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CULTURAL TRENDS AND COMMUNITY FORMATION IN A SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNSHIP: SHARPEVILLE, 1943 - 1985

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University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines cultural expressions and community attachment, and their relation to each other, in the creation and maintenance of urban identity. In examining this, the thesis considers a number of key cultural forms in Sharpeville such as boxing, football, musicial performance, youth gangs, and styles of dress. It argues that, conceptually, "community" is never static; rather it is a state of existence, a perception, for a grouping of people. At a given time they may consider themselves to be collectively part of or constitute a community; at another, their attachments may be to a different entity - the local neighbourhood, for example.

The empirical data was derived mainly from primary sources altho[illegible] due to the historical time-period examined - namely 1943 to 1985 - there was some reference to secondary sources. The research involved mainly

in-depth interviews and participant observation. By administering a questionnaire, "key" informants within the various cultural areas examined were identifed and interviewed at length, sometimes more than once.

The thesis argues that "communities" only gain a sense of cohesion, "identity" and unity at certain specific historical moments; at other times the cultural focus within them may in fact express quite other meanings than those of "community" for their members. This identity is seen thus as both a product of the structural features which inform, influence and even dictate its direction as well as the responses and actions of the residents themselves, in shaping its outcome.

:LARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being 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.

17th day of July 1991.

In Memory of David Webster

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As is the case with all dissertations, there is an enormous number of people to thank for their time and assistance. In this case the one person whom I would most like to thank is no longer with us. Doctor David Webster was my initial supervisor. More than that, he was my mentor and friend, and it was his enthusiasm and fine example that first aroused my interest in social anthropology. I am deeply saddened that he is not alive today to witness the fruits of this study. I will never forget the meetings with him during times of de-motivation, in which his enthusiasm and encouragement saw any pessimism quickly dissipate.

I am indebted to Professor Belinda Bozzoli and Deborah James, who, following Doctor Webster's death, helped me re-gain my footsteps and point me in the right direction. It was their supervision and support - which took us to the strangest of places, including Cambridge and Paris - which enabled me to complete this thesis.

I am deeply indebted to various people in Sharpeville: to Betty Mkg[illegible] who permitted me to use her shebeen as a base in the township in 1986; to Father Patrick Noonan, who granted me permission to utilise rooms in the Catholic Church in Sharpeville to conduct interviews from, as well as providing a place to sleep during 1989 and 1990. Our late night chats were often the catalyst for uncovering new areas of research. To Sharpeville students, Tsepo Koebe, Masanka Mokoena, David Radebe, Tsietsi Motloung, Chris Nkete and Nathaniel "Slo" Lenke, for their enthusiasm and assistance, as well as for including me in their varied excursions. I will not forget the time they arranged for me to be a judge at the Mr and Miss Thuto-Loare Beauty contest at which the Sharpetown Swingsters were performing.

I would also like to thank Marie Human at the Bailey Archives for providing me with material pertaining to the music group, the "Hurricanes"; Hilda Mabena for the

photographs of Sexton Mabena; Jonas "Brian" Chaka for those of the "Beavers"; and Elliot "Do what you like" Mpepo for the photograph of the Transvaal Jumpers.

Thank you also to Mahlamola Ntoane for acting as my interpreter during the initial interviews in 1986.

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To my parents: without their generosity and support I would never have managed to complete the thesis.

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object of which never quite seemed to make sense. I hope that for those who are able to see it, this dissertation goes some way to answering their questions.

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Introduction

I first visited Sharpeville in 1984 while researching the topic of my honours dissertation on the oldest surviving jazz band in South Africa, the Sharpetown Swingsters. I was aware of the political symbolism attached to the name of Sharpeville and was not unduly surprised to note a remarkable sense of cohesiveness and unity displayed by the residents there during a rent boycott which had begun some months before. However, in discussing various cultural activities, particularly those of the competitive sports of boxing and football, I became aware of a profound sense of area rivalry which had existed within the township from its inception. Yet, in these same activities, there often existed a sense of unity when faced by a (real or perceived) challenge from other areas, particularly from Soweto.[1] This situation was therefore similar to that described by Evans-Pritchard of the Nuer, where normally antagonistic tribal groupings fuse in order to oppose outside threats.[2] However, it was complicated because, in Sharpeville, the response to outside challenges was not always characterised by this sense of unity. Thus, in order to explain these responses, along with those in the realm of political

activity, the formation and operation of culture and cultural expression, and how these relate to community and the feeling of belonging to a community, needed to be clearly understood.

This thesis then, examines cultural expressions and community attachment, and their relation to each other, in the creation and maintenance of urban identity in the township of Sharpeville. In examining cultural expressions, the study goes beyond the theoretical approaches utilised in earlier anthropological urban studies based in South Africa, such as those conducted by Mayer, Pauw, Wilson and Mafeje, and Kuper, whose chief concern was to explain the process of urbanisation. The approach adopted by these authors, while empirically rich, is theoretically inadequate, especially because, after unsuccessfully explaining the process of urbanisation, many concluded that a viable urban African culture in South Africa did not exist.[3] The object of Chapter One of this thesis then, is to provide a clear theoretical framework to facilitate a more rigorous understanding of urban African culture. An in-depth overview of the South African studies is provided in this chapter and is placed here as part of the process of

developing a framework in which to explain the concepts of "culture" and "community". Once concluded, the thesis turns to the overall focus of the study, that is, the township of Sharpeville.

The township of Sharpeville is the oldest of the six surviving townships in the Vaal Triangle. It lies in the magisterial district of Vereeniging, some five kilometres to the west of the central business district, just over seventy kilometres from Johannesburg. The Sharpeville of today has sixteen primary schools, three high schools, one library, two community halls, nine churches and one soccer field. Twenty seven kilometres of its roads are tarred, comprising only the main roads in the township.[4] Most employable residents out of a total population of 46 143 seek work in Vereeniging, although a small proportion are self-employed.[5] Sharpeville was established in 1942, the product of the destruction of the original black settlement area in the region, the freehold township of Top Location. Sharpeville has not expanded much since its establishment; only 480 more [illegible] the original houses have been built,[6] and, since 1960, its official population has increased by less than 10 000.[7] The reason for this is that its neighbour,

Sebokeng, ten kilometres to the west, which was constructed in 1966, was intended to become the only black township in the Vaal Triangle. This was part of the state's policy of "grand apartheid", which, introduced in the 1950s, sought to get rid of the long established freehold areas, such as Sophiatown in Johannesburg and Lady Selbourne and Newclare in Pretoria, and move black people living in the urban areas further away from city and town centres.[8] While not a freehold area, Sharpeville was marked for removal because it was considered to be too close to the Vereeniging CBD. It escaped removal because the state, after initially planning a gradual removal over a period of twenty years, eventually contended that it would be too costly to complete.[9]

Sharpeville's establishment then, was not part of "grand apartheid" and came about at a time when state policy was indecisive and unclear, uncertain of how to deal with the enormous economic and social expansion that had occurred during the second world war. During this period, there were a number of similarities which characterised most Reef towns. The economic boom which accompanied the outbreak of WWII coupled with economic decline in the

Rand's rural hinterland saw massive increases in urban populations, which in turn resulted in severe overcrowding, bad sanitation, inadequate provision of basic social amenities, the increase and spread of diseases, and escalating, often militant, social discontent. Yet, while these towns experienced similar problems, because there did not exist a general, guiding state policy, the responses to these problems by local bodies were in no way similar and were often isolated, ad hoc reactions to urban crises. Thus Vereeniging was similar in industrial composition to the East Rand. Both of these areas had (and still have) large-scale iron and steel works, and both experienced considerable industrial expansion during WWII, accompanied by massive population increases and ensuing social crises. But the responses by their respective local governing bodies were completely different. The Vereeniging Town Council was able to contain the crisis by creating Sharpeville, while the Benoni Town Council, experiencing strong resistance from residents and "illegal" lodgers to any suggestion of displacement, could only respond by creating a "tent town."[10]

A result of all of this was that Sharpeville's establishment was, in a sense, unique, and, for its new inhabitants, the initial experiences were for the most part new and unfamiliar ones. Indeed, Sharpeville's inhabitants experienced a removal a decade before the era of grand-scale forced removals which characterised the 1950s and 1960s, a removal which was also quite different from those which came later. The inhabitants of Top Location were gradually moved to Sharpeville; some of them moved voluntarily; and the entire population took some twenty years to move. It was thus very unlike the forced removals which came later which were carried out with brutal swiftness and which had the effect of disrupting and breaking down affected communities.[11] This was a significant element in the subsequent social and cultural development of the township, and is the basis for understanding the subsequent cultural expressions. However, stating that the establishment of Sharpeville was unique is not to suggest that the township is very different from the other urban townships on the Reef. Socially and culturally there are strong resemblances between them. Urban cultural institutions such as the shebeen and the stokfel, which span the Witwatersrand

and which have been present since townships were first established, have thrived in Sharpeville and still do today.[12] From a political perspective however, Sharpeville presents significant contrasts with other townships.

In its forty seven years of existence Sharpeville has managed to create for itself a name which has political connotations of one sort or another to people all over the world. Indeed, the tragic events on March 21, 1960 there are well-known world-wide and as Chaskalson has observed:

> People with only a fleeting knowledge of South African history are aware of the events of 21 March 1960 and Sharpeville Day is annually commemorated by opponents of apartheid all over the world.[13]

In later times, the Vaal Triangle upheaval in September, 1984, and the subsequent trial and conviction of six people, popularly known as the "Sharpeville Six", for their part in the death of a councillor during the upheaval, saw the name of Sharpeville once again drawing world-wide attention. In the political sphere, Sharpeville is both a symbol of resistance for apartheid's opponents and, to the right wing of South Africa's political spectrum, a reminder of the spectre of

black uprising. However, during discussions and interviews with residents living in Sharpeville I observed that while most were aware of the political focus upon their home, they did not accord it as much importance as I had expected. Indeed, on commencing my research in the township, many residents pressed me for my reasons for selecting their home. Initially I found this quite surprising as I had expected them to be quite used to the pilgrimage of press reporters and other interested parties. Yet residents quizzed me for the reasons I was there; and perhaps significantly, some wanted to hear that I was there for reasons other than that of the political events which had thrust the name of Sharpeville into the political spotlight.

The political symbolism associated with Sharpeville, its evolution as a "community", as well as many of its cultural features thus provide the primary focus of this thesis. How was the creative expression of the township's political identity fused with that of its cultural identity, if at all? How, indeed, do communities become communities and create identities; and how are these in turn affected by outside forces and dynamics? Culture, it is argued, is a force which is threaded through these

processes: Political identity has a cultural disposition while cultural expressions often assume political overtones. Further, different cultural expressions have their own peculiar dynamics, but do not exist in isolation, and, indeed, are deeply affected by outside forces. This thesis then, seeks to understand the changing complexities of the cultural identity of Sharpeville which, it is argued, is of fundamental importance in understanding its responses as a community.

After the theoretical discussions of Chapter One, Chapter Two of the thesis explores the origins of Sharpeville; in particular the removal of Top Location residents to Sharpeville, which affected the original settlement patterns of the new township in such a way as to create the conditions for a display of intense area rivalry. Chapter Three examines how the area rivalry manifested itself in the subsequent social and cultural development of the township, particularly in youth gangs, boxing and football. Chapter Four is concerned with the effect of American consumer culture - which during the 1940s and 1950s, influenced Africans living in the urban areas of South Africa in general - on cultural developments in Sharpeville. Chapter Five considers the factors which led

up to the pivotal event of the Sharpeville shooting, the result of which created the conditions for strong unity, which offset, to a large extent, the former expressions of area rivalry and generated a powerful political identity - or sense of "community". The chapter also considers the aftermath of the shooting a period which witnessed the construction of Sebokeng and the proposal of Sharpeville's removal. Chapter Six is concerned with Sharpeville after 1960 and explores the new expression of community and cultural unity by re-examining the cultural activities which had embodied strong area rivalry during the previous decade. The chapter introduces another factor which had a uniting influence on the township and that was a belief that the residents of Soweto regarded Sharpeville as "culturally inferior". In addition the chapter illustrates how cultural activities in the 1960s were characterised by a shift away from parochialism. In football, for example, this involved a transition to professionalism. In the final chapter, the themes of unity, community identity and the shift away from parochialism are all examined in a consideration of musical performance, community support and changing musical styles.

In a brief conclusion the thesis argues that "communities" only gain a sense of cohesion, "identity" and unity at certain specific historical moments; at other times the cultural focus within them may in fact express quite other meanings than those of "community" for their members. These cultural forms in Sharpeville came to embody divisions and rivalry in the pre-1960 years, a period during which key cultural institutions such as football, boxing, gangsterism, cinema, shebeens and music all consolidated, more or less firmly, around particular geographically defined "areas". But the shock of recession and political repression and the shootings, followed by economic expansion, the subordination of Sharpeville to the status of a "satellite" in relation to Soweto, and the penetration of rigorous economic forces into some of the previously parochial cultural institutions, all combined to create within Sharpeville a greater sense of "community" identity. This identity is seen thus as both a product of the structural features which inform, influence and even dictate its direction as well as the responses and actions of the residents themselves, in shaping its outcome.

FIELD SITUATION AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

The research upon which this thesis is based, was conducted in Sharpeville, a black township a few kilometres to the west of Vereeniging, a town in the Transvaal near the Vaal River. The research was carried out between 1986 and 1990.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

There are a number of generally recognised techniques of research which include fieldwork, surveys, ethnography, participant observation and in-depth interviews. Ideally, a researcher's aim is to combine both qualitative (subjective and speculative research, with the aim of learning about the social world at first hand) and quantitative (objective and rigorous research, with the aim of collecting hard data and establishing general trends) research techniques.[1] Traditional anthropological research methods have been geared toward the study of other cultures and countries, and part of the process of becoming an anthropologist involved embarking on a period of "initiation in the field", as

British anthropologist Burgess explains:

> For social anthropologists, the conduct of field research in another culture and preferably in another country is an essential rite de passage (Van Gennep, 1960). Originally this research in some other society was seen as an ordeal; a test in which anthropologists had to engage.[2]

However, through factors such as high costs and third-world independence, anthropological research in general has become less and less focused on foreign countries or on other cultures. Further, anthropological research has ventured into areas (such as industrial society) which have been the traditional realm of sociological and historical research, and consequently have had to borrow concepts and methods of research from these. This study is an example of such a venture; it is urban-based and considers a time period of a little over forty years. As a result, the investigative approach has involved research techniques characteristic of all three disciplines: anthropology, history and sociology. It is thus a venture into the social sciences as a whole, but with an emphasis upon anthropology.

The primary methods of data collection in this study were participant observation and the interview. A lengthy questionnaire was drafted, covering such areas as

personal details, information pertaining to family, household composition, employment/unemployment and pensions, social and cultural interaction, as well as cultural interests, interaction and networks. The purpose of the questionnaire was not to obtain statistically highly accurate information - although some important trends were noted - but rather to gain an insight into the lives of people living there, to identify patterns of cultural formation, and to identify key individuals within the specific cultural practices such as football, boxing, popular music, beer drinking, gangs and styles of dress. In conjunction with administering the questionnaire, the aim was to spend a considerable amount of time in Sharpeville itself in order to become a participant observer, and become familiar with residents in order to break down as far as possible formal barriers and establish at first-hand patterns of normal, day-to-day existence. However, while this approach was well-intentioned, the actual experience of it was less successful; and I encountered a number of problems which related to the overall difficulties of research in South African communities. These were not new ones, however,

and I was familiar with what Kuper had already noted about anthropology research in this country:

> South Africa has been a problematic research terrain for the social anthropologist. To some degree, the difficulties which confront the anthropologist are similar to those which face all social scientists working in the country. Political obstacles, widespread suspicion and fear are bound to make any social research in South Africa very difficult. Ethnography, however, requires a particularly high level of mutual regard and acceptance, even identification, between the fieldworker and his subjects. The anthropologist must wonder whether his conventional techniques of research are viable in this inhospitable climate.[3]

I was also aware of the experiences of Norwegian anthropologist Kramer, who, during his research in Soweto in the early 1970s, commented:

> My fieldwork was ... not carried out in the traditional anthropological manner where the anthropologist lives amongst the people he is studying, and participates as far as possible in the social life of their community. On account of the apartheid laws of South Africa I was not permitted to live in Soweto, as it is illegal for whites to live in a Black area.[4]

Kramer discovered how racial relations in South Africa had a very direct effect on how he was received by his subjects:

> ... many of the people with whom I came into contact insisted on defining their relationship with me in terms of the conventional South African pattern, where the white man is "boss" and the Black man is "servant".[5]

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When I began to visit Sharpeville in 1986, the community was embroiled in a rent boycott which had, during the first few days of September, 1984, erupted in violent confrontation between residents and police. By 1986, a number of community leaders were in detention, on trial facing charges relating to "terrorism", or in hiding from the South African state's repressive apparatus, while the majority of the residents were not paying rent. I expected that my identity as a student from the University of the Witwatersrand, an institution well-known for its stand against racial prejudice, along with the fact that I had already established strong ties with the members of the Sharpeville-based jazz band, the Sharpetown Swingsters, whose history was the subject of my honours dissertation, would enable me to be readily received by the residents of Sharpeville, even those who were not known to me and who were not connected to the band. But this was not to be and even after examining my credentials, many people declined to be interviewed, preferring instead to remain anonymous. Thus my questionnaire tended to be administered rather erratically. Nevertheless many people were quite happy to engage in idle conversation, particularly in the

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shebeens, which often covered potentially risky political topics and my efforts at participant observation were rather more successful than first indications had suggested they would be.

During the period between March and October, 1986, I made regular visits to Sharpeville with my interpreter, Mahlomola Ntoane, visiting the township for up to five days a week. My initial visits were to see the members of the popular jazz group, the Sharpetown Swingsters. These visits were to ensure the continuity of the contact I had already established. Apart from the Sharpetown Swingsters, I was able to establish contact with a relative of my research assistant, a woman who ran a shebeen from her home in the township. I established the shebeen as a base and Ntoane and I would always begin our visits to Sharpeville from there. I interviewed people who visited the shebeen as well as neighbours and people who lived in the same block. I also interviewed people whom I met through these initial contacts and from there spread my base.

Further, I was in touch with some members of the legal team who were working on the Delmas Treason Trial case, which involved a number of Sharpeville residents, and through this connection established contacts, some of whom I was able to interview. I also encountered Father Patrick Noonan, an Irish priest who had been based in the Vaal Triangle since the early 1970s, and who provided me with a wealth of information concerning his experiences and understanding of the area, as well as further valuable contacts. Additionally, I met Elaine Proctor, who, at the time, was producing a film on popular culture in Sharpeville, and who was able to provide me with useful information and contacts as well.

During this initial eight month period, I conducted a total of twenty six in-depth interviews, most of which were based on the questionnaire I had constructed. Those involving "expert" or "key" informants, however, were managed without the aid of the questionnaire and here I followed the themes relevant to the areas we were discussing. Interviews were conducted in either English or South Sotho, depending on the preference of the interviewee. Many insisted on responding in English, although responses invariably ended up being a mixture of

English, South Sotho and Afrikaans. Due to the fact that my South Sotho was weak and restricted to a smattering of phrases, my interpreter conducted and translated those interviews in South Sotho.

My progress was severely interrupted with the declaration of the third State of Emergency on 13 June, 1986. Indeed, the regulations were such that I was required to carry a permit issued by the local commissioner of police in order to enter into Sharpeville. I decided to forego applying for such a permit as I felt it would jeopardise my relations with the residents. I continued to visit Sharpeville, albeit no longer on a regular basis, and I came to understand at firsthand the siege conditions under which the people in the township were living during this particularly volatile period of South African history. On numerous occasions I narrowly avoided contact with SADF patrols in the township, although on one occasion a patrol detected me entering Kgomoco Lower Primary School. However, I was not questioned and I concluded that they must have gathered that either I was a teacher or a teaching official. Familiar sights during this time included delivery vehicles being escorted by police and armoured cars, as well as the burned shells of

motor vehicles, tyres and rocks spread across streets, and the charred remains of gutted shops and houses. What I found quite remarkable was the speed with which residents transmitted reports of police and military presence throughout the township and often I was informed of a patrol within minutes of its entry into the township and was shown the safest exit route out of the township. The closeness of living, along with strong, long-established networks ensured an effective system of informal communication.

By mid-1988 the situation had eased and I was ready to begin a series of follow-up interviews. This phase involved identifying and consulting the key informants in the various areas of popular culture which I had singled out as crucial for my research: the areas of football, boxing, popular music, politics, styles of dress, gangs, shebeens, and stokfels. I drew up interview schedules for each area, to facilitate exploring their origins, influences and manifestation in the township. This phase involved almost fifty interviews, all of which were conducted during the period between October, 1988, and June, 1989. This time I conducted most of the interviews by myself, although some were carried out by a handful of

students who were resident in Sharpeville, and who were interested in the project. For me this was a highly constructive approach as the informants were often more responsive when dealing with familiar faces. This was indeed the case with members of gangs who were otherwise highly suspicious of outsiders. Further, I was able to utilise their interpretations of what had been said as a guide toward understanding many of the responses - a step towards, in Geertz' terms, "getting inside the minds of the actors."[6] By this time I was a sojourner in the township, staying in the residence of Father Noonan, who provided me with a room and space to conduct my work.

The information I discerned during these interviews (as well as that generated during a final three week follow-up visit in March, 1990) comprises the body of this thesis. But the fact that it embraces a period of time going back some forty years generated some problems with periodisation and historical accuracy. In order to overcome these I consulted a variety of newspapers, magazines and other secondary sources, as well as related texts. Here, The World newspaper proved invaluable, but because it was banned under the Internal Security Act[7], I had to tolerate a series of delays before being able to

utilise it, and then to endure a whole range of restrictions. In order to gain access to The World, I had to obtain the permission of the Minister of Law and Order in person, which took all of two years to obtain and which required that I furnish a full bibliography for the minister's perusal. Further, the conditions of my consulting The World were such that, should I quote from it, my thesis would be banned under the same conditions, and my supervisor(s) (and anyone else for that matter) would be required to obtain the necessary permission in order to examine it. But the real tragedy of this draconian measure was the fact that all the information contained in every issue of The World from 1957 was, up until 1990, banned. So the football results in 1968, the boxing reports in 1962 and fashion pages, along with the rest of the contents, were rendered subversive by the Act. Being the major and for some periods the only black newspaper on the Reef meant that the most comprehensive chronicle of urban life in the Reef's townships between 1957 and 1977 was simply not accessible.

I had intended to consult the municipal archives pertaining to Sharpeville, the Vereeniging Municipal archives (from the inception of the township until 1968),

the Orange-Vaal Development Board Archives (from 1968 until 1977) and the Lekoa Town Council archives (from 1977 until the present). However, I experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining the necessary permission. The Vereeniging municipality responded by informing me they did not have archive material concerning Sharpeville, the Orange-Vaal Development Board indicated that they had notified their head office, who then never contacted me, and the Lekoa Town Council never responded at all. Because I felt it was not the most important aspect of my research I chose not to pursue it and I was able to utilise secondary sources at my disposal to provide the necessary dates and other information pertaining to my research. But there are still gaps: for example, historical accounts of shebeens, stokfels, and, to some extent, the gangs, is thin, as much of the information gleaned relates to more recent time periods. On the other hand, dates offered by informants concerning earlier time periods often proved to be inaccurate and consequently much of the historical information in those areas is rather cursory. It is thus recognised that a weakness in the research is the fact that the archive material contained in the local state bodies mentioned above was not consulted, which perhaps

would have provided accurate recorded historical information in these areas. Nevertheless, it is felt that these were not the major areas of the thesis and that the information extracted from the interviews is more than adequate.

CHAPTER ONE

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY - THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND LOCAL APPLICATIONS

Attempting a combined usage of the terms "culture" and "community" is a challenging exercise. Of "culture", Hebdige notes that it is a "notoriously ambiguous concept" which has "acquired a number of quite different, often contradictory meanings."[1] Other theorists have associated the term with words and phrases like "problematic",[2] "elusive",[3] and even "a pretty tall order."[4] Further, in theorising "culture", some cannot even agree upon the starting point.[5] In South Africa, analysts have at times found it difficult to justify examining "culture", because the term has been used by the state and its supporters to provide a basis for the ideology of "separate development", "apartheid", in which "culture" is seen as that which separates (and keeps separate) different ethnic groups.[6] "Community", on the other hand, tends to be associated with a certain romanticism. Time and again ethnographers have endeavoured and failed to find "communities" defined in ideal terms which possess specific, ideal attributes, and, as Thornton has noted:

> virtually without exception ... any study of communities has been about why the community has not been as "solidary" or as coherent as the observer desired it to be.[7]

Further, anthropologists studying communities in South Africa are put in an awkward position when it comes to defining exactly what they mean, because the term "community":

> ... has been defined, legislated, acted and conceived in so many ways that the ethnographer must frequently define what he means, what he does not mean, and what he is forced to mean whenever he speaks about any "community" he proposes to study.[8]

The concept of "community" is difficult to theorise because there are problems in articulating precisely what it is: Is a community defined by its structural composition or by the people who feel they belong to it? Or is it worth even attempting to define, given the problems observed by Thornton? Williams has noted that the word "community" never seems to be used unfavourably,[9] which prompts Bozzoli to demand:

> Is it [community] merely a mask for deeper class differences? Does it really have analytical value? ... What is its relationship to the classes which constitute society?[10]

Further, we must consider how a community relates to, influences and is influenced by other communities, towns, cities.

This study will attempt to avoid these problems by engaging in a theoretical discussion to provide clarity on the application of the concepts of "culture" and "community", and the connections between them. It should be noted at the outset that, in general, anthropologists in South Africa have not focused on urban studies which

consider these questions in a contemporary setting. Those who looked at such questions earlier, most notably, Kuper, Wilson and Mafeje, Mayer and Pauw, while they provide rich, comparative material, are not always theoretically self conscious and do not always seek the connections between cultural evolution and community formation which this thesis sets out to pursue. More theoretically informed precedents from within South African anthropology are relatively few in number. Important advances made by non-Southern Africanists such Clifford Geertz and Marshall Sahlins[11] are yet to be comprehensively utilised in the South African context.[12] As a result, theoretical contributions from non-anthropologists, particularly neo-Marxian cultural studies, have of necessity been considered side-by-side with more clearly anthropological work.

Thus, this chapter explores these two difficult concepts further. It examines the epistemology which informs approaches to each. Have theorists of both "culture" and "community" provided an adequate balance between both structure and human agency? And how may we make use of these concepts in a way which is both theoretically rigorous, and provides a wealth of questions for the researcher to ask of his or her material?

The traditional application of "culture" in Anthropology

In the discipline of anthropology, culture was originally seen in terms of man's ability to adapt to his environment through learned as opposed to biological means. Culture was described as the expression of meanings and values in the institutions and ordinary behaviour of society. This conceptualisation was based upon an earlier definition by the ethnologist Sir Edward Tylor who, in 1871, described culture as:

> ... that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.[13]

In 1952, American cultural anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckhohn, after analysing 160 definitions of culture taken from the different social sciences, elaborated upon this definition and argued that:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action.[14]

These types of eclectic and extremely wide-ranging definitions alarmed the British structural functionalists of the 1950s and 1960s, who felt it better to ignore the topic completely. As John Beattie put it:

> To study all this [culture] would obviously be a pretty tall order, and most British social anthropologists consider "culture" too extended a concept usefully to designate a specific field for systematic study.[15]

Instead, the British school laid emphasis upon the "social" as opposed to the "cultural", abandoning it to the efforts of their counterparts in North America, such as Margaret Mead,[16] and Kroeber and Kluckhohn,[17] and thus effecting the division of anthropology into two parts: "Social Anthropology", dominated by British thinkers, and "Cultural Anthropology", dominated by American thinkers. This is not to suggest that the British school ignored the concept entirely, as the work of Mary Douglas, for example, illustrates.[18] But the difference in focus affected the subsequent usage of the concept "culture" and the most significant theoretical developments occurred in the American school.

Locating the "ethos": Geertz and cultural studies

Clifford Geertz is perhaps the most important theorist to have emerged from the lineage of American cultural anthropology and his theoretical approach in conceptualising and researching culture, broadly referred to as "symbolic anthropology", has been of considerable

value to this study. Geertz argued that the eclecticism of the definitions of culture which developed from Tylor's original definition were self-defeating "... not because there is only one direction in which it is useful to move, but because there are so many: it is necessary to choose."[19] Instead of examining how culture was objectified in the environment, Geertz sought to establish the meaning of a culture for its actors, which Geertz argued was located in public symbols or what he referred to as the "webs of significance".[20] Unlike his counterpart, Victor Turner, a descendent of the British school, who was concerned to establish how symbols operated in the social process, and whose rather functionalist approach entailed examining how these symbols are arranged to resolve contradictions in society,[21] Geertz wanted to establish the ethos of a culture, or the meaning the symbols possess for the actors involved. Thus:

> (o)ur double task is to uncover the conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts, the "said" of social discourse, and to construct a system of analysis in whose terms what is generic to those structures, what belongs to them because they are what they are, will stand out against the other determinants of human behaviour.[22]

By placing the subjects of a particular culture at the centre of analysis, Geertz provided a crucial slant to cultural studies: an emphasis upon human agency as opposed to structure. However, this itself has rendered

him subject to criticism. His approach, according to the critics, displays a lack of a "systematic sociology", rigour, and a comparative dimension.[23] Further, Geertz's approach ignored the fact that there may be more than one culture operating in a society and that these may exist in opposition to each other. Despite these problems, however, his insistence on establishing an approach to culture in terms of its meaning for the actors themselves has been of profound influence and, in terms of this study, has been a crucial aspect of coming to terms with the ethnographic material.

The importance of structure: "Structuralism"

While not in any way a reaction to Geertz's method of considering culture, "structuralism", an approach epitomised by the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss in the 1960s, provided the necessary comparative dimension. Structuralism challenged the classical structural-functionalist understanding of "structure" as an observable entity which could be located by analysing a society's institutions, insisting that "structure" in fact meant "deep structure", a singular phenomenon underlying all societies. That is, those adhering to Lévi-Strauss's viewpoint hold that the vast number of very diverse cultural lexicons in different societies all

have a common underlying structure. In La Geste d'Asdiwal, Lévi-Strauss argued that one of the reasons for analysing myth in different societies was:

> ... to isolate and compare the various levels on which the myth evolves: geographic, economic, sociological, and cosmological - each of these levels, together with the symbolism proper to it, being seen as a transformation of an underlying logical structure common to all of them.[24]

In seeking a method to examine underlying structure, Lévi-Strauss was influenced by the work of structural linguistics, especially the work of de Saussure who had argued that all possible utterances (or paroles) - real and potential - were not amenable to scientific study, only "the social part of a language" (or langue)[25] Lévi-Strauss sought to make a similar distinction in order to examine culture. He argued that by reducing the endless variety of surface productions of a culture to the elements and rules of its structure, it would become amenable to scientific investigation.[26] For Lévi-Strauss then, culture is organised like language. But, rather than decipher:

> ... the social contents locked up or somehow expressed in symbolic forms, or examining the relationship between what was conceived and who conceived it ... [his] ... aim was to decipher the internal articulation: to crack the code.[27]

However, by insisting upon developing a rigorous, "scientific" approach, Lévi-Strauss was obliged to deny an intentional subject in the social and cultural process, as well as any significant impact of history of "event" upon structure and in this sense his was in

contrast to Geertz's approach. Nevertheless, structuralism has become one of the most important theoretical paradigms in the social sciences, underpinning, amongst other approaches, "structural Marxism" which, in utilising the structuralist approach, has provided an important contribution to cultural studies by emphasising relations of domination and subordination.

The impact of Marxism on cultural studies: the "structuralist/culturalist" debate

The Marxist approach to cultural studies is of crucial importance to this study because, in contrast to other approaches, it emphasises the notion that society is unequal, consisting of dominant and subordinate classes, out of which flow different cultures which, at particular moments, stand in opposition to each other. In the realm of cultural studies, the question is: how are these relations to be interpreted and understood? The two most important responses to this question emphasise either structure or human agency, a divergence which echoes the theoretical dichotomy between structuralism and Geertz.[28]

"Structural Marxism" was developed by theorists such as Althusser, Godelier and Terray, the latter two of whom are anthropologists.[29] But it has centred on the

work of Althusser, who explores ways in which to refine the classical Marxist notion of a "base" and a "superstructure".[30] For Althusser, rather than a simple "superstructure", there exist a number of "levels" of society, including those at which exist in the institutions of the legal proces the state and ideology, which serve to reproduce the submission of dominated classes or groups to the rule of the established order. Importantly for this analysis, Althusser and his followers prefer the term "ideology" to that of "culture" because it emphasises domination. Ideology acts in a particularly subtle way such that an individual <u>experiences</u> the ideology as if he or she was the "... <u>autonomous principle</u> of determination of that relation."[31] For Althusser then, the basic function of all ideology is to constitute individuals as subjects.[32] Thus, social relations are structured in such a way to "... have a logic or tendency or force of their own and operate, in part, 'behind men's backs'."[33]

Althusser's approach has been subject to a number of criticisms: it has been suggested that he views people only as passive recipients of ideological indoctrination. He, and indeed structural Marxists in general, have been more concerned with re-formulating the problem of "determination" in a non-reductionist way than with

engaging in the question of discussing culture.[34] In terms of successfully theorising culture then, structural Marxism alone is inadequate.

Theorists such as Thompson and Williams, who have been labelled (perhaps not always accurately) as "culturalists", have criticised structural Marxism for its emphasis upon the importance of structure over that of human agency. Williams has outrightly rejected the usage of "base" and "superstructure", arguing that these categories, which, according to Williams, were used metaphorically by Marx, have become concepts for structural Marxism.[35] In proposing an alternative, Williams has constructed an argument which, in brief, amounts to an attempt to reconcile the base/superstructure model with subjective experience as part of an indivisible social whole, within which relations of domination and subordination operate. Thompson, the other major "culturalist" theorist, is particularly sceptical of any approach which, in his view, treats "history as a 'process without a subject' [and] concur[s] in the eviction from history of human agency."[36] For Thompson, many of the terms utilised by structuralists - such as "mode of production" and "social formation" - are more suited to economic rather than historical considerations. Thompson's approach

(formulated before the development of Marxist structuralism but developed further later in Poverty of Theory[37]) was concerned with recovering the history of oppressed peoples; and it stressed locating experience, or, "getting inside the minds, perceptions, and the feelings of the historical agents themselves."[38]

Not surprisingly, in emphasising the role of human agency, the "culturalist" approach has been criticised for diminishing the role of "abstraction", which, as Johnson argues:

> ... is both a condition for thinking clearly about the world and for learning from concrete instances in such a way as to be able to transfer insights or consider them in relation to another case. If we refuse analytical distinctions of the most elementary kind (eg. culture/not culture) we will not be able to examine that real history whose integrity we aim to preserve.[39]

For Johnson then, the contribution of structural Marxism to cultural studies, is its insistence upon effecting these distinctions.[40] Thus, as with the approaches of Geertz and Lévi-Strauss, it is clear that no single pole of this debate is entirely adequate. But not all "culturalists" have in fact denied "abstraction." The approach of Gramsci, which "... is one of the major turning-points in Marxist cultural theory," is explicitly used and developed by Raymond Williams, and it does seek to establish conceptual links between culture, class, an

ideology, thereby reconciling the notion of "social whole" with the ability to make analytical distinctions.[41]

Analysing the "social whole": Gramsci's influence on cultural studies

For Gramsci, (who rarely actually used the concept "culture") ideology is more than merely a body of ideas and has a material sense in terms of its existence in the social practises of individuals and in the institutions in which these practises occur.[42] But it has a necessary metaphysical nature as well:

> To the extent that ideologies are historically necessary they have a validity which is psychological; they "organise" human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc.[43]

The efficacy of an ideology lies in its ability to bind together a bloc of diverse social elements. Gramsci refers to this process as the struggle for "hegemony", which refers to:

> ... the processes whereby the ideology of a dominant class attempts to impose some uniformity on the culture of the working classes.[44]

Williams, who has attempted to render Gramsci's work amenable to "cultural analysis", argues that, as a concept, "hegemony" must be taken further and should be

regarded as a "culture":

> Hegemony is ... not only the articulate upper level of "ideology", nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as "manipulation" or "indoctrination". It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values - constitutive and constituting - which as they are experienced as practices appears as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a "culture", but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes.[45]

Thus, the dominant class, group, or set of classes, have control over the means of production (both mental and material) and they are in a position to impose their way of thinking on the dominated groups in that society in such a way it appears that there is only <u>one</u> set of ideas or cultural forms. However, the culture of the dominated groups or classes still exists and finds expression in a less overt fashion:

> Groups or classes which do not stand at the apex of power ... find ways of expressing and realising in their culture their subordinate position and experiences.[46]

This form of "cultural assertion" then defines the struggle for <u>hegemony</u> in which both the dominant and

dominated groups attempt to assert their cultures. Obviously the former is the more successful:

> The dominant culture represents itself as the culture. It tries to define and contain all othe cultures within its inclusive range. Its views o the world, unless challenged, will stand as the natural, all-embracing, universal culture. Other cultural configurations will not only be subord to this dominant order: they will enter into struggle with it, seek to modify, negotiate, re or even overthrow its reign - its hegemony. The struggle between classes over material and soci life thus always assumes the forms of a continu struggle over the distribution of "cultural power".[47]

Thus, while the dominant and the subordinate classes distinct cultures, when the dominant class asserts i culture "... the subordinate culture experiences its in terms prescribed by the dominant culture."[48] In way the dominant or "effective" culture also becomes basis for a dominant ideology.[49]

Gramsci has referred to the response of dominated gr as "common sense", which is the reaction by the domi classes to the world about them in a more-or-less spontaneous way.[50] According to Gramsci, this respo is by no means a uniform one and nor is it necessari coherent. In fact it is a lack of coherence which essentially defines it.[51] The reactions are:

> spontaneous in the sense that they are not the result of any systematic educational activity o part of an already conscious leading group, but been formed through everyday experience illumin by "common sense", i.e. by the traditional popu conception of the world - what is unimaginative called instinct.[52]

In making sense of "spontaneous reaction" and "common sense", Williams has distinguished between "oppositional" and "alternative" cultures, each of which contain "residual" ("formed in the past ... but still active ... as an effective element of the present") and "emergent" ("new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships which are continually being created") forms.[53] Here:

> the difficulties of human practice outside or against the dominant mode are, of course, real. It depends very much whether it is an area in which the dominant class and the dominant culture have an interest and a stake.[54]

For analysis therefore:

> the major theoretical problem, with immediate effect on methods of analysis, is to distinguish between alternative and oppositional initiatives and contributions whowich are made within or against a specific hegemony (which then sets certain limits to them or which can succeed in neutralising, changing or actually incorporating them) and other kinds of initiative and contribution which are irreducible to the terms of the original or the adaptive hegemony, and are in that sense independent.[55]

The concepts introduced by Gramsci and expanded by Williams and others[56] are of considerable use in understanding the cultural forms and expressions of domination and subordination in societies. Using these formulations it is possible to think of how more than one culture can exist in a society, how cultures can exist independent of each other, as well as in opposition to each other in instances where the interests of the dominant and subordinant groups clash. In addition, the

concepts provide a basis for understanding how and from where cultural forms emerge and are expressed. Importantly, in analysing the expression and interaction of different cultures, we are not obliged to think in terms of "levels" - as with structural Marxism. Further, by utilising these concepts we are able to successfully retain a conception of social whole without limiting analysis, thus avoiding the criticism structural Marxism levelled at the "culturalists". Finally, the concepts of "hegemony" and "common sense" permit us to express structure - by first analysing the composition of the social whole - as well as human agency - by analysing cultural expression from the point of view of the actors.

The importance of these concepts is illustrated by the considerable interest shown in applying them to South African cultural studies (see below). However, the impact of initial applications has been diminished by a failure to account for the differences in context. Indeed, much of the preceding discussion has related to defining and understanding the responses of the working classes (mainly those of England and Europe) to ruling class domination, and ways in which "working class culture" can be explained and understood. Because initial applications to South African conditions involved simply transplanting these concepts without a sufficient consideration of the difference in contexts, many erred by simply mechanically

attaching "culture" to "class".[57] In order to generate a more rigorous basis for their application to South African conditions these approaches are now considered.

