

THE RELATION BETWEEN HOSTELS AND THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON THE
REEF FROM JULY 1990 TO DECEMBER 1993: A CASE STUDY OF MERAPE
AND MEADOWLANDS HOSTELS IN SOWETO

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ABSTRACT

This thesis set out to investigate the relation between hostels and the political violence on the Reef between July 1990 and December 1993 which claimed 4756 lives. This relation is anchored in a broader discussion of firstly, political violence in South Africa generally, and secondly of the hostel system. This contextualisation frames the investigation of two Sowetan hostels Meadowlands and Merafe. These two hostels were among those that became focal points of political violence on the Reef during the period under review. The thesis argues that the political violence and conflict on the Reef between 1990 and 1993 constituted a 'war' in which these and other hostels played a crucial part. The Inkatha Freedom Party colonised these institutions, ejected non-Zulu and ANC supporters and transformed the hostels from migrants camps into "fortresses of fear" from which many attacks on township residents were launched. The thesis attempts to understand this process through an in-depth investigation of Meadowlands and Merafe hostels as case studies. It attempts to draw a sociological profile of these two hostels. This has involved examining these hostels as social institutions, the social relations and culture operating within them, and their place in the social structure of the surrounding community. The thesis has included an investigation of the social characteristics of hostel residents such as their ethnic identity, age, gender identity,

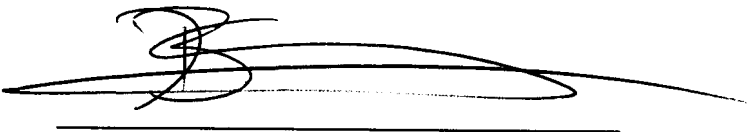
marital, employment status, political affiliation and work history. These multiple identities are components in attempting to explain the participation of many hostel residents in political violence. Through a series of in-depth interviews the thesis has attempted to map their different experiences and understandings of political violence in relation to their broader aspirations, beliefs and world views. It is asserted that any investigation of the relation between hostels and political violence requires this attempt to map a 'view from below' which goes deeper than official statistics and media accounts.

"I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended."

- Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

DECLARATION

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



BABYLON MGCINA KA XEKETWANE

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28 day 16/1995

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Finally, my family was, as always, most gracious during the period of my engagement with this thesis. May their generosity and patience yield fruit for eternity.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family Boitomelo, Nonkululeko, and Rolihlahla who throughout my studies have lived the lives of a migrant family. They have grown to understand the pain of growing up as strangers.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC - African National Congress
AZAPO - Azanian People Organisation
CASE - Community Agency for Social Enquiry
CIIR - Catholic Institute for International Relations
COSATU - Congress of South African Trade Unions
DBSA - Development Bank of South Africa
ECC - End Conscription Campaign
HRC - Human Research Council
IBIIR - Independent Board of Inquiry
ICJ - International Commission of Jurists
IDAF - International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa
IFP - Inkatha Freedom Party
JCC - Johannesburg City Council
JMC - Joint Management Council
LIC - Low Intensity Conflict
MDM - Mass Democratic Movement
MK - Umkhonto We Sizwe
NHRA - National Hostel Residence Association
PAC - Pan Africanist Congress
RDP - Reconstruction and Development Programme
SCA - Soweto Civic Association
SACCWU - South African Commercial Catering Workers Unions
SADF - South African Defence Force
SAIRR - South African Institute of Race Relations
SAMWU - South African Municipal Workers Union
SAP - South African Police

SSRC - Soweto Student Representative Council
THRA - Transvaal Hostel Residents Association
TV - Television
UDF - United Democratic Front
UWUSA - United Workers Union of South Africa
WRAB - West Rand Administration Board

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This thesis aims to analyze the role hostels played in the political violence on the Reef from the time political violence erupted in July 1990 until December 1993. It does so through two case studies of the Merafe and Meadowlands hostels in Soweto.

The thesis will analyze what is new and distinctive in this pattern of political violence and the role played by hostel residents in this pattern. The thesis will argue that while "war" is a contested notion, the political violence that engulfed the Reef constituted a war. It will further argue that the hostel system played an indispensable role in this conflict since it frequently provided bases and launch pads for the agents of political violence.

This thesis explores the relation between hostels and political violence on the Reef between 1990 and 1993 largely by attempting to draw a sociological profile of both the Merafe and Meadowlands hostels in Soweto. This has involved examining these hostels as social institutions, the social relations and culture operating within them, and their place in the social structure of the surrounding township. The thesis has included an investigation of the social composition

of the hostels which has focused on the social characteristics of the hostel residents, such as ethnic identity, age, gender identity, marital status, employment status and work history. Through a series of interviews the thesis has attempted to map the different experiences and understandings of political violence of hostel residents in relation to their differing political beliefs and broader world views.

The thesis will present these arguments in five chapters. The first chapter analyses political violence in South Africa. It is argued that the destabilisation policies of the apartheid government which were initially aimed at neighbouring countries, were later turned inwards, into South Africa, in order to weaken the anti-apartheid forces and prevent South Africa's move towards democracy. These destabilisation methods introduced South Africa to a type of political violence that had never been seen in the country before, and brought "war" to the Reef.

The next chapter focuses on the hostels. It traces the changing nature of hostels on the Reef from their inception in 1913 as migrant labour hostels built to house single males in the inner cities. The following chapter attempts to understand the role which Meadowlands hostel played in political violence. It traces its historical origins, the social characteristics of its inhabitants and their relationship with neighbouring communities. The next chapter examines similar themes and describes the role which the Merafe hostel

played in the political violence and how both provided sanctuary for "warlords" imported from Natal. In both these chapters it is shown that violent conflict connected to fears, insecurities, values, beliefs and aspirations which were deeply embedded in the social identity of the hostel residents. Their multiple identities as Zulus, men, migrants, Inkatha supporters, and hostel residents are crucial ingredients in attempting to explain why many of them participated in political violence.

The chapters which focus on the Merafe and Meadowlands hostels describe and analyze the changing relationships between the hostel dwellers and the residents of the surrounding townships from the time these hostels were built in the 1960's until the 1990's. It will be shown how the 1990's brought enmity and antagonism between the hostel inmates and residents of neighbouring townships. These two chapter suggest that these relationships could not have changed so drastically in the 1990's without the aid of a well organised "hidden hand" or 'third force'. The final chapter raises some questions on the role of hostels in the new dispensation and maps different accounts of how hostel residents may be integrated into a peaceful and democratic future.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Political violence engulfed South Africa to an unprecedented degree between 1990 and 1993. Significant characteristics of

this pattern of violence compared with the past are its geographical spread, intensity, source and duration.

Between 1990 and 1993 political violence appeared to follow a pattern. It intensified at moments of political consensus, for example, as soon as the African National Congress (ANC) was tied to the negotiation process by signing the Pretoria Minute, suspended their armed struggle in August 1990 and committed themselves to the peace accord signed in September 1991, the numbers of deaths and injuries rose to an all-time high between July 1990 and August 1991 (Everatt, 1991).

Another significant characteristic of the political violence was that it seemed to decline at times when it could embarrass the government. When the then state president of South Africa F.W de Klerk went on his diplomatic mission in October 1990, the violence declined a great deal; the same thing occurred when parliament opened in January 1991, and again when Inkatha and the ANC signed their ineffective peace accord on the 29th January 1991. Once again the violence decreased when the government sponsored a peace conference in June, which was boycotted by all the liberation movements but was attended by Inkatha. At all of these times a significant downturn of violence was experienced (Everatt, 1991).

It appeared that the level of violence declined when it could damage de Klerk's government, and it peaked when it could obstruct and weaken the government's rivals. The initiators

of this violence were obviously against any "genuine and workable moves toward creating a peaceful climate and normalising political life in South Africa" (Everatt, 1991: 5).

This thesis suggests that the political violence on the Reef was deliberately imported from Natal where it had been raging since the 1980's. The youth/comrades, the "warlords" and the hostel residents were central antagonists in this political violence on the Reef. Many South Africans both inside and outside the hostels who have experienced this violence defined it as a "war".

3. METHODOLOGY: RESEARCHING THE "WAR"

In researching political violence on the Reef generally, this thesis has employed the triangulation method of research. Triangulation refers to the use of a number of different and distinct research methods to gather data (Babbie, 1989; Bailey, 1987;). The study has mainly used qualitative investigative methods of research. Mouton claims that this approach "concentrates on qualities of human behaviour, i.e. on the qualitative aspects as against the quantitatively measurable aspects of human behaviour" (Mouton, 1988: 1). He continues by arguing that "the aim of such research is not to explain human behaviour in terms of universally valid laws or generalisations, but rather to understand and interpret the meanings and intentions that underlie everyday human action"

(Ibid). Qualitative research methodology thus seeks to explore social relations which are not always observable and measurable. The emphasis of qualitative research is insight into the social world of social actors. It is primarily aimed at exploring the meaning of social situations from the participants' point of view. It has been argued that qualitative variables are broadly used by sociological researchers in "observational studies" (Bailey, 1987: 60-61). Schwartz and Jacobs have further added that an advantage of qualitative methods is the "use of natural language because it is best at gaining access to the life-world of individuals" (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979: 5).

