alexandra Land and Property Owners Association (ALPOA); and there is a widely-held opinion among sections of Alexandra's formally-housed population that ACO represents the interests of shack-dwellers. There are however also numerous cross-cutting categories, such as ethnicity and political affiliation, which mitigate against the formation of groups based on housing class. ACO's organisational structure is also explicitly aimed at breaking down potential lines of conflict and building unity through the creation of yard committees and other structures which enable occupants of formal and informal housing to interact on the basis of equality and democratic decision-making.

An analysis based on the work of Rex and Moore would then progress beyond the early attempts of the Chicago School to combine social and spatial analyses. Rex's and Moore's recognition of the importance of power relations in the distribution of urban space begins to address the neglect of social relations in Park's ecological theory. Their use of a Weberian political economy enables them to combine an analysis of urban spatial relations with a model of social differentiation that is both more subtle than class in a purely Marxist sense and recognises the difference between categories and groups. Importantly, they also recognise the existence of alternative social categories.

A possible contribution of anthropology to this field is suggested by Pahl (1975:207). Anthropological techniques could be used to explore patterns of social control among certain sections of the urban poor. Pahl identifies kin-based or patron-client relationships as commonly-found forms of social control which act as important coping mechanisms for engaging with the broader society. In contrast to this, local power relations in Alexandra often appear to be associated primarily with civic structures and to be based on democratic principles. In some cases, however, other patterns of power relations underlie this form of organisation. I discuss patron-clientelism in chapter 5, and in chapter 3 show how the chair of a yard committee commands a moral authority analogous to that of a household head.

To combine this with Rex's and Moore's argument, if local power-brokers also control access to housing, then the spatial configuration of housing classes will reflect local power relations. As Pahl puts it, "so long as important life chances are

determined locally there will be a coincidence between spatial and social structure" (Ibid).

ACO's strategy is based on the same premise which informs Pahl's argument. If decisions about access to housing in a yard are made in an inclusive, democratic manner, then patterns of social relations, which in this case are based on the principle of egalitarianism, should correlate with the spatial boundaries of the yard, despite the co-existence of formal and informal housing within the yard. In other words, if all yard residents have an equal right to make decisions about housing, this effectively merges the categories of informal and formal housing into one housing class which corresponds to the physical space of the yard. According to this assumption, potential social divisions in a yard containing houses and shacks should be overcome by the participation of all residents in a democratically-elected yard committee, so that a yard forms both a spatial, social and political unit.

The potential for this strategy to succeed or fail is one of the themes of this thesis, so that chapter 3 looks at yard committees, chapter 4 at political leadership encompassing both yards and free-standing shack settlements, and chapter 5 specifically at political organisation within shack settlements. One of the questions I ask in these chapters is whether access to housing is in fact determined through inclusive and democratic processes, with chapter 4 in particular looking at the role of patron-clientelism in ACO structures, and its implications for ACO's strategy to build unity across categories of social differentiation. In these chapters as a whole I thus explore the relationship between social categories based on housing, the spatial

relations of settlement types, and actual patterns of social and political relations and identity.

Urbanism is not, however, simply about the interaction between social structure and spatial form, since images of urban space are culturally constructed and often ideologically charged. In chapter 2 I look at how the relationship between spatial and social relations is represented ideologically by political actors in Alexandra. Images of urban space do not, however, exist in isolation from ideas about the countryside, and several authors have explored how the construction of images of town and country relates to social and political processes[11]. As Raymond Williams (1973) has illustrated, the expression of contrasts between urban and rural often embodies other meanings, which cannot easily be communicated in a different form. ACO, for example, uses ideas about the countryside when discussing people's participation in democratic civic structures and membership of the township community. In general, one finds that discourses about migration and urbanisation, which bring together experiences and ideas of town and country, are central to the representation of urban space, and its relation to identity and categories of social differentiation.

But while images of the countryside underlie ideological representations of the city, the organisation of urban space has its own ideological dynamic, and we need to develop a general conceptual framework to encompass the cognitive as well as social ordering of urban space. One could say that we need to encompass not only the

[11]Williams (1973) has proposed a general theoretical approach to this question. Applications to specific contexts include Ferguson (1992) on Zambia and Kapferer (1992) on Australia.

geographical and sociological but also cultural imaginations.

The works of Rex, Moore, Pahl and other urban sociologists address the distribution and usage of urban space - in effect combining geographical and sociological analyses. Anthropology, on the other hand, is often situated at the interface between geographical, sociological and cultural analysis, with numerous studies looking at the relationship between space, culture and society (Thornton 1980; Ardener 1981; Moore 1986; Ramphele 1991). My own thesis, in which I hope to make a contribution to this area of study, focuses not only on the distribution and usage of urban space but also, importantly, on its meaning.

This is not to reify space as a thing in itself, or to advocate some form of spatial determinism in which spatial form determines social processes. On the one hand, social and cognitive processes are themselves spatial, and are thus expressed in spatial form. On the other hand, spatial form structures and institutionalises these processes. We are thus dealing with the by now classic problem of how to reconcile structure and process in an understanding of social change. This is a common theme in anthropology and sociology, but I aim to take it beyond considerations of social structure and/or conceptual schemes; and to explore how these connect to spatial form.[12] Moore (1986) does something similar using the concept of space as text. In chapter 2 I explore this idea, which deals with the mutually constitutive dynamic

[12]Examples of discussions of cognitive structures include Geertz' (1973) discussion of culture as text; Sahlins'(1976) outline of conceptual schemes which both inform and are structurally transformed by practice and Williams' (1977) work on culture as a material social process. On a more sociological level, Giddens' (1981) notion of structuration allows for a mutually constitutive relationship between social structure and process.

between structure and process in an analysis that combines social, conceptual and spatial considerations. This necessitates the exploration of spheres of life common to much anthropological research: power relations, social organisation and cognitive understandings associated with ideology, culture and identity; with an emphasis on how these are both represented in and constructed by the organisation of urban space.

Chapter outline

In chapter 1 I problematize the concept of urbanisation and its relation to urbanism. While the two issues are inextricably intertwined in the minds of people in Alexandra, I argue that they should be treated as analytically distinct. This approach has important theoretical and methodological implications, particularly for the study of informal housing. Emic understandings are, however, a central element of any anthropological analysis. In chapter 2, I look at how understandings of urbanisation underpin the discourses of local political organisations concerning the distribution of space, power and legitimacy in Alexandra. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 examine the convergences and contradictions between these discourses and the practice of local-level politics. In chapters 3 and 5 I use ethnographic material from yards which combine formal and informal housing, and from a free-standing shack settlement, to provide a micro-level study of the inter-relatedness of space, social relations and political organisation. In chapter 4 I examine political leadership which encompasses both settlement types referred to earlier. In showing how political processes in a free-standing shack settlement are influenced by outside factors, the chapter emphasises the ambiguous and historically contingent nature of categories of identity associated

with settlement type and experiences of migrancy or urbanisation. This has a direct bearing on studies of informal housing, which is the theme of chapter 5. I challenge the notion of marginality as a catch-all explanation for the characteristics of these settlements, and criticise the tendency to study informal housing in isolation from the broader urban environment; a tendency which, as I discuss in chapter 1, is intrinsically related to the conceptual muddling of urbanism and urbanisation. In chapter 6, I tie these issues together when I discuss the relationship between identity and change among shack-dwellers in the context of violence. I conclude by suggesting that my analysis of symbolic meanings in this account presents a possible avenue for anthropologists to make a contribution to the study of urbanism.

CHAPTER 1. URBANISM, URBANISATION AND THE URBAN-RURAL DICHOTOMY

The social and spatial visage of Alexandra is constantly reshaped by the continuing population influx into the township and the resulting proliferation of informal housing. This would seem to suggest that a study of urbanism in Alexandra should be foregrounded with a discussion of urbanisation. The concept of urbanism is in fact frequently subsumed within the framework of urbanisation, particularly in South Africa and other developing countries. This approach is seen as an appropriate and necessary way to understand urbanism in societies where migration continues to shape the urban environment. In the industrialised West, however, low levels of rural-urban migration mean that it is nonsensical to conceptualise urbanism in terms of urbanisation. In the 1970s, Pahl deplored the tendency of sociologists to avoid developing new urban analytical frameworks by decamping to the 'Third World', where urbanisation was still centrally important to the functioning of cities.

> Most of the work which has been done in the name of urban sociology is about urbanization - that is change, disorganization and adaptation. It is as if sociologists cannot define urban without a rural contrast: when they lose the peasant they lose the city too. The response to the discovery that 'sociologically urban' is everywhere is, as I have suggested, to go somewhere where still it is not everywhere, rather than to construct a truly *urban* sociology (Pahl 1975:198).

The assumption contained within this statement is that a rural-urban contrast *is* still meaningful in industrialising countries, such as South Africa, which maintain significant rates of rural-urban migration. But the meanings which are imputed to this contrast extend far beyond a simple spatial distinction between town and country. Conventionally, the rural-urban dichotomy presupposes a dualist model of culture and society where the two categories are linked through a process of modernisation, leading to an underemphasis on important intermediate and often ambiguous kinds of experiences. I would argue therefore that it is a mistake to conflate urbanism and urbanisation, not only in industrialised countries, but also in the developing world, precisely because of the nature of the rural-urban contrast that informs such an understanding.

The conceptualisation of urbanism as a component of urbanisation is still, however, widely prevalent in South Africa. This approach owes much to the pioneering work of the Chicago sociologists, written at a time when Chicago, like much of the developing world today, was experiencing rapid industrialisation and urban growth. In this chapter, my review of the contributions made by the Chicago school demonstrates the kinds of distortions which may arise from this model of urbanism.

In the light of this discussion, I take a look at the southern African literature on urbanism and urbanisation, and argue that it falls into the same traps as the Chicago literature. My argument that we should make an analytical distinction between urbanism and urbanisation however leaves unanswered the question of how to understand urbanism in Alexandra, where for ordinary people population influx and

urbanisation is of central importance to their social existence.

Part of the answer to this question lies in separating emic and etic levels of explanation. But I go further than this, and address the more fundamental question of whether Pahl's assertion that in the West both city and countryside are 'sociologically urban' has any relevance for South Africa, despite its status as a developing economy. I suggest that it does, and that this conclusion has important implications for my study of life in Alexandra. It also represents a significant paradigm shift in South African urban studies: a possibility I will explore in more depth in chapter 6.

Lessons from Chicago

The early studies of urbanism produced by the Chicago School were effectively also studies of urbanisation. Chicago in the 1930s was undergoing rapid industrialisation and immigration from all over the world. Consequently the theoretical models developed to explain patterns and shifts in urban social relations were focused on the ways in which rural immigrants integrated and adapted to urban life.

Park's human ecology model of spatial relations, in which the city is divided into numerous territories based on market competition, provided the context for a cycle of immigration and adaptation. Here, Park set out a process in which the urban social and spatial equilibrium is temporarily disrupted by immigration. Poor immigrants are initially segregated into distinct social worlds until an improvement in their socio-

economic status enables them to compete with mainstream society and eventually to move out of their ghettos and integrate both socially and culturally. Equilibrium is thus restored (Park 1952; Hannerz 1980).

Park's statement that equilibrium would be restored was, however, a prediction rather than an observation.[1] While Park was writing, Chicago was characterised by ongoing social disruption: a factor that was central to his research. Park's description of social worlds did not imply a series of urban villages based on stable rural-style social relationships. Instead, he argued that the kinds of social relations found in the countryside were broken down in the city by an increasing division of labour, and he was concerned that the resulting superficiality of urban social relations put a strain on the moral order.

Thomas, a colleague of Park's, developed these ideas further with the concept of social disorganisation, in which he postulated that movement from the countryside to the city was associated with "the decreasing of the influence of existing social rules of behaviour upon individual members of the group" (cited in Hannerz 1980:22), so that the urban population, unlike rural society, was individualistic and disorganised. This led to Wirth's (1938) characterisation of a secular, individualistic and alienating urban society, beset by loneliness and anomie. At about the same time that Wirth presented this vision of urbanism, Redfield set out its polar opposite in his model of a rural 'folk' society: an isolated, static community based on face-to-face relationships and cultural homogeneity, sustained by oral tradition (Redfield 1941; Redfield and

[1]Ultimately, of course, his vision of an urban American 'melting pot' has failed to materialise.

Singer 1954).

The collapsing of urbanism into a broader framework of urbanisation by the Chicago school was thus associated with a theoretical model of the city which was defined in opposition to the countryside. This contrast was not only social, but also implicitly moral. The city was viewed in a negative light, as superficial, alienating and dangerous, in contrast to a peaceful, satisfying and generally romanticised countryside. While urbanisation was clearly an inevitable correlate of industrialisation and modernisation, these writings also convey the idea that people moving from the countryside to towns lose their place in a social fabric, and ultimately lose part of their identity.

That this produced at best a partial view of urban life is demonstrated in several of the Chicago monographs written during the same period. There is a tension throughout these works, where the authors attempt to apply the concept of social disorganisation to accounts of distinct social worlds while presenting ethnographic material that suggests the inadequacy of these theoretical models. For example, Thrasher (1927) used the concept of social disorganisation to explain the proliferation of gangs in Chicago, while at the same time he described gangs as elementary societies characterised by face-to-face relationships, internal organisation, dispute resolution mechanisms and their own languages and symbols. Similarly, Anderson's (1923) work on hobos on the one hand describes individualism, factionalism and disorganisation while on the other hand demonstrating that hobo society had its own social categories, language, social organisation and institutions; even to the extent that

there was a body of poetry written by hobos about hobo life. Whyte (1943) applied Park's concept of separate social worlds in his depiction of a slum, but concluded that integration into the surrounding society was being blocked, not by poverty, but by a strongly localised form of social organisation. Whyte's monograph, like many subsequent urban ethnographies, could be described as depicting an 'urban village'. The existence of close-knit communities like these of course completely contradicted Wirth's model of urban superficiality and alienation.

So where did this rural-urban dichotomy come from? Williams (1973) has commented that while the realities of social experience may not fit into such a contrast, ideas about the opposition of city and countryside can be very powerful as well as variable. He describes it as "one of the major forms in which we become conscious of a central part of our experience and of the crises of our society" (Ibid:289), and argues that we have to look at the historical contexts in which these ideas emerge. The Chicago school's negative image of an industrialising city is also found in the literature and art of nineteenth century Britain, produced in response to the industrial revolution (Lambert and Weir 1975:26). This suggests that the rural-urban dichotomy which arose in early twentieth century urban sociology was less a reflection of reality than an image of moral contrasts engendered by the ongoing disruptiveness and uncertainty of the industrial revolution and the era of industrialisation that followed. These images underlie the definitions of urbanism which arose during this period.

While, in the first half of this century, the convergence of analyses of urbanism and urbanisation was at least an understandable response to processes of industrialisation, the tendency to approach urbanism in this way continued to characterise urban sociology even after Western urban populations had largely stabilised. Pahl's statement cited earlier was a plea for urban sociologists to develop a new theoretical framework to deal with stable urban populations, rather than maintaining the old Chicago-dominated thinking and simply moving to new research sites in developing countries. Of course, as the Chicago literature shows, even in these countries it is a mistake to view the city simply as what the countryside is not. While urbanisation is a reality that influences urban life, the concept of urbanism needs to be regarded separately from urbanisation, rather than being subsumed within it. In this light, one should reassess the literature on southern African urbanism and urbanisation.

Urbanisation in southern Africa

For the purposes of this discussion, the literature on urbanisation in southern Africa can be broadly divided into two distinct schools of thought. Before the 1980s, the issue of African urbanisation was largely the domain of social anthropologists, by virtue of the concern at that time with questions of 'tribalism' and 'detribalisation'. By the 1980s, the structural-functionalist framework employed by these scholars had given way to a Marxist political economy. The concept of culture, which had led anthropologists to be labelled the handmaidens of apartheid, was for the moment set aside in favour of studies of repression and resistance.

Despite the differences in approach, I argue that the use of a rural contrast to explain urbanism is apparent in both these schools, due to an overall modernist framework, and that it is modernism per se, rather than just specific theoretical paradigms, which needs to be challenged.

Urban Anthropology

Urban anthropologists in southern Africa up to the early 1970s had similar concerns to the Chicago sociologists, in that they were looking at processes of adaptation or integration into urban society. The context of their studies was, of course, quite different from Chicago, since large numbers of people moving to urban areas maintained rural homes and practised circular migration. Processes of urbanisation and integration were therefore harder to define, and a central theme of these studies was the question of whether migrants were becoming urbanised, or 'detribalised', when they moved to towns, or whether they were retaining a rural way of life.

The Manchester school studies of the Zambian Copperbelt developed a situational approach which emphasised migrants' adaptation to urban life. In this approach, behaviour is seen to be conditioned by social situations: thus migrants in towns are immediately detribalised in terms of their behaviour, although this can easily be reversed on their return to the countryside (Mitchell 1966; Gluckman 1961).

In contrast, the South African literature dealt more with long-term historical than with situational change. The Mayers'(1974) study of Xhosa migrants in East London asked whether migrants became socially 'town-rooted' and whether they became oriented towards urban cultural values (Ibid:5,6). Their conclusion was that School Xhosa were culturally predisposed towards adopting a Western-oriented urban culture by virtue of their mission education, but that the insecurity of urban life often required them to maintain rural base and thus prevented them from becoming completely 'town-rooted' (Ibid:206,224). Red Xhosa, on the other hand, chose to encapsulate themselves from non-Red urban society and cultural influences; thus resisting the process of urbanisation. Even here, however, the life of Red Xhosa in town was characterised by social networks rather than a coherent rural-style social structure. In other words, there was still an element of social transformation (Ibid:100).

The Mayers distinguished urbanisation as a social and cultural phenomenon from the more mechanical process of stabilisation of the urban population; a process in which migrants return home less often and eventually settle permanently in towns. They did, however, point out that if a migrant became socially or culturally urbanised, he would be more likely to settle permanently in town (Ibid:5).

Other South African anthropologists assumed a more direct relationship between stabilisation and social or cultural transformation, implicitly conflating these into a single overarching process of urbanisation. This process has often been divided into three stages - migration, temporary urbanisation and permanent urbanisation - involving not only geographical orientation but also social and cultural change. These

stages are then applied both to individual life histories and to a historical periodisation. Hellman, for example, equates detribalisation with permanent residence in urban areas and the severance of ties with rural areas. In her study of a Johannesburg slumyard in the 1930s, she describes the majority of residents as temporarily urban and constantly moving between countryside and town (Hellman 1936:110). As people become more permanently urban, their 'traditional' culture adapts and incorporates elements of 'Western' culture (ibid:117).[2]

In general then, southern African anthropologists during this period, like their Chicago counterparts, made the assumption that it is the urban immigrant who changes, while the town itself maintains an equilibrium.[3] Town and country are therefore seen as unchanging repositories of cultural values: urban and Westernised as opposed to rural and traditional. As with the Chicago approach, urbanism here is also understood in terms of a broad framework of urbanisation, which is informed by a rural-urban dichotomy. Just as we should be critical of the Chicago literature, this model of the relationship between urban and rural developed by urban anthropologists in southern Africa should also be problematised.

Some recent work has begun to deal with this issue. Ferguson's (1990) critique of the historiography of migration and urbanisation on the Zambian Copperbelt raises some important questions about how we view urbanisation in South Africa. Ferguson takes issue with those scholars who have periodised Copperbelt history into the three

[2]See also (Wilson and Mafeje 1963; Pauw 1963; Brandel-Syrier 1971,1978).

[3]See for example (Wilson 1941).

stages of circular migration, temporary urbanisation and permanent urbanisation. He argues that this is a "grand modernist narrative" which is based on inaccurate generalisations about a typical male migrant career, and which presents history as a unilinear and epochal progression towards a given end (Ferguson 1990:619-621).

Ferguson further argues that this narrative is constructed in terms of an outdated debate between conservative colonial administrators and liberal academics. He suggests that liberals were trying to counter conservative opposition to African urbanisation; hence their studies contain the implicit assumption that urbanisation involves social progress from tradition to modernity (Ibid:616-7).

Instead, Ferguson asserts that while there have been significant changes in patterns of work and residence, these changes are neither linear nor epochal. Now, as previously, there is a "plurality of possible patterns or strategies available" (Ibid;616). Migrants, faced with an uncertain future, may not themselves know if they are rural or urban.

In deconstructing the narrative of urbanisation, Ferguson is effectively disengaging the contrast between town and country as spatial environments from the social and cultural attributes a modernist framework attributes to this dichotomy. The implication of this is that urbanism, as the relationship between urban spatial form and social processes, needs to be reconceptualised.

Ferguson has been strongly criticised by MacMillan (1993), who has accused him of constructing his own "narrative of narratives" from the literature, and ending up with a "postmodern caricature" (Ibid:691,712), following which Ferguson wrote a spirited defence of his analysis (Ferguson 1994). The question of whether the Copperbelt historiography does fall into the traps Ferguson claims, or whether Ferguson is, as MacMillan suggests, setting up a straw man, does not however detract from the importance of the questions Ferguson asks, as Bonner's recent study of African urbanisation in South Africa demonstrates.

Like Ferguson, Bonner (1995) suggests there may be hidden assumptions underlying conventional approaches to urbanisation in South Africa. While there has been much discussion of indices of urbanisation - such as stabilisation - little attention has been paid to culture and consciousness, other than by the Mayers. In particular, Bonner argues, there is no adequate treatment of first-generation urbanites. He suggests that this is because they are assumed to be "in the course of a journey from migrant to urban, and are as a result a transitional category not particularly worthy of attention" (Bonner 1995:117). Bonner, like Ferguson, also refers to an implicit gender bias in the assumption that women simply followed their husbands to town. This point has been made elsewhere (Izzard 1985; Sharma 1986; Moore 1988), but its significance is not often appreciated in the South African context.

Bonner's work strongly suggests that studies of urbanisation in South Africa do in fact appear to fit in with Ferguson's characterisation of a 'grand modernist narrative'. These studies imply that stabilisation of the urban population is a male-driven process

of modernisation which corresponds to movement from a traditional countryside to a modern city.

While pc[illegible] actors in southern Africa may have manipulated these ideas, they did not create them.[4] The employment of a modernist framework linking a traditional countryside with a modern city, which is also apparent in the work of the Chicago school, clearly extends beyond the context of southern Africa. I would argue that the use of a rural contrast to define urbanism in a context of high rates of migration or immigration invariably implies a process of modernisation. The narrative in which this is presented then inevitably obscures the complexity, uncertainty and fluidity of rural-urban relationships and identities.

One could argue that the distortions associated with ideas about modernisation arise not so much from the peculiarities of southern Africa, but from the imposition of a Western world-view, conditioned by the industrial revolution, onto an African context.[5] Pahl's complaint that urban sociologists working in the developing world continue to use the models developed to explain industrialising Chicago would explain why even today studies of urbanism and urbanisation in South Africa and other developing countries often use this same framework.

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[4]Although Ferguson and MacMillan disagree on the specifics of this, there is no doubt that ideas about modernity and tradition and their relationship to urbanisation have been central in southern African politics.

[5]Judith Kapferer (1992:258) has made a similar argument about Australia, where she states that the rural-urban dichotomy is an ideological construction deriving from the experiences of 18th and 19th century Britain and Europe.

To sum up, until the 1970s southern African urban studies were largely studies of migrancy, which was viewed as the first stage in a gradual process of urbanisation. Urbanism was equated with the final stage - 'permanent urbanisation' - which, as the end point of the process exists in opposition to the 'traditional' rural setting from which the migrants originate. This process is then by definition a unilinear one of modernisation.

Of course Ferguson and Bonner are not only criticising pre-1980s urban anthropology, but also the political economy literature that has emerged since then. Ferguson explicitly challenges the Marxist concept of proletarianisation, arguing that it is used merely as a latter-day equivalent of detribalisation or Westernisation within an essentially unchanged modernist framework (Ferguson 1990:618).

The South African literature on political economy does, however, warrant closer inspection, since it appears to challenge the previous dualist model of economic and social relations. The issue which prompted this move was the proliferation of informal housing in the 1980s, which could not easily be fitted into definitions of urban or rural.

In my review of this literature I however argue that its apparent challenge to a rural-urban dichotomy is superficial. The replacement of a dichotomy with a continuum still presupposes the same end-points as polar opposites. Urban is still perceived in terms of a rural contrast, and urbanism is still collapsed into urbanisation. Informal housing is merely slotted into this framework as a transitional category between rural

and urban. A critique of this literature's use of a rural-urban continuum therefore raises important questions about how we view informal housing: questions which have directly influenced the way I conducted my research.

Political Economy in South Africa

During the 1980s scholars paid more attention to the growing 'permanently urbanised' black population in South Africa. The literature on the political economy of urban townships was concerned with socio-economic differentiation and its implications for resistance to state oppression. The central theme was the way in which urban social and political dynamics were shaped by the state's policy towards urbanisation. In particular, authors focused on the socio-economic effects of the transformation from influx control to the later policy of orderly urbanisation.

The conventional approach to the relationship between state policy on urbanisation and socio-economic differentiation in black townships is summed up by Morris and Hindson (1992) who refer to the fact that influx control maintained a clear distinction between those who had permission to reside in the urban areas and those who did not. They argue that the lack of opportunity for black urban economic advancement meant that the primary level of socio-economic differentiation among black South African was based on the possession of or lack of rights to urban residence. Verwoerdian apartheid thus compressed classes and obstructed class mobility in an undifferentiated

urban space.[6] In other words, urban social relations among settled urbanites during this period have again been understood in terms of the opposition between urban and rural; a distinction which was emphasised by the state in both legislation and discourse regarding the separation of urban 'insiders' and rural 'outsiders'.

In the mid-1980s, influx control was replaced with the policy of orderly urbanisation. Many observers had assumed that an end to influx control would mean a net migration to urban areas (Simkins 1983). When this did not happen, one of the reasons put forward was that legislative controls had simply been replaced by material constraints, which necessitated the maintenance of secure rural household bases and thus prevented whole families from moving to the cities (Mabin 1989).

Mabin argues that the state recognised and took advantage of the role of material constraints in restricting the struggle for access to urban resources. The introduction of orderly urbanisation involved selective upgrading and the creation of middle-class housing, removals of squatters and alternative allocations of poorly-serviced sites for informal housing. A central practice thus became control over land occupancy - "controlling the notion of space, as a means of controlling people, rather than controlling people into specific spaces" (Cobbett 1986b:116).

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[6]See also (Hindson 1987; Boraine 1989).

The state's exploitation of material constraints is seen to have encouraged class formation, thus creating difficulties for mass-based organisations whose strategies assumed unified black opposition to the state. Although most analyses of the 1980s argue that the fiscal crisis faced by Black Local Authorities generated mass political mobilisation that transcended class divisions, class is still assumed to be the main category of social division, and authors debate the extent to which the United Democratic Front (UDF) was driven by distinct class interests or was a multi-class urban social movement (Swilling 1986, 1988; Seekings 1988).

In addition to class formation, orderly urbanisation is seen to have created "socially demarcated residential areas with differential access to urban resources" (Morris and Hindson 1992:157).[7] This approach focuses on the socio-economic status of geographical areas, and in particular on the differences between formal and informal settlements in determining people's access to resources as well as their social and political identities. It is thus employing a Weberian rather than a Marxist analysis of class, and is very similar to the concept of housing classes discussed in my introductory chapter.[8]

This analytical approach has become more evident in analyses of socio-economic differentiation since 1990, which attempt to explain the rising levels of violence. For example, Morris and Hindson argue that the disintegration of apartheid since February 1990 accelerated urbanisation and class differentiation, intensifying

[7]See also (Mabin 1989,1990; Boraine 1989).

[8]p.27

competition between "geographically and socially distinct urbanising communities" over access to material resources, and resulting in violence (Morris and Hindson 1992:157).

They further argue that political organisations are able to mobilise in urban areas primarily because of separate communities' differential access to material resources. The emerging social divisions which material differentiation implies may however involve race, class, age, language and ethnicity, and organisations may appeal to these identities when they mobilise. The example presented by Morris and Hindson is Inkatha, which uses ethnic or tribal symbols to mobilise followers. They argue that Inkatha is however rooted "not in an urban grouping cohesive through tribal identity, but in one that is made cohesive by its social and material relations as well as its differing relationships to other groups" (Ibid:153), such as, for example, hostel-dwellers.

In other words, urban groups are not constituted along ethnic lines, but rather, according to the authors, around access to material resources, and in particular to housing. Morris and Hindson specifically distinguish between formal township residents, shack-dwellers and hostel dwellers, in order of increasing marginality. The use of the term marginality is significant, since it implies not only exclusion from material resources, but also social isolation, non-participation in national politics and cultural conservatism or traditionalism (Roberts, 1981).[9]

[9]See chapter 5 for a discussion of this concept.

In general, the literature on urban political economy can be criticised for conflating the objectives of the state towards urbanisation, which are apparent in state discourse, with the effects of its policy on urban life. In both academic and state discourse, the use of an urban/rural or insider/outsider dichotomy was replaced by other means of conceptualising the issue: while the state developed the policy of 'orderly urbanisation', the same ideas were expressed academically in concepts such as displaced urbanisation[10] (Murray 1987), and hierarchies of access to urban benefits (Mabin 1989). Bureaucratic fragmentation and ambiguities in urbanisation policy after 1990 are also reflected in scholarly discourse about social fragmentation during the transition period.

More pertinent to the theme of the present chapter, these studies, like the earlier anthropological works, situate urban social relations exclusively within a broader framework of urbanisation. Until very recently, the understanding of urbanisation still presupposed a process of modernisation, despite the move away from a crude dualist model in the 1980s. While the work on orderly urbanisation describes a series of steps towards the urban areas, rather than simply a move from rural to urban, this is still a unilinear process towards a given end; held back only by material constraints. The categories of urban and rural continue to inform this understanding in much the same way as before, with informal settlements seen as a largely transitional category: neither rural nor completely urban.

[10]This term refers to the growth of 'closer settlements': informal housing that is geographically situated in 'rural' bantustans but at the same time integrated into the 'urban' economy.

This status has been described not only in economic terms, but also as social, political and cultural. Cole (1987), for example, talks of political leadership in Crossroads being based on rural practices. Similarly, Sapire argues that informal settlements in the PWV[11] had "distinctive sub-cultures and political practices" which existed in "a complex array of hybrid organisational forms, some of which mirrored those of urban townships...while others resembled transitional forms of migrant and farm labour communities" (Sapire 1992:681). This approach is not really all that different from earlier characterisations of 'temporary urbanisation', where migrants had not completely severed ties with the rural areas, and combined aspects of both rural and urban cultures.[12]

In other words, this literature replaces a rural-urban dichotomy with a continuum, in which the inhabitants of informal housing are treated largely as a transitional category. Reflecting back on Bonner's comment that first-generation urbanites are not given sufficient analytical attention because of their presumed transitional status,[13] one can make a similar argument about studies of informal housing. While informal settlements have been seen as important - as political 'buffer zones' between the state and organised black opposition in the 1980s, and as a locus of violence in the 1990s - their place in a rural-urban continuum is taken for granted rather than problematised.

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[11]Now Gauteng province.

[12]See chapters 5 and 6 for more discussion on this issue.

[13]p.46

This continuum is assumed to be social and cultural as well as economic, and implies a transition to modernity, now associated with democracy. Informal settlements are viewed as one step away from this state. So, for example, their political organisation is described as undemocratic and as an obstacle to development, while township-based political structures are assumed to be potential vehicles through which the RDP can be implemented. The fallacy of this distinction emerges in my ethnography, particularly in chapter 4.

The consequence of this approach is that informal settlements are often studied in isolation from the broader urban environment from which they are assumed to be marginalised. Much of my thesis represents an attempt to show that informal housing is an integral part of this urban environment, and to bring both formal and informal housing into a study of urbanism in Alexandra.

We can therefore conclude that, notwithstanding important shifts and developments, South African social scientists have largely continued to understand urbanism in terms of a modernist narrative of urbanisation which is informed by the contrast between a traditional countryside and a modern city. Recently, however, there has been some recognition that this framework is inadequate to explain the totality of people's experiences of urban life. The search for a new approach has been described as a need to look at the social character of urbanisation. So, for example, Mabin (1991) argues in a more recent publication that understandings of urbanisation which ignore social processes such as circular migration are not adequate to explain the dynamics of urban settlement, and particularly of informal housing. He discusses the

contributions of 'rural' activities towards 'urban' households, and how variations in rural households affect patterns of urban settlement (Ibid:42). Mabin concludes his review of urbanisation since 1960 with the statement,

> Moving into the 1990s, it appears that some social processes affecting urbanization, such as circular migration, may persist for substantial periods and prove little affected by policy changes. At the same time, informal urbanization has challenged authority and altered the make-up of cities - it may yet challenge their whole structure (Ibid:44).

Bonner (1995) also responds to the "hidden assumptions" underlying analyses of urbanisation with a historical exploration of its social character. He uses life histories to move away from grand narratives to more finely contextualised accounts of urbanisation. These life histories demonstrate how poverty and social instability in an "extraordinarily fluid and heterogeneous urban environment" produced constant changes in strategies to cope with a conditional urban existence (Ibid:125).

A New Framework?

These approaches begin to challenge stereotypical accounts of urbanism and urbanisation, but as yet there is no new theoretical framework in which to insert this material. This is where Pahl's statement about both town and country being 'sociologically urban' in industrialised countries can prompt us to ask some searching questions about these categories in South Africa.

Authors such as Williams (1973) and Harvey (1973) have argued that in the industrialised world urbanism as a way of life is no longer confined to the city as a spatial or built form, and that these two issues have to be considered separately. For Williams, urbanism is capitalist industrialisation, which has transformed both town and country (Williams 1973:293). Harvey similarly argues that industrialisation and the penetration of market exchange into all areas reduces the antagonisms[14] between town and country, so that both are integral to urban processes (Harvey 1973:308).[15]

Harvey recognises that this process of global urbanisation is not complete in the developing world, but asserts that neither is it absent. He argues that as antagonisms between urban and rural decrease, they are replaced by new antagonisms internal to the urbanisation process, such as the appearance of rural problems in the city. Harvey specifically refers to developing countries when he cites the example of large numbers of people moving from the rural areas to informal settlements on the urban peripheries, where they form "an unstable 'lumpenproletariat'" (Ibid). Here, he argues,

> Urban poverty is, for the most part, rural poverty refashioned within the city system. It is in this sense that we have to accept [the] view that the urbanization of the countryside involves a subsidiary ruralization of the city (Ibid).

[14]Harvey's use of the term antagonism rather than simply contrast is significant, since he is referring to a Marxist dialectic driving social change.

[15]This approach clearly resonates with Wallerstein's world systems theory, which integrates 'modern' and 'traditional' economies into one economic system (Wallerstein 1974).

If we take this approach when exploring urbanism in South Africa, it implies that instead of viewing urbanism as one end of a unilinear modernising process of urbanisation, we need to examine rural and urban life within a more holistic framework which recognises that social processes are multi-directional, and that urbanism itself is far more heterogeneous than previously thought.[16]

But what does this mean for a study of Alexandra? Firstly, as I have suggested earlier,[17] we should view migrants and the inhabitants of informal housing as part of the urban environment instead of studying them in isolation. The importance of urban incomes for rural life and of rural households for urban existence implies a two-way process of change. This interconnectedness of town and country means that it is not useful to try to fit people into social or cultural categories of urban, rural or transitional. Rather than trying to describe an urban way of life in opposition to a rural way of life, we should look at the inter-relationship of urban spatial form and social processes and recognise that this inter-relationship takes diverse forms.

In my ethnography, therefore, I challenge the assumption that we can make sense of social and political processes in Alexandra through the use of a rural-urban contrast associated with a distinction between tradition and modernity. This allows me to discuss in chapter 4, for example, a political leader who has a permanent home and family in Alexandra as well as a second home in the countryside; who has long

[16]The emphasis on heterogeneity is important. As Wolf noted in his critique of Wallerstein, an integrated economic system does not imply homogeneity (Wolf 1983). There are, rather, many different forms of urbanism.

[17]p.55

experience of ANC politics and yet who practices patronage and styles himself as traditional. The significance of the categories urban and rural, or modern and traditional is not that they objectively explain how a leader like this came to power, but rather that they are used emically by people to make sense of the diversity of urban life and to explain their behaviour. In other words, urbanisation and a rural-urban dichotomy *are* important to people in Alexandra, but their emic meanings should not be confused with an objective reality. In the next chapter I examine how ideas about urbanisation, and categories of rural and urban, are used by political organisations in Alexandra in order to legitimise their claims to be representative of the township population.

CHAPTER 2. THE REPRESENTATION OF URBAN SPACE: URBANISATION IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

In the popular imagination, Alexandra township is both romanticised and demonised. In its history, the identities of political activists, gangsters, musicians and writers merge into one another, providing a heady mixture of resistance and romance, poverty and extravagance, violence and hedonistically-pursued pleasure. It is a history of melodrama, complete with theatrical heroes and villains. From the bus boycotts and gangland feuds of the 1940s and 1950s to removals and threats of demolition in the 1960s and 1970s; the turmoil of June 1976 and the following decade of states of emergency, the 'six day war' and treason trials; and finally to the elation of Mandela's release and the horror of political violence; Alexandra exists in an almost permanent state of crisis. Conferring a powerful sense of place on its inhabitants, yet always on the threshold of change, Alexandra allows the forces of the imagination free rein to refashion its image. Variously known as the Dark City, Nobody's Baby, Little Chicago, Slagpaal or just simply Alex, Alexandra is the archetypal 'soft city'. In the words of Jonathan Raban,

> it awaits the imprint of an identity. For better or worse, it invites you to remake it, to consolidate it into a shape you can live in. You, too. Decide who you are, and the city will again assume a fixed form around you. Decide what it is, and your own identity will be revealed (Raban 1988:10).

Alexandra has many parallels with Sophiatown - an underdeveloped slum hidden in the wings behind the glittering modernity of Johannesburg. Gready (1990) has argued that it was contradictions such as this that enabled writers like Can Themba and Bloke Modisane to mould Sophiatown in their own image, and to derive their identity from this 'unreal' city.

Alexandra's place in the heart of Johannesburg's northern suburbs similarly underlies a somewhat schizophrenic sense of reality among the inhabitants of this area. Its early history of falling outside municipal control clearly revealed Alexandra's anomalous status: it was in, but not part of, 'white' suburbia. Hidden by industrial developments, and with no signposts to mark its location, Alexandra was officially invisible.

With the democratisation process in South Africa, Alexandra has been transformed into something of a mecca for politicians and foreign visitors. Keen to savour the air of resistance that clings to this potent symbol of the struggle against apartheid, they hope that some element of past heroism will be imparted to their own tarnished images. This newly embraced centrality of Alexandra within the northern suburbs is reflected in new local government demarcations: half the wards in the eastern Johannesburg metropolitan substructure are in Alexandra; and the transitional 'mayor' of this municipality is a former Umkhonto we Sizwe[1] guerrilla from an old Alexandra family.

[1]The (now disbanded) armed wing of the African National Congress.