South African approaches: culture and class analysis

The earliest studies of urban culture in southern Africa were concerned with explaining the processes of urbanisation in southern Africa. The object here was to develop a conceptual framework to interpret how the patterns of behaviour of migrant labourers in the urban areas were different from those in the rural areas. Hellman, for example, argued that this process should be seen in terms of "detribalization" or what she referred to as a "standard of detribalization",[58] while Mitchell argued for "stabilisation", or "the extent to which individuals cease to return to the point of origin of their migration."[59] However, as Coplan observes, despite the considerable attention to the process of urbanisation, social scientists:

> ... have yet to agree on the criteria that would allow them to categorise black South Africans according to their degree of urbanisation.[60]

Consequently, because the task of accurately assessing the degree of urbanisation was never achieved, many of these studies concluded that "... it is impossible to

speak of an urban African culture ..."[61] Thus, Pauw, i a study of urbanisation in East London, concluded that:

> hardly any clear patterns seem to have crystallise yet, and the variations in patterns of behaviour, values and beliefs, and the different combinations of these in different regions of the culture, seem to defy systematisation. At this stage it is impossible to give a complete picture of the cultu of the urban Bantu.[62]

Still, the categories - such as kinship and religion - used by these researchers, as well as the rich ethnographic material contained in the initial studies, have become the basis for later discussions of urban culture.[63]

In later times, circa the late 1970s and early 1980s, Marxist analyses of South African urban culture tended be characterised by an adherence to the concept of "class". Not only was this an implicit critique of the perceived failure of the earlier school to explore "class", but, according to Bozzoli and Delius, it was a result of a strong "workerist" perspective which had developed in South Africa out of the heightened labour activity during the 1970s.[64] These analyses sought to understand different urban cultures as conglomerates of classes. To some extent this was an attempt to refine some of the more economistic studies which had prevaile in the 1970s. One analyst commented that:

> ... economic identification of classes is not the last word, but merely the first, and that it is th political, social, cultural and ideological character of classes which renders them real and recognisable social categories ... Our understandi

> of working-class culture, of petty-bourgeois politics, of social networks, of ideological patterns is crude where it exists at all ...[65]

Conceived in this way, the majority of the studies which followed while closely adhering to a class analysis, sought to first identify classes and then to explore their cultural manifestations, grappling with the notions of "culture" and "class consciousness", and to distinguish and explain the differences and contradictions within the (working) classes. While this study by no means sets out to eliminate "class" as a basic tool of analysis (as the preceding discussion indicates), it does suggest that "class" alone is somewhat crude a tool with which to analyse the complexities of the townships. Early on, in fact, Marks and Rathbone remarked upon the impossibility of locating a "homogeneous working class culture" in South Africa; but they insisted that:

> [The] lack of homogeneity does not, however, deny the existence of a class; even in the "advanced" capitalist societies of Europe and North America the consciousness of a class "in itself and for itself" has been the exception rather then the rule - and the rare exception at that.[66]

Therefore, the task of their analyses was, by first noting that "culture is inherently pluralistic and multi-layered," to emphasise the:

> ... essential interrelationships ... between the political economy, imperial and local, and class formation, between different sections of the working class and different classes, between class, culture and consciousness.[67]

Despite this recognition, early Marxist work did tend toward class-reductionism, underlining the recovery of the experience of the "dominated classes" and showing a considerable interest in exploring the area of "culture" in its relationship to class. Studies such as those performed on Alexandra, Sophiatown and Vereeniging all emphasised and analysed these townships "... as conglomerates of classes."[68] Koch, in an account of the slumyards of Doornfontein during the 1920s and 1930s, was concerned to demonstrate how, borrowing from E.P. Thompson, " ... the black working class of Johannesburg, 'made itself as much as it was made'."[69] In approaching this he adopted Williams's concepts of "oppositional" and "alternative" cultures and argued that the "black working class of Johannesburg" during this time displayed the traits of an alternative culture. Couched in a class-based analysis, he concluded that "marabi culture" provided little unity and coherence to class consciousness; but his concern to highlight class led him to downplay other pertinent factors - what Williams would refer to as residual features - such as ethnicity for example. However, his innovative use of the work of Gramsci, Williams and Clarke et.al. provided one of the few attempts to apply these concepts to South African conditions.

Other approaches, while defining "culture" in a Williams/Thompson framework, have been characterised by an inability to apply it. Lunn presents a study of the "popular culture" of urban black South Africans for three decades culminating in 1976, in which, despite some consideration of the other urban areas, the main focus is upon Soweto.[70] She offers a definition of "culture" which draws on the approach defined by Williams, acknowledging that "culture" contains residual features ("inheritance of previous relations"), a recognition that "culture" is "part of a whole structure," while "ideology" is a "system of thought that translates itself into practices and institutions that serve to maintain and endorse the status quo."[71] However, in this case "class" is underplayed, there is little indication of whose culture she is referring to nor of whether there is more than one culture involved. In addition, because she has ignored pertinent factors such as community and ethnicity, her overall conclusion is grounded in a rather simplistic dominant ideology/cultural-resistance dichotomy and there is little sense of the "culturalist" terminology being adequately applied in and translated to the South African context.[72] However, her emphasis on "race" as a category in cultural analysis is important. In criticising the tendency to relate class directly to race, she notes that "the coincidence ... of colour and class in South Africa ... helps to endorse the parameters of the working class, which is primarily black."[73] But,

she argues, "in concentrating on a racially defined area of culture such as black music, one cannot draw a class analysis out of cultural practice."[74]

In contrast to Lunn, Coplan, in his pioneering examination of the performing arts of urban Africans in South Africa, has grappled more closely with the specifics of South African conditions.[75] However, because he has attempted to deal with a period spanning more than a century, he is only able to refer very broadly and unevenly to categories such as class and community. Thus, he outlines the categories of "working class" and "middle class" in examining the 1920s and 1930s. But these concepts, perhaps over-emphasised in some studies, all but disappear when other categories, such as "community", are introduced. His discussion of Sophiatown as a community, for example, is a somewhat over-romanticised account of the reaction by residents to their harsh and oppressive living conditions and ignores the divisions which other writers have noted.[76] Further, after an account of the destruction of Sophiatown and the ensuing intensification of state coercion which followed the 1960 massacres at Sharpeville and Langa, any sense of the pressures, strains and divisions between and within classes, and between and within communities, disappears altogether and the discussion confines itself to the reaction of urban Africans as a homogeneous grouping to their conditions of domination. Despite these

shortcomings, however, Coplan's work remains one of the most important overviews of the development of urban black culture in South Africa to date and has been a valuable reference source for this study.

Later studies have surmounted many of the initial problems in applying the new body of cultural terminology. As Bozzoli and Delius have observed, instead of defining a starting point which began with predetermined ideas of capitalism and the "working class":

> the resulting analyses ... began to look at how state forms, identities, consciousnesses, and structures took many different forms, only coalescing into large entities (such as "races") at particular moments, and rendering earlier attempts at correlating class, culture, and consciousness simplistic.[77]

The study by la Hausse of the shebeens in Durban during the early part of this century is an excellent example and his utilisation of class in relation to popular culture, and is examined in the concluding section of this chapter.[78]

Yet, despite the fact that recent studies have demonstrated a more sophisticated understanding of the concepts introduced by Gramsci and Williams, it appears that, in their eagerness to apply the new body of theory has caused them to overlook a major distinction in Gramsci's work. This, it is argued, is a result of an ignorance of the <u>context</u> in which Gramsci made his

observations: Gramsci was concerned to establish how the ruling classes in central Europe could successfully maintain control for so protracted a period of time, without the continual use of force. He concluded that it must happen with the consent of the dominated groupings and sought to explain the processes involved.[79] It was in this context that the concepts of hegemony, ideology and common sense were introduced and utilised, and it is for this reason, that they are often at odds with a direct application to the situation as it has been in South African townships.

In discussing the process of "hegemony" in South Africa, Bozzoli has suggested that hegemonic control in South Africa has been both incomplete and constantly threatened, that it has not been "uniformly successful", and that the state's repeated resort to the use of repressive apparatus suggests its failure to maintain authority through more subtle - "hegemonic" - means.[80] While these observations have some validity, particularly during the post-1976 period, it is suggested here that it was not <u>hegemonic control</u> that was constantly threatened but rather <u>direct rule</u>. In constructing his argument, Gramsci clearly distinguished between "rule" (<u>domino</u>) - "... expressed in directly political forms and in times of crisis by direct or effective coercion,"- and "hegemony."[81] In South African townships, "rule" has been predominant because <u>apartheid</u> created a situation of

continual crisis. Townships were ruled by force, by direct or effective coercion, both covertly and overtly. Co-opted structures and bodies were seen as such, as demonstrated by the sequence of failed state-imposed black local and homeland government. Indeed, only recently (post-1976), as the state and capital have sought to engender a sense of the "free-market" in black workers, largely to counter the burgeoning black trade union movement, has there been any real semblance of hegemonic struggle (which by 1984, from the point of view of the State, had failed, provoking a return to direct force). A true hegemonic struggle will more likely occur as political change advances and black people in South Africa become increasingly involved in the parliamentary process.[82]

It is not that the concept of hegemony has no applicability to South African conditions, it is rather that it should be applied cautiously with sufficient acknowledgement of context. Of great importance, particularly for cultural studies, is how black people in South Africa responded to their experience of domination, as well as, in the case of the urban areas, to the impermanence created by apartheid legislation. It is here that definitions of culture which address how subordinate groupings - in the case of South Africa, the majority of black people - live, interpret their conditions of existence and, at certain moments, challenge their

dominance, are important. In this regard la Hausse's definition, in an echo of early American cultural anthropologists, is pertinent:

> "Culture" is ... understood as the means whereby social groups "handle" the lived experience of their material conditions of existence to produce an expression and representation of these conditions in a variety of attitudes, values, symbols and practices.[83]

In sum, the concepts of "hegemony" and "common sense" may be constructively applied to South African conditions for, amongst others, understanding and analysing the cultural responses of subordinate groupings, considering how "actors" in the various social groupings make sense of their material conditions of existence in order to act coherently within them. This approach is similar to that which Geertz outlined: it seeks to explore the meaning of a culture for its actors. But it goes beyond his approach by, firstly, insisting upon analysing and understanding the different social groupings within a social formation including classes, and, secondly, examining the cultural manifestations from the angle of domination and subordination. In this thesis it will be demonstrated how, in a situation of "rule" the residents of Sharpeville - the "actors" - perceived, made sense of, and re-interpreted their restrictive conditions of existence and expressed them both for themselves as well as for others to see. In this process, just as the dominant culture preferred to regard them as invisible,

so too, in some instances, the dominant culture was made to appear non-existent, as the cultural practices in Sharpeville were perceived as a "lived whole".

In considering the social composition of the township of Sharpeville, the study makes references to the concept of "community" which, as was outlined above, requires careful attention. It is to this concept that the discussion now turns.

Anthropological approaches to urban community studies: "networks" and "urbanisation"

Anthropological studies of urban communities, particularly those which influenced the direction of similar studies in southern Africa, have been characterised by a concern for analysing the social relationships between members of groups and between groups, encapsulated in the conceptual framework of "social networks". Barnes, for example, in a study of Bremnes, a small Norwegian island parish, described three categories of social relationships which formed a type of network: one based on relationships in the working situation, another based on proximity of living areas, which included those relationships based on friendship, kinship and neighbourliness, and a third kind of relationship which was distinctive because it was likely to be of a different nature for each person in the

community. Barnes referred to the latter type of network as a "total network", since everyone in a community was linked to everyone else in one way or another, which, for Barnes, corresponded to the social structure.[84] The other types of networks were characterised as "partial networks", or "... any extract of the total network based on some criterion applicable through out the whole network."[85] Partial networks included those relationships developed as a result of kinship, marriage, politics and religion.[86]

The concept of "network" provided a framework for anthropologists studying urban communities in southern Africa. Epstein, for example, in a study of Ndola, a town in the Zambian Copperbelt, observed that, in a situation where the status of Africans living in the town was uncertain, where the economic position of Africans was precarious, where socially and politically, Africans living in Ndola experienced uncertain status, and where legislation served to control the movement of Africans in and about the towns, the African inhabitants had "... elaborated a complex system of organising social relationships among themselves."[87] Epstein noted that "networks" provided:

> ... a covert or informal structure composed of inter-personal links which spread out and ramify in all directions, crisscrossing not only the whole of the local community, but knitting together people in different towns and in town and country.[88]

As a research method, this technique of identifying the different types of social networks has proved useful in analysing empirical data. However, as a theoretical approach, the studies have tended - despite an intention to move beyond structural-functionalism - to be couched in a functionalist framework. Because social relations were considered in terms of how the elements functioned to maintain group identity and stability, the stresses, strains and contradictions to be found within and between social relations and within the networks themselves, and how these affected the development of urban cultural patterns, were not considered at all. Thus, in developing an approach for adequately conceptualising "community", the concept of "network" on its own is inadequate.

"Community" as part of society

Many community studies have been criticised for failing to consider the context within which communities are formed. Thus the early anthropological urban studies discussed above tended to downplay broader societal developments. For example, in Pauw's examination of East London, despite some references to Johannesburg, and in Wilson and Mafeje's study of Langa, despite references to social categories which feature in most other urban studies - such as tsotsis - there is little sense of the dynamics which have caused these different sets of peoples to be living in the urban areas.[89] These earlier

writers did not seek to explore the dynamics of power and subordination involved in the formation of South African communities, and tended to consider culture and community in a vacuum. Early "community studies" in Great Britain were criticised for much the same reason. Critcher argued that these studies should not simply consider the "nature of family life" or the "decline in the quality of leisure activity," but should insist upon "... the structural context, and the ideology which explains the group's situation within it."[90]

This is not to suggest that micro studies of this nature have no value in considering broader societal developments. Indeed, they are often of significant value in providing a basis for understanding the attitudes and responses of the people who live in these communities to wider events and crises. Here Brian Jackson's account of the community of Huddersfield in northern England is an excellent example: he demonstrates how "Working Men's Clubs", initiated by middle-class interests with the aim of curbing the drinking habits of working-class men, eventually came to be controlled by the working-class itself, who re-defined the role of the clubs in terms of their own needs, including the re-introduction of alcohol.[91] Further, the brass-band movement, which was initiated by churches and often patronised by employers

as well as people from the local middle class, lost their objective conservative image during times of crisis:

> They [brass bands] belong to the rhetoric of working-class life. In a time of extreme crisis, such as the Great Strike, they might emerge for a moment as a voice of protest and unity. They are one of the reserves of community.[92]

In this case, the peculiarities of a community's actions and responses can be made apparent and, when considered in terms of wider societal developments, occasion better analysis. This is certainly true for understanding how the Sharpeville of 1960, officially recognised as a "model township" during the preceding years, assumed a leading role in the PAC's anti-pass campaign (discussed in Chapter Five below).

The "defended neighbourhood"

In considering a community as a part of the wider society, a sound analytical method is required. Here the Chicago school of sociology, whose approach to urban studies has varied between examinations of ecological processes in urban society, social organisation and disorganisation, dimensions of social and personal control, symbolic interaction and the management of the self,[93] have performed an important role. Suttles, a sociologist based in this school, has argued that community must be seen " ... as a social category to be used solely for the purposes of description and analysis."[94] According to Suttles, it should not be

viewed in the terms of a "natural community", a concept introduced by Suttles' predecessors, Park and Burgess, who considered "community" as untouched by different cultural influences and administrations, and who ignored the effect of outside influences as well as the feelings of the occupants themselves.[95] Rather, it should be considered in terms of the response of a territorial population to their environment and here Suttles introduces what he terms the "defended neighbourhood":

> the residential group which seals itself off through the efforts of delinquent gangs, by restrictive covenants, by sharp boundaries, or by a forbidding reputation ...[96]

Suttles argues that the characteristics of the "defended neighbourhood" are structural rather than sentimental or associational, the most important element being the identity of the neighbourhood itself.[97] Essentially, however, it is the perceived or actual outside threat which defines the community. Thus, a neighbourhood might:

> ... share a common fate at the hands of city planners, realtors, politicians and industry. Protest groups, conservation committees spring into existence, thrive, and then decline, as the issue which brought then into existence waxes and wanes. All this tends to give the defended neighbourhood an ephemeral and transient appearance, as if it were a social artefact. But these social forms are real enough, and they leave at least a residue of a formula for subsequent cohesion ... All of these structural characteristics give the defended neighbourhood an amorphous and indistinct appearance so long as we look for only a single bounded unit persisting through time. The defended neighbourhood can expand or contract boundaries; its activation is episodic; and the cohesion of its members is always qualified by alternative loyalties. This does not

> mean that the defended neighbourhood is unimportant but calls for a specification of that realm of life over which it exercises its special influence.[98]

The concept of a "defended neighbourhood" has obvious applicability to South African townships. Indeed, from the time of the first forced removal, black-designated living areas have all become "defended neighbourhoods", because they have always been, to a lesser or greater degree, under the threat of removal. While the cohesion and solidarity in the different townships and areas is episodic as threats from without, such as removal, wax and wane, the residues of a formula for subsequent cohesion are left behind. Employing a conceptual framework which closely resembles that of a "defended neighbourhood", Tomaselli has argued that, because apartheid decreed that people live in areas according to race and ethnicity, "communities" in South Africa "have few common interests other than a shared domination."[99] Thus, the inhabitants constitute:

> ... themselves as communities, suffering a commonly perceived oppression. The source and cause of that oppression is recognised and these communities have established strategies to help them cope with their everyday circumstances.[100]

There are, however, a number of serious problems with Suttles' approach. The question of internal class differentiation and composition of the "defended neighbourhood" is not considered and, further, the source of urban problems is viewed in terms of its most directly manifested features; they are seen, for example, simply

as the result of an incompetent public bureaucracy. In dealing with these problems it is necessary to consider "structure".

Castells, influenced by the work of Althusser, has considered urban crises in terms of their basis in the structures of class-based society. They are seen as stemming from the processes involved in the reproduction of labour power, where the state and capital seek to maintain communities functional to capital accumulation.[101] Here the inhabitants of communities have a common experience of, for example, the provision of infrastructure, transport, housing, and other necessary services, such as education and health care.[102] For Castells, this experience is mediated by the role of social process (the conscious actions of individuals as members of social groups and classes in defining their image of the city/town), and the role of social history (the historical context of the process of urbanisation).[103] In this understanding, of importance to Castells are the structural positions of people - in terms defined by class, sex, race, ethnic origins, cultural traditions and patterns of relationships - different historical contexts - and how these influence their actions under domination. "Urban crisis" is a result of perceived inadequacies in both the provision of services as well the perception of the effectiveness and adequacy of political representation.[104] Further,

experience is seen in terms of the social relationship of physical space, that is, the perception of space as mediated by social relations. Here, while space is initially defined by the dominant social grouping, the definition is never static and may be altered in times of urban crisis.[105] Castells has influenced a number of urban studies in South Africa. Seekings, for example, has argued that the urban protest which characterised South Africa during the 19[illegible]s was not a direct result of "human suffering" or "lack of shelter", but followed a combination of [illegible]teriorating standard of living coupled with a perception on the part of residents of the local state's inability to provide the "basic goals expected of an urban system."[106] The work of Castells is important for this study because it understands communities not simply as homogeneous groupings, but as containing people who, although they may occupy different structural positions, all have the same experience under domination. It is in this context that community as "defended neighbourhood" should be understood.

The social composition of a community: the importance of class

In stating that the inhabitants of a community occupy different structural positions, we are also referring to the fact that a community is not simply considered as a cohesive unit, but one more likely to be divided along

lines of class, as well as along other lines, such as those of age, sex, ethnicity and religious preference. Class reductionism notwithstanding, of the possible divisions, class remains the most important because it is the objective relations between the different classes that essentially defines the capitalist mode of production and the resulting relations of domination and subordination. But in community analysis, it is not only the antagonisms between the different classes which require explanation, but also the factors which draw different classes together. Tourikis, in a discussion of Alexandra Township mentioned above, argues that the relationship between the African petty-bourgeoisie and the African working-class in the township was characterised by "... simultaneous unity and opposition."[107] As a result, there were two different types of class struggles:

> "... at times, struggles in Alexandra occurred between petty-bourgeoisie and working-class; at other times, an alliance of these two classes (constituting "the people") challenged (indirectly) the "power bloc".[108]

In this study it will be seen that in Sharpeville there were similar relationships between these two classes: initially strong divisions existed between them, but these were more muted towards the end of the 1950s as a variety of factors threatened the community as a whole, culminating in the 1960 Sharpeville shooting. But Tourikis' conclusion that "the cultural practices of Alexandra's classes were a reflection of their class

struggles, class interests and needs," is an example of the type of analysis referred to above one in which class is more or less rigidly attached to culture; la Hausse, in considering the relationship of subordinate class struggles to culture, has produced a more satisfactory analysis. In an examination of the shebeens in Durban during the early part of this century, he demonstrates how they "... represented generally defensive attempts by Durban's labouring poor to make their punishing conditions of existence more habitable."[109] Further, because the "... popular consumption of 'poisonous concoctions' [in shebeens] was clearly perceived by capital as a threat to the achievement of optimum productivity," it caused this form of popular culture to become "... a crucial area of struggle between the dominant and dominated classes."[110] But, this was not simply "working class" response as, according to la Hausse, "... it is extremely doubtful if one can even begin to talk about self-conscious class-based urban cultures in South Africa."[111]

Apart from internal class variations, the community interacts with and is influenced by the society at large. Indeed, it is the lure of the city, the factors which both draw people to or dislodge them from it, the conditions under which people are made to live, that define a significant aspect of the hegemonic struggle between the dominant and subordinate classes. In this

thesis it will be demonstrated how it was the structural position of Sharpeville in relation to Johannesburg and Soweto, its status as a country town, that defined crucial aspects of its social existence manifested in such cultural expressions as football, boxing and musical performance.

"Human agency" and community

It will be also seen in this study how Sharpeville's cultural and community characteristics were not only a result of its structural position in relation to Soweto and Johannesburg; they were also the creation of its residents. Indeed, the identity of the community - a point Suttles introduced but never adequately explored - or the notion of a community as symbolised in the minds of its occupants, is as important as a structural analysis of it. As Brake has observed, the "physical space [of a community] is not merely a simple territorial imperative, but symbolic of a whole life-style."[112] Considered in this way, Cohen argues that community must be conceptualised as a symbolic rather than a structural construct:

> In seeking to understand the phenomenon of community we have to regard its constituent social relations as repositories of meaning for its members, not as a set of mechanical linkages ... Community exists in the minds of its members, and should not be confused with geographic or sociographic assertions of "fact". By extension, the distinctiveness of communities and, thus, the reality of their

> boundaries, similarly lies in the mind, in the meanings which people attach to them, not in their structural forms.[113]

Thus, the insistence is upon the significance of the symbolic meaning of community for the human agents themselves. Here, then, community becomes a cultural construct, an aspect of how people make sense of their material conditions of existence. In this regard, Bozzoli has suggested that in order to use "community" as an analytical tool, it is imperative to regard the people who constitute the community as active agents in constructing their history, of which their reaction to state initiatives and capitalist transformations is only a part.[114] In this study, it will be observed how, in fact when Sharpeville was first established, it was symbolically perceived by its inhabitants as comprising not one, but a series of communities, which significantly affected its subsequent social and cultural development.

Conclusion

In sum, this discussion has argued that culture embodies the way different social groups perceive, make sense of and express their social and material conditions of existence in order to act coherently within them. In any given society there may exist a number of cultures, some of which may be in opposition to each other. In capitalist society, dominant classes or groups attempt to impose their way of thinking on the dominated so that it

appears there is only one set of ideas or cultural forms. The responses of dominated groups are not necessarily uniform nor coherent; they contain both residues from the past as well as emergent or new forms, and may either directly challenge the dominant culture or merely exist as alternatives to it. For analytical purposes, the chapter stressed the importance of retaining the notion of the social whole, arguing that structure as well as human agency are crucial constituents.

The discussion has tried to avoid the trap of attempting to provide a precise definition of "community". For analytical purposes, it is of greater value to explore the reasons a group of people consider themselves to belong to a community or, should the contrary apply, why they do not. As with cultural analysis, both structure and agency have been emphasised. A rigorous community analysis would include a consideration of the internal class differentiation of the community along with other divisions such as age, area and ethnicity. In addition, it would study the community's position in relation to the rest of the society; here the conception of the "defended neighbourhood" was posed as a useful analytical tool. Finally, it would explore the perceptions of the people themselves - perceptions that lend an important dimension to the definition of "community".

Following upon these conclusions, the ensuing three chapters examine both the origins as well as social composition of the township of Sharpeville in its early years; and provide a detailed analysis of the perception of the new township in the minds of its inhabitants. In considering the emerging life-styles and social trends of the township, the discussion observes how, to all intents and purposes, its inhabitants at first did not regard themselves as belonging to a single township or community. Instead, three different areas, each commanding its own set of loyalties, were defined - a fact which significantly influenced Sharpeville's development.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BEGINNING OF A "MODEL LOCATION"?

THE ORIGINS OF SHARPEVILLE

This chapter explores the origins of the township of Sharpeville through a consideration of the historical and social developments in the area prior to its inception in 1943; the factors which caused the demise of the original black settlement area in Vereeniging, Top Location, and the removal of its residents to Sharpeville between 1943 and 1960. The chapter demonstrates how these prior developments formed the basis of the structural composition of early Sharpeville. Further, it notes how the nature of the removal of Top Location, coupled with the different reactions of residents to it, created a situation of profound area rivalry, which affected the subsequent social and cultural development of the township.

The origin of Vereeniging

Vereeniging had its origins in 1892, fourteen years after vast coal deposits were discovered in the area.[1] Due to its location near the Vaal River where the coal deposits were located, it expanded fairly rapidly. The town developed around the Union Steel Corporation (USCO), established in 1913, and later the State-controlled Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR), at Vanderbijlpark, some twenty kilometres from Vereeniging. The secondary industries which

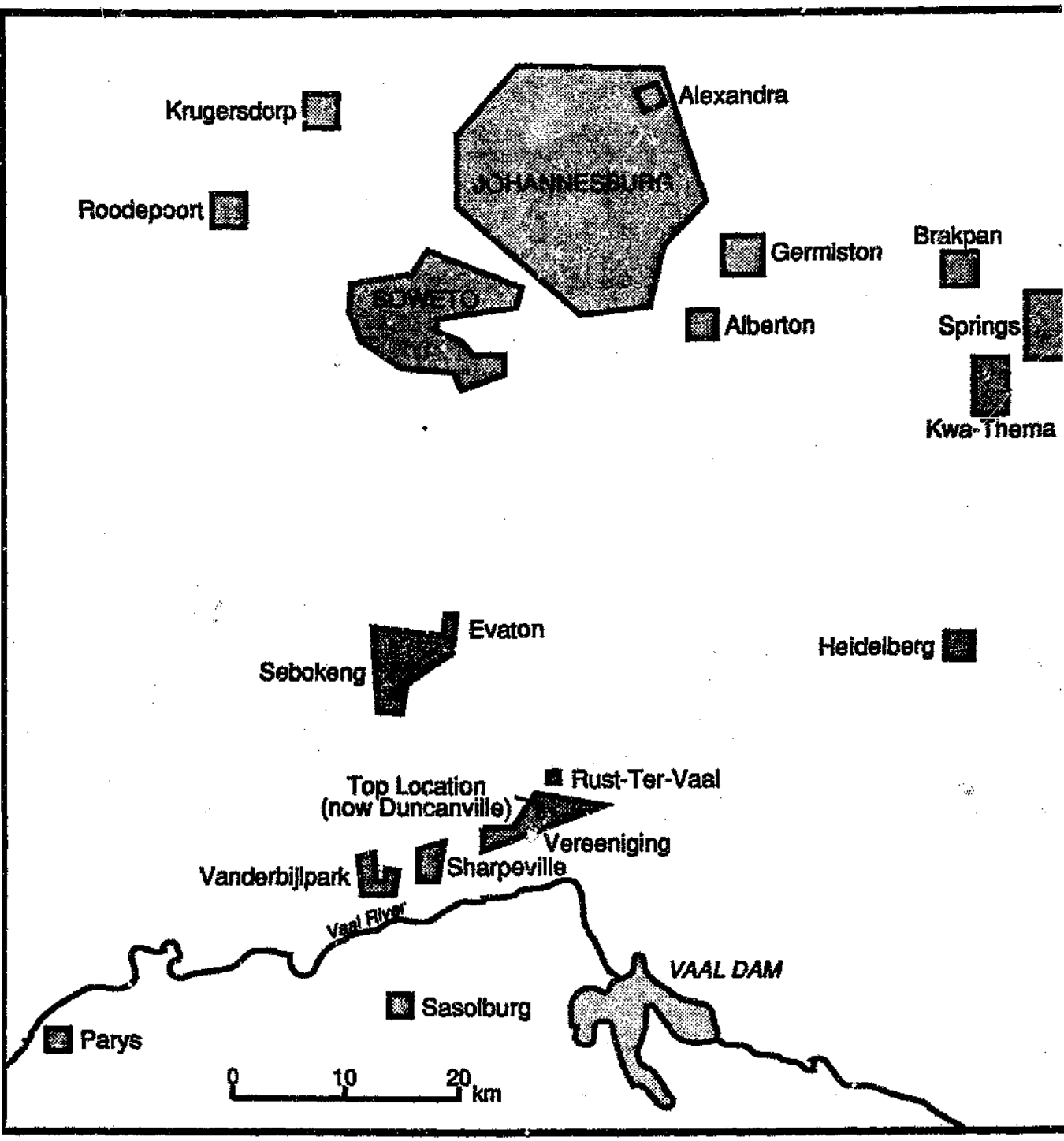


Fig. 1 The Vaal Triangle and the Witwatersrand Area

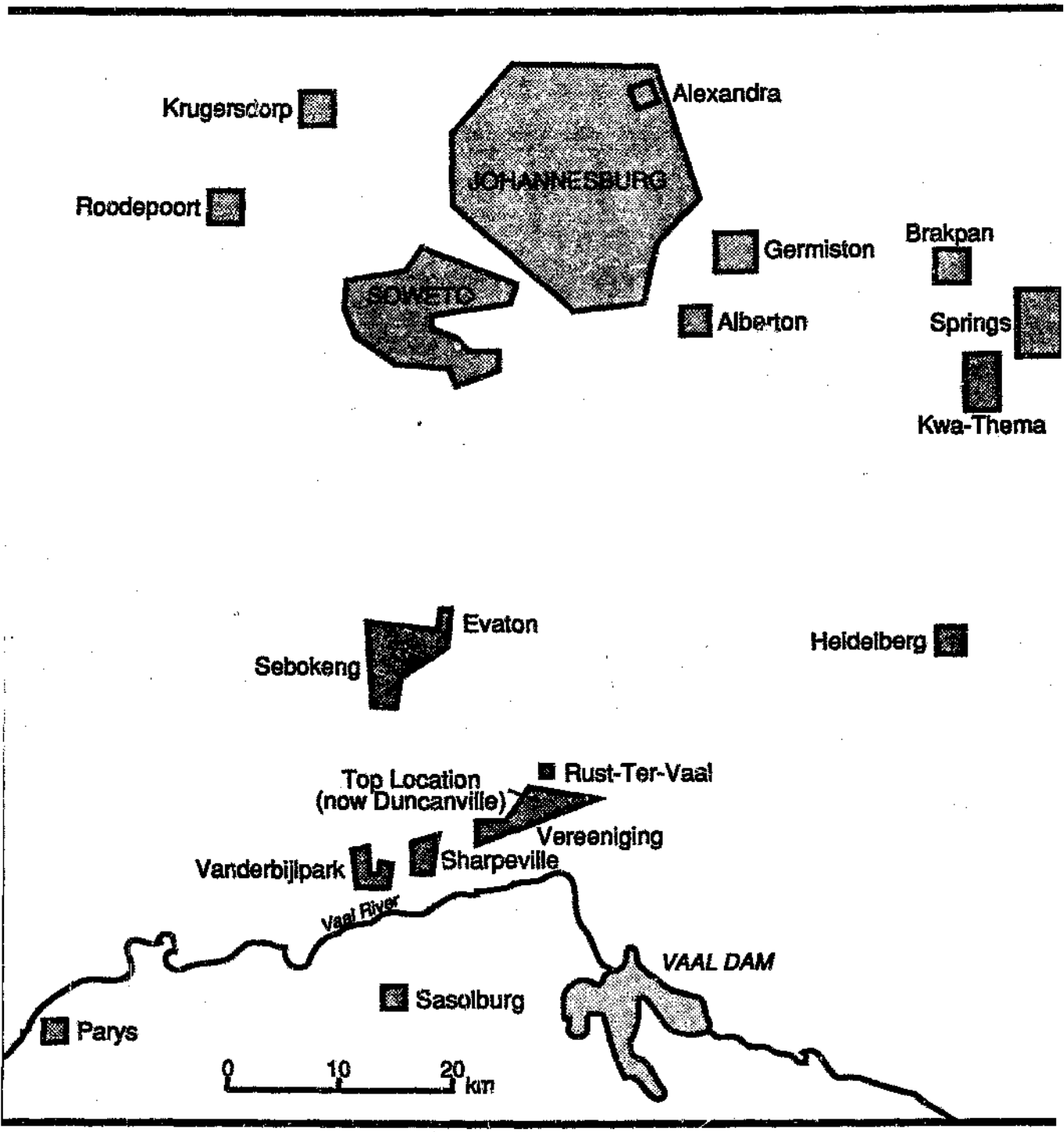


Fig. 1 **The Vaal Triangle and the Witwatersrand Area**

developed thereafter were by-and-large heavy industries centred around steel and metal production.[2] Through its steel industry, Vereeniging provided the bulk of South Africa's munitions during the Second World War. Rapid industrial expansion ensued and this in turn fostered a sizeable jump in both white and black populations, reportedly a threefold increase in the decade ending in 1945.[3]

"Topville"[4]

Sharpeville was constructed only in 1943. Prior to that, Africans living in Vereeniging were accommodated in "Top Location," or "Topville", as residents knew it, which was established in 1912 on what was then the municipal boundary.[5] According to Shakinovsky, black workers were attracted to Vereeniging from as early as 1900 by the relatively higher wages offered by the heavy industries there.[6] But the work itself: "... entailed hard physical labour and long shifts. Consequently workers were quickly worn out, and the turnover of workers in the area was particularly rapid."[7] For the Vereeniging Town Council (hereafter VTC) this caused what the council felt was "...an unusually severe drain on municipality resources", presumably because of the cost of processing people entering and leaving the area, as well as the allocation of houses.[8] Like that of many other authorities on the Rand, such as, for example, Sophiatown and Alexandra, the VTC's response

was to implement a housing scheme whereby residents in Top Location were allocated land for rent on which they built their own houses.[9] This resulted in a class of African landlords who built houses and lean-to shacks on the land they rented from the VTC, which they in turn rented out. Petrus Tom, who was born in Top Location, recalls:

> We lived with coloureds in the southern part of Topville (as it was later called). Indians and Chinese lived on the eastern side and they owned shops and a bioscope. Blacks owned grocery shops, butcheries, tailor and vegetable shops. Blacks also owned stands. They had tenants and would rent ten or more rooms in one yard.[10]

The situation of tenancy resulted in the creation of a relatively well-off class of African, Indian and "Coloured" landlords, and a larger group of tenants and sub-tenants, which had the effect of creating incipient class divisions within the location. By the 1940s, this was exacerbated by an unrelenting African landlord class:

> Through the Native Advisory Board[11], it [the class of landlords] demanded higher influx control, rejected alternatives to state education attempted in 1943, and in 1944 protested against attempts to lower rents at the expense of fees accruing to the landlords.[12]

The disparity in the incomes of the two groups was widened by the fact that, as a 1949 survey noted, the landlords were older and more established members of the community and therefore more likely to have been:

> ... employed for long periods with the same firms with consequent better chances of having attained promotion and rises in wages. Alternatively, their chances of acquiring a knowledge of which lines of employment are more remunerative have been increased by their long periods of residence and they have taken advantage of this knowledge.[13]

While a section of the landlord class belonged to the petty-bourgeoisie - shop owners, teachers and other professionals - a significant portion of it was objectively part of the working class. Thus, the upper echelons of Top Location society consisted of a middle class and an upwardly-mobile working class, much the same as it was in Sophiatown, as Lodge has described: "Landlordism [in Sophiatown] could embrace people drawn from both working-class and petty-bourgeois occupations."[14] This indicates the extent to which social categories blur in newly formed populations such as these. Still, some of these class distinctions were to persist and find expression in Sharpeville itself in later times.

Rapid population expansion and the 1937 unrest: motivation for a new township

The 1930s and 1940s witnessed a massive increase in black urbanisation. Johannesburg's black population, for example, rose by 40% in the ten years ending in 1936.[15] In Vereeniging, the percentage increase was even larger: between 1935 and 1937 the population of Top Location doubled.[16] One of the reasons for this was the inability of the African reserves to provide adequate subsistence for their populations, as well as heightening exploitation and

harsh treatment of black tenants by struggling white farmers, all adversely affected by severe drought in the early 1930s.[17] Peter Mathibela was born in Top Location in 1952. His father, Petrus, was born on a farm near Bethlehem on the Lesotho border, where he had been a sharecropper until he was forced off the farm in 1945. He then found employment with the South African Railways, which brought him and his family to Top Location.[18] Some sharecroppers arrived in the Vereeniging with their stock which they housed either in Top Location (and later in Sharpeville), or in the nearby vicinity:

> They [his grandparents] never had a farm, they were tenants on a farm. Then they left that place [farm in the O.F.S.] because my grandfather had more cattle than the owner of the farm. Then he used to tell my grandfather that he must slaughter - get rid of - some of his cattle and even sheep and chickens. He used to tell him that if he can't do that, he must see that he moves out. It got to a point when he was finding he hardly had any cattle left, then he decided to leave the farm. Then he came down to Brick and Tile [Vereeniging] and there had had to build a kraal where he could keep them. He started to look for a job and then he got one at Brick and Tile.[19]

While economic decline in the Rand's rural hinterland was a key cause of the flood of migrants, many of whom were Basothos, industrial growth was also an important factor. An economic boom was induced by the Second World War and Vereeniging - with its growing steel industry - became the centre of South Africa's munitions production and as a result saw a rapid expansion of production. The families of many of the current residents in Sharpeville arrived in the

Vaal Triangle during this period of industrial expansion. The Mabena family, for example, moved to Top Location in 1933, when Tom Mabena followed his employer there:

> From Springs they move to Top Location. What makes them move is my father is working as a lorry driver, when his employer, Mr G Burroughs, wanted to move from that side to Vereeniging. So my father followed him.[20]

Most of the middle-aged and elderly people in Sharpeville were born in Top Location, their parents having moved there earlier, many from Lesotho. A straight line drawn from Lesotho to Johannesburg shows Vereeniging to be directly en route, which is probably why it was one of the places where Basotho people seeking work in the cities converged. James Lengane, for example, was born in Top Location in 1945. His father hailed from Basutoland, his mother from Thaba'Nchu, although they only encountered each other in Vereeniging, where they were married. Lengane's father came to Vereeniging in search of employment.[21]

Many of the newly urbanised were women, the bulk of whom came from Basutoland. Bonner notes that it was a combination of rural impoverishment and the system of labour migrancy that saw large numbers of Basotho women leave their homes.[22] Land shortages and depression, exacerbated by the severe drought in the early 1930s, considerably reduced the ability of many young Basotho men to pay a full bohali (bridewealth) payment and most resorted to paying chobale instead.