This thesis also follows a case-study approach. As Rose (1991) points out, one of the advantages of the case study is that it allows flexibility in the choice of methods of data collection. Case studies provide one of the main arenas in which quantitative and qualitative research material can be combined. The aim of case studies is not to infer the findings from a sample to a population but rather to identify patterns of theoretical importance (Bryman, 1989).

McNeill claims that "a case-study involves the in-depth study of a single example of whatever it is that the sociologist wishes to investigate. It may prompt further, more wide-ranging research, providing ideas to be followed up later, or it may be that some broad generalization is brought to life by a case-study" (McNeill, 1990: 87-88). The case-study

method of research is appropriate for an individual researcher because it enables him/her to study one aspect of a problem in some depth within a limited time (Bell, 1992).

The main methods employed in the research were:

- (i) A survey of both primary and secondary sources. Bryman emphasises that the examination of documents such as policy statements, speeches, minutes, reports and so on is an integral element in qualitative research.
- (ii) 82 interviews with male hostel inmates. This included:
 - 51 interviews with Merafe hostel inmates
 - 31 interviews with Meadowlands hostel inmates.
 These were in-depth, semi-structured interviews using a questionnaire (see Appendix 1). These included closed-ended questions to obtain background information as well as open-ended questions which allowed for elaboration on key issues (Phillips, 1985). They are referred to in the text as "respondents".
- (iii) 28 interviews with women connected to male hostel inmates.
- (iv) 18 Interviews with key informants:

These were people who had particular expertise on the topic under investigation such as:

 - Sanku Molaudi: PAC chairperson, Mapetla
 - Zwelethu Mseleku: PAC vice-secretary Meadowlands

- Godfrey Xgowa: AZAPO spokesperson Mapetla
- Peku Libumba: AZAPO secretary, Meadowlands
- Dr Golimolimo Mokae: AZAPO national spokesperson
- Mgungulu Ngwenya: ANC spokesperson Meadowlands
- Absolom Mogwera: ANC spokesperson Mapetla
- Sakie Macozoma: ANC national spokesperson
- Themba Khoza: IFP national leader
- Humphrey Ndlovu: IFP Transvaal leader
- Nkohlakalo Hlongwane: IFP spokesperson Mapetla
- Skhumbuzo Zuma: IFP spokesperson Meadowlands
- Ndabandaba Dube: Merafe hostel induna
- Sizwe Mkhize: Merafe hostel induna
- Dr R. Taylor: Wits academic
- Rev. P.K Ngcosi: Priest involved with peace initiatives
- Thembinkosi Ngcobo: sociologist
- Ndoda Mthiyane: Transvaal Hostel Association
- Ntethelelo Nxumalo: Transvaal Hostel Association
- Mojalefa Moseleki: Soweto Council spokesperson.

(v) 15 interviews with township residents in Merafe and Meadowlands using a questionnaire. (See Appendix 2). These were randomly selected from the houses adjoining the two hostels.

(vi) Participant observation. This was probably the most important research method employed. It involved spending time in the hostels in order to obtain a more nuanced understanding and "insiders" experience of hostel life including leisure patterns, social

networks, political and cultural practices. Furthermore, the information gleaned through participant observation "allows the observer into the everyday social worlds of the people under study" helped to provide a more complete picture of the working environments of the respondents" (van der Burgh, 1988: 63). In addition, this method built and strengthened the relationships between myself and the respondents, which enhanced the quality of the interviews conducted and the information obtained.

"It is the task of the social scientist to interpret the meanings and experiences of social actors, a task that can only be achieved through participation with the individuals involved" (Burgess, 1984: 78). The participant observer gathers data by participating in the daily life of the group or organisation studied, and then by watching the people he/she is studying to see how they behave in the situations in which they find themselves (Becker, 1958: 652). The central value of participant observation "lies in the opportunity that is available to collect rich detailed data based on observations in natural settings" (Burgess, 1984: 79). Schatzman and Strauss (1973) state that the participant observer must avoid creating a disturbance through their presence. Rather, they should aim to integrate themselves into the life and work of the people in the setting under observation (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

Distinctions are made between active and passive roles, open and closed roles and known and unknown participant observers. Gold distinguished four ideal typical roles: "the complete participant, the participant as observer, the observer as participant, and the complete observer" (Burgess, 1984: 80).

In this study I adopted the role of "observer as participant" whereby the researcher is a participant in ongoing activities while his/her identity as a researcher is known (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973: 61). The role of "participant as observer", requires a more active role in the work and practice of the respondents, was not possible in this study as the respondents were all permanent inmates of the hostel and I was not. The scope for active participation was therefore limited.

Burgess, however, points out that in practice the role of "participant observers" is often not so sharply distinguished. Rather, he says, that the participating field worker may well find his/her position and activities changing from time to time (Burgess, 1984). This point is echoed by Olsen and Whittaker who argue that roles are often not clear-cut in the research experience in that roles exist simultaneously, and that overlap occurs (Olsen and Whittaker, 1967).

4. INITIAL RESEARCH PREPARATION

Meadowlands and Merafe hostels are two of the biggest hostels in Soweto. They have an estimated population of 5 600 and

4 782 registered tenants respectively. However, unofficial figures of people residing in both these hostels far surpasses the official figures. Merafe hostel consists of fourteen blocks. Each block houses approximately 400 people. Meadowlands hostel on the other hand consists of sixteen blocks, each block also houses approximately the same number of people as Merafe hostel. The rapid changes in these hostels' population has introduced a new phenomenon in each hostel. Whereas hostels used to be occupied only by men, each hostel block now includes men, women and children.

The nature and the limited time given to this project allowed for only a small sample to be interviewed from each hostel. The large number of people required to make generalisations from a survey of the entire hostel of 5 600 and 7 000 people, would have been impossible to establish.

A pilot study of five respondents in each hostel was carried out in both hostels to establish social networks and to determine time considerations, ambiguity of questions, wording or language and whether questions were too intricate, and to ensure that they were simple and direct. In the pilot study I was always provided with an "escort" (a person to ensure that I did not ask any sensitive questions that would endanger the IFP or the hostel).

It was discovered in the pilot study that the questionnaire was too long. However, we were unable to omit any question

because all questions were geared to probe certain responses which were crucial to the study. The pilot phase further revealed that there were questions that were not liked by some hostel inmates. Those questions were subsequently rephrased.

This piloting phase provided a number of discoveries, some of which proved the significance of an intensive interview. I was able to probe a range of very important understandings some of which had not been included in the questionnaire. This type of interview generated a better environment for extracting information, since it involved direct participation by the respondents (Williamson et al., 1982: 163-173).

The co-operation of all respondents in the piloting interviews was far beyond my expectation, an incentive that motivated me to continue this research.

5. SAMPLING

There are two broad types of samples, namely, the probability and the non-probability sample. "A probability sample is one in which each person has an equal chance (or probability) of being selected" (de Vause, 1986: 52). The principle of random selection is one in which equal probability of selection is ensured. Random sampling is possible when a sampling frame, i.e. a list of all members in the research population, is available. These methods are predominantly utilised in survey research where quantitative results are the aim and outcome

of the research. The issue of representivity and generalisability are central within the context of this research method.

A non-probability sampling method was, however, the most appropriate sampling technique for this study. While non-random sampling generates difficulties with the representivity and generalisability of the results, it is useful where the researcher is interested in obtaining a range of responses and ideas people have, rather than establishing what proportion of the population gives what response (de Vause, 1986: 68). A snowballing technique which incorporated the use of quota sampling was employed. This technique makes use of set quotas, which cover particular characteristics, aimed to produce a more representative sample. Quota sampling is "usually defined by such criteria as social class, age and sex" (Shipman, 1988: 57). Shipman goes on to say "quota sampling has to be used [where] it is impossible to find lists from which a probability sample of the population can be drawn" (Ibid).

In this regard hostel residents from different age groups, employment status and work experiences were interviewed.

Interviews were conducted in both these hostels during the week and on weekends, in order to target the employed and the unemployed inhabitants of these hostels. All 82 interviewees in the hostels were randomly selected according to hostel blocks. Interviews were conducted during the day and in the

evenings. Interviewing inmates in the evening helped in gaining insight into life in the hostel after sunset.

6. INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

During the time the research was conducted in the two hostels, violence burst out from time to time and involved inmates from both hostels and their neighbouring communities. Because of this it was a great effort to reach a target of 51 interviewees in Merafe hostel and 31 in Meadowlands hostel.

Conducting field work in the hostels was not an easy task, particularly because the field work was conducted at the peak of the political violence on the Reef. This required appropriately timing visits to the hostels as well as carefully explaining my mission to my contact persons and my interviewees. Winning the confidence of both the contact person and the interviewees was found to be a key that opened the doors to successful field work. From the first days of my field work in the hostels, I was authorised to select a hostel block, a room number and a person to interview by the hostel induna.

My thorough knowledge of *IsiZulu*, the main language spoken in both of these hostels, was an added advantage. This helped minimise the problem of understanding and interpretation, particularly since all the questions were asked in *isiZulu*.

This knowledge also helped a great deal in cases where respondents needed reassuring about fears they might have had.