As this dramatic transformation shows, the representation of urban space is not incidental to social and political processes but rather a central component. Alongside national political changes, there has been a gradual shift in the conceptual mapping of Johannesburg's northern suburbs. Within Alexandra itself, however, national politics is only a broad framework for complex and fluid local political processes. In this chapter I look specifically at the relationship between the two main political players in Alexandra: the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO) and the Alexandra branch of the ANC. In the 1990s, this relationship has been characterised by both alliance and opposition; an ambiguity owing much to the complexity of Alexandra politics in the 1980s. There is still much disagreement among both activists and academics about this period, and my outline of the history of civic organisation is intended as a basic background to more recent developments, and as a context for later chapters in the thesis, rather than an in-depth analysis.

After this outline of civic history, I discuss how the representation of space underlies political power, and then demonstrate how this operates in Alexandra. The fraternal relationship between ACO and ANC in the 1990s is underlaid by competition for legitimacy and control which is visible in the political discourses of these two organisations. Central to these discourses are representations of space in the township - social maps within which statements about identities, and membership of the community in Alexandra, are embedded.

Political organisation in Alexandra - factions and alliances

The precursor to ACO was the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC), which was formed in 1986 and was widely regarded as one of the more successful examples of civic organisation in South Africa during a period of unprecedented popular mobilisation against the state. Alexandra politics in the 1980s was, however, characterised by ideological diversity and contestation. In part, these differences mirrored divisions within the United Democratic Front (UDF) between 'charterists', whose ideological orientation was guided by the Freedom Charter, and 'workerists', who were more concerned to prioritise working-class interests. The charterist camp claimed a more direct relationship with the exiled ANC, although this was not necessarily always the case. It viewed the workerists with some antipathy. In actual political developments, 'charterist' and 'workerist' tended to operate as categories rather than identifiable groups, so that there was often disagreement over who fell into which camp. This helps to explain the complexity of Alexandra politics in the period leading up to the formation of AAC.



fig.7: extract from 'The Alexandra Accord' (see Appendix 1).

Table 1: political organisations in Alexandra in 1986 and 1991.

1986	1991
Alexandra Residents' Association (ARA)	(disbanded)
Alexandra Civic Association (ACA)	
Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO)	(disbanded)
Alexandra Action Committee (AAC)	(relaunched as) Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO)
(banned)	African National Congress (ANC) Alexandra branch

Two other civics existed prior to AAC's formation: the Alexandra Residents' Association (ARA), a small independent grouping, and the Alexandra Civic Association (ACA), which was aligned to the UDF. Also of central importance during this period were youth movements, and particularly the UDF-aligned Alexandra Youth congress (AYCO). Although ACA was associated with the UDF, it had little organisational presence in Alexandra (Carter 1991:203). While AYCO and ARA often worked together, there were serious ideological tensions between the two organisations. AYCO executive members were striving to create a charterist identity, and saw ARA as workerist (Ibid:92).[2]

The person who was to change the face of Alexandra politics was the trade union leader Moses Mayekiso. In an attempt to boost their support, ACA invited Mayekiso to join the organisation in 1985. Mayekiso declined, viewing ACA's middle-class

[2]Carter notes that there was in fact a degree of overlap between these categories, but that the labels were nonetheless perceived as important by AYCO leaders (Carter 1991:92).

executive as petty bourgeois, and later accused ACA chairperson Mike Beea of being 'populist'. Mayekiso described himself as a socialist, and was scathing about ARA 'workerists'. However, his background in the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), his interest in the formation of a workers' party, and his stated rejection of the Freedom Charter as a 'capitalist document' meant that AYCO leaders doubted his charterist credentials (Ibid:201,206,209).

In early 1986, police actions following the funerals of two youths sparked off unprecedented waves of community anger and further state repression, culminating in the 'six-day war' against security forces. In the midst of this turmoil, Mayekiso seized the moment, and in February formed AAC. AYCO was by now experiencing serious internal divisions, and several disaffected AYCO members joined trade union activists in setting up AAC structures.

AAC set out to create yard, block and street committees throughout Alexandra. Its success marginalised ACA and ARA, and in May 1986, at a mass meeting in the township, AAC was unanimously elected sole representative of Alexandra. ARA unilaterally disbanded and it was decided that ACA should dissolve itself and its members serve in AAC structures (Jochelson 1990:18).

The subsequent imposition of a state of emergency and widespread detentions meant that political structures either collapsed or went underground. While ACA reconstituted itself in 1988 (Jochelson 1988:216), AAC leaders remained in detention until 1989. On their release AAC was relaunched as ACO, and the two civics

continued to compete for support and legitimacy.

Organisationally, AAC had far more impact than ACA. Following the lead of Eastern Cape community organisations, AAC activists organised civic structures throughout the township. Local yard committees[3] were formed with the aim of overcoming social divisions, such as those based on class and ethnicity, and resolving tensions arising from overcrowding. Mechanisms of cooperation and dispute resolution were designed to enable people to unite in opposition against the apartheid state. It was envisaged that civic structures at various levels would link leadership to the grassroots in democratic processes of election and representation that would bypass the power of the state. How successful this strategy was in the hostile conditions of the 1980s is contested (Carter 1991; Jochelson 1990), although activists at the time confidently proclaimed an era of 'people's power'.

ACO has since built on this legacy. By the time the ANC was unbanned in February 1990 it was generally regarded as the only legitimate civic in Alexandra, leaving ACA effectively marginalised. Many of the people I spoke to were in fact confused or completely ignorant about the relationship between the two civics. Some people had not realised that there had been a changeover in the 1980s, while others who had arrived in Alexandra since then only knew of one civic. When asked about actions organised by ACA, such as a demonstration during the visit of British foreign minister Douglas Hurd in 1991, few people realised that this was not the same civic that had organised their yard and street committees. Both ACO and ACA however

[3]See Introduction, pp.28-30; chapter 3.

entered into a fraternal relationship with the ANC.[4] Their different ideological orientations, emerging from the contestations of the 1980s, however meant that their relationships with the ANC progressed along different paths. While ACA's role in the early 1990s was relatively minor, it is worth looking at if we are to understand the tensions between ACO and ANC.

When an ANC branch was formed in Alexandra after the organisation was unbanned, the newly-elected secretary was Obed Bapela, a former AYCO and AAC activist who had been imprisoned with Moses Mayekiso when they and other AAC leaders were charged with treason.[5] The election of a prominent civic leader onto the ANC executive illustrated the common perception that the UDF was effectively the internal wing of the ANC while the movement was banned, and highlighted the dominance of AAC and later ACO in UDF politics.

Bapela, however, left civic politics when he was elected, thus potentially weakening the alliance between ANC and ACO. Between 1990 and the end of my research, no ACO office-bearers held office in the ANC. Although the ACO leaders were all ANC members, the civic claimed to be representative of all the people of Alexandra, regardless of political affiliation. They represented the township in local government negotiations and played a prominent role in regional and national civic structures.

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[4]Fraternal relationships linked organisations in the Mass Democratic Movement; the somewhat loosely-defined successor to the UDF.

[5]The charges were dropped in 1989.

In contrast to the growing separation of ACO and ANC, ACA maintained a close relationship with the ANC. Mike Beea, who was still the chair of ACA, was in 1992 chosen to represent the ANC and its allies on the Alexandra Interim Crisis Committee (ICC), which was formed to deal with the endemic violence in the area (fig.8). The close relationship between ACA and ANC again illustrates the perceived continuity between the UDF and ANC, but here the ANC's association with an older charterist grouping that rivalled ACO served to undermine the ANC/ACO alliance.

ACA's potentially destabilising effect on the ANC/ACO relationship was recognised and fostered by covert state forces hostile to this alliance. In 1991, a leaflet attacking ACO was fraudulently issued in the name of ACA (fig.9). Despite its fraudulent nature, this leaflet illustrates the centrality of the issue of informal housing to the growing political tensions in Alexandra during this period.[6]

What this rather complex political history shows is that in the early 1990s the relationship between ACO and ANC, while overtly one of alliance, was underlaid by serious ideological tensions. These were compounded by socio-economic differences between the two groups of leaders. Many returned ANC exiles, who were prominent in both the branch executive and as general members, came from the same middle-class social background as the ACA leadership: old Alexandra families who had claims to property in the township and were dismayed at the proliferation of shacks. The ACO leadership, on the other hand, had a more working-class character. Leaders

[6]While ACO activists realised early on that the leaflet had not in fact originated from ACA, this was not obvious to the general population. The leaflet was not widely circulated, but all those I spoke to about it responded strongly: either in support of its message or rejecting it outright.

NATIONAL PEACE ACCORD



PEACE NOW — NOT ANOTHER DEATH LATER

- **ALL COMMUNITY LEADERS, INCLUDING DR MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI AND DR NELSON MANDELA, ARE INSISTING ON PEACE IN ALEXANDRA**
- **AN INTERIM CRISIS COMMITTEE (ICC) HAS BEEN APPOINTED IN ALEXANDRA**
- **THE PEOPLE OF ALEXANDRA MUST FULLY SUPPORT THOSE LEADERS WORKING FOR PEACE**
- **WE NEED POLITICAL TOLERANCE IN ALEX FOR PEACE TO WORK**
- **HELP THE SADF AND S.A.P IN ALEX — THEY ARE HERE TO HELP US**

POLITICAL TOLERANCE

People have different political beliefs — we must accept that.
Political tolerance is a big step towards peace in Alexandra.

INTERIM CRISIS COMMITTEE (ICC)

The ICC was formed through the Peace Accord on April 1, 1992, to work towards peace and tell you what is happening. You will receive regular information from us. The Interim Crisis Committee (ICC) is Rev. Dr Liz Carmichael (the churches); Deane Yates (Relief organisations); Melanie Stewart (Democratic Party); Mike Beea (ACA/ANC); Bruce Anderson (IFP).

S A DEFENCE FORCE / S A POLICE

There will be an SADF / SAP presence near the corner of 3rd Avenue and Rooseveld, in 17th Avenue and throughout Alexandra. An additional SADF company is now in Alex. Patrols have been increased in the area around Alexandra Clinic to protect the staff, patients and residents.

MAKE PEACE WORK NOW!

fig.8: leaflet issued by the Alexandra Interim Crisis Committee, 1992.

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fig.8: leaflet issued by the Alexandra Interim Crisis Committee, 1992.

ALEXANDRA CIVIC ASSOCIATION SAYS:—

* MAYEKISO BAPELA AND THE ALEXANDRA CIVIC ORGANISATION ARE SELLOUTS WHO ARE NOT WORKING FOR OUR PEOPLE

* THE ZULUS AND THE ALEXANDRA RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN LIVING IN PEACE TOGETHER FOR YEARS

* THE ALEXANDRA CIVIC ORGANISATION HAVE STARTED TAKING THE LAW IN THEIR OWN HANDS AND ARE CAUSING VIOLENT OUTBREAKS IN ALEXANDRA

* THIS VIOLENCE IS CAUSING UPHEAVAL AMONG RESIDENTS AND SCHOLARS

* THE SQUATTER[illegible]ACKS THAT MAYEKISO BROUGHT INTO ALEXANDRA AR[illegible]ILTH, CRIME AND DISEASE AND ARE MAKING IT DIFF[illegible]OP THE VIOLENCE

* THE ALEXANDRA CIVIC [illegible]ANISATION'S BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IS CAUSING THE DEATHS OF INNOCENT CHILDREN AND RESIDENTS

* WE SAY THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE THE ALEXANDRA RESIDENTS AT HEART AND CALL ON ALL ALEXANDRA RESIDENTS TO STAND WITH US TO BRING PEACE AND STABILITY TO ALEXANDRA

WE ARE AN ASSOCIATION WHICH STANDS FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE

ISSUED BY THE ALEXANDRA CIVIC ASSOCIATION (ACA)

fig.9: leaflet issued in the name of the Alexandra Civic association, 1991.

such as Moses Mayekiso were also relatively recent arrivals in Alexandra and had no connection to the period of freehold property rights. These social differences served to underscore the diverging ideological standpoints of the two organisations, particularly with reference to housing and the 'squatter' issue.

The relationship between ACO and ANC, and their approaches to informal housing, were not however static. The ambiguity of alliance and competition meant that local politics was characterised by fluidity, so that shifts in the ACO/ANC relationship were reflected in changing discourses about housing and urbanisation. While overtly addressing the problem of inform ousing, these discourses embodied initially complementary and later contrasting representations of space in Alexandra. I argue that it is through these discourses and representations that both ACO and ANC attempted to establish political power and legitimacy.

Politics, Power and Space

The most distinctive feature of urban space is that it is limited. In South African townships, and particularly in Alexandra, the extreme scarcity of space and thus of housing has focused scholarly attention on competition over this resource, which is consequently viewed as the most immediate source of material differentiation (Morris and Hindson 1992). In the literature on South African urban political economy, the organisation of residential space into different types of settlement - shacks, hostels and formal housing - is therefore seen to play a central role in the construction of

socio-political divisions (eg Mabin,1989).[7]

Clearly, one cannot ignore material constraints. In Alexandra, space is undoubtedly an extremely scarce resource, with a rapidly increasing population of over 350 000 people squeezed into two square kilometres. The most immediate need for anyone moving into the township is a place to live. Competition for space obviously plays a role in this regard, and it is therefore not surprising that the main strategy of organisations seeking to establish power and legitimacy is to seek to control access to the space which people need. Local ACO structures in theory make decisions about who is allowed to build shacks in a particular area. When the alliance between ACO and ANC was still relatively strong, the ANC did not contest ACO's control over space, but once this started breaking down there was an increasing tendency for the ANC to champion middle-class property rights and challenge the rights of shack-dwellers.

People's access to space is therefore related to political processes, and is not simply a reflection of socio-economic status. In my Introduction, I discussed the role of power relations in the interaction between social structure and spatial form. Here I referred to Pahl's argument that where local power-brokers control access to housing, the spatial configuration of social categories based on housing - Rex's and Moore's 'housing classes' - will reflect local power relations.[8]

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[7]See chapter 1, pp51-2.

[8]pp.29-30

The social mapping of urban space is not, however, simply an objective reality which reflects power relations, since space is not just a material resource. Ramphele (1991) differentiates a number of categories of space: physical, political/economic, ideological/intellectual and psycho-social. That aspect of space which is overtly concerned with power relations - "the capacity to marshall authoritative and allocative resources" (Ibid:69) - is political/economic space. But it does not stand on its own. Ramphele argues that "the political/economic both defines and is defined by the physical, psycho-social and ideological/intellectual space" (Ibid:88). In other words, material and non-material aspects of space are combined in the construction of power relations.

As the symbolic framework within which social activity takes place, ideological/intellectual space is central to attempts to establish a hegemony: to present a particular pattern of power relations as the natural order of things. Moore, for example, describes how the spatial organisation of Marakwet society represents male values, thus creating a hegemony of male domination (Moore 1986:88). Similar examples in South Africa include the attempts by missionaries to instil Western Christian values by reorganising the household, and the strategy of the apartheid state to restructure settlement patterns and create racially and ethnically segregated townships (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Bank 1993).

The representation of space can, however, be interpreted in different ways, revealing the possibility for contestation. In Alexandra, the challenge to state power was closely linked to the organisation and control of space through yards, block and street

committees. These structures were seen to represent 'people's power', thus challenging state control, and were a central part of attempts to construct a political hegemony in opposition to the state.

The range of interpretations of the representation of space is, however, limited. To approach the question of how this relates to material conditions, one may use Moore's analogy of space as text. Briefly, this implies "the assumed interdependence of parts with the whole, of sense with reference, and of structure with action" (Moore 1986:80), similar to a system of metaphors. The key point in Moore's argument is that text can become removed from the social and historical conditions of its construction, since conceptual scheme and discourse are mutually constitutive and therefore a text has a history.[9] This creates the potential for multiple and contested 'readings' or interpretations of the text (Ibid:82). The text is nevertheless

> related to material conditions as the product of certain representations (ie ideology) whose source and referent is, ultimately, the material conditions of existence themselves. The text is a product of ideology, of the 'lived' conditions of social reality (Ibid:87).

This provides the connection between space as text and power relations, since the ability to impose a particular interpretation and present it as natural is a manifestation

[9]Roseberry (1989) also discusses this, in relation to Geertz's (1973) notion of 'inscription', but rather than allowing text its own history he adopts Raymond Williams' (1977) approach to culture as a material social process. Thus, ideas inform action, while action under changed conditions may change ideas.

of political power.[10] In Alexandra, as I have suggested above, this process was central to the struggle against the apartheid state. But representations of space are also critical to the contestations between competing political actors within Alexandra itself.

The political discourses of ACO and ANC embody images of Alexandra and its people that are ideologically-constructed representations of space. These are social maps which make sense of the distribution of space in the township and lay the basis for their claims to represent the community.

Given the influx of migrants into Alexandra, ideas about the countryside are central to the mapping of urban space, with the contrast between urban and rural serving as a reference point in the construction of categories and identities. The pool of potential images of the countryside is fairly constant, but the ways in which these are woven into urban ideologies vary. Kapferer (1992:255) talks of rural myths and urban ideologies, arguing that ideas about the countryside are selectively appropriated into urban-constructed political ideologies. This is apparent in the contrasting ways in which migrants and shack-dwellers are represented in ACO and ANC discourse.

The way in which contrasting ideas about town and country are fused into images of urban space is through narrative: specifically narratives about urbanisation. As I discussed in chapter 1, urbanisation is perceived as being of central importance to

[10]Eg Williams' discussion of 'selective tradition', where a dominant grouping presents "an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification" (Williams 1977:115). See also Castells' discussion of the struggle to institutionalise the meaning attached to space so that it becomes internalised in behaviour (Castells 1983:14).

social and political processes in Alexandra. Narratives which make sense of this are thus powerful vehicles for the ideological representation of urban space. The element of political discourse I explore in this chapter is therefore that which concerns urbanisation, since it is through these narratives that ACO and ANC present contrasting ideologically-based images of Alexandra.

Urbanisation in Political Discourse

An acute housing shortage coupled with the continuing influx into Alexandra means that housing and urbanisation are critical concerns in local politics. The main socio-economic divide in the township is between the minority of residents who live in formal housing and the majority who inhabit zinc shacks. Many shacks are built around houses in yards, while others form free-standing shack settlements. The need for socio-economic development amid the endemic social tensions caused by competition for space and resources has thrust the problem of informal housing into the forefront of political discourse. In the early 1990s, it was primarily this issue that exposed the tensions between ACO and ANC. The ways in which these two organisations viewed the nature of the problem, and thus the possible solutions, can be seen in their understandings of urbanisation.

ACO discourse

ACO's ideological starting point was clear in its adoption of the Freedom Charter slogan "Houses, security and comfort for all". It claimed to represent all the people of Alexandra, but was faced with an extremely diverse constituency, with differing short-term interests. Shack-dwellers, for example, desired access to housing, while potential property owners wanted to evict shack-dwellers from their yards.

The problems of organising in this context were exacerbated by the limitations of physical space, which provides the material basis for organisation. As Ramphele points out, clear physical boundaries play an important role in the formation of conceptual boundaries between inside and outside, private and public, family and non-family, security and insecurity, urban and rural [Ramphele 1991:68].[11] In other words, physical boundaries have an impact on the ideological ordering of space.

In Alexandra, the basic unit of civic organisation is the yard; a clearly demarcated geographical space. Yards are organised into block and/or street committees which come together in area committees, of which there are 14 in the township.[12] ACO organisation thus rests on a concept of interlocking bounded units. One of the main difficulties facing ACO was how to organise in areas without yards; in large free-standing shack settlements, where there are no clearly bounded units other than

[11]Ramphele states that the physical limitations of space define these concepts. In chapter 3 (p), however, I show that this assumption is too reductionist in the context of Alexandra. While physical boundaries may provide a framework for the way people talk about social divisions, the associated conceptual as opposed to physical space is fluid and may transcend physical boundaries.

[12]See Introduction, p.12.

individual shacks. ACO's response was to make a distinction between shack-dwellers in yards, who participated in formal civic structures, and shack dwellers in shack settlements. A separate shack-dwellers' coordinating committee was formed to cover the whole of Alexandra, independent of other civic structures within an area. This structure was eventually disbanded, due in part to charges that it promoted ethnic conflict (many shack settlements are perceived as being ethnically homogeneous), and individual shack settlements were then supposed to organise shack committees which would function in a similar way to other local civic structures.

It has long been recognised that informal housing provides fertile ground for political mobilisation in South Africa. However, political leadership is often characterised by powerful patrons or 'warlords' whose precarious hold on legitimacy results in organisation that is unstable and prone to violence.[13] In Alexandra, shack-dwellers in general are often perceived to form the core of ACO's support-base, but in fact civic structures are very weak in free-standing shack settlements. Richard Mdakane, the secretary of ACO, recognised the problem, and explained the civic's approach.

> Most people say ACO is based in shack areas, but we are very weak in shack areas. The basic structure of ACO is yard committees - tenants and sub-tenants. In shack areas, people don't come to meetings. Maybe we neglected to organise shack areas...Of course they organise themselves into strong structures, but not necessarily in our structures. We failed to give them political direction.

[13]This a broad generalisation, although it often appears to be an accurate description of squatter politics, and is popularly accepted as valid (eg Stadler 1979; Cole 1987; Bonner 1990; Sapire 1992). In chapter 5 I present a specific case study which questions some of the assumptions underlying this analysis.

While making a distinction between shack-dwellers in yards and shack settlements, Mdakane recognised that many township residents lumped them together in one category - "squatters" - since people in formal housing have permits from the local council and people in shacks do not. Problems arising from the lack of legal access to housing are therefore common to all shack-dwellers.

> Because of the location of Alex near work, this attracts people. It would be difficult to stop the influx. I don't know how we would deal with it without more land. There are some problems in organising these people. Some are very conservative; some are members of other organisations; some are migrants and not interested in participating in structures. But housing is a serious question for them. Ultimately they can be organised by ACO. But short term they are conservative.

Mdakane is thus displaying an ambivalent attitude towards shack-dwellers. They display the potential for strong ACO organisation, but ACO is still weak in shack areas. A closer examination of Mdakane's ideas shows how his explanation of this problem rests on a particular understanding of urbanisation.

Urbanisation appears in ACO discourse as a narrative. This narrative explains that people arriving in Alexandra from the rural areas become part of the community only if they are organised and transformed by ACO into a radical working class and abandon their previously 'conservative' ideas and practices, thus breaking with their rural past. Shack-dwellers' need for space can act as the catalyst in such a transformation. This process, however, needs to be directed to prevent them following alternative strategies of organising their space which would conserve and strengthen their 'outsiderness'.

Ideally, people should get permission from local civic structures before erecting shacks. ACO's narrative of urbanisation facilitates and legitimizes this process. More fundamentally, it describes an ordering of space in which the township is presented as a construction of interlocking units coming together as a unitary whole which is simultaneously ACO, Alexandra and 'the community': an image which represents the civic as a hegemonic power. ACO recognises class as a category of social division, and prioritises working-class interests. At the same time, however, social divisions based on class, ethnicity and housing type are intended to be overridden by the unity ACO engenders. Any area which is not organised into ACO structures, such as Inkatha-controlled hostels,[15] therefore represents an abberation - a problem and maybe a threat to the whole. In addition to Inkatha hostel-dwellers, shack-dwellers from outside Alexandra are the group Mdakane refers to as the most likely to organise autonomously in this way, facilitating the development of opposition to the hegemony of ACO. One is reminded here of Castells' characterisation of the way space can be used to organise against the state,

> Only in the secrecy of their homes, in the complicity of neighbourhoods, in the communication of taverns, in the joy of street gatherings may they find values, ideas, projects and, finally, demands that do not conform to the dominant social interests. The control over space is a major battle in the historic war between people and the state (Castells 1983:70).

[15]Before violence erupted in 1991, ACO claims that Inkatha members were involved in ACO structures, and that ACO had committees in all three hostels.

While this characterisation could be applied to ACO's challenge to state hegemony, it is also an apt description of the independence of some informal settlements from ACO, which in this case was assuming the power of a hegemonic body.

ACO's interpretation of squatters' independent organisation of politics and space as opposition which poses a threat to the whole 'community' is thus presented as real and natural. The media has often followed this line with an unquestioning acceptance of the violence as taking place between Inkatha-supporting hostel-dwellers and 'township residents'. An examination of ANC discourse however suggests that the unitary category of 'township residents' may be contested.

ANC discourse

The ANC's position on urbanisation has been rather more complex, due to the shifting political terrain since February 1990. Immediately after the ANC's unbanning, the Alexandra branch of the movement allied itself closely with ACO. ACO executive members were all members of the ANC; and ANC structures, or 'sub-branches', coincided with the boundaries of ACO area committees.

Potential conflicts of interest that might have been caused by overlapping structures were initially contained by a clear division of labour between the two organisations. Local civic issues such as housing were dealt with by ACO, while the ANC mobilised around national political concerns. The ANC did not play a significant role in local debates on urbanisation, but officially supported ACO's position.

There was, however, a growing sense of disquiet among ANC leaders, which may have been encouraged by strongly vocalised discontent among returned exiles, about the 'squatter problem'. Many returned exiles were absent during the struggles of the 1980s, during which the Freedom Charter's statement of the right to housing acquired a new significance as shack-dwellers were mobilised in opposition to the state. On returning, the exiles found their yards full of shacks which they associated with crime and squalor. They blamed ACO for bringing outsiders into Alexandra. "We are the bona fide people of the township...We have permits", exclaimed one returned ANC exile, ironically echoing the words of the Alexandra Liaison Committee - the precursor to the Black Local Authority which generated such antipathy and was the catalyst for anti-state opposition in the 1980s.[15] The problem was particularly acute among those who had come from property-owning families and who planned to buy back the yards which had earlier been expropriated by the state. A returnee in this position complained, "ACO has brought in shack-dwellers and told them not to pay rent...[standholders] are complaining throughout Alex".

This attitude towards shack-dwellers conflicted with ANC policy, and was officially discouraged. It was particularly significant that at a funeral of a member of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, in July 1991, one of the coffin-bearers was the chairperson of a shack committee in a large free-standing shack settlement known as 'Mozambique'.[16]

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[15]Sarakinsky quotes Leepile Taunyane of Sam Buti's Liaison Committee in 1981 describing shack-dwellers as "not bona fides of the township. They (were) people who had just streamed to Alexandra from nowhere" (Sarakinsky 1984:72).

[16]Tomas Minis (see chapter 5, p.208).

At an ANC general meeting in February 1992, however, the tensions between ANC and ACO finally surfaced. In this meeting, ANC activists described their organisation as the historically legitimate representative of the people of Alexandra, and ACO merely as an interest group representing squatters.[17] The ANC saw itself as a mediator between ACO and property owners, who were represented by the Alexandra Land and Property Owners' Association (ALPOA),[18] and challenged ACO's right to represent the people of Alexandra in local government negotiations.

This dramatic political shift was tied to changing ideas about the local role of the ANC. During a discussion I had with Obed Bapela, secretary of the ANC branch, around this time, he spoke about the need for the ANC to get involved in local welfare and development. The ANC seemed perilously close to stepping on ACO toes. ACO leaders expressed fears that individuals in the ANC leadership were allying with its rival, ACA, which was anti-squatter and mobilised mainly among residents of formal housing. Personal accusations and personality clashes further contributed towards the deterioration in the relationship between ACO and ANC, and obstructed mutual debate about their respective roles.

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[17]This highlights the point made by Mdakane: that residents of formal housing perceived shack-dwellers as the back-bone of ACO support, largely because they also believed that ACO had brought shack-dwellers to the township.

[18]People have been able to buy property since 1986 (see Introduction p.8), but the presence of back yard shacks has made this a very controversial issue, and has caused many disputes over land rights. Consequently, ALPOA was formed to articulate the interests of property-owners.

ANC policy on urbanisation was still unclear by the time I finished my fieldwork. On the one hand, there was a tendency to view shack-dwellers as outsiders who posed a threat to Alexandrians - this narrative of urbanisation emphasises the temporary nature of shack-dwellers' residence in Alexandra and legitimises middle-class property-owners' claims to space. On the other hand, the ANC was still trying to mobilise shack-dwellers. On the same day as its February 1992 general meeting, the chair of the ANC branch addressed a meeting in 'S'tshwetla', the biggest shack settlement in the township, and emphasised their unity with all South Africans in the struggle for liberation. He was accompanied by an executive member of ACO.

In other words, the ANC appeared to be vacillating between two ideologically conflicting readings of the spatial ordering of Alexandra. The first is of a unitary township which includes both shack-dwellers and residents of formal housing. This concurs with ACO's position, and makes political sense if ANC and ACO are in alliance rather than competing for power. The second reading describes the 'real' Alexandra - ie the Alexandra of the 1950s - as unchanging over time but as being invaded by outsiders who, by moving uninvited into yards and refusing to pay rent, are upsetting the 'natural' spatial order of the township, embodied in the concept of property rights. This emphasis on temporal continuity legitimizes the claim of the ANC, which had a strong presence in Alexandra before its banning, to represent the people, thereby contesting the hegemony of ACO. It also presents as natural a spatial ordering representing the values and interests of a property-owning middle class, a constituency perhaps neglected by ACO. This reading clearly demonstrates competition for legitimacy and power between ANC and ACO, which takes the form

of appealing to, and empowering, different constituencies.

One explanation of the apparent contradictions in ANC discourse could lie in its inheritance of two ideologically divergent strands of UDF activity, now represented in the competition between ACO and ACA, as well as the problems of combining what were the internal and external wings of the ANC before 1990.

The expression of this contradiction is however made possible by the uneasy relationship between different levels of leadership, who are articulating different politico-spatial claims: a phenomenon also present in ACO although less vocalised at the central level. This should not be seen as surprising, for of course in any multi-layered organisation there is a complex distribution of and competition over power. Organisations are made up of individuals, and power is not merely institutional but is present in all social relationships (Foucault 1977). Playing a leadership role in an organisation does not necessarily bind one to the aims and interests of the organisation, but may provide the resources and legitimacy for a leader to exert power in a variety of social relationships. I examine this theme in more depth in chapter 4.

Conclusion

Given the diverging ideological tendencies of the ANC and ACO in Alexandra, it is pertinent to review the goals these organisations espouse. During the early 1990s, the ANC styled itself as a national liberation movement, fighting for a non-racist, non-

sexist, democratic South Africa. ACO formed part of a national civic movement fighting for civic rights such as housing and services.

In terms of these goals it was logical for both ANC and ACO to claim that their constituency was 'the people'. The immediate interests of the people living in Alexandra however varied. Shack-dwellers needed housing, while people living in formal housing claimed property rights which would enable them to evict shack-dwellers. The way in which ANC and ACO translated their goals into an ideologically-based ordering of space suggests that while both organisations were seeking to represent themselves as hegemonic powers, they were in fact addressing the immediate interests of different constituencies, rather than the whole population. Both organisations, however, recognised the same broad categories of social division - informal and formal housing, overlaid by class distinctions.

This raises two issues which organisational discourse obscures. Firstly, while the claims of both ACO and ANC to represent the township community are suspect, one cannot simply assume that ACO's support base is among shack-dwellers or that ANC's support lies among residents of formal housing. Secondly, although housing type is clearly differentiated, as in the distinction between property owners, council tenants and 'squatters', these are not necessarily the only or the most significant emic categories of social division at the local level. In the next chapter I therefore look at local level dynamics and the impact of organisations on the people they claim to represent.

CHAPTER 3. SPACE, DOMESTICITY AND 'PEOPLE'S POWER'

> To unite the people in the yard, to encourage comradeship, brotherhood and working together as one family of the people in the yard; to look to the welfare of the people in the yard. For people to help each other financially, physically, morally and otherwise. To defend each other against enemy attacks. To look to the cleanliness, to clean the yard of dirt and crime.[1]

This statement, made shortly before the launch of AAC in February 1986, illustrates the vision held by the activists who set out to form civic structures throughout Alexandra. In chapter 2, I argued that it is through the establishment of these types of structures that ACO today represents itself as a hegemonic power.[2] Carter similarly describes the strategy of civic activists in the 1980s as an attempt to construct a political hegemony - "an appeal to organisational and ideological allegiance, as well as the promotion of a certain kind of morality as the morality to be adhered to" (Carter 1991:15). In other words, community organisation was directed at transforming people's understanding of their social environment, rather than just eliciting support for a political cause. ACO activists in the 1990s have continued to follow this strategy, whereby the organisation of local civic structures represents an attempt to effect social as well as political transformation.

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[1]The objectives of a yard committee, taken from the minutes of a residents' general meeting in Alexandra, 5 February 1986 (Carter 1991:197).

[2]p.81

ACO organisation in 1991 and 1992 was seriously impeded by wide-scale violence and security force actions. At the same time, as I showed in chapter 2, ACO faced competition from the ANC. The growing rivalry between these two organisations was expressed in contrasting images of Alexandra: social maps that represented social relations in spatial terms and embodied the political power of these organisations. The contestation between these images meant that no one organisation could be said to have a hegemony in the township. The ways in which people actually perceived their world was thus a "process and an arena of cultural struggle".[3] One of the terrains in which this struggle took place was the organisation of living space and the formation of yard committees.

In chapter 2 I showed how, in ACO discourse, the civic is represented as a series of interlocking spatial units forming a unitary township community. Thus the civic is synonymous with 'the community', and indeed the entire township. In support of its claim, one could cite the fact that ACO does have a hierarchy of elected committees linking grassroots and leadership. The basic units of this structure are yard[4] committees, which form the building blocks of ACO's representation of the township. ACO's political strategy is based on the premise that yards are both social and political units; playing a central role in the social construction of the community and in facilitating political participation in ACO. The efficacy of ACO strategy amid contestation from its rivals is thus linked to the way people conceptualise their yards.

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[3]Bozzoli's (1983:18) characterisation of hegemony, cited in Carter (1991:20).

[4]Yards are the previously freehold stands which used to house landlords and their tenants. Many of these yards are today occupied by large numbers of households in formal and informal housing.

While ACO views yard committees as effecting political integration, these structures are in fact highly variable. In the 1980s, Carter comments,

> individual activists took it upon themselves to mould the character of the structure in which they were involved. This meant that while AAC could lay claim to organizing yard and street committees, they did not necessarily have direct control over these committees. Thus while their objective appeared hegemonic, it was more a loose association of small collectives scattered throughout the township, rather than a tight-knit coherent organisation with disciplined members (Carter 1991:222).

The diverse character of yard committees is not, however, due solely to the idiosyncrasies of individual activists. Yard populations are characterised by various different types of social organisation, and some of these appear to be more amenable to civic organisation than others. In the first part of this chapter I use two contrasting case studies of yards from the Lusaka[5] section of the township to explore the possible reasons for different levels of organisation. The comparison of an established yard committee with a yard that has not been successfully organised by ACO suggests that historical continuities arising from Alexandra's freehold past play a significant role in the predisposition of these two yards to civic organisation. Central to this process is the way in which people have conceptualised the yard 'community' over time.

In contrast, people living in the 'Mozambique' shack settlement near these two yards[6] appear to have little or no sense of community. I compare this to my yard case studies, and suggest that ACO's difficulties in organising informal settlements arises

[5]See Introduction, p.12

[6]See fig.11 for a map of the area.

in part from the flawed assumption that the yard committee model of organisation can be transposed to informal settlements.

One of the factors which I identify as important for yard-based organisation is the delineation of domestic and public space. This issue of course leads one to consider the role of gender. ACO's ideal of a participatory democracy is also premised on the principle of non-sexism, and the civic frequently points to the high level of women's involvement in ACO structures as evidence for the realisation of this principle. In the second section of the chapter I take a closer look at the successfully organised yard, and question whether women are in fact fully recognised as political actors. I argue that the key to addressing this question lies in the conceptualisation of private domestic space and public political space; conventionally associated with women and men respectively.

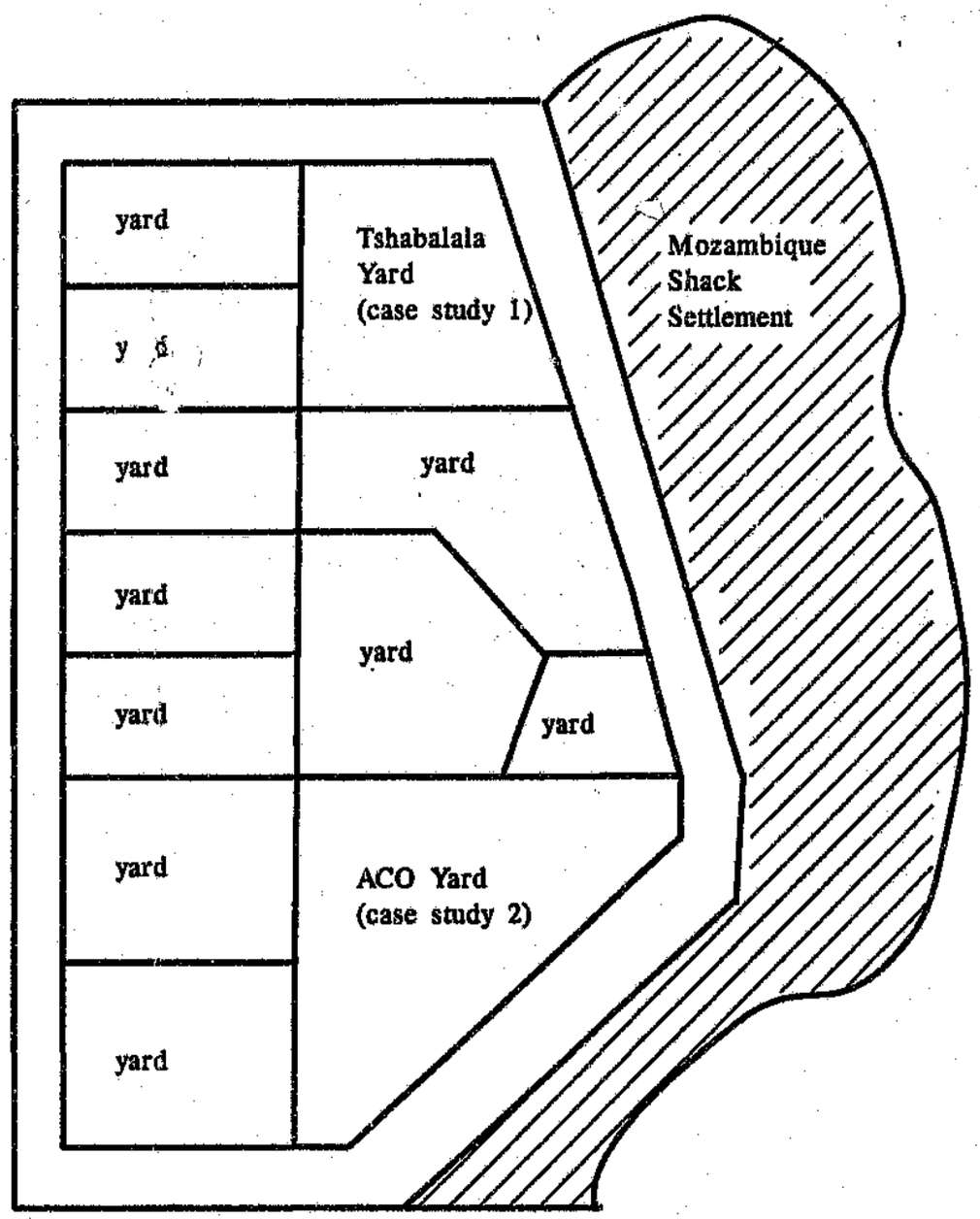
Yard Committees in Lusaka

Yard committees were first organised in Lusaka in 1986. The main objective of these structures was to overcome social divisions and tensions arising from overcrowding. An elected committee would resolve disputes in the yard and organise people to ensure that communal facilities were looked after. Regular yard meetings would provide a forum where people could voice their opinions and participate in the management of the yard. People would thus be empowered to control the space in which they lived. Yard committees could choose representatives to represent the yard in broader civic structures, enabling people to participate in political processes.



fig.10: extract from 'The Alexandra Accord', depicting ACO leaders on their release from prison in 1989 (see Appendix 1).

fig 11: map of yards in relation to the 'Mozambique' shack settlement.