Normally, chobale served as a compensation payment paid to the father of a women by the man she had eloped with. It could:

> ... subsequently constitute the first instalment of a full bohali (bridewealth) payment, but in practice it all too often allowed marriage on the cheap and reflected the growing poverty of much of Basotho society.[23]

Because the full bridewealth payment was not paid, an increasing number of these women were often abandoned by their husbands:

> Without transferring a large proportion of the bridewealth payment, men enjoyed only limited rights over their children and a much weaker bond was sustained between husband and wife. Men were encouraged to adopt a more casual and cavalier attitude towards their spouses, and were more inclined to disappear into South Africa and never return.[24]

With a marital bond that was not particularly secure, these women found themselves in a marginal situation in their homes, the homesteads of their fathers-in-law - in which, by custom, they were obliged to live - and were more likely to experience sexual advances from the men residing there. Once deserted by their husbands, the women often set off in search of them.[25] Widowed women were another category likely to leave Basutoland. According to Bonner, once widowed, a women in Basutoland faced either of two unfavourable options: "... to be married to a male kinsman of their husband (the levirate system), or to remain perpetually vulnerable to men."[26] In terms of the latter, because of land shortages and as these women no longer had the protection of their husbands, their lands were often extracted by chiefs. As a result, these women often

abandoned their homes. But the majority of women who contributed to the mounting exodus were those "... properly married by cattle and living with their children in monogamous homes."[27] Because of the migrant labour system, husbands frequently had to return to their places of employment soon after marriage and, in most instances, were gone for considerable lengths of time; some of whom never returned. As a result:

> Many women were thus condemned to live lives of profound insecurity and poverty, never knowing when their husbands would come home or where their family would get their next meal.[28]

This was compounded by tension in their new homes - the homesteads of their in-laws - most commonly caused by the infrequent remittance, as well as allocation, of monies from husbands.[29] Frequently these women joined the others who were searching for their spouses and in most cases "... would find that they had disappeared without trace."[30] Instead of returning to Basutoland, many opted for a life of brewing beer and prostitution:

> Overnight, "respectable" married women thus became transformed into the notorious unattached and undesirable Basotho women so reviled by white administrators at the time.[31]

The rapid population growth in Vereeniging caused severe over-crowding in Top Location, and this, coupled with poor sanitation resulted in the spread of diseases such as typhoid, polio, tuberculosis, pneumonia and gastroenteritis.

In two months of 1946, nearly 150 people died of pneumonia, eighty five of gastroenteritis, and twenty four from tuberculosis.[32] The lack of accommodation affected production in the area as well. Chaskalson notes that it:

> ... began to be a limiting factor on the expansion of production and the [Vereeniging Town] Council came under pressure from local industrialists to provide more African housing.[33]

Rather than provide more houses, the VTC resolved to construct a new township, following the recommendation of a Commission of Enquiry into the causes of a violent clash between police and residents in September 1937, which saw the deaths of two white constables, with dozens of other demonstrators and policemen wounded.[34] The Commission found that it was the introduction of the pick-up van along with the indiscriminate use of sjamboks by black policemen that had sparked off the clash, but also criticised the VTC for its inadequate control of the location - its inability to curtail illicit beer brewing as well as control illegal entry into the location.[35] The bulk of illegal dwellers were the Basotho women referred to above, who were also largely responsible for the illegal beer brewing. In order to resolve the problems the Commission proposed the construction of a new township:

> The existence of a serious state of overcrowding is apparent and is frankly admitted by the Council, but enlargement is not possible for the reason that the rapid development of the Town of Vereeniging threatens to encircle the Location with European residential areas and makes its removal to another site imperative.[36]

Sharpe Native Township

As a result of the above, the Vereeniging Town Council purchased a site two miles west of the central area of Vereeniging upon which Sharpe Native Township (Sharpeville) was established.[37] According to Leigh, Sharpeville was named: "... at the request of the residents themselves in honour of Mayor John Lillie Sharpe ... a man renowned for his interest in the welfare of the Bantu ..."[38] Removals to Sharpeville began in 1943 and continued over a period of fifteen years as houses became available. The removal was marked by the fact that initially Top Location residents were called upon to volunteer to relocate to Sharpeville and many responded to the call. It was only the removal of the final group of people in 1959 that bore the mark of a genuine forced removal.

According to Petrus Tom, many of its residents were not happy about being moved to Sharpeville: "Many [people] disliked the removal [from Top location]. People went to Evaton, Lesotho. Only those who were not able to leave completely came to Sharpeville."[39] As was the case in most examples of removal, those who objected to it were by-and-large the relatively affluent group of African landlords.[40] Tom recalls that one such stand-owner in Top location went as far as challenging the authority of the

Vereeniging Town Council to carry out the removal, with the backing of a Communist lawyer; Joe Slovo:

> As time went by, a court-case challenged the removal. Lawyers -- Mr Slovo from Wits - helped [a] Mr Sheshe to challenge the Vereeniging Municipality. Mr Sheshe's case was unfortunately defeated. Police took his belongings and threw them out of Topville.[41]

In fact, Sheshe lead the challenge of a group of ten standholders and their tenants. The group lost the case, but only after Sheshe had taken the VTC to the Appellate Division. The entire group was removed as a result. Sheshe refused to go to Sharpeville, repairing instead to nearby Evaton.[42] Indeed, many landlords went to Evaton because, as it was a freehold area, they could own land there as well:

> ... the landlords, a lot of them went to Evaton because even when they were still in Top Location they were still having stands in Evaton. They bought some there as well because they did not want to be under the municipality, they wanted their own land.[43]

But other landlords were quite willing to make the move. This was the grouping who disliked accommodating tenants who, by brewing beer and engaging in other such practices, drew the attention of the police to their properties.[44] These landlords were also lured by offers of compensation from the Vereeniging Municipality: "... landlords volunteered [to move to Sharpeville] because of the money that they were getting from the municipality ... They got compensated for being moved."[45]

However, the bulk of residents who volunteered to move to Sharpeville were tenants in Top Location, who were enticed by the offer of "bigger" houses in Sharpeville:

> ... the houses in Topville were a room the size of this one [one of the rooms in a standard four-roomed house in Sharpeville]. Now they could see that the advantage of having a house in Sharpeville, you were having a four-roomed house and you were having a yard, and it's not cramped like the one in Top.[46]

Others were persuaded by the unfavourable living conditions in Top Location: "You know, it [Top Location] is an old location, very dilapidated, in poor condition, and then the government decided to do us a modern township."[47]

It appears that there was another group of people who did not want to be removed from Top Location. Chaskalson has observed that many of the original tenants of Top Location resented the removal to Sharpeville because it was more easily controlled than Top Location had been:

> The slumyards of Old Location (Top) could not be patrolled as effectively as the neat rows of houses in Sharpeville, and they provided shelter for gangs of unemployed youths and for prostitutes and beer brewers who serviced the nearby industrial compounds. Sporadic police raids served to disrupt the activities of the Topville lumpenproletariat, but they never really threatened its continued existence.[48]

Whatever their intentions however, there is evidence to suggest that much of this grouping never actually made it to Sharpeville: most were not registered with the township administration and were therefore not in a position to be allocated houses.[49] Thus, after Top Location was finally demolished in 1959, many of its lumpenproletarians were forced to move to Evaton which, like Top location, was a

freehold township and could therefore accommodate them. The majority of these illegal dwellers were Basotho women (described above) who relied for their subsistence upon the brewing of beer. The Top Location beerhall, built in the late 1930s, had run at a loss during its entire period of operation, due largely to the efforts of the women brewers who orchestrated a boycott of the beerhall in 1939.[50] By 1942, the VTC considered closing it down but declined to do so for fear of encouraging an escalation in illegal beer-brewing.[51] By contrast, the Sharpeville beerhall was profitable from its inception in 1943 and, after a recipe for brewing beer more cheaply was discovered, it increased its profit margins even further, enabling the VTC to finance the effective administration and control of the new township.[52] The VTC quickly expanded its beer brewing industry and by 1959 there were two beer-halls and eight off-sales depots.[53] This therefore strongly suggests that many of the militant beer brewers of Top Location did not relocate in Sharpeville. In general, the very poor beer brewers ended up in Evaton while - as will be seen in Chapter Four - the "respectable", more financially secure ones were able to re-establish themselves in Sharpeville.

A further by-product of preventing much of Top Location's lumpenproletariat from resettling in Sharpeville, was that it diverted much of the activities of the notorious Sotho migrant gang, the "Russians", from the Vereeniging area to

Evaton.[54] In Chapter Four it will be seen that their return in the late 1950s was a factor which led to the Sharpeville shooting in 1960.

The new township of Sharpeville was intended to have 5 000 houses, although only 3 800 were constructed.[55] It also included what was known as a "native village" which was an area set aside for those wanting to construct their own houses on land leased from the Council for ninety nine years. In addition there was a section known as an "Asiatic Bazaar", and a quarter for "coloureds" to reside in.[56] This was for the grouping of "coloured" people who moved to Sharpeville. Only a small proportion of the "coloured" population and none of the Indian population who were residing in Top Location moved to Sharpeville. Most in fact remained in Top Location until the VTC had constructed separate townships for them in 1967.[57]

Sharpeville also had single-sex hostels and by 1949 the first hostel to be constructed had a population of 1 120 men paying a rent of fifteen shillings per month.[58] Houses were allocated at the rate of thirty five per month from 1946 and, in that year, residents could rent four-roomed houses without bathrooms for 27/-6 and ones with bathrooms for 28/-6.[59] By 1947 the township had a population of 8 755, just over half that of Top Location.[60]

For the residents transferred there, Sharpeville represented an improvement in living conditions. The crime rate was lower than that reported in Top Location, and health conditions were better.[61] But the cost of living was significantly higher, and by 1946 a large number of residents were in rent arrears, unable to afford the increased rentals.[62] The Vereeniging Town Council, however, considered the construction to have been a highly successful undertaking and took pride in having established what they regarded as a model location.[63] The main road in Sharpeville - Seeiso Street - had street lights and running water was provided. In addition, there was a brewery, a clinic and a library, and weekly film shows were screened at the communal hall.[64] According to Chaskalson, "from the point of view of both facilities and control, Sharpeville was a native administrator's dream."[65]

Naming of the "suburbs"

In contrast to the view of the VTC, the residents of Sharpeville began to formulate their perspective of their new home. One aspect of this was how residents began to refer to different areas in the township by names. According to informants, the naming of the "suburbs" of Sharpeville by residents was for the purpose of assisting direction-giving by articulating identifiable points of reference. But it was

also part of the process of imbuing meaning and expression, making sense of otherwise drab, uninteresting and even confusing surroundings.

The landlords from Top Location owned stands in the "native village" and constructed houses there; residents referred to this area simply as "Stands". The first houses to be built in Sharpeville had grey roofs, and the area became known as "Putswastene" (Sotho: "Putswa" = "grey";Afrikaans: "stene" = "bricks"). Those "coloured" people residing in Top Location who moved to Sharpeville, were moved to an area near the communal hall where the police station was built. In this area the houses had red roofs and consequently the area came to be known as "Rooistene". "Phomolong" (Sotho: "Phomolo" = "rest") was so-named due to the large number of churches built in that area. The area known as "Vergenoeg" (Afrikaans for "far enough") was so-named because, according to one resident, "it doesn't matter from where in Sharpeville you are coming, Vergenoeg is far enough away!"[66] "Seapoint" has the dam, Leeukuil Pan, next to it. Leeukuil Pan is known to the residents as "Dhlomo Dam" after a stock owner who kept his cattle next to it during the 1950s and 1960s.[67] "Vukazenzele" (Zulu: "Vuka" = "wake up") was the area where the last residents to be moved from Top Location were located. This area, known to the authorities as Sharpeville Extension 1, contained "site and service" stands each of which consisted of a temporary housing structure and a

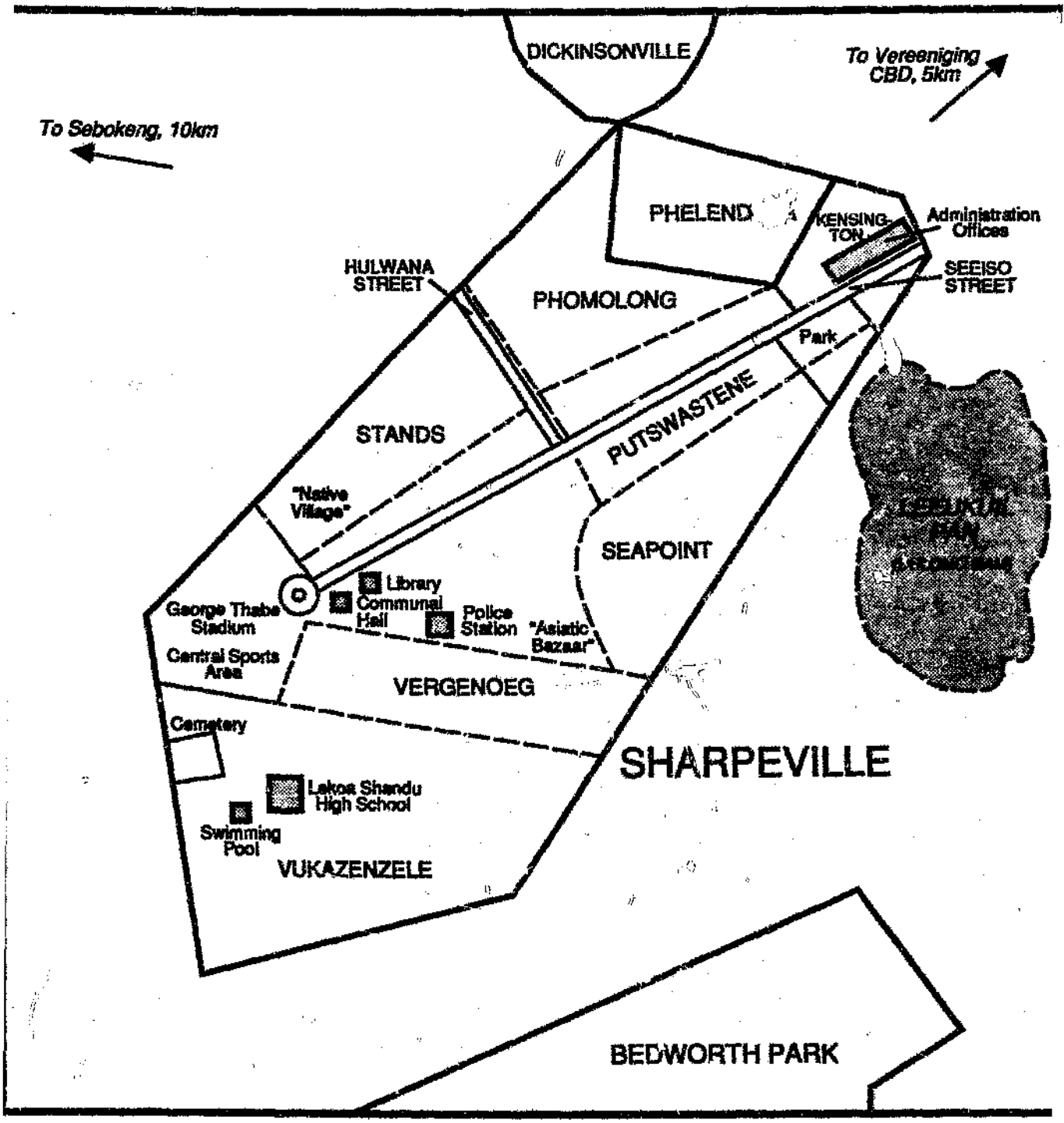


Fig. ii <u>The "Suburbs" of Sharpeville</u>

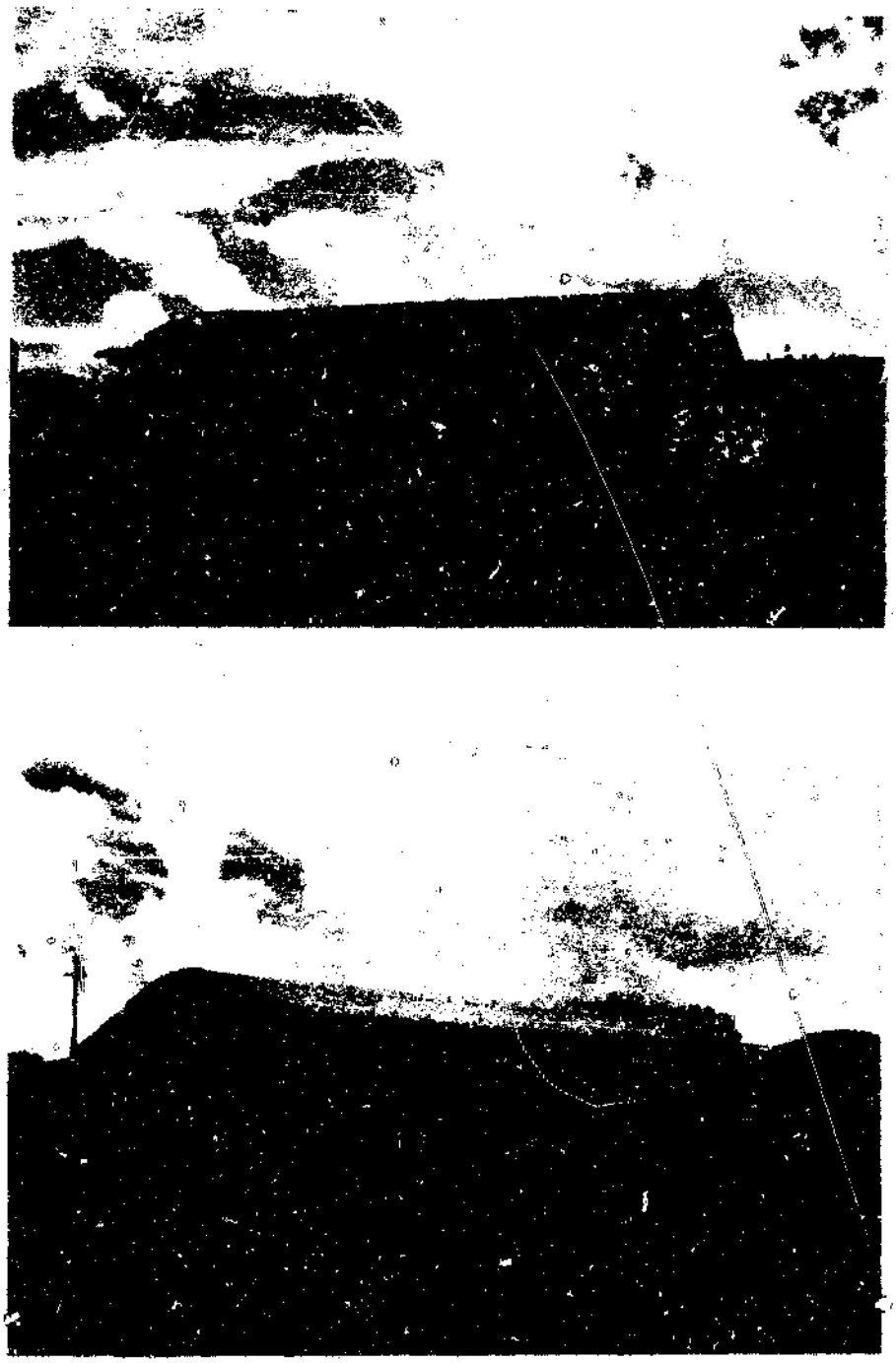


Fig. iii (top) "Putswastene"

(bottom) "Rooistene"

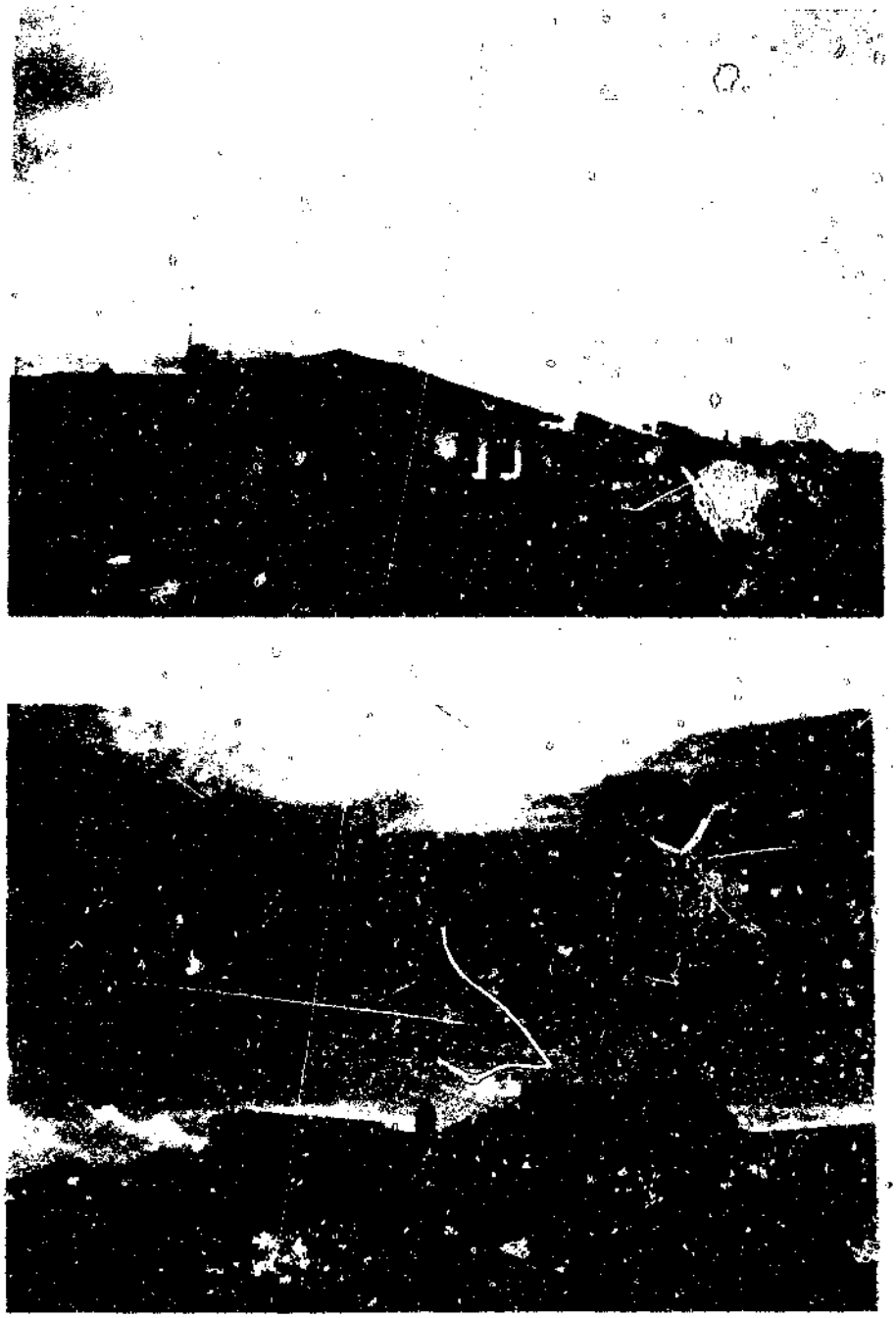


Fig. iv (top) "Vukazenzele"

(bottom) "Cape Stands"

toilet. Residents were provided with cheap building materials and had to build houses within five years or else forfeit their right to remain there.[68] As a result, residents began to refer to the area as "Vukazenzele" or "Wake up and do it yourself!"[69]

"Phelendaba" and "Kensington" are the only two "suburbs" whose names' origins are not quite as easy to establish. According to an informant, "Phelendaba" means "the end of the story" or the "end of the news" and was so named because it was the last area to be constructed in Sharpeville. "Kensington" is the area which comprised the hostels in Sharpeville and only became a residential area in 1980. In 1979, the occupants were all moved to newly constructed hostels in Sebokeng, and the hostels in Sharpeville were converted into houses. Two of the first residents in the new residential area were Sam Ntje and Peter Mathibela. Between them they decided to name the new suburb. Initially they wanted to name it "Philadelphia" after one of the jazz centres in the USA, but felt it was not quite appropriate. Instead they settled for "Kensington" which reflected their optimism for "a better life-style", epitomised by that of the residents of Kensington in London.[70]

The effect of removal: neighbourhood rivalry

The naming of the suburbs also reflected the division of the township into a number of rival areas and this was based upon the largely voluntary nature of the removal from Top location to Sharpeville. The effect of more forced removals in South Africa have been examined by a number of writers. The studies note their disruptive effect upon the people involved. Maasdorp and Pillay, for example, remark that even in situations of "normal", "non-segregationist" relocations in other parts of the world, the outcome has been one of severe trauma for those involved.[71] Pinnock has observed how the forced removals in Cape Town during the 1960s disrupted the affected communities in a way that:

> ... binding social forces provided by community facilities and churches were broken down ... when such venues - often built by communities at considerable expense - were lost as the families were moved.[72]

Pinnock observes that neighbourhoods were broken down because individual people, and not entire neighbourhoods, were moved.[73] The removal of Top Location produced a similar consequence for some of its residents. For others, however, the removal had the opposite effect, and, to a certain extent, even strengthened already established networks and neighbourhoods. This was because initially, as shown above, the relocation was voluntary and only in the latter stages were people actually physically forced to

move. The Top location removal was thus quite different from other, forced, removals and this had a significant effect upon the subsequent development of Sharpeville.

The removal was effected in three phases: the first major group of people moved to the area known as Putswastene from 1943; the second to Rooistene from 1948 and to Phomolong and Phelendaba from 1950); and the final stage was the forced removal to Vukazenzele in 1959. During the first two - voluntary - moves, the town council called on those people who wished to move to Sharpeville to volunteer to do so; landlords were offered compensation and tenants were offered better houses (although at higher rentals).[74] The fact that initially there was choice involved served to divide the new residents of Sharpeville, as Petrus Tom, who was moved from Top Location in 1959, recalls: "This [voluntary move to Sharpeville] caused division among the people because some wanted to live in Sharpeville and others not."[75] Further, the first group to arrive in Sharpeville was reasonably well settled before the second arrived. Relationships had been re-established and, in many cases, groups of friends and relations had moved together. People in each of the areas then, had much in common with each other, but little with the inhabitants of the others. The final group was the only one to be forcibly moved and, despite being a fairly disparate grouping, were drawn together by a common opposition to the removal.[76]

There was also an ethnic dimension to the relocation. Unlike later removals to such as those to Soweto, which were effected on an ethnic basis, people moving to Sharpeville were allocated houses on a random basis. But, ironically, in resisting the impersonality of their random removal, many families arriving in Sharpeville attempted to have houses allocated nearby friends, often on an ethnic basis.[77] For example, when a Zulu family was moved, Zulu families to follow would attempt to be allocated houses in the same area. There is also evidence to suggest that families went as far as exchanging houses in order to be closer to friends.[78] According to some residents, the reason for this was that in the early days - c.1930s and 1940s - many people had only recently arrived from the reserve areas and had preserved the ties with their rural homesteads.[79]

Despite this ethnic dimension, the removal did not have a racial slant. In Top Location Indians and "coloureds" had integrated into the community: "In Top Location we lived together with coloureds and Indians and we were marrying each other."[80] The grouping of "coloureds" who moved to Sharpeville were not considered any differently from the rest of the new inhabitants of Sharpeville and were part of the grouping who moved voluntarily to the new township.[81]

Nevertheless, the consequence of the above was to divide the new township according to the period in which people moved; this manifested itself in intense neighbourhood rivalry. Petrus Tom, who arrived in Vuka in 1959, experienced the rivalry as follows: "When we arrived from Top Location, we couldn't go to Rooistene. We were people from Topville, you see, so they try to beat us up."[82]

The rivalry was a combination of two factors: the retention of certain links during the move from Top Location to Sharpeville and the settling together of groupings of people; and the severing of ties between these groups and the others due to the timing of the removal as well as the attitude towards it. It was, therefore, a by-product of the way in which the residents of Top location made sense of their removal. Instead of the Top location networks being wholly disrupted, there was an effort on the part of some actively to re-constitute their communities; and a reaction on the part of others to oppose being removed entirely. While the different reactions reflected, sometimes complexly, the various structural positions of people, they also reflected their specific interests - as the inconsistent reaction of the landlord class illustrates. Whatever the reason however, the rivalry became a crucial element in the subsequent social and cultural development of the township and in the next chapter it will be seen how the rivalry manifested itself.

CHAPTER THREE

LIFE IN THE NEW TOWNSHIP: THE EXPRESSION OF AREA RIVALRY, 1943 - 1960

During the period 1943 to 1959, Sharpeville was still in the process of being constructed. As was seen in the previous chapter, the removal was spread over almost twenty years - the first group of people arriving in 1943, the last only in 1959. This chapter considers how cultural activities were affected by the removal and how the new residents of Sharpeville in turn responded. Indeed, the removal of Top Location may have displaced a significant section of its lumpenproletariat, as well as disrupting the lives of its residents, but it did not destroy cultural expression. From its inception, Sharpeville's cultural expression was both rich and varied. The rivalry which resulted from the removal ensured that much of this expression assumed an "area form". The rivalry was also class-based: indeed, the more middle-class a person, the less likely he or she was to be enmeshed in area rivalry, and the suburb of "Stands" seemed, for the most part, to have remained aloof from the manifestations of area rivalry. For the majority of residents, however, territoriality played a significant role in their daily lives during this period.

The question of territoriality has been examined elsewhere. Whyte has demonstrated how teenagers and young adults in Chicago in the 1930s were drawn to an area - a street corner - by the leader of their gang and "... by the location of their crap game, right next to 'the corner'."[1] The corner became the gang's point of reference which they tenaciously defended.[2] Suttles, considering Chicago a few decades later, observed that teenagers residing in slums there joined gangs, or "street corner groups", whose identity was established by the territory they patrolled.[3] In Sharpeville, territoriality was manifested in the patterns of evolution of youth gangs, as well as in the competitive sports of boxing and football. Indeed, it was most likely to affect those sub-cultures which lent themselves more naturally to competition and aggression.

"An outdoor people": the role of the street

Township dwellers in South Africa, residing in identical, "match-box" houses, on tiny plots of land, have been forced to spend a good deal of their daily lives in the dusty streets. Children begin playing in the streets from a very young age. Football matches and games of hopscotch are regular occurrences. Adults traverse the streets on their way to and from bus shelters and taxi ranks, visiting friends and relatives, and going to church services and football matches. Township street life has always been both vibrant and culturally important. Nasson, in an absorbing study of

District Six, Cape Town, conveys the richness of community life there prior to its removal in the 1960s. He emphasises life on the streets:

> In District Six ... the rough culture of the street ran through life like a brightly coloured thread. There were unstaged entertainments which onlookers could stand back and enjoy, like noisy squabbles between neighbours over shared street washing lines, pavement fights, swaying and toppling drunks, or the sorry sight of a hawker's fruit-and-vegetable barrow upending, clattering and mashing its contents.[4]

People living in District Six during the time acknowledge the role of the street: "... outside you could feel the life, man. We were an outdoor people, then."[5] English social historian, Jerry White, in a study of the Campbell Bunk community in North London, refers to the street as: "... a theatre which never closed; its audience and actors were never all asleep at once."[6] In Sharpeville too, the street played an important part in the daily lives of residents, and still does, as was evident during my research. While I was in the township, the streets were always occupied: children played, kicking old floor-polish tins or skipping with a length of rubber hosepipe; gangs loitered in bus shelters playing dice; drunks stumbled from shebeens; people were constantly walking up and down the dusty streets. But the image that these accounts convey is one of a sense of harmonious and joyful relations. This is, however, somewhat misleading. For in Sharpeville, at least, the streets were the place in which area rivalry manifested itself most clearly and it was the neighbourhood youth gangs who expressed it most distinctly.

Territoriality and youth gangs

The removal of Top Location severely disrupted the activities of its lumpenproletariat, and gangs were no exception. According to informants, the two major gangs which operated in Top Location were the "Indians" or "Bafana ba Kioko" (lit: "Boys of Kioko"), who took their name from the American "Cowboy and Indian" films screened at the local Top Location cinema; and the "Fighting Gurkas".[7] The Gurka's leader, Titus Ngali, left the gang and joined the music band, the Sharpetown Swingsters, shortly after he arrived in Sharpeville in 1959. With the move to Sharpeville, only the "Indians" survived after its leader, a certain Kgobedu, was moved to Putswastene in the 1940s and re-formed his gang there. Apart from its leader and its name, however, the "Indians" of Sharpeville were, to all intents and purposes, a new gang, most of the members of old having been dislocated and dispatched to other areas in the township or to nearby Evaton.

But during the 1950s, involvement in gangs in Sharpeville increased dramatically, due largely to a substantial increase in unemployment among the youth. In the late 1950s Sharpeville's population was largely young: the 1960 census reveals that it was composed of 8 655 men, 6 843 women and

20 863 children. Chaskalson notes that the first generation of youths born in Top Location reached the Vereeniging job market in the late 1940s.[8] This group found it extremely difficult to obtain employment, a situation which was exacerbated by the fact that industrialists in Vereeniging preferred to employ migrant workers who were prepared to work for lower wages in dangerous conditions.[9] Migrant workers occupied the hostels in Sharpeville as well as compounds in local industries such as USCO, Houtkop Brickworks, and Vereeniging Brick and Tile Company until the early 1960s when they were removed as part of the Nationalist government's policy to eradicate all industrial compounds in white areas.[10] This grouping formed the class-base of the "Russians": gangs of Basotho migrant workers pervasive throughout the Reef during this period. The activities of the "Russians" in the Vaal Triangle were for the most part confined to Evaton, which was a freehold township and much less regulated than both Sharpeville and, while it existed, Top Location. However, towards the end of the 1950s, "Russian" presence in Sharpeville increased as a consequence of a tightening of administrative control in Evaton. The increase of "Russian" presence, as will be seen in the next chapter, coupled with the resulting actions of the VTC, was a cause of the 1960 Sharpeville shooting.

The VTC became aware of the problem of youth unemployment as early as 1951, and began a programme of encouraging local industrialists to employ local people.[11] While the Council had some success in this regard, the programme failed to curb the rise in unemployment.[12] It was the resulting grouping of unemployed youths who not only joined gangs, but also provided much of the backbone of the rivalry between the areas. Indeed, as Sharpeville expanded, and as new areas developed, so new gangs emerged. A gangster called Seila formed a gang in Rooistene called "Ring Cafe", so-named because of its members' habit of loitering outside the shopping area in Rooistene which had become known to residents by this name. The "Apostles" or "Ma-Mapostola" fo ed by a certain Mpasa, rivalled the "Indians" in the upper parts of Putswastene, closer to Rooistene. On weekends, these gangs frequented shebeens such as Sidwell's shebeen in Putswastene, where live jazz music was performed by bands such as the Sharpetown Swingsters and the Cooltown Swingsters. There, fighting between the gangs frequently occurred, typically over women.[13] Sam Ntje was a member of "Bafana ba Kioko" during this period and he recalls how "protecting" women formed a significant part of the gang's activities:

> There was not really any "formal" gangsterism, but people collected in terms of area, especially over a woman from a particular area. A gang from an area would form to "protect" their territory.[14]

For the young men in the township, it was potentially dangerous to court women from rival areas. Courtship patterns during this period were, however, such that a man would generally wait until a woman expressed interest in him, before proceeding to court her. But women would not necessarily conform to the [illegible]valry "rules" and frequently expressed interest in men from rival areas, who, if keen enough, would have to endure the danger of courting in rival territories. This was exacerbated by the fact that parents did not allow courting to take place indoors, forcing men to stand on the street corners, whistling discreetly to attract their lovers. Chris Jana was one such courtier. Here he describes his encounters whilst courting his wife:

> I was staying in Rooistene. My wife, [her family] they were from Top Location and she was living in Vuka. I used to go there and see her ... I used to get some nonsense, you know, while I go there, from the local guys. They used to talk behind my back and say, "how can this guy come from that side and take one of our girls here?"[15]

Not surprisingly, Jana's presence in a rival area provoked a response:

> Two days after that [first confrontation] I went to Vuka, it was late in the afternoon, about seven. It was dark already. Then they saw me going that way. Then coming back, around the corner, HEY MAN, a gang! They start whistling, "shweeo", "shweeo", making a noise. They are trying to frighten me. I say, hey, there's no way. I've got to do something. It's either I run away - I must try to divide them - otherwise I won't be able to go through there. Then I run away ... The funniest of all, the very same guys who turned against me, they are the guys whom I used to help with a little money when they were short in town.[16]

Gang activities were concentrated outside shopping areas and especially in and around beerhalls. Their habit of drinking in public and robbing and harassing residents were soon brought to the attention of the Vereeniging Town Council (VTC), after members of the Sharpeville Advisory Board complained of gang members: "drinking kafir-beer outside, in public [which] was a shame according to native custom [and] disgraceful to see it misused in this manner."[17] Initially, the Vereeniging Town Council attempted to curb the proliferation of gangs by adopting piecemeal measures such as outlawing the carrying of knives. But by 1958 the Council had achieved little success and resolved to deal with the problem once and for all:

> All suspected "Tsotsis" were to be banned from the beerhalls and depots, and expulsion to labour camps would be used to "prevent unhealthy conditions such as in Johannesburg ... The first large-scale expulsions of unemployed youths from Vereeniging to the Native Affairs Department labour camps began [in 1958].[18]

These measures had some success in eradicating the gangs, as Sam Ntje recalled when interviewed in the late 1980s:

> Gangs started dying out in the late 1950s and 1960s. There were no more ringleaders, no really organised gangs. Presently there are no gangs - there are only "comrades" or "jets", as we call them.[19]

But if the gangs were dying out they took a long time in doing so. From the mid-1950s until the early 1960s[20], a new breed of "gangsters" emerged, which were also neighbourhood-based. The first of these was the "Berlins" who, like many of its predecessors, also derived its name from films screened at the communal hall, as its leader "Bra

(after whom Pimville was later named) and John Hardy, donated land enough for two soccer fields, tennis courts, a club house and stands for 5 000 people.[51] The BSC was instituted with two football grounds, tennis courts and a stand with a seating capacity of 5 000 spectators,[52] and was intended to act as an umbrella for the development of a wide variety of sports, including tennis, rugby, hockey, athletics, cycling, cricket, boxing and soccer.[53] The Transvaal African Amateur Boxing Association was established in 1930, with its headquarters at the Bantu Men's Social Centre. Officials of the white Transvaal Amateur Boxing Association helped with the former's boxing tournaments by providing referees and judges.[54]

Apart from the BSC, American Board missionaries were also responsible for introducing boxing to Africans in the townships of the Witwatersrand. This was done by initiating the formation of Boys' Clubs which were part of a process of encouraging youth to keep "good company" and "not run wild on the streets".[55] One of the earliest clubs was the St Mary's Boys' Club in Orlando, Soweto. It was here that Jake Tuli, one the most famous of South African boxers, who won the British Empire flyweight title in 1952, learned to box. Tuli was educated at the St Mary's Mission School, in Orlando, where he became involved in the church. Father Claude Lunnis,

Choekie" recalls: "We used to like the films of the Germans during that time, there were many, the films of the German soldiers."[21] As with the previous generation of gangs, these also formed over competition for women:

> ... they [the gangs] were fighting for the girls. The other people don't want him to come to their area to see his girlfriend. You can't get permission to go and see your girlfriend in another area; you should have to wait for her to come to your area. It was a problem, it's why we were fighting.[22]

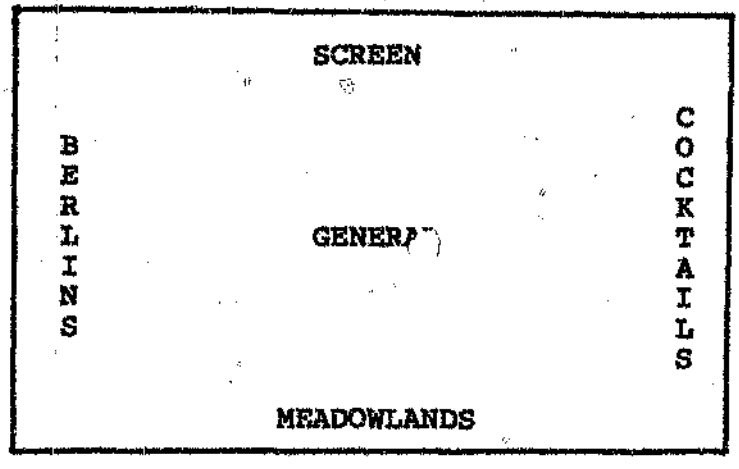
For this new generation of gangs, cinema provided a source of names as well as several inspirational role-models, to these avid followers of the pursuits of cinematic villains. One resident recalled that a favourite actor was Richard Widmark, who played Styles, the apple-munching, pick-pocketing, gangster in the film, Street with no name.[23] Other favourites were The Durango Kid, The Spice Merchant and The Drums of Fumanshu.[24] Writers elsewhere have noted the influence of cinema on neighbourhood gangs. Lodge, for example, observed that many of the gangs in Sophiatown derived their names from films screened at the local cinemas. One of them, the "Vultures" drew its name from the film Where no vultures fly.[25] The Sharpeville cinema, while attracting gang members, also presented them with a problem:

> There was only one bioscope [the communal hall] which created problems when walking to the bioscope. You had to pass through some of the others' territory. In the bioscope we also had our areas.[26]

Films were screened at the Sharpeville Communal Hall, which was located in Seeiso Street, Rooistene. To attend film shows the "Berlins", who operated in Putswastene, had to venture

into Rooistene, which was dominated by the "Cocktails," who would ambush them and other gangs arriving to attend shows. For the "Berlins", then, and "Meadowlands" (who named themselves after the newly formed area in Soweto and operated in Phomolong and Phelendaba), their only chance of getting inside unscathed was to arrive late: "They [the gangs] used to come very late, when they knew that they won't find anybody standing outside ... Before the picture ends, they have to leave very early also."[27]

Inside the hall each gang had its own demarcated area, which served to decrease the frequency of fights during filmshows and permit the audience uninterrupted viewing.[28] Nasson has described how it was commonplace for neighbourhood gangs in District Six, during the 1940s and 1950s, to "monopolise certain rows" of the local cinemas, "roughly bundling out anyone foolhardy enough to risk occupying a seat which had been appropriated as customary territory."[29]



Although the "Cocktails" were in control in the area where the cinema was located, there were instances when the other gangs could retaliate. For example, when members of the "Cocktails" made necessary visits to the administration offices to pay rent, they were obliged to traverse Berlin's territory. This, as "Bra-Choekie" explains, was the opportunity for the "Berlins" to recoup losses felt during film show encounters: "When the people were coming down from that side to pay rent, now it was our chance to get them back."[30] Venturing into rival areas was hazardous for all youth in the township, not simply gang-members. Masanka Mokoena describes the experience of traversing Putswastene in order to visit the administration offices:

> When you have to go to the administration offices, Putswastene people will stop a group: "where are you from?" "Rooistene. OK, stand this side." "You?" "Seapoint. OK, that side." Then they'll give you a thrashing and for no reason but that you are from Rooistene. You have done nothing.[31]

Leeukuil Pan (see fig.ii), which became known to residents as "Dhlomo Dam" after a certain Dhlomo who used to water his cattle there, was Phelendaba and Phomolong territory: "Putswastene has got 'Dhlomo' - the dam. It was called 'Putswawater' because the water was very dark."[32] The other side of the dam could be reached by people from Rooistene, Vergenoeg and Vuka. At this end, the water was clear and so

it had a different name: "From this side [Rooistene, Vergenoeg, Vuka] it [the dam] was called "Tarzan Dam" because it had blue water like the water in Tarzan films."[33]

But, what was remarkable about these gangs was their method of confrontation:

> In those times it [fighting] was not with knives and guns, it was only face to face with the fists ... It was like sports, murder-free. The gangs which came later became deadlier as they were using guns and robbing people of their belongings.[34]

This change was in part caused by the coercive measures adopted by the VTC to control the gangs, as described above.[35] Beyond that, however, gang members were emulating in the streets what organised boxers were performing in the gymnasiums. Indeed, boxing - along with jazz music - was a predominant form of popular culture in the township during the 1950s and the gang sub-culture shared aspects of its parent culture.