7. OBSTACLES EXPERIENCED

It would have been absurd to expect that the whole interviewing process could have been conducted without difficulties. The field work was loaded with problems and challenges. The problems encountered in the piloting phase were the tip of the iceberg. There were some occasions where the respondents had to leave in the middle of the interview, or worse still when the interview was nearly complete, presumably because the interview was too long.

At times the respondents insisted on seeing the completed questionnaire after the interview to ensure that only the correct information was recorded. They sometimes questioned why the responses were recorded in English and sometimes demanded that they be recorded in *isiZulu*, lest the interviewer be accused of manipulating the answers.

An in-depth interview which extracted long answers made it difficult to record every word uttered by the respondent. The use of a tape-recorder would have been very helpful in this regard, but permission to use one was refused in both hostels.

The ever present fear of being discovered as a member of the Xhosa ethnic group dominated my mind until the last interview

was completed in Meadowlands hostel. This was coupled with a fear of being seen entering the hostel by the township youth who might have accused me of fraternising with their enemy.

Another problem in conducting research in violence-infested areas such as Meadowlands and Merafe hostels, was that of raising people's expectations. A sizable number of inmates in both hostels, particularly older men, women and children, expressed a longing for peace and the hope that I could assist them. My most frustrating moments during my fieldwork in these two hostels, arose from the realisation that I was as helpless as they were in the matter of coming up with solutions.

I was further frustrated by the fact that the respondents who helped me personally in my academic project will not benefit directly in terms of the solutions to the violence, and worse still, because of their high levels of illiteracy, they will not be able to read the thesis they helped to shape.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WAR ON THE REEF

1. INTRODUCTION

...for decades apartheid inflicted suffering on its victims. It is stupid to think the suffering inflicted by apartheid on the victims will end without apartheid putting up a strong fight to perpetuate this suffering. You see, apartheid presented white South Africans with a false sense of superiority for many years. The apartheid army and sinister forces created by apartheid cross borders to maim and kill anyone who dare challenge the status quo. It is unthinkable to believe that the regime will allow this to be lost at the negotiation table. It had to put on a strong fight under the guise of "black on black" violence. (Key informant no. 1, PAC Executive member)

During the three year period of July 1990 to June 1993 the Human Rights Commission (HRC) recorded a total of 9325 deaths in the political violence which engulfed the country, a death rate of 259 per month or 8,5 per day. The PWV region alone accounted for 4756 or 52% of these deaths. HRC records show a link with hostels in the case of 483 deaths or 44% of the Soweto total of 1106 deaths in the three year period. Among the problem hostels in Soweto which have been identified as sites of violence are Merafe, Meadowlands, Diepkloof, Dobsonville, Dube, Jabulani, Nancefield and Mzimhlope.

This thesis set out to investigate the relation between this pattern of political violence and hostels on the Reef between 1990 and 1993. This relation must be located in a broader discussion of political violence in South Africa generally in this period. Political violence is defined as deliberate acts

of destruction that impact on power relations in society. The chapter will firstly discuss the relation between political violence and war and show the difficulties encountered in the concept of "war". The chapter will then examine political violence that engulfed the Reef from 1990, and argue that the scale of violence seen on the Reef constituted a particular type of civil war termed 'low intensity conflict'. It is shown that this term is also used to describe a repressive military strategy that involves the use of surrogate forces. The chapter will argue that the political violence which broke out on the Reef from mid 1990 formed part of a programme of destabilisation that shows strong continuities with the destabilisation methods that left most of the neighbouring countries in a state of economic and social dislocation. The chapter compares the destabilisation violence in the Reef to the violence in Natal, the types of violence on the Reef and the agencies involved. Finally it examines key themes such as ethnicity which have been posited as explanations of the political violence in South Africa.

The political violence that enveloped many parts of the Reef was part of the apartheid state's strategy to maintain political control. During the period 1976 - 1990 the South African government carried out a complex combination of economic and political manoeuvres, which were largely accompanied by military interventions, to destabilise its neighbours (Hanlon, 1986; Barrell, 1990; Du Pre, 1992; Johnson and Martin, 1989; Britain, 1990; Herbstein and Evenson, 1989).

These destabilisation policies wrought havoc in neighbouring countries, destroyed social life, disrupted economies and infrastructures, and directly or indirectly caused the death and social dislocation of thousands of people. This art of destabilisation was later turned inwards against progressive forces inside the country and was perfected by the security agencies of the apartheid state.

Political violence in South Africa increased dramatically after the unbanning of the liberation movements and Nelson Mandela's release from prison in February 1990. The numbers of those who died in political violence almost doubled from 2 166 in the 12 months between July 1990 to June 1991, to almost 4 200 in the comparable period ending July 1993 (HRC Report, 1993). However this pattern of political violence has deep historical roots in South Africa and has often been described as a 'war'.

2. THEORISING SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE AS "WAR"

Frederikse emphasizes that "war" is not a new phenomenon in South Africa. She claims that South Africa has been at war since the arrival of settlers in 1652 (Frederikse, 1985: 7). Other scholars believe it was in the 1970's, when the Soweto uprisings of 1976 took place, that the origin of war in South Africa can be seen (Davies, 1987: 35). Others identify the 1980's, particularly between 1984 and 1986, as the period that identifies the emergence of war in South Africa (Cock, 1990:

47-50; Evans and Phillips, 1988: 140). Other writers point to the period preceding the 1990's as marking the intensification of "civil war" in South Africa (Simpson, et al., 1990; Kentridge, 1990: 14-18; Mpheto, 1990: 5-8; Hindson and Morris, 1990: 21-23). This thesis argues that the political violence that engulfed most of the Reef from August 1990 marked South Africa as a country at war.

At first glance the concept of "war" has a simple meaning but it is a politically contested notion. A number of key actors have referred to political conflict in South Africa as a war. In a speech made by Nelson Mandela at a rally in King's Park Stadium (Durban) attended by an estimated 100 000 people in February 1990, he said "We recognise that in order to bring the "war" to an end, we must learn to talk to each other as South Africans" (Copper et al., 1990: 257). Dirk Coetzee referred to the violent conflict in South Africa in the 1980's as "a twilight war". This implies that much of the violence that took place in South Africa from the mid-1980's was hidden. It is further suggested that "twilight war" meant that much of the violence was performed in secret by anonymous agents (Cock, 1991). This secrecy has a double meaning; in the sense that Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) was operating as an underground guerrilla army in a clandestine fashion. On the other hand, state violence was also executed in secret by agents of the state.

In South Africa, in particular, the concept of "war" is contested because there were very serious political repercussions, not only in terms of legitimising action, but in terms of the consequences for opponents of apartheid who were captured. Their classification as prisoners of war should have meant better treatment. According to a protocol of the Geneva Convention signed by the ANC president Oliver Tambo, all guerrillas captured in South Africa should have been treated as prisoners of war (Cock, 1990: 46)

The notion that South Africa was at war was denied at various historical moments by agents of the apartheid state. An example is Brigadier Hermanus Stadler, who maintained that the African National Congress (ANC) could not be regarded as being at war with the South African government. He said, the South African government was facing a "revolutionary onslaught". He said this in order to deny legitimacy to the ANC which claimed to be fighting a 'people's war'. In another treason trial Brigadier Stadler described the resistance as "acts of terror"; which should be regarded as illegitimate, criminal actions far removed from the actions of war. He urged people to distinguish between actions of terror and actions of war (cited by Cock, 1990: 46). The apartheid state generally defined acts of violent resistance as "terrorism", another contested notion that is usually used to mean " political violence exercised by one's opponents" (Cock, 1991: 4).

On the other hand, when the South African government was faced with the problem of defending itself against a court action filed by the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), it ironically described itself as a country at war. In that case the SADF was involved in a Supreme Court action filed by the ECC to restrain it from illegally undermining the organisation. Lieutenant-General Jan Loggerenberg, who was the chief of staff, asserted in an affidavit that the SADF was on a war footing (Cock, 1990: 46-70).

'War' is contested in theoretical as well as political terms. Cock (1990) contends that Hannah Arendt's 1970's definition of war as a "massification of violence" far from explains the South African situation, as this definition suggests a simple relationship between war and violence. The definition of war in terms of casualty figures of over 1,000 deaths a year is also overly simplistic. Scruton defines war as "a forcible contention between states with the purpose of overpowering each other by armed force in order to secure certain demands or claims" (Scruton, 1982: 489). This definition does not explain the South African situation because the main protagonists, MK and the SADF, did not belong to separate states.

Another definition that is inadequate in explaining the South African conflict is that of Kidron and Smith; according to them, "war" is an open armed conflict in which "regular, uniformed forces are engaged, on at least one side; the

fighters and the fighting are organised centrally to some extent, and there is continuity between clashes" (Kidron and Smith, 1983: 6). This definition is much broader than the previous two definitions. However the problem with this definition lies in the fact that MK and the SADF were not similarly socially organised and there was no continuity between armed clashes of the two forces. Most of the violent clashes were episodic (Cock, 1990: 47).

In reality most of these definitions are flawed because the nature of war has changed from its conventional interstate character. Almost all of the wars in the world during 1993 were civil wars. Virtually all of the violent conflict now under way in the world involves violence between internal groups, often ethnically defined, rather than states. Klare cites one estimate that "only four of the eighty two armed conflicts recorded in 1989 - 1992 were of a classic interstate character, while all of the remainder entailed some degree of internal warfare, usually along ethnic and religious lines" (Klare, 1994: 38). Increased intergroup violence is a major characteristic of the contemporary world, and South Africa's past and present is no exception.