Historical Continuities

While civic organisation in Alexandra was seen as part of a revolutionary strategy to establish 'people's power', material from yards in Lusaka suggests that ACO's success in organising yard committees partly depended on continuities in the way people have perceived their yards since the time when Alexandra was a freehold township. In the area in which I conducted my research, only those yards in which these continuities with the tenancy era were present had fully-fledged yard committees. One yard that did not exhibit these continuities, for example, was occupied exclusively by members of one extended family, who saw no need for an elected committee to maintain social order in the yard.[7] A second yard was occupied by people who had all moved into the area after the expropriation of property rights, who had never experienced life under a landlord, and who allowed dispute resolution and the maintenance of social order to be managed in a rather ad hoc manner by the man who had resided in the yard the longest.

In contrast, the most effectively organised yard I encountered had been and continued to be occupied by many former tenants, who played an active role in the yard committee. In this yard, continuities from the freehold past played a positive and constructive role in the formation and maintenance of the yard committee. The persistence of ideas related to the landlord-tenant relationship can also, however, serve as an impediment to ACO organisation. In the following discussion I look at

[7]The Botha family (see p.124).

how people understand the nature of the yard community in two yards which are still inhabited by many former tenants - one where the yard committee is very weak, and one where it is strong and active.

Case study 1: Landlord-tenant continuities

This yard is still occupied by the family of the former landlord. Here, the social relations arising from the landlord-tenant nexus have continued to exert an influence on how people perceive the yard, in a manner which mitigates against ACO organisation.

The yard is home to a number of different families, living in two brick houses, several smaller terraced and detached brick rooms, one shack and a caravan. The big house in the yard is occupied by the descendants of a Mr Tshabalala, who used to own the stand, and who was known as the mastant[8] by the 15 or 20 families who were his tenants, most of whom still live in the yard. Tshabalala bought the property in the 1940s and owned it until the late 1970s, when it was expropriated by the state. After Tshabalala's death, the family partitioned the house, which is today occupied by five of the Tshabalala children, eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Tshabalala's eldest son lives in a separate brick room near the house. The family is effectively headed by Tshabalala's daughter Joyce, who is one of the few family members with an income, and her brother Patrick, who is a recently returned ANC exile.

---

[8]Standholder

The old landlord had a paternalistic relationship with his tenants. In the words of his son Patrick,

> He saw to law and order and keeping the place clean. He solved problems. If someone was beating his wife, she would run to my father, who would speak to them. In most cases they respected him. If someone didn't want to listen, he could be chucked out. It didn't happen, to my knowledge.

I interviewed several former tenants who substantiated this view. Elizabeth Langa, who has lived in a room in the yard since 1968, described her relationship with the landlord: "The mastant was a very kind man, like a father. You could understand him. If you couldn't pay rent, he would wait".

Today the Tshabalalas have a similarly close relationship with some of their father's previous tenants. As Joyce said, "The old people who were here with my parents are very sweet. They treat us like their children". Elizabeth concurred with Joyce that the yard was like a family, saying, "I'm just living with everybody like sister and brother".

Joyce and Patrick, as heads of the household, continue to have a paternalistic relationship with many former tenants. Joyce is a nursing sister, and regularly provides free treatment to people with minor ailments or injuries. Patrick, who has been building an extension to the house and has started several small business enterprises, receives assistance from local unemployed men in return for food and drink or a little money. Another former tenant, Rose Mokoena, clearly felt quite affectionate towards Patrick, saying, "he's very kind and gentle and helpful".

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Even though the Tshabalalas have no formal rights to the stand, former tenants still behave as though the family controlled the property. Joyce described how they were able to prevent shacks being erected on the stand: "We were fortunate because when someone wanted to build, the person who stays by that space came and told us and we told them not to build".

Joyce is planning to buy back the stand from the local council. There are however tensions between the Tshabalalas and some residents in the yard who do not relish the prospect of having to pay rent to a new landlord. Patrick was indignant about this, saying,

> Some of the people talk about the Freedom Charter and don't know basic economics. You can't stay on someone's stand and not pay rent or electricity. You have to agree a flat rate. Someone has to pay for services, although the rent may have been too high [in the past].

This situation also highlighted the resentment the Tshabalalas had felt at losing their property rights, and exposed underlying tensions that had long existed between them and some of their tenants. Joyce explained with some frustration,

> When the council took over the properties, the tenants told us we are equal. There are no standholders. They started neglecting the yard. You can't tell them anything. It's not your property...We thought we were like a family...As children we played with them. Now we can buy the properties back they pretend to be nice.

About half the residents of the yard are opposed to the Tshabalalas buying back the stand. There is presently a dispute between Joyce, some of the residents, and the

council, which has told the residents that they can stay for five years before they have to find somewhere else to live. Some of the former tenants stress that the rent charged by Tshabalala was much lower than the rent charged by the local authority after the property was expropriated. The reluctance of other former tenants to regaining their previous landlord could be due to the fact that they have successfully avoided paying the rent charged by this local authority. They have been boycotting rent to the council since 1989, and were still boycotting when I interviewed them in July 1991, despite ACO's signing of the Alexandra Accord which had ended the official boycott.[9] Those former tenants who, as Joyce had noted, refused to accord the Tshabalalas any authority, might also have been reluctant to re-engage with the moral obligations inherent in a personal landlord-tenant relationship.

There has been a fledgling yard committee in the yard since 1990, headed by four 'reps',[10] one of whom is Joyce's younger sister. The committee coexists smoothly with the paternalism of the Tshabalalas, and its chairperson is in favour of Joyce buying back the stand. This easy coexistence is probably due to the fact that the committee plays a very minor role in the yard. Few of the people I spoke to were involved, and several did not even know about the committee's existence. Patrick, like many returned exiles, is hostile towards ACO, since he blames the civic for the influx of shack-dwellers to Alexandra. The committee does not in fact appear to have a strong link to ACO, and its main function is dispute resolution. Other functions usually associated with yard committees, such as the allocation of space, are fulfilled

[9]See Introduction, p.3; Appendix 1.

[10]The term initially referred to those who represented yard committees in wider structures.

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by the Tshabalalas.

Despite divisions over the sale of the property, there is a strong sense among its residents that the yard is a community. When it was subdivided by the council, people ignored the fence dividing the yard in two and refused to use the new numbering system introduced by the council. Ethnic differences are incidental to the social relationships in the yard, which are defined by what was, and what in some ways remains a landlord-tenant nexus. It is not, however, a community of equals. Despite the attempts by some residents to use the expropriation of property rights to assert a principle of equality in the yard, the Tshabalalas have a clearly paternalistic relationship with many of their former tenants. If they succeed in buying back the property this relationship will be formalised once again.

The organisation of yard committees in yards where landlord-tenant relationships continue informally, despite the absence of formal property rights, therefore creates a situation that is full of contradictions. ACO yard committees are premised on unity and equality, and provide mechanisms to solve or avoid potential disputes. The unequal power relationship which previously existed between landlords and tenants however also provided mechanisms for solving disputes. The introduction of a yard committee then combines both these models of social relationships in one yard.

In the above case study, members of the former landlord's family have largely incorporated the idea of a yard committee into their understanding of social relations in the yard, and the participants in the yard committee have likewise adjusted ACO's

model to accommodate landlord-tenant continuities, leaving those who oppose the reintroduction of a landlord marginalised. The activities of the yard committee remain limited, precisely because it co-exists with an alternative model of the yard community. The result is that the yard is not a political unit, and while it could be described as a social unit, it differs from that envisaged by ACO.

This example describes a situation where continuities in the way people perceive the social relationships in their yards have served to undermine ACO's strategy of organising yard committees. There are however many yards where such continuities have instead strengthened ACO organisation. These are yards where the landlord moved away, but where former tenants still perceive themselves as a close-knit community.

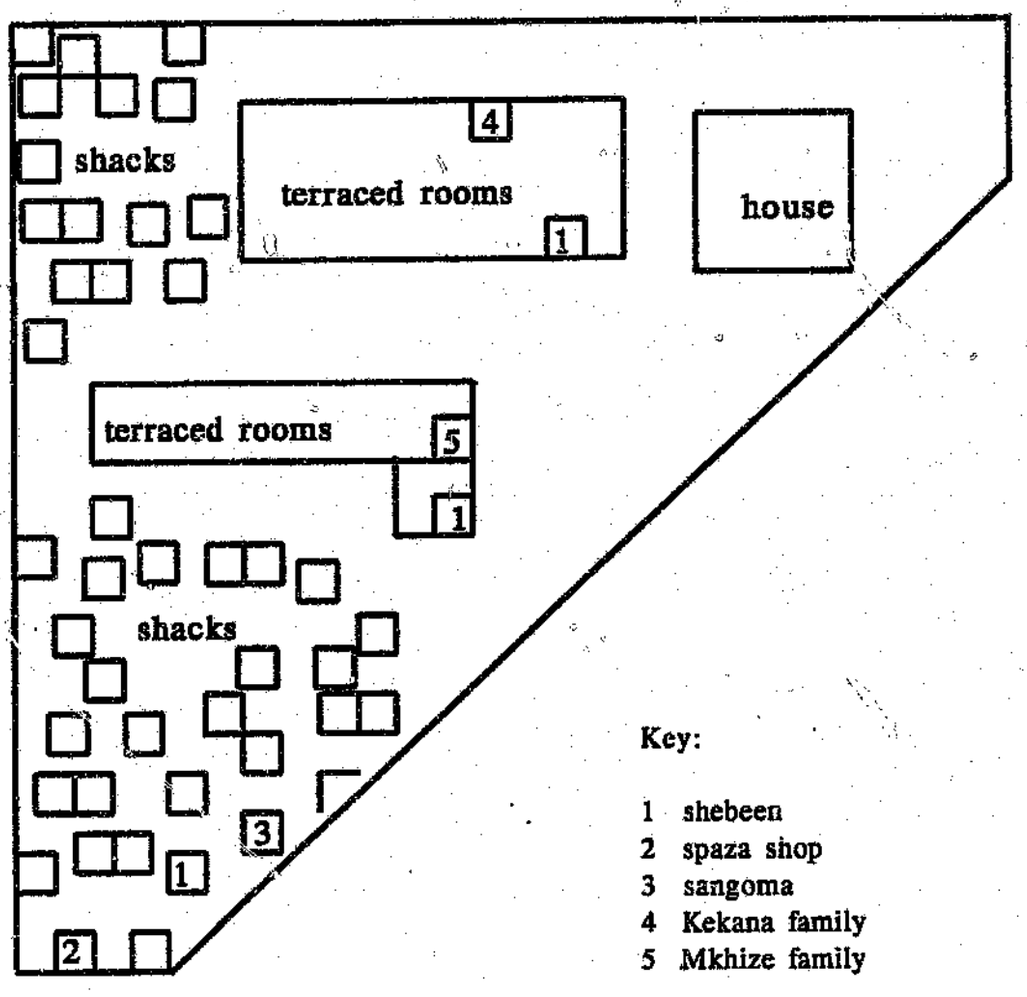
While Tshabalala appears to have been a fairly well-liked landlord, many landlords were less popular. The idealised image of paternalism, in which the yard is like a family with the landlord as father, was often contradicted by the harsh reality of material inequality and high rents, which meant that this model of social reality could be criticised in its own terms. The idea of a yard as a family, with authority accompanied by respect and conferred by consent, often appeared to fit more closely with the egalitarian yard committee model than with an exploitative landlord-tenant relationship.

The Tshabalala yard therefore cannot provide an explanatory model for all yards that are still inhabited by former landlords. Interview material from other yards, however, suggests that many unpopular landlords moved away after their properties were sold or expropriated. The subsequent transformation from control by one person to communal control over space was nevertheless relatively simple, since the categorisation of the yard as a social unit remained unchanged, and the authority to maintain social order was merely transferred from a landlord to an elected committee. I spent much of my time in one of these yards, which has had a successful yard committee since 1986. I looked at how it continued to function as both a social and political unit during a period which brought significant demographic and political changes to the area.

Case study 2: ACO's ideal yard

This large yard consists of a house, two rows of terraced rooms and over 50 shacks, with a central open space (fig.12). Although it was subdivided and renumbered by the council, residents took down the fence and use the old numbering system. It used to be owned by a landlord who lived two streets away, until it was expropriated by the local authority in the mid 1980s. Today, virtually all the residents of formal housing in the yard are the families of the old landlord's former tenants, while the shack-dwellers are much more recent arrivals.

fig.12: distribution of space in 'ACO's ideal yard'.



Key:

1 shebeen
2 spaza shop
3 sangoma
4 Kekana family
5 Mkhize family

Several of the original tenants are male migrant workers, mostly from Transkei, who have lived in rooms in the yard for up to thirty years while maintaining families in the countryside. Since the late 1980s, many of their younger relatives have moved into the yard with their own families and have built shacks. Some of these came directly from the rural areas, while others were already living in Alexandra and were forced to flee their homes after violence erupted in 1991. The other former tenants in the yard include several extended families that have been in Alexandra for generations. One of these is the multi-generational Kekana family:

> Abel Kekana was born on a farm in the western Transvaal in 1919, and came to Alexandra in 1939, shortly before joining the Allied forces in World War Two. He was married in Alexandra, and moved to the yard in 1971 because his Alexandra-born wife was related to the landlord. Today he lives with his wife, two of their children and a grandchild. In 1970, one of the Kekana daughters married Matthew Mkhize, who came to Johannesburg from Natal in 1957. In 1972 this couple moved to the yard, where they now live with their six children in a room opposite the Kekanas.

Most of the shacks in the yard are occupied by young couples (the average age of those interviewed was 31) and infants, since school-age children are sent to relatives in the rural areas. Almost 90% of those interviewed had moved into the yard since 1990, although many of the men had been living elsewhere in Alexandra during the 1980s or earlier, before their wives joined them.

The yard has had an active and well organised committee since 1986. The three founding members, or 'reps', still remain on the committee, which is currently chaired by Matthew Mkhize. The committee performs many functions, in which political and social dynamics are closely interwoven. One of these is the allocation

of space in the yard, which is formally governed by the yard committee. In this process, political orientation, kinship, social ties, and to a lesser degree ethnicity all play a role in determining the eligibility of new residents.

On one level, the allocation of space is a purely political process. Some residents consulted external ACO structures before being allowed to move in. This process is illustrated by the case of Alfred, a shack-dweller who has lived in the yard since 1990.

> Alfred came to Alexandra from Venda in 1969, and stayed with his mother's sister in 14th Avenue. He was joined by his wife in 1982, and in 1989 decided that he needed more space. He first went to the local council, but they advised him to go to ACO. At the ACO office, he was sent to the Vincent Tshabalala area committee, which covers 14th Avenue. Alfred attended a meeting of this area committee, where he was told that there was no space in which to build. Alfred's next step was to attend a meeting of the Lusaka 'area committee',[11] which was also attended by yard representatives. At that meeting, Alfred was allocated space in the yard.

After the outbreak of violence in March 1991, political orientation became an increasingly important determinant of an applicant's suitability, although this criterion was underlaid by social factors. An example of this is the case of Mandisa Vayeke, an ANC marshal who built a shack in the yard in July 1991. Mandisa is from Transkei, and has lived in Alexandra since 1989. Through her ANC activities she knew Matthew Mkhize and asked him if she could move into the yard. One of the yard residents described what happened:

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[11] This meeting was chaired by David Shabangu, who describes himself as the chair of Lusaka. In fact, Lusaka does not have an organised area committee, and Shabangu's influence covered a much smaller part of the area. His role is discussed in chapter 4.

> Mkhize told the reps, who went house to house and told us there's a meeting on Saturday at 9.00...Everyone went... Mkhize told us there is a person who wants to build a shack here. The people admitted this girl to the yard. People asked where she's from; why she moved; what kind of person she is. He said Mandisa is a good girl and a member of ANC. She came here because there were enemies where she was staying. It's because she was the only Xhosa.

From th' it is clear that perceptions about the ethnic nature of the ANC/Inkatha conflict also played a role in the allocation of space. Despite these perceptions, the yard is in fact ethnically mixed, and the allocation of space is not ethnically exclusive. A large proportion of the shack-dwellers are Xhosa-speaking, but this is mainly due to the influence of kinship and social ties. As one of the former tenants explained,

> If someone asks for space to build here, first they [the yard committee] check out if he's good to live here and where he's from. Some people look for space because they have relatives around, so they can ask the relatives if he's good.

While people thus went through a nominally political process to gain permission to build, and were necessarily ANC supporters, a significant number were related to people already living in the yard, and many more had 'homeboy' connections to yard residents. Mandisa, for example, already knew many of the shack-dwellers in the yard, since she is from the same area of Transkei as them. In other words, while access to housing was controlled by a political structure, the criteria used by the yard committee to determine eligibility were social rather than political. Even ANC membership operated here as a marker of social acceptability and trustworthiness rather than of ideological orientation.

There are a number of other functions of the yard committee in which political and social aspects are similarly combined. Social order is maintained through the mediation of disputes, usually by Matthew Mkhize. These include neighbourly quarrels, arguments over money, sexual infidelities and anti-social behaviour or fights arising from drunkenness. Since Mkhize is at work during the day, a time when many women are at home, there is a separate women's committee which deals specifically with disputes amongst women. If the yard committee is unable to resolve a dispute, it is referred to the ACO structure immediately above the yard, and in theory can continue to be referred to higher structures until it reaches ACO leadership.[12] Another function of the yard committee was defence. After an Inkatha attack on the area, a yard meeting was held to discuss how to defend the area, and groups of men were subsequently organised into night watches.

There are also aspects of life in the yard which, distinct from overtly political structures, clearly mark out the yard as a community of co-resident and cooperating people. The yard has a burial society, whose members pay R15 a month into the society's bank account, contribute extra amounts when someone dies, and attend funerals. While the society draws its membership exclusively from the yard, not all segments of yard society belong to it. It includes most of the people living in formal housing, but none of the shack-dwellers. The shack-dwellers' profile, as younger, poorer and more recently arrived than their house-dwelling counterparts, may explain this.

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[12]In reality, problematic disputes were referred to David Shabangu, chair of the Lusaka 'area committee', who was reluctant to engage the assistance of higher authorities (see chapter 4).

While this division between shack-dwellers and residents of formal housing is significant for activities such as the organisation of the burial society, there are practices which cross-cut it. In February 1992, for example, virtually everyone in the yard participated in a night vigil and ancestor ritual held by Mrs Kekana. People in shacks and houses alike also consult the yard's resident sangoma (traditional healer), who is valued for his powerful muti (medicine/herbs) which protects the yard from violence. Patterns of social drinking also serve to transcend intra-yard divisions. Yard residents, many of whom are unemployed, spend much of their time in the three shebeens in the yard. Two of these border the open space in the middle of the yard: an area which is the focus of social activity. People are usually to be found sitting around on benches and chatting, and women do their washing while their children play (fig.13). Occasionally someone will buy a bucket of umqombothi,[13] which will be passed around for all to share, or they will persuade the owner of the shebeen to give them bottled beer on credit. People who try to drink alone are loudly berated for being 'crooks', until they relent and share their drink.

Alexandra has a notoriously high crime rate, but none of the disputes mediated by the yard committee while I was there were about crime, unlike those, often concerning cases of theft, dealt with by the 'people's court' which had existed previously in the street.[14] Although several of the yard residents are involved in criminal activities, these are tolerated as long as they are not directed at people in the yard - an offence which would be regarded as seriously anti-social. The sanction against this is

[13]Home-brewed maize beer.

[14]In 1986, youth activists ran a people's court in the same street as this yard, and dealt with cases from all over Lusaka.

illustrated by the case of a man known as 'Tokolosh', a habitual drinker of mbamba[15] who is mentally disturbed and has gangrenous sores on his legs and feet, which he has been told should be amputated. Although his physical condition is clearly related to his drinking, people say that he became sick after walking on muti that was put outside his door to counteract his habit of stealing from people in the yard. The yard thus comprises a moral community within which thieving and crime are not tolerated. This community transcends the formal/informal housing divide.

This yard is very clearly, then, both a social and political unit, and fits perfectly with ACO's conception of a yard. People frequently stressed that they were 'united' and spoke about their 'brothers' in the yard. Although the local council still has the authority to allocate formal housing, the space in the yard is in other respects controlled by the residents. It is a political territory,[16] and at the same time a conceptual spatial category which underpins a pattern of social relationships, often described in the idiom of kinship. In addition, there are real ties of kinship and affinity in the yard, which is perceived as an extension of people's homes.

[15]Mbamba is a highly alcoholic concoction, also known as Barberton. Can Themba wrote, "Barberton is a poison made in such a way as to give a quick kick. It is made of bread, yeast and sugar. Its main characteristic is that it is 'raw' (swiftly prepared) liquor. One of its commonest effects is upon the skin which it peels off and sallows. People get red lips and purulent black pimples on the face. But it has made those who have drunk it for a long time raging madmen, especially in fights" (Themba 1985:73). Mbamba is brewed in one of the shebeens in the yard, where it is a popular drink among the very poor and unemployed, despite its often dire consequences.

[16]The locus of an ACO yard committee, and therefore "the object of a political bond" (Thornton 1990:10).



fig.13: the central space in 'ACO's ideal yard'.

The yard committee provides a way for people to understand and organise their lives in the yard. The tenants had little social attachment to the landlord, who had never lived in the yard. When a committee was first introduced in 1986, it made perfect sense for people to organise themselves into a structure based on an ideology of equality, which provided mechanisms for social order, since their common experience of being tenants had already established these ideas in principle.[17] When shack-dwellers moved into the yard, their social acceptability had already been determined by the yard committee, and they found a structure and model of social relations within which they were easily accommodated. The result is that the yard is today a bounded unit in which the political is inextricable from the social.

An important clarification however needs to be made here. While the physical space of the yard provides a framework for people to talk about and [illegible] and social relations, it does not determine these social relations. After the outbreak of violence in 1991, there followed a process of redrawing and accentuating the boundaries of social inclusiveness in the face of a common enemy. Political affiliation was central to this definition. Two Zulu-speaking shack-dwellers living in the yard were rejected by the community, and accused of being Inkatha supporters. One fled to the Inkatha-controlled Madala hostel while the second was killed. While they may or may not have been Inkatha supporters, Inkatha functioned here as a label to attach to people who were seen as social outsiders, despite living in the yard.[18]

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[17]It is important to note that civic activists had to establish a yard committee before being able to influence access to housing in the yard. The fact that the population of this yard were amenable to civic organisation is therefore in no way due to prior screening on the part of the civic.

[18]People did not reject these men simply because they were Zulu. Zulu-speakers such as Matthew Mkhize and several others have never been suspected of being disloyal.

This process also drew in a few people living in a shack settlement opposite the yard who, after the violence began, effectively became members of the yard community. The settlement, known as 'Mozambique', is inhabited mainly by young Mozambican men, but the people who were drawn into the yard community are South Africans, who have more in common socially and politically with the yard community than with the Mozambican shack-dwellers in the settlement where they live. The outbreak of violence provided the catalyst for these people to be formally drawn into the yard committee, since the shack settlement had no equivalent structure.[19]

The conceptualisation of the yard as a social and political unit has, then, both excluded certain people physically present and extended beyond the physical space of the yard itself to include people who do not live within its boundaries. As one resident put it, "This yard committee takes them as if they stayed this side". One effect of this is that not only is the yard known as the best organised yard in the area, but its influence has also spread such that Mkhize is seen by many people living nearby as the chair of a street committee, even though ACO officially has no such structure.

ACO's success in organising yards such as this is starkly contrasted with its failure to maintain cohesive structures in free-standing shack settlements. ACO's solution to the problem of how to organise these areas has been to use the yard committee model - in other words, to assume that shack settlements, like yards, are social units that can become political units. In the following section, where I look at the 'Mozambique'

[19]See chapter 5.

shack settlement referred to above, I argue ACO's assumption is flawed, and present an extreme example of some of the problems facing the civic in such areas.

'Mozambique' - A Free-Standing Shack Settlement

Mozambique is a densely populated shack settlement named after the large concentration of Mozambicans living there. This chaotic jumble of makeshift dwellings appears to defy the limitations of physical space. Shacks are crammed so closely together that the settlement from afar resembles a tattered patchwork quilt, carpeting the wasteland on which it is built. The shacks are of varying sizes and colours, built from sheets of zinc, cardboard boxes, plastic bags and anything else people have managed to scavenge. Conditions are terrible. There is no drainage for water used in washing, which flows into people's shacks or collects in stagnant pools. Piles of rotting rubbish and sewage give the place the appearance of a huge rubbish dump. When I began my fieldwork, there were a few taps but not a single toilet for the entire settlement. People's fear of going out to relieve themselves at night led to still further pollution of their domestic living space, and to inevitable health hazards. Later, bucket toilets were installed along the roadside, but infrequent collections led to a worse situation than before. Buckets of raw sewage festered for days in the summer heat next to spaza shops selling fruit and vegetables, surrounded by swarms of large flies.

Mozambique first came into being when DIPAC, a construction company working in Alexandra,[20] moved its Mozambican workforce onto a piece of empty land in 1990, and later retrenched most of them. Since then, many other people have moved to the settlement. Some of these are Mozambicans who arrived more recently, and have never worked for DIPAC. Mozambique is also home to small numbers of Zimbabweans, but the majority of the non-Mozambicans are South Africans, many of whom are from the Giyani and Bushbuckridge areas of the north eastern Transvaal.

As a settlement, Mozambique gives an impression of disorder, appearing to have neither spatial logic to its construction nor a sense of cohesiveness or community. While this appearance belies the existence of small shack clusters formed around kinship and social ties,[21] or around work-place relations, these clusters do not, in sum, go to make up a social unit.

Although there are no formal boundaries in Mozambique, the settlement is thought of as having several distinct areas. One of these is the original DIPAC settlement, which is still largely occupied by Mozambicans.

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[20]DIPAC was regarded as the name of the company rather than an acronym, and I came across noone who even knew what the initials stood for.

[21]In chapter 5 I look at this issue in more detail.



fig.14: building a shack in 'Mozambique'.

A hostel made of shacks

Several people compared DIPAC's original settlement to a migrant workers' hostel. Most of the men living here are young single Mozambican men, who are migrants or refugees. They are extremely vulnerable, since their employers never registered them. Consequently they are defined as illegal immigrants, and live under the constant threat of deportation. They live with men they know through work, or are distantly related to, in mainly 'no family' households.[22] In contrast to the way in which yard-dwellers see their living space, residents here view the settlement as a purely functional and barely adequate means of survival. The dissatisfaction, and sometimes even despair, with which they view their living conditions is most eloquently expressed in the words of three Mozambican men:

> It's a bad place...Here I just came to look for work. There's no option; I have to shield from rain. If DIPAC had a hostel we would stay there.
>
> I don't like this place. I'm here because I'm suffering and don't have accommodation.
>
> This place for me is just a place to sleep and look for work. It's not a healthy place. I didn't grow up in a place like this, but it's because I'm suffering.

Dissatisfaction does not stem simply from the physical conditions of the settlement, although this is indisputably appalling. In contrast to nearby yards, there is a marked

[22]No family households are those with no conjugal bond (Niehaus 1994). While this type of household is commonly characterised by co-resident siblings, in the case of Mozambique, household members often have no kin relationship at all.

lack of social cohesiveness among the shack-dwellers, which in many ways impacts negatively on their lives. There are few close kin or social ties between these households, and even within households relationships are often fairly functional and devoid of domestic or family content. Many of the men have long working days, and the little leisure time they have is spent drinking in shebeens. However, unlike the same activity in yard shebeens, this often leads to conflict rather than conviviality.

There is consequently almost no collective social organisation in the settlement. The Mozambicans are, for example, unable or unwilling to follow the example of the yards and organise a cleaning programme. There are no mechanisms to resolve disputes, and Mozambique is known in the area for the frequent fights which break out when men have been drinking at weekends. Violence and the lack of hygiene combine to cause a high rate of sickness and death, but there are no support systems to deal with this. When people become sick, they rarely attend the Alexandra clinic, because they are afraid of being deported back to Mozambique. Some go to Joyce Tshabalala for assistance,[23] but most remain in their shacks until they recover or die.

People's response to death is probably the most revealing aspect of social life in Mozambique. There are no burial societies in the settlement. When someone dies, relatives are expected to arrange the burial, but many of the Mozambican men have no family nearby, and bodies remain unclaimed in the mortuary. One resident put it bluntly, "When you die you're dead. If you don't have family to look after you, the government is going to bury you".

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[23]See p.96

As this quote suggests, the absence of family support in the predominantly male migrant environment makes the problem of social disorganisation even more acute. Virtually the only women in the area are visiting girlfriends. In the absence of legitimate claims to relationships, violent disputes often arise, and there is a high incidence of rape.

The negative consequences of social disorganisation were exacerbated in 1991 and 1992, when violence and police raids posed outside threats to the settlement. Whereas many yards played a role in organised defence, the Mozambicans were unable to organise themselves sufficiently to do this, and the first Inkatha attack in the area took place in Mozambique. In contrast to the yards, where police risked serious opposition whenever they took action, the residents of Mozambique rarely resisted them. The police knew that many of them were illegal immigrants, who therefore had no recourse to the law. They raided the settlement almost daily, mainly searching for weapons and dagga, and there were many allegations of assault and robbery at their hands.[24]

There was not, however, a complete lack of community in Mozambique during this period. The men living there clearly desired a more cohesive arrangement, even though they were unable, ultimately, to achieve this. One illustration of this was their attitude towards violence and crime. They often denied that the frequent fighting was criminal, or alternatively blamed it on outsiders - arrogant youths from the yards, or promiscuous women. Theft was also blamed on outsiders - either people from the

[24]See Appendix 2 for statements by shack-dwellers in Mozambique and in yards.

township, or RENAMO guerrillas living in the settlement, who were also perceived to be in league with the police. No one really knew who had been in RENAMO, but it represented a powerful label to attach to anti-social behaviour, in much the same way that people in yards used the Inkatha label to define social outsiders. Through this process of defining insiders and outsiders, and denying that insiders were responsible for crime, the shack-dwellers were able to maintain an image of a moral community, a 'cultural brake' against social disintegration[25] which introduced the potential for social and political organisation.

In 1991 and 1992 there were several attempts to form a shack committee in Mozambique. Each committee, however, eventually collapsed. Although outside factors such as police raids contributed to this, the lack of social cohesiveness was one of the central causes of the failure of organisation in the settlement. In chapter 5 I look more closely at these political developments.

Politics and Space

The above case studies suggest that a prerequisite for effective civic organisation in a particular settlement is that its residents perceive it as a social, as well as a political unit. This model of organisation appears to be more suitable for yards than for free-standing shack settlements. Many yards which could be characterised as social units however have no political function. While historical continuities in patterns of yard-

[25]This term is used by McFarlane to describe a similar situation in rural northern Ireland, where violence is blamed on outsiders or psychopathic insiders (McFarlane 1986).

based social relations provide one level of explanation for this phenomenon, this raises further questions about the conceptualisation of yards as social, political and spatial categories. A yard is the locus of several households, which may act as a social unit of co-resident and cooperating people, and may take on a political function linking the yard to broader civic organisation which is seen to encompass the whole township. To understand how these three levels of categorisation are combined or separated, we need to investigate the categories of household, yard and township in relation to conventionally opposed domains of domesticity and politics.

In this section I look at the conceptualisation of domestic and public space in the two yards I discussed earlier. I look firstly at how the perception of yards as semi-domestic and semi-public spaces is related to the ability of yard committees to combine social and political processes, and to create a political unit that is at the same time a moral community. Looking further at the second case study of the established yard committee, I examine the implications of this conceptualisation of space for women's participation in politics.

Conventional dichotomies

The issue of domestic and public domains, both symbolic and sociological, has been extensively discussed by authors examining the status of women. The apparent universality of female subordination has been explained by arguing that women are associated with the domestic sphere, a devalued and non-political domain, while men are associated with the more prestigious public, political sphere (Rosaldo 1974).

In this dichotomy, domestic is largely conflated with household: either "the localized family unit" (Sanday 1974:190) or "those minimal institutions and modes of activity that are organized immediately around one or more mothers and their children" (Rosaldo 1974:23). This is seen as a fundamentally non-political category, in the same way that Sahlins' 'domestic mode of production' describes household economies based on shared meanings and culturally ascribed statuses; effectively a 'moral economy' and, as Wilk describes it, a 'black box' - a unit rather than a focus of analysis (Cheal 1989; Wilk 1989).

In contrast, the public domain has been described as 'society': "activities that link, rank, organize, or subsume" domestic units. In other words, the public domain is a 'political economy' that involves the "control of persons or control of things" through negotiation and struggle (Rosaldo 1974:23; Sanday 1974:190; Cheal 1989). On a symbolic level, the public level is synonymous with "universalistic systems of order, meaning, and commitment" (Rosaldo 1974:24).

The universality of this dichotomy has since been questioned, since the social and organisational form of the domestic unit varies in different societies. More importantly, the association of women with a devalued domestic sphere has been shown to be intrinsically related to a nature/culture dichotomy, and is culturally specific to 'Western' society. In other words, too many variables are subsumed in one all-encompassing dichotomy (Tiffany 1978; Moore 1988; Strathern 1984; Poewe 1981).

Despite this, the distinction between a non-political domestic 'moral economy' and a public 'political economy' is both persuasive and pervasive in social theory. One response to this has been to emphasise that power can be informal as well as authoritative; that politics need not be associated only with formal office and institutions, but can also refer to informal power relations within the domestic sphere (Collier 1974; Tiffany 1978; Rogers 1978). In some contexts, the significance of domestic power relations may arguably be greater than the public political economy. Peasant societies in particular are often described as centred around the domestic group, which is a social, economic and political unit (Rogers 1978:148). From a different perspective, Cheal has argued that in the context of socio-economic change, households may well combine 'moral' and 'political' models of the household, which provide "contrasting sets of rules and resources, that are selectively drawn upon by social actors to achieve their purposes at hand, under conditions where no single strategy provides a permanent best solution" (Cheal 1989:19). In order to understand how these arguments can illuminate the different statuses of Alexandra yards, I begin by examining the categories of household and domesticity.

Household and domesticity

There are many different kinds of residential arrangements in Alexandra. A high level of fluidity, and continued influx into the township, makes it difficult to define household membership without presenting a misleadingly static picture. Murray, writing about Lesotho, defines a de jure household as "the unit of economic

viability", tangibly manifested as a "partially co-residential group" whose de facto membership changes developmentally over time (Murray 1981:48). Spiegel has challenged the analytical value of this distinction, pointing to changes in de jure household membership in rural labour-sending areas (Spiegel 1986,1987). However, both Murray and Spiegel concur that labour migrants tend to remain members of their rural households, to which they send remittances.

Today's complex patterns of urbanisation, however, resist conventional typologies and periodisations (Mabin 1991).[26] People living in South African cities pursue a variety of strategies regarding rural-urban links and urban household arrangements, and may not know themselves what decisions they are going to take in an unknown future. Whether one looks at co-residence and commensality, at household as a sphere of economic distribution and consumption, or at emic notions of household membership, de jure household membership in Alexandra is fluid. Patterns of co-residence and economic support are constantly changing. Domestic arrangements do nonetheless form patterns which demonstrate significant differences in the way people organise their households.[27]

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[26]See chapter 1.

[27]Since I am focusing on ideas about domestic space in Alexandra, the definition of household used here involves at least partial co-residence and commensality. Economic support is a much more problematic factor, since there is a high level of unemployment in the area, and patterns of dependence and support are subject to the vagaries of the labour market. Although some people sometimes remit wages to rural relatives, this does not preclude them from being members of urban households which are separate from those inhabited by these rural relatives. While I recognise that some Alexandra residents are simultaneously members of rural households, these are not included in the analysis here, which refers to residential arrangements in Alexandra alone.

A simple typology of households in Lusaka would not only present a distorted and static picture, but would also gloss over the different characters and histories of specific settlements. Household typologies also obscure the linkages between households, a feature which Spiegel has suggested may be more analytically pertinent, in a context of fluidity, than the typologies of households themselves (Spiegel 1986).

In my own study, an examination of household, in conjunction with networks of kinship, affinity and other close social relationships in specific yards, begins to suggest that domestic space extends beyond households, and that we should focus on 'domesticity' rather than on a static notion of household. An analysis of this phenomenon provides some pointers to understanding the successes and failures of ACO strategy in the area.

Many yard-based households in fact form extended family units with other households. Although these households may be accommodated in separate dwellings, there is often cooperation, commensality, joint decision-making and residential fluidity between them. In these cases, the use of household as a unit of analysis obscures more than it reveals. The family or domestic group may be made up of several households, and the domestic domain is not confined to a built dwelling. This dispersion of domesticity has been found in several other contexts. Ross's (1993) study of an informal settlement in the Western Cape, for example, describes domestic relations diffused throughout the settlement. This phenomenon has also been noted in America, where poor urban Black communities construct domestic networks. Thus,

> the basis of familial structure and cooperation is not the nuclear family...but an extended cluster of kinsmen related chiefly through children but also through marriage and friendship, who align to provide domestic functions. This cluster, or domestic network, is diffused over several kin-based households, and fluctuations in individual household composition do not significantly affect cooperative arrangements (Stack 1974:114).

While Stack notes that the members of this group may live near each other or co-reside (Ibid:113), the domestic network is not primarily a spatial category. In Alexandra, however, the locus of domesticity is often the yard - a clearly demarcated spatial category. This is similar to the peasant 'domus' in medieval France, which comprised a domestic cluster that went beyond the extended family, and was defined by and "embodied in the permanence of a house and in the daily life of a group co-resident under the same roof" (Ladurie 1980:24). The boundaries of Alexandra yards often similarly define domestic domains over time, despite changes in the number of households and in their membership. Like the 'domus', the yard is then both a spatial and moral entity, the significance of which is greater than the sum of its inhabitants (Ibid:30).