African interest in boxing

During the 1940s and 1950s, boxing not only drew a huge following in Sharpeville, but in many townships throughout the country as well. Despite this, no substantial sociological nor anthropological examination of boxing in South Africa exists to date. Before we examine the nature of area rivalry with regard to boxing then, in order to

contextualise the popularity of the sport in Sharpeville, an account of boxing among Africans in South Africa is necessary.[36]

Boxing only became popular among Africans in South Africa during the 1940s, although it had been introduced to the country as early as 1795 by British troops during their occupation of the Cape.[37] Immigrant mine workers from the United Kingdom, who worked on the Kimberley diamond fields in the 1870s, and on the gold fields of the Reef in the 1880s, had also brought with them knowledge of the rules of boxing. These rules included London Prize Ring and Queensberry Rules, in which either bare knuckles or skin-tight gloves were used. Prize fights took place in the Republic of the Orange Free State whose government, unlike those in Natal and the Cape, did not outlaw the sport.[38] Amateur boxing began on the diamond fields in the 1880s when diamond magnate, Barney Barnato, also a prominent amateur boxer, established an amateur boxing stable in 1878.[39]

The bare-knuckle boxing bouts aroused the interest of African mine workers, although not sufficiently to encourage their participation.[40] Instead, it was groups of domestic workers - or houseboys - from the northern Transvaal who adopted bare-fisted fighting and who fought against each other on Sundays from around 1910. These groups, known as the Amalaita, were originally a gang of juveniles in

Johannesburg, who were an offshoot of the "Ninevites", a criminal gang which emerged from the slumyard society of Johannesburg at the turn of the century.[41] But Amalaita boxing did not spread to the rest of the African population in the urban areas who, according to Mphahlele in Down Second Avenue, "feared and hated them" because they "assaulted people who crossed their path, raped women and girls."[42] Indeed, the Amalaita were restricted to the rural-based migrants who were generally spurned by the settled, urban Africans, who referred to them as moegoes or country bumpkins.[43] Rather, it was organised boxing which captured the imagination of urban Africans.

Boxing among settled, urban Africans was institutionalised with the establishment of the Bantu Men's Social Centre (BMSC) in Johannesburg, in 1925. The BMSC was a response by a group of liberal political organisations, missionaries as well as industrialists, in particular the Chamber of Mines, to counter the era of militance by African workers which had begun toward the end of the First World War and had culminated in the African mineworkers' strike in 1920. In 1921, a body known as the "Joint Council of Europeans and Natives" was set up by Professor Rheinallt-Jones, Howard Pim and several missionaries. The Council, composed of equal numbers of Africans, Coloureds, and Indians on the one hand, and whites on the other, sought to:

> get at the root of Native grievances by fair-minded investigation and to try and eliminate them by educating public opinion and bringing their existence to the notice of the authorities.[44]

By 1935, there were forty councils functioning in different centres around the country. The objectives of the white liberals who sat on these councils, were moral ones. For Rheinallt-Jones, the aim was the "cleansing of the moral and public opinion" of and in respect of black people.[45] The Reverend Ray Phillips wanted "to devise a social gospel" which would resolve "the whole great problem of moralising the leisure time of Natives in city and country alike."[46] It was out of the Joint Council that the South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR), the BMSC and the Bantu Sports Centre (BSC) developed in the 1920s. The Councils left the promotion of sport to the American Board missionaries, "... who believed that physical exercise had a particularly salutary moral effect."[47] The American Board missionaries, in particular Frederick Bridgman and Ray Phillips, sought to encourage non-threatening recreation "... as an antidote to political militancy and popular protest."[48]

Bridgman founded the Bantu Men's Social Centre in 1924 with the encouragement of municipal officials and police who provided grounds, and the Chamber of Mines who donated a substantial amount of money for the establishment of the Centre.[49] In 1931, the Bantu Sports Club was established, following a donation of twelve acres of land by two prominent liberals to be used as a sports ground for blacks in Johannesburg.[50] Two sympathetic accountants, Howard Pim

who headed the St Mary's Mission School, encouraged Tuli to take up boxing: "Apart from giving me spiritual instruction, it was Father Lunnis, too, who encouraged me to become a member of the St. Mary's Boys' Club and take part in its activities."[56] The St Mary's Boys" Club was run by Willie "Baby Batter" M'Batha, the South African "Non-European" welterweight champion, and his popularity amongst young boys at the time encouraged them to join the club:

> I remember that from the day we first met he was my hero. In my eyes there was nobody to compare with him ... It was at the club - I was then nine years old - that I first took up boxing under Baby Batter.[57]

During the 1940s and 1950s, Boys Clubs sprang up all over the Transvaal. Examples were the Dougall Hall Boys' Club in Marabastad, the New Mai Mai Boxing Club at the BMSC, and the G-Man Boxing Club in Sophiatown. In Sharpeville, the first club was the Central Boys' Club followed by the Ferreira Boxing Club (see below).

Boxing became popular in black working-class communities probably for the same reasons that it is popular among working-class communities in urban centres around the world. Being a combat sport, boxing has enabled men in such communities to transform into a sport the violence of street fighting, which is endemic to their living conditions. Corrigan has observed that working-class children in London gather to "mess around", apparently to do nothing, although

this involves a myriad of activities ranging from a variety of anti-social and petty illegal doings in shopping centres, to individual and gang-fighting, to gang chases.[58] Sugden has observed similar occurrences among youth in New York.[59] Street fighting then, is part and parcel of growing up in working-class areas in such centres. Conditions in these areas lead boys to engage in street fighting at a young age, and, in their early teens, to involve themselves in gangs. Researchers and writers alike in South Africa have observed how the process of survival in the streets is something township youths learn from a young age. Umlaw has noted that boys in Soweto learn how to defend themselves in the streets, and the ability to fight well with fists or with a knife in a fair fight, is considered an important part of becoming an _authi_, or a "man among men" amongst his peers.[60] Bloke Modisane, writing on his boyhood in Sophiatown in the 1940s, recollects how he and his friends formed a street-corner gang in order to keep their street safe:

> ... we were ... a kind of vigilante group concerned with keeping our corner safe from marauding gangs of Sophiatown; we were neither thieves nor thugs, and never carried knives, but we never hesitated to use violence against the _tsotsis_, the bull-catchers, who attacked, robbed and stripped people. We answered the _tsotsis_ with violence, which was a kind of lingua franca, and, in effect, we too were _tsotsis_ ...[61]

An informant in Sharpeville told me that he has trained himself to be alert at all times, and sleeps in a way that ensures he is awake and in a fighting position within seconds of a threatening situation emerging.[62]

It is this atmosphere which goads individuals to enter boxing. Sugden contends that some join a boxing club because they are already good at fighting and "the boxing club is viewed as a place where they can extend skills and reputations already established in the streets and otherwise deviant skills for more formal approval."[63] For others it is a way to develop good fighting skills in order to protect themselves, or at least stand more of a chance in street fights:

> The pecking order of the streets is generally indifferent to relative factors of size, weight, skill or experience and the toughest kid on the block is generally the biggest kid on the block. The boxing club turns out to be a good bet for adolescents who have learned the importance of being physically assertive, but invariably lost out in a meritocracy where brute strength counts for everything.[64]

Thus, the boxing gym not only enables youths to improve fighting skills, it gives them:

> ... the chance to earn respect, using the aggressive currency of the streets, but within a neutral structure which, as much as possible, equalises inherited physical differences and takes account of different levels of skill and experience.[65]

Elijah "Maestro" Mokone, African featherweight and lightweight champion during the early 1950s, who resided in Evaton, turned to boxing to improve his chances against local gangsters:

> On my rounds in the location selling vegetables, I was always accosted by local "toughies" who considered me a "skappie" - a greenhorn in the ways of the city. These chaps often approached my fruit-cart, chose the most juicy fruit and left without paying. In most cases I was the victor. On many such occasions I was threatened with knives, but undaunted, I faced these chaps and beat them up. All these incidences turned my mind to the fight game. Then a fellow who later became my brother-in-law, and also a boxer, Josiah "Tiger Joe" landed the knockout punch! He painted a rosy picture of fighting and fighters. And one day, I timidly walked into a gymnasium ...[66]

Sharpeville resident, Carlton Monnakgotla, the African middleweight champion in 1967, grew up defending his younger brother in the streets of Vuka and Vergenoeg, generally regarded by residents as the most dangerous areas in Sharpeville[67] :

> I had to protect my young brother, and used to get fucked up. [Petrus] Mokoena, Lefty [Masondo] and others were all training at the hall. Sexton [Mabena] was the Transvaal Bantamweight champion. I was nothing. I decided to take up boxing for one purpose: to know how to defend myself.[68]

Monnakgotla gives an idea of the "street law" which pervaded his upbringing and influenced his outlook: "I believed in one thing, the survival of the fittest, the law of the jungle."[69]

However, boxing in Sharpeville, as well as in other urban centres in South Africa during the late 1940s and 1950s, was not simply a response to the dangers encountered in the streets but was also, along with jazz music, the most popular and pervasive form of popular culture. In fact, during this time, jazz music and boxing were part and parcel of the same phenomenon: a cult fascination among Africans with American cult heroes and American consumer culture.

American cult heroes and the myth of "white superiority": "Gone is my image of the Superman"

Couzens has observed that Africans in South Africa began to

aspire toward their American counterparts from the 1920s.[70] Coplan has argued that the focus on black American culture was a result of the experience of similar conditions:

> During the early twentieth century, thousands of black people in the United States and South Africa migrated from rural areas to the expanding cities. There both groups experienced similar conditions: overcrowding, poverty, segregation, personal harassment, economic exploitation. Those conditions accompanied parallel processes of class formation within American and South African black urban communities. Together, these forces set the stage for the emergence of performance styles that served comparable expressive needs.[71]

He suggests though, that the differences between the two groups ensured dissimilar consequences. In South Africa, Africans were in the majority and so retained their own culture, community and language. In addition, they experienced the harshness of the migrant-labour system.[72] But, the similarities of experience were reinforced:

> ... by the mass distribution in South Africa of black American performance culture. This culture attracted Africans trying to adapt positively to their own urban environment, and the international recognition given to black American performers made the temptation to copy them, rather than develop problematic African models, almost irresistible.[73]

The African elite in Johannesburg was the first grouping to focus on black American culture. This grouping, which frequented the BMSC from its inception in 1923, initially aspired toward "white" culture, but because the latter

accepted blacks only in subordinate roles, turned instead to the American "negro".[74] Couzens notes that Africans in South Africa were influenced by American entertainers such as Duke Ellington and Paul Robeson, as well as American boxers such as Jack Johnson and Joe Louis.[75] It was these performers and pugilists who helped "break down the myth of white superiority."[76] This is vividly conveyed in a passage from Drum journalist, Nat Nakasa:

> Gone is my image of the Superman. And it is looking to see how the image was destroyed which intrigues me ... For some of us it began when Joe Louis knocked out Max Schmeling in the late 'thirties. In one blow, Joe Louis proved that the black man can also make the grade if allowed to compete on the basis of fair play. So did Louis Armstrong and Nat King Cole.[77]

The influence of American culture was vividly displayed in the nicknames of the local boxers in Johannesburg. Examples included "Homicide Hank" Mahlo, Ephraim "Kid Bogart" Bohata, Reuben "Panama Flash" Londi, and "Kid Dynamite" Lekwete. African interest in boxing swelled during the 1940s, enhanced even further by the successes of African boxers overseas. Willie "Baby Batter" M'Batha, who learned to box at the BMSC in the 1940s, paved the way when he fought a successful debut in Great Britain, knocking out Ginger Stewart in his first fight.[78] But it was Jake Tuli who provided the ultimate inspiration when, in 1952, he knocked out British flyweight champion, Teddy Gardner, to win the Empire Flyweight Title,

confirming that African boxers could emulate their American counterparts, and, when permitted fair play, could truly reveal their mettle.[79]

After World War II, the BMSC became the "mecca" of African boxing on the Witwatersrand. Weekly bouts there drew huge crowds and aspiring boxers in townships around the country sought to emulate Tuli's success.[80] In Sharpeville, the popularity of boxing was substantially augmented when local resident, John Mthimkulu, made history by becoming one of the youngest ever national boxing champion after winning the South African "Non-European" Flyweight championship, in 1955.[81]

Boxing in Topville and Sharpeville: "Man, a fist was the play of the day"

The majority of male informants who were teenagers during the 1950s joined boxing clubs in Sharpeville. Female informants were avid supporters of Sharpeville boxers and sought romantic involvements with the famous ones.[82] During the 1950s, boxing was clearly the most popular sport in Sharpeville and from a spectator point of view, it was not only popular, but most fashionable as well:

> Boxing that time was not as it is now. That time it was just for fun and people were really interested in it. You'll find the whole township discussing about it, and they would go to watch it in scores of numbers. Man, the hall was just around here, opposite the rent office. We used to call it "Central". Man, a fist was the play of the day. I used to make it a theatrical play of fists.[83]

The influence of black American boxers was a significant aspect of the sport gaining gaining popularity in Top Location and later Sharpeville. Boxing informants there informed me that their inspiration to take up boxing came from perusing the famous American boxing journal, Ring, and the desire to emulate American boxers:

> We used to like the South African boxers, but particularly we like Sugar Ray Robinson and Archie Moore. Those are the boxers we used to like. We used to buy Ring and [boxing] books and look at them. We liked them, and then we started to imitate them.[84]

Boxing in the Vereeniging emerged at much the same time as it did in the Johannesburg region:

> The Vaal has always been there when it came to boxing. In the middle 40s there were talented fighters from Vereeniging like Fly Mhlahleti, Sam Sanki and many others.[85]

Sharpeville resident John Mthimkulu, who was a national boxing champion during the 1950s and 60s, maintains that it was through Fly Mhlahleti that boxing began in Sharpeville:

> When we started boxing in Vereeniging, it was way back and there was a fellow out at Evaton by the name of "Fly" Mhlahleti. He started the whole thing. He was a boxer in Evaton and he came here and then he started giving clinics in boxing. Then they started having stables.[86]

The first stable was Central Boys' Club, which was established in 1946 in Top Location by a certain Mr Ntomyane, who was a teacher at the local Dutch Reformed School. According to Mthimkulu, the club was called "Central Boys' Club" because Ntomyane wanted it to be the centre of activity, "where everything happened" for the young boys in the township.[87] The club required a venue to operate from

and, because only the municipal offices were serviced by electricity, Ntomyane sought and obtained the permission of the local superintendent to convert one of the rooms into a gymnasium. For equipment, he provided a punching bag, two pairs of gloves and a speedball.[88] Ntomyane was moved to Sharpeville shortly after establishing the club and so relocated it there. In Sharpeville, as Mthimkulu recalls, the club trained in a school room and later in one of the hostels:

> When I came [to Sharpeville] from Top [Location, in 1952], it [Central Boys' Club] had already started. But then there were schools here, in the houses. There were no halls then, we used the hou[illegible]s for learning. So we trained there as well, at night, until then [c.1954/5] when we shifted to a hostel [hall].[89]

"Blue" Kholane trained at Central Boys' Club from 1953 until 1958, when a mishap at work forced him to discontinue boxing.[90] Kholane was born in Top Location in 1939. His family were moved to Phelendaba, Sharpeville, in 1951. Kholane was educated as far as standard six and initially worked as a filing clerk in Vereeniging, before becoming a driver for an engineering firm. According to Kholane, most of the youngsters in the township dreamed of becoming champion boxers and, not surprisingly, Central Boys' Club was packed to capacity during training sessions.[91] As Kholane recalls, there were as many as sixty boxers at the hostel on any given night.[92] Training sessions took place nightly, the juniors from 6pm to 8pm and the seniors from 8pm to 10pm. Kholane maintains that the success of the club's boxers was due to

their hard training and strict adherence to the "laws of the gym", defined by the manager/trainer, Uncle Sam Manoto: "He knew boxing. He was a good trainer and a very strict, handsome person. His law was 'Everybody [in the club] Must Win'."[93]

Kholane was never more than a mediocre boxer, achieving only moderate success in the amateur ranks. The most successful boxer to emerge from the club was John Mthimkulu, who won the "Non-European" flyweight title in 1955. Like Kholane, Mthimkulu was also born in Top Location in 1939 and moved to Phelendaba in Sharpeville, in 1952. Mthimkulu was the son of an isangoma from Ladysmith:

> My father was a sort of a witchdoctor and he used to travel around the whole time. So I used to stay with my mother at Topville. So then they [my mother's people] came from the Transkei. They're Xhosas and my father's Zulu, he came from Ladysmith ... My mother's father, he was from the Transkei. They came via Free State to this end.[94]

Despite an avid interest in the sport, Mthimkulu only took it up after being encouraged to do so by a certain Motto Monnaheng, who later became his manager:

> [Mthimkulu] ... was interested in boxing as a toddler when he and his schoolmates used to engage in minor street brawls. He was later spotted by his present manager, Mr Motto Monnaheng who introduced him to serious gymnasium work.[95]

By the time Mthimkulu won the flyweight title, in 1955, he was employed as an assistant mechanic at a garage in Vereeniging, having left school during standard six.

According to Mthimkulu, his success was a result of his rigorous training programme:

> I'm having a fight this week, the fight is on Saturday, its a title fight. Monday I start [training]. Tuesday I wake up early in the morning at quarter to three. I make it a point that even the earliest woman who wakes up to make fire, she's still sleeping. Its only fresh air. Then I come out and I put my boots on. I lock my door, put the key somewhere and off I get. I just go out this way [gestures] and then out to Evaton. Coming back, by then they've just woken up and there's now smoke. But that smoke doesn't do anything because I've already had fresh air. So the fresh air is inside here [pats his chest].[96]

Mthimkulu's dedication was known of, and indeed expected, by his supporters, and he made no bones about combining it with a little publicity:

> You know what I rather used to do for footwork? When I started, I used to get to town. On a Saturday, it was a busy day ... Early in the morning I used to get to town. There were a lot of people there already. So I had my big boots with the tyres on them. So I move around the crowd. So I move in and out of the crowd like this [describes a zigzag movement with his hand] and the crowd go crazy. I move until the end of the town and I come back again. I move twice or thrice. Now I've done my homework, my footwork.[97]

Territoriality and boxing

Like gangsterism, boxing reflected area rivalry. But it also served to undercut it in certain instances. This section explores the extent to which it exacerbated and/or undercut area rivalry and the reasons for these contradictory effects. According to Suyden, the Memorial Boxing Club in the Burnt Oak housing project, New York, afforded its members a kind of informal neutrality in the face of gangs and street violence.[98] But in Sharpeville, rather than affording

neutrality, the boxing clubs were very much part of the territory and gang rivalry, as this statement from boxer, Joe Mabena, reveals:

> [Boxers, Carlton] Monnakgotla and Sexton [Mabena], they were friends because they were playing football for one club, one stable and we were all the time together. We were moving together, working together, fighting people together. We were a club of boxers and we were a gang as well.[99]

Boxers were probably not afforded neutrality because their physical prowess was a threat to township gangsters. Indeed, boxers appear to have been the target of tsotsis in townships in general on the Witwatersrand during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Zonk reporter, Mike Phahlane, reporting on a series of attacks on professional boxers in 1958, suggested a possible motive for the attacks:

> How these tsotsis envy the real muscular heroes of the township - the professional boxers, who get into the ring, and gloved-up prove their manhood by fighting it out man to man, obeying the rules of the game. Yes, our pro boxers are the real men of the townships, and how those tsotsis hate them. This hatred has led to some particularly savage attacks on unarmed and well-known boxers by these little monsters who are too yellow to lace on a pair of gloves. No sir, for them there's only the gun and the knife and no place for a referee ... Another grouse that the gangsters have against the ring-boys is that these men get all the glamour, the publicity and have too many girl friends, and they accuse the boxers of "making easy money".[100]

Soweto boxer, Enoch Nhlapo, was one such victim:

> One evening ... I was on my way through the Orlando shelters when I received a shocking blow on the back of my head. As I staggered forward I received another crack and heard someone say: "Ja boxer, hoekom boks jy nou nie," [Yes boxer, how come are you not boxing now] and then he dashed away. Well, this character has been shooting off his mouth in the shebeens, telling of how he beat up a well-known boxer who is supposed to know the art of self-defence, and what a walkover it was for him. How does he think I could have defended myself against a surprise attack from behind, and then when I was nearly unconscious he ran away? But one day I'll find that palooka and really make him square up to me - then we'll see about self-defence.[101]

This trend was certainly apparent in Sharpeville, exacerbated by area rivalry. Champion boxer Carlton Monnakgotla was attacked on a number of occasions by gangsters from rival areas, and was charged with assault for knifing an assailant. Francis Kabi, a boxer from Central Boys' Club, was stabbed to death by unknown assailants, presumably rival gangsters, in November 1960.[102] These attacks were the reason why boxers such as Carlton Monnakgotla, Sexton Mabena and Joe Mabena formed their own gang, and generally went everywhere together.[103]

Area rivalry and the formation of Ferreira Boxing Club

According to my informants, Central Boys' Club was the biggest boxing club in Sharpeville in the late 1950s and 1960s. But, despite having the largest membership, as well as producing Sharpeville's first national champion, Central Boys' Club was by no means the most successful boxing club in Sharpeville. This was Ferreira Boxing Club, formed in 1955. Its creation relates directly to the central theme of this chapter: that strong area rivalry existed in Sharpeville following its inception in 1943. The boxers in the eastern "suburbs" of Sharpeville, Phelendaba, Phomolong and Putswastene were in Central Boys' area, and they joined the Central Boys' boxing stable.

But the rivalry between different areas meant that while there were boxers training in the western "suburbs" who did not have an established club at that point, they certainly did not join Central Boys' Club. Instead, they formed their own. A group of friends in Rooistene and Vergenoeg had been training together and desired a venue to train in:

> Well, we used to box and train together, but we needed a place to train in. So we call our stable Ferreira, he was the superintendent of Sharpeville at that time. So we wanted to get in his favour so that he lets us use the communal hall. He was very much interested in our boxing and used to watch our matches. So we call our stable Ferreira and he lets us use the communal hall to train.[104]

Here then, the rivalry which thus far had occurred on an informal level via the neighbourhood gangs and the fights, became formalised in the domain of organised sport and the formation of the two clubs. Further, the process of naming, a significant feature for the residents of the township as illustrated by the naming of the suburbs[105], was here utilised to curry the favour of the local superintendent, Ferreira, who had already granted permission for Central Boys' Club to use a hall in one of the hostels.

Ferreira Club revolved around the Mabena brothers, Sexton and Joseph, of whom Sexton is the better-known. Indeed, he is Sharpeville's most successful boxer. Their father was a truck

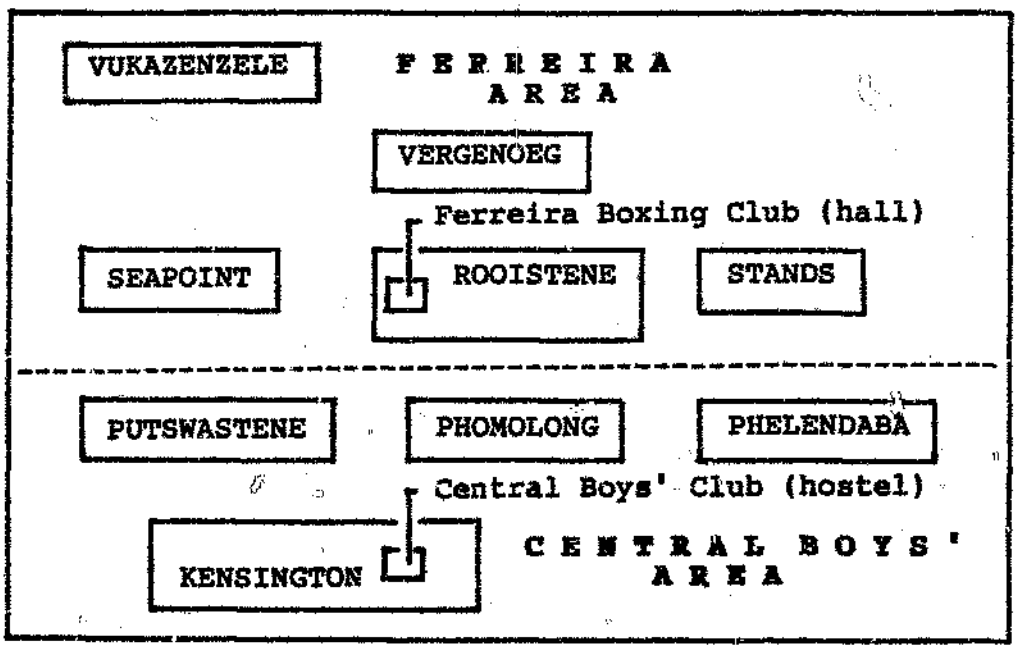


Fig. vi Areas of Sharpeville depicting the two major boxing territories

driver who had followed his employer from Springs to Vereeniging in 1933. Joseph was born in 1935 followed by Sexton two years later. They had an older brother, Glory, a younger sister, Nomankusazane, and two younger brothers, Thomas and Sydney, the latter of whom played for the popular jazz band, the Sharpetown Swingsters. Joseph and Sexton attended the Presbyterian School in Top Location until the family was moved to Sharpeville in 1946. Joseph was then sent

to Orlando High in Soweto:

> I did not go to school here, I went to Orlando High to further my studies. I was the most liked, the most beloved in my family ... Even though Sexton was a champion, my father prefers me. At that time if you attended school in Johannesburg, you were important, Johannesburg. When I arrived it was the time when Jake Tuli had left. When I left school, Kaizer Motaung started. It was called the Rock, it was a big school.[106]

This regard for Soweto reflected a notion that it was the



Fig. vii **Sexton Mabena sparring in the Sharpeville Communal Hall c.1958**

"centre" of cultural activity, the ideal for other areas to emulate. It will be seen further on that the desire on the part of Sharpeville cultural exponents to better their Soweto counterparts was to result in a degree of unity between the areas.

Sexton was schooled locally at the Lekoa Shandu High School. In 1946, however, the school had not yet been constructed[107]:

> In Sharpeville there were no schools at that time. School used to be in houses. Our school was in the corner house over there [points out of window]. We didn't have schools, we didn't have lights, anything![108]

The two brothers took up boxing because, according to Joseph, at the time they did not know many people in Sharpeville:

> We were the only Ndebeles this side, the only Mabenas. We didn't have anybody that we knew ... Then we find that the only thing to do is to do something, then Sexton started to train.[109]

Joseph's most significant match as a boxer was an unsuccessful challenge for the Transvaal lightweight title in 1961. Sexton fared better, winning in all four national "Non-European" boxing titles and also fighting overseas - albeit unsuccessfully - in 1960. Sexton Mabena is not only the best and most successful boxer to have emerged from Sharpeville, he is also one of the most highly rated boxers in South Africa's boxing history. Mabena was unbeaten in the 1950s and so impressed the Toweel brothers - Willie was the British Lightweight Champion at the time - that they

negotiated for Mabena to fight in Britain. According to Joe Mabena, Sexton attracted the attention of the boxing fraternity because of his style of boxing:

> They [Ferreira Boys' Club boxers] used to entertain Johannesburg very much, because they introduced a new style of boxing, especially Sexton, he shows them "bobbing and weaving". They [boxers at the time] didn't know how to do it. When I say "bobbing and weaving", I refer to Muhammad Ali [who came later]. Look at Muhammad Ali, that's exactly what Sexton was doing in boxing [before him]. When he fought, at times I never believed it was my brother. Man, he was wonderful to look at. Sexton, oh he was a thriller![110]

Carlton Monnakgotla also commented on Mabena's style:

> Sexton Mabena, they used to call him the "Wonder Boy". He was gifted from boxing. He was like Sugar Ray Leonard. You could cry tears to watch him ... He was our Sugar Ray down here.[111]



Fig. viii Sexton Mabena demonstrating his "bob and weave"

In 1958, Mabena defeated Elijah "Maestro" Mokone for the featherweight championship, winning his second national title. Mokone, Mabena's mentor from nearby Evaton, was, along with Jake Tuli, regarded as among the finest of African boxers during the 1950s. His defeat at the hands of Mabena saw the latter's fame increase dramatically. Casey Motsisi, reporting for Drum magazine, described Mabena as follows:

> He's just turned 23. He's just turned husband. He's just turned dual national champ. All in that order. And who is he, this man of many parts? He's Sexton Mabena, the "Wonder Boy" of South African non-white boxing, the man who wears the national bantam and featherweight crowns.[112]

Mabena's rapid rise and his capture of the public's imagination not only focused attention on him as an individual, but also on Sharpeville as a whole, as Motsisi's report bears out:

> Only a few years ago he was just another face in the crowd in the bicycle-crazy town of Vereeniging, some 30-odd miles south of Johannesburg. Today, the house where he stays with his parents has become a landmark.[113]

Sharpeville became the centre of the African boxing world. Major boxing bouts began to be held in the Sharpeville Communal Hall on a regular basis, affording Sharpeville boxers more opportunities to challenge for titles. Sharpeville became a boxing promoter's paradise, and Vaal Promotions, formed in the late 1950s in Sharpeville, became a highly lucrative venture for its proprietor, S T Mthembu.[114]

However, the promotions business, while attracting a good deal of money, did not decrease the intensity of the rivalry between the two boxing clubs in the township. Indeed, while

residents were delighted to see boxers in rival areas win titles, their support remained firmly rooted in their own. This is illustrated by the the following account by an informant who lived in the Central Boys' Club area. Despite claiming to have been an avid boxing supporter during the 1950s, he could not remember the titles Sexton Mabena had held:

> Sexton Mabena, I don't know much about because I was in Mthimkulu's area. Mthimkulu was training there. But I don't know much about Sexton. I only followed [him] from a distance. He was a very good boxer. I witnessed him fighting. He was one of the idols of Sharpeville, the man who held two titles. I think it was lightweight and featherweight.[115]

The animosity between the two major boxing stables climaxed in 1957 when Ferreira's Lefty Masondo, the Transvaal "Non-European" flyweight champion, challenged Central's John Mthimkulu for the national "Non-European" flyweight title. This was not simply a personal bid for the championship, but a challenge from the Ferreira area. Indeed, for Ferreira the fact that the flyweight title was held by their rival made it essential they obtain it, as Joe Mabena explains:

> ... we wanted Lefty Masondo to take the South African flyweight title from John Mthimkulu. We did not like it that Central had the title and we felt that Lefty could do it.[116]

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Carlton Monnakgotla, a boxer from Ferreira, who later held the welterweight title, recalls the antagonism between the two clubs in general, as well as the build-up to the fight:

> The people this side - football, whatever - we wanted to be better than the other side. It then got to Soweto. We were not on good terms. When I used to spar down there against other welterweights, I used to fuck them up. When "Shamba" [John Mthimkulu] was fighting Lefty [Masondo] down at the communal centre, we started the fight outside. The one group shouted, "Shamba" and the other shouted, "Lefty", and then the fight broke out. The rivalry was natural. We wanted to be better than them. And they wanted to be better than us. It boiled down to the point where we hated one another.[117]

Mthimkulu defeated Masondo in a closely fought contest in which press reporters felt a draw "... would have been a better verdict."[118]

The rivalry between the two clubs had a positive outcome: it elevated the standard of boxing in the township to a remarkably high level. Between 1956 and 1966, Ferreira Boxing Club boasted four South African "Non-European" boxing titles, while Central Boys' Club - through John Mthimkulu - held the "Non-European" flyweight title for some thirteen years. Between 1955 and 1969, Sharpeville as a whole boasted at least one national boxing title at any given time, and as many as five at other times. This, given that only eight divisions existed - heavyweight, cruiserweight, middleweight, welterweight, lightweight, featherweight, bantamweight and flyweight - meant that Sharpeville held over half the available "Non-European" titles. If one compares Sharpeville's size to that of, say, Soweto, this was no mean feat. It was this string of victories which eventually had

the effect of establishing a degree of unity between the two clubs as they sought to defend the challenges of boxers from other townships, particularly from Soweto.

Football and neighbourhood rivalry

In the realm of boxing then, the neighbourhood rivalry was not strictly between the different "suburbs", but between two broad areas which divided the township into roughly two halves. This was more a material necessity than an active effort to unite areas. In football, however, rivalry was expressed between the different suburbs and the reason for this difference is located in the formation of the different football teams in the township, which are rooted firmly in the areas from which they emerged.

Football in the Vaal had its roots in Top Location. It is not possible to pin-point exactly when football arose there, although it can be surmised that if Top Location was established in 1912, then football had its origin soon after, following Walvin's comment that "... no other sport lent itself so easily and cheaply to the varying conditions of urban life."[119] Most informants who lived in Top Location indicate that they had played football for a variety of teams, such as the Oxen, the Fighters, the Union Jacks, and the Red Pirates, the latter of which, according to shebeen owner and football enthusiast, Mohale Mokopane, was a popular team during the 1930s.[120]

In the 1940s and 1950s the teams in Top Location were the Transvaal EX-20s, the Transvaal Jumpers, Happy Hearts and Dangerous Lions. Their organising body was the Vereeniging Bantu Football Association, which was established in the 1930s and was affiliated to the Johannesburg Bantu Football Association. When Sharpeville was established in 1943, footballers there desired their own association and formed the Southern Transvaal Bantu Football Association, in 1949. The first clubs in the association were the Sharpeville Lions, Naughty boys, Sharpeville Fast Eleven and the Government Lions, the local police team.

In Top Location, the Transvaal Jumpers were the core of the Vereeniging Association. According to Sharpeville resident and ex-president of the South African National Football Association (SANFA), George Thabe, "in fact they were <u>the</u> association."[121] The removal of the club's members to Sharpeville provides an interesting commentary upon area rivalry. Further on the discussion examines this along with a consideration of the Transvaal Fast XI (or the Sharpeville Fast XI)[122], a club which originated in Sharpeville. But first we consider how the football teams evolved from street teams and became firmly entrenched in the areas from which they emerged.