The violent conflict in South Africa both during the 1976 - 1990 period and the 1990 - 1993 period may best be described as a particular type of civil war, namely a "low intensity conflict" (LIC). The concept of "low intensity-conflict" (LIC) or "low level civil war" has been used by a number of

scholars who have written about the conflict in South Africa particularly since the mid 1970's to date (See Cock, 1989: 3; Evans and Phillips, 1988: 136; Kentridge, 1990: 15; Coleman, 1990: 3; Haysom, 1989: 188).

Low intensity conflict is one point along a spectrum which includes conventional war through to nuclear or high intensity war. War in this sense is viewed along a continuum of violent conflict (Cock, 1990: 47).

This type of conflict is linked to the process of militarisation. By militarisation is meant a "social process that involves a mobilisation of resources for war at political, economical and ideological levels (Cock, 1990: 87). This process has emerged as a result of heightened challenge to the apartheid state.

The term "low intensity conflict" refers not only to a type of civil war but also to a state strategy. After 1976, South Africa entered a period of intense conflict termed "total onslaught" in government circles. The government argued that South Africa was facing a "total onslaught" from the revolutionary forces, and this "total onslaught" was highly integrated and multifaceted in nature (Swilling and Phillip, 1989). The only way it could be countered, the government argued, was by a counter revolutionary method called "total strategy". Part of this strategy was a counter-insurgency method called the low-intensity conflict (LIC). This is an approach to defeat progressive forces without engaging in a full-scale conventional war (Cock, 1989; Marishane, 1992).

As noted above LIC not only describes a type of conflict, but it also describes a particular military strategy which was extensively used by Americans (Klare, 1988: 62). The hallmark of this strategy is that it operates through surrogate forces who execute similar functions to those of the state agencies. In South Africa the principal agencies of violence were the SADF and the SAP whose operations were indistinguishable to many township inhabitants as they were fused in a pattern of indiscriminate violence (Cock, 1990: 5). Important actors in the political violence were also the death squads, the "kitskonstabels", the "askaris", the Internal Stability Units (ISU), and the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) (Coleman, 1990). It will be shown below that during the 1980's their role was extended to include surrogate forces in the shape of vigilantes and members of Inkatha (Hayman, 1989; Cock, 1990: 51-57; Coleman, 1990: 5-7; Lawrence, 1990: 63). They were active in the escalating scale of political violence that engulfed the Reef after mid-1990.

3. POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON THE REEF FROM 1990

The mid-1990's signalled the start of a new pattern of political violence on the Reef. Oscar Dhlomo warned in August 1990 that there was a deliberate policy of 'ethnicising political differences' on the part of political leaders. During the 1990 - 1993 period there was a process of using hostel-dwellers, many of whom were Zulu migrant workers from Natal who supported Inkatha, in violent conflict with

township residents. This new pattern was signalled by an incident on 22 July, 1990 when 27 people were killed at Sebokeng in a clash between Inkatha supporters and the ANC. The hostels were implicated in this clash. "Sebokeng residents reported seeing bus loads of rural Zulus arrive in their township and seize control of migrant workers' hostels, expelling the occupants" (Sparks, 1994: 138). The emergence of this Reef violence coincided with the launch by Inkatha of a national political party, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). It is significant that this launch took place at Sebokeng on 14 July 1990 and marked the full advent of Inkatha onto the national arena from its previous base of Natal/KwaZulu (CASE Report, 1991).

Inkatha was a formerly tribal organisation formed in 1975 as an exclusively Zulu movement. Since its formation Inkatha was faced with a major contradiction: that of characterising itself as a national liberation movement while at the same time functioning within apartheid structures. This contradiction worsened over the years as Inkatha increasingly became dependent on the apartheid organs - mainly in the form of the KwaZulu bantustan and the apartheid security forces in order to fortify its own political position. Any attempts by Inkatha leader, Dr Buthelezi, to resolve these contradictions led to Inkatha becoming a surrogate of, and totally allied to the apartheid state (Mare, 1987; Mzala, 1988; Forsyth, 1990; Mare, 1992).

From its formation in 1975, Inkatha was simply a cultural movement committed to black liberation and mirrored the exiled ANC. When mass protest intensified in the 1980's through organisations like the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and the biggest labour federation the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Inkatha's existence was threatened. It subsequently founded a rival labour federation, United Workers' Union of South Africa (UWUSA) and opposed any actions taken by progressive organisations such as strikes, school boycotts, a move that presented Inkatha with a serious political problem (Kentridge, 1992).

After the launch of Inkatha and the clash at Sebokeng a number of similar clashes followed. There were many local reports of "Zulus being bussed in and taking over the migrant workers' hostels, then using them as bases from which to launch attacks on residents. This provoked reprisals against the hostels, starting a cycle of violence that raged up and down the urban belt of the Witwatersrand..." (Sparks, 1994: 138).

The political violence on the Reef between 1990 and 1993 involved actions such as arson, bomb attacks on the homes of particular individuals targeted for their political connections as well as armed attacks involving hostels and shootings of various kinds. The conflict on the Reef and in the rest of the country has taken different forms to that in Natal, both in scope and intensity.

One distinctive feature of the violence on the Reef was that attacks were increasingly directed against gatherings of black people engaged in their daily routines. Funeral vigils, trains, buses, taxis, stokvels, parties and taxi ranks increasingly became sites of political violence. In September 1990 random attacks on commuter trains began, with armed men stabbing and shooting passengers. This was followed by attacks on taxis used by black commuters. Attacks on black commuters on their way to work became common (see Appendix C). According to a Goldstone Commission Report between 1990 and 1993, 600 people have died in nearly 500 train, bus and taxi attacks. Attacks on people travelling in township trains also increased dramatically. Reef trains in the past were important sites for peaceful social activities that involved religious and political organising (Shubane, 1991). This pattern was disrupted as random attacks on trains travellers increased. From 1990 to 1992 more than 300 train commuters lost their lives, while 850 were injured in train attacks (SAIRR, 1992). These attacks could be described as a form of terrorism as they involved "systematic acts of destruction aimed at altering or maintaining power relations through spreading extreme fear" (Cock, 1990: 85).

Hostels have been specifically linked to these attacks. For example in 1992 two Zulu-speaking residents of Merafe hostel were arrested on the grounds of suspected involvement in two attacks on Johannesburg trains.

The larger scale and different types of political violence on the Reef required "logistical support, transport and planning". (Innes and Kentridge, 1992: 87). The weaponry involved was of a different order to home-made guns and pangas; sophisticated automatic weapons and hand guns became more widely available and consequently the death rate increased. Many hostels were used to store arms caches, including AK- 47's, revolvers, pistols, ammunition, knives and spears. In the planning and execution of attacks the killers began to show a higher degree of professionalism.

August 1990 witnessed the suspension of the armed struggle by the ANC in the Pretoria Minute of 6th August. However in that month alone over 700 people lost their lives in political violence, 570 of these people dying in the PWV area alone. During the remaining months of 1990, national deaths remained at high levels of an average of 366 per month (Simpson et al., 1991: 11). Altogether 38 major killings or massacres occurred on the Reef (HRC Report, 1992).

In Swanieville, on 12 May 1992 twenty-eight squatters were killed, thirty injured and eighty-two shacks burnt down in an attack by more than 900 Inkatha supporters wielding rifles, guns, pangas and spears. It was alleged by residents that police arrived during the attack, but stood by and then escorted the Inkatha supporters back to their hostel. Inkatha actually claimed responsibility for the massacre, claiming it

was a revenge attack for the deaths of two Inkatha supporters in the nearby hostel on the previous night.

This pattern of police assistance for hostel attackers occurred again at Boipatong, when on the night of 17 June 1991 more than 300 armed men from KwaMadala hostel carrying AK 47 rifles, pangas, knobkerries, and spears, attacked and shot, stabbed and hacked thirty - eight people to death in their homes. Some residents claimed that police had escorted the attackers into the township and out again. "Whatever the truth of the residents' allegations, there was an absolute conviction in the minds of nearly the entire black community that the police were involved in the attack by Inkatha supporters, and that this was part of a government plot to weaken the ANC and its supporters" (Sparks, 1994: 141).

As the death toll from political violence mounted many accused the government of conducting a systematic campaign of destabilization. Many people believed that a "third force" within the military -security establishment was instigating and directing the violence to weaken the ANC. This was described as an internal version of the destabilisation strategy practice by the apartheid state in neighbouring countries such as Zambia, Namibia and Angola among others.

As the formal apparatus of South African repression has been dismantled, its function - to hamstring and cripple political opposition - has been carried out by violence. It has proved far more internationally palatable: economic sanctions have been widely lifted, diplomatic, sporting and other links have been established. At the same time, the

liberation movements and their allies seek to undertake normal political activity in a community that is destabilised by horrific levels of brutality and bloodshed (Everatt and Sadek, 1992: 4).