One example of this is the yard inhabited solely by one extended family, referred to earlier.[28] This yard has been inhabited by six generations of the Botha family since the 1920s. During the last seventy years there have been changes in family composition, in the number of households and in the number of buildings in the yard. It still remains, however, the Botha family yard, headed by its widowed matriarch. Although there are a number of different households in different houses, the

[28]p.94

boundaries between them are porous and the yard as a whole is the family home. Fenced, with one access gate, and clearly differentiated from the public path that runs alongside, the yard could be described as a domestic domain.

Here, the boundaries of family and yard are coterminous. But even in those yards which, unlike the Bothas', are inhabited by several different families, ties of kinship, affinity and neighbourliness may extend many of the features of domesticity beyond individual households or families.

In the Tshabalala yard, the three families referred to earlier[29] - the Tshabalalas, the Mokoenas and the Langas - between them form at least eight households in seven different dwellings. Other families are similarly dispersed in different buildings in the yard. This pattern is constantly changing as the families change their membership over time, and many family members have moved out of the yard. In this example, however, the yard as a whole is described using the idiom of kinship; as one big family headed by the Tshabalalas. The power of the Tshabalalas to control the space in the yard is not presented in political terms, but as a process of authoritative allocation based on shared understandings. Some former tenants contest this model, and see the landlord-tenant relationship in political terms, as a process of struggle to prevent the Tshabalalas from buying back the stand. Their concerns have not however been taken up by the yard committee, which has been assimilated into the paternalistic and familistic model of social relations in the yard.

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[29] p.96

In other words, while there is clearly an imbalance of power in the yard, resulting in negotiation and struggle, this is manifest in largely informal ways, and is not evident in institutions or office. Thus it is not explicitly recognised as public or political. While households and families are differentiated, the yard as a whole is perceived in broadly domestic terms.

The diffusion of domesticity within a yard is even more marked in the second case study, but in this case the yard is also a political category. In the following discussion I examine this apparently contradictory situation.

ACO's ideal yard: domestic and political?

I showed previously[30] that many of the households in this yard are connected through ties of kinship and affinity which cross-cut the distinction between formal and informal housing. In addition to this, people have 'homeboy' links as well as bonds of friendship and neighbourliness which have developed over the years, particularly among former tenants.

Many features of domesticity are diffused within this yard. While the yard is clearly demarcated from the world beyond it, there is no hard and fast differentiation between the space within and the space beyond the household. Rather, certain activities are categorised as more private, and thus more firmly grounded within people's separate dwellings than other activities. On the one hand, sleeping and sex are defined as most

[30] p.103

appropriately situated within the dwelling, a space into which the yard community is hesitant to intrude, as demonstrated by the yard committee's reluctance to mediate marital disputes unless they threaten the stability of the yard. On the other hand, activities such as child-care, eating together and washing clothes may take place within or beyond the dwelling. Even private and quintessentially domestic activities such as washing oneself and using the toilet are not completely private, since the yard has only a few communal toilets and taps.

The narrow spaces between shacks are more private than the open space in the middle of the yard, and are often the venue for private conversations or people who simply want to be alone. The space between the two rows of terraced rooms is where yard meetings are held. This space is freely accessed by residents of the yard, but is strategically hidden from the view of the street and passing police patrols. The open space in the middle of the yard leads directly onto the street, and the most public part of the yard. Even this space is not, however, completely public, and is symbolically bounded by a small fence which separates the street from the yard.[31]

This categorisation of the yard into different areas is, then, primarily spatial. But even spatial categories can vary over time. Men and women gather for yard meetings at weekends, and after the meeting the men in particular will often continue discussing issues in the centre of the yard while they drink at the shebeen. The same space during the week is used more by women for domestic activities, since many of the women are unemployed and have young babies.

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[31]See fig.13

In other words, space in the yard is categorised in terms of degrees of privacy or domesticity. Domestic space is not clearly distinct from the semi-public or political domain of the yard committee. Rather, these categories are fluid and merge into one another.

This yard then appears paradoxically as simultaneously a domestic and a public domain, combining both a moral and a political economy. On the one hand, the yard population is a moral community embodying shared values and understandings. This is the model which was enunciated most clearly by residents of the yard, who frequently stressed their unity. The role of Matthew Mkhize, as chair of the yard committee, on one level supports this perspective. He is accorded authority and respect, and speaks on behalf of the yard. Cheal has shown how this type of arrangement is conventionally described as a moral economy, which "presumes the existence of consensus and cooperation" (Cheal 1989:18). On the other hand, the main function of the yard committee is dispute resolution, which explicitly negotiates people's opposing interests. This is arguably characteristic of a political economy model of social relations, which "assumes that dissensus and division are to be expected" (Ibid).

The reason that there is no contradiction between moral and political economy lies in the nature of political power in the yard. Since the yard committee is democratically elected, it is understood as being representative of all the people in the yard and directly accountable to them. Political power therefore rests on a moral base. There are presumed to be no 'political' divisions in the yard; an understanding

emphasised by people's common affiliation to the ANC. Thus, while the yard committee is a formal political institution which enables the yard community to participate in broader political processes, disputes and opposing interests within the yard are not seen as part of political activity. Disagreements are thus not viewed in terms of power relations but are understood as the consequence of intimacy; similar to family quarrels.

This case study would further appear to contradict the conventional dichotomy between the domestic/private and political/public domains, since the two are inextricably fused. While there is an emic distinction between the yard as a moral community and political activity that takes place in broader (public, township) political structures, the yard committee is nevertheless recognised as a political structure formed by the yard community and functioning primarily within the yard. Political power is however embedded within the moral community; perhaps a true manifestation of 'people's power'.

But what of the other central component of the public/private dichotomy? Where does gender fit in? Does the embeddedness of the political domain within a sphere which overlaps with domesticity enable women to participate in politics in a manner which women have in most contexts been unable to do? Civic activists often claim this is the case, and point to the predominance of women in civic structures. There are, however, still very few women at a leadership level. In the following discussion I examine the political role of women in this same yard.

Women, Politics and Power

There seems to be a high level of political participation among women in the yard. Although the founding members of the yard committee are all men, the treasurer of the committee is today a woman, and other women also participate in the committee. Both men and women attend general yard meetings at weekends. Women in the yard also have their own committee, which mediates disputes between women, particularly during the week when male yard committee members are absent from the yard.

If women are unable to resolve a dispute among themselves, they refer it to the yard committee, which has more authority than the women's committee. In practice, this usually means referring the matter to Matthew Mkhize, whose position as chair of the committee is in many ways analogous to that of a household head.

One might argue that ascribing a higher degree of authority to the more inclusive yard committee does not imply that women have less authority than men. However, the men also have an exclusively male grouping, which is effectively beyond the authority of the yard committee, and which deals with defence. The issue of violence was raised only once at a general yard meeting, and the men later decided to organise guards. Women are excluded from any involvement in this activity, and there are no report-backs to general yard meetings. This is probably not surprising, since warfare is quintessentially political and public, and almost always associated with men (Sanday 1974). In the context of the yard, this suggests that men as a group have more formal political authority than women.

Another arena of differential access to authority is the relationship between spouses or lovers, a domain defined in the yard as completely private. An examination of specific marital disputes suggests that women are not only challenging their husbands' authority, but also explicitly challenging the categorisation of these disputes as private. This results in a process of struggle; of informal but nevertheless political competition within the yard.

During the 1980s, many women who were beaten or otherwise badly treated by their husbands reported this to people's courts. If the youths who ran the courts found the husband 'guilty', he would be punished, often severely. Not surprisingly, the phenomenon of youths flogging adult men for mistreating their wives was not popular among men, who felt it violated moral values.

Since people's courts have been disbanded, dispute resolution has become a function primarily of yard committees; structures in which youth activists play no institutional role. Yard committees today are generally reluctant to intervene in marital disputes. Several examples from ACO's 'ideal yard', discussed earlier, illustrate the underlying processes.

Dispute 1

A woman living in a shack in the yard was being repeatedly beaten by her common-law husband. Eventually she reported the matter to yard committee officials, who told the man to stop beating her. Months later, she was still being bea . When she showed me her bruises in the presence of a man who played an active role in the yard committee, he responded by saying that she was lying, since the committee had told her husband to stop months before.

By bringing the matter to the attention of the yard committee, this woman was making a statement about the nature of marital disputes. She made it clear that husbands and wives can have opposing interests, requiring intervention in the political domain of the yard committee. The committee, whose purpose is largely to ensure that the yard remains a unified moral community, responded in a way that was calculated to restore stability - to reassure the woman that her problems were being taken seriously, without practically intervening in a way which would antagonise her husband.

Women may, however, force their disputes into the political domain, as the following example shows:

> **Dispute 2**
>
> Late one night, Nomvula came back from the shebeen to find her husband Thami in bed with another woman. Nomvula stood in the yard and shouted so that everyone woke up and saw the guilty lovers coming out of their shack together. Nomvula then demanded that the yard committee convene that night to deal with her husband. In the end, the committee was saved the difficulty of having to mediate a dispute between a husband and wife. Instead, they mediated between Thami and his lover's common-law husband. Thami was initially ordered to pay compensation to the other man, but the latter rejected this, arguing that the payment would effectively be lobolo,[32] and he could lose his common-law wife altogether. The dispute could not be resolved by the committee, who referred it to David Shabangu, the chairperson of Lusaka.[33]

[32]Bridewealth.

[33]See chapter 4.

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[33]See chapter 4.

In this example, a woman succeeded in bringing a marital dispute momentarily into the political domain. It was then transformed, however, into a dispute between two men, belonging more squarely in 'public', during which the interests of the women were not addressed.

Although it might appear that men can treat their wives however they wish without public censure, there is a third example in which the yard community did intervene:

Dispute 3

Dudu used to [illegible] with her sister's family in a shack in the yard, but began spending much [illegible] with her boyfriend on 14th Avenue. When he started beating [illegible] to local comrades for help, but as she explained, "they [illegible] is involved they mustn't interfere". Dudu then had a baby [illegible] and denied paternity. He accused her of sleeping with other men, the [illegible] got worse, and he refused to support the child. Dudu sought refuge in the yard, and when her boyfriend started threatening her, he was himself beaten up by Dudu's "brothers": men in the yard.

In this example, direct intervention in a marital dispute did not threaten yard unity, since Dudu's boyfriend was not resident in the yard. In the previous examples, however, intervention would have been perceived as endangering the moral community, by creating conflict between men, while marital disputes between men and women are private and therefore can be tolerated. The yard here could be compared to a patrilocal extended family, where women's attempts to achieve power are seen to threaten the moral ties between kin and affines (Collier 1974:91). Thus,

> In a world where men gain political power by having a large and cohesive body of co-resident kin, young women gain power by breaking up domestic units. Men work to bind lineage mates together; women work to tear them apart (Ibid:92).

I previously showed how the power and authority of the yard committee in this yard, and in particular Matthew Mkhize, has extended beyond the yard, so that Mkhize is popularly perceived as the leader of a street committee.[34] This is due to the fact that the yard's residents are well-organised into a united body. Women's attempts to achieve power are seen as disruptive to this unity and threatening to the power of the yard community as a whole.

I would argue that this exclusion of marital disputes from formal political processes explains the limited extent of women's participation in political structures outside the yard. A weak differentiation between public and private has been argued to facilitate women's empowerment (Rosaldo 1974; Collier 1974; Rogers 1978). This appears to hold true in the case of organised yards in Alexandra. Here, women are able to participate politically because of the way in which the political domain has been brought into a sphere of activity which overlaps with the domestic domain. But the same process effectively excludes women from participating fully as political actors in the wholly public domain of the township or the civic. Since the yard committee is elected by and accountable to the yard population, political power in the yard is constituted by a 'moral community'. Within this moral community, the status of women is ascribed and defined by social norms and values. The attempts by some

[34] p.111

women to have their grievances recognised, and thus eventually to achieve power, are not recognised as political, and these women are instead viewed as disruptive.

In other words, while the political domain has been partially brought into the domestic domain, the domestic has also been brought into the political, and women are constrained from becoming fully and formally recognised political actors. It would seem, therefore, that the conventional dichotomy associating women with domesticity and men with politics, although simplifying a complex situation, still has some validity.

Conclusion

The quotation with which I began this chapter - a vision of what yard-based organisation could be - applies to only one of the case studies I have described. In the successfully organised yard inhabited by former tenants and more recently-arrived shack-dwellers, the yard committee indeed represents 'comradeship, brotherhood and working together as one family'. For the community of this yard, ACO's representation of yards as the building blocks of a unitary township represented by the civic appears to make sense. But while this yard fits into ACO's representation of space in Alexandra, the environment around it does not easily do so.

ACO's attempt to construct a hegemony is challenged in several ways. Firstly, there are other yards which are impervious to ACO organisation, and whose inhabitants challenge the right of ACO to represent them. Secondly, ACO has failed to maintain

effective organisation in free-standing shack settlements. The large population living in these areas means that this is a serious threat to ACO's claim to represent the entire township. Thirdly, even where yards are organised into committees, the influence of individual activists is such that, as Carter suggested,[35] they often do not effectively link up with broader structures. In the next chapter I look at political leadership in Lusaka as a whole, and show how David Shabangu, the 'chairperson' of the Lusaka area committee, acted relatively autonomously of higher structures and manipulated differences between ACO and ANC to his own advantage. The failure of ACO to exercise control over shack settlements presented a further opportunity for Shabangu to attempt to extend his power and influence into these areas. In my discussion of informal housing in chapter 5, I take a more in-depth look at the consequences of Shabangu's efforts to incorporate the Mozambique shack-dwellers into his Lusaka structures.

[35] p.90

CHAPTER 4. PATRONS, POWER-BROKERS AND COMRADES

There is an abundance of literature on political leadership in informal settlements in South Africa (eg Stadler 1979; Cole 1987; Bonner 1990; Sapire 1992; White 1993). 'Warlords' such as Ngxobongwana in Crossroads (Cole 1987), and charismatic leaders like James Mpanza in Orlando (Stadler 1979) are seen as characteristic of the political culture of these settlements. The emphasis on informal housing has, however, obscured the fact that these types of leaders also exist in contexts outside informal settlements. In this chapter I look at one such leader, who was a long-established resident of Alexandra living with his large family in a house in Lusaka. Between May 1991 and May 1992, I followed the career of David Shabangu, who was involved in organising both yards and shack settlements. As a leader in both ACO and ANC structures in the area, he attempted to minimise outside interference in Lusaka, which he saw as his own independent territory, and maintained his position through patronage, brokerage and coercion.

This style of leadership, usually associated with 'shacklords' in informal settlements, presented difficulties to both ACO and ANC. Shabangu displayed a set of values and practices which did not only from differ from the democratic political culture espoused by these organisations, but which also fell outside the dichotomy these organisations make between a progressive organised urban constituency and

conservative rural-centred outsiders. As I showed in chapter 2,[1] these contrasting images of town and country are central to the representation of urban space by both ACO and ANC. In other words, not only did Shabangu challenge the democratic credentials of these organisations, but also their understandings of the very nature of urban politics and their representations of urban space.

Shabangu was eventually toppled from his position and forced to flee the township. In this chapter, I attempt to explain his rise and fall from power by looking at the resources which Shabangu was able to use in maintaining his position, and then at how the performance of his role led to a loss in legitimacy and the collapse of his power-base. A central factor in this process was Shabangu's attempt to maintain a yard-based constituency while developing a relationship with shack-dwellers in free-standing shack settlements. This demonstrates the need to contextualise studies of informal housing in the broader urban environment, raising important questions, which I address in chapter 5, about how we view political organisation in informal settlements.

David Shabangu: 'Chairman of Lusaka'

The first day I began fieldwork in Alexandra I met David Shabangu, self-styled 'chairman' of Lusaka. I was introduced to bab'Shabangu,[2] as he was known locally, by an executive member of ACO, who told me that Shabangu would help to facilitate

[1] pp.78-85

[2] The prefix means father.

my research in the area.[3] My initial impression was one of rotund joviality - a colourful character with many improbable stories to tell. Short in stature, but with a huge imposing stomach barely contained by his well-worn shirt, Shabangu was often to be found holding court in the street outside his home, his face all but obscured by an enormous straw hat.

Shabangu was not however a figure of fun. He took me on several tours of his territory in his old and battered car, and despite the hospitality we experienced at every stop, Shabangu always insisted on being accompanied by two or three local comrades - tough-looking youths covered in the distinctive tattoos of prison gangs - for protection.

During these visits, Shabangu told me about himself. He claimed to be a privileged member of the king's council in Swaziland, where he had a homestead and several wives. The king apparently did not approve of politics, and Shabangu explained he was at pains to keep his participation in the ANC a secret. Shabangu's age was indeterminate, but before moving to Alexandra he had lived in Sophiatown, where he had played the trumpet with the African Jazz Pioneers, and he claimed to be personally acquainted with many ANC veterans from that period. He also revealed to me that he was a powerful traditional healer, with patients all over South Africa.

[3]See Introduction, p.18.

From the start, Shabangu described himself as the chairman of Lusaka, meaning that he claimed to have been elected by residents of the area to head the Lusaka area committee and represent it on the ACO central committee. Later in 1991, Shabangu was elected as chair of the ANC sub-branch which corresponded to the boundaries of Lusaka, and several ANC executive members assured me of his bona fide status as a trusted local leader.

It eventually emerged that many of Shabangu's claims were untrue. Like many of ACO's 'areas', Lusaka did not have a functioning area committee, and in fact ACO executive members regarded Shabangu as merely the chairperson of a 'block' - one of the smaller units of an area - but allowed him to attend central committee meetings in the absence of an elected chair of Lusaka. Shabangu's second home was in kaNgwane, not Swaziland, and he had no special relationship with the Swazi king. Despite his ANC affiliation, I discovered, he was actively involved in opposition to Enos Mabuza, the pro-ANC chief minister of KaNgwane.

In Alexandra, Shabangu used his position in ACO and ANC to increase his own power and seemed intent on creating his own personal fiefdom in the township. He withheld information from central leadership, misled his supporters, embezzled money collected for public uses and formed a vigilante group of men from Transkei who carried traditional weapons and enforced his will.

Shabangu was hugely influential in local political developments in Lusaka, and whatever his personal political convictions may have been he was undoubtedly an integral part of local ANC and ACO organisation. The leaders of these organisations used him despite his shortcomings, and people initially supported him in spite of, or maybe because of, his reliance on coercion as well as legitimacy. In 1992, however, Shabangu left Alexandra in fear of his life, after being implicated in the murder of an old Zulu-speaking couple who were both ANC members. That his fear was well-founded was borne out by the murder, a few months later, of a local activist who had worked very closely with Shabangu. ACO leaders suspected that the murder was a result of internal conflicts in the area.

Control Over Resources

Shabangu controlled certain resources which enabled him to carry out his leadership role. These included personal attributes as well as resources which were attendant upon his position as chairperson of Lusaka, and which depended on the continued performance of his role.

Personal Attributes

Although Shabangu had been resident in Alexandra for many years, his rise to power was relatively recent. One reason for this was his status as a senior married man. In 1991, as in the 1980s, there was no question of women achieving significant leadership positions in Lusaka, since this involved organising the area for defence

(Carter 1991:266).[4] But while opportunities for older men to acquire political leadership had been limited in the youth-dominated political climate of the 1980s, by the 1990s this had changed. Yards in Lusaka were initially organised into yard committees in 1986 by youth activists, who also established a 'people's court' in the area and regularly meted out violent punishments.[5] The behaviour of undisciplined youths, known as 'com-tsotsis', however prompted civic leaders to shift youth activists into an organising role, without any institutional power. Richard Mdakane of ACO explained his organisation's current policy,

> Elderly people need to be given priority in structures, because some people are conservative. Others prefer a dignified committee of fathers and mothers. Religious people would like to pray before and after meetings. Youth don't use that culture.

Many people in Lusaka supported this approach, arguing that youths could not resolve disputes between adults, let alone flog a grown man. Mdakane specifically spoke about older activists being needed to organise communities of people who had recently arrived in Alexandra from the rural areas, and who were perceived as being more conservative than established residents. Shabangu's rise to power must be understood in the context of this revival of generational male authority.[6]

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[4]See also chapter 3, p.130.

[5]See chapter 3, p.131.

[6]It was in this context that the struggle between men and women over the definition of disputes as 'public' or 'domestic' occurred (See chapter 3, pp.131-135).

In this context of the renewed importance of traditional and patriarchal values, a second source of power was Shabangu's status as a traditional healer. He described himself as an umlingo (magician), and frequently spoke about his powers. He used these for protection as well as for treating a steady flow of clients, and participated in the training of local sangomas. The power of traditional healers in Alexandra is however ambivalent, since it is considered to shade imperceptibly into the power of malevolent magic or witchcraft, and people still remember the events of 1986, when youths burnt down the houses of several sangomas and burnt to death a woman accused of being a witch.[7] Although there was a general acceptance that Shabangu was a genuine healer, I came across very few people who admitted to consulting him, suggesting perhaps that his power had the potential to inspire not only trust but fear.

Shabangu's power thus had a charismatic aspect, and this combined with authoritative skills in oratory to give him a formidable public presence which assisted him in his attempts to organise the area. He worked tirelessly to unify the community, and showed considerable proficiency in doing so. He was quick to mediate disputes, ready to listen to people's problems, and keen to set up local yard or shack committees wherever possible in order to draw people into civic structures. Where he was successful, this process of unification was highly valued by residents, who felt it empowered them to have Shabangu representing their interests and enabled them to organise more effective defence against violence. Shabangu's competent, if idiosyncratic, fluency in English convinced people that he could represent them at any

[7]Johanna Hlubi was killed in February 1986, at the height of the 'Six Day War' against the security forces. Witchcraft accusations are still fairly common in Alexandra. I was on one occasion warned that a local sangoma might bewitch me, although no one accused her directly of being a witch.

level.

Organisational Resources: Brokerage, Patronage and Coercion

My introduction to Shabangu by an executive member of ACO points suggestively to a role he clearly aspired to: that of a broker, who "stands guard over the crucial junctures or synapses of relationships which connect the local system to the larger whole" (Wolf 1956:97).

In addition to representing Lusaka on ACO's central committee, Shabangu frequently visited the 2nd Avenue offices of ACO and ANC, where he would convey information about the area to the leadership. It was rare to find anyone else from Lusaka doing this, or indeed to find anyone from this area in the offices at all, other than a few of Shabangu's trusted lieutenants who would either accompany him or deliver his messages.

Back in Lusaka, Shabangu encouraged visitors of note to explain their business to him so that he could assist, usually successfully since he was the best known representative of the area. Even the press cited Shabangu as the authoritative spokesperson of Lusaka, and quoted his version of the first outbreak of violence in Alexandra since the unbanning of the ANC.[8] Shabangu's home was known locally as "the office"; a place where people could go with their problems. He always kept his ear to the ground, with the help of local comrades, and whenever there was a serious

[8]See Introduction, p.14.

conflict or otherwise significant local event he would appear at the scene, or send comrades to represent him. By making it his business to know everything that was happening in his area, Shabangu made himself indispensable to ACO and ANC, which lacked coherent organising structures in Lusaka. Likewise, Shabangu was the visible face of these organisations for local residents, who trusted him either to deal with their concerns directly, or to convey them to higher authorities. This trust in Shabangu's influence was reinforced when he was frequently seen in the company of visiting leaders.

In other words, Shabangu mediated between the local level and central leadership, gaining influence that reinforced and legitimised his position and discouraged dissent. The rapidly changing terrain of Alexandra politics, and the largely instrumental nature of Shabangu's relationship with those over whom his moral authority was weak, however meant that he continually needed to demonstrate his influence, since the perceived withdrawal of support would weaken his position.

This brokering role can be maintained only if the linkage is limited to a small number of mediators, and preferably just one (Silverman 1977b). Shabangu was thus at pains to maintain the exclusivity of his position wherever possible, by monopolising the flow of information between the two levels. He was, for example, reluctant to refer disputes to structures outside Lusaka. When ACO began a programme of training mediators for the Alexandra Justice Centre,[9] Shabangu refused to send anyone from Lusaka for training, claiming that he had already trained them himself. While

[9]An initiative of the University of the Witwatersrand Centre for Applied Legal Studies and ACO.

brokerage is common in most democracies, and is not necessarily viewed in a negative light, Shabangu's lack of accountability, coupled with the way in which he withheld information from both ACO leadership and local residents, was counter-productive to the organisation as a whole.

Shabangu's ability to act as a broker was clearly a source of power, but his role was more complex than that of only a broker. The power he gained through brokerage both reinforced and was reinforced by other sources. One of these was his ability to establish special relationships which resembled what is commonly referred to as patronage.

Much of the literature on power brokers falls within studies of patronage; a broker being the agent who brings together a patron and a client, although the broker might also act as a patron in his own right (Eg Weingrod 1977a; Boissevain 1977; Lemarchand, 1977; Silverman 1977b). There is an ongoing debate about the use and meaning of this term:[10] two problems in particular make it difficult to discuss patronage in a South African context. Firstly, the concept of patronage often confuses etic and emic levels of analysis, resulting in a local model being used to analyze itself (Silverman 1977a; Gilsenan 1977). Whereas in many Mediterranean societies the patron is clearly present in local idiom, this is not obviously the case in South Africa, and one should be wary of confusing a structural dependency relationship with a

[10]Gellner has attempted to present a general definition, where "patronage is unsymmetrical, involving inequality of power; it tends to form an extended system; to be long-term, or at least not restricted to a single isolated transaction; to possess a distinctive ethos; and whilst not always illegal or immoral, to stand outside the officially proclaimed formal morality of the society in question" (Gellner 1977:4).

moral ethos.

Secondly, while the anthropological usage of patronage refers to a characteristic type of social relationship, studies of political development in Africa today often focus on political clientelism, in which patronage is a feature of government or party organisation (Weingrod 1977b; Eisenstadt and Lemarchand 1981). Defined as,

> a more or less personalised, affective and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships (Lemarchand and Legg 1972:51),

political clientelism is understood to refer to the integration of 'traditional' and 'modern' value systems and behaviour in a context of post-colonial political change, enabling one author to state that "patronage in the anthropological sense appears increasingly to be a historical phenomenon, while patronage in the political sense becomes more relevant to contemporary issues" (Weingrod 1977b:325).

Indeed, the usefulness of the concept patronage has been questioned altogether, due to the fact that it has become too all-embracing to be helpful; "a concept for all seasons, applied quasi-universally to a multiplicity of relationships in a wide diversity of social and economic formations" (Gilsenan 1977:167).

In the light of all this, it is not helpful to try to ascertain whether Shabangu himself was a patron or not. One can rather use the concept of patronage as an ideal type, and note that the relationships Shabangu established exhibited some but not all of its

features, combined with other attributes. Shabangu was not simply a patron, any more than he was just a power broker or a 'warlord', and we need to examine the articulation between all these facets of his leadership role. Shabangu's use of patronage enabled him to exercise coercion through the indirect use of physical force and direct control of access to space. His ability to do so was reinforced by power derived from his position as broker between organisations and followers.

Shabangu relied on a group of comrades, who were mainly youth activists, to assist in organising the community. Since there was no formal organising structure in the area, these comrades were personally picked by Shabangu and were accountable to him as an individual.[11] Their functions included disseminating information, organising meetings and collecting money for mass funerals or defence. They also played a 'policing' role involving the threat and practice of physical force. Although as youth activists comrades were discouraged from holding office in ACO structures, those close to Shabangu gained considerable power, legitimised by their role as his agents. However, the relationship was clearly unsymmetrical, since Shabangu had access to many more sources of power than did his comrades. Two of his lieutenants who displeased him simply disappeared, one after publicly being accused by Shabangu of being a police informer: a charge which usually resulted in expulsion or death.

[11]ACO intended to create organising committees in every area, each of which would be answerable to an elected organiser, who would in turn report to the area committee.

Shabangu also acted as a powerful benefactor to several local residents. In one case he protected a Zulu-speaking woman who had been accused of being an Inkatha supporter, leaving her deeply obligated to Shabangu, who encouraged the relationship to continue in this vein. Other similar examples involved bestowing protection and influence on key individuals who were strategically placed to ensure a spread of loyal support.

Shabangu was able in this way to establish a series of long-term multiplex social relationships involving mutual dependence and inequality of power. Although this resembles patronage as commonly understood, Shabangu and his comrades were not simply patron and clients in the usual sense of the term, in that the relationship lacked the moral ethos usually associated with such a relationship. Secondly, the ebb and flow of Shabangu's authority meant that the power imbalance between him and his comrades was at times shifting and ambiguous.

While the comrades depended on Shabangu for their power, they were privately dismissive of him, to the extent that they contemptuously told me that his claim to be chair of Lusaka was a lie. There was a complex process of competition for power, hidden from outsiders by the apparent loyalty of all concerned to the same organisations.

The central figures here were two of Shabangu's closest comrades. Philemon Mthembu, an ex-FRELIMO guerilla and ANC marshal who had been involved in underground military structures while the ANC was banned, was highly respected and

influential in his own right. He was not interested in holding office in local ACO or ANC structures, and chose to assist Shabangu in organising the area, but he was increasingly thrust into a leadership role. People often came to him for assistance when Shabangu was not available, and valued his experience and ability to solve their problems. Philemon's position as a marshal also gave him an independent power base, since he played a central role in defence and was involved in recruiting and training potential marshals. Shabangu was doubtless aware of the potential for Philemon to usurp his role, and for this reason was at pains to maintain an alliance with him. Indeed, Shabangu was in some ways more dependent on Philemon than vice versa.

Among the other comrades, informal leadership rested on a man known as Linda, who was significantly older than the others. Locally, Linda was feared as a thug. His intimidatory practices were to a degree, however, legitimised by his association with Shabangu: he thus depended on Shabangu for the continued effectiveness of his informal leadership role. But people also knew that Linda himself commanded the allegiance of many comrades whose loyalty to Shabangu was questionable. In a context where Shabangu's influence was wavering, Linda's main potential rival was Philemon. While Shabangu initially relied on Linda for much of his protection, as time went on Linda grew to resent Philemon's increasingly privileged position, and he and his comrades became openly contemptuous of both Shabangu and Philemon. Shabangu could not afford to alienate further either Linda or Philemon, and was forced to suffer the consequences of the conflict between them. Therefore, although Shabangu was thus empowered by elements of patronage in his relationship with his

comrades, there were countervail' g forces which weakened his ability to maintain this type of relationship.

The relationship between Shabangu and his comrades enabled him to use coercion when dealing with those who fell outside his moral authority. It is doubtful whether Shabangu himself ever directly used physical force, which might have damaged his claim to be unifier and representative of the community, and he left the potentially controversial 'policing role', which involved beatings and other intimidatory practices, to his comrades. I will later show how Shabangu tried to increase his control over physical force, and the impact this had on his position. But Shabangu also had access to a more subtle form of coercion: control over the allocation of space. In successfully organised areas of Lusaka, the right to build shacks was controlled by civic structures, which were ultimately controlled by Shabangu. In theory, he had the ability to banish someone from the area, and I came across several cases where this appeared to have happened. He could also prevent a newcomer from settling there, although in practice he did not have sole control over this process, since both the comrades and local yard committees played a role in such decisions.

To sum up, the basis of Shabangu's power lay, firstly, in personal attributes such as age and gender, his status as a traditional healer, and organisational and oratory skills; and secondly in the derivative power of brokerage, his use of patronage, his control over physical force and the allocation of space. His power however also contained sources of vulnerability. He could be weakened if his ability to maintain a patronage-style relationship with key comrades was diminished; his legitimacy could

be dented by either his comrades' excessive use of physical force or by the withdrawal of support by ACO or ANC; and his magical powers could prove to be sources of fear and mistrust. Much of his power depended on whether he could continue to extend civic structures and unify the community under his leadership; legitimising, in the eyes of local residents and central authorities, his claim to represent the area. Shabangu's ability to fulfil this role met with varied success, leading eventually to his downfall.

Performance: Legitimacy and Coercion

People's evaluations of how Shabangu used resources such as brokerage, patronage and coercion in his leadership role were critical to the maintenance of his power-base. Shabangu clearly could not rely on coercion alone to consolidate his position, and a patron or broker requires a degree of legitimacy to be effective. Shabangu therefore needed to strike a balance between legitimacy and coercion. Swartz has argued that both legitimacy and coercion arise from people's expectations and evaluations of the content of real or symbolic exchanges. In the case of legitimate leadership, "supporters expend energy and other resources in taking part in processes which are beneficial to the locus of legitimacy in return for expectations that sometime in the future there will be a return of benefit to them" (Swartz 1969:31). In contrast to this generalised notion of reciprocity inherent in legitimacy, coercion, which involves the threat or use of force, creates a more specific expectation of benefits (the lifting of negative sanctions) within a more clearly defined time-frame. Legitimacy thus provides more flexibility than coercion in terms of people's expectations of perceived

benef[illegible]nd their subsequent evaluation of a leader's performance of his or her role. Legitimacy and coercion are not however dichotomous, and leadership combines the two in various degrees (Ibid).

Shabangu was never able to rely solely on legitimacy, for reasons which will be examined below, but he nonetheless tried to legitimise his position as far as possible. Between 1991 and 1992 a decline in his legitimacy and increased reliance on coercion accompanied changing evaluations of the performance of his leadership role.

Initially, Lusaka residents kept quiet about Shabangu's misdemeanours, and only a small number of people raised their dissatisfaction with ACO. They knew he kept money collected from residents for funerals; many disbelieved his stories about Swaziland; and there was a general suspicion as to why he often conveniently disappeared before police raids or outbreaks of violence.[12] Dissatisfaction with these and other aspects of his role, such as his use of coercion, was however not aired in public.

Towards the end of Shabangu's period of power, however, it was common to find little huddles of people, including his close comrades, angrily denouncing his actions. By this time, Shabangu had been responsible for numerous acts of violence, and many

[12]That these suspicions had been present before people began to express them publicly is evidenced by people's shocked reactions when Peta Katz and Sakkie Niehaus, from the University of the Witwatersrand anthropology department, agreed to accompany Shabangu to Swaziland to see the famous Reed Dance. Shabangu's assurance of an invitation to stay in the king's kraal came to nothing. Peta was robbed of all her money and documents in Mbabane, and it turned out that the Reed Dance was not even scheduled for that weekend. People in Alexandra showed little surprise that the trip had ended abortively.

people were afraid that he might become aware of their dissent. Nonetheless, local comrades were increasingly blatant. They would talk about Shabangu within sight of his house, although just out of earshot, in a very obviously conspiratorial manner. Shabangu was well aware of what was going on, and was convinced they were plotting against him.

Shabangu's role bears some resemblance to that of the Mexican cacique, described by Friedrich:

> a strong and autocratic leader in local and regional politics whose characteristically informal, personalistic, and often arbitrary rule is buttressed by a core of relatives, "fighters", and dependents, and is marked by the diagnostic threat and practice of violence (Friedrich 1969:247).

Here, although the phenomenon of caciquismo was perceived as illegitimate, Mexican peasants accepted the leadership of the cacique. However, their concern with legitimacy

> was indicated by the singularly strong contrast between the public care to avoid mentioning or naming a cacique as such and the extreme intensity with which his status ("cacique"), his behavior, and his power and legitimacy cropped up in private or household dialogue and in the whispered conversations of intrigue. In this singular dialectic between the public and the private, and the overt and the covert, the phenomena of caciquismo resembled witchcraft (Ibid:246).

This comparison seems particularly apt in Shabangu's case, where the shift from private to public expressions of dissatisfaction resulted in him fleeing in fear of his life. In the following discussion I examine what happened to make this shift occur.

Although Shabangu's self-seeking motivations were obvious to a number of people, public awareness of these was balanced by his attempts to legitimise his position through fulfilling people's expectations of a local leader. He sought to ensure that people perceived him to be not only an influential broker between organisations and supporters, but also as the source of material benefits; the head of a formal political structure; and someone who could unify people and create a sense of community.

While the balance between legitimacy and coercion varied over time, it also varied in space, due to the marked heterogeneity of the population of Lusaka. On the one hand, Shabangu's constituency comprised people in formal housing who were born in Alexandra, including the families who used to own stands when Alexandra was still freehold; council tenants[13] who live in terraced rooms or 'bonds'; and shack-dwellers living in the same yards as residents of formal housing. On the other hand, his potential supporters also included the residents of large free-standing shack settlements. Shabangu's mediating role between divergent types of followers, and ACO and ANC leadership, involved a complex process of representing different audiences to each other. As in the Mexican case,

> since the middleman's publics are often structurally complex, and since the ideologies which he links - particularly the ideas on legitimacy - are often even more complicated, the legitimacy of the middleman will of necessity include conflicts and contradictions of interest, motivation, and various types and levels of knowledge (Ibid:266).

[13]In some cases these were the former tenants of local landlords.

A middleman's ability to fulfil this mediating role can offset a number of features that are perceived as illegitimate, but at the same time his legitimacy varies according to different interests and understandings. Shabangu's aim was to try to reconcile these through his leadership.

The provision of material benefits

Recalling Swartz's statement about the relationship between legitimacy and the expectation of benefits, one would expect Shabangu to have had more flexibility in areas where he enjoyed a greater level of legitimacy. Indeed, amongst people who were well established in Alexandra and who had experienced the struggles of the 1980s, Shabangu's position in ACO and ANC structures went a long way to legitimise his role, and their support for these organisations did not need to be propped up by many tangible benefits in return.[14] Shabangu fulfilled their expectations largely by being highly visible and accessible, and by providing personal assistance where necessary.

At the other end of the spectrum was the Mozambique shack settlement.[15] The Mozambicans knew little about South African politics, and were only interested in supporting someone who could offer them immediate assistance in alleviating the

[14]This is a broad generalisation, and in fact people's expectations of ACO and ANC varied according to both their understandings of what these organisations stood for, and their levels of need for material assistance. In particular, most people expected more immediate results from ACO, since one of its stated goals was resolving housing problems, while the long-term benefits expected from the ANC were embodied in the vaguely defined concept of liberation. The outbreak of violence changed this situation somewhat, with people expecting the ANC to provide them with defence.

[15]See chapter 3, pp.112-118.

overcrowded, unhygienic conditions of the settlement or halting the frequent police raids to which they were subjected. Shabangu repeatedly tried to establish shack committees in the settlement and seized every opportunity to persuade people that he could assist them directly. This included, for example, claiming responsibility for the installation of toilets: at a public meeting in the settlement, Shabangu told people that I had organised for toilets to be installed. This implied that he was ultimately responsible, since he had brought me to the area. He also associated himself with outside attempts to address the problem of police harassment. When an official from the Alexandra Peace Committee visited the settlement to discuss police harassment, Shabangu convened a meeting and used it as an opportunity to establish a shack committee under his leadership.[16] When these efforts failed, Shabangu promised assistance with monitoring and defence.

Shabangu was however unable to provide the Mozambicans with the security they so badly wanted. Police raids increased in severity and many people were deported. When violence intensified, other residents of Lusaka, both yard- and shack-dwellers, began to demand that the ANC provide them with defence. Shabangu ultimately proved unable to fulfil this expectation.

[16]This was the third time a committee was established. See chapter 6, p.244.