Football is clearly the most popular sport played and supported in Sharpeville. During my research there (1986-90) I came across over thirty football clubs, many of these clubs having several teams which play in local and national football divisions and leagues. The majority of male interviewees in Sharpeville were playing or had played football at some point during their lives. (N = 56) and, conversely, while not playing the game, female interviewees indicated a strong support for football teams and formed a significant part of any supporting crowd at football matches. The importance of football is illustrated by this comment from George Thabe: "With black kids if you don't play football there is something wrong with you!"[123] Football in Sharpeville began in much the same way Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane describes in his book The Children of Soweto.[124] In it he recounts how children in the townships begin playing football by forming street teams which play against other street teams. According to George Thabe, this is a general township trend and, indeed, many of the top clubs in the country emerged from the street teams.[125]

Street matches are played in the street if it is wide enough or in any open space, and any round object is used as a ball "... until you get to a tennis ball."[126] If you owned a tennis ball, you were very much in demand by the other

children in the street. Steve Montjane, writing for Bona magazine, describes:

> Perhaps one in twenty boys had a ball in his pocket and that would be guarded with flying fists at the slightest provocation. You had to be nice to the boy who owned the ball. For, when you find a group of chaps struggling for possession in our dusty streets, the first question was: Whose ball is it? If it belonged to someone you had wronged before or who just did not like the look of you, he would not allow you to play. The man with the tennis ball was the boss for the day. We all had to nurse him. Those in his side had to play to him all the time. His opposition had to be careful in tackles. This because the owner of the ball could send one off at will without any "good" reason. Sometimes a hot game would be ended by a mere laugh. If the owner of the ball is in possession, tries to kick the ball, misses it nobody should laugh, Otherwise he would just pocket his ball and walk off.[127]

Even the street matches had a prize: the teams played for money - from a penny through to threepence. The money was lodged with a trusted spectator and the match began. The winner was the first team to score two goals before the other team scored, or the first team to go two goals ahead. Thus, according to Thabe, "if the teams were well-matched, the game could go on for a couple of weeks."[128] Further there was no official referee for the matches: "Everyone was the referee. Everyone would be shouting at the same time. Handball! Handball!"[129]

In England, from as early as the 14th Century, street football matches were immensely popular and were reported to have been particularly rough and wild.[130] They often incurred the wrath of the authorities who were more

interested in preparing their subjects for war, as this proclamation issued by the Lord Mayor of London in the name of King Edward II, in 1314, illustrates:

> Proclamation issued for the Preservation of the Peace ... Whereas our Lord the King is going towards the parts of Scotland, in his war against his enemies, and has especially commanded us strictly to keep his peace ... And whereas there is great uproar in the City, through certain tumult arising from great footballs in the fields of the public, from which many evils perchance my arise - which may God forbid - we do command and do forbid, on the King's behalf, upon pain of imprisonment, that such game shall be practised henceforth within the city ..[131]

These street matches also involved vast numbers of players. A description of the game in 1602 suggested that there were as many as thirty players on each side.[132]

During my research in Sharpeville, I was able to observe a number of street matches. I became particularly fascinated with one of them. It involved a duel between two parallel streets in Seapoint. The matches were played three or four times a week, and could last as long as four hours. The number of players also varied during matches, depending upon other occurrences in the street. In this extract from my diary, I describe one of the matches:

> The match was played in the street at about 5pm in the afternoon. A deflated plastic ball was used, the goals delineated by half-bricks, stones and an empty Utshwala carton. The two teams varied in size between five and ten players per team depending upon who arrived and left, or who had lost interest in the game. In fact, my appearance disrupted the game for a short while when a number of the players - ranging in ages between six and nine - deserted the game to entertain me by singing and dancing directly in my line of view. The group included a girl who had been playing next to the "football pitch". They sang African National Congress freedom songs and "toyi-toyied", before returning to the game. An old woman stood in the gateway of her house which adjoined the "football pitch", keenly observing the game, delivering enthusiastic advice each

time play passed nearby her. Pedestrians strolled casually across the playing surface and players were always careful to avoid colliding with them, although this was not always possible. Some passers-by stopped to watch and pass comments. Vehicles too, drove through the playing area and drivers gave a warning hoot before continuing through at a snail's pace. A boy of about fourteen years of age acted as a kind of referee, although there were no stoppages for fouls. The football pitch was a space of about forty metres in length, the width of the street in breadth. The street itself, typical of those in the rest of the township, was un-tarred and uneven. The two goal-keepers demonstrated remarkable bravado concerned only with keeping the ball out of their goals and clearly not worrying about injuring their bare legs as they dived and slid on the rough surface. The game was at times fast and furious, eliciting an approving response from spectators who sat on fences or stood nearby. At other times, the match halted for a short while as the ball careered down the road and players waited for the game to re-start. Some players wore shoes, but most were bare-foot, though the latter bore no concern for the former. Skill was the order of the day and the game



Fig. ix A street football match in Sharpeville, 1990

consisted mainly of individual dribbling skills. Goals were celebrated by a high "take five" handshake, while the opposing goal-keeper was severely reprimanded for allowing it no matter how hopeless his situation had been. As dusk approached, so the volume of pedestrians increased as people arrived home from work, but this in no way affected the pace of the game. The game was over when one side had scored four goals. A furious argument then ensued over whether the ball had gone into the goal or over the goal-post. Eventually the captain of the defeated side conceded defeat and handed over a handful of two cent coins amounting to no more than twenty cents. The game had lasted for just over two hours and ended with barely sufficient light to continue playing.[133]

In general, after playing against each other for a short period of time, the best players in a group of streets would form a representative team to challenge other areas. According to Thabe this was a "natural process", although it was more a manifestation of area rivalry, which, apart from Sharpeville, appears to have been characteristic of other African townships as well, as Steve Montjane, commenting upon his boyhood in Soweto, describes:

> My mother never could understand why sometimes if she sent for me, I stayed away so long. I had to reconnoitre. Keep my eyes open, for if one of the enemy spied me entering their street, he would give the signal. At this, boys would appear from all over and fill the street in no time. I could always cope with one, but as soon as the number finishes the hand, there would be only one course of action - to turn the heels inside out - run like mad.[134]

In contrast to boxing, which was an individual sport, football clubs in Sharpeville were formed out of street and area teams, and thus have their roots deeply entrenched in them. According to Thabe, it is very unusual for a player to come from a different area from that of the rest of his team,

and when this does occur the player risks becoming unpopular with supporters. This was confirmed by Molotsi Molefe, who was one of the founders of Sharpeville's most successful professional team, the Vaal Professionals, and who also played for the Dangerous Lions of Sharpeville:

> [Ex national lightweight boxing champion, John] Mthimkulu ... where he was doing his training sessions, that's what you would normally term an area for Dangerous Lions [see diagram below] and if you live in that area, it's assumed that you will play for Dangerous Lions, although you do get exceptions, but in the normal run of things [that was the pattern]. So I happened to be born and bred there. Boxing wise, it was the same. So it was just a normal thing.[135]

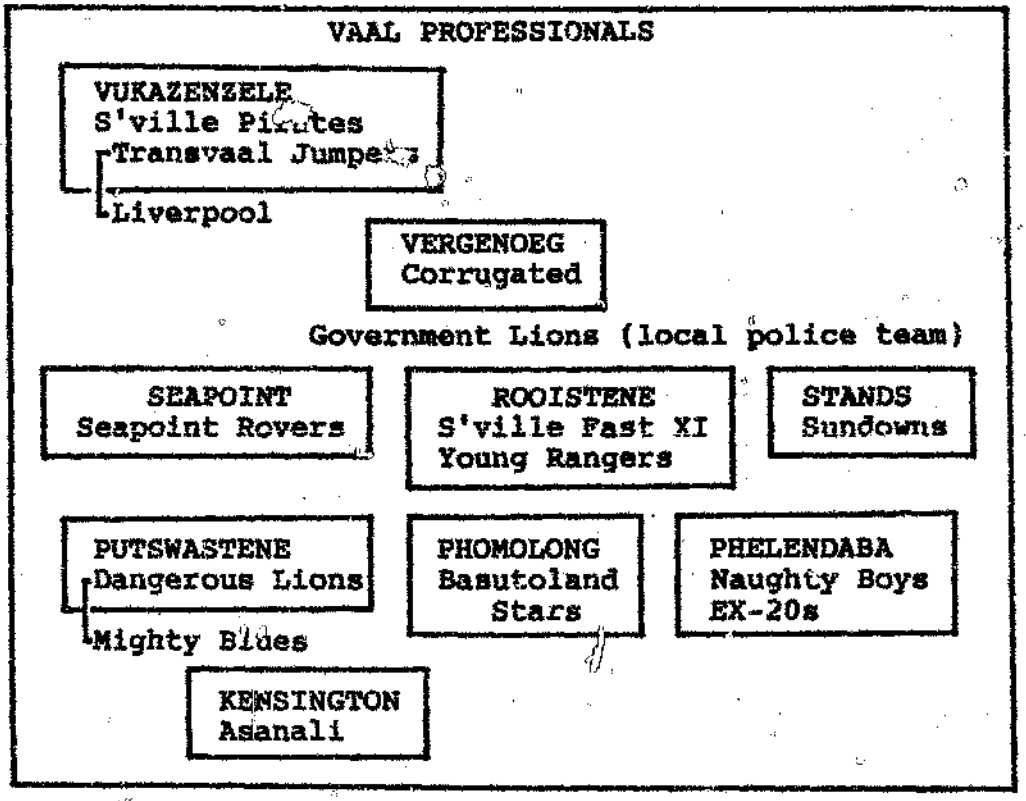


Fig. x Areas of Sharpeville with corresponding football teams

The effect of removal and rivalry on the football clubs: the examples of the Transvaal Jumpers and the Transvaal East XI

The Transvaal Jumpers Football Club was founded in 1933 by a certain C J J "Sam" Ngwenya.[136] All the players were educated at local mission schools in Top Location, most at the Methodist school, others at the Dutch Reformed and Anglican schools. The players came from similar backgrounds to those of the popular jazz band, the Sharpetown Swingsters[137]. After learning to play the game in the streets, it was at school that they first experienced organised football. In fact, the success of the Transvaal Jumpers was largely due to the Methodist school team, from which came all but three players in the Transvaal Jumpers side of 1946. Elliot "Do what you like" Mpepo was a member of this school team when they joined Transvaal Jumpers that year. Knowing that they were very skilful, they had been searching for a club to join, finally settling on the Transvaal Jumpers.[138] Other players included Philip "Concrete Mixer" Ramokhoase, Moses "Rand Daily Mail" Skhosana, Patrick "Mcondo" Tlhopane, and Benjamin "Ice Cream" Mokale.

Like the naming of the suburbs in the township, as well as the nicknames of the boxers, this process of naming was a significant aspect of African sports culture, a feature which is apparent even today. During my research I observed that

many famous sports people were known, and referred to, by their nicknames alone. Consequently I did not ask Sharpeville residents where John Mthimkulu lived, I asked where I could locate "Shamba." Steve Montjane, writing for Bona magazine, offers a reason for this process:

> A name is very important ... We say "Bitso lebe ke seromo". Its English equivalent to the nearest would be: "Give a dog a bad name". A person who makes his presence felt must be given a new name. This is brought out loud and clear by the names by which our sports stars are called. Our people, it seems, can't help but giving descriptive names when they watch somebody doing something. They have to call him by a name which tells exactly how he does it or what he looks like. They give him a name that tells how he differs from other players, or how he sings, how he runs. From these names one who hears them has a fairly good idea of the owner's performances.[139]

Thus, Elliot "Do what you like" Mpepo was a midfield opportunist with a penchant for dribbling the ball, while Philip "Concrete Mixer" Ramakhoase, also a midfield player, was a dogged, hard-working defender.[140] This process of naming then, facilitated identification of a sports player - or, as the case might be, a musical performer. But what is curious about it is how, in the context of the sport, a player was better known by his nickname than by his real name. If, in the context of apartheid, the dominant culture preferred to regard Africans as "invisible", the process of designating nicknames was a "common sense" response which insisted on their existence although not directly challenging the dominant culture.

In 1943, Transvaal Jumpers entered the local football league. Teams such as Happy Hearts, Lucky Letts and Dangerous Lions were the sides to beat and, in that year, the Transvaal Jumpers won the division after a draw in the final match with Dangerous Lions.[141] By 1947, according to Philip "Concrete Mixer" Ramakhoase, "... the Transvaal Jumpers F.C. were invincible and clicked like a well-oiled machine", soon exhausting all opposition in Vereeniging.[142] They resorted to playing at the Wemmer Football Ground in Johannesburg against teams affiliated to the Johannesburg Bantu Football Association (JBFA), such as Orlando Pirates Football Club, Naughty Boys Football Club and Moroka Swallows Football Club.[143] As is the case today, these Soweto sides were feared country-wide and victory over them was considered a phenomenal achievement. Not surprisingly, as Patrick "Mcondo" Tlhopane explains, the team trained extra hard for such games: "When facing teams like Orlando Pirates, we players of the Transvaal Jumpers used to take "road work" from Topville to Redan [a distance of about 8km]."[144]

Training presented problems, as there was little time or opportunity for it. Most players worked in the local industries during the day and the lack of electricity meant that training after work was difficult owing to insufficient light. Matches were played on weekends and days off work. One of the few alternatives, apart from long-distance running in fading light, was to join a boxing club and train with the

boxers in order to get fit: "As it is known, most Jumpers players played also boxing. The reason for this is that they wanted to keep fit, and besides, interest in sport."[145] Elliot Mpepo, along with many of the Transvaal Jumper's players, joined Central Boys Boxing Club, which represented the area of Phomolong: "I used to join a boxing club as training. The training was held at Hostel number six [in Sharpeville]."[146] Mpepo also played for Dangerous Lions as well as Transvaal Jumpers while the latter was still in Top Location. This, however, posed a problem when the club was eventually moved to Sharpeville. Initially, the removal from Top Location to Sharpeville disrupted the team only insofar



Fig. xi **The Transvaal Jumpers c.1950. Elliot "Do What You Like" Mpepo is in the middle row, second from the right; Sam Nqwenya is in the middle row on the extreme right; Patrick "Mcondo" Thlopane is in the back row, second from the left.**

as distance was concerned. While the president, Ngwenya, was still in Top Location, players such as Elliot Mpepo had already moved to Sharpeville and had to cycle back to Top Location to play, a distance of about five kilometres.[147] When Ngwenya was moved to Sharpeville in 1959, the club itself moved with him, specifically to the area of Vukazenzele. For Elliot Mpepo, this caused a difficult situation. By moving to Vukazenzele, the Transvaal Jumpers came to represent that area. Mpepo, however, resided in Phomolong. He was forced to leave both Dangerous Lions as well as Central Boys Boxing Club, and to become one of the exceptional players who played for a side in a different area.

Apart from playing in Johannesburg, the Transvaal Jumpers travelled extensively, as Mpepo recalls:

> We went to Swaziland, Bloemfontein, Randfontein, Heilbron. In Heilbron we were beaten and we gave them a return match and we won 6-1. I scored three goals from the far corner.[148]

The team was highly successful and became widely known:

> From the Far Eastern Transvaal to the West Rand and from Pretoria to Bloemfontein, the name Transvaal Jumpers F.C. spelt fear to football clubs and District Associations alike.[149]

According to George Thabe, the Transvaal Jumpers were the "terror in the whole of the Transvaal."[150] Today, the club is regarded as one of the formidable teams of early football in South Africa.[151] Its history also provides an insight into the general development of football in South Africa from amateurism to quasi-professionalism. The controlling

influence of the president and "owner" of the club, Ngwenya, is a significant aspect of this development, which is examined more fully in Chapter Six. For the moment, however, we are concerned with area rivalry.

Just as footballers joined boxing clubs to get fit, boxers joined football clubs for the same reason.[152] This resulted in the boxers from Ferreira Boys' Club forming one of the first football clubs in the new township of Sharpeville, the Transvaal Fast XI:

> We formed Transvaal Fast XI, we formed it! We were boxers. We find that we didn't have many interesting things to do, entertainment, you know, then we say "let's play football", then we formed that Fast XI.[153]

Its formation is another example of area rivalry. The team was formed out of, and closely related to, the Ferreira Boxing Club and its corresponding area, as Carlton Monnakgotla recounts:

> I joined the club [Fast XI] because I was staying on the side of the favourites of this area, this Transvaal Fast XI. This side of the township had Fast XI support. It was more like a gangster - the other side, there was Dangerous Lions and people there supported them. 99.9% of the team were boxers.[154]

It was one of the few teams to have actually formed in Sharpeville, most of the others having originated in Top Location:

> By that time, when we started to play here, Top Location was still existing. All the [main] sides, they were Top Location: Dangerous Lions, Transvaal Jumpers, Lucky Letts, Happy Hearts. Then we form our team here. Then after Top Location was all demolished, then they came this side and started to play together.[155]

This is confirmed by, Transvaal Jumpers' player, Ellio
Mpepo: "When I came here [Sharpeville] the only team w
XI, in Rooistene."[156]

Despite some measure of success, the Transvaal Fast XI
attained the same reputation as the Transvaal Jumpers.
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Fig. xii Sexton Mabena in Corrugated playing strip c.1

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Fig. xii Sexton Mabena in Corrugated playing strip c.1962

Conclusion

Sport, whether actively played or only watched, occupied a significant portion of the leisure activities of Sharpeville residents and, indeed, was a pervasive form of popular culture in the township. The expression of area rivalry was apparent in both boxing and football, the dynamics of which were determined by the nature of each, rivalry being more aggressively expressed in boxing. The influence of American cult heroes and black American culture was more apparent in boxing for the obvious reason that the latter was not played in the United States. Along with boxers, gang members in Sharpeville were also influenced by American consumer culture and found inspiration in the pursuits of American cinematic villains. In Chapter Four it will be seen how, during the same period, along with American film culture and cult heroes, American consumer culture as a whole held a pivotal position of influence in the social and cultural life of Sharpeville residents.

CHAPTER FOUR

LIFE IN THE NEW TOWNSHIP: SUB-CULTURE AND STYLE, 1943 - 1960

In Chapter Three it was argued that area rivalry in Sharpeville was more likely to affect those sub-cultures which lent themselves more naturally to competition and aggression. There were, however, exceptions, such as clothing styles, a cultural form not usually associated with rivalry but which, as will be seen in this chapter, became the subject of competition between the various areas in Sharpeville during the 1950s. But not all sub-cultures reflected area rivalry during this period. Musical performance was less affected by territoriality. Indeed, it often acted more as a force for unity than cleavage. There were music competitions, but these were not between local music bands and were by-and-large contested by the Sharpeville band, the Sharpetown Swingsters, and bands from other townships, particularly those around Johannesburg. As will be seen in this chapter, this resulted in a tendency to draw the different areas together to support their local band against the visiting ones.

Musical competitions also drew the different classes together. In Chapter Two it was seen that the upper echelons of Top Location society consisted of a middle class and an upwardly-mobile working class. The fact that

its removal resulted in a large proportion of the lumpenproletariat going to Evaton could have suggested that, from the perspective of class, Sharpeville was fairly homogeneous. This was not the case and it will be seen in this chapter how the divisions between Sharpeville's elite and its working class were expressed in styles of dress as well as in modes of entertainment, the latter of which were conducted along separate, class-differentiated lines.

Musical performance, as a sub-culture, was enacted in a way very different from the other sub-cultures in the township. It was far less parochial and the success of a band from early on was measured in terms of its ability to draw a following wider than only Sharpeville. This was, as we shall see, a further outcome of African interest in American culture which, in the entertainment world, saw ultimate success in terms of international tours and recognition. During the 1940s and 1950s, it was not only black American cult heroes that attracted Africans, but also the flood of American consumer goods after World War Two, which, when combined "... truly turned "Americanism" into a mass-cult."[1]

Brake has contended that in any complex society there are several cultures. Relative to and within these cultures there exist sub-cultures which are smaller, more localised and different in structure to the larger culture.[2] Clarke et.al. argue that a sub-culture is both distinctive as well as characteristic of the br[illegible]er culture:

> ... a sub-culture, though differing in important ways - in its "focal concerns", its peculiar shapes and activities - from the culture from which it derives, will also share some things in common with that "parent" culture.[3]

In Sharpeville, some, but not all, sub-cultures reflected the area rivalry in the township. Most, however, were profoundly influenced by American consumer culture, which was particularly deep-felt in clothing styles. During the 1940s and 1950s, the influence of American culture was considerable in all African townships in South Africa and no less in Sharpeville.

American consumer culture: the "Americans of Sharpeville"

According to Manoim, American consumer culture had "instant mass appeal" for urban Africans in South Africa:

> America marketed consumer goods with instant mass appeal: Hollywood movies, jazz records, pulp novels, two-tone shoes, "gangster" hats. Their goods were generally cheap and could be aimed at the township masses, not just the black elite.[4]

The combination of black American heroes and American consumer goods developed a cult following among urban Africans:

> It was a cult tailor-made for consumer society; street smart and populist, flashy and appearance conscious, its very existence revolved around a species of consumer goods, from records to hats and weekly movies. And, most important, unlike the "white model" which could be followed slavishly only by the elite, this cult proclaimed itself open to all ...[5]

The American consumer cult arose in Sophiatown which, during the 1940s until its destruction in the mid-1950s, was the centre of black cultural activity on the Witwatersrand. According to Coplan, in perhaps a somewhat romanticised account:

> ... Sophiatown set the pace, giving urban African culture its pulse, rhythm, and style during the 1940s and '50s. Noisy and dramatic, its untarred, potholed streets ran by the communal water taps and toilets and the rectangular jumble of yards walled in with brick, wood, and iron. A new synthesis of African culture sprang up here, shouting for recognition. Materially poor but intensely social; crime-ridden and violent but neighbourly and self-protective; proud, bursting with music and writing, swaggering with personality, simmering with intellectual and political militance, Sophiatown was a slum of dreams, a battleground of the heart. Sophiatown produced leaders in many fields, and Africans in other cities looked to them for inspiration.[6]

It was in Sophiatown that the "Americans" emerged, a notorious gang whose image was based upon the style of clothes they wore. Their exploits drew the attention of the media, largely a result of the gang's emphasis on

American fashion and a fascination among urban Africans with American consumer culture, as this article, which appeared in Drum magazine in 1954, portrays:

> After World War II most of the world's big cities had to face another kind of war: trying to stop the crime wave caused by the young and unemployed. America had what was called "The street with no name that runs across the States." Johannesburg was no exception. Sophiatown, generally considered the nucleus of all Reef crimes, spawned on to the Reef more gangs than any other location ... During this period, a group of brothers and cousins with friends formed a clique of small-time, lone-wolf pick-pockets and bag-snatchers who paraded Sophiatown's streets over week-ends dressed in the loudest and latest American fashions. These imported American - and sometimes Portuguese - clothes made them the leaders of popular fashion, and the most sought-after escorts for the "nice time girls." Through the country of origin of their expensive clothing, they were called "The Americans".[7]

In addition to the "Americans", other gangs in Sophiatown also emulated American styles, as Don Mattera, who was the leader of a gang in Sophiatown called the "Vultures", recalls:

> Almost everything we wore or ate was fashioned after American styles. Some gangs and gang members chose the names, habits and mannerisms of film stars such as George Raft, John Garfield and John Wayne, who was nicknamed "Motsarai" (Swaggerer).[8]

The "Americans" in Sharpeville: working class style and area rivalry

The focus on American consumer goods was felt in Sharpeville, epitomised by groups of working class men who, by their style of dressing, were also known as the "Americans". "Bra Bozi" Sikaledi was a well-known

"American" in Sharpeville during the 1950s. Sikaledi arrived in Sharpeville from Top Location in 1945. He left school in standard six to provide for his family:

> I decided to quit school early because my father was no more working and my sister was married to one guy, and my mother was not working also, so the responsibility was supposed to be taken by me. I had to help the parents.[9]

He became interested in style once he started working and could therefore afford to purchase clothes. His fascination with styles of dress was stimulated by the movies: "We used to watch films at the communal hall, films like Richard Widmark and John Dalinger, Ricky Nelson. You name them, there were so many."[10] It was through watching the movies that Sikaledi and other trend-setters in the township decided to dress in "American" style. The emphasis here was on sporting clothing imported from America: "We were calling ourselves "Americans" ... therefore we had to buy from America."[11]

However the "Americans" in Sharpeville differed significantly from their counterpart in Sophiatown. In general, Sharpeville "Americans" were not dependent upon illegal activities for a living, and, like Sikaledi, were formally employed. The "Americans" of Sharpeville were not linked in any way to the Sharpeville gang subculture described in the previous chapter. They distanced themselves from the activities of the lumpenproletariat and tended to be drawn from the working class. They

admired their elite counterparts, the African middle class, which consisted of shop-owners as well as professionals such as teachers, for their ability to dress expensively. But they also retained and even guarded their identity as "Americans".

A further difference between Sharpeville and Sophiatown "Americans" was that, for the former, participation in sport was considered a crucial part of being an "American": "All the people ["Americans"] they had to take part in sports, all of them. I was a boxer. Some of them were soccer players, some of them were boxers."[12] Sport, particularly boxing, was a pervasive form of popular culture in Sharpeville during the 1950s, whereas in Sophiatown the focus was on gangs and the underworld. As Aggrey Klaaste has commented, the "Americans" in Sophiatown had "... a kind of a Robin Hood character - seldom robbing from their community. They dressed well and were respected."[13] Although dressing constituted an important part of a Sharpeville "American's" status and reputation as well, participation in sport was at least as important.

Another feature which differentiated the two sets of "Americans" was that those in Sharpeville did not constitute a gang or even a cohesive grouping. As with Sharpeville's gang sub-culture and sports cultures of boxing and football, the Sharpeville "Americans" were

firmly divided along territorial lines. This is illustrated by Sikaledi's initial experience as an "American". Soon after he began dressing in the style, he discovered others also conforming to it. This, however, did not imply allegiance to a grouping:

> ... immediately after working I decided to wear like "Americans", only to find that Machini [a well-known gangster in the township] was also an American in Sharpeville. So people used to tell us that we are dressing alike. So we decided to form a group. Ja, but we were divided because we were from different sections. People from Phelendaba, people from Putswastene, people from Vuka.[14]

This territoriality eventually extended to informal dress competitions between the different neighbourhoods, which were held at Maduna's Place, a popular shebeen still in existence today:

> ... more especially on Sundays we used to dress [in] beautiful clothes and we used to dress "American" style, and Maduna's place was the very same place where we were going to compete. We used to give Maduna an L.P. Therefore we'll watch each other and the one who has got beautiful clothes will be given an L.P. at Maduna's place. It was known as the "Americans'" place, although it was a shebeen by that time.[15]

These competitions were not publicised and nor were they intense and aggressive. Indeed, the nature of the sub-culture promoted a sense of courtesy and tribute:

> ... the competitions were among ourselves, not that we were telling everyone that we are competing ... It was just some kind of complimenting each other how you are dressed.[16]

While the "Americans" were divided along area lines, as a group they drew their following from within the ranks of Sharpeville's working class. Clothing styles, in general,

reflected class differences within the township. Indeed, while area rivalry was reflected most clearly in the sphere of sport as well as in the activities of gangs, class was expressed in styles of clothing and also in those leisure activities characterised by dance and performance culture. Shebeens in the township too, were divided along class lines.

Shebeens, dress and music: class and cultural expression

For Sharpeville's residents, the shebeens and beer-halls in the township were the places to meet and discuss daily events and happenings, or to simply forget about life's harsh realities. Shebeen culture, in general, has occupied a significant part of African life in South Africa's urban areas. In traditional southern African societies beer-brewing was undertaken by women, where it was an important custom. Krige has observed that beer was an economic and social currency, it was consumed as a nourishing food; it was used to thank, reward, reconcile, honour, entertain, ritually cleanse and functioned to bind groups together.[17] In the urban areas, traditional patterns of beer-brewing remained and wives brewed beer for husbands regardless of prevailing laws. This soon developed into a profit-making institution:

> Women soon discovered that beer and often stronger brews could be sold at a profit to people their menfolk brought to the home or even to complete strangers.[18]

Hellman and, later, Koch have observed that beer-brewing in the urban areas became an important survival mechanism for women living there and that shebeens became an important means of providing for families.[19] La Hausse notes that "for their [shebeen] owners, many of whom were women, the shebeens provided financial support for urban families."[20] Bloke Modisane, a writer for Drum magazine during the 1950s, describes how his mother, living in Sophiatown:

> ... turned our house into a shebeen, worked ten hours a day brewing and pressing home brew called skokiaan and barberton, and from the proceeds she educated me to high school level and the two girls to primary school level.[21]

Following the removal of Top Location, many of its original beer brewers moved elsewhere, along with, as we saw in Chapter Two, a significant proportion of its lumpenproletariat. But this did not mean that the new Sharpeville was lacking in shebeen activity. Indeed, much of the "respectable" shebeen life that had existed in Top Location began to re-assert itself. Shebeens such as Sidwell's Place, Maduna's Place, Ma-Bricks, Smart's Place, and Kgame's Place were the places to meet at nights and on weekends.[22] The women in Matsanang street, Putswastene, were the leading brewers of umqombothi (or home-brew).[23] To guard against the police raids, brewers would conceal their beer in a rubbish heap nearby, at the edge of the township. The Matsaneng brewers used this situation to their advantage. In order to stifle

competition they would: "send youngsters to the rubbish heap to find out where the beer [belonging to rival brewers] was [hidden]. Then they would pour ash into the beer."[24] But this was more a process of economic "competition" than true area rivalry.

Still, because of the threat of gang attacks, residents in an area would probably frequent their local shebeens. Certain shebeens soon became the favoured haunts of particular groupings. As we have already seen, the "Americans" patronised Maduna's Place where they held dress competitions. Other shebeens were frequented exclusively by teachers and members of Sharpeville's elite class. These were considered to be respectable places and their proprietors would refuse entry to prospective patrons of lesser status.[25] Some, interested in their patronage, practised a form of segregation by insisting that such patrons seated themselves in the kitchen or outside in the yard.[26] Many preferred this option over that of frequenting working-class shebeens which were also patronised by members of the gangs, and where there were often violent clashes between the different groupings. Many gangs claimed shebeens as their own, as did the "Russians", who held private famo parties.[27] It was the activities of the youth gangs and especially those of the "Russians" which aroused the

concern of the Vereeniging Town Council in the mid-1950s, whose resulting action became one of the causes of the Sharpeville shooting in 1960.[28] Gang members dressed in a style which was the precursor to the "Pantsula" style prominent in the townships today. They were known as "Majamboko" and dressed in Dobshire, turn-up trousers and wore caps known as "Sdory."[29]

Sharpeville's elite class consisted of shopowners, doctors, lawyers and, in the majority, teachers and clerks. The latter, as Coplan notes, earned much the same in wages as drivers and labourers; their status depended largely upon their education.[30] According to Sikaledi, teachers were respected by residents, as were policemen:

> Teachers by that time were well-respected for the fact that they were educated. They respect me because I was dressing like teachers. We were respected by everyone. In our group we did not have teachers, only workers. The people who were respected were policemen and teachers, because a policeman he was always in his uniform, even on Sunday, because he wanted to retain that respect.[31]

For Sharpeville's elite, fashion shows, beauty contests and formal dances were the order of the day. During the 1950s, the Vereeniging Ballroom Dance Club taught its members the various steps and movements of dances such as the waltz and the foxtrot at the Communal Hall on Tuesday and Thursday nights, while the Vereeniging Non-European Social and Cultural Club, under the leadership of a certain Mr J. Fantisi, arranged fashion shows and beauty contests.[32] Betty Mkgome, who today operates a shebeen

which caters for teachers and white-collar workers, recalled how, during the 1950s, she enjoyed jazz and ballroom dancing, particularly the tango, as well as beauty contests. She was born in Top Location in 1935, attended the St. Cyprian school in Sharpeville until the middle of her standard six year, when she left after falling pregnant. In 1958 she was crowned "Miss Vereeniging" and it was the popular Sharpeville band, the Sharpetown Swingsters, who performed the music during the crowning ceremony at the communal hall:

> The competition was called "Zenzele Woman". It was the Sharpeville Swingsters[33] [who were playing]. From there it went to Cape Town ... I came third, I was a princess. There was Miss P.E., Miss Cape Town and then Miss Vereeniging. I was the third one there.[34]

Most of the leisure activities in the township were conducted along separate, class-differentiated lines. According to Sikaledi, it was only at "white weddings" that the "Americans", for example, "came together and discussed things with teachers."[35] It was musical performance, however, that brought the different groupings together under one roof. Jazz performances, usually in the form of a competition between two bands, known as a "two band stage", were enormously popular throughout townships during the 1950s and Sharpeville was

no exception. Coplan has remarked upon how African jazz bands were able to ensure contact between classes:

> Though the various bands had definite social status, the broad demand for their services among all classes of urban Africans brought working-class and middle-class performance culture into continual contact with each other.[36]

But while the performances drew the different groupings together, group identity and social status was maintained and exhibited through styles of dress. Indeed, for such occasions, Sharpeville's "Americans" ensured they were impeccably attired:

> We used to attend concerts, more especially when they are singing for a cow or playing for a cow ["two-band stage" competitions], we would go and watch being well dressed because we were regarded as "Americans". We couldn't wear a [pair of] short[s] or you couldn't wear just a rag for the fact that you are regarded as someone who is very important, king of "Americans".[37]

The elite class dressed in a style known as "Gentlemen", "those that put on suits, bow-tie and handcuffs."[38] At such occasions, the different groups would gather and consider the others' appearance. According to Sikaledi, each group had its own language to avoid any eavesdropping, although this appears to have been more a process of maintaining identity:

> We had our own language, it's slang, slang, slang, we were slanging! Slanging! ... It's a tsotsi-taal, but it's a slang ... You couldn't hear [understand] us, talking our own language.[39]

It was African interest in American culture, in this case, black American performance culture, that drew the two groupings to the same functions. In much the same way as African interest in boxing was augmented by the successes of black American boxers, so the accomplishments of black American jazz performers had a similar effect and jazz derived mass appeal among all classes of urban Africans during the 1950s.

Urban African popular music in South Africa: local styles and black American performance culture: a brief overview

The development of urban African music reflected the imitation as well as interpretation of European and American music styles, as well as a blending of them with local indigenous forms. One of the earliest urban music styles was marabi, which originated in the slumyards of Johannesburg during the 1920s and 1930s. Marabi was more than simply a style of music and was, as Todd Matshikiza described, "... the name of an epoch."[40] Koch has argued that marabi epitomised the slumyard culture of Johannesburg's lumpenproletariat during the first three decades of this century and functioned as a survival mechanism by providing informal employment of which the most common was beer-brewing.[41] According to Coplan, marabi music "... drew heavily on the syncretic forms that preceded it, many of which were developed in the city by specific ethnic groups."[42] These forms included

the tickey draai style of early Coloured performers from the Cape as well as tula n'divile, a style in which Xhosa folk melodies were played on keyboards.[43] However, although:

> ... marabi retained traditional musical practices and elements, its ultimate form reflected the desire of largely unschooled and un-Westernised urban Africans to modernise by absorbing new cultural elements within a familiar structure.[44]

Indeed, whilst a locally developed style, marabi soon fell under the influence of American performance culture.

During the post-World War 1 period, the newly forming record and cinema industries in South Africa brought American performance culture into the townships. The influence of American music was first felt among the African elite who were influenced by ragtime. Reuben T. Caluza, a teacher at the Ohlange Institute in Natal, combined Zulu choral music with Ragtime into a style which became known as e'Ragtime.[45] The influence of American musical performance was augmented by the inauguration of the radio in the 1920s and, although broadcasting for Africans only began in the 1940s, Africans listened to the white municipal radio stations.[46]

The earliest recording studio in the country was established in 1932 by Eric Gallo.[47] The initial recordings produced specifically for the "Bantu" market

were on Zonophone and included izibonga (praise-singing), tribal music, choral music, folk songs and the traditional music of the mine workers.[48] The "barrel-house" organ and piano music of the shebeens, marabi and tula n'divile were only recorded in the 1940s.[49] By the mid-1930s, the majority of recordings for the African market consisted of a harmony vocal music known as mbube, or "bombing", which originated from:

> ... groups of Zulu males performing songs in the traditional idiom, but with a Western rhythmic vocal and/or instrumental (banjo) foundation taken from Afrikaans folk music styles such as the Vastrap.[50]

The focus by recording companies on mbube caused the proliferation of the vocal groups performing this style of music. By the late 1940s and early 1950s there were a number of such groups performing in Sharpeville such as the Black Serenaders, the Sharpeville Five and the Satchmore Serenaders, the latter being the most successful, recording a handful of records at Troubadour's recording studio in Jeppetown, Johannesburg, in the 1950s. The names of these groups clearly reflected the influence of American jazz performers as is demonstrated by the case of the Satchmore Serenaders, who derived their name from Louis Armstrong.

This era also saw the emergence of elite bands such as Peter Rezant's Merry Blackbirds, who performed only American ragtime and jazz orchestrations and reflected the style and values of the African elite.[51] Other

groups, such as the Jazz Maniacs, while also middle-class, were more versatile and retained an essentially marabi feel to their music.[52] In general, the style a band pl , whether it was purely American rhythms or only marabi, or a mixture of the two, reflected the ability of its members to read music. Most could not and were envious of their musically literate counterparts. Peter Rezant, the leader of the Merry Blackbirds, claimed that other bands wished they could play like the Merry Blackbirds, but were unable to since they could not read music.[53] From the 1930s through to the 1950s, the ability to read music became a point of distinction between bands. During an interview with the Sharpeville band, the Sharpetown Swingsters, when I asked for their opinion of the Merry Blackbirds, trumpet-player, Molefe Moshoeshoe replied: "They were reading music."[54] The Sharpetown Swingsters was an example of a band unable to read music and their tunes were composed and then transmitted by ear. The Vaal Crochets, however, another Sharpeville-based band, consisted of musicians who could read music, their name clearly reflecting their ability to do so.

White audiences in South Africa were exposed to African music following the British Empire Exhibition in Johannesburg in 1936, where several African performing groups participated. Among them was an amateur musical theatrical troupe known as the Lucky Stars, lead by Esau

Mtetwa, a teacher from the Amanzimtoti Institute in Natal. The troupe drew an overwhelming response at the Exhibition and a tour of London was arranged for them by a local white promoter.[55] While the tour itself was a failure, it developed a preoccupation among African musicians with overseas success:

> Thus began a Black South African showbusiness tradition very much alive today, of overseas tours as the African performers' ultimate professional goal, along with the fame and enormous financial rewards which were assumed to automatically follow international recognition.[56]

This attitude was reflected in the succession of Sharpeville-based musicians who defined success in terms of that achieved outside of their home environment and affected their relationship with local community support.

In the 1940s, there developed a new local jazz music style known as tsaba-tsaba (Zulu: "separate"), which reflected a combination of African melody with the American rhythms of ragtime, swing, jitterbug, and also the Latin American rumba and conga.[57] Despite retaining an American influence, tsaba-tsaba was the result of an effort on the part of professional musicians to develop their own "African-based" music.[58] While tsaba-tsaba differed rhythmically from marabi, the styles developed in similar environments. According to Coplan, tsaba-tsaba was in fact a working-class African dance which developed

during the period "... when American jitterbug, locally known as "jive", and large dance orchestras dominated the dance halls."[59] While tsaba-tsaba was associated by the African elite with "... proletarians and the rough social atmosphere of the occasions where it was most often played,"[60] it found an interested audience in Walter M. B. Nhlapo, a musical journalist and talent scout for Gallo records, who:

> ... viewed class division as an obstacle to African creativity, and wondered why tsaba-tsaba and other township styles could not be "polished and given to the world as the La Conga from Africa?"[61]

As Coplan observed, this suggestion was indeed prophetic: August Musurgwa's Skokiaan, the most famous of tsaba-tsaba tunes:

> ... became an international success, topping the American Hit Parade as "Happy Africa" in 1954, and was eventually published as sheet music in 17 countries.[62]

Despite the success of this tune, tsaba-tsaba was by no means the most innovative of locally-developed music styles. This was kwela, which developed during the 1950s from African youths playing cheap penny-whistles, imitating the fife and drum bands of Scottish immigrants in South Africa and was made famous by pennywhistlers such as Elias and Aaron Lerole and Spokes Mashiyane, who made some of the highest selling records in the history of the local industry.[63] Kwela significantly influenced local jazz performers. While American music was still an influence, many jazz musicians respected kwela for having

achieved international recognition and also admired the inventiveness of the pennywhistlers. Further, many jazz performers had grown up as penny whistlers.[64] This resulted in kwela-jazz or Majuba, the innovators of which were, among others, Ntemi Piliso's Alexandra All-Star Band and the Jazz Maniacs, and it was the title of a tune by the latter, Majuba, which came to express this particular style.[65] The Sharpetown Swingsters, in Sharpeville, were both interpreters as well as innovators of this style. The band were influenced by the majuba performers of the time: "We followed up mostly bands like Jazz Maniacs and African Swingsters, and bands like City Jazz Nine, and also the New Sinfonaters from Bloemfontein."[66]

These bands, apart from the Jazz Maniacs who came earlier, were also contemporaries of the Sharpetown Swingsters. The Sharpetown Swingsters listened to their music, learned from the musicians, and also contributed to the majuba style. In 1958, Mike Phahlane, music columnist for Zonk magazine, commented: "The Sharpetown Swingsters are right on the African Swingsters heels."[67] Shortly after, in 1959, whilst reviewing a Sharpetown Swingsters recording, he wrote:

> The Sharpetown Swingsters carry on with the form which has made them so popular with the country's disc lovers. Their latest offering is "Iza Levay" flipped by "Amajali", which is undoubtably, so far, the big band waxing of the new year.[68]

The band was and still is, without any doubt, the most successful music group to have originated in Sharpeville. However, in terms of this study, the history of the band is significant more in terms of their relationship with the community of Sharpeville than with their actual musical accomplishments.

Musical performance and community support: the Sharpetown Swingsters

The Sharpetown Swingsters was formed by four musicians, three of whom are still with the group today. Joseph Molefe and Joseph Moshoeshoe were both members of the Methodist Mission School bugle band in Top Location in the 1940s. They met whilst performing in the band and became firm friends. Molefe's interest in music was largely cultivated by his brother, who, during Joseph's childhood, worked at the local bioscope in Vereeniging, known as the "Odeon". During interval, recordings of jazz were played, and Molefe's brother was able to borrow them from the film operator:

> My brother used to get a good collection from the operator, a European fellow who was working [there]. He used to get in good records. Then it's where I had picked up some of this music of the fellows like Glen Miller, Harry James, Artie Shaw, and those fellows who were playing good jazz, swings, and foxtrots.[69]

It was a result of seeing films of Glen Miller that Molefe became interested in playing the trombone. Moshoeshoe's uncle owned several instruments, and he and

Molefe used them to teach themselves how to play. When they were proficient enough, they joined His Majesty's Band, but left soon after to join Macmilos Band because they wanted to learn from the owner, a certain Michael Mphcfu, whom they regarded as a highly proficient player. After a short stint with Macmilos Band, they re-joined His Majesty's Band and Molefe recruited Hans Lenkie Bessie into the band, having taught Bessie to play the saxophone. But they were unhappy playing for His Majesty's Band as it was committed to Mr Sejake, who did not play any instrument and was only interested in promoting the band as a business venture. As a result, Molefe, Moshoeshoe and Bessie decided to purchase their own instruments and form their own band. Molefe recruited Stephen "Booitsie" Lepere into the band by asking him if he wanted to become a "some-body", a band-player, like his brother, Jacob Lepere, who later played bass for the famous musical, King Kong.[70] Jacob taught his brother how to play the double-bass, and Stephen Lepere became one of the founding members of the Sharpetown Swingsters, and later its leader. Lepere had developed an interest in music after witnessing Fred Astaire tap-dancing in a movie screened in the Top Location community hall. He began tap-dancing with friends on a large piece of rock in the Location, calling himself "Fred Astaire" and his girl-friend, "Ella Fitzgerald".[71]

Ishmael Molefe (tenor-sax) and David Masuko (drums), formed the Sharpetown Swingsters in January 1953. They formed during the greatest era of African Jazz in this country. It was the era in which such famous artists as Kippie Moeketsi, Ellison Themba (of the African Swingsters), Ntemi Piliso (of the Alexandra All-Star Band and today the African Jazz Pioneers), Zacks Nkosi (of City Jazz Nine), Grey Mbau (of the Harlem Swingsters), and later, Hugh Masekela, Dollar Brand, Jonas Gwangwa, Caiphus Semenya, Letta Mbulu, and Miriam Makeba, emerged.