This escalating political violence must be related to the increasing opposition to apartheid. The 1990's were not the first time there had been violent confrontation in South Africa between forces opposed to apartheid and pro-apartheid forces. The 1980's marked the intensification of internal political opposition against the apartheid regime. It was during this period that the agencies of the state undertook the most harsh and extensive clampdown on students, labour and political activists since the 1960's (Mzala, 1988). Members of unregistered labour movements survived against all odds, when the state detained hundreds of its members and leaders, while others disappeared without trace. The 1980's were characterised by the proliferation of strike actions as "unregistered, unrecognised, and newly-registered trade unions began flexing their muscles" (Du Pre, 1992: 119). This was a clear indication that forces opposed to apartheid were prepared to withstand any repression in their fight. Their mood was aptly captured by the songs which were sung during those times: *"asikhathali noma siyafa, noma siboshwa, kodwa sobe silwela inkululeko"* (we do not care whether we are detained or die, we will be fighting for our freedom). This culminated in the formation of the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985, which represented almost half a million South African workers.

The eighties also saw the emergence of the non-racial United Democratic Front (UDF) which specialised in mobilising an aggressive youthful constituency (CIIR, 1987; Seeking, 1991; Marks, 1992). The government imposed a State of Emergency in an attempt to crush the UDF challenge to its political hegemony. "Vigilantes" were deployed in the townships to erode the power of anti-apartheid forces.

This marked a shift away from an exclusive reliance on the SADF and the SAP to quell black opposition. This strategy was operative on a large scale in Natal prior to the unbanning of the ANC and other opposition forces.

4. INKATHA AND THE CONFLICT IN NATAL

In Natal a Zulu civil war raged with considerable involvement of the security forces of the apartheid state. When the violence was restricted to Natal there was an overwhelming demonstration of police bias towards Inkatha in its "war" with the UDF (Kentridge, 1992). "The bias reflected a policy articulated at the highest level of government. Cabinet ministers approved security police funding of the activities of Inkatha and its trade union wing, the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA), from 1986" (Amnesty International, 1992: 40). While the conflict was confined to Natal, the strife was not perceived as ethnic because the Natal region is predominately inhabited by the Zulu-speaking ethnic group (Shubane, 1990).

As it is well known the political violence in Natal went on to claim the lives of more than thousand people a year in that region during the 1980's and the 1990's (Minnaar, 1992).

So-called 'faction fighting' was been part of the Natal region for many years. Reasons for these feuds ranged from family quarrels, theft of cattle, brawls after beer drinking, fights over girls or marriage ceremonies, or traditional street fighting that was won by a non-dominant clan. One reason that became pivotal among many was the outstanding conflict in retaliation or wrong done to the tribe's honour (Minnaar, 1992). These violent confrontations were between different tribal or clan groupings within certain "Izigodi" (magistracies) in the region. These faction fights were largely between members of illiterate rural populations. Combatants were only armed with traditional weapons, such as assegais (spears), axes, knobkerries, sword-sticks (*intsumentshu*) and any other instrument that could kill an opponent. The only sophisticated weapons were home made guns dubbed "Qwashas", though these were as deadly as any modern weaponry (Ainslie, 1992).

With colonization these faction fights took a different direction. The cause "lay in the increasing pressures on the reserves set up in the 19th century by Sir Theophilus Shepstone. The acute land shortage experienced in these areas often provided the catalyst. Disputed boundaries between tribes or clans resulted eventually in an entrenched cycle of

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revenge and retaliation" (Minnaar, 1992: 1). This background is crucial to understanding the current relation between political violence and hostel residents on the Reef. It will be shown below that more than 50% of people interviewed in both the Meadowlands and Merafe Hostels hailed from areas where faction fighting had become endemic. However one key informant, Thembinkosi Ngcobo, a sociologist, believes that these faction fights had nothing to do with political competition or scarce resources as many writers have suggested. He points to the lack of commitment from the apartheid authorities in stopping these feuds, possibly because they played right into the 'divide and rule' strategy of the apartheid state. Faction fights never presented a threat to maintenance of apartheid rule in the region.

It was only in the 1980's when this factional violence moved from the rural to the urban areas of Natal that it took on an overtly political shape. The first violent confrontation in Natal occurred in the 1980's under the State of Emergency, when the apartheid government sought to erode or destroy all democratic formations allied to the UDF and became committed to strengthening Inkatha.

In the 1970's, Inkatha was a relatively a new organisation which was largely perceived as an internal black liberation movement acting as an extension of the ANC (Aitcheson, 1989; Mzala, 1988). Its aims and objectives were expressed with the purpose of capturing and arousing the political feelings of

the black majority. In one of its proclamations Inkatha asserted:

The business of black liberation is our business The important thing I want to stress here is that it is absolutely vital in our struggle for liberation for every organisation which emerges among blacks to make possible that unity with other black organisations is achieved. Division and the chewing of the end of mutual recrimination have been the bane that has thwarted our struggle for too long. ...We must organise now as effectively as we can...I have always known that we need structures which spurn rural and urban and which spurn provinces. This kind of structure now exists in the form of Inkatha (Mzala, 1988: 119-120).

At this time anything which challenged the repressive rule of the South African government was viewed positively by the majority of black people. This challenge was enough to make thousands believe that Inkatha was an instrument of black liberation and an extension of the ANC. This is well captured by Mare who claimed that:

The hand of Buthelezi and Inkatha was strengthened during this period through African National Congress support for their political agenda. One powerful set of political symbols of mobilisation arose out of identification of Inkatha with the revived ANC. Inkatha colours, its political myth of origin and some leadership figures were drawn from aspects of ANC tradition, especially its conservative branch in Natal prior to its unbanning (Mare, 1992: 57-58).

All of this boosted the membership of Inkatha. Various surveys conducted around the late 1970's and the early 1980's put Inkatha's support at well above 50% of all black South Africans (Mzala, 1988). Mzala for instance claimed that Inkatha membership increased from 30 000 in 1976 to well above

250 000 members in 1979. The Arnold Bergstresse Institute found that 50% of Inkatha members also supported the ANC (Mzala, 1988). By contrast, Orkin maintains that Inkatha's support both in rural and urban areas never went beyond a 30% mark of all people living in rural and urban Natal since its inception in 1972 (Orkin, 1988). On 22 June 1990 more than a thousand Inkatha supporters marched through Central Johannesburg armed with assegais and knobkerries.

In the 1980's, there was a clear sign that Inkatha was beginning to lose its hegemony particularly among the urban inhabitants of Natal (Mzala, 1988; Ainslie, 1992). Political formations opposed to the apartheid regime and Inkatha began to intensify their opposition. The resistance took the form of actions attached to national strategies, such as consumer boycotts, rent boycotts, education boycotts as well as other forms of boycotts that involved local issues (Seeking, 1991; Aitcheson, 1989; Hindson and Morris, 1990).

An event that marked a high point of the resistance in Natal was the Kwa-Mashu school boycott of 1980, which, although linked to nation-wide action that was geared to making apartheid unworkable, included protests against the introduction of the Inkatha syllabus dubbed "*ubuntu-botho*" in most schools under the jurisdiction of KwaZulu government. This resistance was brutally repressed by Inkatha-linked vigilantes (Mzala, 1988). Furthermore, the Natal resistance

also involved organised opposition to the proposed incorporation of certain townships into KwaZulu.

People engaged in boycott actions generally belonged to groupings affiliated to the UDF or the growing labour movement which was strengthened with the formation of Cosatu in the mid 1980's (Charney, 1992; Aitcheson, 1989; Seeking, 1991).

This opposition against the apartheid government came to be viewed as directly targeting Inkatha, since it was the KwaZulu arm of the organisation which was responsible for the general administration of apartheid in schools and in the townships. This meant that Inkatha had the ability to distribute patronage to its followers through the KwaZulu government. This is best captured by Mare who states that:

Allegiance to the "Zulu nation" - measured through membership of Inkatha - could determine access to resources. Inkatha claimed total representation of "Zuluness" in the first years after its formation in 1975. It was also a sole party in the apartheid government. Those who sought to politicise and mobilise Zulu ethnicity also controlled pensions; land allocation and education; signed work-seekers' permits; and approved bottle store licences. There were and are, therefore, both "positive" and "negative" inducements to accept the specific version of ethnic identity into which Buthelezi organised people, and ... it is given form in Inkatha. The former are found in the pride, self-worth, solidarity, and discovery of what an illustrious past can offer; the latter lie in the instrumental acceptance of the specific Inkatha version of that identity due to the material and political pressures (sometime extremely violent) applied to a large sections of the regional population (Mare, 1992: 67-68).

The apartheid state's response to increasing township turmoil was harsh and repressive. Apartheid activists were banned while some were detained. Some of those who were viewed as dangerous by the state were assassinated; Griffiths Mxhenge and Dr Rick Turner are examples. People who had associated themselves with township resistance were also targeted for attack by vigilantes, and slowly the violence spread to most parts of Natal (Kentridge, 1992).

In 1990 782 people died in Natal and 352 in KwaZulu (Hansard 21 March 1991, cols. 729 - 730).

The apartheid state, with its sophisticated power failed to put an end to the carnage. The number of political killings grew dramatically; over 6000 people were killed in this region from the time the strife began in the 1980's until 1992 (Kentridge, 1992; Marks, 1992).