Formal Organisation

A great deal of Shabangu's legitimacy depended on his positions in both ANC and ACO. His support for these organisations vacillated, however, depending on his perceptions of how they would affect his power-base. Towards the end of 1991, Shabangu was very critical of ACO, since he felt that the civic was trying to undermine his autonomy. He criticised ACO for allowing shack settlements to be organised separately into a shack-dwellers' coordinating committee,[17] arguing that this would encourage ethnic divisions.[18] Of course, the existence of a shack-dwellers' coordinating committee also meant that settlements in Lusaka fell outside Shabangu's control, and he lobbied heavily for the coordinating committee to be disbanded. Shabangu explained to me,

> We can't control them. They are causing more violence in the areas. They are busy sjambokking people. Once we try to talk to them they go direct to the [ACO] office and take the matter there. The people on the ground get hurt. In the [shack-dwellers'] coordinating committee you get tribalisation...In structures you don't get this. The coordinating committee has Inkathas.

In this matter Shabangu was both reflecting the fears and prejudices of people in yards towards those in shack settlements, and exploiting those perceptions in order

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[17]See chapter 2, p.79. This structure was composed of representatives from free-standing shack settlements all over Alexandra, and was independent of ACO area committees.

[18]There is a popular perception among people who were born in Alexandra or who are well-established in yards that people in shack settlements attach more importance to ethnic identity than other township residents, because of coming from ethnically-defined rural homelands and consequently being traditional and politically backward. This view is reinforced by the way in which many shack settlements are associated with particular ethnic groups.

to extend his own power base. By the end of the year he had succeeded in persuading ACO to disband the shack-dwellers' coordinating committee.

Shabangu also felt that ACO's main role should be to facilitate communication between effectively autonomous areas, and he criticised ACO secretary Richard Mdakane for being too dictatorial. It seems hardly coincidental that, two months before Shabangu made these statements, Mdakane expressed serious reservations about him during an interview with me, and spoke of the need to establish organising structures to deal with the problem of Shabangu abusing his position. Shabangu appeared to be aware of ACO's hostility towards him, and felt that his power was being threatened. However, in 1992 he switched allegiance from ANC to ACO, a change which can be explained by broader political developments.

In chapter 2,[19] I described how differences between ANC and ACO emerged publicly in February 1992 at an ANC general meeting, where ACO was accused of representing the interests of shack-dwellers rather than the whole township. This threw doubt on the legitimacy of ACO's participation in local government negotiations. In March 1992, large-scale violence broke out in Alexandra after the ambush of an Inkatha funeral, and divisions occurred between ANC and ACO leadership on how to respond.[20] This filtered down to the local level as a perceived

[19]p.84

[20]On March 26, the ANC called on Alexandra residents to march to the Madala hostel, a move which was opposed by ACO and local peace structures. A violent confrontation with police followed.

hostility between ANC and ACO.[21]

In Lusaka, people were desperate for an end to the violence and ongoing police harassment, and there appeared to be a growing perception that the ANC could not deal with the problem. In and around the Mozambique shack settlement in particular, people saw little evidence of the ANC being concerned with the unprecedented levels of persecution by the police. Even before violence broke out in March, local residents were talking openly to Shabangu about killing police and adopting the strategies of the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA),[22] in defiance of ANC policy. Shabangu had by now established his own 'defence unit' and said that they were supporters of ACO and not ANC. It is likely that Shabangu encouraged local perceptions that the ANC was ineffective in controlling the violence. By doing so, and thus by distancing himself from the ANC, Shabangu was able to bypass ANC control over local defence units,[23] and instead to create what was effectively a small private army.

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[21]In another section of the township one man was killed as a result of this conflict. The incident was kept quiet by ANC and ACO.

[22]The armed wing of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

[23]Defence units in Lusaka were largely controlled by ANC marshal structures. In Alexandra as a whole, there were several different kinds of defence units, involving either civic structures, ANC marshals or members of Umkhonto we Sizwe. According to ACO leadership, defence units were supposed to be accountable to 'the community' (ie ACO structures), even though the ANC played a central role in creating them. Marshal structures were accountable only to the ANC, and ACO officials saw the potential for confusion and lack of community control in areas where marshals were involved in defence. The often localised nature of defence initiatives however meant that they could do little about their concerns.

fig.15: The Star (27.3.92)

Bloody battles as Alexandra erupts

By Stan Hlophe
and Guy Jepson

At least 100 Alexandra residents were injured in running battles with the police yesterday as the township erupted after months of simmering tensions and sporadic clashes.

The bloody day of violence began at about 11 am as police took action against thousands of people defying a court ban on an anti-violence protest march to the local police station and council offices.

Heavily armed riot policemen pursued the chanting crowd as it left the Alexandra Stadium, ignoring the pleas of Peace Forum leaders not to go ahead with the march.

Last night police reported that sporadic clashes were continuing as groups of youths threatened to march on the Inkatha Freedom Party-dominated Madala hostel.

Earlier in the day, riot policemen repeatedly fired teargas and birdshot as enraged residents taking part in a one-day stayaway ignored their leaders and swelled out of a meeting at the local stadium.

Randburg's chief magistrate had on Wednesday night refused permission for the protest march — called by the ANC, PAC, Azapo and other local organisations which came together under the auspices of the Peace Forum — because Alexandra had been declared an unrest area.

The Peace Forum demanded that Madala hostel be closed, renovated and converted into family units, and that the shacks in the "Beirut" shack settlement area be demolished so that "the legal owners and residents of the houses in that area" could return.

Police spokesman Captain Eugene Opperman said last night he knew of 19 people who had been injured in several clashes, but a spokesman for the Alexandra Clinic said 100 had been hurt.

The clinic spokesman said 28 people had gunshot wounds and seven had been assaulted.

Main roads and streets were barricaded with burning tyres and huge rocks, and a group of youths were roving the streets, some armed with petrol bombs.

Captain Opperman said that from about 1.30 pm police fired rubber bullets and tearsmoke during sporadic petrol-bombing and stone-throwing incidents. Shortly afterwards, a police Casspir was stoned and a petrol bomb was thrown at it. Police fired birdshot to disperse the crowd. Star photographer Joao Silva was hit on the head with a stone when police were being pelted.

Earlier, the intervention of ANC leaders Steve Tshwete, Popo Molefe and John Nkadimeng failed to persuade the angry crowd to disperse.

Police stood along Eighth Avenue ready to take strong action if the protesters proceeded with their march.

The ANC's Alexandra branch yesterday blamed the chief magistrate for not allowing the march to go ahead, and the police for firing teargas.



Mad scramble . . . as marchers try to avoid teargas and birdshot during a confrontation with police yesterday.
Picture: Joao Silva

Shabangu thus sought legitimacy from his association with both ACO and ANC, but manipulated differences between them in attempts to boost his own power and to minimise outside control over his actions. The ultimate consequence however was a decline in his power. His earlier hostile stance to ACO meant that he lost a significant degree of support from ACO leadership, thus weakening his ability to demonstrate influence to his supporters. Later, in distancing himself from the ANC and declaring himself in favour of ACO, he alienated a number of ANC supporters in Lusaka, who were in some cases hostile towards the civic.

Community

Probably the most important source of Shabangu's legitimacy was his claim to represent and unify the population of Lusaka. This involved establishing local yard and shack committees, which were answerable directly to him. This was however only a part of his broader strategy to create a sense of community with common norms and values. This was crucial to Shabangu's role, since legitimacy needs to be based on some set of shared beliefs or values (Swartz 1969). Shabangu therefore tried to create certain norms which would cut across the heterogeneity of Lusaka. The themes which impacted on this process are political understandings and affiliation; social differentiation related to housing distinctions and urbanisation; ethnic identity; and violence.

In order to understand how Shabangu attempted to create a sense of community in Lusaka, it is first necessary to examine what sort of community he envisaged. In chapter 2, I discussed how ANC and ACO constructed ideologically-based orderings of space which defined 'the community' which they claimed to represent. In ACO discourse, this referred to people in houses and shacks alike, with the proviso that rural migrants make a break with rural values and practices and become transformed by ACO into an urban working class. ANC discourse vacillated between this and an alternative construction of community that excluded shack-dwellers as rurally-oriented, backward outsiders and prioritised middle-class interests, embodied in the concept of property rights. Both ACO and ANC view democratic organisational structures as the means to empower and create unity among those people who are defined as the community.[24]

Shabangu's understanding of how to unify the community differed from those of both ACO and ANC. He frequently spoke about the importance of tradition, and claimed that he alone could educate people about this, since it was neglected by organisations in Alexandra. Unlike ACO and ANC, he saw no need for a break between rural and urban values and practices, since he did not associate this contrast with the distinction between tradition and modernity. This was apparent in the way he attempted to establish a shack committee in Mozambique.[25] Under the guise of conducting an 'election', Shabangu had already predetermined the leader of the committee, explaining, "People from the rural areas already have a leader...they don't want to

[24]See chapter 2, pp.78-86.

[25]There were several attempts to establish a shack committee. This was the second time one was chosen (see chapter 5, p.216).

choose just anyone", and this leader was then allowed to pick the members of the committee. This ensured that authority rested in the hands of married men whose style of leadership was similar to that of rural indunas. Shabangu's way of organising thus contradicted the recommendations of ACO secretary Richard Mdakane, who told me, "I don't think it would be proper for us to organise on traditional lines. There are negatives, like having to be a married person, and women can't participate".

Shabangu felt that the source of unity lay in people's participation in Lusaka structures, which would overcome social divisions based on ethnicity and housing, as well as addressing the problems of violence and squalor which were often blamed on shack-dwellers. There was however a significant difference between this and the discourses of ACO and ANC, in which the community was seen to be unified through democratic organisation. Shabangu argued that unity in Lusaka depended on his ability to provide strong 'traditional' leadership.

Shabangu's construction of community therefore differed from that of ACO and ANC in that it was defined by his personal leadership and did not exclude rural migrants or require them to transform their values and practices to fit in with the political culture of these organisations.

Philemon - an alternative construction of community

Before examining the methods which Shabangu used in his attempts to establish a sense of community, it is useful to look at the difference between his ideas and those of Philemon, who played a central and relatively independent role in helping Shabangu to organise.

Philemon recognised that support for organisations alone was not enough to overcome divisions in the community. In 1992, when ethnic violence broke out in areas of Lusaka, he explained, "[The attackers] are all comrades, but don't want to listen. They are not political...They support the ANC, but they're from the homelands and have these beliefs... Now we have to tell them this is not right".

He also recognised the difficulty in reconciling the immediate interests of property-owners, tenants and shack-dwellers. And he saw the potential for this conflict of interests to create tensions between ANC and ACO. He explained that some people in formal housing wanted to buy the stands they lived on, which meant that people living in rooms and shacks on the property would either be evicted or become tenants, causing resentment among shack-dwellers. On the other hand, many residents of formal housing, who were ANC supporters, felt that ACO was encouraging shack-dwellers from outside the township to try to control these developments. Philemon felt that promises to solve the problem by building houses for everyone were dishonest, since there was no way everyone could be accommodated. He nevertheless argued strongly that ACO leaders would eventually solve the crisis, and that it was

important for people to support the civic, since the only alternative was a return to unpopular State administration.

Philemon thus identified several problems which he saw as associated with urbanisation. Firstly, he saw people from the rural areas as lacking an understanding of politics and as a potentially corrupting influence on the ANC. Secondly, he perceived that the conflict over space resulting from urbanisation could divide the community and weaken ACO. His solution to these problems was a combination of organisation and political education. His strategy to draw the Mozambicans into the community, for example, included trying to integrate them into marshal structures, and appointing an existing marshal as the leader of the first shack committee.[26] He also used his experience in FRELIMO to explain to the Mozambicans that the South African government, through its support for RENAMO, was the cause of their problems in Mozambique as well as being the oppressor in South Africa, and that they should therefore support the ANC. In general, he consistently tried to explain to people that their interests lay in opposing their common oppressor - the South African government - rather than in fighting each other.

Philemon's understanding of community was thus as inclusive as that of ACO, and he understood why this position was losing ground in the ANC. He recognised that there was disunity, but felt that unity could be achieved if people were educated about the aims and values of political organisations. He agreed that people from the rural areas needed to make a break with past understandings, but stressed that even well-

[26]Tomas Minis (see chapter 5, p.208).

established urban residents of Alexandra needed constant education to help them develop a sense of solidarity and thus community with everyone in the township, including shack-dwellers.

Although Philemon's ideas sometimes conflicted with those of Shabangu, they were in fact beneficial to organisation in Lusaka. Without Philemon's efforts, splits in the community would probably have surfaced much earlier than they did. It is significant that the ethnic conflicts which occurred early in 1992 happened at a time when Philemon was not able to spend much time organising in the area. Philemon's relationship with Shabangu meant that Shabangu benefited from Philemon's organising skills, and many of the weaknesses and contradictions in Shabangu's leadership were obscured, both from the central leadership of ACO and ANC, and from supporters in Lusaka.

Political Affiliations and Understandings

ACO claims to be politically inclusive, enabling it to represent the whole community regardless of political affiliation. Shabangu's dual role as an ACO and ANC leader however encouraged the popular perception that the two organisations were virtually synonymous. The outbreak of violence resulted in an increased emphasis on political affiliation, since people who did not support the ANC were seen as potential Inkatha supporters - ie the enemy. Political outsiders thus became social outsiders. At a local level, support for the ANC has never been a purely political issue. It often acts as a marker indicating social relations and identity, and embodying certain norms and

values: a political culture rather than merely political membership.[27] In a context where the social significance of political affiliation had increased drastically, Shabangu tried to ensure that the political culture of Lusaka would be a specifically ANC culture, and it was only when his leadership was in crisis that he started openly distancing himself from the ANC.[28]

This political culture was overtly apparent in political rituals such as rallies and funerals as well as in the chanting of ANC slogans even during supposedly non-partisan ACO meetings. It was also manifested in practices that emphasised community participation and consensual decision-making and suppressed political cleavages. A good example of this is the manner in which meetings were conducted in yards and shack settlements. There were many cases of yard meetings held to decide whether a newcomer would be allowed to build in the yard.[29] Everyone I spoke to explained that the process involved people asking questions about the candidate's background and suitability, and all were adamant that they had the right to oppose such an application. However, nobody had ever done so, and they were not sure what would happen if people could not reach consensus. What had actually happened was that the decision had already been taken - by Shabangu and the comrades, together with the chairperson of the yard committee. This resembles once again the role of a Mexican cacique:

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[27]See, for example, yard committees' use of ANC affiliation as a criterion for determining a newcomer's social acceptability (chapter 3, p.105).

[28]See p.160.

[29]See chapter 3, p.105.

> Public meetings are handled (or more precisely, orchestrated) by the cacique in such a manner as to give the illusion of meaningful rank-and-file participation, making it appear that the cacique's role is confined to one of providing needed information or "orientation". In reality, of course, the cacique makes all the important decisions affecting the community according to his own judgement, with no more than ritualistic consultation of the residents. He demonstrates a certain degree of sensitivity to public opinion, but only to the extent necessary to forestall potential coups and avoid overt group conflicts within the community (Cornelius 1977:344).[30]

Shabangu's manipulation of local structures was even more apparent in his direct involvement in picking shack committees in Mozambique, under the guise of holding democratic elections, and similar interventions in other Lusaka shack settlements. That elections in these areas were more a matter of personal power and manipulation rather than of impersonally-operating democracy is shown in the example of another election in a shack settlement neighbouring Mozambique. Factional conflicts[31] in this settlement in 1992 prompted executive members of ACO and ANC to hold elections for a new shack committee, following their own constitutional guidelines. Despite the fact that shack-dwellers had requested outside intervention, they proved to be unable or unwilling to vote, and thus allowed the existing committee to remain.

Shabangu's attempts to create a political culture of ANC support thus diverged from the organisation's own democratic principles. And whilst support for the ANC may play an integral part in defining shared norms and values within homogenous social groupings, its capacity to do this in the socially heterogenous Lusaka area was in any

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[30]While Mexican caciques are characteristic of rural peasant society, this description is of an urban cacique. The parallels with Shabangu are thus even more marked.

[31]See chapter 6, p.246, for an account of these conflicts.

case limited. While ANC support defined the community in terms of political insiders and outsiders, it did not necessarily imply shared norms and values beyond the obvious level of supporting the same organisation. The meanings people attached to the ANC varied according to their past experiences and understandings. In particular, there was a large number of shack-dwellers from Transkei living in Lusaka who perceived the ANC in terms of a Xhosa 'nationalism'.[32] This added a political complexion to the already complex pattern of ethnic identities in Lusaka, and culminated in conflicts between different ANC-aligned groupings. During the second major outbreak of violence in March 1992, there were fights between groups of ANC supporting Bhaca shack-dwellers and men from the Mozambique shack settlement, which escalated into general Xhosa-Shangaan conflicts in the area. Shabangu's attempts to create a sense of community through support for the ANC thus ultimately failed because of his inability to develop a common set of understandings of the aims and values of the organisation.

Housing

The conflicts of interest between residents of formal and informal housing weakened Shabangu's sphere of influence, and he tried to create a sense of community encompassing both these groups by bringing them together in ACO structures. As activists realised when they started organising in the 1980s, the creation of yard

[32]This has many causal factors, including the combination of the Transkei administration's support for the ANC and the area's history of resistance which has produced most of the top leaders of the ANC. It is, however, simplistic to assume that the perception of the ANC as a Xhosa organisation created a unitary ethnic identity. Xhosa-speakers in Alexandra continue to identify with and group around sub-Xhosa ethnicities such as Pondo and Bhaca.

committees goes a long way towards the development of common norms and values, especially since dispute resolution is one of the main activities of these committees. The hostility towards ACO of some people living in formal housing, however, hampered Shabangu's attempts to organise yard committees.

Most yards in Lusaka that contained large numbers of shacks had some form of organisation, although not always with formally-constituted yard committees. In contrast, those yards where few shacks had been erected were largely unorganised. People living in houses in these yards were ANC supporters, but were often hostile to ACO, and many knew little about Shabangu. A group of returned ANC exiles in the area were particularly vociferous in their resentment of ACO, and dismissed leaders such as Moses Mayekiso as outsiders who were not originally from Alexandra and who were responsible for shack-dwellers bringing crime and squalor into the township. While Shabangu and Philemon successfully mediated a number of disputes between prospective property owners and shack-dwellers living in the same yards, there were also several cases where Shabangu was powerless to intervene and shack-dwellers faced eviction. Shabangu's attempts to create unity across the social divisions associated with housing were thus effective only in areas where people were able to establish yard committees. His ability to create a sense of community was thereby limited.



fig 16: view of the Tshabalala house (far right), taken from 'Mozambique' (photo: D.Coplan).



fig 17: shacks on the river bank - east bank development in the background (photo: D.Coplan)

Violence and Ethnicity

A central part of the creation of community is the perception of a common enemy. In Alexandra, the endemic violence initially helped Shabangu to unify Lusaka and increase his legitimacy. In 1992, however, he unwittingly exacerbated ethnic divisions as he increased his use of coercion, in a move which he had calculated would reinforce his position. Instead, his legitimacy decreased to the extent that he was forced to leave the township.

The first outbreak of violence in Alexandra, in March 1991, increased the importance people attached to the distinction between insiders and outsiders in the community. As one man told me, "Before the faction fighting started, we would have a yard meeting without worrying what organisation people belonged to. Now we are more concerned". The expulsion of two Zulu-speaking shack-dwellers in Matthew Mkhize's yard, discussed in chapter 3,[33] illustrates the effect of this redrawing of community boundaries to exclude those who were not regarded as full insiders. A second consequence was a marked drop in the number of disputes within yard communities, as evidenced by a decrease in the number of cases that had to be mediated by yard committees. Many people felt that the importance of presenting a united front to the enemy outweighed individual grievances against their neighbours, and yards thus appear to have exhibited a higher level of social cohesion than before. Related to this was the increasingly central role played by yard committees in defence.

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[33] p.110

Shabangu capitalised on the increased influence of yard committees by stressing that yards on their own were powerless to defend the community, and that they needed to unite, under his leadership, for defence. His ability to transform people's perception of a common enemy into support for his leadership was however limited by two factors. Firstly, the redrawing and tightening of community boundaries depended on the degree of unity that was already present. In the Mozambique shack settlement, for example, the violence increased people's concerns about defence, bu the level of social cohesion was so low to begin with that Shabangu's attempts to organise a shack committee remained largely unsuccessful.[34] Likewise, the threat of violence in areas where Shabangu had little or no influence, such as in yards where people were hostile to ACO, did not convert into support for him. The second factor which limited Shabangu's ability to gain from the violence was the role of ANC marshals in creating defence units. The ANC marshal structure was not accou to Shabangu, and although marshals answered to Philemon, who had strong links to Shabangu, the latter was unable to take control of these marshals' actions.

The March 1992 violence, coming after a year of low-intensity attacks, pushed people's fear and anger to their limits. Shabangu tried to maximise his advantage from this situation, and attempted to overcome the limitations resulting from his lack of direct control over defence. In order to understand what effect this had on people's evaluations of his performance, it is necessary to examine the context in which Shabangu's actions took place.

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[34]See chapter 5, pp.207-221.



fig.18: The Star (3.4.92)

Early in 1992, ethnic conflicts were developing in Lusaka shack settlements. Philemon was worried about these developments, and his concerns illustrate the confusing nature of the situation:

> We have a problem. The amaBhaca want to hit the amaXhosa. They want to hit anyone who is not Bhaca; like Shangaan...We [in the ANC] hit someone who hits you - not because of their nation...We're not hitting Zulus...AmaBhaca want to hit all the Zulus in the shacks...Many Zulus are ANC...When we hit Zulus they will join Inkatha.

This general ethnic conflict thus overlapped with a process whereby groups of Xhosa-speaking shack-dwellers were beginning aggressively to redefine the ANC in ethnic terms. At the same time, there were indications that Shabangu was losing control. Unprecedented levels of police harassment had resulted in a high level of anger in the area, and some dissatisfaction with the lack of response by the ANC. Shabangu was concerned that people would take their own defensive action without his sanction. In particular, he was worried about the possibility of trained ex-FRELIMO or RENAMO soldiers falling outside his authority, especially after the Mozambicans had fought with the police during a raid on their settlement.[35] A group of Bhaca men seemed to be trying to take over the largest shack settlement in Lusaka, and ACO and ANC officials responded by trying to create a new area committee that would be independent of Lusaka structures and therefore also independent of Shabangu.[36] Shabangu was also losing his influence with ACO leadership, who were aware that large parts of Lusaka did not recognise his leadership. Finally, the simmering conflict

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[35]See chapter 6, p.245.

[36]See p.169; chapter 6, p.246.

between Philemon and Linda[37] meant that Shabangu was losing control over comrades who were loyal to Linda.

Shabangu's response to this situation was to form a new set of patronage-style relationships with a group of Pondo[38] shack-dwellers, thus effectively creating an ethnic vigilante group. These men frequently used violence to enforce their will. Unlike comrades such as Linda, who had been active in the township during the 1980s, and who were perceived as members of the political community despite their sometimes unpopular behaviour, Shabangu's new comrades were rural migrants who carried sticks and knobkerries, and their coercive behaviour was highly unpopular among established residents and shack-dwellers alike.

On March 7 1992, an Inkatha funeral was ambushed in Lusaka, and large-scale violence broke out in Alexandra. That night, an old Zulu-speaking couple living next door to Shabangu were murdered. According to witnesses, Xhosa-speaking men armed with 'traditional weapons' raped the woman before killing her and her husband, and left some of their weapons at the scene to serve as a warning to others. The man and his wife were both card-carrying ANC members. News about the killings travelled quickly, and Shabangu was widely suspected of being involved. People were furious, although too frightened to speak out publicly.

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[37]See p.150.

[38]Not everybody made the distinction between Xhosa and Pondo. While Xhosa-speaking Bhaca saw Shabangu's group of Pondos as hostile towards them, others blamed Xhosas generally for the actions of this group.

Meanwhile, violent ethnic conflicts in Lusaka continued, although these were small-scale compared to the fighting with Inkatha which took place around the Madala hostel. On Sunday 8 March, the body of a Xhosa woman was discovered in Mozambique, prompting an attack by Bhaca shack-dwellers who killed some of the Mozambicans. A second fight between Xhosa and Shangaan-speaking men occurred the following Wednesday outside a Mozambican-owned shop. People living in nearby yards blamed this violence on Xhosas, saying they were "too united". They could not understand why anyone would attack the Mozambicans, who were at this stage thought not only to be cooperating with defence units, but also to be supplying them with guns.

Shabangu was increasingly becoming tainted with the conflict in Lusaka. Although people were too scared to oppose him, he had become associated with one faction - seen as a Xhosa-speaking one - rather than with the whole community. Many of his past misdemeanours, such as keeping money collected from residents for funerals, were now openly talked about as evidence of his dishonest intentions. Shabangu now described his vigilante group as a defence unit, and demanded R6 each from locals to buy guns. Some of the money was used for weapons which were used in an armed robbery and later confiscated by police, but several thousand Rands are still unaccounted for.

By this stage, Shabangu had lost virtually any claim to legitimacy, and clung to power purely through the fear people had of his 'defence unit'. Philemon's reputation was also damaged by his association with Shabangu: it was widely known, for example,

that Shabangu's guns were stored at Philemon's house.

Shabangu's ability to rule through fear declined when the violence subsided, and a few months later he disappeared. It was generally believed that he had left because his life was in danger.[39] Philemon continued to organise Lusaka in Shabangu's absence, but without the support of Linda and his comrades. In October 1992 he was killed. Nobody in the area would talk about who the attackers were, but ACO leaders suspected that the perpetrators were local comrades. In the aftermath, civic and ANC structures in Lusaka were plunged into chaos. Yard committees continued functioning, as they have since 1986, but without Shabangu's leadership, with all its weaknesses, any larger form of organisation in Lusaka was virtually destroyed.

Conclusion

To conclude, although Shabangu commanded resources such as age, gender, supernatural power, organisational skills, patronage, brokerage and coercion, his power depended on how he used these resources in the performance of his role. He tried to balance people's perceptions of him as a power-seeking opportunist by attempting to fulfil people's expectations of a local leader. In other words, he sought legitimacy by presenting himself as an important broker, a source of material benefits, the head of ANC and ACO structures, and as the leader of a united community.

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[39]I eventually discovered that he was living in Hillbrow, central Johannesburg. In 1995, three years after fleeing, he wants to go back to Alexandra but is still afraid. He has asked the ANC to try to mediate his return.

His manipulation of the divisions between ANC and ACO, and his consistent abuse of his position, however weakened his relationship with these organisations and undermined his ability to demonstrate influence to his supporters. Secondly, he proved unable to provide the most important material benefit demanded by people in the area: security. While he tried to use organisational structures to unify the community, he failed to extend these structures sufficiently to overcome significant divisions between shack-dwellers and residents of formal housing. These divisions were exacerbated by different levels of understandings about the aims and values of the ANC, despite Shabangu's attempts to create a unifying political culture of ANC support. Although Shabangu was opposed to shack-dwellers' tendencies to group along ethnic lines, his assumption that ethnic divisions would be eradicated by strong leadership alone ironically facilitated such divisions. His attempts to bolster his faltering leadership by taking control over defence increased ethnic tensions and resulted in him being associated with one particular ethnic faction. He thus lost legitimacy further and increased levels of coercion. While his use of physical force enabled him to retain power during the worst of the violence, his inability to maintain a patronage-style relationship with powerful comrades created the potential for opposition to his coercion, leading to his eventual downfall.

So who was Shabangu? He was not simply a patron, broker or 'warlord', but a combination of all of these, blending legitimate and illegitimate features. He closely resembled the Mexican cacique, whose power is based on "demonstrated achievements, aptitudes, sanctions, and resident perceptions which, taken together, enable him to compel obedience if not affection on the part of his followers. He is

regarded with a mixture of respect, cynicism, and fear" (Cornelius 1977:345).

Shabangu was also a political entrepreneur, in that he encouraged shack-dwellers to maintain rural-style authority structures, but at the same time tried to downplay ethnic divisions by creating new urban configurations of allegiance. While shack committees, dominated by indunas, combined people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, this did not however prevent groups such as the Bhaca from grouping separately, which caused divisions within these committees.

Shabangu himself was Swazi, and his personalised relationship with his 'defence unit' was based on patronage rather than ethnicity. However, where resources are perceived to be monopolised by one ethnic group, a vertical dependency relationship may reinforce ethnicity (Lemarchand 1977). The fact that Shabangu's new comrades were all Xhosa exacerbated ethnic cleavages and weakened his ability to sustain his legitimacy.

ACO and ANC used Shabangu because of his ability to integrate people into their political structures in a manner which was broadly similar to Lemarchand's concept of political clientelism: in other words, through providing an "alternative means for integration where coercive power is not sufficiently coercive to command widespread compliance and where conceptions of legitimacy are as yet too weak or circumscribed to produce consensus" (Lemarchand 1977:101). This took the form of merging 'traditional' and 'modern' values and practices in a combination of dependency relationships, brokerage and coercion, and thereby challenging the association of this

distinction with the categories of rural migrant and urbanite. Shabangu's style of leadership thus contradicted the understandings of the political community espoused by both ACO and ANC.

As Lemarchand has shown, while this kind of political clientelism is assumed to effect integration into a broader structure, this structure may in fact become secondary to local dynamics. Ultimately, Richard Mdakane was right when he told me that Shabangu was useful in the short-term, but dangerous in the long-term. Without a clear understanding of the fact that Shabangu represented a style of politics that fell outside the simple contrast between rural and urban, or between traditional and modern, organisations were unable to intervene.

It is in the light of this analysis that I discuss the politics of the Mozambique shack settlement in chapter 5. An understanding of Shabangu's role in the settlement, together with a realisation that cultural identities and categories are more fluid and ambiguous than is commonly thought, suggests that the conventional analytical approach to the politics of informal settlements is inadequate to explain either developments in Mozambique or 'squatter' politics in general.

CHAPTER 5. THE POLITICS OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS: SHACK COMMITTEES IN 'MOZAMBIQUE'

The young Mozambican men who form the largest grouping in the Mozambique shack settlement lead a precarious existence. They are denied full access to basic resources such as water and sanitation, health care and education. They not only lack legal rights to the land on which they live, but are classified as illegal immigrants, and face the constant threat of deportation. They are not able to join South African trade unions, and are therefore extremely vulnerable to exploitation in the work-place, where they are paid lower wages than their South African counterparts.

Many of the Mozambicans are not proficient in South African languages, and are clearly identifiable as foreigners and illegal immigrants, both to Alexandra residents and security force personnel[1]. They are consequently socially distinct from the South African population of Alexandra. Having grown up in the post-Independence period in their home country, they arrived in South Africa with little understanding of the relationship between the political struggles in the two countries, and access to political education is limited by language problems.

[1]White police officers in the Internal Stability Unit have been trained to look for vaccination marks which distinguish Mozambicans from South Africans.



fig.19: Mozambican youths in the original DIPAC settlement.
(photo:D.Coplan)

The Mozambicans are only too familiar with the devastation wreaked by violence, since one of the factors which encouraged them to migrate to South Africa is their country's long history of violent conflict. They were therefore reluctant to become involved in the violent conflict which was inextricable from political organisation in Alexandra in 1991 and 1992. South Africans were suspicious of the motivations behind this reticence, and the broadly ANC-supporting township population often accused Mozambicans of being associated with RENAMO and thus of being in collaboration with the police and Inkatha. In fact, many of the young men were deserters from both RENAMO and FRELIMO, and had no wish to resume any kind of military activity.

During this period, the Mozambican men in the DIPAC part of the settlement displayed very little social cohesiveness or sense of community.[2] In contrast, a smaller cluster of shacks which sprung up adjacent to the original DIPAC settlement in 1991 displayed a quite different pattern of social relations. This shack cluster consisted of about ten households made up of Mozambicans and South Africans who had migrated from Giyani,[3] and who formed a fluid social grouping varying over time. There were other isolated clusters of shacks in the rest of the settlement which had similarly developed through social ties, but the Giyani families are significant to my study because of the links between them and the DIPAC Mozambicans. Unlike the mainly 'no family' DIPAC households,[4] the Giyani families, with one exception,

[2]See chapter 3, pp.112-118.

[3]The capital of the then homeland of Gazankulu, which has a large population of Mozambican migrants and refugees.

[4]See chapter 3, p.115.

were all nuclear, while this kind of household comprised about half of the rest of the settlement.

In 1991 and 1992, a series of shack committees were formed and subsequently collapsed. Leadership in these structures was personalised, authoritarian and short-lived, based on a combination of values and practices deriving from life histories that encompassed the widely differing contexts of Mozambique and South Africa, and of rural and urban life. The committees' sphere of influence was confined mainly to the DIPAC area, and to a lesser extent to the Giyani shack cluster, but attempts by the ANC and ACO to extend organisation to the whole settlement were largely a failure. While the politics of the settlement were thus generally parochial, the violence in the township nevertheless transformed political practices. The Mozambicans in particular suffered the consequences of the occupation of Alexandra by antagonistic security forces, whose understandings had been shaped by years of hostility between themselves and township residents. Political activists outside Mozambique were able to use the Mozambicans' desire for protection against the police to form dependency relationships with influential individuals in the settlement, and these relationships formed the basis for the establishment of political structures. Political developments in Mozambique therefore cannot be understood solely in terms of its internal dynamics, and must be situated in the broader urban context. In this chapter I show how such a contextualisation challenges the assumptions commonly made about the politics of informal settlements.

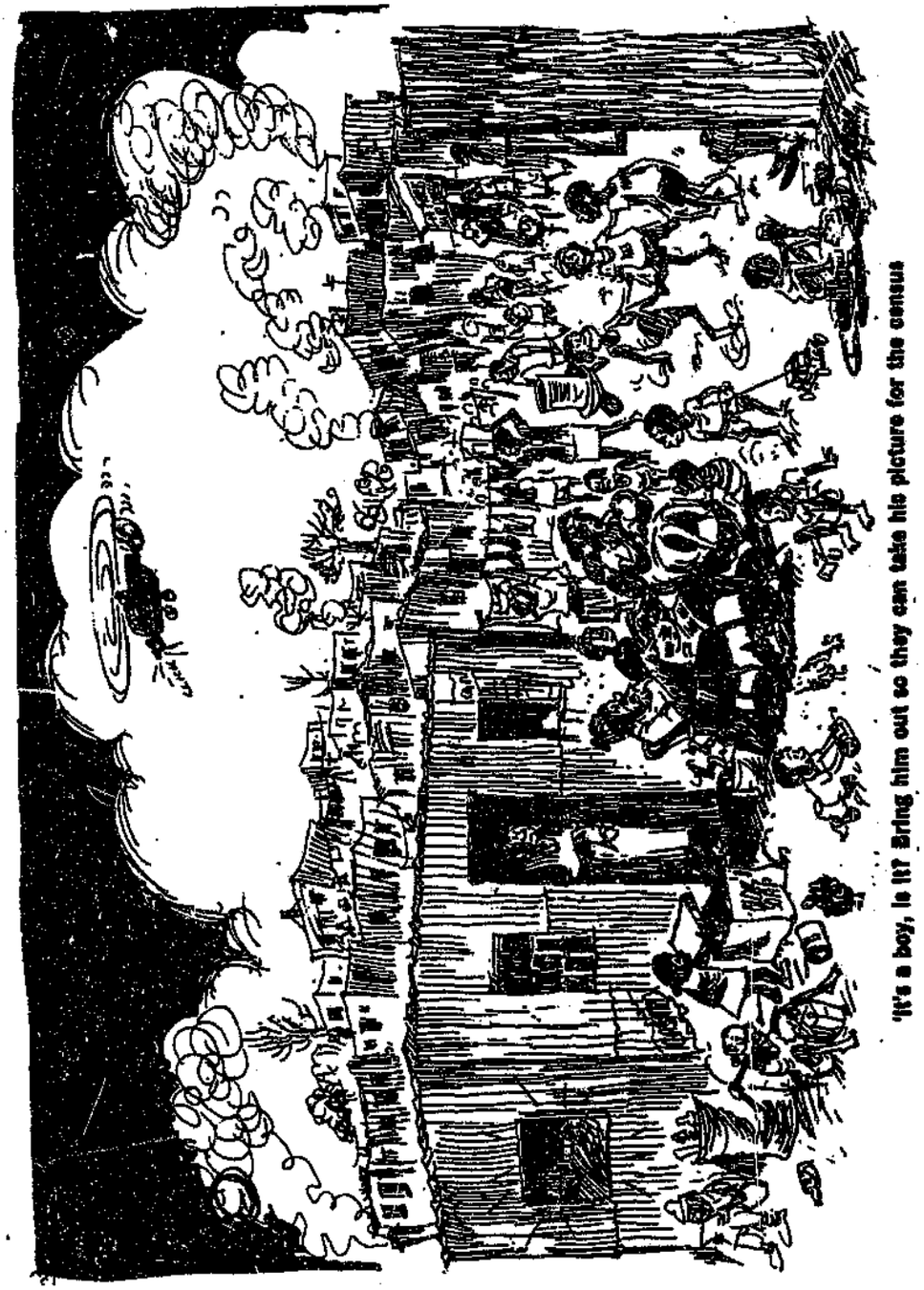

fig.20: Popular images of informal housing: this cartoon was produced when the government announced that its census would involve aerial photographs of areas that were inaccessible or dangerous (Sunday Times 10.3.91).

South African Informal Settlements.

By 1990, the number of people living in informal housing in South Africa was 20% of the total population, and in the PWV this included 46% of all Africans in the region (Sapire 1992:697). Demands for development set against a background of rapid urbanisation and violence have resulted in the depiction of informal housing as one of the major social and political problems in South Africa in the 1990s. This has provided added impetus for academic studies of informal settlements, contributing to an already extensive international literature.

Most of this literature examines the illegally established shack settlements, or 'shanty towns', which have become a major feature in the geography of underdeveloped cities worldwide. Informal housing is not, of course, always clustered in large settlements. In Alexandra yards, for example, shacks and houses exist side by side. In this chapter, however, I focus on free-standing shack settlements, to which the literature on informal housing is more relevant.

Despite disparities in geographical location, social composition and the conditions which created shack settlements in different parts of the world, the literature suggests marked socio-political commonalities. Most writers on South Africa agree on the causes underlying these commonalities. There is however a circularity in their approach, since explanatory models shape the kind of research carried out and the selection of relevant data (Worsley 1984:180). I would argue that this is particularly true in South Africa, where informal settlements are assumed to be economically,

socially and politically distinct from other forms of housing. This has led to the creation of what is almost a separate subdiscipline of urban social science, taking informal settlements as its unit of analysis. Issues such as patronage and violence tend to be addressed in this specific context, rather than being seen as part of urban society as a whole.

In this chapter I attempt to evaluate critically the South African literature by exploring the basis for current models, drawing material from the Mozambique settlement in Alexandra and placing this in the broader context of the township. One case study can not, of course, be representative of shack settlements in South Africa as a whole, but the material can nevertheless be used to engage in debates and raise questions for further research.