In Sharpeville, along with the Sharpetown Swingsters, there were bands such as the Cooltown Swingsters, the California Swingsters and the L Y Swingsters. Of them,



Fig. xiii The Sharpetown Swingsters c.1955

The Sharpetown Swingsters drew the largest following among all sections of the local population. Most of the elderly residents I interviewed recall having hired the Sharpetown Swingsters to perform at a function - usually a wedding. Indeed, it was Sharpeville's relatively large middle-class who could afford to hire the band for functions such as weddings which helped secure its continued survival. But in order to ensure maximum exposure the band performed at as many functions as possible and would generally negotiate a fee based on what the potential hirer could afford.[72]

Resident Sam Ntje who, at least until 1986, ran the Jazz House shebeen, became interested in music through listening to the music of the Sharpetown Swingsters.[73] The music of this band, which residents in all parts of the community enjoyed, transcended the barriers between neighbourhoods. Elderly residents recall fondly memories of boxing and jazz during the 1950s:

> ... I can tell you one thing, Sharpeville is a funny town. In boxing we are alright, in jazz we are also alright ... I would say that many people in Sharpeville like jazz.[74]

One such resident, James Lengane, was so taken by the Swingsters that he pursued the band as a kind of "groupie". Being a boxer, he acted as an impromptu "bouncer" when the need arose:

> ... I followed them [Sharpetown Swingsters] for the sake of entertainment. Sometimes I would go and help them as a security for them and for people who would have come to the hall to listen to them.[75]

The Sharpetown Swingsters were proficient enough to attract the interest of talent scouts from the recording studios in Johannesburg. Two years after they were formed, in 1955, Rupert Bopape, the talent scout for EMI, "spotted" the Sharpetown Swingsters and offered them a five-year contract to record under the Columbia label, which the Swingsters signed. In all they recorded some twenty two songs between 1955 and 1960, "Amajali" and "Iza Levay" (YE 229), recorded in 1959, being the most popular.[76]

The Sharpetown Swingsters did not or, more accurately, could not rely on recordings to ensure their success and continued existence. For their first recording "V Blues", which according to band members made them famous and sold many units, the band received the sum total of eleven pounds. The composer, Stephen Lepere, received five pounds without further royalty payments.[77] Rather, it was through live performances, especially local ones, that the band was able to survive. Live performances were known as "two-band stage" and ran along the lines of a competition between two bands. The band which received the most enthusiastic response "won" the competition, although it did not receive any additional prize above an initial appearance sum. Instead, the victorious band gained more popularity, as Molefe Moshoeshoe explains:

> It was not a matter of prizes, it was only a matter of pleasing the community, people who attended the show. It had nothing to do with how much you received, it was only you became more popular.[78]

It was here that music tended to lend itself to indications of community, or unity, which were counter to the patterns of area rivalry in the township. Indeed, while boxing had the effect of restating and reinforcing inherent rivalries between the different areas, music seems to have overcome these somewhat. One explanation for this is that, in general, music is inherently a less competitive "sport" and thus lends itself less to a statement of rivalry. It was also because musicians performed for money and so would hire themselves out to anyone in Sharpeville who could afford them. But perhaps the most important reason was that the Sharpetown Swingsters played competitions against bands from other townships and not against bands within the township, because local promoters preferred to invite outside bands, especially those from Johannesburg, to attract larger audiences. It is in this context that Molefe Moshoeshoe's statement about pleasing the community becomes comprehensible: bands were paid by the promoter of the show, and the amount was agreed on beforehand. Accordingly, there was a direct relationship between the popularity of a band and the sum a promoter would have to pay them to perform. When the Swingsters first began to perform they were only able to demand a sum of "fifteen

bob" or fifteen shillings. By 1955, as their popularity increased, they were paid seven pounds, ten pence. More famous bands such as the City Jazz Nine and the African Swingsters received much more, as Joseph Molefe recalls: "I remember when we were playing for about seven pounds and ten shillings, they used to play for ten pounds, or fifteen pounds."[79]

For the Sharpetown Swingsters, their success was defined in terms of their performance against the famous bands from Johannesburg. Competitions were fierce as the band sought to draw the support of their local community behind them. According to Metsing "Ike" Nteeo, a TV3 presenter and resident of Sharpeville, the competitions offset the acquiescent nature of music:

> In those days, music was a competition. If they said a "two-band stage" it meant that you had to play from 8pm to 12pm as Sharpetown Swingsters and the other band had to play from 1am to 4am ... The people would actually decide which band played better than which. Now, amongst the opposition people, as you would call them, people like Ellison Themba, Zacks Nkosi, Ntemi Piliso, those were the people who were on the opposition side because in those days it was set a "two-band stage". You know, it's like Wits [University of the Witwatersrand] and RAU [Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit]. If you play rugby today, RAU, never mind your brother is there, he's your opponent because of affiliations![80]

However, while the Sharpetown Swingsters were able to galvanise local support behind them, it was the bands in Johannesburg (Sophiatown and Alexandra) who set the standard and it was left to the Sharpetown Swingsters to

match or better their skill. If accomplishment can be gauged from the comments of music critics at the time, then it is possible to suggest that the Sharpetown Swingsters realised and even bettered this standard. However, this success did not ensure their survival. After the 1950s, during a period when the other contemporary jazz bands began to disappear, the Sharpetown Swingsters persisted, an outcome which was not due to their recording contracts, nor to their popularity outside of Sharpeville. For the most part it was due to the support they derived from local audiences. As band-member, Stephen Lepere commented: "What kept us together ... our people have been asking us to play ..."[81] The circumstances of this survival, obviously crucial to the subsequent survival of the Sharpetown Swingsters, became a blue-print for the survival of future bands to emerge in the township. For subsequent music groups, it also created a tension between accomplishment - defined in terms of that achieved outside of Sharpeville - and survival - which was only possible through local community support.

Conclusion

In sum, the influence of American consumer culture extended to most areas of Sharpeville cultural life during the 1950s. It was particularly evident in dress styles, epitomised by the "Americans", who ensured that

the clothes they wore were all imported. Just as area rivalry affected youth gang culture as well as the sports of boxing and football, so it was apparent in clothing styles, as evidenced by the informal dress competitions between "Americans" from different areas. Class was another division examined in this chapter, which was also visible in the types of clothing people wore. Musical performance, however, had the effect of overcoming both class as well as area divisions. The fact that the Sharpetown Swingsters drew local Sharpeville audiences behind them against bands from without the township during the "two-band stage" competitions was the first manifestation of an unprecedented state of unity between the different rival areas, which followed the tragic events in the township in March 1950.

CHAPTER FIVE

TURNING POINT: THE SHARPEVILLE SHOOTING, 1960, AND ITS AFTERMATH

In the last chapter, the twin manifestation of both area rivalry and some semblance of community were examined. It was seen to what extent the rivalry affected the nature of the "community" of Sharpeville, which up until this point had a limited existence. However, toward the end of the 1950s and the beginning of 1960 there was a dramatic change as area rivalry subsided; Sharpeville began to emerge as a united community. This is largely attributable to the tragic shooting at Sharpeville in March, 1960, and the factors which provoked its occurrence. The shooting transformed the township into the kind of community Suttles would refer to as a "defended neighbourhood".[1] Indeed, apart from the drastic and tragic effects of the shooting, Sharpeville residents, having recovered from the effects of the Top Location relocation, were to re-experience the threat of removal. The result, as the chapter demonstrates, was a community united in its response to the shooting, but unsure of its future, as a result of the government's intention to move it, along with all the black settlements in the Vaal Triangle, to Sebokeng, some ten kilometres to the west of Sharpeville.

Coercion and control: political activity during the 1950s

During the 1950s, it was almost inconceivable to the Vereeniging Town Council, or to anyone else for that matter, that an event of the magnitude of the Sharpeville shooting was just around the corner. Both Lodge and Chaskalson have remarked how it is particularly anomalous that the shooting should have taken place in this "model" township; and that the 1960 State of Emergency be declared as a result.[2] Sharpeville had always been, in comparison to other areas, politically inactive, apart from a smattering of overt protest as well as what might be termed "hidden" forms of resistance.

Following the 1937 riot in Top Location, the Vereeniging Town Council (VTC) maintained tight control of Sharpeville and was quick to pre-empt any potential political unrest. In 1950, a May Day stayaway call by the South African Communist Party and the ANC saw the VTC convene a joint session of both the Top Location as well as the Sharpeville Advisory Boards. At the meeting, the Vereeniging Commissioner of Police warned that a local adherence to the stayaway call would be met with strong police action.[3] Further, all meetings in the township were banned and a message from the Paramount Chief of Basutoland imploring people to continue working was

broadcast in the days leading up to May 1.[4] On May Day itself, a strong contingent of police patrolled both Top Location and Sharpeville.[5] Lodge reports that pamphlets were circulated in both townships urging people to support the stayaway, but the stayaway was unsuccessful in both.[6] A national stay-at-home call by the ANC on June 26 the same year was also ineffective in Sharpeville following similar methods of control by the VTC.[7] Further, when pass laws were extended to women in the mid-1950s, Lodge observes that "so many [women] presented themselves for registration that the number had to be controlled daily."[8] Chaskalson argues that the VTC was: "... effectively able to insulate the Vereeniging townships from the political turmoil that many other parts of the country experienced in the '50s."[9] Indeed, such was the atmosphere in Sharpeville that local officials were able to boast of what they considered to be a general political quiescence in the township. Shakinovsky notes that:

> ... as late as 1955, the town clerk of Vereeniging proudly asserted that "... no organised trouble had been encountered in Sharpe Native Township since its establishment in May 1943."[10]

It seems, however, that the people in the township were aware of struggles elsewhere and that their lack of response did not reflect political apathy. Rather it indicated the extent of the control exerted by the VTC.

This is illustrated by the bus boycott in nearby Evaton, in 1955. Both Lodge and Chaskalson report that the boycott had little effect on Sharpeville.[11] Yet, a protest song called "Evaton", by a Sharpeville mbube vocal group, the Satchmore Serenaders "... became a big hit because it was political, and was banned by the government."[12] According to its composer, Clement "Satchmore" (sic) Nkete, the song criticised the Evaton Passenger Company for raising bus fares, for the fact that many people died during the period of the boycott, and for the fact that many left the township as a result.[13]

There were other forms of collective political protest. A protest meeting held in 1951 was attended by over a thousand people, to object to proposed stock regulations to prohibit the keeping of cattle in the township.[14] Although residents offered no direct opposition to the introduction of the regulations three months later, they ignored them until well into the 1960s, a clear expression of passive resistance.[15]

In general, however, there was a lack of political activity in the township. Lodge attributes this "apparent political apathy" to the relative newness of the township, official control, as well as the fact that local industry relied more upon migrants residing in

Vereeniging than on settled township workers, thus making trade union activity in the townships themselves difficult.[16] Further, the disruption of the community links originally formed in Top Location, coupled with the strong neighbourhood rivalry affected political activity to a significant degree. Indeed, it was not merely the youth gangs from the different areas who expressed antagonism toward each other but, as was seen in the previous chapter, also boxing and football supporters, and even the "Americans". The fact that the township was so disunited made political mobilisation exceedingly difficult, while any semblance of political activity was quickly stifled by the VTC's tight administrative and coercive control. Towards the end of the 1950s, however, a number of factors altered the situation quite dramatically, which propelled the township toward a unity it had not yet experienced.

The first of these was the VTC's response to the youth gangs in the township. It was shown in Chapter Three that the VTC's coercive action was effective in curbing the proliferation of these gangs. However, the real problem for the authorities were the "Russians". "Russians" or Ma-Rashea were:

> ... a group of working men who responded to an urban, industrial, commodity-producing environment by organising themselves on the grounds of their common, rural, tribal background; a group of men who were identified by their "traditional" dress and weaponry, and who were named (it is said) after the Russians - feared victors in the recent "European" war.[17]

The gang originated in 1947 in Twatwa, a township for Africans in Benoni, and drew its membership from the ranks of Basotho migrant workers.[18] Groups of "Russians" were to be found all over the Reef during the 1940s and 1950s, a substantial proportion of whom were located in Vereeniging and Evaton. Bonner notes that, between 1944 and 1947, rival "Russian" factions there clashed over "... long-standing rivalries between different localities and sections of the Basotho in Basutoland."[19] "Russians" in Vereeniging were drawn from Vereeniging's compounded workforce, some of whom were accommodated in Sharpeville's single-sex hostels which dated from 1947, while the remainder were quartered in employers' compounds in Vereeniging.[20]

Prior to 1957, "Russians" in Vereeniging preferred to frequent Evaton because it was not as strictly administered as Sharpeville was. But late in 1956 "... a tightly enforced visitor permit system was introduced in Evaton and this prompted an exodus of "Russians" to Sharpeville ..."[21] It was the increase in the presence of "Russians" that aroused the concern of the VTC and prompted a programme to counter it. However, while the VTC's coercive action was effective in curbing the activities of local gangs, it had little influence on the "Russians", who did not fear the municipal police. Indeed, a force of only thirty six unarmed policemen

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posed no significant threat to a Basotho gang steeled by countless township battles, "... who could summon reinforcements from the different compounds on the East and West Rand and as far afield as Johannesburg."[22]

Rather than deal immediately with the ineffectiveness of the municipal police, the VTC resolved to wait until the completion of the Sharpeville police station in 1959. In the meantime, the Council adopted a series of indirect measures to contain the "Russians". The first was to close beer-halls on Sundays (although beer was still available from off-sales depots).[23] In addition, influx control regulations were tightened, a measure which was also a response to the 1955 amendments to the Urban Areas Act. These amendments allowed Basotho workers to remain in an area only if they were legally present there on 6 May 1955. Further, those legally working could change jobs in the urban area, but "... they forfeited their urban rights if they left an area for any purposes other than authorised vacational leave."[24] The aim of these amendments was to limit as far as possible "Russian" access to urban areas. However, in Sharpeville, it seems the only people who were affected were illegal relatives and friends of residents in possession of urban rights, while the township residents as a whole were left to contend with an increase in police raids.[25] These raids

were conducted with scant regard for residents or their possessions:

> The white S.A. Police reinforcements from Heidelberg would be called. With .303 rifles they would surround the location. Police in vans and on foot raided the location from house to house. People hid under beds, in toilets, inside wardrobes, and in dirty washing tubs. The raids started as early as 1.00 am.[26]

Township officials showed little concern for the effects of these raids. The Location Superintendent would not listen to complaints from residents, refusing to "meet with Kafirs or Kafirmeide," while letters of complaint sent to his office received no reply.[27] The residents thus saw the Council's attitude as according the police carte blanche, and, as Chaskalson notes: "...the increase in police raids towards the end of the 1950s was the source of considerable discontent among township residents."[28]

The final removal of Top Location residents

In Chapter One it was noted that the removal of Top Location took place over a period of nearly two decades and involved three stages. The first group had moved as early as 1943, while the last group, involving some 9 000 people, was resettled only in 1959. Furthermore, while the first and second stages of the resettlement had been conducted at a relatively slow pace - at a rate of a few families a month - the final stage was conducted

substantially faster. It the pace at which this grouping was moved, coupled with the manner in which the removal was carried out, that further incensed the residents of Sharpeville.

The VTC had intended to remove all Top Location residents without interruption. However, by April 1951, removals had ceased and the Council was unable to move the last of the residents for another seven years because there were "... no approved housing schemes into which they might be transferred."[29] It was only in 1958 that plans for Sharpeville Extension 1 were approved and the VTC could complete the resettlement of Top Location.[30]

During the delay, the Council did little to administer the remaining Topville residents, and when it was finally able to remove them, it did so at an abrupt and brutal pace. The final stage of removal involved no discussion; it was a truly forced removal. The houses were demolished row by row and so residents could predict when their turn would be, but nothing more. Petrus Tom was one such resident:

> There was a truck doing the removals which was paid for by the Municipality. We had lunch at twelve o'clock and then found that all our belongings were no longer there. They'd already moved them to Sharpeville. We'd got a number in Sharpeville but we didn't know Sharpeville very well ... [so] we didn't know where to look for our number. I asked some people who gave me directions. We spent one or two hours looking for our new home. The next day one still got lost because one was not used to the place. It took us about two weeks to learn how to get home, where to get off the bus and where to

> board the bus to town. We did not use buses in Top Location. We used bicycles or simply walked because Top Location was next to the factories.[31]

According to another resident:

> The Top removals were very painful particularly towards the end. Initially people were accommodated comfortably. Then the authorities began to worry that they couldn't accommodate everyone. The people in Vuka [see map] were the last people to be moved. It was very hurried. Many were moved to two-roomed houses ...[32]

Chris Jana recalls that the houses in Vuka were constructed at a rapid pace: "They [the VTC] used to build about a hundred houses a day. In one row, four-roomed houses, in the next row, two-roomed houses, just like that."[33] A resident who was moved to Vuka recalls how poorly the houses were constructed:

> When we got to Sharpeville [in 1959], we got a big shock. The houses were a mess ... The walls inside were not plastered. And the floors were made out of concrete.[34]

Further, not everybody received houses. In some cases, families were forced to share a house: "You found two families sharing a house, two rooms and two rooms, the one family using that door, the other using the other door."[35]

The majority of residents moved to Vuka, however, received stands in the "site and service" scheme:

> ... my family moved to Sharpeville in April of 1958. Where they moved to is now called Site and Service which is next to the old houses which were present in Sharpeville which had moved earlier in 1948. And when people moved there, there were no houses. People had to start from scratch by building shacks ...[36]

Site and Service schemes were developed by the Department of Native Affairs to provide squatter populations with cheap municipal housing in the 30s and 40s. Site and Service residents received a stand comprising a temporary housing structure and a toilet; and were provided with cheap building materials. They had to build a house within five years or else forfeit their right to remain there.[37] The residents of Topville were not squatters. And, as Chaskalson observes:

> while some case could possibly be made for the removal of squatter communities to site and service schemes, there was very little that could be said in favour of removing residents from a settled municipal township like Topville onto stands that contained nothing more than a single roomed shack and a toilet.[38]

As a result, the new residents of Sharpeville Extension 1 were angry with the Vereeniging Town Council and extremely discontented with their new living conditions. But in addition to this, there were delays of up to two years in the provision of loans for building materials by the Bantu Housing Office, while the Town Council took months to process building plans from people who were prepared to self-finance the building of their houses. Furthermore, there was only one tap for every thirty stands, and rentals were twice as much as the rent in Top Location. There was also severe overcrowding - 270 of the 644 houses in Extension 1 were shared by two families - simply because insufficient housing was provided for the final group of people removed from Top Location.[39] Not

surprisingly, residents in Extension 1 were extremely dissatisfied and their feelings were communicated to the council in the following ways:

> In May 1959 a group entitling themselves "The New Arrivals from Topville" wrote a letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs requesting "that if there is insufficient houses (sic) to accommodate the residents of Topville, it [be considered] the responsibility of the Town Council to get them accommodated elsewhere". The next month over 200 people met to protest about overcrowding and high rentals, and a deputation was elected to convey their complaints to the Council.[40]

The Council, however, chose to ignore the complaints, satisfied that it had completed the removal of Top Location and could now concentrate on asserting municipal control over Sharpeville. Rather than accept these conditions, many residents chose to leave the township and as many as 5 000 people left the Vereeniging municipal district for Lesotho, Qwa-Qwa and Evaton.[41] For those who remained, however, the general dissatisfaction which arose as a result of the removal was to be inflamed by the influx control police raids as well as by a number of price hikes.

Influx control, cost of living hikes, and protest

On 23 October 1959, the Sharpeville Police Station was opened by the Minister of Bantu Administration and

Development, M C de Wet Nel.[42] While this did not necessarily provoke the residents in any direct way, it:

> ... freed the municipal police from all their previous responsibilities other than raids. The municipal police could now ignore criminal activities in the township and concentrate their energies on turning residents' houses upside down in the search for illegally brewed beer and people without the necessary documentation.[43]

The increase in liquor raids seemed to go hand in hand with the construction of another beerhall in the township in 1959:

> People were dissatisfied with the building of [the new] beerhalls as it would encourage drinking among children. The Blockmen, who were regarded as the tools of the officials and were not respected at all, told the community that beerhalls would replace the "evil home brews".[44] When the beerhalls were built the women who traditionally brewed the beer were harassed by the authorities. The community was angry at this.[45]

The VTC had built the beerhalls both to disrupt the activities of illegal brewers, as well as to provide a source of income for the Council.[46]

During 1959, Sharpeville residents were subject to a number of price hikes. At the beginning of 1959, bus fares were doubled.[47] But it was high rentals that caused the most problems for residents:

> In November 1959 1 500 rent notices were served on Sharpeville households and by January 1960, the corresponding figure had risen to 2 310. Early in March The Star reported that 300 women protesting about rents had marched to the Location Superintendant's office and stoned his car.[48]

A resident gives an idea of the rent crisis:

> We struggled to pay rent. Many people were locked out of their homes because they could not pay. Sometimes as many as 200 houses were locked. The municipal police moved about in streets with buckets full of keys to lock people out.[49]

Local officials considered the protest to be a result of PAC and ANC instigation, although it conceded that trouble was brewing in Sharpeville over rentals and saw it as necessary to introduce a reduced sliding scale of rents.[50] Indeed, as we shall see, both the ANC and PAC had branches in Sharpeville by this time.

The increase in the cost of living was coupled with increasing unemployment, which was exacerbated by local employers' preference for migrant workers.[51] A newspaper report after the Sharpeville shooting quoted residents as stating that trouble would have come to Sharpeville even if the PAC had not come to the township. Residents blamed influx control and the pass laws, which they said prevented youths from seeking employment elsewhere and resulted in hundreds of youths roaming the streets of Sharpeville.[52] In early March 1960, residents in nearby Bophelong and Boipatong held a meeting to discuss what they considered to be a potentially volatile situation. The meeting felt that their children were being converted into "jailbirds" and criminals by the pass laws, and were further prevented from seeking employment in other areas.[53]

The Pan Africanist Congress: grass roots organising or focus on leadership?

The ANC had established a branch in Vereeniging in the mid-1950s and had about 200 members.[54] However, it seems that its activities were restricted to only "... collecting membership subscriptions and taking members to ANC meetings in Sophiatown, Orlando, Evaton and Pimville."[55] Lodge argues that one of the reasons why the ANC were unable to expand in Sharpeville:

> ... may have been the controlled environment in which so many workers existed which made the organisation of trade unions very difficult, thus depriving the ANC of a normal source of energetic activists.[56]

But these restrictions did not affect the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), which was able to utilise the prevailing conditions and even to penetrate factories, to build a vast amount of support in the Vaal Triangle. This was largely focused upon their anti-pass campaign. A resident recalls:

> We heard about this PAC. Sobukwe was just beginning to be popular. Some young men around here belonged to the PAC. The PAC was saying we must get rid of the passes.[57]

Probably the PAC also procured more support than the ANC because of its focus upon the idea of Africanism. They believed that "... Africanism made articulate a deeply rooted ethno-nationalist popular consciousness."[58] Their

middle-class intellectualism found a support base in Sharpeville and the branch there consisted of young, relatively well-educated working-class men and women.

The PAC had come to Sharpeville about a year prior to the shooting. According to the Commission of Inquiry into the Shooting, the PAC had established a branch in Sharpeville in July, 1959, and by March 1960 it had a membership of 150.[59] The PAC branch in Sharpeville revolved around a group of clerks who worked at African Cable in Vereeniging, including the branch secretary, Nyakane Tsolo.[60] It began organising black employees by distributing pamphlets among them during nightshifts. This angered white employees, although the managing director is alleged to have dismissed the issue as "unimportant African political affairs."[61] Initially, the pass campaign seems to have derived little support, as Sharpeville resident, Petrus Tom, recalls:

> In 1959 when I was living in Sharpeville we realised that the PAC was active because some of our fellow workers were members. They would give us PAC leaflets and were preparing for the pass campaign of 1960. We didn't take it very seriously ... These PAC members would address us at lunchtimes, in the buses, and in the townships. They were campaigning everywhere.[62]

However, the heightened organising soon began to take

effect, such that a few weeks prior to the shooting, in Petrus Tom's words, the "campaign became very hot":

> It was the strongest campaign I've ever seen. Sometimes you saw people standing at the bus-stops asking people to burn their passes, because the idea was that people should surrender themselves at the nearest police station on 21 March without their passes ... Some people started small fires at the bus stops and everybody would take out their passes and burn them. One the weekend before the 21, we had parties - stokvels - drinking and having campaign workers there supplying us with those stickers ["Away with Passes"] and telling us about a meeting to be held. They told us not to go to work on Monday and to surrender at the new police station. They wanted to know who still had a pass. If you did you were a sell-out. You couldn't go and drink at any stokvels with a pass or without a sticker showing you were supporting the campaign. This thing was very very hot.[63]

Lodge contends that the success of the PAC's campaign relied simply on the unusually tense conditions already existing in the township, which were conducive to mass action, rather than upon a good understanding of community organisation. It underestimated the power and coercive capacity of the state, and simply tapped into a specific set of conditions which were conducive to mass action.[64] And indeed, in a remarkably short space of time, Sharpeville had evolved from a divided, politically quiescent township into a highly discontented, united community, whose grievances were effectively exploited by the PAC.[65]

The Sharpeville Shooting

The PAC's call received an almost negligible response not only in the Witwatersrand area, but also in Natal and the Eastern Cape.[66] In Sharpeville and the surrounding townships however, the response was completely different. In Sharpeville itself a massive crowd gathered outside the police station early on March 21st. Accounts from various informants give an idea of the atmosphere and feeling on that day.

Activity began early, with Sharpeville residents beginning to form queues at the bus terminal in Seeiso Street from 5am. PAC members arrived and told people not to go to work:

> The next morning I woke up at five o'clock because I was on day-shift and had to board the six o'clock bus to work. I found that there were no buses. People were busy preaching that today we would not go to work. A big crowd gathered at the bus stop. People were making sure no-one would go to work that day. Members of the PAC were patrolling the townships. They didn't want to see taxis or bicycles or buses ... some of the PAC members were even patrolling town to see that no black man or domestic worker came to town. They even stopped petrol attendants. Vereeniging was quiet. There was not a single person in town.[67]

Another resident recalls getting caught up in the proceedings:

> The next day [Monday] some people joined the PAC procession as they went around, and police sjambokked people who were walking around. Fortunately they did not reach me, although they got very close. Then somebody told me that the PAC wanted to get rid of the passes - the hated system,

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> the "dog on a leash" system. That morning I had to leave home for school. There were crowds of people. I went with my neighbour to Seeiso Street. We heard gunshots and found out that they were dispersing people. The police did not like seeing crowds. I left my neighbours and cycled to school. Seeiso [Street] was full with people and police. When I got to school I thought I would be in danger from the PAC for going into the school gate. Nobody reported to school that day. When the principal arrived, he decided not to worry about school. On the way back we heard that an important official was coming to talk. The news spread rapidly. Crowds surged on the police station.[68]

In adjacent townships similarly large crowds gathered: in Evaton a crowd of 20 000 strong gathered outside the Evaton police station; crowds from Bophelong and Boipatong joined and marched to the Vanderbijlpark police station.[69] In both these cases, the bulk of the crowds were dispersed: after a baton charge on the crowd at Vanderbijlpark and the swooping of low-flying Sabre jets at Evaton.[70] At Vanderbijlpark a man was killed when police fired on protesters who were allegedly throwing stones.[71]

At Sharpeville, by ten o'clock the PAC procession, which had began in Extension I, had reached the police station and surrounded it. Swooping Sabre jets called in by the police to disperse the crowd had failed to do so.[72] On

the contrary, they seemed to attract more curious onlookers:

> The aeroplanes were flying, "shweeo", "shweeo". Now I was still young by that time ... I remember saying to one of the policemen, "who is the government of that army?" I said to him "this government is wasting a lot of petrol on those aeroplanes." Man, then they were flying right next to us, they were trying to scare us. At first we were very excited and then we started to get worried.[73]

Police reinforcements began arriving during the course of the morning, some in Saracen armoured cars. Lieutenant-Colonel Pienaar, the senior officer at the Vereeniging Police Station, reached Sharpeville in a police car behind a saracen:

> As I turned off the main road [Seeiso Street] on the road to the station, I saw this large crowd there. I estimated it to be between 20 000 and 25 000. From a point of about 300 yards from the station, they were massed together ... When I landed inside that yard that morning, from all I had seen and been told, and what I had personally experienced, I was satisfied that that mob was ready for anything. The mob was in a frenzied state and I feared an attack on the police at any moment.[74]

Yet the testimony of those who survived the shooting indicates that while they may have been in an excited state, they were not planning violence and nor were they expecting a violent outburst from the police. As David Khunou, a retired teacher and composer recalls:

> These cannons were busy entering [the police station] and they were turning them, facing us ... We said "Hau, they'll never kill us, man, they are making jokes". Now, other policemen were right on the roof of the police station with guns. "No, ... they're just aiming at nothing, those guns contain nothing", but they contained death.[75]

the contrary, they seemed to attract more curious onlookers:

> The aeroplanes were flying, "shweeo", "shweeo". Now I was still young by that time ... I remember saying to one of the policemen, "who is the government of that army?" I said to him "this government is wasting a lot of petrol on those aeroplanes." Man, then they were flying right next to us, they were trying to scare us. At first we were very excited and then we started to get worried.[73]

Police reinforcements began arriving during the course of the morning, some in Saracen armoured cars. Lieutenant-Colonel Pienaar, the senior officer at the Vereeniging Police Station, reached Sharpeville in a police car behind a saracen:

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Indeed, the perception of the crowd at the police station was in complete contrast to that of the police, who saw a frenzied mob, ready to attack at any minute. By 1.15pm nearly 300 police officers faced a crowd of over 5 000. Lodge describes the events that followed:

> ... [A] scuffle broke out at the gate which breached the wire fence round the police station. A police officer, accidentally or deliberately, was pushed over. The attention of the front rows was focused on the gate and they surged forward, pushed by people behind them who wanted to see what was happening. At this stage, according to police witnesses, stones were thrown at them. The more inexperienced constables began firing their guns spontaneously. The majority of those killed or wounded were shot in the back. Altogether 69 people died, including eight women and ten children. 180 people were wounded.[76]

The shooting caught the demonstrators completely unawares. Many thought the gun-shots were fire cracker explosions:

> People were running in all directions in the townships. Some couldn't believe that people had been shot, they thought they had heard fire crackers. Only when they saw the blood and dead people, did they see that the police meant business.[77]

Others were confused by the bodies strewn all over the area surrounding the police station:

> ... we heard ... "Rwaa" ... "Rwaaa" [thundering of heavy machine guns] ... I then swiftly, together with my daughter ... went out with concern. As we went out we turned our eyes towards the police station; it is within our sight as you stand outside this house. I was taken aback by a sight of something that looked like a patch of fallen sheep on the ground. On second scrutiny I realised it was a blanket of fallen people.[78]

This surprise at the action of the police should be understood against the fact that, up until then, the police were not in the habit of shooting people. Bonner notes that during this period:

> ... despite the constant harassment of pass, permit and beer raids carried out by the police, informants of all political and other persuasions, repeatedly offer the same unsolicited remark: "in those days the police didn't shoot you".[79]

Indeed, the only prior incident of this kind was that at Bullhoek[80], in 1921, an event which would not have been well known by Sharpeville residents. Joe Mabena recalls the astonishment felt by the survivors of the shooting:

> Man, they mow them down ... Hey, after the shooting, it rains. Just after the shooting, whoo God, it rains. On exactly that spot, only that spot, it rains. There was a lot of blood. Without the rain I don't know what would have happened to the blood. And we are all standing in groups, discussing the surprise: "why did they shoot us". We were frightened. We never saw it happen [before], we had only seen it before in bioscope.[81]

The shooting at Sharpeville along with a similar occurrence at Langa in Cape Town ushered in an unprecedented era of repression in South Africa. It also altered the perception of local authorities of Sharpeville as a "model" township.

State of Emergency and a state of shock in Sharpeville

In the days that followed the shooting, industries in Vereeniging, particularly the steel industry, were paralysed:

> Nobody reported for work the following week. Loudspeakers were going around in the township pleading with the workers to go back to work. Many were waylaid and beaten up on their way to work. Employers were afraid to keep these people in their yards.[82]

Workers from other townships in the Vaal Triangle went on strike in solidarity and sympathy with Sharpeville workers.[83] Albert Luthuli called for a nation-wide stay-at-home on Monday March 28th, as a day of mourning for Sharpeville as well as the victims of a similar massacre at Langa.[84] Karis, Carter and Gerhardt report that "several hundred thousand Africans across the country observed Luthuli's stay-at-home call."[85] It was only after the mass funeral for the victims had taken place, Wednesday March 30th, that workers gradually trickled back to work.[86] On that day, the government declared a state of emergency:

> and assumed broad powers to act against all forms of alleged subversion including the power to arrest and detain indefinitely any person suspected of anti-government activity.[87]

Over 1 500 people (mainly from the PAC and ANC) were arrested. International condemnation of the shooting was immense. The remainder of the year saw a massive outflow

of foreign capital, as well as an increase in white emigration. This, coupled with the nation-wide strikes, led to the worst financial crisis since 1932.[88]

The victims of the shooting and their families faced crises of their own. Families who had lost breadwinners, either dead or wounded, struggled to feed themselves. The community at large reeled from the loss of relatives and friends. The local churches played an important role in alleviating the plight of the victims and their families by administering and distributing food parcels sent to Sharpeville.[89]

Philip Phatang, who was a member of the Sharpeville Advisory Board at the time of the shooting, recalls that the magnitude of the incident took the VTC completely by surprise:

> ... it caught them unaware. I think if they did know the outcome of the whole thing it would have got us ... what can we do about it, what can we do in this case? It came just all of a sudden. Nobody was aware of it.[90]

Indeed, the VTC were astounded that an event of such appalling extent should occur in their "model township". In its first meeting following the shooting, the only mention of the shooting was in connection with the donation of two hundred pounds to a relief fund for the victims.[91] By April of 1960, the fund - dubbed the Mayor's relief fund - had raised some nine hundred and one pounds.[92]

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The response by the VTC was, however, not as favourable as the creation of a relief fund suggests. The VTC Non-European Affairs Committee ruled that victims of the shooting, including their dependents, who went into rent arrears, would not be evicted until their cases had been reviewed by the welfare department.[93]

In July 1960 the VTC finally conceded that wage levels in the area were abysmally low and both increased wages to all its African employees by 20% and convinced local industrialists to do the same.[94] Later that year, the retiring president of the Vereeniging and District Association of Industries, T H Hirsch, said that the Sharpeville incident had jolted industrialists out of a "lethargic attitude towards Non-White labour":

> Sharpeville caused every industrialist, and in fact, all employers, to examine African labour employment with an urgent view to improving working conditions for Non-Europeans, and to ensure that Non-European labour is efficiently employed ... I think, therefore, it is safe to say that, in this respect, some good has come out of the evil of Sharpeville.[95]

Those injured in the shooting were tried for public violence at the Vereeniging Regional Court. For the residents of Sharpeville it was a trial of the innocent made worse by the fact that many had been arrested while recovering in hospital.[96] Petrus Tom describes the trial:

> There was a case against all those people who were at Baragwanath. Their case was held in Vereeniging. Many of us decided to go to court on that day. The security at court was strict. We were not allowed to

> give the people food or money. We had to talk to them from a distance. They were being kept at Modderbee prison. Many of us cried when we saw the wounded and crippled coming to court. But the prisoners, they were just singing.[97]

The perceived immorality of the trial of the injured was a factor in creating solidarity in the township. Indeed, by now Sharpeville was in the process of evolving into into a strong community. Many residents claim that after the shooting there was no more rivalry and no more area gangs:

> [prior to the shooting] you had gangs at Phelendaba, Putswastene and Rooistene, but after the Shooting there was nothing like that, people came now to be one family. There was no more gangsterism.[98]

Sam Ntje, who had been a member of "Bafana ba Kioko", confirms this: "Gangs started dying out in 1960. There were no more ringleaders, no really organised gangs."[99] Further, the media focus on the township following the shooting altered the community's perception of itself as simply another small urban township in the country. Sharpeville, for better or for worse, had become special.

The Silenced Sixties

The decade after the Sharpeville Shooting was a period of heightened state repression as well as the intensification of racial segregation as the state sought to curtail popular protest and limit the possibility of it recurring. According to Bloch, this period is

generally regarded as one of political silence: "the 1960s are often conceived of simply as a time of silence and defeat, almost without a history."[100] Laws, such as the 1962 Sabotage Act and the 1967 Terrorism Act, introduced repressive measures such as house arrest, and increased detention periods. Between 1960 and 1965, over 13 000 people were detained, and around three hundred banned. By the end of 1964, 1 700 political prisoners were serving sentences.[101]

Along with intensified repression, the government began aggressively to implement its apartheid policies. The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959, recognised eight African "national units" and defined the powers of local territorial, regional and tribal authorities, the aim of which was to prepare them for self government. Africans residing within "white" South Africa became the subject of removal and relocation. During this period, some 400 000 city dwellers were resettled along with over a million labour tenants and farm squatters.[102] "Coloured" and Indian people did not escape this process. During the 1960s, the Group Areas Act was extended to include them as well, and by 1970, over 62 000 families had been resettled.[103] Africans in the urban areas responded with confusion and fear to the heightened repression and the intensification of apartheid, and political resistance and economic strikes decreased markedly.

The 1960s also experienced an economic boom, some of the benefits of which trickled down to the black working class.[104] From a cultural perspective the boom coupled with the repressive climate sparked off a degree of hedonism among urban Africans because: "with so much instability, a resort to both conspicuous consumption and entertainment was not, and is not, incomprehensible."[105]

The Sharpeville shooting and the subsequent police repression were to affect political organisation in Sharpeville for the next two decades. After the shooting, support for the PAC was still particularly strong in Vaal Triangle where, during the anti-pass campaign, it had received the most support. The PAC leadership in Sharpeville - detained, arrested and harassed - fled the country: "... most of the leaders [of the PAC] were arrested ... From there they skipped the country. Most of them skipped the country to Lesotho."[106] Those who remained had to contend with heavy police surveillance and frequent raids from the local security branch; and PAC members in the Vaal Triangle were forced to concentrate their activities in Evaton.[107] For the majority of Sharpeville residents, however, the PAC had all but disappeared: "After the PAC went underground, there were supposed to be structures set up to support and continue the movement in the township, but nothing was set up."[108]

The combination of police surveillance in the township and the effect of the State of Emergency were sufficient to discourage people from political protest:

> There were some people who were going to the graveyard to clean the graves, but after the Sharpeville Shooting, the State of Emergency was very, very strong against the community.[109]

Indeed, following the shooting, Sharpeville was to all intents and purposes politically inactive. In 1962, for example, while Sharpeville Day was being commemorated world-wide, Sharpeville itself remained quiet.[110] But apart from political harassment, the residents of Sharpeville were to face the threat of removal as well.