Evidence is still emerging of collusion between Inkatha and certain members of the security forces in Natal during this period. Integral to creating and maintaining peace in Natal was the government's unwillingness to order expeditious, credible and public investigations into allegations of human rights violations by security officers. For example, the evidence which emerged in the Trust Feed case indicated the involvement of the police in the violence and a cover-up that involved senior officers (Amnesty International).

The agencies of this political violence included state agencies such as the SADF and SAP, members of political organisations such as the ANC and PAC, MK cadres, members of self defence units, criminal elements, hostel dwellers, Inkatha vigilantes and the township youth. According to the preliminary report of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), "many hostels in the Transvaal are today used as Inkatha barracks" (ICJ, 1992: 21). This view was further supported by the Goldstone Commission interim report on train violence, which claimed that whenever a group of attackers were identified, they were identified as hostel dwellers (The Star, 29.7.1992). These hostel residents were widely assumed to be Inkatha vigilantes. This social category is thus particularly relevant to understanding the relation between hostels and political violence.

Vigilante groups emerged in several parts of the country in the mid-eighties, the most prominent and sustained of these groups were mainly "war-lords" from within Inkatha. Vigilantes who supported Inkatha have been said to be responsible for the spread of political violence in Natal during the 1980's and in the Transvaal during the 1990's (CASE Report, 1991; HRC Report, 1992).

Inkatha vigilantes were part of a phenomenon which dominated the South African political scene in the 1980's (Kentridge, 1990). The Human Rights Commission identified Inkatha and the security forces as the primary culprits in the 50 attacks in

which 10 or more people were killed (HRC Report, July 1992; The Star, 3.7.1992). Vigilantes were members of private "armies" that are drawn from traditional and conservative elements, from the unemployed and even from criminal gangs (Lawrence, 1990; Evarett, 1991; HRC Report, 1991). They have been defined as "violent, organised and conservative groupings operating within black communities, which, although they receive no official recognition, are politically directed in the sense that they act to neutralise individuals and grouping opposed to the apartheid state and its institutions" (Haysom, 1989: 188). The question of official recognition and state support is controversial. The vigilantes in most cases acted either in collusion with the police or on their own, with the police apparently turning a blind eye to their actions (Haysom, 1989).

Revelations first appeared in July 1991 of government funding of the Inkatha Freedom Party and its activities. Evidence has now emerged of links between the covert operations of the SADF and the training and arming of Inkatha vigilantes (Marks, 1992; Shepherd, 1992). The Goldstone Commission was told that Inkatha leaders on the Reef urged their supporters at Soweto's Nancefield hostel to attack ANC members and community residents (The Weekly Mail, 22.5.1992). Overall "there is little doubt that the violence in the townships of Natal and the Rand is being and has been fomented by elements in the army and the police" (Marks, 1992: 123). As Everatt argued "the aim seems to be to destabilise black South African life

and to prevent the establishment of a normalised political climate" (1991: 2).

The Community Agency for Social Inquiry (CASE) analyzed responsibility in 257 acts of violence covering the first year of the Reef violence. "Of these Inkatha had been reported as responsible in 51%, the SAP in 23% and the ANC in 4% of cases, while the SAP was recorded in 46 reports as "actively colluding" with IFP supporters in acts of violence and aggression (CASE, 1990: 1).

The HRC recorded a total of 2 786 deaths that involved vigilantes between 1990 and 1992. 884 of these occurred during the first year of this carnage, while 1 898 people died during the second year of the Reef violence. This is a clear indication of the upward trend of vigilante-related violence (HRC Report, 1992).

However the views of CASE and the Human Rights Commission have been disputed. The South African Institute of Race Relations, while admitting a steady increase of fatal and non-fatal incidents of political violence between 1990 and 1992 argued that it was not possible to identify aggressors and agents of attack in 87% of cases. The Institute identified 14.5% of incidents as directed against members of the police and the security forces (SAIRR, 1992).

The Human Rights Commission claims that "vigilantism in South African context is a phenomenon born directly out of the creation of apartheid-motivated structures of government and administration". The structures concerned are the homelands (both the "independent" and "self-governing" varieties) and the black urban councils. Both structures are strongly rejected by the vast majority of the black population and strong pressures have built up for their dismantling. In response to these pressures, private "armies" of vigilantes were developed to support and defend these unpopular structures, and came to receive the tacit and the active encouragement of the state as a strategy which fitted well with their "total strategy". It was this strategy that helped promote the image of "black on black violence" at no political cost to the government (HRC, 1990/91).

The initial objective of the vigilantes was to break the strength of all the progressive organisations and individuals who opposed the apartheid-created homelands and the discredited Black Councils. Since the government focused its attention on new forms of the destabilisation strategy after February 2 1990, the vigilante targets also changed, they became less selective, and switched their tactics to random terrorising of township residents (HRC, 1990/92; Shubane, 1990).

The State decided to use the vigilantes in its dirty work because the vigilantes were capable:

of destabilising communities far more effectively than the official organs of the state and a far more chilling level of violence can be used than that which the state could ever bring to bear without suffering immense damage, both locally and internationally (Pauw, 1991: 117).

A reliance on vigilantes is part of the reliance on surrogate forces which defines the strategy of low intensity conflict described above.

In the past these forms and agencies of political violence were perceived as part of "a marginal conflict, confined to the narrow provincial boundaries" of Natal (Innes and Kentridge, 1992: 74). The new pattern of political violence which emerged on the Reef from 1990 to 1993 demands different explanations. Many explanations - all fraught with deficiencies - have emerged. Each explanation emphasises different factors such as ethnic antagonisms, socio-economic conditions, ideological differences, criminal elements, and tensions generated by the disintegration of apartheid. It will be shown that several of these are important themes in exploring the relation between political violence and hostels on the Reef.

5. EXPLANATIONS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

(a) Ethnic Antagonism

Shula Marks attests that "it seems clear that Inkatha supporters mobilised around a specific Zulu ethnic identity,

have been the source of most of the aggression. This is true in Natal ... and on the Reef" (Marks, 1992: 122). There is no doubt that ethnicity is an important source of identity - in South Africa and elsewhere. Elements of language, kinship and custom are often deeply embedded in individual identities and strongly felt. What is controversial is the extent to which the political violence on the Reef can be explained in terms of ethnic antagonism. A crucial distinction is that between ethnic identity and ethnic antagonism.

Ethnic identities are social constructs, constantly shaped and reshaped and negotiated in a process of social interaction. As Sitas has written, "'Zulu-ness' must be viewed as a negotiated identity between ordinary people's attempts to create effective and reciprocal social bonds (or functioning cultural formations) out of their social and material conditions of life..." (Sitas, 1987: 53).

Ethnicity is not inherently conflictual with a national identity. It is politicised ethnicity - the mobilisation of ethnicity to secure economic and political goals - that is divisive. Ethnic antagonism is a principal component even if it does not provide a sole and satisfactory explanation in interpreting the violence on the Reef (Mkhize, 1990).

Political violence in South Africa is often explained by journalists in terms of "black on black" violence or in terms of an atavistic tribal conflict between a Zulu Inkatha and an

allegedly Xhosa ANC. Time magazine for instance maintained that the strife emanated from "tribal-based animosities that dated back centuries (Time, 17 August 1990). Giliomee perceives Inkatha as epitomizing the forces of Zulu nationalism whilst the ANC was identified as a Xhosa organisation whose Xhosa leadership sought power on behalf of the Xhosa nation (The Star, 24 August 1990). Johnson evaluates the Reef conflict in terms of the war between the Xhosa and the Zulus. He also perceives the adverse relationship between the two ethnic groups as emanating from the past, particularly in the "proud" warrior history of the Zulu nation that continues to find expression through Inkatha (Sunday Star, 21.10.1992). Horowitz emphasises the "Zulu-Xhosa" ingredient in much violent conflict and stresses that the ANC is dominated by Xhosas in its leadership. This is construed as indicating "an unspoken undercurrent of Xhosa nationalism in some echelons of the ANC" (Horowitz, 1990: 30; cited by Taylor, 1991: 4).

The explanation of the conflict in terms of ethnic antagonism has been rejected by a number of other analysts. Taylor maintains that this explanation does not accurately describe or account for the dynamics of the conflict. He claims that the ANC is not a Xhosa organisation and has never made special claims for the Xhosa "nation". Nor are its campaigns targeted against the Zulu people. There are many Zulus who support the ANC, and not all Zulus support Inkatha (Taylor, 1992). Shubane argues that ethnic identity "has not been in and of

itself a variable which has structured politics. It has always needed to be primed by an external agent" (Shubane, 1990: 6).

The explanation of the Reef violence in terms of ethnic antagonism has other major limitations. The advocates of this argument have failed to take into account the fact that the attacks on the townships by the hostel dwellers included attacks on Zulu-speaking members of the community. Secondly, a number of areas that have been involved in political violence were predominately non-Xhosa speaking areas. Thirdly, the advocates of the ethnic argument assume hostels to be homogeneous entities that house only Zulu-speaking "impis" that are embroiled in violent activities. The thesis will provide a more nuanced and differentiated account. As Shula Marks has written, "...the reality is far more complex and historically specific than these simple [ethnic] stereotypes allow ... in South Africa ... ethnic explanations by themselves have only limited value" (Marks, 1992: 122).