Conventionally, the similarity of social and political organisation in informal settlements is thought to be caused by shack-dwellers' common experiences of harsh and insecure material conditions. Shack-dwellers have little or no access to basic services and infrastructure, and since settlements are usually occupied illegally, there is a constant threat of eviction. The populations of shack settlements are characterised as fluid groupings of poor and marginalised people - often migrants with links to the rural areas. Political organisation is thus described as a hybrid mixture of urban township politics and migrant culture. It is assumed that shack-dwellers' material vulnerability leads them to rely on strong leaders who can offer protection and basic resources, and that leadership tends to be personalised and authoritarian - a form of patron-clientelism. This type of organisation is seen by most authors as inherently

unstable, since competition for legitimacy and control often involves violent conflict, frequently along ethnic lines. The result is that political organisation is generally parochial, factional and short-lived (Bonner 1990; Stadler 1979; White 1993; Sapire 1992; Cole 1987). As I will show in this chapter, the Mozambique settlement in many ways appears to conform to this model.

There has been a recent shift in emphasis in the South African literature, from a celebration of squatter resilience despite the odds (Eg Stadler 1979; Bonner 1990) to a focus on the post-1990 violence, in which shack settlements are seen to have played a major role. Although the violence often appears to be based on ethnic or political rivalry, current explanations view ethnicity and political affiliation as organisational frameworks for conflicts whose real roots lie in a competition for resources which has been exacerbated by the breakdown of apartheid controls (Eg Morris and Hindson 1992; Ruiters and Taylor 1991).[5]

Both explanations for violence and analyses of the politics of informal settlements thus view the exclusion of shack-dwellers from urban resources as a central and causative factor underlying common socio-political dynamics. This state of exclusion is often referred to explicitly as marginality. It is assumed that exclusion from urban resources marginalises people economically, spatially, socially and politically from the formally-housed urban population. It is economic marginality that results in dependence on 'shacklords' who can provide basic resources, resulting in a parochial form of political organisation that mitigates against integration into wider political structures:

[5]See chapter 1, p.52.

ie political marginality. This reinforces the social separation and cultural distinctiveness of these settlements from the broader urban population, forming the basis for the development of mutually antagonistic social identities, which in turn lay the ground for violent conflict not only within these settlements but also between them and other communities perceived as being more privileged.

In South Africa, the centrality of marginality in these arguments has not prompted much discussion of the concept itself, whereas in studies of Latin American informal housing it is the focus of much debate (Eg Perlman 1976; Roberts 1981). The reason for this silence is that marginality in South Africa is commonly assumed to be a self-evident phenomenon comprising economic exclusion, social and spatial separation, cultural distinctiveness and political alienation.

Documented case studies, such as Cole's work on Crossroads (1987), seem in many ways to support this assumption. In my own study, the Mozambicans in Alexandra certainly appear to provide an extreme example of urban marginality. They are excluded from access to material resources; socially and culturally distinct and stigmatized; not successfully integrated into political organisations; and they display a political culture which appears to be based on rural or 'traditional' models of authority rather than on the democratic ideals espoused by ANC and ACO. The political organisation which was established in the settlement during 1991 and 1992 eventually collapsed completely, and the Mozambicans, who had a history of violent internal conflicts, did finally participate in the violence which was subsuming the township. It would be tempting to use marginality as an explanation for these

developments.

The concept of marginality is however problematic, since marginality in general is anything but self-evident. The South African analytical approach to marginality in informal settlements is informed by a variety of quite different theoretical models which have been combined in one all-encompassing explanation. On the one hand, explanations are clearly influenced by a Marxist political economy approach, in which a surplus urban mass is structurally separated from the established working class. This is then combined with an understanding of culture influenced both by British structural-functionalist modernisation theory, resting on the concept of rural-urban cultural dualism, and by the American culture of poverty model, which tries to explain a situation of apparently permanent cultural pluralism.

The assumption that marginality is self-evident glosses over the contradictions between these theoretical components and discourages critique. In the following discussion I address firstly political economy and then the cultural component of the South African model of marginality in informal settlements. Evidence from the Mozambique shack settlement demonstrates that although elements of this model are supported by case study material, informal settlements cannot be generalised as marginal, and marginality is inadequate as an explanation for political instability and violence.

Political Economy

The central component of South African explanations for the characteristics of informal settlements is that their inhabitants lack access to material resources which are available to the broader urban population, and that this results in social and political marginality. Mabin (1989), for example, argued that shack-dwellers' poverty created a category of social 'outsiders' who could be manipulated politically by state and capital, and thereby act as a political buffer zone between radical township politics and the apartheid state.

This is very similar to Marx's depiction of a politically reactionary 'reserve army' of lumpenproletarians; the main difference being that Mabin recognizes the existence of struggle, albeit unsuccessful, against state control. Later modifications of Marx's ideas resulted in the conception of a marginal sector of the economy, defined as afunctional to monopoly capital. In this model, the 'marginal masses' are not a reserve army since they do not compete for jobs. Their poverty turns their lives into "a Hobbesian nightmare: precarious, unstable and incoherent" (Worsley 1984:189). People in South African informal settlements, however, clearly do compete for jobs, just as the vast majority of so-called 'marginal poor' do in other parts of the world (Ibid:203). In fact, one of the main complaints about Mozambicans in Alexandra is that, being willing to work for less pay than South Africans, they take jobs away from local people. While this scenario arguably supports Marx's own conception of a 'reserve army', it clearly contradicts the current Marxist model of a marginal sector of the economy.

Sapire makes some interesting observations about employment rates in informal settlements in the PWV in 1990:

> Although households which ended up in informal settlement areas were considerably poorer than their backyard and formally-housed counterparts, male unemployment did not exceed the rates of unemployment in formal townships[6] and the effects were slightly mitigated by the opportunities for accumulation through petty commodity production, the provision of services, opening small 'spaza' (tuck shops) and establishing coal-yards in settlements. Unemployment rates were, however, high (Sapire 1992:679).

Sapire however notes that unemployment rates among female-headed households in 1987/8 were greater than 50%, and that those people who were employed, often in the construction industry, tended to be more unskilled and badly paid than workers in formal housing. This still supports the view that informal settlements are home to the poorest of the urban poor. The term 'unemployment' is, however, misleading. As Sapire recognises, it obscures the existence of earnings from the informal economy. Secondly, unemployment may be short-term rather than a permanent state. Taking this into account, my own survey of 38 people in Mozambique - 19 Mozambicans, 17 South Africans and 2 Zimbabweans - reveals a rather different picture.

[6]The same pattern was noted in Lusaka, Zambia, in the 1950s (Seymour, 1976:64).

Table 2: Employment patterns in the Mozambique shack settlement 1991/2

	Men			Women	
	Moz.	SA	Zim	Moz.	SA
Currently employed	10	6		1	
Informal economy (main income)	2	3	2		4
Unemployed for less than one month	4				
Main income from employed spouse				2	4
Total	27			11	

While the level of unemployment in terms of conventional criteria is about 55 %, none of the households I surveyed are destitute. Virtually all the formally-employed men work in the construction industry on contracts. Those that are unemployed rather than working full-time in the informal economy are between contracts and not chronically unemployed. All of these are young Mozambicans, who receive basic support from the employed men sharing their shacks - a short-term arrangement, since they are never unemployed for long. While nearly all the women are formally unemployed, they are either supported financially by the informal economy[7] or by their husbands' wages. Five of the six women supported by their husbands had obeyed their husbands' injunctions not to work, and so could be described as unemployed 'by choice'. They were also peripherally involved in the informal economy through a sewing group. These five women were all part of the Giyani cluster of shacks.

[7]In all cases, these were spaza shops owned by the woman's husband. There were no female-headed households in the survey, and I came across none in the settlement. This is obviously related to male migrancy, which has underlaid the development of the settlement. Female-headed households are common in the rest of the township.

It is significant that almost 90% of the Mozambican men I interviewed were either employed or between contracts. This is a much higher rate of employment than in the rest of Alexandra, where long-term unemployment is common among both men and women. Wages are, however, undeniably low, and a sizeable proportion is sent to rural relatives. In early 1992, the average monthly wage in the settlement was R443. A survey concentrating on Mozambican migrants, many of whom were inaccessible because they were working most long hours, would almost certainly have given a much lower figure. These wages are in real terms even lower than the 1989 average monthly income of R419 for households in shack settlements in the PWV, which contrasted sharply with an average figure of R900 for formal housing (Sapire 1992:679). Wages are clearly low, but interestingly they are considerably higher than the amount township residents think the Mozambicans earn. I was repeatedly told that they were paid R75 a fortnight, but the lowest wage I recorded was R130 a fortnight, paid by DIPAC.

The term economic marginality is thus quite misleading, since many of Mozambique's shack-dwellers, and in particular the Mozambicans, are clearly integrated into the urban capitalist economy. The informal sector in the settlement also presents problems for this characterisation. It was noticeable in Mozambique that the only brick dwellings were those built by spaza shop owners, who had accumulated capital. South African shack settlements in general provide many opportunities for accumulation through the informal economy, as Sapire recognises.[8] The characterisation of these

[8]It is interesting that the idea of an informal sector in Africa developed about the same time that Latin American theorists were talking about a sector marginal to capital (Worsley 1984:210). Both schools are effectively looking at the same thing, but what was perceived as a problem in Latin

areas as economically marginal therefore underemphasises shack-dwellers' participation in the urban economy and overlooks wealth or class distinctions within informal settlements.[9]

Rather than characterising informal settlements as economically marginalised, it makes sense to recognise that the working class is subdivided by numerous distinctions of wealth, status and identity. Referring to similar findings in Latin America (Eg Perlman 1976), Worsley proposes that the term 'urban poor' is more appropriate than 'marginal' to describe the inhabitants of informal settlements (Worsley 1984:206).

The dangers of collapsing poverty and informal housing have however been demonstrated in Seymour's case study of Lusaka in Zambia, where 'squatter' household incomes were not the lowest in the city (Seymour 1976:64). In Alexandra, poverty is widespread throughout the township: in the thousands of backyard shacks, overcrowded brick rooms and hostels. One must not forget that poverty, political instability and violence are not confined to informal settlements. This is apparent even in popular discourse, where the term 'marginalised youth' is frequently used to refer to unemployed and under-educated youths who are seen as just as much of a 'Hobbesian nightmare' as shack-dwellers, if not more so.

America was increasingly being seen as the solution to urban poverty in Africa. The concept of an informal sector has since been extensively criticized, but those who continue to use it to describe unregulated economic activity do recognise its ambiguity as a source of accumulation or as a condition of mere survival (Rogerson and Preston-Whyte 1991:1).

[9]Internal heterogeneity has been recognised as a feature of informal settlements in Latin America (Roberts 1981). In 1976, Tony Seymour, writing about Zambia, made a plea for "typologies within the squatter universe" to take account of this (Seymour 1976:73).

Another illustration of the why the category of urban poor cannot be subsumed within that of shack-dwellers is that virtually all the migrants in Mozambique have at one time or another lived in hostels, backyard shacks and work-place accommodation. The same pattern has been demonstrated for shack-dwellers in the PWV as a whole, resulting in a much wider arena of experience and resources than is often assumed (Sapire 1992:677). For example, while most of the shack-dwellers I interviewed were planning to build homes in the rural areas, they did not necessarily intend to stay in the shack settlement while they were in Johannesburg, and several people indicated that they planned to move into the formal township when they had enough money. While many would never realise their ambitions, basing their plans on the experiences of others who had succeeded. There [illegible] ubicons throughout Alexandra, in every type of accommodation, who [illegible] ricate networks of social ties.

The characterisation of shack settlements as economically and thus socially marginal is an oversimplification of a complex and fluid situation, and to depict shack-dwellers as a group that is distinct and separate from the rest of the urban population is "totalising and essentialising" (Sapire 1992:695). This raises serious problems for theoretical models which view poverty as the primary force shaping political practices and conflict in informal settlements. We need therefore to go beyond political economy, and investigate the realms of culture and identity.

Culture and Identity

The South African literature on informal settlements in general recognizes that political economy alone cannot explain the characteristics of these areas. Other than material deprivation, the second major conditioning factor identified in the literature as underlying the characteristics of informal settlements can loosely be termed 'migrant culture'. Shack settlements have never, of course, been occupied uniformly by recent rural migrants. The organised squatter movements in Soweto in the 1940s, for example, included large numbers of people from urban Pimville and Alexandra (Stadler 1979). Similarly, in the 1980s, many shack-dwellers in the PWV were long-term urbanites, with over half born in the region (Sapire 1992:677). The majority of shack-dwellers, past and present, are nevertheless commonly assumed to be migrants, and their cultural characteristics to emanate from this.

On the whole, informal settlements are viewed as a product of continued urbanisation; a process in which people move closer to the city step by step, while necessarily maintaining a rural household base for security (Mabin 1989; Bonner 1990).[10] Bonner thus talks of a "transitional migrant culture" which, instead of assimilating into the broader urban culture, "lives on, in grotesquely parodied form" (Bonner 1990:93), and Cole describes practices and institutions in Crossroads, modelled on "the invented tradition of bantustan structures", which "served to reinforce and perpetuate material and ideological linkages with the rural areas" (Cole 1987:19). In other words, informal settlements are understood to be culturally closer to the rural

[10]See chapter 1, p.53.

areas than to the city, but nevertheless culturally distinct: a neither urban nor rural. Of course this has not always been seen as a phenomenon exclusively of informal settlements. The obvious example is the 'Red' Xhosa in East London, whose selective reinforcement of rural customs and values was a response to the urban environment (Mayer and Mayer 1974).

This type of analysis is currently seen as the most appropriate for understanding the dynamics of informal settlements in the Gauteng (PWV) area, which at the end of the 1980s experienced a new influx of rural migrants from Ciskei, Transkei, northern Transvaal and Mozambique (Sapire 1992:677). The Mozambique settlement in Alexandra appears to fit in with this pattern, and the surrounding area also supports Sapire's assertion that the number of Xhosa-speaking migrants increased significantly in 1990: a factor which had a direct bearing on the post-1990 violence.

Migrancy is seen as providing the cultural materials which shape political practices and institutions in informal settlements. These are consequently viewed as distinct from the broader urban culture. The spatial separation of large concentrations of migrants, combined with their perceived economic marginality, is seen to prevent 'migrant culture' from being assimilated into a broader urban 'township culture'. Economic marginality is thus understood to be associated with social, cultural and political separation, or marginality, from the mainstream urban environment.

The manner in which migrancy is seen to shape political practices is through the establishment of patronage, or patron-clientelism,[11] which produces a distinctive type of political leadership, or 'shacklordism'.[12] In this model, economic marginality is seen as the root cause of dependency relationships, and migrancy as supplying the cultural content of these relationships. Patron-clientelism is often associated with marginality, where people who lack resources enter into vertical dependency relationships rather than horizontal class solidarity (Lemarchand 1981:20). Patron-clientelisn is therefore seen to flourish in contexts where class identities are not fully developed. The Mozambicans in Alexandra, like shack-dwellers elsewhere, typify the occupational volatility of the urban poor; a condition which arguably militates against the development of a working-class consciousness (Worsley 1984:207). The combination of this and presumed economic marginality means that patron-clientelism is associated particularly with informal housing, both in South Africa and internationally (White 1993; Lemarchand 1981).

Patron-clientelism, as a structured dependency relationship, is of course common in many different societies and contexts. The distinctiveness and durability of South African 'shacklordism' is seen to arise from its cultural content, which is analytically distinct from the structure of the relationship (Silverman 1977). Urban 'shacklords' legitimise their position by drawing on rural patterns of authority, a type of patron-clientelism identified by Lemarchand as 'patrimonial' (Lemarchand 1981:17).

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[11]See chapter 4, p.146.

[12]A term referred to by the Urban Foundation, emphasising the presumed distinctiveness of political leadership in informal settlements (White 1993:15).

In a multi-ethnic urban context, however, where leadership is achieved through access to resources[13] rather than ascribed through genealogy,[14] legitimacy is precarious and frequently contested. Leaders therefore tend to use physical force against their opponents.[15] Lemarchand terms this 'repressive' patron-clientelism: "a coercive response to the assault of modernity on the legitimacy of rural patrons" (Ibid). The combination of patrimonial and repressive patron-clientelism in South African shack settlements, involving a mixture of legitimacy and coercion, thereby legitimises violence, "as a means of defence or as an instrument for attaining specific social and political ends" (Sapire 1992:696). This analysis, with its roots in an understanding of neo-traditional 'migrant culture', underlies the common characterisation of shack-dwellers as violently "sectional and divisive" (Bonner 1990:108); setting the stage for their participation in the post-1990 violence.

This argument is not completely inaccurate, and it does have the merit of attempting to fill in the gaps left by a purely materialist approach. Although the characterisation of shack-dwellers as economically marginal is theoretically unclear and empirically debatable, it is nevertheless true that shack-dwellers do lack access to certain urban resources. The Mozambicans in Alexandra certainly have minimal access to several key resources which are enjoyed, at least partially, by the township population in general. Secondly, where shack-dwellers are involved in oscillating migration, their

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[13]See chapter 4. A well-known example in the literature is Ngxobongwana in Crossroads, who had a bakkie, which he used to accumulate favours: the start of his political career (Cole 1987).

[14]This is, of course, a simplification of rural chiefly authority, which is both ascribed and achieved in varying degrees (Comaroff 1974).

[15]A Latin American example is the Mexican urban 'cacique' (Cornelius 1977). See chapter 4, pp.154,155,169,180.

cultural understandings will obviously be influenced by this experience, and by their sustained rural ties. In the following section I look at how material deprivation and migrancy have indeed played a role in the political development of the Mozambique shack settlement, but I also discuss the limitations of this explanatory model.

Political Organisation in the Mozambique shack settlement, 1991-1992

The Mozambique shack-dwellers, like most other inhabitants of informal housing, lacked several basic resources, including water and sanitation. The few taps in the settlement were inadequate, and the absence of toilets meant that people had to use those in nearby yards - a cause of much tension - or relieve themselves in the river. Secondly, the shack settlement lacked any established institutions to ensure social order. Although such institutions do not strictly speaking belong in the category of material resources, the lack of them could be classed with "social problems generated by ubiquitous material deprivation and municipal neglect (Sapire 1992:682). The lack of social order in Mozambique is related to the fact that it was created to house a work-force comprising men who had few social ties between them.[16] An alternative pattern of social development is illustrated by the Giyani shack cluster, which formed around kinship and social ties instead of workplace relations, and had mechanisms to maintain social order.[17] These mechanisms were not, however, extended further than the shack cluster.

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[16]See chapter 3, p.113.

[17]Authors discussing the possible attractions of informal settlements mention the development of shack clusters and the ability to choose one's own neighbours (Eg Seymour 1976).

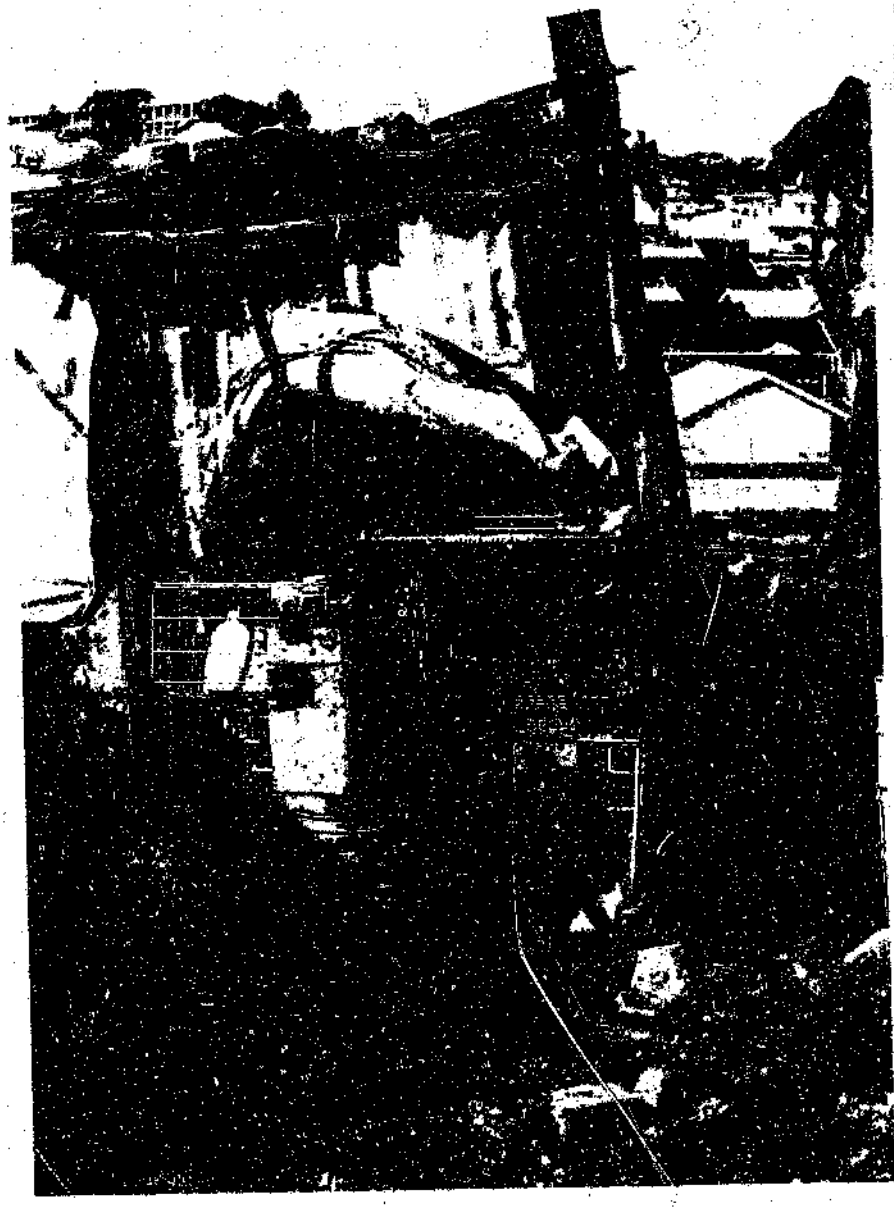

fig.21: a shack in 'Mozambique'.

The repercussions caused by this lack of order were dire. Unmediated conflicts led to injuries and deaths, and the absence of organised cleaning programmes exacerbated the unhygienic conditions of the settlement. The lack of social institutions thus intensified the harsh material conditions experienced by the shack-dwellers.[18]

More significant politically was the status of many of the residents as illegal immigrants, which served to heighten their general vulnerability as shack-dwellers. The most acutely felt material conseqaence of this situation was that the Mozambicans had no recourse to the law to prevent harassment, thefts and assaults at the hands of the police. ANC and ACO, which would ordinarily take up such issues, also felt unable to defend illegal immigrants. Police actions became a serious problem for the shack-dwellers after the first outbreak of violence in Alexandra in March 1991, and increased dramatically in the year that followed. Mozambique was the site of one Inkatha attack, in April 1991, but the violence impacted on shack-dwellers' lives mainly through police harassment, which was more frequent and severe in Mozambique due to people's lack of citizenship. The lack of social organisation in the settlement limited the Mozambicans' ability to take collective action to deal with the problem.

The shack-dwellers' need for protection was the main catalyst behind the development of political organisation in the settlement, followed by a desire to establish social order[19] and to improve their living conditions. This is similar to documented cases of

[18]See chapter 3, pp.115-6.

[19]See chapter 3, pp.117-8.

shack committees elsewhere, which function to provide defence of illegal space, basic resources and social order, in the absence of any other source of social welfare (Sapire 1992:682; Bonner 1990).

There were three attempts to organise shack committees in Mozambique - in May and November 1991 and February 1992 - all of which eventually collapsed. The third committee, which I discuss in chapter 6, never really got off the ground due to the extremely repressive conditions in 1992, but the first two demonstrated features which appear to conform to the popular model of 'shacklord' leadership. The authority of both committees was vested primarily in a single leader, without whom the other committee members had no legitimacy. All committee members were male, and a separate women's committee established in May 1991 had a clearly secondary status.[20] In both cases, committee members referred explicitly to migrant networks and rural practices to legitimate their positions. At the same time, both committees exercised power through a combination of legitimacy and coercion, and commanded popular support only as long as people thought they could offer practical solutions to their problems. Their failure to deliver on their promises contributed to the committees' short-lived existences.

The situation in Mozambique thus appears to be a typical example of material vulnerability and 'migrant culture' leading to dependency relationships and political instability. A closer examination of the processes leading to the establishment of shack committees however suggests a more complex analysis.

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[20]This pattern is common in most organised shack settlements (Sapire 1992:684).

First shack committee: May 1991

Preceding the violent eruptions in March 1991, two representatives from Mozambique apparently participated in ACO's shack-dwellers' coordinating committee - a structure which operated independently of yard, block and area committees in Alexandra and reported directly to ACO's central committee.[21] This participation however had no tangible impact on the lives of people in the settlement, and did not translate into political organisation. After violence broke out, the Mozambique representatives in any case stopped attending meetings, leaving ACO with no foothold in the area.

Meanwhile, ACO activists in the Lusaka section of the township, where Mozambique was situated, had plans for the settlement. The two main players here were David Shabangu, the self-styled chair of Lusaka area committee, and Philemon Mthembu, the former FRELIMO guerilla and ANC marshal who acted as right-hand man to Shabangu.[22]

Shabangu sought to incorporate Mozambique into Lusaka political structures. He was supported in this by Philemon, who explained, "If it wasn't organised it would be easy for the enemy to get in and create its own structures". Shabangu needed Philemon's organisational skills, since Philemon's own Mozambican origins meant that he was one of the few activists who could communicate effectively with the Mozambicans and win their trust. Philemon felt that for ACO and ANC to establish

[21]See Chapters 2, p.79, and 4, p.158.

[22]See chapter 4, pp.149,150,165-7.

a presence in Mozambique, the shack-dwellers needed a leader living in the settlement. He chose Tomas Minis, a migrant from Komatipoort, known as a long-time ANC supporter, who spoke both seSwati and Shangaan, and was therefore able to communicate with both South Africans and Mozambicans.[23] In May 1991, Tomas visited the shacks and called men to a meeting, where they were recruited into the ANC, and a shack committee of five men was formed. Tomas described the process:

> We formed the committee because there wasn't respect among people...I'm the leader since the committee formed. I picked the committee. I knew them from 1979 and I thought they would be the right people. I knew them in Komatipoort. Everyone comes to meetings. We meet to tell each other not to fight. We must live peaceful lives. If someone has a problem they come to the committee...We solved problems the same way in Komatipoort. There, there are chiefs and indunas. If we can't solve, we take it to Shabangu.

Initially the desire for social order motivated people to support the committee. But increasing police harassment meant that people also expected the committee to protect them. One of Tomas' committee members explained to me that they were powerless to do anything about the police except to report the problem to other structures. The belief that ACO or ANC could alleviate the problem was hence a motivation for becoming integrated into their structures.[24]

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[23]People in the area referred to Tomas as a comrade. This term made an important statement about his membership of the broader political community, since the Mozambique shack-dwellers, who were often suspected of being in league with Inkatha and the police, were rarely recognised as comrades. The general consensus in nearby yards was that Tomas was "a real comrade...trustworthy", and Philemon's decision to appoint him as leader was thus consciously directed at political and social integration.

[24]The Mozambique shack-dwellers frequently asked me to help with the problem of police harassment. In March 1992, I suggested to the deputy editor of the Saturday Star newspaper that he run a story about the shack-dwellers' plight (fig.22). Sefako Nyaka visited the settlement, but did not stay long enough to witness police actions. The police were able to deny everything, and harassment continued.

Alex squatters accuse SAP of bribery, assault

Selaka Nyaka

FRIGHTENED residents at the squatter settlement in Alexandra township's . Avenue this week accused the police of random assaults, extortion, theft and of demanding bribes during raids on the camp.

Most of the residents are illegal immigrants from Mozambique working for a construction company contracted to install an infrastructure in the run-down township.

'Deported'

The alleged victims said they were reluctant to talk "because we might be arrested and deported to Mozambique".

On Friday two officers, whose names and the registration numbers of the vehicle they were travelling in are known to the Sunday Star and the residents, allegedly demanded money from Steve Hlongwane. Because he did not have any money on him he was allegedly assaulted. The officers then told him they would collect R300 from him at his workplace as they knew he was getting paid later in the day.

The policemen were seen at the construction company at closing time. When confronted by members of the Alexandra Peace Group, the officers allegedly denied they were there to collect money from Mr Hlongwane.

However, Mr Hlongwane said on seeing the police he went back into the construction site and informed his seniors about the policemen's demand. This was confirmed by a senior official at the company.

A member of the Alexandra Civic Organisation, Obed Bapela, said when they went to report the matter at the police station, they were told to bring along a witness.

"It is extremely difficult to get witnesses to go to the police station because they fear deportation," Mr Bapela said.

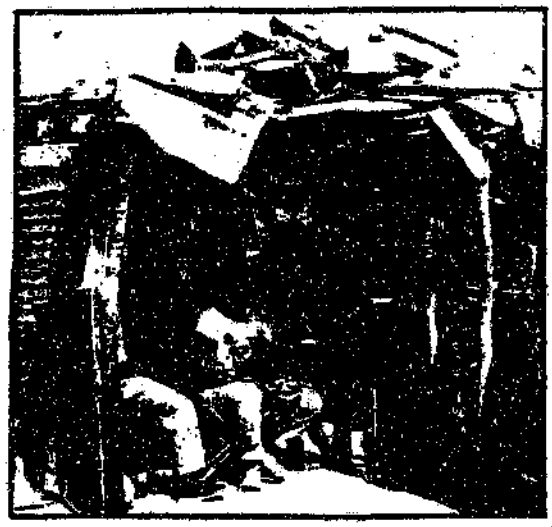
The names of the policemen and the registration number of their vehicle were given to Witwatersrand police liaison officer Captain Eugene Opperman.

Spaza-shop owners claim that during police raids officers help themselves to cigarettes and other items without paying. In one incident police allegedly demanded money from a shopowner after allegedly claiming they had found dagga in his store.

Because he had no money on him, one of the police officers allegedly stabbed him with a sharp object on the head.

When he went to lay a charge at the Wynberg police, he was accused of lying and told he would be charged for "telling lies about the police".

A man known as Azrun said after kicking down his door, policemen tied him to his shack with wire and forced him to inhale smoke from a lit firecracker.



VICTIMISED ... illegal immigrants in Alex have accused police of assault. Picture: Debbie Yazbek

Complaints

Captain Opperman said the police had "taken note of the serious allegations made against some of its members". The allegations are being investigated by a senior officer.

He said complaints could be lodged with the SAP public relations division, preferably in writing. They could write to the Regional Chief, Public Relations, Private Bag X5, Johannesburg or telephone (011) 407-0302.

fig.22: (Saturday Star 8.3.92).

This raises certain analytical points about how we should approach the politics of informal settlements. Clearly, one needs to look at the broader political context. Sapire has discussed how ANC mobilisation in informal settlements drew shack-dwellers into the polarised relationship between the ANC and Inkatha, at the same time as crystallising the mutually antagonistic identities and stereotypes of shack-dwellers and hostel-dwellers which fuelled the post-1990 violence. Sapire is arguing, in other words, that the act of political integration was a crucial factor in the violence, which cannot be understood solely as an inevitable coefficient of shack politics (Sapire 1992).

In Mozambique, organisation itself cannot be understood outside the context of broader political activity. The shack-dwellers showed no particular propensity to establish vertical dependency relationships until a leader was chosen for them by powerful political actors. The Mozambicans made a rational calculation that township organisations could help to solve their problems, were initially eager to pay ANC and ACO membership fees from their meagre salaries, and supported Tomas and his committee.

This suggests some important ways in which shack-dwellers are not, in fact, as distinct from other urban residents as is often assumed. Firstly, one cannot assume that shack-dwellers are politically alienated or marginalised. The Mozambicans had enough knowledge about the political system in Alexandra to exploit it as a resource. Internationally, there are many examples of inhabitants of informal settlements displaying high levels of political involvement (Eg Roberts 1981; Perlman 1976;

Seymour 1976).

While the Mozambicans seem to fit the stereotype of squatter politics as self-interested and instrumentalist (Eg Stadler 1979; Worsley 1984:218), in that support for leaders depended on the delivery of resources and participation in the wider political system involved a rational calculation of perceived benefits, this instrumentalism should not be viewed as necessarily a product of inherent individualism or of the internal dynamics of informal settlements. The political framework is after all defined by outside power-holders (Worsley 1984:219).

Two African examples discussed by Seymour (1976) illustrate this nicely. The first is from Zambia in 1972, where the coalition government's Squatter Control Unit (SCU) was to enact the official policy of demolition. Squatters in Chipata compound threatened to "quit UNIP[25] en masse" if this went ahead, and demolition was consequently halted and the head of the SCU fired. UNIP acted here in the interests of the squatters because it needed squatter support in its efforts to achieve a one-party state. In Kenya in the early 1960s, KANU[26] similarly formed branches in squatter areas, but once the KANU government had consolidated power and no longer needed squatter support, it began demolishing shacks (Seymour 1976:55,56). One therefore needs to question whether squatters are being any more instrumentalist in their politics than the political elites.

[25]Kaunda's United National Independence Party.

[26]Kenyan African National Union.

On a smaller scale, the same is true in Alexandra, where Lusaka activists wanted to increase their support base by organising Mozambique, but where ACO and ANC leaders were not prepared to take the political risk of defending illegal immigrants against police action. Here, as elsewhere, shack-dwellers' evaluations of the benefits of exploiting the political system as a resource were bound to vary under different conditions, and support by Mozambicans for ANC and ACO wavered when it became clear that these organisations were not going to address the issue of police harassment.

It is therefore a mistake to view shack-dwellers as either inherently 'conservative' or 'revolutionary', and just as mistaken to cite these statuses as evidence in debates about marginality. The so-called marginalised poor are politically unpredictable rather than politically marginal (Roberts 1981), since their actions are a result of agency as well as of structural constraints:

> Victims as they are, the poor are also agents, active in history. The direction of their activity is so ambiguous that while some see them as aspiring bourgeois, others, like Fanon, have regarded them as a potential revolutionary force, indeed *the* revolutionary force in cities (Worsley 1984:217).

The Mozambique case study also illustrates that vertical dependency relationships are not just internal to informal settlements. Far from being a causal factor underlying social, cultural and political isolation or marginality, these relationships are often precisely the means by which informal settlements are integrated into the broader urban community, albeit through personalistic criteria which render integration

uneven and therefore undemocratic (White,1991).[27] Shack leaders can act as brokers between shack-dwellers and outside actors or patrons who command resources: developers who need popular legitimacy for their projects or political activists seeking to increase their support base (Ibid:1). Informal settlements are, in other words, a resource desired by political actors whose own organisational machinery is inadequate to integrate shack-dwellers without establishing a clientelistic[28] relationship with key individuals in these settlements. In this way, patterns of clientelism originating from outside informal settlements are replicated within such settlements rather than being generated solely by the conditions of informal housing (Lemarchand 1977:101).

ACO's and ANC's lack of an organised presence in Mozambique prompted Philemon to choose a leader who could act as an intermediary. While Philemon did not consciously seek to set up a dependency relationship between the shack-dwellers and ACO/ANC leaders, dependency was an inevitable result of the poor organisation and political education in the settlement.

This is illustrated by the manner in which Tomas tried to deal with organisational problems and police harassment in August 1991, when police raids were being conducted several nights a week. It is interesting to compare Tomas' approach to that of yard-based shack-dwellers elsewhere in the township, who were also accusing the police's Internal stability Unit of thefts and assaults. These people reported their

[27]The integrative properties of clientelism have been noted elsewhere (Eg Lemarchand 1977).

[28]Whereas patronage emphasises dyadic relationships, the term clientelism embodies more diverse kinds of dependency relationships (Eisenstadt and Lemarchand 1981:1). See chapter 4, p.147.

complaints to ACO structures, and were asked to make statements at the ACO office.[29]

People in the Mozambique settlement, by contrast, did not fully understand how ACO could help them, since they had yet to see any tangible benefits. As a result, Tomas was having difficulty in mobilising people for shack meetings. He nevertheless retained his faith in ACO's power to solve their problems, and wrote a letter requesting assistance. It is worthwhile recording the text in full, since the tone of the letter reveals much about the nature of the relationship between Tomas and ACO.[30]

The letter was headed,

P.A.C A.N.C 91/08/25
Tomas Minis
My home is in Komatipoort

thus establishing Tomas' credentials.[31] The text reads as follows:

> All the people you see around here live with me. We are very happy to see our elders [bobabe] visiting us. We would like you to know about our living conditions. On the whole, we live in peace but we can't sleep at all because of the police [mabunu]. When they come to a shack they knock and when you do not open the door they kick it in. If they aren't successful at that, they break the door with a heavy hammer. Once inside the shack, they first ask if you have a gun, secondly for dagga. If you have none of the two, you get

[29]See Appendix 2 for a sample of the statements made.

[30]See Appendix 3 for original seSwati text.

[31]The file containing minutes from shack meetings which Tomas habitually carried with him was similarly labelled ANC/PAC. Tomas seemed to perceive both organisations as equivalent. The PAC however had no presence in this area.

beaten up. Thirdly, they demand money. They also take radios, bags as well as breaking our possessions. They also force other goods open, and forcefully take our ANC marshal uniforms [jtimpahla tewusosha].[32] Others get beaten up.

We are grateful for your arrival here; you who are our powerful people [abantu abakhulu kithi]. As you are here, could you intervene on our behalf. Amongst us are those who do not want to listen to anything to do with meetings; others attend meetings, others do not have anything to do with the ANC. As you are here, we would like to inform you that people from RENAMO are amongst us. That is all I can say about that. We ask you to rescue us with your voice; and also advise us on how to deal with them; as well as on what to do with RENAMO. RENAMO people also rob people in the shacks. The police and RENAMO are in league. We just don't know where to place these people, and I apologise for adding so many words.

This letter clearly indicates deference to a greater and more powerful authority, and contrasts with yard-based shack-dwellers' demands that their elected representatives take up their concerns. While Tomas' approach is based on some knowledge of the political system in Alexandra, he not surprisingly failed to appreciate the differences between levels of leadership in township organisations. Since the only serious attempts to organise Mozambique were those of Lusaka activists, executive members of ACO and ANC had never heard of Tomas, and the organisations were reluctant to be seen to defend illegal immigrants against police action. Tomas never received a response to his letter.

[32]Tomas was trained as a marshal by Philemon: a further example of Philemon's attempts to integrate Mozambique politically into Alexandra (See chapter 2, p.83; chapter 4,p.166). A number of Mozambicans were supposed to undergo training, but their jobs left them with very little free time, and they dropped out of the programme.

While this discussion of the first shack committee in Mozambique challenges a simplistic notion of shack-dwellers as politically marginalised, and points to the role of outside actors as sources of dependency relationships, it does not directly address the underlying assumption about 'migrant culture' as a determining feature of such organisation. It is through comparing Tomas Minis' shack committee with the second attempt to organise the settlement that I will show the limited applicability of the term 'migrant culture' to shack organisation.