The threat of removal: the construction of Sebokeng

Following the shooting, the Vereeniging Town Council decided that Sharpeville was too close to the Vereeniging central business district and wanted it moved further away.[111] In response, the Department of Bantu Affairs resolved to establish a single black township for the Vaal Triangle, comprising the magisterial districts of Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark.[112] Sebokeng - 15 kilometres from both Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark - was to become the central black residential area of the Vaal Triangle, and the other townships close by were to be removed to Sebokeng.[113]

First to be moved, in March 1966, were the residents of Meyerton and the hostel-dwellers residing in industrial compounds in the Vaal.[114] The removal was part of the Department of Bantu Administration's plan to clear existing slums, particularly those in Evaton, and also to relieve overcrowding in the existing townships. Sharpeville - last on the list because, having no slums, its removal was not considered to be urgent - was to be moved gradually, as people required houses.[115]

The construction of Sebokeng, however, saw the cessation of VTC projects in Sharpeville. A circular from the Department of Bantu Administration, in 1965, informed the VTC that only existing projects in Sharpeville should be completed and that planned future developments should be scrapped.[116] As a result, a housing scheme in Site and Service No.1 (Vukazenzele), undertaken in 1964, was brought to a halt, while planned projects, a creche at Vukazenzele, a social centre and the introduction of waterborne sewerage, were all cancelled.[117] The moratorium on future developments in Sharpeville put the VTC in an awkward position. Although the Council wished that Sharpeville be removed, it recognised that while the township was in existence it would have to be adequately administered. This was made clear by the medical health officer of Vereeniging, Dr Bernstein, who recommended that water borne sewerage be introduced in Sharpeville

and expressed concern over the shortage of housing, warning of the possible spreading of diseases such as tuberculosis as a consequence.[118] Bernstein's request was, however, refused by the Department of Bantu Administration, despite having the full support of the VTC.[119]

Indeed, the halting of these projects came at a time when the development of adequate infrastructure in Sharpeville was still badly needed. Earlier, in 1963, a resident complained of "some sickening maladies" in the township:

> In 1960 we were promised that all houses would get electricity and meters. All lavatories would be converted into a sewerage system and all the main streets would be tarred and lit. On rainy days the streets of Sharpeville are pools of mud, and at Vukazenzele is worst still, with dangerous dongas. There are not sufficient drains.[120]

Sebokeng, on the other hand, was equipped with a piped water system even before the first residents had arrived, while water-based sanitation followed soon after. Furthermore, the allocation of houses formerly owned by whites in Residensia to Sebokeng, resulted in a "tremendous" demand for the houses.[121] The Secretary of the Sebokeng Management Board, J C Knoetzee, told a newspaper reporter that Residensia was being re-planned to establish a model town, to be occupied by "... mostly well-to-do Africans of the middle class."[122] In contrast to the two and four roomed houses in Sharpeville with no

piped water and outside, bucket-system toilets, the houses constructed in Sebokeng had either four or five rooms and they included a bathroom and a toilet.[123]

The construction of Sebokeng threatened the newly developing unity in Sharpeville. The threat of removal evoked differing reactions: Some fought to remain in Sharpeville:

> When I married in 1967, Sebokeng was already there. My wife wanted us to go there, but I was against the idea because since my mother was here, my father wasn't a very healthy man after the shooting, and I had to run the family, to give some support to my father, so I disagreed to go there ... I had to bribe one of the block men. Bribery was the only thing that could keep you in the township ...[124]

But for others, especially those on housing waiting lists, Sebokeng represented an end to the waiting.[125] And generally, many of the young people in Sharpeville were initially quite willing to move to Sebokeng. For them, the construction of Sebokeng meant not only a house, but also an opportunity to establish a degree of independence from overconcerned parents.

Parents and elderly people, having survived the Sharpeville shooting, lived in fear of experiencing

another and preached political restraint to their offspring:

> People moved out from here [Sharpeville] only because they wanted to be far away from the elderly people, because whatever they were doing, their parents used to tell them, "don't do this. If you go too far you will be arrested." You see, warning them every now and then. That's why they decided to go away and make their own living.[126]

The full extent of the shock of the shooting for these overly concerned parents is illuminated in this quote from an activist who was born only a few years before the 1960 tragedy. Here he describes the effect it had upon his parents:

> ... the incident of 1960, my mother told me a lot about the issues that happened, and even my father told me a lot about that ... It was a way of intimidating or instilling fear among the people so as to stop them from resisting oppression that they find themselves in ... I would say that the main issue that resulted from 1960 was fear. This came about as a result that many of the leaders, as we hear from our parents, of the 1960 period, had to flee, some were arrested and others were banned, and so on. So those who remained behind were captured with fear and some turbulent silence ... Many a time when you ask a parent on, say for instance, a question of raising rents and so on, they will tell you "my child, we went through a difficult time of bullets in 1960, now it is difficult to start doing something about the situation now. This government is too strong and there is no way you could fight them; you are just talking from inexperience as you are still young."[127]

The fear of another tragedy like that of 1960 was now coupled with the fear of another disruption. It effectively stifled political activity in the township

for the ensuing two decades. Indeed, while in the previous decade, political activity had been effectively controlled by the VTC, now it was silenced by fear.

Conclusion

The problems which were experienced in the township in the months and years preceding the Sharpeville shooting were effectively exploited by the PAC, and the response to the organisation's anti-pass campaign was comparatively strong in Sharpeville. The shooting erased Sharpeville's official status as a model township and ushered in the nation's first State of Emergency. This was followed by a decision by the state to create a single black township for all of the Vaal Triangle, which threatened Sharpeville's existence. Yet, as will be seen in the next chapter, these events served to unite the community so that the rivalry of the previous decade was all but forgotten. In the sphere of culture this unity was expressed in the same activities through which strong rivalry had been expressed only a short while before.

CHAPTER SIX

'THIS IS THE MODERN AGE': THE INFLUENCE OF SOWETO AND COMMUNITY UNITY: LIFE IN SHARPEVILLE, 1960 - 1985

As has been demonstrated, the 1960s were years of heightened repression and uncertainty for the residents of Sharpeville, which created the conditions for a stronger sense of unity in the township, and countered the intense area rivalry which had existed during the previous two decades. In this chapter we consider another factor which contributed to the growing sense of unity - a perception by the residents of Sharpeville that their cultural activities were somehow inferior to those of Soweto. Their perception had its basis in the fact that urban African inhabitants distinguished between urban and rural dwellers, viewing the latter in a disparaging light; and that Sharpeville found itself on the wrong end of the urban/rural divide. The result was a growing sense of solidarity between the different areas in boxing; amongst the "Americans", as well as, in the 1970s, in the nature of football support. By the late 70s, the focus of rivalry had moved. "Sharpeville" came to be viewed by its inhabitants as something much more closely resembling a "community" than had been the case in previous years.

This chapter also considers how several cultural activities moved away from the parochialism they had previously demonstrated. Gang sub-culture, for example,

no longer embodied local cultural trends and meanings as it had done in the previous decade when, in its style of confrontation, it emulated boxing. It now came to represent the violent activities and crime associated with gangsterism in general. In football there was a move from amateurism to professionalism, and the chapter examines the role of the football patrons who facilitated this. Finally the chapter shows how the transition to professionalism saw Sharpeville briefly recoup the type of success it had achieved in the sphere of boxing, until professionalism altered the traditional relationship of the supporter to football. This, then, worked against the emerging sense of "community" as local supporters in Sharpeville began to support successful teams from outside the township.

Soweto and community unity in Sharpeville

Johannesburg's townships had for decades been looked upon by other urban Africans as the centre of cultural and sporting activity. As is well-known, Sophiatown, because of its location in Johannesburg, South Africa's industrial and financial capital, had been at the heart of African cultural activity during the 1940s.[1] But even during the 50s, after Sophiatown's destruction and

removal, Africans in East London saw Johannesburg as the centre of entertainment:

> Generally, Johannesburg is looked upon as the ideal in the field of entertainment, with East London as something of a backwater. One person was of the opinion that "East London lags behind by a hundred years" in comparison with Johannesburg.[2]

Later, for many Africans, Soweto too came to acquire a kind of magical, big-city mystique in spite of the fact that, following the destruction of Sophiatown and the construction of Soweto, conditions in townships were such as to "... discourage Africans from identifying with the urban areas, from calling the city their home."[3] Lack of amenities, labour camp atmosphere, rows of identical two and four-roomed houses, all characterised South African townships in the 1960s and 1970s. But as with the marabi culture of the 1920s, residents of these townships created their own distinctive forms of community life. As Coplan notes:

> ... authentic community life has taken shape in Soweto and some other urban townships over the past two decades. Social institutions like the stokfel and shebeens still flourish, despite municipal beer-lounges and liquor stores that have operated since 1962 ... Class is expressed in life-style, particularly in modes of recreation and entertainment, and the celebration of family events such as weddings and funerals, as well as material possessions.[4]

Soweto's big-city mystique is captured by a comment from Sharpeville resident, Ike Bikisha, who, in 1966, told Bona reporter, Alf Gwebu, that Soweto is like "... a Chicago and a Hollywood rolled into one."[5]

These trends were evident in Sharpeville. The shebeens of the 1950s continued to operate, although their names altered to reflect the changing times. Maduna's, for example, was now known as "Rivonia", after the white residential area in the north of Johannesburg where, in mid-1963, a number of African National Congress leaders, including Nelson Mandela, were arrested. Other shebeens, such as "Feel at Home" and "Black Stoep" might well have sought to offer people a sense of belonging in the wake of threats of removal and stringent administrative control. "Ma-Bricks", located in Seeiso Street, Putswastene, remained the most popular.[6] As in the 1950s, the bicycle remained the most common form of transport, although by now taxis were beginning to make an impression and a "speedy taxi" - usually a Dodge - carried people from Ma-Bricks to town for a fee of 25c. These taxis were not the over-loaded mini-buses of modern times and accepted only one or two, at most, three passengers, the emphasis being on comfort.[7]

Despite the similarity of urban trends between the two townships, Sharpeville residents had a perception - real or imagined - that they were regarded by

Johannesburg-dwellers as country bumpkins, devoid of any talent. For example, a Sharpeville musician complained that: "if you come from this side [the Vaal Triangle], suddenly you don't have any talent, you come from the farms, though [your] music is great."[8]

This was clearly illustrated in the sphere of boxing. In earlier times, the sport had been firmly divided along area lines, as we have seen. But with the success of Sharpeville boxers came the desire not only to win national titles, but specifically to defeat the Soweto boxers, to put Sharpeville on the map. Carlton Monnakgotla, who won the African middleweight title in 1967, provides an idea of this sentiment:

> With us here in Sharpeville we did not think about making money ... The late Sexton Mabena said that we must all beat the Soweto boxers. We are a small township, but we must show them that we have some world-beaters. The people outside did not know Sharpeville. People only know Sharpeville after the 1960 shooting but even then they would ask, where is Sharpeville? Is it in Soweto? So we wanted to show the outside that Sharpeville can produce great boxers.[9]

This perceived "inferiority" was fed by the fact that cultural life among urban Africans on the reef during the 1950s demanded a "... more sophisticated international and urban status," so that "the distinction between rural and urban became more pronounced ..."[10] As a result, "... anything rural was too close for comfort and viewed in a disparaging light (country bumpkins were known as moegoes) ..."[11] While Sharpeville was not quite in the

rural areas - Vereeniging was a long established industrial complex - the lack of a "TJ" number plate, one of the visible urban/country divisions, was enough to make Sharpeville residents feel on the wrong side.[12] But although Sharpeville boxers' successes put the township on the map, their defeats turned it back into the tiny location a little too far from the social centre of the PWV. In 1962, at a time when Sharpeville boxers were not performing as successfully as in previous years, a fight between two Soweto boxers scheduled for Sharpeville drew this response:

> The interest in the Jerry Moloi-Phillip Sibeko lightweight non-title fight ... has led to many anxious boxing followers referring to it as "the big fight in a small town". This is because the fight is taking place at the Sharpeville Communal Hall, Vereeniging ... Despite the distance, many fans are prepared to travel to see an on-the-spot affair between these two boxers ... [my emphasis][13]

The desire to preserve positive media attention affected Sharpeville boxing supporters as well. They willed that their boxers win at all cost and became known as a viciously partisan group, ready to strike at both opponents and officials should their local hero lose "unfairly". In 1962, during a fight against Sowetan challenger, Ezekiel Shole, John Mthimkulu was close to losing the fight - and his flyweight title - after a severe cut developed above one of his eyes. The mood of the crowd, however, dictated otherwise:

> ... those who were at the Sharpeville Communal Hall in Vereeniging the night Ezekiel Shole inflicted a nasty gash above one of John Mthimkulu's eyes, will

> remember the pandemonium which followed Dr Rex Tatane's attempt to examine the wound and the pending stoppage of the fight as a result of that wound. The completely partisan Sharpeville crowd showed them that they would not tolerate Mthimkulu being sent to bed because of a cut! Dr Tatane beat a hasty retreat and the fight continued. That was a near thing![14]

The "superiority" of Soweto was also felt by the "Americans", who became less concerned with how they were being perceived by the different areas in Sharpeville, and more with how they appeared to their big city counterparts. These competitions began after Americans from Soweto visited Maduna's Place, following a jazz show featuring the Sharpetown Swingsters:

> Immediately after the show we [the Sharpeville "Americans"] decided to pay a visit at Maduna's place and we met people from Soweto there. They were amazed to see people from Sharpeville wearing "American" because they thought that they were the only "Americans" by that time.[15]

Thereafter, the two groupings began taking turns to host what became clothing style competitions:

> When the people of Soweto decided to pay us a visit, we would come together and tell each other that the people from Soweto are coming, so each and every one of you will have to dress well, and we are going to meet at such and such a place, more especially Maduna's place, because he was the only guy who could play jazz. They used to bring along their L.P.s. It was competition, clothing and jazz.[16]

Whether the focus on Soweto was due only to the fact that it was the cultural centre of all of South Africa, and thus the obvious rival, or whether it reflected a broadening of the theme of rivalry to that of a

Sharpeville united in its opposition against Soweto specifically, is difficult to ascertain. Certainly, Sharpeville boxers and fans, dressers, and musicians, were clear about who their rival was. But the view of their counterparts in Soweto is less obvious, except for their general disregard for those living in the country/rural areas.

The move away from patterns of area rivalry was also influenced by a lessening of parochialism as the township became more involved in general, nation-wide trends. This was illustrated in the changes in the nature of gang activity in the township - although a lessening in the intensity of area rivalry did not necessarily lead to solidarity between the different gangs.

Area rivalry and the gang sub-culture in Sharpeville

Area rivalry continued to exist in the 1960s and 70s, although it was not as pronounced as it had been in the 1950s. In these later decades it came to be expressed mainly in the activities at the Sharpeville stadium, which was erected in 1962, and the swimming pool, constructed in 1965. Because of their location, both of these "belonged" to Vuka. In the stadium, the prime seats in the gallery were "reserved" for Vuka gangsters, who would "come with knobkierries and sharpened umbrellas," to enforce their domination.[17] Like the township, the

swimming pool was divided into areas - "number 0", "number 5", "number 6", "number 9". The most popular area, "number 9", encompassing the deep end of the pool, was Vuka domain, while the shallow end, "number 0", was available for the other areas. For the people of these areas, venturing into "number 9" was highly risky, because "when you got in there it's going to be terrible, they're going to drown you."[18]

In the main, however, youth gang activity was not quite as intense as it had been in the previous decade. In Chapters Three and Five it was seen how the activities of the youth gangs were severely curtailed by the coercive action of the VTC and, following the 1960 shootings, some residents recalled that, as the township united in coping with its catastrophic effects, much of the gangsterism disappeared. The only gang to "disappear" completely was the "Russians": members returned to places like Evaton to escape the strong police presence in Sharpeville after the shooting. Many of the youth gangs survived. The Berlins, for example, persisted until the early 1970s. But their activities petered out in the wake of the VTC's firm action against them and the lessening of the intensity of area rivalry. They eventually disbanded once members had married and started raising families.[19] Indeed, the gangsterism epitomised by the "face-to-face' fist-fighting described in Chapter Three, ceased entirely. In its place came the weapon-wielding gangs so

common in the townships today. These gangs did not fight each other as often as their predecessors had done. Instead they focused on attacking and robbing residents:

> It was no longer the enjoyable gangs, it was the robbery gangs, their work was dangerous. Usually they were standing in the shebeen streets because people emerge drunk.[20]

Weapons - knives, axes, kierries as well as firearms - became common and violent assaults increased. The well-known gangsters who emerged in the 1960s - such as Paulos Mofolong, known as "Senamolele", and Mahash - were often on police wanted lists and all served jail terms for offences ranging from assault to murder. During this period, the most notorious gang was known as "Prima" and operated in Vergenoeg, while the most infamous individual was "Michael the Hammer" who was jailed for murder in the 1970s. "Michael the Hammer" operated with a hammer and a dog:

> He would shout "Hikgele mo hatse!" ["fall down!"]. He was walking with his dog. If you try to run away, he sets his dog on you. You haven't got any chance to run away with that dog. Then he hits you with the hammer and takes your money.[21]

Reflecting the times, gangsterism became less parochial and more associated with broader black prison culture. Whereas members of the previous generation of gangs

tended only to be jailed overnight, this new breed of gangs, by turning to violence and crime, exposed themselves to longer prison terms.[22] During an interview with Sharpeville gangster, Mahash, whose name evidently means "The Horse", certainly reflecting his physical size, he recounted a life of gangsterism revolving around a prison culture which stretched nation-wide. In the mid-1960s, whilst in prison awaiting trial for assault, Mahash joined a gang called the "Big Five":

> ... at the waiting-trial I met a couple of people I stabbed ... then they beat me up so badly ... There was a guy called "Ticks". Then he advised me to join the Big Five.[23]

Gang members had Swastikas tattooed on their forearms. Members' allegiance was expected never to wane:

> When you have this Swastika, you are signing that your brother is your brother. You never turn against him. If a "Big Five" member is fighting there I'm not supposed to ask questions, just get involved in the fight.[24]

The significant feature of the gang, however, was that becoming a member was only possible during a term in prison: "When you want to wear German [the Swastika], you have to join German inside [prison]."[25] Further, promotion to higher rank within the gang was also, and indeed, still is, dependent upon being behind bars:

> I have a big position in this German gang. The last position I have to ascend to is to become a "professor". Now I cannot become a "professor" out here. I have to go jail to become a "professor".[26]

According to Mahash, the Big Five was (and still is) to be found in prisons throughout the country: "There is no jail without Big Five members. You can go to any jail and find the Big Five there."[27] Rival gangs, both within and without gaol, were the "26's" and the "28's". These two gangs, along with the Big Five, were (and evidently still are) characteristic of prisons country-wide:

> If we catch a "28", we beat him up to death because we call them "worms" and if you simply leave a worm, it will move around and it will come back and it will kill, so you have to beat them to death because of that. They [the "28"s] have been stabbing us in jail and we've been killing them. That's why I don't want to go to Durban. Durban is a "28" District. I don't want to go to Cape Town. Cape Town is a "28" district. Port Elizabeth is a "28" District; I can't go there. You see, our district is definitely places like Bloemfontein and Kimberley.[28]

But, while the prison sub-culture extended to all parts of the country, both within and without the confines of gaol, it only affected those who had served time, and the prison gangs were not well known to ordinary residents in Sharpeville. Thus, while Mahash held a high-ranking position in the Big Five, his status as a gangster was restricted to Sharpeville:

> Let's say I leave Sharpeville and go to Soweto. I've got to make myself popular in Soweto and [even] after knowing me, they're [those in Soweto] still going to ask around who is this guy, where is he coming from? To make myself known I have to be "rude" [violent] again. So it's better in Sharpeville because people know me, they know that that guy, if you mix around with him, he'll assault you and he'll kill you.[29]

From the 1960s, then, the gang subculture in Sharpeville was organised more in terms of the broader prison culture than according to area rivalry. Despite the national links, Sharpeville gangsters - as the example of Mahash indicates - determined and maintained their notoriety on their home turf. Within Sharpeville, while area rivalry did not disappear altogether, as is evidenced by the actions of the youths both at the stadium and at the swimming pool, it was certainly not as pervasive as it had been during the previous decade.

Along with overall influences, each subculture - gangs, the different sports, music, and style - was enacted according to its inner dynamics. In the 1960s and 1970s, Sharpeville's gang sub-culture may have been less parochial but it remained as it had been previously: firmly disunited between areas. This was because it was by nature confrontational. The football subculture reflected a similar trend away from parochialism although the process took longer to complete. In Chapter Three it was shown how football teams grew out of township streets and areas. The transition to professional football in Sharpeville brought with it two developments. The first was a greater unity and a lessening, though not disappearance, of area rivalry; the second related to the system of patron managers.

The transition to professional football

Critcher has argued that the introduction of professional football, wide television coverage, sponsorship control and player mobility has changed the traditional relationship of the supporter to football. The change has taken three main forms:

> firstly, a disinclination to continue following the local team regardless of its achievement; secondly and relatedly, a preference for armchair viewing of weekly televised excerpts; thirdly, a symbolic redefinition of the role of the supporter through the activities of ritualised aggression adopted by younger fans.[30]

Couzens has noted that, in South Africa, the advent of television in the mid-1970s saw large companies (liquor, food and soft drinks) providing sponsorships in their efforts to expand markets and advertise their products.[31] According to Couzens, this development has affected football considerably:

> The entry of "big" capitalism has changed the whole nature of the game. As football becomes more and more lucrative, "small" professionalism is displaced. Clubs have begun to lose their local affiliations (Pirates nowadays have a nation-wide following) and players are moving from club to club with increasing frequency.[32]

The late 1950s saw the introduction of professional football to black teams. In 1959, black players and spectators alike were calling for professional football to be introduced following the decision of the white

Football Association of South Africa (FASA) to create its own professional league, the National Football League:

> ...some of Transvaal's white clubs have taken an exciting decision to play professional league which they hope will attract customers ... and bring them a big new following ... Why shouldn't WE start our own professional inter-racial Football League? ... We've asked these questions the past few weeks, and, from clubmen and sports officials, the answer every time has been "Yes, let's try".[33]

That year, 1959, the South African Soccer Federation (SASF), which represented one of the first attempts to unify a sport across the three racially divided communities, black, Indian and "coloured", formed a professional wing, the S.A. Soccer Federation Professional League (SASF-PL).[34] The large Soweto clubs, Orlando Pirates and Moroka Swallows, were both members of this league when it started. Threatened by sponsorship rivalry, many whites were anxious to destroy or weaken it. They used pressure to deny the SASF-PL use of municipal fields and facilities. As the SASF-PL weakened, through the help of the municipalities, the rival of SAFA, the South African Bantu Football Association - a body more inclined to follow the instructions of FASA - was revived and out of it the National Professional Football League (NPSL) was formed. The two leagues operated in opposition to each other until the SASF-PL finally collapsed completely in 1969.[35]

In 1962, a splinter of the Transvaal Fast XI Football Club of Sharpeville, Corrugated Fast XI, applied to join the second division of the SASF-PL.[36] Joe Mabena, who played for the team, explained why they decided to turn professional:

> ... we were so very successful, winning, winning, winning all the time, our side here, going to [the] Free State, going to such places, everywhere in Johannesburg we were winning. Although it was a small amount we were still winning money, and then we decided we want to have a share. We want to have some money to be paid [to us]. Then the president [of the club] said, "no", Mr Nyembe say, "no you can't get paid, you are not professionals." We said, "we are doing [winning] a lot of money, we want to have something." Then we decided to break away and form Corrugated Fast XI. And then we choose Dr Mokhesi as our president.[37]

And, according to Mabena, it was his idea to call the team Corrugated Fast XI:

> ... When I was still in Johannesburg, I used to like Moroka Swallows, and Moroka Swallows they used to have a second division side by the name of Corrugated XI ... I liked the name Corrugated, then I say we are Corrugated Fast XI.[38]

"Corrugated" remained in the league until 1969 and were only moderately successful, never winning promotion to the first division. But it was out of Corrugated that Sharpeville's original fully professional football team emerged, the Vaal Professionals, who brought Sharpeville its first real success in the football world. The Vaal Professionals were formed during the late 1960s out of a desire among Sharpeville football players, administrators and supporters alike, to produce a side capable of

matching the "big five" teams from Soweto, Kaiser Chiefs, Orlando Pirates, Moroka Swallows and Moroka Big XV. As George Thabe explains:

> When we [SABFA] formed the NPSL, Vereeniging had a status [in SABFA] and had to provide a team in the first division. There were strong teams, for example, Moroka Swallows. The weaker areas had district sides, for example, Benoni United and Katlehong United. Here [in Sharpeville] we were looking for a club to play first division. Corrugated were coming back to the Association [Southern Transvaal Bantu Football Association] because they had failed to make the grade in the SASF. The first Vereeniging side in the NPSL had been a pick side - Vereeniging United or Sharpeville United - with different players every weekend. But there was friction with local clubs to provide the best players, so the Vaal Professionals was formed out of Corrugated, and would then be a completely separate professional club. Various clubs surrendered their players. Officials from various clubs were seconded to run the club.[39]

The "friction" between local clubs was a result of neighbourhood rivalry. But, the desire to match the Soweto teams offset this. Dr Mokhesi, the patron and sponsor of Corrugated, was asked to do the same for the Vaal Professionals, while Molotsi Molefe, a brother of Sharpetown Swingsters' trombonist, Joseph Molefe, and a football player for the Dangerous Lions in the early 1960s, was one of the officials seconded to run the Vaal Professionals. Molefe set about organising, first the officials to run the club and, next, the players:

> I spoke to Dr Mokhesi who allowed me to pick a few fellows. I picked about ten fellows belonging to different clubs ... Those were pseudo-directors and that's how it got started. For instance I belonged to a team called Dangerous Lions. One belonged to [Transvaal] Jumpers. One belonged to Basutoland Stars, and so on and so forth. That sort of made the "cream" of Sharpeville clubs.[40]

Apart from Sharpeville, players were also required from the surrounding townships. Johannes Modise, for example, was from the Evaton Old Dutch Boys. Further, such was the desire among the clubs to produce a side capable of challenging the Soweto teams, that they gave over their players freely, waiving any transfer fees. The community as a whole accepted the side immediately:

> The Vaal Professionals was a new creation, a special creation. There was universal support from the whole township because it did not come from a certain area. It commanded support because it was considered to be strongly the Vaal team.[41]

Indeed, residents were strongly in favour of a Sharpeville team capable of defeating the Soweto sides. Sharpeville resident, Sam Ntje, informed me that the community supported the idea of getting the best players from the Vaal to make a "great team" and to "beat the Soweto sides".[42] But it did not entirely offset neighbourhood rivalry. With the formation of the Vaal Professionals, there resulted in two allegiances, as Molotsi Molefe explains:

> ... when it [the Vaal Professionals] was launched, that is when we had two allegiances: allegiance to one's amateur club one belonged to, like me, Dangerous Lions, and [allegiance to] Vaal Professionals.[43]

The process of professionalising soccer in a township like Sharpeville had several important effects. One was the emergence of football patrons, or patron-managers, to be dealt with further on. Another was the style of

support offered by football fans. On the one hand, this was to transcend narrow area rivalries, and to express a sense of solidarity in the face of competition from other - mostly Soweto-based - professional sides. On the other, it was to witness a marked increase in the extent of football hooliganism.

The plan for defeating Soweto sides worked from its inception and the Vaal Professionals were an immediate success. This newspaper report, in December, 1970, provides some evidence:

> All over the country [football] fans will be treated to good football today. Top-drawer stuff will be seen at the Orlando Stadium when [Moroka] Big XV try to break giant-killing Vaal Professionals ... Professionals have an unbelievable record. They beat Witbank Black Aces and everybody said it was a home decision. They went on to topple PUBS [Pretoria Buccaneers] and everybody started looking. And only last Saturday they stopped Kaiser Chiefs.[44]

Along with success, the Vaal Professionals brought a sense of respect: "We [the Vaal Professionals] were respected. Clubs like Kaizer Chiefs, all the big sides, did doff their heads at us. We were a respected team."[45]

The Vaal Professionals enabled Sharpeville residents to recapture the sense of pride they had felt at the successes of Sharpeville boxers in the 1950s and early 1960s. As with boxing, local partisan support from the Vaal Professionals was often quite overwhelming:

> The Orlando Pirates - Vaal Professionals match was abandoned five minutes before time when BUCS [Orlando Pirates] disputed a penalty awarded to Pro's at Sharpeville Stadium yesterday ... Pro's

> officials were faced with a torrid time trying to stop fans from assaulting BUCS players. The players had to run for their life while being chased by the irate fans.[46]

Fans and rude supporters

In 1973, the Vaal Professionals were the topic of a NPSL inquiry, following the disruption of several games at the Sharpeville Stadium. Roger Sishi, general manager of the NPSL, was concerned for the safety of referees, linesmen and visiting teams which, he maintained, were the sole responsibility of the home team and its local association, but which those in Sharpeville were unable to guarantee.[47] A letter to the press summed up the feelings of supporters from other townships:

> Sir - In regards to the match played at the Sharpeville Stadium on Saturday, May 19, [1973], it was really a shame for the Vaal supporters to go to the extent of assaulting the players of Zulu Royals. My dear brothers, always the better team wins. You should not have acted the way you did, because according to the league, your team is going to forfeit the only points shared with Royals. So, do think first before you disrupt league matches ... I pity Vaal to have such rude supporters. Supporters are there to give courage, not to win matches for their teams.[48]

The efforts of "rude supporters" or, less euphemistically, "soccer hooligans", have been extensively examined in Great Britain and some of this discussion provides useful comparison. Davies, for example, suggests that the supporters more likely to

engage in soccer violence "... were all in rotten jobs, from rotten homes ..." and had "no other excitement or meaning in their lives."[49] Rude', focusing more closely the game itself, argues that football violence is an example of a "backward looking riot" where supporters attempt to restore a prior state of affairs,[50] while Taylor believes that the violence is the result of football supporters becoming more and more removed from real or imagined control of the game as traditional relationships with players, managers and supporters are replaced with professionalism and contracts, and with national as opposed to regional identities. The violent reaction, then, is an attempt to re-assert traditional control.[51] Critcher argues that Taylor and others tend to locate their commentaries on football hooliganism within the game itself and ignore the "... more general cultural pressures to which some sections of the working class are being subjected."[52] These pressures must be examined in order to understand the nature of football hooliganism. Thus, although it may be true that the violent supporters all have "rotten jobs and homes", Critcher insists on a broader consideration of the specific cultural pressures at any given time.

In Sharpeville, local players and supporters were obsessed with winning. As Molotsi Molefe commented: "I think they [Sharpeville supporters] have been bad losers. Well it has been like that in boxing. We didn't want to lose."[53] The reason why Sharpeville teams and individuals were bad losers has already been examined. Success neutralised their position as an insignificant country township and afforded them a status alongside their Sowetan counterparts. Losing, on the other hand, relegated them to the obscurity of "moegoes". This preoccupation with winning detrimentally affected the Vaal Professionals. Because they were not an established side like the Transvaal Jumpers or the Transvaal Fast XI, they did not automatically command the grass-roots following the latter sides had developed over years. Furthermore, the arena in which the Vaal Professionals were expected to succeed was one in which the others had not competed and in which success was not expected of them. Support for the Vaal Professionals, then, was strongly dependent on their success. When that began to dissipate in the late 1970s and early 1980s so too did their support-base, as shebeen owner and resident, Mohale Mokopane, commented: "People no longer favour the Vaal Professionals as much because they are not playing as well and do not have such good players."[54] Unlike the other clubs, the Vaal Professionals did not represent a specific area of Sharpeville, as Mike Matloane, general manager of the NPSL (at the time of writing), suggests:

> ... the Vaal Professionals were never really a club, they did not end up belonging to anybody, it kind of hung in the air. An Orlando supporter will remain one but the Vaal Professionals took only one or two players from a club. Kaiser Chiefs made it because they were consistent. Crowds only came to Vaal Professionals' games if the other team was popular.[55]

The waning achievements of the Vaal Professionals, which began in the late 1970s, also reflected broader developments in football itself. The change from the amateurism of the 1950s to professionalism was in the process of completing itself.

The developments noted by Critcher and Couzens were seen in Sharpeville. As the success rate of local teams declined so the younger Vaal residents - those up to about thirty five years of age - were more likely to support "national" teams such as Kaiser Chiefs. The older generation on the other hand, instead of supporting a new team, have withheld their support for the Vaal Professionals, complaining about its decline and hoping its success rate will increase. Mohale Mokopane, owner of the SANFA CLUB[56] shebeen in Sharpeville where soccer is the main topic of conversation, is an example of such a football fan. He described the current discontent among older football enthusiasts who complain that there is no longer "any real football", and indicated the lack of

support by this older generation for the National Soccer League (NSL) and its disturbance at the ousting of George Thabe from the top position in SANFA.[57]

For the Vaal Professionals, their lack of success has affected their financial situation. In order to improve their success rate and match the successful professional clubs like Kaizer Chiefs, they need to buy better players and hire more adept coaches. However, as Molotsi Molefe explains:

> ... you need good finance to get good players. Now who's interested in financing a second-division team? .. The better players are attracted to bigger clubs; they've got the finance. That's basically what happened [to the Vaal Professionals].[58]

The need for sufficient finance introduces the second area of discussion, also an important aspect of the development of professional football in South Africa, that is, the role of "patron-managers".

Patron-managers

The study of patronage by anthropologists has been restricted for the most part to Mediterranean societies. Certainly there is little material on patronage in African societies.[59] Gilmore, considering Fuenmayor in southern Spain, refers to patronage as informal contact between people of unequal status and power.[60] In general, patrons provide otherwise unobtainable goods and

services to people whose social ties are limited to the local community, and receive in return less tangible benefits such as political support. Li Causi, in a study of western Sicily in Italy, observes that patronage occurs in conditions of economic exploitation and political domination.[61] Given the fact that precisely these conditions have been characteristic of townships in South Africa, it is surprising that few studies of this important anthropological phenomenon in South African townships have been done.[62] Those studies of African urbanisation by anthropologists during the 1950s and 1960s which did observe patronage in African sport, highlight the prestige, power and control involved, as well as to intense competition for position, but fail to analyse these. Wilson and Mafeje, for example, note the following case of patronage in Langa, Cape Town:

> In the [African] football clubs there are also the wealthy men, no longer players, who are elected to the unions and boards, and who are viewed with some suspicion by young players from the country. Their power derives from their position as townsmen (not country cousins), from their wealth - they subscribe to club funds - and their offers of transport when required ... The rugby clubs also invite as "patron" [the English word is used] middle-class people such as an advocate living in Langa, or a minister of religion.[63]

In Sharpeville, while the area in which a side emerged was important in determining its players, the president or "owner" was crucial for its survival. This is illustrated by the example of the owner and manager of

Transvaal Jumpers, Ngwenya, for it was he who formed the side, or rather, who provided the financial backing for the team to play league football.[64] He provided the original Transvaal Jumpers team with their outfits (mustard and black blocks) and other equipment. His controlling role as "owner" of the Transvaal Jumpers is illuminated by the fact that it was his move to Sharpeville, in the late 1950s, that effected the team's official move from Top Location. Ngwenya maintained control of the club for as long as four decades and its achievements were all attributed to him:

> During all this time, in fact up-to-date, the club [Transvaal Jumpers] had only one president guiding and controlling its affairs. It is to this man that I attribute the wonderful success that the club achieved during this period in the history of Black football - Mr J Ngwenya.[65]

The example of Ngwenya is illustrative of the type of patron or "big man" in football which emerged in Sharpeville and, indeed, in other South African townships, during the evolution of professional football. Certainly, financial backing was a crucial link between a "street team", the local league, and beyond. Isaac Magashule, writing for Bona in 1962, has described the role of the financial sponsors:

> [the sponsorship of clubs has been spearheaded] ... by the generous and tireless efforts of Johannesburg's wealthy businessmen well-known in the African community. These men are head-above-social-swim elites of the city, and are commonly called "patron-managers" in the field of sport. These tycoons all profess that they came into the football game as enthusiasts and above all to

> provide for the sadly lacking facilities, security and maturity in the set-up of the majority of our football clubs.[66]

Having provided the funds, the "patron-managers" then assumed positions of considerable control:

> ... by virtue of their financial standing and readiness to provide generously for maintenance of their respective teams, patron-managers have naturally grown to be regarded as bosses of the clubs, wielding much authority over almost all departments of the club's make-up.[67]

The question that must be answered, then, is why the "patron-managers" parted with their money? Did acquiring control of the club provide sufficient motivation? Financial gain can be ruled out as a possible reason because monetary returns - largely in the form of gate-takings at matches - were most often insufficient to cover a team's expenditure. Most studies of patronage in Mediterranean society argue that patrons receive political support for their favours. "Patron-managers" in South Africa, it seems, secured prestige:

> These football tycoons maintain that "sport is the doorway to international fame and prestige," and that with the abundant talent in the country which of course needs the proper care of devoted persons, our football will surely attain international recognition.[68]

Indeed, while "patron-managers" set out to provide the funds for "international fame and prestige", some of that fame and prestige was intended for themselves. For "patron-managers" in Sharpeville, financial sponsorship was certainly a way of enhancing their personal prestige, which was more often than not displayed in flamboyant

fashion. By providing financial support, patron-managers earned the allegiance and support of the players in their teams, as well as status in the township where they became know as "men of means". In many cases, patrons utilised their prestige for political gain. Before we examine this, however, it is necessary to introduce a second type of patron.

Apart from the patrons who provided financial favours, there was another variety, whose power derived not from monetary means, but from their mastery of the rules and regulations of the sporting associations, as well as their ability to manipulate them. Wilson and Mafeje have commented upon this second variety of patron:

> Scope for leadership among Africans is very limited and office in almost any sort of organisation is a source of social prestige. Whereas for a White man or woman, there are many alternative opportunities of exercising leadership in work, in politics, in local government, as well as in church or social clubs or sport, the opportunities for an African are few. To a White man the secretaryship of a rugby club may indeed be a burden, not willingly undertaken, but to most Africans office in almost any organisation carries prestige ... People in Langa cling to positions as tenaciously as if they were careers.[69]

Kuper reports the following observations of a Durban and District African F.A. meeting in the 1950s:

> At meetings, the committee procedures often take on an independent life and the work of the association is enmeshed in the most complex and obdurate debate ... With the passage of time, the minutes become businesslike, but there is still much sterile debate. This arises in part from the desire to display procedural virtuosity and from a lack of familiarity with the rules. But the emphasis on ritual also shows the importance attached to the organisational mysteries of the White man ... It

> seems as though the symbols of power represented by the committee procedures of the White man become a substitute for the exercise of power and that political energy, denied other expression, is projected into the football association. Certainly there is much rivalry for position.[70]

While tending towards being patronising, these quotes illustrate the common denominator between the two types of patrons: both carried the reward of prestige. But the difference was that the first type secured his position through financial means, the second, through education. The key to becoming a "committee"-based patron was a reasonable level of literacy and numeracy in order to participate in, and indeed to manipulate organisational procedures. In Sharpeville, the most distinctive example of this variety of patron is George Thabe.

The "Pele of South African football"

George Thabe is the most important figure in the history of organised football in the Vaal Triangle, where local residents refer to him as the "Pele of South African football."[71] Thabe's career is nothing short of remarkable. For fifteen years he was the most important and influential figure in the organisation and control of South African football, heading the South African National Football Association (SANFA) and its professional wing, the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL).

Thabe was born in Top Location in 1932, the tenth and last child of a wood merchant from Kroonstad. In 1946 he moved with his family to Sharpeville, to the area of Putswastene. According to Thabe, his father, while not particularly well-off, had a clear vision of his son's future:

> He was a very strange man, highly Christian. He had not only a vision [of my future profession] but gifts. When I was still very young he had decided what I should be. He passed away when I was sixteen and I have followed that course.[72]

Thabe trained as a teacher and taught between 1954 and 1962. In 1950 he was one of a group of football players who formed the Young Rangers: "We liked Rangers of Johannesburg and more than that, Glasgow Rangers [of Scotland]."[73]

Apart from playing football, Thabe was also involved in its administration. From 1950, as club secretary, he represented the Young Rangers at meetings of the local football association, the Southern Transvaal Bantu Football Association (STBFA). In 1955, Thabe became the assistant secretary of the STBFA and, in 1962, on completing his college studies, became its secretary. He was elected president of the Transvaal Football Association in 1965 and treasurer of the South African National Football Association (SANFA) three years later. In 1970, he assumed the highest organisational position in black football when he became president of SANFA, after ousting the previous president of ten years, Joe Sibiya.