(b) Gender and Violence

Gender identities are negotiated in similar terms to ethnic identities, and often involve linkages between masculinity and violence (Cock, 1991). For many South Africans violence is a legitimate solution to conflict and violent behaviour is proper and appropriate to manliness. In Natal, according to Kentridge, "war is a male affair" (Kentridge, 1990: 2). Much

of the political violence both on the Reef and in Natal is gender specific. With a few exceptions the violence is perpetrated by men, both white and black. Understanding this requires an investigation of the gender ideologies operating in different cultural contexts. The link between masculinity and militarism in Zulu history has frequently been used by Buthelezi to mobilise his constituency. The conception of men as warriors is often invoked to justify the carrying of traditional or "cultural weapons". A statement made by king of the Zulus at a rally in Soweto illustrates this point:

The call to ban the bearing of cultural weapons is an insult to my manhood. It is an insult to the manhood of every Zulu man (Cited by Cock, 1994: 52).

This is further supported by Mare who claimed that the:

Inkatha version of the Zulu ethnic group sanctions male-dominated gender relations, and hierarchy of authority in which chiefs stand anointed by tradition (Mare, 1993: 72).

(c) Socio-economic Conditions

Other explanations have given priority to poor socio-economic conditions to account for the political violence. Woods and Kotze, for instance, argue that in most poverty stricken residential areas of South Africa violence is endemic because people struggle to survive and they scramble for scarce resources. They maintain that in most violence-infested areas, unemployment is common and living conditions are depressing (Kotze, 1991; Woods, 1992).

socio-economic issues are obviously pivotal in any explanation of social events. However, poverty does not automatically induce violence. There are large numbers of communities in black society that have been trapped in a milieu of deprivation for decades, without engaging in violence. The socio-economic analysis is too general and cannot demonstrate why political violence emerged on the Reef and not in other areas of the country with similar or worse "social pathologies". Furthermore, this explanation does not explain why socio-economic deprivation resulted in increased political violence after February 2, 1990.

(d) Apartheid Created Social Divisions

Other analysts have emphasized the social division created by years of apartheid as causes of political violence. Taylor, for instance, claims that decades of apartheid have created pervasive destitution and social cleavages within townships, resulting in endemic structural conflict. Many migrants form part of the forced labourers from the "homelands" who live in the hostels. This group of men provide a secondary labour market where the cost of production of the labour power is the lowest (Taylor, 1991). Taylor argues that the Reef also contains the most debased section of the community dubbed the "underclass". This section of the Reef population consists largely of the unemployable and those working in the lowest segment of the labour market. They are the hostel dwellers

or the squatter-camp communities, the social groups that are most implicated in the Reef violence (Taylor, 1991).

Taylor's argument is also limited in a number of ways. Apartheid engineers were experts in exploiting social divisions for their own ulterior motives. The political violence between 1990 and 1993 was not exclusively between the hostel dwellers and the unemployed or "underclasses". The violence was between the hostel dwellers and the rest of the non-hostel population, particularly on the Reef.

(e) Migrancy

Migrancy is clearly an important factor in any explanation of the current violence on the Reef. Schlemmer has argued that recent arrivals of Zulu-speaking migrant workers are characterised by "solidarity and a shared sense of deprivation" which make them "predisposed to violent reactions" (Schlemmer, 1991: 5).

The reasons for migrancy, the collapse of the rural economy, and the ways in which migrant workers have been deprived of family life particularly, have been well documented (Wilson, 1979; Segal, 1991; Delius, 1989; Ramphele, 1989, 1992). Since the abolition of influx control in 1986 the number of migrant workers on the Reef has increased (Jooma, 1991; Mabin, 1991). Schlemmer argued that migration to the cities increased dramatically in the mid 1980's because of the mini-boom of the

1986-1989 that expanded work opportunities. However, this phenomenon was short-lived because it resulted in declining opportunities in late 1989. Large numbers of people who flocked to the urban areas arrived in a situation of increased destitution with few alternatives available to them (Schlemmer, 1991).

The category of "migrants" in most of these accounts is far too generalised. There are distinctive differences between Xhosa-speaking and Zulu-speaking migrants living in the hostels. For example the pattern among the Xhosa-speaking migrants was either to bring their wives with them or to leave the hostel to live with women they had met on the Reef (Minnaar, 1992). Zulu-speaking migrants, however, remained in the hostels and did not bring their wives with them. According to Hindson and Morris, this was because the land in KwaZulu was still able to sustain its population - albeit on minimal levels. Hence the Zulu-speaking hostel residents from Natal left their wives and children in the rural areas to maintain their land rights through effective physical occupation. Bringing their wives to the Reef would have meant the loss of the land rights (Hindson and Morris, 1992). (see insert 50 a - d)

(f) Social Tensions Generated by the Demise of Apartheid

Another explanation of the Reef conflict, places the blame for the increase in violence primarily on the social tensions generated by the disintegration of apartheid instead of its

The closed nature of the hostel system, as indicated in the next chapter, and the existence of a large concentration of unemployed single men, created the perfect environment for coercion and forced recruitment. This situation also presented the opportunity for rapid mobilisation, instant meetings, and the preparation for the launching of attacks on the neighbouring townships. Unemployment, migrancy and hostels are among the pivotal elements in the explanation of the violence that has racked the Reef since 1990.

The availability of a large number of unemployed people in the rural areas of KwaZulu/Natal for instance has led to a belief that the Inkatha Freedom Party has mobilised, trained and then deployed these people in the hostels around the Reef to fan violence. On the other hand, a large number of unemployed people in the hostel could mean that there was a large reservoir of people who were themselves the victims of violence and harboured feeling of revenge against the township residents. On the other hand the presence of a large pool of unemployed personnel in the hostel may be an indication that the hostels were infiltrated by "impis" who entered the hostels under the guise of job-seekers.

Woods asserts that hostel unemployment has long been part of the South African situation. But he maintains believe that the levels of unemployed hostel residents had risen by approximately 26 percent over the period 1990-1993.

He blames the problem of unemployment on two phenomena: (i) large scale retrenchments and (ii) an increase in hostel populations due to new migrants being allowed to move into the hostels (Woods, 1993). He denies the suggestion that these people were deliberately bused in to cause havoc.

Thomas perceived the underlying cause of unemployment in the 1990's as greatly influenced by South Africa's demographic transition. He believe that:

During the last two decades the African birth rate has remained high, whereas mortality rates have declined significantly. Because of this high drop out rate at school, African youngsters are able and willing to enter the labour market at a relatively early age, and since there are few jobs available for young and poorly educated, most either remain unemployed for a lengthy period, or are drawn into the informal sector, or acquire skills. For older Africans, changing lifestyles requires longer periods of employment. While many migrant workers previously abandoned active employment after twenty years of migrant involvement up to normal retirement age - thus remaining almost twenty years longer in the labour force (Thomas, 1990: 254).

Since the mid eighties the rate of urbanisation has increased threefold. Work opportunities never expanded extensively to match this rate. Alternatives to formal employment were limited and informal activity was increasingly "over-traded" during the beginning of the 1990's. This set urban youth and

unemployed adults, Zulu migrants, other migrants and Xhosa - speaking shackdwellers in heightened competition for very fixed and limited opportunities.

This situation of raised expectations and falling opportunity which bred a situation of turmoil, particularly since some of the competing categories of migrants are "cohesive" groups. It is this group of migrants particularly those of Zulu nationality according to Gurr, who are regarded as additionally predisposed to violent reactions, because of solidarity and a shared sense of deprivation (Gurr, 1970).

Zulu migrant workers often originate from districts where a long and established tradition of "feuds" exists. The Msinga areas of KwaZulu/Natal where most of the people interviewed originate from, is merely one of the better-known examples. It is known that in the seventies some of the rural feud fighting spilled over into places as remote as Diepkloof hostel, Inhlazane hostel, Johannesburg Central Business Districts (CBD) and Hillbrow among others.

Migrant workers from other ethnic groups in the mining employment and the hostels had also been exposed to this phenomenon. McNamara argued that between 1974 and 1986, at least 141 inter-factional or inter-ethnic clashes occurs in the mining employment. Over 300 migrants from different

ethnic groups died and more than 2000 were injured in these violent clashes (McNamara, 1987).

It must be noted that McNamara's analysis points to the salience of competition between communal groups of workers for recruitment and employment advantages and anxiety over the possibility of other groups augmenting their relative advantages, as more critical cause of violence.

practice. This position, postulated by Hindson and Morris, argues that "racial, ethnic and class antagonism held in check under classical apartheid have re-surfaced in the climate of liberalisation and deracialisation" (Hindson and Morris, 1992: 155). They further argued that contrary to the belief that the gradual erosion of apartheid would create a more stable African society conducive to economic growth and prosperity, the opposite has occurred. They argue that the demise of apartheid has culminated in the intensification of social hostilities and heightened bloodshed throughout the country.

Hindson and Morris point out that the birth of a post-apartheid era has resulted in declining urban economic development, accelerated urbanisation and the proliferation of squatter communities. These developments resulted in mammoth "social dislocation and general heightening of political conflict within urban metropolitan areas" (Hindson and Morris, 1991: 32).