Second shack committee: November 1991

While the first committee had some support, it never succeeded in resolving the problems in the settlement. Tomas had little experience in mediating disputes, and frequently asked Matthew Mkhize, the chairperson of ACO's 'ideal' yard committee[33] for assistance. While this improved relations between Mozambique and the yard-based population, Tomas had little success in establishing social order. His committee members, instead of mediating disputes, resolved them in a judgemental and coercive manner, leading to a build-up of resentment.

Tomas had a broad appeal and was generally known in the area, but he could not use this to establish comprehensive organisation among the shack-dwellers. One of the reasons for this was the social distance between different areas of the settlement, which limited the organisational effectiveness of the committee. While people outside the immediate DIPAC area of Mozambique knew Tomas, who also lived outside the

[33]See chapter 3, p.101-111.

DIPAC area and habitually wore his khaki marshal uniform, as a comrade, they were largely ignorant about the committee and the regular shack meetings. Both the meetings and the committee members were situated in the DIPAC area;[34] a place where outsiders rarely ventured. In contrast, the influence of the women's committee seems to have been confined to the Giyani cluster, where there was a concentration of women.

Organisation in the settlement was thus very limited. Its limitations became vividly apparent in its inability to do anything about the main problem, which was police harassment. When Tomas moved out of the area, the shack committee collapsed completely. People accused committee members of having criminal or RENAMO backgrounds, of beating people and of taking their money. In November 1991, Shabangu and Philemon convened a meeting in Mozambique to elect a new committee.[35] Unlike previously, when Philemon directed the organisation of the settlement, Shabangu was clearly in control. Philemon's role was confined to translating for the predominantly Mozambican men who made up the audience.

Shabangu began by establishing his own authority, claiming (untruthfully) indirect responsibility for the recent installation of bucket toilets in Mozambique.[36] He then pulled a man whom he had previously identified as a leader into the centre of the meeting and told him to pick people for the committee. Eventually thirteen men were

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[34]See chapter 3, p.113. There is an open space in the centre of the settlement, where Mozambicans congregate to drink and dance at weekends. It is also the only possible meeting space in the settlement.

[35]See chapter 4, pp.163-4.

[36]See chapter 4, p.157.

picked. S. Shangu and Philemon rounded off by asking the crowd for donations towards the funeral of a recently assassinated ACO activist[37] and Philemon shouted ANC slogans. The Mozambicans responded enthusiastically despite their generally poor command of South African languages.

After the meeting, Shabangu privately instructed the new committee on how to behave and explained what it meant to be a comrade. They were told not to beat people, to report those that did, and to attend block committee meetings chaired by Shabangu:

> To be a comrade is not to beat people, but to get support - to work together and form structures to make sure toilets are clean. They can try to solve their own problems to stop disputes in the community of Alexandra. They mustn't be on the other side from people in the big houses. There must be unity[38]...I've got to give them a book of structures. If there are problems from the council they must inform the Lusaka committee and we'll take it to the ACO office.

Predictably, the first question raised by the new committee was what to do about police harassment. Shabangu answered, "we must take these grievances to the office".

The second committee was similar in many ways to its predecessor. The same problems still existed, and people were prepared to support another attempt to solve them. As before, the initiative came from powerful outside actors, and the link

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[37]While this is a common practice in Alexandra, it was a new phenomenon in Mozambique, where there are no burial societies or mutual support systems to deal with death (see chapter 3, p.116). It is highly significant that the Mozambicans were willing to contribute to the funeral of an ACO activist they had never met - in order to win favour from the organisation - and yet were unable to arrange to do the same for their neighbours.

[38]See chapter 4, pp.162-171 for Shabangu's concern with social integration.

between the settlement and broader political structures was expressed through dependency relationships. Migrant experiences again played a role in establishing the committee which, like the first committee, experienced problems related to organisational effectiveness, ability to deliver on what it had promised, and declining legitimacy.

There are however some interesting differences between the two phases of organisation which have implications for the analysis of culture and identity in informal settlements. One difference is the criteria for leadership. Tomas achieved his position through being known as an ANC supporter, while in the second committee authority seems to have been based on membership of migrant networks rather than on explicitly political affiliation. Piet Khoza, who effectively headed the second committee, had been a migrant since the 1970s, and several of his relatives, friends and fellow migrants had followed him to Alexandra where his family formed the focal point of the 'Giyani' cluster of shacks.[39] Piet also had a shack in the heart of the DIPAC settlement in Mozambique, and was known and respected by the Mozambicans there. A closer look at the Khoza family, however, suggests that the differences in leadership between the first and second committees are not as clear-cut as they seem.

Piet's Mozambican wife Selina moved to Alexandra from Giyani in the then homeland of Gazankulu in 1990, followed in 1991 by Piet's brother's wife who similarly came to join her husband. The Khoza family were later joined by a growing number of

[39]See pp.185-6.

acquaintances from Giyani, all of them in nuclear families, amongst whom there were various kinship ties. All the men were employed on contracts, and instructed their wives to stay at home during the day. A few of the women sold beer and cold drinks from their shacks, but mostly they spent their time with each other in the settlement, and would often be found sitting outside one another's shacks with their children, or coming together for their regular sewing group. They often shared their food and ate together, and also shared sewing materials. Most of the shacks were small, and not used for social interaction, but the space between them was clearly communal, and this extended to the Khoza shack, which was much larger than the others, and provided shelter on cold or rainy days.

Selina was officially head of the women's committee launched by Tomas in May 1991, although there was in fact no formal committee structure. Selina, who was much older than the other women from Giyani, all of whom were in their twenties, held an informal position of respect and authority which was nevertheless similar to that of formally elected yard committee officials like Matthew Mkhize. She described her role to me:

> I speak on behalf of the women here. They chose me because I am responsible...When women fight they come to me and I try to calm them down. If a husband and wife fight, the woman might come to me and I will talk to the husband.

Selina explained that she had played no leadership role back home in Giyani, and that this position had emerged from the conditions in the shack settlement, where there were no other mechanisms for maintaining social order.

Like everyone else in the settlement, the women complained about the lack of amenities and the frequent fighting, but their attitude to the area presents a striking contrast to that held by the men in the original DIPAC settlement. Although the families of most of these women had houses in Giyani, where they regularly sent money and goods, they also regarded Alexandra as a home, and expressed none of the misery and discontent that was so common in the DIPAC area. One woman even told me that their area of the settlement was called Tsakane, or 'be happy'.

The practice of establishing women's committees is common in Alexandra yards, and Selina's authority was a new response to the urban environment rather than being based on migrant experiences. It was however Piet Khoza's long history of migrancy that qualified Selina for the position rather than anyone else. At the same time, while Piet's position appeared to be grounded in migrancy, he had spent most of his adult life in Johannesburg and was also an old acquaintance of Philemon: they had been in prison together in the 1970s. This demonstrates the difficulty of separating ideas and understandings emanating from migrancy from those based on (permanent) urban residence. The case of Tomas displays the same ambiguity. He was chosen because he was an ANC supporter, but picked a committee of fellow-migrants that he already knew.

One could argue that this does not contradict current analyses of culture in informal settlements, which is understood to be a 'hybrid' mixture of rural and urban influences, resulting in "distinctive sub-cultures and political practices": some more 'rural' and others more 'urban' in character, depending on people's experiences

(Sapire 1992:681). There are, however, empirical and theoretical problems with this analysis, which continues to assert that informal settlements are culturally distinct from a "broader urban culture" (Ibid).

'Urban culture' displays many of the same features and ambiguities evident in informal settlements. Previously, I showed how shack-dwellers have lived in other types of housing, so that their experiences and resources are drawn from a broader environment.[40] The same fluidity also applies to those living in the formal township. The leadership of Shabangu is a case in point. Although he had a rural homestead which he occasionally visited, he lived in formal housing and was not a migrant. He frequently evoked tradition to legitimise his practices, while using urban-based democratic political organisations to legitimise his position. As long as he was able to fulfil people's expectations of him as a leader, he managed to combine democratic and clientelistic practices without overt contradiction. While Philemon's approach to politics could be characterised as more 'urban', 'modern' or 'democratic', he nevertheless worked closely with Shabangu; and where Philemon was concerned with bringing the Mozambicans into the ANC's ideological fold, Shabangu was more instrumental in integrating them into urban political structures.

The case of Shabangu is but one example to show that the concept of 'migrant culture' is empirically problematic, and that its theoretical underpinnings need to be challenged. As argued earlier in this chapter, the understanding of culture informing South African explanatory models for informal settlements is influenced by two

[40]See p.198.

different schools of thought.

The first is a variant of structural-functionalist modernisation theory. This assumes a rural-urban cultural dualism, and views material constraints as holding shack-dwellers back from full assimilation into urban culture. In other words, shack-dwellers are not fully urbanised and therefore maintain rural cultural characteristics. They are seen as between two worlds - as a transitional category in a modernist narrative of urbanisation - and marginality, although understood to be rooted in material causes, is seen as a problem of social development.[41]

The second influence is the 'culture of poverty' model, as exemplified by Oscar Lewis. In the last few years, migrancy in South Africa is increasingly being viewed as a permanent way of life (eg Mabin 1991). In chapter 1,[42] I noted that a modernist narrative of urbanisation is gradually being replaced by a concern with the 'social character' of urbanisation. While this contextualisation of experiences of migrancy and urbanisation is important, the tendency to replace narrative with a static picture is misleading.

This shift has meant that migrancy is now often perceived as a distinctive cultural state or sub-culture within the urban environment (Sapire 1992:681). While I am not suggesting that South Africans have crudely adopted Lewis' model of the culture of poverty, which, as critics have demonstrated, effectively blames the poor for being

[41]See chapter 1, p.53.

[42]See chapter 1, pp.55-6.

poor (Eg Leacock 1971), the similarities are nonetheless obvious. While migrancy is associated with poor people who live in informal housing, the new focus on social processes affecting migration suggests that the persistence of oscillating migration should be understood as a matter of culturally-informed choices rather than just as a response to material constraints. In itself, this statement is not problematic, but when choices are seen to be informed by 'migrant culture' we end up with the argument that migrancy is perpetuated by 'migrant culture', just as Lewis argued that poverty is perpetuated by a culture of poverty: "a subculture with its own structure and rationale...a way of life which is passed down from generation to generation" (Lewis 1988:311). In other words, the idea that people choose migrancy for cultural reasons implies that the 'problem' of informal housing cannot be solved simply through addressing poverty. This is what Mabin is referring to when he complains that the 'social character of urbanization' is being ignored in policy formulation (Mabin 1991:42).

The growing realisation that migrancy is here to stay, at least for the immediate future, has not, however, had much impact on the old dichotomies favoured by modernisation theory. Even if shack-dwellers are perceived as culturally distinct, they are still seen as between two worlds - drawing on rural and urban cultural understandings and practices. The dichotomy between rural and urban is still largely conflated with that between 'tradition' and 'modernity', embodied in practices like 'patronage' and 'democracy'. Patronage is unaccountable and contains the potential for corruption and violence, while democracy has built in accountability and safeguards against violence. It hardly needs to be said that these dichotomies obscure

the complexity and fluidity of South African society today.

My material from Alexandra clearly demonstrates the fact that neither 'migrant' nor 'township' culture are as clear-cut as previously supposed. I made the point in chapter 1 that urbanisation in South Africa is a global process acting in both directions between town and country, and that this means that we cannot understand urbanism in terms of a rural contrast.[43] Rather, we need to recognise that there are diverse forms of interrelationship between urban social processes and spatial form. The implication of this approach for a study of culture is one that is already recognised as important by anthropologists: we should move away from a static and bounded perception of culture which overlooks crucial cross-cutting differences in identity. If we are to make sense of what happened in and around the Mozambique shack settlement, or any other informal settlement, we need to look at identities such as age, gender, ethnicity or nationality, as well as newly-developing social identities and statuses associated specifically with the city, such as those associated with geographical location and housing type. The fact that people live in a shack settlement is only one variable in this cultural matrix, and should not be seen as the central determining factor.

Taking this into account it is possible to develop a different kind of analysis of the Mozambique shack settlement, which complements the earlier discussion of political organisation. In the second half of chapter 6, I present a cultural and interpretive account of changing social and political identities, which challenges the view that

[43]Chapter 1, p.57.

violence is the consequence of political practices in informal settlements, and instead proposes that violence is part of the process of generating the changing identities which underlie political processes. The conclusions suggested by this analysis have far-reaching implications, not just for the study of informal housing, but for urban anthropology in general.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION:

AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF URBANISM

In chapter 5, I showed that the association of informal settlements with a rural-oriented 'migrant culture', marginalised from a broader urban 'township culture', is empirically inaccurate. This points to a theme which recurs throughout my thesis, and which I introduced in chapter 1: that we cannot understand urbanism in terms of a rural-urban dichotomy which is fitted into a modernist narrative of urbanisation. My ethnography demonstrates that it is misleading to separate the urban population into those who are seen to lead an 'urban' way of life and those, such as migrants, who are viewed as having a 'rural' lifestyle.

This is evident, for example, in the phenomenon of clientelistic dependency relationships, which are assumed to characterise 'traditional' rural and migrant politics in contrast to 'modern' urban democracy. In chapter 5, I showed that while migrant shack-dwellers in the Mozambique settlement did enter into vertical dependency relationships, these were fostered by actors such as David Shabangu and Philemon Mthembu - settled 'urbanites' who lived in the formal township - who used dependency to integrate the shack-dwellers into supposedly democratic urban political structures. Shabangu himself of course saw tradition as the social foundation of democracy, although his entrepreneurial style of politics was in fact neither traditional

nor democratic. And lest we focus too much attention on dependency relationships involving migrants and shack-dwellers, it is worth remembering that the relationship between the Tshabalalas and their former tenants - all long-term residents of Alexandra - was characterised by paternalism.[1]

In a context where we cannot talk about 'urban' or 'rural' values and practices, what makes urbanism distinct from rural life is the articulation of social and cultural processes with urban spatial form. The diversity of both the urban spatial environment and the life experiences of those who inhabit it means that there is a plurality of urbanisms. This can be seen in the contrast between my description of Matthew Mkhize's organised yard in chapter 3 and my account of the Mozambique shack settlement in chapters 3 and 5.

The yard houses both established township residents with a common experience of tenancy and migrant shack-dwellers with a quite different set of experiences. Together, they form a social unit that is at the same time a democratic political structure within the Alexandra Civic Organisation. The bounded space of the yard has shaped and been shaped both physically and conceptually by past experiences of tenancy as well as current demographic changes and political organisation. This moral community can therefore only be understood in terms of its spatial environment.

[1]See chapter 3.

The unstructured and overcrowded Mozambique shack settlement is a very different spatial milieu. While many shack-dwellers were deported or moved away because of police harassment, Mozambique's lack of boundaries, coupled with the fact that there were no mechanisms to control access to space, meant that new clusters of shacks sprang up regularly, leading to a constantly shifting social make-up. The ongoing incremental growth of the settlement presented no obvious spatial basis for grouping people into organisational structures, while at the same time the lack of social ties between shack-dwellers mitigated against the conceptualisation of socially-constructed space other than within discrete clusters of shacks. As in the yard, space in Mozambique presents a way of thinking about social relations. But whereas the whole spatial domain of the yard represents a moral community, the social atomization of Mozambique is demonstrated in the way people confine their domestic activities and social interactions to the immediate environment surrounding their individual shacks.

My ethnography thus demonstrates that the articulation of social and cultural processes with spatial form can have quite different consequences - diverse forms of urbanism - which cannot be explained in terms of the distinction between urban and rural, or modern and traditional. It also demonstrates that it is not either a question of a continuum where some people are more urbanised, and less rural, than others, since this still places the categories of traditional rural and modern urban in a linear historical relationship. In my case studies I show that these categories are combined in a variety of ways that do not stand in a relationship of historical progression. While urbanism does change over time, and is thus historically contingent, these changes are neither linear nor predictable.

The rural-urban dichotomy is thus not an objective reality, and should therefore not be used as an analytical tool. It is, however, subjectively meaningful to social and cultural understandings of urban life, and is therefore an important topic of investigation in its own right. In chapter 2 I showed how this contrast is harnessed by political organisations in narratives of urbanisation which legitimise their claims to represent the community. The definitions of community membership which these organisations use are constructed using the categories of rural outsiders and urban insiders, associated with types of housing, which are in turn represented in spatial terms.

In my accounts of local civic organisation, however, I show that people in Alexandra do not necessarily employ the same clear-cut categories that appear in political discourse. This is because cultural identities comprise many components which are combined in ways that are fluid and cross-cutting. An anthropological study of urbanism, which needs to look at cultural processes as well as at social and spatial dynamics, should be able to find a way to understand the complexity of these urban identities.

In my Introduction, I introduced the idea that in urbanism social process and spatial form are mutually constitutive, and that the organisation of space is conceptual as well as geographical. Sociologists such as Pahl (1975) saw power relations as providing the link between social and spatial dynamics: where local power-holders determine access to space there is a convergence between patterns of social relations and the organisation of space. Moore (1986), however, recognises that space here is

not simply reflecting social relations, but is representing them, and the nature of representation is such that it can be interpreted in different ways. In a situation where people's cultural experiences and understandings suggest a diversity of potential interpretations, power is not manifested only in the control of the physical distribution of space, but also in the ability to impose a particular interpretation of the pattern of social relations this space represents, thus creating a hegemony. The representation of space is therefore inherently ideological: explaining why ACO and ANC in Alexandra seek not only to control the distribution of space but also to define the way people conceptualise the social mapping of the township.

This analysis therefore combines an understanding of space, social relations and cultural ideas within a context of competition for power. In the case of ACO, this involved a conceptualisation of the township community as one where divisions between residents of formal and informal housing are overcome when shack-dwellers make a break with rural values and practices, and are transformed by civic organisation into an urban working class. In chapter 3, I demonstrate the limitations of ACO's attempts to construct a hegemony in this way. As Carter (1991) pointed out for the 1980s, ACO has little direct control over yard committees, which tend to operate more as a loose association rather than as part of a coherent organisation. Thus, even where yard committees appear to conform to ACO's representation of yards as social and political units of both formally and informally housed people, this is rather due to the specific understandings and identities engendered by historically contingent patterns of social relations within yards themselves. In my case study of

a successfully organised yard,[2] the spatial representation of an egalitarian moral community owes much to continuities with people's experiences of being tenants, and to the fact that many of the shack-dwellers in the yard have kinship and social ties to these tenants, and it is these experiences which have enabled the inhabitants of the yard to slot into ACO structures. While yard-based organisation is in many ways a new experience for shack-dwellers from the rural areas, the fact that many of them joined kin or 'homeboys' in the yard emphasised continuity rather than a break with rural values and practices. ACO's distinction between rurally-oriented outsiders and urban insiders thus has little meaning for people in this yard, since the yard community is based on experiences and understandings derived from both these contexts.

Shabangu also made no distinction between rural and urban in his representation of space. His attempts to establish a power-base in Lusaka independent of ACO and ANC involved the establishment of patronage-style relationships with both 'urban' comrades and 'rural' migrant shack-dwellers, which he sought to legitimise by styling his leadership as 'traditional'. For Shabangu, his territory was a spatial representation of a pattern of social relations where his power and authority surmounted social divisions between people in informal and formal housing, from rural and urban backgrounds, and with different ethnic affiliations. He modelled his authority on that of a chief, while drawing legitimacy from his ability to act as a broker between his supporters and democratic political structures. One of the reasons his power diminished was that his manipulation of tensions between ACO and ANC weakened

[2] 'ACO's ideal yard' (chapter 3).

his ability to demonstrate influence with these organisations. More seriously for him, Shabangu's representation of space and social relations conflicted with those of certain shack-dwellers - particularly Xhosa-speaking - in free-standing shack settlements. While Shabangu thought the heterogeneous urban context of his 'traditional' leadership would encompass ethnic diversity, this did not prove to be the case. Unlike in organised yards, free-standing shack settlements have few mechanisms to ensure social order or to determine access to space. There is consequently a high level of competition for resources. In the absence of other ways in which to articulate their interests, shack-dwellers from Transkei drew on and grouped around ethnic identities.[3] Shabangu unwittingly exacerbated these social divisions by acting as patron to one such group, and thus causing widespread resentment.

In both these examples, the attempts by political actors to impose ideologically-constructed representations of space were undercut by more localised conceptions. Central to this process is the coming together of experiences and understandings in the construction of identity. Tenancy, for example, could be described as an identity deriving from a particular 'housing class'[4], as opposed to the ethnic identities adopted by Xhosa shack-dwellers. While these categories are significant in my case studies, identity in general is of course multi-faceted, and we need to take this into account if we are to construct an anthropological theory of urbanism.

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[3]This is similar to Cohen's (1974) characterisation of urban ethnicity. The point I am making here is that we can only understand the political nature of Xhosa identities in terms of the spatial environment of free-standing shack settlements.

[4]See Introduction, p.27.



fig.23: multiple identities: the woman on the left lives in the Mozambique shack settlement. She was born in Transkei, to a Sotho-speaking mother, and is married to a Mozambican man. Despite living in the shack settlement, she participates in Matthew Mkhize's yard committee opposite (see chapter 3, p111). Her companion on the right is her Mozambican sister-in-law, who never ventures into the yard. The rather attractive reflection is actually in sewage from a flooded toilet in the yard opposite.

While on the one hand identities underlie and shape the development of diverse urbanisms - the articulation of social process and spatial form - they are also generated by these urbanisms. In the following discussion, I suggest an avenue of approach for a study of this issue. In order to illustrate how we can look at the construction of cultural identities in a particular socio-spatial context, I return to the example of the Mozambique shack settlement. Here, I show how violence acts as a social process generating changing identities, which in turn underlie transformations in the conceptualisation of space and social relations. My analysis is somewhat tentative, since my thoughts on this topic crystallised only after I had completed my fieldwork. It should therefore be read as a suggestion for the sort of anthropology we should be doing, rather than a thorough and complete example of such an approach.

Identity, Politics and Violence in the Mozambique shack settlement

In chapter 5 I showed that the use of the concept of marginality to explain the dynamics of informal settlements is fundamentally flawed. Critics of marginality theory have argued that the so-called 'marginal poor' are in fact integrated into urban society, but that the mechanisms through which this integration takes place are based on diverse cultural experiences and understandings. They have thus suggested that we should be investigating the different ways in which people use cultural resources to cope with urban life (Roberts 1981:141).

One way of doing this, which is emerging in the South African literature on the recent violence (eg Segal 1991; and to a more limited extent Sapire 1992), is to explore the question of identity. In the case of informal settlements, shack-dwellers have different co-existing levels of identity, many of which are shared with people living in the broader urban environment. This creates the potential for multiple and ambiguous social boundaries, which will be perceived differently in different contexts.

Sapire, for example, argues

> that these totalising and essentialising categories of 'migrant', 'squatter', 'Zulu' or 'Xhosa' obscure the blurred and historically contingent nature of social identities, and that many of these social identities were crystallised in the course of the violence itself (Sapire 1992:695).

Segal makes the same point about hostel-dwellers:

> What we have witnessed in the current violence is thus the crystallisation, and coming to the fore, at a point of crisis, of one particular set of the coexisting identities. In this instance, it is the ethnic fault lines which have become manifest (Segal 1991:219).

It is no accident that these statements about changing identities are being made in studies of violence, since violence can be both transformative and symbolic. There is, however, a tendency to reify violence as an objective state; for example in the categorisation of shack-dwellers as inherently violent due to their distinctive political culture. This understanding of violence is just as totalising and essentialising as the categories previously criticised.



fig.23: violence can generate a powerful sense of group identity. This is a picture of Alexandra youths gathering together during a battle with police, who were trying to prevent a march to the Madala hostel (Saturday Star 28.3.92).

If we are to understand the violence which came to characterise the Mozambique shack settlement, it is necessary to examine the interrelationship of identity, political process and violence. One might demonstrate this with an example from Ethiopia. Here, warfare among the Mursi of South West Ethiopia has been shown to shape identities which are not otherwise given or primary (Turton 1994). In other words, violence generates meaning. Violence is thus, "not just the consequence of politics but is integral to the social processes that generate the symbols and values that provision the political process" (Thornton 1990:218). The reason that violence is so often the most appropriate (although not the only) social form through which to achieve this is that it is highly visible; requires few resources; and, centrally, it embodies a contestation of legitimacy, and thus communicates the potential for an alternative social order or identity (Riches 1986:11).

I thus propose to present an analysis of the Mozambique settlement which begins with shifting identities set against changing political relationships in Alexandra as a whole. I examine how political processes in and around the settlement were informed by symbolic episodes of violence.

Identities

The inhabitants of the Mozambique settlement are described collectively by the surrounding population as Mozambican. There are, of course, many South Africans in the settlement, but since the Mozambicans are in the majority and confer the dominant identity on the area, I will focus on them. They are shack-dwellers, and

residents of a spatially bounded settlement on the periphery of the township. They are regarded as foreign, although in ethnic terms people describe them as Shangaan - a label which can apply, as well, to Tsonga-speaking South Africans. They are identified as migrants; and, finally, as young unmarried men. In the minds of the broader township population, these labels embody meanings which are sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory. The identity they are ascribing to the inhabitants of Mozambique is thus fluid and ambiguous.

Shack settlements in general are viewed by other township residents with a mixture of suspicion, disapproval and sympathy. On the one hand, shack-dwellers are often assumed to be rural migrants rather than established Alexandrians and are thus often viewed as social outsiders. On the other hand, shack settlements are viewed as haven for both urban-based criminals and township youths who want to escape family discipline. They are seen as dirty, dangerous, violent and uncontrolled places. This overlaps on some levels with the perceptions of the Mozambicans as young men who, lacking parental control, fight among themselves and are a threat to local women. Parents often complained that the Mozambicans 'stole' their daughters, and I was advised that it was dangerous for me and my female interpreter to enter the settlement alone. The Mozambicans are of course identified as foreigners: social outsiders of uncertain trustworthiness. The peripheral nature of Shangaan or Tsonga ethnicity among South Africans in Alexandra meant that there was little perceived contradiction in describing the Mozambicans as both foreign and Shangaan.

The combination of these categories resulted in deep ambiguities. The Mozambicans were seen by some people as high-spirited youths who were no threat to anyone else, and rather deserving of sympathy. Joyce Tshabalala,[5] whose yard is opposite the settlement, used to treat the shack-dwellers for minor injuries sustained in fights. She described them to me:

> They fight among themselves, and the older ones punish the younger ones. On this side [of the street] there are no problems. They are very nice people. One time boys from Mozambique were throwing stones at a drunk man and broke a window. The owner saw them and approached them. They apologised and paid for it. I feel very sorry for them. They are here as visitors. When Xhosas were fighting Zulus, the maXhosas would come and ask them to fight. What are they going to fight for? Shame.

Joyce was not the only older woman who cited the Mozambicans' youth as a mitigating factor in their behaviour. The owner of a shebeen frequented by the shackdwellers explained, "[they are] very young people and they drink beer. That's why they fight".

In this regard, local women, who played a minimal role in defence, were more sympathetic to the Mozambicans' plight. But for others, and especially men who were involved in defence committees, the Mozambicans were seen in a different light: as trained soldiers, and therefore as potential allies or enemies in the political conflict consuming Alexandra. Local defence committees frequently tried to involve the Mozambicans; initially with no success. The result was an ambiguous depiction of them as violent yet cowardly; politically disinterested yet untrustworthy. This is

[5]See chapter 3.

illustrated by the statements of an old man in Matthew Mkhize's yard,[5] which was also opposite the settlement: "If violence broke out, the people from the other side [Mozambique] don't fight...We asked them why they don't fight but they don't answer." He described the occasion when the area was attacked by armed men, presumed to be from Inkatha. The attackers came from behind Mozambique and fired on yards from the protection of the shack settlement.

> Inkatha were shooting from that side and killed one man here. The people in the shacks are poison because they didn't do anything. Maybe they are afraid, but they can fight each other with knives and if they need help they run to the yard committee to ask them to stop the fight.

Others were harsher in their criticisms, accusing the shack-dwellers of being cowards who were not prepared to fight in their own country, or of being in league with Inkatha and the police.

The categories of migrants, undisciplined youths, shack-dwellers and Mozambicans of course apply to many other township residents. But the convergence of these identities with a spatially defined settlement on one side of a street that has yards on the other side meant that the shack-dwellers were from the start physically and socially distinct, and stigmatised by the surrounding community. Many of the youths in the settlement complained that they could not venture into the township without being robbed or harassed.

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[5]See chapter 3.

It is important to note that the identity of social stigma does not necessarily result in social isolation. Like the hostel-dwellers of Segal's account, the Mozambique shack-dwellers were part of social networks that extended into the township, across the reef and along migrant routes. They nevertheless felt cut off and ostracised by their stigmatized identity.

The social atomization in the settlement meant that the shack-dwellers as a group had very little sense of a common identity. However, as I discussed in chapter 3, their own folk interpretations of the crime and violence in their midst acted as a "cultural brake" against social disintegration, and created the image of a moral community.[7] During the early stage of the settlement's existence, the main concern of the shack-dwellers was to turn this image into a reality: to establish some kind of social order and deal with internal conflict. Thus it was important to them that Tomas, the leader of the first shack committee, be seen as a legitimate leader who could resolve disputes and build a sense of community identity.

Increasing police harassment, which happened at the same time that violence was transforming political relationships throughout the township, changed the Mozambicans' immediate desire for internal social order to a need to deal with outside threats. Incidents of violence that followed created symbolic meanings that made possible a redefinition of their social and political identities.

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[7]p.118

The Symbolism of Violence

The image of the Mozambicans as potential allies or enemies in armed conflict was of course one created within the context of violent confrontations, and specifically by the armed attack which was launched from Mozambique in April 1991, shortly before I started research in the area. No-one is quite sure what happened, but the account which came to be accepted in nearby yards attributed cowardice and complicity to the shack-dwellers. I was told that two mini-bus 'kombis' came from the east and drove into the settlement. The attackers used the shacks as cover while they fired on Matthew Mkhize's yard opposite. This yard was the best-organised in the area and its yard committee was responsible for coordinating defence in the street. Two men in the yard were killed.[8]

The reality of what happened, while almost certainly different, is difficult to establish with certainty, since the attack was at night and people hid in their homes. The route taken by the kombis is not clear, since there is no clear access from behind Mozambique into the part of the settlement where the attack is supposed to have taken place. In addition, the Mozambicans, although unsure about exactly what happened, claim that some of their own number were also killed.

The symbolic meaning of this event is however clear. The attack emanated from Mozambique, implying that the shack-dwellers were either involved or cowardly or both, and was directed at the yard which represented the socially and politically

[8]Only one of those killed was resident in the yard. The second seems to have been a visitor.

organised community. The event therefore established Mozambique's status as outside this community. This was symbolically reinforced some days later, when the shack-dwellers reportedly fired guns into the air to demonstrate that they had the ability to defend themselves but wanted to be left alone. Again, whether or not this actually happened is impossible to establish, but it fuelled the perception that the Mozambicans, despite owning guns and knowing how to use them, were not prepared to assist the community.

Subsequently, Lusaka activists tried to organise the settlement. But by the time the second committee was established, in November 1991, the shack-dwellers were still generally seen as socially and politically outside the rest of the community, despite Shabangu's attempts to integrate them. By February 1992, the second committee had collapsed as a result of its failure to deal with police harassment, and people started leaving the settlement.

A third committee was established on February 14 1992, though its existence was short-lived. This committee emerged out of an attempt to elicit help from the Alexandra peace committee. Its chairperson, a quixotic rastafarian named 'Paramount Rasta Chief Tom', was by public consensus the shack-dwellers' spokesman on the subject of police harassment. In fact, Tom Chaoke was a spaza shop owner whose vocal complaints about police harassment were more prompted by his frustration at police thefts of his wares. The most interesting aspect of his leadership is that it completely contradicted the stereotypes about shack-based political organisation, and he was thus able to draw on previously untapped aspects of the shack-dwellers'

identity.

Tom's use of Rasta ideology and symbolism drew on and celebrated the masculine identity of the Mozambicans,[9] and stressed unity and commonality in suffering. At the same time, Rasta ideology eschews structures of power, so that Tom saw himself as a representative rather than as a leader, and his position was based entirely on legitimacy without coercion.

There is a close knit network of Rastafarians, or 'brothers', in Alexandra, many of whom are Mozambican, and several of these live in the Mozambique settlement. Of course, Tom's elevation to shack committee leader did not result in wholesale conversion to Rastafarianism, and Tom himself often paid only lip-service to his religion. Despite this, Tom's vocal and articulate leadership opened up new possibilities for the perception of a positive group identity. A violent event, which took place shortly after the new committee was established, symbolically transformed the way the shack-dwellers perceived themselves and were viewed by the surrounding population.

On February 17, the shack-dwellers fought back during a police raid. The event immediately assumed exaggerated proportions: the unarmed shack-dwellers apparently beat up the police so badly that they had to call for reinforcements, who teargassed the area. While Tom was ideologically committed to peace, and played no role in this attack, the event gave expression to the new committee as representing a coherent

[9]Eg through the symbolism of the lion.

community. At the same time, it symbolised the beginning of the Mozambicans' participation in the Alexandra conflict, and thus their integration into the surrounding community. When an Inkatha funeral was ambushed a few streets away on March 7, sparking off waves of violence throughout the township, the Mozambicans were known to be assisting local defence units.

A final transformation in identity occurred in the context of internecine rivalries among ANC-supporting factions in Lusaka.[10] In a neighbouring shack settlement, there was a power struggle between the shack committee and the defence unit based in the settlement, which manifested itself in ethnic terms. Xhosa-speaking Bhaca youths in the defence unit were seen to be the agitators in this conflict. Meanwhile, outside this settlement, Shabangu had established his own 'defence unit' of Xhosa-speaking Pondos who lived in a cluster of shacks built in one of the stormwater drainage areas that run throughout Alexandra and create spaces of unused land between township yards. Shabangu's 'defence unit' was extorting money for weapons in Lusaka and was implicated in assaults and murder.[11]

The consequence of these developments was a rising level of violence within Lusaka centring on conflicts which were perceived to involve Xhosa shack-dwellers from free-standing shack areas,[12] and several of these also involved the Mozambique shack-

[10]See chapter 4, p.176.

[11]See chapter 4, p.177.

[12]Non-Xhosa township residents often did not distinguish between different groupings of Xhosa-speaking shack-dwellers. The distinction they did emphasise was that between shacks in yards and free-standing shack areas. Many of the Xhosa-speaking shack-dwellers in the yards I surveyed were Bhaca, and expressed dismay at the behaviour of their 'homeboys'.

dwellers.[13] These events were interpreted very differently to the 1991 violence, where Inkatha was perceived as the sole enemy. By March 1992, while the overall violence was still ostensibly between Inkatha and 'township residents', this alignment was now seen to be cross-cut by Xhosa factions which were dividing the community. People in Lusaka yards resented the actions of Xhosa shack-dwellers, and saw the attacks on the Mozambicans as being based on ethnic chauvinism. This was seen to be coupled with an attempt by Xhosas to monopolise military power, since the Mozambique shack-dwellers were at this stage thought to be actively cooperating with other defence units and supplying them with guns.

Popular accounts of internecine violence at this point clearly refer to Shangaans, without mentioning whether they are South African or Mozambican, and explain the conflicts as resulting from ethnic rather than nationalistic chauvinism on the part of Xhosa-speakers. This emphasis on ethnicity downplayed the foreignness of the Mozambicans. In other words, the violence itself subsumed the shack-dwellers' identity as foreign and Mozambican, and completed their metamorphosis from stigmatized outsiders to integration into the township community.

While the transformations in both the identity ascribed to the Mozambique shack-dwellers and their own self-image might have presented the potential for some coherent organisation in the settlement, the extremely repressive conditions resulting from the violence prevented this. Lusaka structures were in chaos, and police started deporting Mozambicans on a regular basis. In this context, political organisation and

[13]See chapter 4, p178, for specific accounts.

social order collapsed completely.

Violence was therefore central in the constitution of changing identities in Mozambique. These identities underlay the changing social and political relationship between the shack-dwellers and the surrounding population, from one where the shack-dwellers were stigmatized as outsiders to one of membership of the community. These relationships were in turn represented in spatial terms. While the shack-dwellers were viewed as outsiders, the Mozambique settlement was spatially defined in opposition to nearby yards. It was seen as a dangerous no-go area for residents of these yards, who commonly referred to the settlement not by name, but in terms of its spatial separation from the rest of the township: 'that side' or 'over there'.

Not long after the collapse of the last shack committee in Mozambique, large numbers of shacks were destroyed in a fire. This, together with almost daily police raids and deportations, and particularly the fact that the police commonly arrived in the settlement immediately after I had left and interrogated people I had been speaking to, prompted me to end my fieldwork. During a subsequent visit to the area, however, I found an interesting transformation. In response to the shack-dwellers' plight, and in a context where only yard committees continued to function, members of Matthew Mkhize's yard committee had taken on the role of dispute resolution in Mozambique and were actively involved in trying to restore social order in the settlement. Whereas, before, the shack-dwellers would occasionally come to the yard for assistance, yard committee members were now apparently often to be found in the shack settlement. Just as, earlier, the conceptualisation of the yard committee had

been extended to include the rest of the street and individual South Africans in Mozambique[14], it was now incorporating the entire shack settlement. The spatial representation of the relationship between yard and shack-dwellers was thus transformed from one where Mozambique was seen as a separate territory to one where it was viewed together with yards as part of the street.

A Way Forward for Urban Anthropology?

I have tried in this analysis to move away from the debate about whether violence in shack settlements is the consequence of marginality. While shack-dwellers may indeed be ascribed a social identity that separates them from the rest of the community, such an identity is constructed from many components, and is both ambiguous and historically contingent. Changes in identity are associated particularly with episodes of violence. In other words, violence is not the consequence of a 'marginalised' identity, but may rather underlie its construction.

The relevance of this argument for urban anthropology in general is that it demonstrates the way in which the symbolic meanings associated with social processes - in this case violence - can transform urban identities, which in turn transform the interrelationship of space and social relations. If urban anthropology is to make a significant contribution to the study of urbanism - to treat towns and cities as the focus rather than just the locus of research - it needs to move beyond a modernist rural-urban dichotomy and instead to investigate the specificity of the urban

[14]See chapter 3, p.111.

spatial environment. Here, the kind of symbolic analysis I have suggested above makes a uniquely anthropological contribution to the study of the interrelationship of space, culture and society. If urban anthropology is to remain part of the broader discipline of anthropology rather than being subsumed into sociology, I feel that it is in this direction that we must go.

APPENDIX 1

'The Alexandra Accord'. A booklet produced by ACO and other members of the Alexandra Joint Negotiating Forum, 1991.

THE ALEXANDRA ACCORD



◆ NOT FOR SALE ◆

A COMMUNICATION FROM THE ALEXANDRA JOINT NEGOTIATING FORUM

THE JOINT NEGOTIATING FORUM



THE ALEXANDRA CIVIC ORGANISATION



Dear Residents

The Transvaal Provincial Administration, the Alexandra Civic Organisation and the Alexandra City Council have signed an agreement called the Alexandra Accord. This agreement commits the parties to the development of Alexandra and ends the rent and services boycott.