Thabe's comments provide an interesting backdrop to the discussion of "administrative patrons". According to him:

> the organisation of black football was very difficult as there were very few people who had a good understanding of organisational principles and others had to learn from them.[74]

Further, it was difficult to "teach people with township backgrounds the principles of running a club."[75] Implicit in this statement is the distinction between those who could administer a club - the educated - and those who could not, thus creating conditions of unequal status. But, for the educated, maintaining an administrative position required calculated lobbying and careful manipulating:

> There was always a lot of jockeying for positions. It was so difficult to get an association to understand how an association should be run. But when the president said "go", you went.[76]

When Thabe became the president of SANFA it was he who held sway and so skilful was he at maintaining support for himself that he remained the kingpin of South African football administration for fifteen years, the longest reign by any incumbent in black football. Two years before his downfall, Sekola Sello writing for Drum magazine, said this of Thabe:

> They don't come as calculating and skilful as George Thabe - the Boris Spassky of football. With the patience and skill of a Grand Master, Thabe has eliminated all effective opposition he had ever had. Be it real, imagined or incipient, Thabe has crushed it.[77]

This reference to the game of chess suggests the degree of manipulation and control required, as well as the political skill doing so. Indeed, such was the politicking in the sporting world, it is not surprising that community politics in Sharpeville has been dominated by people who originally made a name for themselves in the arena of sport. But it also indicates the degree to which both types of patron were able to utilise their prestige and, to some extent, their control, to assume public office.

Patrons and power: the "big men" of Sharpeville

In Sharpeville, the tradition by which the most popular "big names" in the township stood for election to local government positions, was apparent from as early as the late 1950s. Local government in Sharpeville came to be dominated by well-known figures in the boxing world, such as David "Hunter" Motsumi, who managed Sexton Mabena during the latter's reign as national African association bantamweight and featherweight champion, at the time one of only three black managers in the country to hold a British Boxing Board of Control licence; and Tom Mabena, Sexton Mabena's father.[78] In addition, it included Philip Phatang, patron-manager of Real Fast XI, who served on the Sharpeville Advisory Board for nearly twenty years.

George Thabe too, followed this pattern. He was the first chairman of the Vaal Triangle Community Council[79], elected in 1977. His status and control originated from his role in football administration and it is not surprising that there was a good deal of overlap between local government and football. Indeed, Thabe's rival in the football world, Knox Matjila from Evaton, was his chief rival on the Community Council. Thabe and Matjila's rivalry followed upon their involvement in the administration of soccer where Thabe held sway. During the early 1970s, Matjila had been Thabe's right-hand man, acting to protect and strengthen their respective positions within the South African National Football Association (SANFA):

> He [Matjila] was first Thabe's protege and after being well groomed he became his boss's hatchet man ... Matjila suspended anyone deemed by the hierarchy to be a threat to them.[80]

In the mid-1970s, Matjila attempted to wrest the leadership of SANFA from Thabe:

> Word went out that Matjila was planning to topple Thabe. He acted swift and mercilessly. Matjila was sent to "Siberia"[81] where he made some threats of a comeback which never materialised.[82]

Thabe expelled Matjila from SANFA, commenting as follows: "I brought him into soccer. Then he grew too big and later plotted against me. I had no choice but to get rid

of him."[83] Matjila, conversely, believed he had been unfairly accused:

> Thabe's allegations are not true. I don't think he can boast a more loyal official than me. He was influenced by people who did not like me and fed him these false stories about being toppled.[84]

In 1981, Thabe resigned from the Community Council, ostensibly because of a lack of co-operation from the government, although it appears that the real reason was Matjila's opposition. The chairman of the Katlehong Community Council at the time, Mpiyale Khumalo, commented as follows:

> ... I must say that Mr Thabe is dishonest because he set the pace by being the first chairman in the country. While it suited him, he took the chance but now he feels bitter because he was defeated twice [by Matjila] in the election for chairmanship.[85]

Matjila, now chairman of the Council, set about avenging his defeats in the football world. Only a few weeks after Thabe's departure, Matjila proposed renaming the George Thabe Stadium in Sharpeville, the Sharpeville Stadium:

> I am not happy about the naming of this stadium. This should be called the Sharpeville Soccer Stadium. It is the most significant name and it rings a bell to any person when he reads about it. You ask anybody from Durban where George Thabe Stadium is and he is most likely not able to give you the answer readily. But as soon as you say Sharpeville Stadium, even someone in England is most likely to know the place.[86]

Although couched in the language of regional loyalty, Matjila's move to rename the stadium was clearly motivated primarily by a wish to strike at the heart of Thabe's status. Despite wide criticism, particularly from within soccer circles[87] , Matjila's proposal was accepted by the Council and the George Thabe Stadium became the Sharpeville Soccer Stadium until January 1983, when the newly elected council under the chairmanship of Essau Mahlatsi reversed the original decision.[88]

Today, no longer involved in community politics or in the administration of football, Thabe has lost most of his former status as one of the most influential people in Sharpeville's political life. He retains some influence, however, within the arena of football. When the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL) clashed with the National Soccer League (NSL) in 1985, forcing Thabe's resignation, it had the effect of dividing loyalties among football patrons, players and supporters in Sharpeville. Developments in the wider arena of South African soccer - the rise to prominence of the NSL and the demise of the NPSL - have in Sharpeville manifested themselves as expressions of loyalty, or opposition, to Thabe. The Vaal Professionals were divided into two after Dr Mokhesi, the original president and patron, took part

of the club over to the NSL. Molotsi Molefe's statement gives an idea of the split:

> Well, the doctor [Mokhesi] felt the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. The doctor left with the majority of his squad. The remnants were taken over by Steve Lekomola and a few other Vaal players and they remained in the NPSL. There are those who keep ties with George Thabe and remain in the NPSL for whatever reason. I myself have remained on the fence.[89]

These splits have caused considerable disruptions in Sharpeville football. The NPSL/NSL split has divided allegiances between officials, players and supporters alike. Some support the NSL, others support the NPSL, while the rest remain undecided or, like Molotsi Molefe, prefer to make no commitment. As a result, enquiries about recent trends in football were often met with blank responses as informants refused to comment on anything they considered controversial or to indicate support for one patron in opposition to another.

The role of patrons in Sharpeville, then, was not confined only to the control and administration of clubs and leagues, but extended to positions of domination in local government as well. The extent of this control and power it generated is illustrated by the example of Thabe who, while losing much of his political support, still preserved influence in the local football world. In general, however, the emergence of patrons paralleled the

transition from amateurism t fully-fledged professional football in Sharpeville, and echoed the broader changes in South African football as a whole.

The nature of football in Sharpeville as a sub-culture has changed considerably since its beginnings in the 1940s. Today traditional support for local teams has for the most part been replaced by support for national teams such as Moroka Swallows and Jomo Cosmos, as access to these teams is made easier by wider television coverage. The "raw ingredients" for the production of successful teams and players still exist but they await the financial resources to develop them. The Vaal Professionals were relegated to the second division in 1981 and are unlikely to regain first division status without substantial financial support. For the more skilled players in Sharpeville, the alternative is to try out for teams outside of Sharpeville, as Augustine Makalakalane and Love Monnakgotla have done and who both now play for Jomo Cosmos.[90] Teams still require financial support to function and so patron-managers continue to exist, albeit in less flamboyant fashion, as the attention of the residents is increasingly focused on the more glamorous national figures such as Kaizer Motaung of Kaizer Chiefs and Jomo Sono of Jomo Cosmos. Children in Sharpeville still grow up playing football in the streets, challenging other street teams. While area

rivalries have been displaced and distracted by regional and national trends, it seems that some aspects of the game remain unchanged.

Conclusion

The shooting in 1960 coupled with the threat of removal had seen Sharpeville evolve from a series of disunited areas into something which residents perceived as more of a community. In the sphere of cultural activities, this unity was enhanced by a perception of inferiority in relation to Sowetans who, in turn, regarded rural and small-town dwellers as country bumpkins or "moegoes." For Sharpeville's boxers and for the "Americans" these factors led to a shift away from the patterns of area rivalry in the township to a focus on rivalling and even conquering their counterparts in Soweto. This inclination toward unity within the township was accompanied by a lessening of parochialism, as cultural activities in Sharpeville increasingly began to reflect national trends. The two tendencies were not necessarily related, indicated by the pattern taken by the Sharpeville gang subculture: while Sharpeville gangs became more entwined in a national prison culture there were certainly no indications of unity between gangs within the township. In football, the advent of professionalism in the 1960s saw the formation of Sharpeville's most successful team, the Vaal Professionals. Like the boxers in the 1950s, the

Vaal Professionals brought success in football to Sharpeville which had the effect of uniting rival football areas. But professional football was part of a nationally linked trend which de-emphasised parochialism. The transition to professionalism also led to the development of a group of patrons who were involved in either the financing or the administration of football in return for access to social prestige and political power. In the main, their involvement was divisive; patron George Thabe's decline in the mid-1980s divided the football community in Sharpeville between those who supported the NSL and others who remained with the NPSL.

The focus on Soweto and the patterns of unity were indicative of the complex relationship which had developed between Sharpeville residents and the broader national culture. They were both embracing and becoming part of the national culture, as well as seeking to create a sense of "Sharpeville" within it. In the next chapter we consider this possibility in an examination of the changes in popular music and performance which exhibited similar trends to those described in this chapter, but struggled more intensely to maintain their identity more acutely. This resulted in an interplay between the need on the part of local music groups for community support coupled with a desire to realise success on a national scale.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NATIONAL TRENDS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT: MUSICAL PERFORMANCE IN SHARPEVILLE FROM 1960 TO 1985

In this chapter we continue examining the complex relationship which had developed between Sharpeville residents and the broader national culture which was introduced in the previous chapter, through a consideration of musical performance in Sharpeville. It will be seen how the example of musical performance captures the subtleties of this relationship most distinctly.

In Chapter Four it was seen how the Sharpetown Swingsters relied upon the support of the local community to ensure their survival after 1960 when the popularity of jazz music in general began to decline. Also seen was a tension between accomplishment, which was defined in terms of success achieved outside of Sharpeville; and survival, which was only possible via the support of the community. The music groups which were formed in the 1960s and 1970s in Sharpeville experienced these trends in much the same way. This chapter examines the rise (and in some cases decline) of three Sharpeville bands, each of which was shaped at various times by several interrelated factors: firstly, there were the factors which influenced their emergence, the styles of music they played and the image they portrayed. Here the media

and the state played a prominent role: it will seen how the 1960s and 1970s witnessed significant changes in styles and patterns of popular music which were by-and-large influenced by the wider availability of the radio.

The second influencing element was a band's need for money to purchase instruments, a factor which exposed it to the involvement and possible exploitation of patrons. The chapter demonstrates that neither professionalism nor patronage were restricted to football - both were apparent in the development of popular music in Sharpeville. Indeed, in musical performance these phenomena were even further advanced; they had much earlier roots - as evidenced by the desire on the part of the Sharpetown Swingsters to generate success outside of Sharpeville during the 1950s, an overall trend which was part of a preoccupation with national and, ultimately, international success.

This introduces the final influencing factor: a band's need for an audience as well as its goal of securing a recording contract. Indeed, the success of any musician depends upon the popularity of his or her music nationally, or even better, internationally, the key element being a recording contract which means the availability of the music on record. Here we consider the tension between the necessity to rely on local community

support and the desire for success outside of the community, which reflected a curious interplay between music groups and their local support base. In some instances this tension became impossible to resolve, resulting in the disbanding of the music group.

Changing styles: music in the 1960s

The 1960s signified the demise of African jazz. Many of the jazz greats of the 1950s departed from South Africa: some, such as Miriam Makeba and the Manhattan Brothers, left with the famous musical, "King Kong," in 1960, while others, like Hugh Masekela, Letta Mbulu and Dollar Brand, followed later. Those who remained were unable to command the same interest they were able to during the 1950s, due to laws restricting movement, particularly laws restricting performance in white group areas, as well as changing listening trends among audiences. Thus in the 1950s, jazz musicians had expressed overt political opposition to the implementation of apartheid, as indicated by the titles of songs such as "Bye Bye Sophiatown" by the Sun Valley Sisters, Brown's Cool Six's "Asibadali" ("We Aren't Paying [Rent]") (RCA 74042), "Evaton" (AFC 400) - which supported the Evaton bus-boycotters in 1955 - by the Satchmore Serenaders, and Strike Vilakazi's "Meadowlands", popularised by Nancy Jacobs, a song protesting against the destruction of Sophiatown. But by the 1960s and 1970s, the majority of

the musical shows were those sponsored by recording companies featuring top recording artists singing mbaganga and mgashiyo song.[1] The record companies, in an effort to avoid political and social controversy, turned their attention to a less political form of music. Largely illiterate rural performers were hired by record companies, and produced a highly traditional version of "mbaganga". This was a far cry from the mbaganga jazz of the 1950s and was designed to appeal to the extensive group of uneducated workers - migrant, domestic and industrial labourers rather than to the intellectuals and middle classes for whom jazz had been appealing.[2] The music involved setting rural songs to township rhythms which were played at a rapid tempo.[3]

In 1960 Radio Bantu was introduced by the South African government. Its style of broadcasting embodied the government's idea of separate development and it included separate stations for each ethnic group, numbering seven individual black radio services. It was based on an invented ethnicity which, for urban people at least, had little meaning. The station played mainly mbaganga music, choral and other forms of music, but no jazz; this incensed jazz fans as this letter to a local newspaper in 1961 illustrates:

> Whoever is responsible for the Radio Bantu programmes has earned himself unprintable remarks from the south-western townships' folks who have rediffusion sets in their homes ... Most of the programmes are sheer torture. Sometime ago there was a half-hour jazz programme every Monday. When it was

> thought that at least some form of consideration was being given to modern jazz lovers, the programme went off the air without any notice. This was one of the very few popular programmes in the network. Things have got so bad that listeners have had to stomach Eskimo and Alaskan music ... Sunday is among the worst days for a modern listener. It seems the idea is to convert listeners either to monks or nuns ... We jazz fans are the most starved. I've just about had my fill of "mbaqanga" and choral music hours on end. Can't they do something about this? Let's face it. This is a modern world so let's live up to it and have modern tastes.[4]

However, "traditional" mbaqanga music was to become the staple musical diet of many Africans in South Africa. Jazz did not die out altogether and there were a number of jazz festivals in the 1960s, such as the Cold Castle Jazz Festivals, as well as attempts at its revival by, for example, Ray Nkwe's Jazz Appreciation Society, in the mid-1960s. The youth in the townships, however, turned their attention to a new and exciting form of music which emerged in Britain and the USA in the 1950s, and which was to be heard on Lourenco Marques Radio. Indeed, it was through listening to LM radio that the members of Sharpeville band, the Beavers, first heard the likes of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, and decided to emulate them. For Jonas "Brian" Chaka and a few friends, the 1960s represented a time for a change in the style of music:

> The township jazz that we had at the time. We had bands like the Sharpetown Swingsters, the LY Swingsters, those people were really fantastic, and we felt, okay fine, that field has been covered already, how about we be creative and come up with something new ...[5]

Mbaganga music did not appeal to Chaka and his contemporaries, who were listening intently to LM radio:

> We used to have this Lourenco Marques music station that actually started during my primary school ... and that's when rock type music caught on. In those times we still had mbaganga, that was the in-thing.[6]

"Rock 'n' Roll" was to become a part of a new township style which rejected parochialism and which called for a greater awareness of the world, and it was the radio that facilitated this.

"Rock 'n' Roll" and LM Radio

The rise of "rock 'n' roll" entailed the beginning of a change in the structure of live musical performance; there was a reduction of the number of the members in a band, and the introduction and prominence of the electric guitar. In the United Kingdom, Rock 'n' Roll received virtually no air-play from the state-controlled, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which had an almost complete monopoly over radio airplay there. It was left to pirate radio stations, such as Radio Luxemburg, broadcasting from the European continent, to play Rock 'n' Roll with airplay - and its success, by the mid-1960s, prompted the BBC to change its attitude.[7]

The official policy of the Broadcasting Corporation in South Africa was similar. However, South Africans could listen to Radio Lourenco Marques (LM Radio), which

broadcast from neighbouring Mozambique. LM Radio began broadcasting in Portuguese in 1932 and the first English and Afrikaans broadcasts went out in 1935.[8] The LM announcers or disc jockeys were the catalyst for the station's popularity, as this report in the 1950s indicates:

> Lourenco Marques announcers are popular. That's why L.M. succeeds! David Davies, for example, [has been] Southern Africa's top disc jockey for over 12 years! His "L.M. Hit Parade" is still the most listened to programme in its field.[9]

Judging from the work of most writers on black South African music, LM Radio does not merit consideration as a factor in influencing African popular music. Andersson writes about LM Radio in the context of "white" music in South Africa.[10] Importantly, she does note that LM Radio listenership polls only ever considered the white audience, while listenership polls of Radio 5, which took over LM Radio following Mozambique's independence in 1976, reveal that white listeners account for only a third of the total listenership.[11] Coplan, in his extensive examination of the development of African music and theatre in South Africa, does not mention LM Radio.[12] Neither does Lunn who, in a section on radio-broadcasting in this country, states that the only competition to Radio Bantu came from the more recently established independent radio stations such as Radio Bop and Capital

Radio, as well as the radio station of the African National Congress, Radio Freedom, which broadcasts from Lusaka.[13] Lunn's omission is particularly glaring given the writer's observation that while "children in the 1950s emulated their favourite local bands, children in the 1960s witnessed the birth of the four-man pop group on radio,"[14] and further that:

> for the majority of young blacks the music of the 1960s was the main element that they adopted of international currents. Hundreds of young groups started out attempting to emulate the successful pop groups presented to them on records and radio.[15]

Following my research in Sharpeville, it is clear that LM Radio had a profound influence on the youth there during the 1960s and early 1970s. It is true, as Lunn observes, that young blacks were influenced by the recordings of international pop groups. But they were introduced to them through LM Radio. Sharpeville musician, Philip Mafiki Marakoane, was a teenager during the 1960s:

> I was influenced by the Beatles because of Dave Davies [LM Radio DJ] That guy, he could just put one there. "Here comes "Satisfaction" by the Rolling Stones." "Here come the Kinks." I liked them all, these bands, by the way he talks and I could imagine myself playing. My parents used to pull my legs every night because I listened to LM Radio until I sleep. One day I saw this picture of "Help", then I saw the Beatles [on the cover]. I said come on, these guys are so "hippie". To be a musician is something like a semi-god. People love you, people surround you, people want to grab you. I said I want to be this way, but I thought it was for whites. But fortunately that guy [Davies] came. I sang every song of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Archies ...[16]

According to Lunn, the trend in the 1960s was toward international pop groups and away from the large jazz ensembles of the 1950s. Music bands in the townships now consisted of three guitarists, lead, rhythm and bass, a drummer and, in a few case, an organist.[17] Names adopted by the groups reflected those international bands they were emulating, an example being the "Insects", a name obviously derived from the Beatles.[18] In Sharpeville, groups such as the Beavers, the Beatniks, and the Hurricanes emerged. Jonas "Brian" Chaka, a member of the Beavers, recalls that LM Radio not only influenced musicians, but represented hipness and style:

> You know, in fact, that [Radio Bantu] was a lot of trash that. It was just one hour a day, no, thirty minutes, 9.30 to 10.00. For black people it's just 9.30 to 10.00. It was useless. So we just listened to LM radio ... Wow, the DJ at that time was Dave Davies. Everywhere you go you talk about what you listen to on LM radio. You would try to get attention from it. We used to quote LM radio during those times. Every hour they used to announce in Portuguese. So we would quote that, everywhere you go, even outside, no matter where you are, once you quote that, people say, hey there's a guy! It was a status, to show who you are. So we used to quote everywhere we went, you know, the Portuguese.[19]

This is confirmed by other residents. Bella Matsatsi, who operates a shebeen which plays the latest and best jazz and soul music, recalls growing up listening to LM Radio, later to Radio Swazi and Capitol 604.[20] Chris Jana also recalls listening to LM Radio "because during that time there were no stations better than LM Radio."[21]

The 1960s saw the radiogram or "Spacegram" gain prominence.[22] Lunn notes the change from the 1950s:

> The children of the 1950s who had gathered around bicycle shops and imitated their favourite bands on their home-made instruments, were now accustomed to music offered on radio and on the gramophone, and were also in a position to buy them. A live band was not so necessary at a party or stokfel as a record or radio would suffice.[23]

In fact, radiograms became a part of this new township style. Along with displaying records, it became fashionable to carry a radiogram around as well:

> There was this thing called "Gramophone". I put it on my head, I put it on my head and walk around. When I bought a record I just hold it at my side and keep it there the whole day, the whole day. I made sure that every weekend I bought a record, even if I don't eat.[24]

LM Radio had an important influence on the music that Sharpeville bands, the Beavers and the Hurricanes, played. It also played an important role in the style of the township youth during the 1960s. From this it can be surmised that Africans in other areas were listening to LM Radio as well and therefore any consideration of African popular music or even popular culture during this period is incomplete without considering the influence of LM Radio. For Sharpeville residents LM Radio was very much an aspect of their moving away from parochialism, a part of their "need" to embrace national as well as international music trends.

Pop music in Sharpeville in the 1960s: "The Beavers"

The story of the Beavers is an excellent example of the influence of LM Radio and the music it played, as well as how a band embraced national and international trends. It also highlights the tension between a band's need for success defined in national terms and its dependence on local community support for its survival.

Lunn has argued that:

> ... the groups that played pop music [in and around Johannesburg?] in the late 1960s were mainly Coloured or Indian, while those that played soul music were black.[25]

This might have been the case for Johannesburg, or perhaps Fordsburg, the example she cites. However, in Sharpeville in the late 1960s, groups were copying, in both music and clothes[26], the style of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. It was only in the early 1970s that soul music appeared in the township. Before then, there were groups such as the Beavers and the Tulips, and later the Hurricanes, who imitated the Mersey sound. Chris Jana recalls:

> We had the Beavers and, in the '70s, then there were the Hurricanes. They were very good, I liked those young boys who were singing ... Why I'm saying I liked these two bands is because these two bands were playing similar music to the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.[27]

The formation of the Beavers also introduces another aspect of life in Sharpeville from the 1960s. The members of the Beavers were one of the first generations of children to be exposed to Bantu education. Despite its inferior quality as well as the fact that it was another tier of the state's programme of separate development, Bantu education exposed more black children to education. It is thus not surprising that subsequent upheavals and protests in the black areas had their roots in the academic environment - as evident in the Soweto revolt of 1976[28] as well as the role of students in the Vaal upheavals in 1984[29]. In the sphere of cultural activities, schools also began to play a prominent role.

The Beavers was formed by a group of school friends at Lekoa Shandu High School in Sharpeville. Jonas "Brian" Chaka, the son of a minister, was born in 1948 in LadyBrand, OFS, and arrived with his family in Vergenoeg, Sharpeville, in 1957. He first began listening to LM Radio whilst at primary school. In 1964, he proceeded to Lekoa Shandu Secondary School. There he became friendly with three fellow pupils, Arthur Moabi, Sonny Boy Modisakeng and Sophonia Mokgoera, all of whom were fond of LM Radio. Chaka was a good deal younger than the others:

> I was still a "piccanin" then. I was the youngest member of the Beavers. The others were bigger than me. There was quite a difference, something like six to eight years between me and them.[30]

The four decided to form a band and play the music they were listening to on the radio station:

> Those were the times in actual fact when bands that actually had an influence on us were the Rolling Stones, remember, the Beatles. In fact, the things we were trying to venture into, trying to bring something new into here, maybe sort of try to fuse it with African music. We thought that African music as it was needed to be improved and we thought we could take a bit of Western and a bit of African, sort of mix it, and come out with a new sound ... We were trying to try something new, but also try to satisfy our people. So it was a bit difficult trying to strike a balance. We actually chased some people away ...[31]



Fig. xiv <u>The Beavers c.1968. An example of the influence of British pop-group fashion</u>

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Fig. xiv The Beavers c.1968. An example of the influence of British pop-group fashion

They chose their name to capitalise on the status afforded by outside towns to groups coming from Johannesburg:

> ... most times we were not recognised as a group from Sharpeville because whatever exposure we did get from newspapers, they would say a group from Johannesburg. Most of the time people used to confuse us with the group the Beaters, because by the time we started at [illegible] Shandu, the Beaters started then at Orlando High, you see. That is why we decided on the Beavers, I'm sure of it, because of the Beaters. They called themselves the Beaters, so we called ourselves the Beavers. Somebody just came out jokingly like that.[32]

This quote offers another aspect of the perception by the residents of Sharpeville of the inferior nature of their cultural activities. In this instance the Beavers were aware of the media focus on groups from Johannesburg and chose their name to capitalise on this - even if it meant denying their Sharpeville origin.

Just as footballers required money to purchase equipment, the Beavers, like the Sharpetown Swingsters before them, had to acquire instruments. While the Sharpetown Swingsters formed once all members had purchased instruments, the Beavers in fact formed before they had done so. Further, only one member - Moabi - could actually play the guitar, having taught himself by studying guitar-playing manuals. The others had some musical experience from participating in the school's bugle band. Their biggest contribution was simply raw enthusiasm and an interest in the same type of music.

Later that year - 1964 - Moabi, who was in Standard Nine, left school and obtained work at a construction company in Pretoria. Now a wage-earner, Moabi was able to provide the band's first instrument. He played a pivotal role during the initial development of the group:

> The original Beavers included Arthur Moabi, who is late now. He was the tallest in the group, very tall, something like six foot something, and he was the driving force behind the Beavers because he knew his guitar ... In '64 while I and the other guys were still at school, Arthur was working, and he organised the first guitar. The guy on drums used to play on the table ... In fact with me I never played before. He [Moabi] knew how to play and taught us. Drums, well I knew how to play from the school band. But in actual fact we were all taught by that guy who is late.[33]

As Moabi was working in Pretoria, where he remained during the week, the band could only practise on weekends:

> He [Moabi] would go to work on Monday morning and come back on Fridays and then Fridays we would go to the practise ... We would go to town in the morning [Saturday] and then we would start practice at about ten o' clock, and then we would play until about twelve midnight. Sunday we would get there even earlier, about 8am and go right through until 12, even 1 o' clock.[34]

The Beavers' drummer, Sophonia Mokgoera, also in Standard Nine, left school soon after Moabi to also commence working. When he could afford it, he purchased a set of drums. He was also able to offer a room for the band to practise in:

> The chap who was playing drums, he had a room at the back of his place. So we used to put our instruments there. We used to call that place "Liverpool" [in reference to the home of the "Beatles"].[35]

Electrical power for the amplifiers and electric guitars was provided by a twelve-volt car battery.

Like the Sharpetown Swingsters, the Beavers exploited the support of Sharpeville's middle-class by performing locally at weddings and other events:

> We started locally. In fact what we did ... we had people who invited us to weddings and so on ... People used to come and say there's a wedding and I would like to make a big gig out of it, and I've got so much to spend. Even if it was R20, it was a lot of money then. We would go and play as long as there was transport to get our instruments there and back.[36]

Further, as with the Sharpetown Swingsters, they participated in "Battle of the Bands" contests, held at either the Communal Hall in Sharpeville or in one of the church halls. But these competitions did not involve quite the same selection of bands as they had with the Swingsters. Here they comprised only the Beavers and another local group, the Beatniks, and were organised and judged by musicians from the Transvaal Music Centre, the only store selling musical instruments in Vereeniging at the time. According to Chaka, the Beatniks won all the contests and this was because of their association with the Transvaal Music Centre:

> ... maybe you could say well it's normal for everybody who loses, he's always going to say because of that and that. But those guys [Beatniks], they had contacts. One of the guys was working there in Vereeniging at Transvaal Music Centre ... That guy, he used to organise the competitions there and would have his friends there, so it was obvious that every time they would be the winners ... They would have judges there, But the criterion you wouldn't

> know ... But on the other side we felt that let's continue playing. All that we need is just to get the experience, even if they beat us, the next time we would be there.[37]

The prize at stake during one of the contests was an instrument, the type of which was agreed upon prior to the contest by the two bands: "We would suggest what prize it is going to be. If it's a drum set. Okay, what type of drum set is it? The Beatniks would say, okay, we go along with it."[38]

Most of the members of the Beatniks were in fact "coloured", part of the small group of "coloured" people who resided in Sharpeville until 1967 when they were moved to Rus-Ter-Vaal.[39] The Beatniks were formed by a "Coloured" teacher, Benjamin Bernard, in early 1965, or at least it was he who purchased instruments for the band:[40]

> During those days there used to be these low quality guitars [which the Beavers had] and the Beatniks were rich and they used to have these expensive, beautiful instruments.[41]

Bernard is an example of a music patron who, as we have already seen in the case of football, effected the move of the Beatniks out of Sharpeville. The influence of music patrons is considered in more detail further on in this chapter.

The Beatniks modelled themselves on the Beatles and appear to have been popular among the residents of Sharpeville as this newspaper report indicates: "They

[Beatniks] are popular - like the Beatles of England. Wherever they play they cause a traffic jam in the township."[42] According to Chaka, however, the Beatniks kept apart from the other groups in Sharpeville: "... the Beatniks existed in isolation to any of the groups here."[43] But this was not because they were a "coloured" band: as has already been seen, the "coloured" people who resided in Sharpeville were integrated into the community.[44] Rather it was the fact that the Beatniks had a patron who, by providing their instruments, kept them away from the other musicians in the township. As will be seen below, because the majority of musicians in the township had access to few instruments of their own, they tended to assist each other in either acquiring more or sharing those that they had. By having the best instruments in the township the Beatniks were the envy of the Beavers and all other musicians in Sharpeville. This envy was translated into rivalry: for if they could outplay the Beatniks and their beautiful instruments it could only be attributed to skill:

> I would say, to put it mildly, they [the Beatniks] were rivals ... Every time, whenever we had to play with them, regardless of whether there were other groups there, our target was to beat the Beatniks. We were friends otherwise, but when it was a concert it was a different story.[45]

The most significant difference between the Beavers and the Beatniks, then, was the fact that the former had a patron to sponsor them. The Beavers could not afford all their instruments and as a result they had to wait for a

number of years before they were able to attempt to solicit support outside of Sharpeville. Indeed, from 1964 to 1968, they did not venture out of the Vaal Triangle:

> In actual fact why it took that long [to venture out of Sharpeville] is because we were trying to accumulate some instruments. They were quite expensive, especially the sound system. When we had our instruments we felt we were strong enough to branch out ...[46]

Despite the Beavers' initial lack of success, these contests laid the foundation for the band's future popularity in Sharpeville. After the demise of the Beatniks, the Beavers began to perform regular concerts at the Sharpeville communal hall on Saturday evenings and, as their popularity increased, at church halls on Sunday afternoons.



Fig. xv The Beavers performing at the Sharpeville communal hall c.1968

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In late 1967 the Beavers attempted to secure a recording contract with one of the recording houses based in Johannesburg. They sent tapes to talent scout and composer, Strike Vilakazi.[47] Vilakazi was impressed with what he heard, but as it was not mbaqanga music and therefore unlikely to be recorded, Vilakazi referred the Beavers to Gallo talent scout and manager of the famous mbaqanga group, the Mahotella Queens, Sam Alcock, who proposed to include them as a supporting act to their shows: "Sam Alcock said okay fine, let's see how you can shape up outside here. He organised shows, every Mahotella Queens show we'd be there.[48] For the Beavers this became a strategy to develop support for their particular brand of music, as Chaka explains:

> In actual fact we had gone through a certain change in the music because, prior to that [during the 1950s], we had people like Lemmy Special Mabaso. [Now] we had these Mahotella Queens ... [and] mbaqanga was really the in-thing ... [So] to try to put ourselves on the map, we started by organising shows hand-in-hand with these mbaqanga groups because they were crowd-pullers; so that we should begin to expose ourselves, to get more exposure, and try to see actually how we shape up with these mbaqanga groups.[49]

However, their goal of having their music recorded never materialised. In retrospect, it is clear that their hopes of recording were completely unfounded. Indeed, during the 1960s, the South African recording industry, dominated by EMI and Gallo, concentrated on recording

mbaganga and mbube music. This was because they were cheap to record, they - especially mbaganga - drew huge followings among the lower strata of both urban and rural African populations, and because they were acceptable to Radio Bantu, the chief marketing aid of the recording companies, whose policy - as has already been seen - dictated ethnic purity.[50] Indeed, in terms of broadcasted music, songs containing political references, no matter how obscure, were strictly censored. Further, songs containing any form of "township slang" were disallowed: Andersson notes that a Zulu song was rejected for containing the word, "jawler".[51] In order to ensure profitability, record companies have tended to follow similar censorship policies, while black groups have had to produce acceptable lyrics. Ladysmith Black Mambazo, a highly popular mbube group, have restricted their lyrics to the themes of religion and love, and acknowledge writing songs with the radio in mind.[52] This also affected the members of the Sharpeville band, the Hurricanes: "we [the Hurricanes] did nothing political. We were afraid that it would affect our record sales."[53] Jonas "Brian" Chaka of the Beavers, echoes the problems musicians faced during this period:

> During those times, these recording guys, from the recording studios, used to frustrate anybody. It doesn't matter even if you are coming out with something that is African music, but if you had anything that had English words in there, they wouldn't want to know anything about it. Even if it was mbaganga music ... your lyrics will be in one of our African languages. On the radio, when they

> started T.V., they did not want to hear any English words. So that was our handicap, it was really a weight mounted on us.[54]

The Beavers, realising that their attempts at securing an entree' into the recording studios were proving futile, turned to their local area to develop their support-base, linking with a mbaganga group from Sasolburg called the Space Queens, whose look and music was modelled on the Mahotella Queens:

> The Space Queens were coming in then [1969], they were really very hot ... It was a new and up-and-coming group in the Free State where people were not used to it. They were really going great guns, and with their manager we decided to try the Space Queens. So wherever they used to perform, we used to perform. Mainly they liked the Free State because in actual fact, in Johannesburg, they tried to venture into Johannesburg, but they could see it was just a flop because you see, Johannesburg people they feel that anything that comes from Johannesburg you can't equal. If you come from this side, suddenly you don't have any talent, you come from the farms, though the music is great. You just had to accept it and these people felt, hell, man, it's just useless here, let's concentrate on this side. Ultimately we felt, no, we accept it.[55]

This account illustrates how, despite a good deal of effort, because the Beavers were based outside of Johannesburg, they were left with only their own home community as audience (or at least, a local audience). Support from the local community, as well as support for each other, has been crucial in ensuring the survival of music bands in Sharpeville. This trend has a bearing on the community/rivalry theme: musicians in Sharpeville have faced a constant outside "threat" to their existence

because they have defined their success in terms of that achieved outside of the community. Yet, in attempting to attain this success, the odds have been stacked against Sharpeville musicians because of the distance between Sharpeville and Johannesburg, and the enormous difficulty of securing recording contracts. As a result, Sharpeville musicians have constantly reverted to their support-base in Sharpeville, as their efforts for wider recognition failed. Sharpeville resident and teacher, Oupa Phakoa, stated that Sharpeville was able to produce superior groups mainly because they were able to "... attain moral support from the Sharpeville people."[56]

In Chapter Three it was argued that community support for the Sharpetown Swingsters was crucial in ensuring their survival after 1960. During the 1950s, the band established its popularity within the community before it became more widely known, while after the 1950s, during a period when other jazz bands did not last, the Sharpetown Swingsters survived largely through the support of the community. The "organic" relationship which thus developed between the band and the community played a vital role in ensuring the survival of the band. A similar relationship sustained the groups which emerged later - the Beavers, the Hurricanes and later the Black Five - although the latter two enjoyed more more success outside of the community. While the Beavers were never able to secure recording contracts, the Hurricanes and

the Black Five were and this was due to both changes in the recording industry as well as the introduction to South Africa of "Soul" music, which reflected more closely the type of music the Beavers, who also adapted their style to it, were now playing. "Soul" music emerged at much the same time as black consciousness - which had a profound influence upon African political development in South Africa during the 1970s.

"Soul Music"

According to Chambers, soul music, unlike Rock 'n' Roll, had its foundations in the Negro church and gospel music, which was "... grafted onto secular rhythms, producing the "soul community"."[57] Soul was in fact a combination of blues and gospel music, both Afro-American traditions. For American blacks, it represented a return to their African roots, encapsulated in this statement from soul musician, Dennis Brown: "Africa? Africa? Africa? Just the mention of the name, man, is like you call my name."[58] Soul music was part of a trend among American blacks toward re-discovering their roots and asserting African culture and their skin colour as something to be proud of; articulated in the Black Power movement. In South Africa this became one basis of the Black Consciousness movement.[59] In the 1970s, soul music produced a similar effect, particularly on youth, to that which black American performance culture had on African popular

culture in the 1940s and 1950s. Indeed, as recordings of American soul artists, particularly that recorded under the Motown label, such as Diana Ross and the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, James Brown, Curtis Mayfield and Aretha Franklin became available, so the popularity of soul music among Africans flourished. Jacob Macheli, a member of the Sharpeville band, the Hurricanes, recalls that the group was influenced by the music of Otis Redding.[60] In South Africa, soul groups such as the All Rounders and Inne-Laws emerged in the late 1960s and drew enormous support.[61] While the lyrics of the American artists reflected the message of the BC movement there, those of local artists were less strong because of existing censorship although, according to Lunn, their lyrics "... were, nevertheless, assertive and realistic."[62]

In Sharpeville, the popularity of soul among the youth there boosted the success of the Beavers and they now no longer needed to play second fiddle to the mbaqanga groups. They were able to abandon touring with the Space Queens, and could tour the country towns of the OFS and the Vaal Triangle alone. At this point they felt that, despite not having had their music recorded, they had reached their objective - their music was being recognised in its own right:

> We were actually achieving our objective ... That was because people were coming to accept our brand of music. There was a certain trend among the people tha if you love a different music from what was common [ie. mbaqanga], sort of make them unique among the people, and we could see that it was now a

> prestige amongst the young ones to say that "I like the Beavers", "I'm going to a show of the Beavers"... So I think why I say it was the best year for us, we managed to influence a lot of groups ... We even used to enjoy shows around here. We didn't go out much because we had so much support around this area.[63]

The persistence the Beavers had displayed finally paid dividends. Indeed, eight years is a long time to wait, but, as with the Sharpetown Swingsters, their dedication and patience, and the fact that they had a supportive community held them together and finally offered them a measure of success:

> ... we started getting something like R200, R400. I mean for us to get something like R900 during those times, it was very exciting, very exciting, because you buy a brand new guitar for something like R350. Transport to Bloemfontein would cost something like R285, so R900 was a big amount.[64]

But while the Beavers were experiencing success wider than simply Sharpeville it was still very much on the wrong side of the rural/urban divide. It was only later bands who/which attained real success. The first of these was the Hurricanes.

The Hurricanes: "We existed like a family of groups"

The Hurricanes were formed in March 1966 by Jacob Macheli and Philip Marokoane. Both lived in the same street in the neighbourhood of Vuka, in Sharpeville. Macheli was born in Top Location in 1950, the son of a taxi owner. Marokoane, born in 1954, was one of the first generation of children to be born in Sharpeville. His father was an

ordinary labourer. Like the members of the Beavers, both Macheli and Marokoane were interested in the music broadcasted by LM radio, listening together and then attempting to copy out the lyrics of songs they heard.[65] Macheli had an acoustic guitar which belonged to his uncle, and he and Marakoane used to take it to members of the Beavers to tune.[66] They would listen to the music on the radio, then attempt to play it by ear. As with the members of the Beavers, they were inspired by groups such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.[67] It was Macheli's idea to form the band:

> The guy [Macheli] wanted to form a band. He was very intelligent. He was a little bit older than me ... They [Macheli's parents] were rich at that place; they were owning kombis and everything, and they were just buying everything for him. People were poor, poor. I was poor, but I was talented and he just fetched me. Then I went along with him.[68]

Next, Macheli enlisted three school friends at Lekoa Shandu High School who had similar interests in music, Stephen Molefe, Abram Modisakeng and Stanley Thipe.[69] As with the Beavers, the Hurricanes did not have much experience in the way of playing instruments: "We [Macheli and Marokoane] had an acoustic guitar and we were playing together ... The other guys ... couldn't play either. We started from scratch."[70] Unlike the Beavers, however, the Hurricanes did not have to wait until they could afford to buy instruments before they began to play. The Beavers let them borrow their instruments to practise with until they were able to purchase their own. And when it came to purchasing