The Alexandra Accord also sets up a Joint Negotiating Forum (JNF) to find ways to solve the problems in Alexandra.

The other members of the JNF are: the Central Witwatersrand Regional Services Council, the Sandton Town Council, the Randburg Town Council, Eskom, the Rand Water Board and the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

This book explains the story behind the Accord and gives the residents of Alexandra information about the JNF.

We hope that you will share this publication with other residents, discuss it with your friends and read it to those who cannot read.

VIVA ALEXANDRA!

The Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO) is committed to making Alexandra a better place for all residents. ACO wants Alexandra to be a place where all can live peacefully.

For the past six months we have been involved in negotiations about the future of Alexandra. This year, on 27 February, we signed the Alexandra Accord with the Government. This Accord is an agreement to deal with many of the problems facing Alexandra: land, housing and services such as water, sewerage and electricity.

The residents of Alexandra will have the opportunity to discuss these issues and put forward suggestions about the future of Alexandra. ACO will call meetings in all areas so that residents can participate in decisions about the future.

The Alexandra Accord is for all the residents of Alexandra. Use this book to debate these issues in the yard, street and area committees.

If you have any questions about this book, please contact the ACO offices at Ganda Shopping Centre, 1st Avenue, Wynberg. 252

AMANDLA!

ALEXANDRA

Past, Present and Future.

PART 1: Looking Back




Ndodana, Jabu, ave ubukeka kahle ! Natal is good for you.
Sawubona Malume Tumo.
How are things at home ?
Mother is well ... but things are not good in Natal.
Sesikhathele yimpi malume. It just goes on and an...
Ungasho. Nathi here we have been ducking bullets and axes.
TUMO AND JABU ARRIVE IN SELBOURNE STREET.
Malume, phakathi kwaseGoli na lapha, there are all these lovely places. But here, hé... all this rubbish?
This rubbish is the story of Alexandra.
When I first came to Alex in 1942 it was already a-komponi. Yo, it was so bad we used to call it Dark City.
I stayed in a room with six people - kungena manzi namatoilet. And still we had to pay a lot of rent.
If things were so bad why did people flock here?
In those days Alex was first stop for everyone coming to the city. It was close to work and you didn't need a permit.
Even today Alex accepts everybody. It is the grandmother to all people.


Hayta Bra Tumo. Hoezit daarso?
Sharp, Bra Sipho. I was just telling m'shana the history of Dark City.
Ya, m'shana! Alex is a poor kasie maar it is rich in names: Hell's Kitchen, Terror Township, Nobody's Baby...
Why was it called Nobody's Baby?
This land was owned by the people in the early days. So the government didn't run Alex like it did other townships.
And the Jo'burg City Council wanted nothing to do with Alex.
Alex ya faleletsa ele ngwana ya senang batswadi.
Before 1958 the Health Committee managed the township. But it did not have any money.
We might be poor but ungasinyatsi.
Ya! We have a proud history of resistance. Azikhwela! The famous bus boycott of 1957.
I've heard of that. The buses stood empty and people footed and sang all the way to the city.
Ya, we kept it up for three months until they gave in.
Thinking about all that walking makes me thirsty. Let's go to my place.


Malume, that tall building... is it a flat or what?
Nxa! That is a hostel. When I see the hostels I am always reminded of another struggle that the residents fought and won.
What struggle was that?
The fight to save Alexandra.
Ya, that story starts in 1958. That's when Peri Urban took over Alex.
I remember the older people saying that Peri Urban was going to fix up Alex.
Banna! Then they came with their raids.
A re bone banna!
Peri-aban uyabafoster a'majita.
That was the time they moved the shackdwellers to Tambisa and Diepmeadow.
Yo! The landlords were unhappy when their boroth was taken away. Some of them had to sell their houses to the Peri Urban.
Peri Urban encouraged people to sell. Maar ra ba 'hlaiefela ka pele.
We have arrived. Ke mona dladleng, mshana.
Peri Urban had mapped the future of Alex without asking us.
They were going to bulldoze family life in Alex and build eight hostels.


Maar Malume, I only saw one hostel. Where are the others?
Hau! uNkulunkulu ukhona. They built only three hostels before Alex was saved.
How was Alex saved?
Umfundisi Buti started the Save Alex campaign. It was that campaign that made the government change its mind.
But that was only years later. By then they had forced thousands and thousands of people to leave. Kwakuntswembu!
Many men were sent to the hostels. And families were moved to Tembisa and Soweto.
All this suffering! Ons sal nie so gesuffer if there was democracy.
After 1979 our hopes were very high. Buti promised us houses, tarred roads, parks, lights...
Ya, you remember all that talk about an international hotel - enye iSun City!
We waited and waited, but nikis.
They built some few houses and flats. Aga kusafana nje!
Our laaties couldn't take it any more. They started with their marches, boycotts...
Ya, that's when all those civics appeared.
Even in those days there were two civics - ba phehisana nja-a-lo.


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Ya, this civic thing only made sense to me after 1986. That was when the comrades from the Action Committee visited all the houses.
They talked about uniting all the residents to form one big civic. They said they were going to bring people's power to Alex.
Ya! Ke a hopola, mfo. The rent boycott started, the council resigned, and then the army moved in...
And that was the end of the Action Committee and their people's power.
Ya, we heard about the Alex treason trial...
Ei, Ma Tumo! There's going to be a treason trial at home!
Give isponono sami my love.
Aga suka!
Ba phile soft da'so, maan... is that part of Alex?
That's the East Bank. Those houses were built after 1986.
There have been some good changes since 1986. But the big problem remains. We need houses which people can afford.
THEY ARRIVE AT TUMO'S YARD.
Hawu, babakhe! Umtwana is tired wena umdontsela ezipotini. Unjani kanti?

THE STORY OF THE ACCORD

On the 24th of April 1989 the court found that the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC) had been trying to solve the problems of Alexandra, not trying to make Alexandra ungovernable.
The five leaders of the civic were set free: Moses Mayekiso, Richard Mdakane, Obed Bapela, Mzwanele Mayekiso and Paul Tshabalala.



During the next few months the civic started to rebuild its structures.



The civic held meetings all over Alexandra. In these meetings residents discussed their problems.





THE LAUNCH OF ACO

In December 1989 a central committee meeting was held to launch the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO). The civic elected an executive committee.



ACO'S DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In early 1990 ACO sent a letter to the TPA asking for a meeting. At the same time ACO started making its own plan for the development of Alexandra. The civic asked an organisation called PLANACT to help them.

ACO and PLANACT held meetings to look at solutions to the problems of Alexandra.







The meetings with PLANACT made it clear that the solution does not lie in Alexandra alone. The days of separate development are over. There must be one local authority for Alexandra. Sandton and the other white suburbs in the area.

THE JOINT NEGOTIATING FORUM

In August 1990 the TPA and the Alexandra City Council agreed to meet with ACO to discuss the problems of Alexandra.

The TPA and ACO could not agree on the role of the Council. ACO said that the Council was part of the TPA, but the TPA insisted that the Council was an independent party. Eventually it was agreed that the Council be a party to the negotiations.

However, both the TPA and ACO did agree that negotiations should involve other important parties. They decided to form a negotiating body, called the Joint Negotiating Forum (JNF), to do something about the future of Alexandra.

WHO ARE THE OTHER PARTIES ON THE JNF?

The Regional Services Council

The Central Witwatersrand Regional Services Council is a government body which gets taxes from businesses in the Witwatersrand. It uses this money to upgrade townships like Soweto and Alexandra.



Our goal is the upgrading and provision of infrastructure and essential services to enhance the quality of life of the residents.

The Sandton Town Council

The Sandton Town Council is the local authority for Sandton. It includes the industrial areas around Alexandra.



The JNF is a useful forum to start talking about future local government structures.

ESKOM

Eskom makes and sells electricity to local authorities all over South Africa. Eskom wants to improve the electricity system in Alexandra.



We believe the JNF can bring different groups together to improve services to the community.

The Randburg Town Council

Many residents of Alexandra work in Randburg. The Randburg Town Council is therefore pleased to be able to help provide services to Alexandra.



Together we must identify the needs of the people and find solutions to these problems.

The Development Bank

The Development Bank of Southern Africa provides loans and technical assistance for projects which improve the quality of life of poor people in urban and rural areas in southern Africa.



We need recognised institutions to implement development projects and we support the JNF to facilitate this.

The Rand Water Board

The Rand Water Board supplies clean water that is safe to use and drink to people living in Alexandra and to the whole of the PWV area.



Water is a necessity of life and we are involved in the JNF to ensure that water is available to all of Alexandra's residents.

THE NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN

In October 1990 ACO presented its proposals for the future development of Alexandra at a meeting of the JNF.

HOUSING

- The residents of Alexandra should not have to pay the money they owe for rent and services.
- People who rent houses should be able to own these houses.
- Low cost houses must be built.
- The hostels must be upgraded.

LAND

- Land on the Far East Bank must be developed with the participation of the people of Alexandra.
- More land must be made available close to Alexandra.

SERVICES

- Services such as water, sewerage and rubbish removal must be upgraded and must be well maintained.
- Services must be affordable enough for everybody.

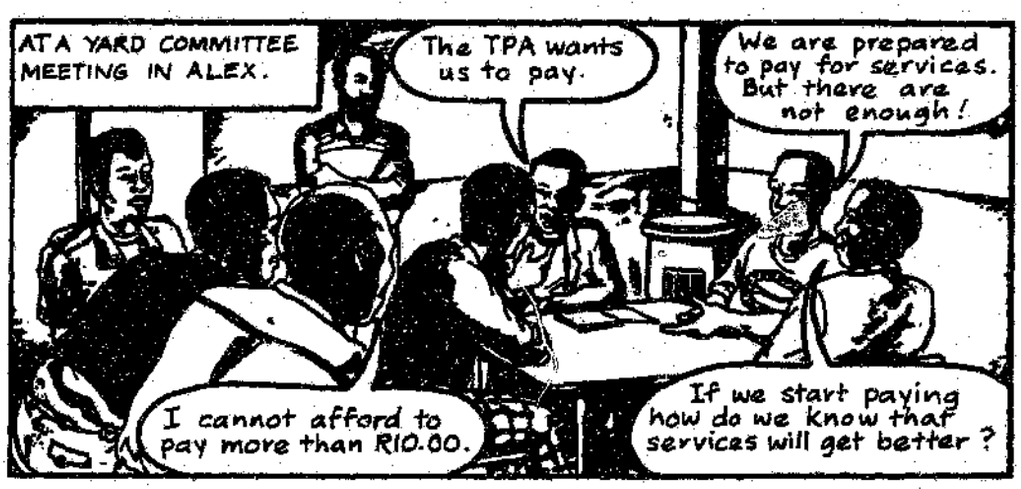
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- There must be one local authority for Alexandra, Sandton and the other white suburbs in the area.
- This authority must have enough money to run the area properly.



ENDING THE BOYCOTT

ACO held discussions with the residents of Alexandra about ending the rent boycott.



ACO went back to the JNF to negotiate the payment of a special price for rent and services.



On 27th February 1991 the TPA, ACO and the Alexandra City Council signed the Alexandra Accord. The rent boycott had been successful.

At last the government was listening to the needs of the people.



THE ALEXANDRA ACCORD

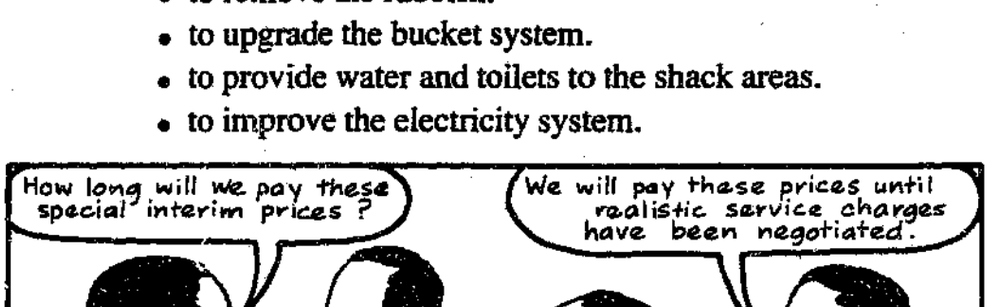
What will the Accord do for the residents of Alexandra?

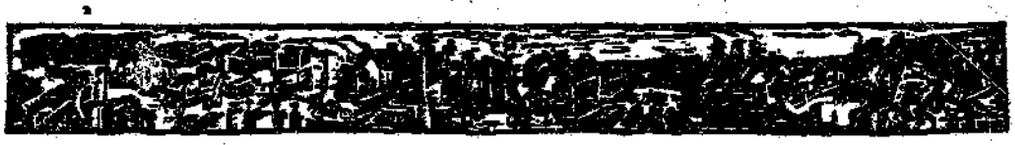


The Accord brings some immediate benefits and makes it possible for the long-term development of Alexandra to take place.

IMMEDIATE BENEFITS:

- The rent arrears have been written off. You no longer owe this money.
- You will pay special interim prices for services such as water, sewerage and rubbish removal.
- The RSC has given R3 million:
  - to improve the water system in the hostels.
  - to remove the rubbish.
  - to upgrade the bucket system.
  - to provide water and toilets to the shack areas.
  - to improve the electricity system.





SPECIAL SERVICE CHARGES:

As from May 1991 residents will pay a special price for services such as water, sewerage and rubbish removal until new affordable prices have been negotiated.

How much to pay per month:

PRIVATE HOUSES R50.00

COUNCIL HOUSES
- 4 rooms R30.00
- 6 rooms R40.00

PRIVATE OR COUNCIL FLATS
- Bachelor flat R40.00
- 2 bedroom flat R50.00
- 3 bedroom flat R60.00

COUNCIL ROOMS
- 1 room R10.00
- 2 room R15.00
- 3 room R20.00
- 4 room R25.00
- 5 room R30.00
- 6 room R35.00
- Each extra room costs R5.00

HOSTELS
- bed in 8-bed room R23.00
- bed in 6-bed room R25.00
- bed in 4-bed room R27.00
- bed in 2-bed room R30.00
- bed in 1-bed room R30.00

SHACKS R10.00

Council workers will give each shack a number. You only need to start paying when you have a permit and when your shack has a number.

Where to pay:

You can pay at the Council offices or at pay centres to be established. Representatives of the Sandton and Randburg Town Councils will manage



THE ALEXANDRA PEOPLE'S FUND

The JNF has set up a People's Fund which will be used for community projects. The Fund will get some of its money from the special service charges paid by the residents.

THE ELECTRICITY SERVICE:

The JNF has agreed that the Regional Services Council will be responsible for the supply of electricity to Alexandra. The RSC has appointed Eskom as its agent.

In the next few months the RSC will pay Eskom to have the electrical system in Alexandra fixed.

- The meters in every house will be checked.
- All broken meters will be repaired or replaced.
- The [illegible] will be read every month.

Pay centres are being established near to Alexandra. These centres will be open at times suitable to residents.

A book will soon be distributed to residents with more information on the electricity service, office hours and office locations.

Special electricity charges:

- Electricity will now cost 10 cents per unit.

Broken meters:

- Residents will pay R50.00 per month until the meter is fixed.
- Businesses will pay R80.00 per month until the meter is fixed.



LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENTS:

The JNF has set up three Committees to plan ways of making Alexandra a better place to live.

The Housing, Land & Development Committee will:

- look for more land for the residents of Alexandra.
- plan the building of low-cost housing on the Far East Bank.
- improve conditions in the hostels and talk to hostel dwellers about turning some of the hostels into family units.
- find out how and when the rented houses could be transferred to the people.

The Finance Committee will:

- find out everything about the condition of services in Alexandra.
- involve the community in the upgrading plans.
- decide what the most important needs are.
- look for money to pay for the upgrading of services.

The Constitutional Committee will:

- look at the problems in the present local government system.
- recommend ways of setting up a non-racial local government with one tax base.

PROGRESS REPORT

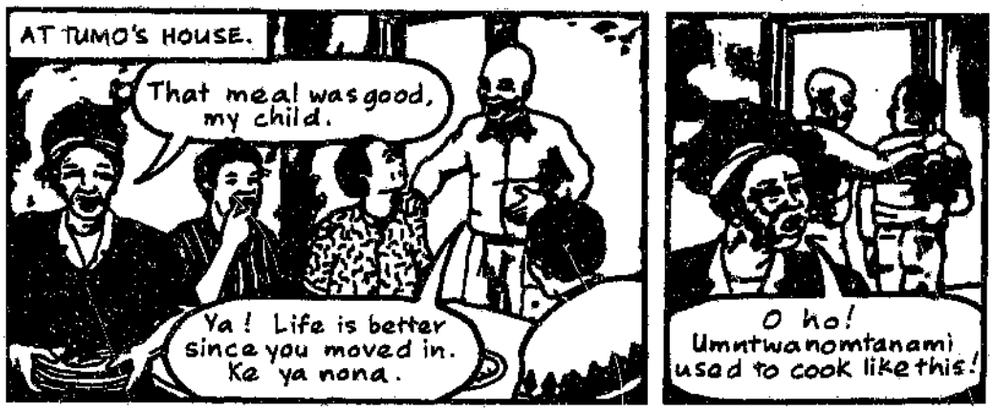
What has happened since the Alexandra Accord was signed?

- Land on the Far East Bank is now available for housing. The JNF will develop this land with the involvement of the people of Alexandra.
- Water and toilet facilities in the hostels and shack areas will be upgraded soon.
- The RSC has given money to repair the roads and the electrical system in Alexandra.
- The Sandton and Randburg Town Councils will help manage Alexandra until there is one local authority for the area.
- The RSC has appointed Eskom as their agent to manage the electricity supply in Alexandra.
- The JNF continues to negotiate for more land for the residents of Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA

Past, Present and Future.

PART 2: Looking Forward




Malume, there is this talk about the new South Africa. Do you think things will improve in Alex?
Asazi. Maybe now that they have stopped detaining the civic...
Usho icivic! Labo, they just cause trouble.
Akunjalo, Mama. The civic is now talking to the government.
Ya, I went to a meeting last year where they talked about negotiations. Angikezwa nix ever since.
I hear that ACO has signed some agreement. Kunjalo?
JOKO
There's Com Ben from the street committee. Maybe he can brief us...
COM BEN JOINS THE GROUP. THEY ASK HIM ABOUT THE AGREEMENT.
Sure, sure. We signed the Accord in February.
Au ngwanaka. What will this agreement do for the people of Alex?
There is now a negotiations structure called the Joint Negotiating Forum - JNF.
All the groups that have real power to improve Alex are working together in the JNF.


All this talk-talk! Tell the JNF to come and sweep up the rubbish.
Ya! Kunini? When are we going to see something?
In the next few months the JNF is going to clean up the rubbish, improve the bucket system and provide more taps and toilets and upgrade the hostels.
Ya! You want to make the hostels into family units and chase us out. Where will we live?
No one will chase you out, mfowethu. You in the hostels will decide about any changes.
Bafowethu. Already the JNF has got land on the Far East Bank to build houses.
Manje, why si'ngazwanga about this concord?
Haai, Mama, it is Accord; Isivumelwano.
ACO was going to have a mass meeting on 10 March, but the fighting started the day before.
Ya, this fighting interferes with everything.
The fighting hasn't stopped everything. The JNF has been working non-stop since March.
But no real progress can be made until the fighting stops.


Is it true that the rent boycott is over ?
Yes, we have suspended the boycott during negotiations. It is an act of faith.
How am I going to pay back all the rent money I owe ?
You won't have to pay, Mama. The Council has agreed to cancel the arrears.
And that is not all. ACO has been negotiating a special discount price for services.
Where do we have to pay ?
We will pay at the Council offices.
But then our money will be going to support the Councillors.
No. The Sandton and Randburg Town Councils will manage the money.
So now Sandton and Randburg are going to help run Alex !
Not for long. Soon we will have one big council for Alex, Sandton, and Randburg – the whole area.


What will one big council do for Alex?
It will mean that more money will come back into Alex.
The JNF will also go to big companies and banks to get money to upgrade Alex.
Sa nahana re ditlaela! They've done this, they've done that, but nothing really changes.
But, Mama, there have been some good things: the post office, the roads, the Apollos...
You can't sleep on the roads or in the post office. And when they do build houses we can't afford them. Look at the East Bank!
You are right. The problem is that they never consulted with us. That is where the JNF is different.
From now on ha ho sa le jwalo everyone in Alex will participate in its future development.
There are many different people in Alex with many different needs.
That is why we need to build strong democratic structures in Alex.

APPENDIX 2

Statements made by Alexandra shack-dwellers on 23 and 24 August 1991 concerning allegations of police harassment.

1. Alpheus Mashitela
   Emily Maluleka
   Elias Phalane
   Solomon Mothwale Patji

All live in unnumbered shacks in a yard at 140, 11th Avenue.

Elias:

> On Monday this week [19 August], around 12.00 midnight, I heard a hippo[1] in the street. It woke me up. It stopped for a while and then drove off. After it left, police were in the yard. They started with Emily's shack. I didn't see them at that point.

Emily:

> When they came they broke my door. Two of my sons were sleeping in the kitchen. When the door fell in, they [sons] ran into the other room with their blankets. After they [police] broke in they came straight to the bedroom. We were my two boys, me and my husband. My husband asked who they were and why they broke in. They didn't say anything and started searching. I couldn't see how many there were because one was shining a torch on my eyes. They were wearing camouflage and were all white. One was busy with my wardrobe. He took R170 from a shirt pocket in the wardrobe. We realised the money was gone after they left, because we knew how much was there. [After they left] My son's wallet was lying on the floor, empty. That also had R65. There was R50 in the other son's trousers, which was also taken. We were sitting on the bed while they were shining a torch into our eyes and speaking to my husband in Afrikaans. My husband told me they were asking if my sons were working. He told them that they are working. They didn't ask anything else. Then they left and went to Elias' shack. While they were busy with Elias, my sons asked my husband to go and ask the police what they were doing, but my husband said they have weapons and we should stay.

[1]Police armoured vehicle.

Elias:

I heard them breaking the door of Emily's shack, but I couldn't hear what happened inside. When they came to my shack they used an iron bar on the door. I asked 'Who are you?'. They said, 'Police' and I opened. Two men came in and said 'Where's the gun?'. I said 'I don't have a gun with me'. I had ANC pictures on the wall. They took them down and said don't I know they have banned the ANC. They asked me what nation I am. They asked if I'm a Zulu. I said no, I'm a Pedi. They asked if I'm a comrade. I said no. One of the police went for the drycleaners' bag which had my girlfriend's purse inside. He took it out. The other was busy talking to me and shining a torch in my eyes. I saw him [the first one] take R112 out of the purse. I told him to bring the money back. The one who was talking to me shoved me with an iron bar and said I was talking shit. Then he pulled his revolver and pointed it at me. He said to me 'Keep quiet'. The one who took the money went out and the one with the gun stayed inside and then followed. They just closed the door. I locked the door and went to bed. They went to Alpheus' and Solomon's shack at the same time. I can't identify them because they shone a torch in my eyes. The police came searching two weeks ago, during the day.

Solomon:

They battled to get in. For five or six minutes they were kicking the door and using the rod until I got up and asked who they were and they said police. They asked why I took so long to open and I said I thought they were Inkatha. Only one came into my shack. The others were standing by the door. They were wearing camouflage. The one inside started searching. He told me he was looking for dagga and guns. I told him I don't smoke dagga and don't have a gun. He took all the blankets off the bed and dropped them on the floor. Then he went for the pillow case and dropped it and my money fell out. There was R180. He took the money. I asked why he was taking my money. He didn't say anything. Then he told me I must sleep and went out and closed the door. He was staggering and looked drunk. I saw his face but I couldn't identify him. They all look the same. I went back to sleep.

Alpheus:

While they were busy at Solomon's, I heard them. I went to unlock the chain because I heard them saying they were police. I was lying on the floor after unlocking the chain and three policemen came into my shack. They jumped over me. My bags were hanging on the wall. While these three were standing over me a fourth one came in. I saw him coming from Solomon's shack. He shone a torch into my eyes. The three started bringing down the bags and searched them. They asked me in Zulu, 'Where's the dagga?'. There were three of us sleeping there. Me, my cousin and my brother. One of the policemen took something out of his pocket and said 'Do you know what this is?'. My cousin said 'Yes, I know it's dagga'. While searching, they threw

my bank books on the floor. Then they blew out the candle and left. After they left, I searched my trousers which had been on top of one of my bags, and found that R78 was gone. Then I went outside. I heard a knocking at another shack in the next yard. I thought they might beat me up if I followed. I went back to sleep. I can't identify them.

[Summary: Approx. 12.00 midnight on 19 August 1991. At least 4 policemen, white, wearing camouflage, spoke Zulu and Afrikaans. Arrived in a hippo. Stole R465. Assaulted one person with an iron bar. Possibly drunk.]

All 4 came to ACO on Tuesday 20 August and then to the Wynberg police station to make statements.

Emily:

My statement was taken by a black policeman. He asked if I thought the police were mad to come and take my money. I said I wouldn't report it if nothing had happened. He said could I identify them. I said I couldn't. He asked why I came to ACO before going to the station. I just kept quiet.

Elias:

My statement was taken by a black policeman. He didn't ask any questions; just took down what I was saying.

Solomon:

My statement was taken by a white policeman. I was asked what the police were wearing when they came in and I told them camouflage. I was asked if I could identify them and I said no. He was threatening me. He was accusing me - how can I come in and lay a charge on people I don't know. He asked me the colour of the hippo. I said I only heard the hippo. He was insisting how could I know these people because I did not see them. He was threatening. He asked why I started from the ACO offices. He said if we talk shit we will all be locked up. He asked if I thought ACO was going to pay me. He said they may pick us up to come and report to the police station.

Alpheus:

I was asked what time the police came and I said between 12.20 and 12.30. My statement was taken by a white policeman. He threatened me, pointing fingers and telling me to talk the truth. He said what am I going to say in court. He asked me why I came to ACO. I said it's the community office. He asked if I'm a comrade. I said no.

Noone was given a case number or told the names of the police taking statements. On 23 August they reported again to the police station.

Elias:

> This morning [23 August] a black CID policeman came to the yard and told us to report to the police station. We came to ACO first. The policeman's name was Dube. At the station they told us maybe someone will come and tell us when to report to the station. That's all they did today.

Alpheus:

> A white policeman told me I must bring the two people I was sleeping with to the station at 9.00 tomorrow morning.

2. Nomakhaya Mdzula
Beauty Nosakhele Mkontwana
Nozamile Mvuba
Constance Lubambo
Florence Tshongolo
Nozuko Cynthia Mboto

All stay in unnumbered shacks in a yard at 149, 20th Avenue.

Nomakhaya:

> At 10.30 pm on Monday night this week [19 August] the police came and knocked at the door. My brother went to the door. They kicked the door in. Four police came in. They hit Nox, my brother, with a stick, on the left arm. Then they took a cold drink. While they were beating Nox, some money fell from his pocket. It was R60, and the police took it. They shone a torch in our eyes so we couldn't see them. I didn't see what they were wearing. They didn't identify themselves. When they spoke, it was in Zulu. There were three of us; me and my two brothers. The other brother pulled a blanket over his head. I hid in the corner. When they were about to leave, they shone the torch at a poster on the wall and told us to look at the poster and left. When they left I didn't want to go out. We put the door up. I came to ACO on Tuesday [20 August] and then to the police. No statement was taken. I was asked to bring my shack documents and then they will take a statement. I don't have any papers so I haven't been back. My brothers said they'll go at the weekend. While I was explaining that my brother was assaulted and robbed they said that my brother must come and tell them.

Nosakhele:

> On Monday at 10.30 while we were sleeping, someone kicked the door. It fell in and four police came in. One went straight for a picture of Mandela on the wall. He hit me over the head with the picture and the glass broke. Another was hitting me and the other two were beating my husband. The two of us and

my baby were in the shack. I was carrying the child while they were hitting me. They were talking Afrikaans but I didn't understand. My husband also didn't understand. One of the policemen who was hitting me shone a torch on the wall where there was a jacket hanging. He took R280 from the pocket. Then he left, followed by the others. We picked the door up and slept. On Tuesday we went to ACO and then the police station. I gave a statement to a black policeman. I was asked why I didn't take the number of the policemen and if I could identify them, but they shone torches in my eyes so I couldn't. Then I went and wasn't told when to come back again. Yesterday a white policeman came to my place and told my husband to report to the station today and make a statement. He's working today so he said he'd go tomorrow. The policeman left a piece of paper with his name.

Nozamile:

It was on Monday night. All the doors were being kicked in at once so there must have been a lot of policemen. They kicked our door for a while. I went to open the door and lit a candle. Two policemen came in. The one in front had his own candle. He had Mandela's picture with him. He dropped it. He lit his candle from my candle. He went to search the beds. I put the baby on one bed. The other policeman shone a torch into my eyes so I shouldn't see what the first was doing. The policeman took R380 from the other bed. Constance and I were together in the shack. The police didn't say anything the whole time. They were white and wearing camouflage. After taking the money they left. We closed the door and went to sleep. On Tuesday I went to ACO and then the police station. I made a statement to a white policeman. I was asked if I could identify the police. I said the torch was in our eyes. The policeman asked if I was laying a charge or just wanted my money back. I said I wanted my money. He said who is going to pay me? A black policeman asked if Constance stayed with me, and then she was called in [to make a statement]. Then ACO phoned and asked us to come here. The police let us go.

Constance: lives with Nozamile and corroborated her statement.

Florence:

At 10.30 on Monday while we were sleeping we heard someone kicking the door four times. Two police came in shining a torch. It's a two-roomed shack. They came into the kitchen. Me and my brother, Buyile, were in the shack. They asked in Afrikaans, 'Who says viva Mandela?'. We didn't answer. My brother was sitting on the bed. There was a box which the police emptied. They took my brother's trousers from the chair and shook them. His wallet fell out. They picked it up and opened it. There was nothing in it. They came to me and went for my jersey which was on the wall. They shook it and a plastic fell out with R150 in it. Another policeman came into the kitchen and then joined the first two. He shone a torch straight into my eyes. I had wrapped myself in a blanket by then. He pushed me to the side and the other

two went out with the plastic and the money. While they were moving into the kitchen one of the police took a pot with meat and they went outside. I don't know what happened to the pot. They never said anything except 'Who says viva Mandela'. They never identified themselves. They were white, and wearing camouflage. I didn't hear anything before or after and I didn't go outside. On Tuesday I came to ACO and the police station. I made a statement for a black policeman. When I spoke about the money that was taken, the policeman said 'Who's going to pay you when you don't know who took it?'. I didn't answer. He asked if I saw a registration number, but I didn't see any vehicle. They never asked my brother to report to the police station. The police used to come, but they would knock and search and then go away.

Nozuko:

On 10.30 on Monday night last week the police took my money. I was inside the shack. Before they came in I heard them kicking other shacks. I thought they were Inkatha. I didn't realise they were police until they came to my shack. I heard people talking outside but I couldn't hear what they were saying. The police kicked down my door. Five police were outside and three came inside. I was asleep and when I woke up my husband had run away. My husband said he can't identify them. They were on foot, not on a hippo. They were white and wearing camouflage. I asked 'What is wrong?'. They didn't identify themselves. They asked 'Waar is die geld?'.[2] I didn't understand, but one shone a torch in my eyes while the other took my money from under the bed. There was R60. The one who had the money asked me where the money came from. I told him my husband is working. One of the police had a hammer in his hand. One had a big stick, and the third held the torch. When they went out I asked where they were taking my money. They asked where I got it from. They were speaking in Zulu. The following day when I went to make a statement at the police station, the person who was taking the statement asked the same question as the police the night before: where I got the money. I said my husband was working. They asked how much money he was earning. I said R500 a month. Then they asked where he works. I said he works for DIPAC. They asked if I could point out the police who took my money, but I said they shone a torch in my eyes so I couldn't see. They said, if I can't point them out I'll be charged with defamation of the police. They asked if I wanted them to pay me. The policeman taking the statement was white. Then they told me to go home. Today there was a policeman from Wynberg police station called Mr Dube, who was looking for my husband. When he didn't find him he said he should report to the police station tomorrow. Mr Dube wrote his name down. The police never came before. My husband never had problems with the police.

[Summary: Approx. 10.30pm on 19 August 1991. At least 5 policemen, white, wearing camouflage, spoke Zulu and Afrikaans. Stole R930. Assaulted 3 people.]

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[2]Where is the money?

two went out with the plastic and the money. While they were moving into the kitchen one of the police took a pot with meat and they went outside. I don't know what happened to the pot. They never said anything except 'Who says viva Mandela'. They never identified themselves. They were white, and wearing camouflage. I didn't hear anything before or after and I didn't go outside. On Tuesday I came to ACO and the police station. I made a statement for a black policeman. When I spoke about the money that was taken, the policeman said 'Who's going to pay you when you don't know who took it?'. I didn't answer. He asked if I saw a registration number, but I didn't see any vehicle. They never asked my brother to report to the police station. The police used to come, but they would knock and search and then go away.

Nozuko:

On 10.30 on Monday night last week the police took my money. I was inside the shack. Before they came in I heard them kicking other shacks. I thought they were Inkatha. I didn't realise they were police until they came to my shack. I heard people talking outside but I couldn't hear what they were saying. The police kicked down my door. Five police were outside and three came inside. I was asleep and when I woke up my husband had run away. My husband said he can't identify them. They were on foot, not on a hippo. They were white and wearing camouflage. I asked 'What is wrong?'. They didn't identify themselves. They asked 'Waar is die geld?'.[2] I didn't understand, but one shone a torch in my eyes while the other took my money from under the bed. There was R60. The one who had the money asked me where the money came from. I told him my husband is working. One of the police had a hammer in his hand. One had a big stick, and the third held the torch. When they went out I asked where they were taking my money. They asked where I got it from. They were speaking in Zulu. The following day when I went to make a statement at the police station, the person who was taking the statement asked the same question as the police the night before: where I got the money. I said my husband was working. They asked how much money he was earning. I said R500 a month. Then they asked where he works. I said he works for DIPAC. They asked if I could point out the police who took my money, but I said they shone a torch in my eyes so I couldn't see. They said, if I can't point them out I'll be charged with defamation of the police. They asked if I wanted them to pay me. The policeman taking the statement was white. Then they told me to go home. Today there was a policeman from Wynberg police station called Mr Dube, who was looking for my husband. When he didn't find him he said he should report to the police station tomorrow. Mr Dube wrote his name down. The police never came before. My husband never had problems with the police.

[Summary: Approx. 10.30pm on 19 August 1991. At least 5 policemen, white, wearing camouflage, spoke Zulu and Afrikaans. Stole R930. Assaulted 3 people.]

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[2]Where is the money?

3. T[illegible]as Minis
Eric Ngobene
'Paulus'
'Aaron'

All live in the 'Mozambique' shack [illegible]ettlement.

Tomas:

> On Saturday [17 August] at about 8.00 pm the police came to my shack. They knocked at the door and then pushed it. I had a candle and they blew it out. They shone a torch in my eyes. They asked where I'm from. I said I'm from Komatipoort. They said they don't want Mozambicans here. They wanted to take my radio. I told them I bought it and showed them the slip. They took some money and left. They were wearing camouflage. I didn't see a hippo. I followed them and asked why they took my money. They said they didn't take it and I could search them. So I searched their pockets and one took out a gun and pointed it at me and said 'We didn't take your money'. When they pointed the gun they said to go and sleep, so I did. They spoke Afrikaans. I didn't see any name or number, but I could identify them if I saw them. I've seen them many times before. It was the first time they came to my shack. No other police came to my shack before.

Eric:

> In July, the police came to my shack. They asked me where is the gun. I said I don't have a gun. They asked me where's the dagga. I said I don't know anything about it. They started searching. They shone a torch. They took R100. I can identify them. I've seen them since, even today [24 August 1991]. They came about 2.00 am. I didn't see the hippos because I was sleeping. There were 6 policemen. They spoke Afrikaans. They said 'Open the door, police'. They asked where I'm from. I said Maputo. They said 'Where's your pass?'. I had some plates in the shack. They asked where the slip is. There were three of us. The other two can also identify them.

Aaron:[3]

> Last week on Monday [19 August] at about 3.00 am the police kicked my door down. Five police came in . There were two of us. They started hitting us. They asked about guns and dagga. We said we don't have any. They took R50. They tied me to the shack with electric wires. They set fire to a cricket and told me to inhale it. It made me dizzy. They burnt a hole in my shirt with

[3]See press cutting, fig.22, p.209.

3. Tomas Minis
Eric Ngobene
'Paulus'
'Aaron'

All live in the 'Mozambique' shack settlement.

Tomas:

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[3]See press cutting, fig.22, p.209.

a cigarette. They meant to burn my skin. They asked where I'm from. I said Mozambique. They were wearing camouflage. When they banged the door they said they were police. They shone a torch in my eyes. I can't identify them because they all look alike. When there are police everyone stays in their shacks. If the police hear anything in a shack they run in and beat you. After tying me up they went and told Paulus [the other person in the shack] to sleep.

Paulus: lives with Aaron, saw everything and corroborates Aaron's statement.

APPENDIX 3

Letter from Tomas Minis to ACO/ANC leadership.

P.A.C Area 91/09/25

Ekhaya kimi kuse komatiPoort
abantu Bomke laba ngaBona lona Bakhula
Nami Sijabula kakhulu uma SiBona beBabe
BaFika. Umu Sinyaziya ipilo yethu kuthi
thina Sikhala kahle kejs asilali
ngendaba ye Nabunu uma bafika emukhukwini.
Bayaneka uma unga vuli Sivalu baya sikhahl
bas.kula uma bakhuleka kuvula bashaya
nge tihamela. kefuzala uma bangehile bafuna
isibamu kesibile bafuna intsonga uma uthi
aunaluthu uyashaswa kesithathu bafuna imale
uma bangenile bathatha nhe mawayilisi Radio
amabeke baya khula kuvula ngenkanu
baghuka itimpahla bewusha tewusasha abanye.
bayashaywa tina Siyabonga nje ngoba
kufikenine abantu abakhulu kithi
nje ngoba nifikile Sicela nisilekelela
se ngoba nisibona Sinje abanye uma uBatshela
nge ndaba yemthinga abafuni kusilalela
abanye bayangena imthinga abanye abafuni
abaningi bayavuma mthinga abanye bathi abanendaba
nhe ANC. Selana Siniyaziya kuthi nhe Bantu
BaRenamu Sinabu Lona bakhona amazwi ethu
magina lakhu thina Sicela nisilekelela
nge mazwi kuthi Siyenza kanjani ngalaBan'
se Sicela kuthi iRhenamu Siyenzani ngoyo nga'
nabo' baka Rhenamu baya Bamba ikuzi la emukhu
kwini amabunu nhe Rhenamu Bayinkhapani
asihazi kuti siBabeka kuphi labe bantu
ngi gelelani kuqwalisa amagama amaningi

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