Hindson and Morris (1991) explained the current political violence in terms of violent confrontation between squatter communities and their neighbouring inhabitants, as well as clashes between a unionised working class, the developing black middle class and the fast growing black underclass.

However the violence on the Reef was not exclusively practised by the squatter-camp communities or the hostel dwellers. Nor did it occur exclusively between squatter-camp residents and

their neighbouring communities, or exclusively between a unionised working class, the developing black middle class and the underclass communities. Secondly, the demise of apartheid has affected the whole of South Africa, and as a result all the major cities have experienced intense urbanisation with the proliferation of squatter communities. However, not all major cities have experienced the endemic violence seen on the Reef in the 1990's.

(g) Criminal Violence.

Other accounts such as those of Nel (1991) and Nell (1992) maintain that all South African violence is criminal in nature. Their main argument is that South Africa was not at war, and the difference between ordinary violence and political violence is obscured. They charge that "in today's South Africa political violence is not a helpful category for either politician or ordinary people" (Nell, 1992: 3). Nell and Nel's account does not explain why the hostels are a key element in political violence. While criminal and political violence shade into each other both in terms of actors and effects, criminality does not constitute a sufficient explanation. Criminal violence does not always manifest the same level of organisation and is not directed at altering the power relations in society. This thesis maintains that political violence is a distinct analytical category.

(h) Ideological Antagonism

other explanations of political violence focus on antagonism between different ideological groupings. The advocates of this argument maintain that the violence that was tearing black townships on the Reef apart was mainly caused by political rivalry and competition. According to this perspective Inkatha used violence to make political inroads particularly on the Reef where its support was reported to be less than 3% of a sample population (CASE, 1991; Schlemmer, 1991). The argument is that since July 1990, Inkatha instituted violence as a means of strengthening its declining support base and as a way to contest the ideological hegemony of the ANC over the black population (Mayibuye, 1991; Hindson and Morris, 1992).

At one level the political violence has been between members of Inkatha and members of the non-racial democratic organisations, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the UDF and since 1990, the ANC. Yet in both Natal and on the Rand as Segal reminds us that

such explanations may be imposing an official sounding order on overwhelming confusion and horror of the violence where in fact there is no such coherence: only a shifting assortment, a "kaleidoscope" of explanations ... the human face of violence is far more diffuse and complex than most media and political accounts portray (Segal, 1991 : 19).

(i) Third Force Activities

At the time of writing new evidence is emerging on the involvement of elements of the apartheid state in political violence which was aimed at the destabilisation of black South African life and the preservation of white minority rule. Shula Marks writes, "There is little doubt, ... that the violence in the townships of Natal and the Rand is being and has been fermented by elements in the army and the police" (Marks, 1992: 123). "The evidence is now overwhelming that there was indeed a third force, consisting of elements of Inkatha, the police force and Military Intelligence. Thabo Mbeki believes its aim was to sponsor sufficient chaos to justify the armed forces taking over the country to restore order - and halt the transition to democracy" (Sparks, 1994: 157). The methods they used were similar to those of the destabilisation strategies launched against neighbouring states after 1976.

While this thesis gives some weight to this "third force" it must be acknowledged that "the security forces are watering a ready-made field. The field was ploughed and the seeds of the violence were sown by the apartheid state..." (Marks, 1992: 124). Marks points to the destruction of communities and social supports through the migrant labour system, as well as the dislocations caused by industrialization and urbanization. The outcome is that "Apartheid has created a veritable laboratory for violent behaviour" (Marks, 1992: 125).

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that the political violence on the Reef between 1990 and 1993 is best conceptualised as a particular type of war described as low intensity conflict. It was shown that LIC does not only describe a type of conflict, but is also used to describe a type of military strategy which relies heavily on the use of surrogate forces. This chapters has described the use of Inkatha vigilantes in these terms. They were crucial agents in the shift from the external to the internal destabilisation strategy of the apartheid state. Thus this thesis suggests that the apartheid state was directly involved in instigating and permitting the violence to continue.

The chapter has outlined various explanations of political violence which appear to be incomplete in themselves. The intensification of rural poverty, migrancy, unemployment and urban overcrowding, criminal elements and ethnic and gender identities are clearly crucial factors in any explanation of political violence and highly relevant to understanding the relation between political violence and hostels on the Reef. All of these themes will appear in the sociological profiles of Meadowlands and Merafe hostels presented below.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HOSTELS

...hostels are places that nobody wants. The people who live in the bleak and forbidding buildings never wanted to go there. For many of them hostels are places to lay down their weary heads, and shelters from the dust or rain. Lots of people who live in hostels are Johannesburg workers who were uprooted from their rooms in the city by the "location in the sky" act. Their employers did not like these hostels either. They say that things worked much more smoothly when the workers were nearby and didn't have long journeys to make every day (Can Themba, 1985: 116).

1. INTRODUCTION

"Violent encounters between hostel dwellers and township residents, and among hostel dwellers themselves, have become a major feature of the violence accompanying political transition in South Africa. Of particular concern has been the brutal nature of the attacks on township residents, their apparent randomness and senselessness" (Ramphela, 1993: 1). This chapter traces the development of hostels from compounds to "fortresses of fear". The chapter argues that there have been five main changes in hostels on the Reef since their inception in 1913. These changes involved firstly, the shift in the location of hostels from the inner city to the townships. The second main change concerned the gender composition of the hostels. While hostels were originally built to house and control exclusively male migrants workers, they recently came to accommodate increasing numbers of women

and children who have moved into urban areas. The third main change involved the ethnic composition of the hostel. When hostels were first built, they were multi-ethnic institutions that housed male migrants from different parts of South Africa and its neighbouring countries. In the beginning of the 1990's hostels in the Reef began to house mainly Zulu-speaking migrants bused in from rural Natal and sympathetic towards Inkatha. The fourth change involved an increase in the numbers of people inhabiting these hostels, as the mechanism of influx control collapsed. The fifth change involved the relationships between township residents and hostel inmates. After the unbanning of the political parties and the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, these relationships changed from peaceful social and commercial interactions to relations of violent conflict.

These changes were both transformative and negative. They were not advantageous either to the people who lived in hostels or to the residents of the surrounding communities. The concept "metamorphosis" is used here in an attempt to capture the transformative nature of changes in hostels. It is a biological concept used to describe an evolutionary transition in form and structure as it occurs in insects, it describes the transition from egg to larva to pupa to adult.

This chapter will first document the number and the social characteristics of hostels. Secondly, the chapter will examine hostels as forms of total institutions and critically

evaluate the Goffman thesis as applied to hostels. Thirdly, the chapter will discuss the social processes whereby hostels have changed and become "fortresses of fear". Since the beginning of the 1990's, hostels have been used as a base to try to derail the process of peaceful transition.

2. HOSTELS AS SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Despite their significance in the lives of millions of South Africans, hostels have not been subjected to extensive sociological investigation apart from Sitas's pioneering study. Sitas has pointed out that "the hostel system is largely unexplored, if not opaque in the social sciences" (Sitas, 1983: 249). According to Ramphle "migrant -labour hostels dwellers have over the years since industrialisation began in South Africa lived in anonymity. They have been largely invisible, particularly to those living outside African townships, hidden, as their hostels often are, from the white public in divided South Africa" (Ramphle, 1993: 1).

Hostels are characterised by a number of defining elements:

- (i) Firstly, they are closely linked to the migrant labour system, a system that was introduced by the mining industry and fortified by the pass laws, thus becoming "a central feature of the South African economy from the very beginning of the country's industrial revolution" (Wilson and Ramphle, 1989: 197). This industrial revolution brought with it powerful forces

of urbanisation and proletarianisation mainly from indigenous black community which until the early 1900's was largely part of rural society. Black labour was essential in developing industries in South Africa, but their permanent presence was viewed by white authorities as a threat. Control had to be exerted on their influx into the urban areas, and hence the hostel system was created to control cheap, black labour with the aid of the pass law system (Wessels and Wentzel, 1989: 6-7). In terms of section 2 of the Bantu Areas Act no 25, of 1945, hostels were proclaimed as "Bantu Areas" for the housing of single men or women, working in town on a migrant basis.

- (ii) Secondly, while originally built by mining companies, hostels came to be the responsibility of the apartheid state. It was the state that assumed the responsibility of providing for the management of the reproduction of migrant workers through hostels in the urban areas.
- (iii) Hostels are extensive throughout South Africa and are notorious for their deplorable social conditions. These social conditions created dangerous social elements. These hostels are isolated and often prison-like.

The conditions are a source of considerable deprivation and frustration to the inmates (Segal et al., 1991). Hostel residents have little privacy. They sleep in over-crowded rooms, and lack adequate bathing and sanitary facilities. Person-to-toilet ratio is usually over 100:1 (West, 1991; Smith, 1991). Overall, hostels are characterized by overcrowding, bad living conditions, squalor, and poor administration. Single-sex hostels act "as breeding grounds for aggressive and machismo culture, unconstrained by the stabilising presence of families" (Segal et al., 1991: 3). These social conditions are themselves a form of structural violence.

- (iv) Hostels became linked to violence. In the period 1990-1993 whenever there was extensive violence on the Reef, hostels and hostel inmates were involved. Areas that were ravaged by violence were areas that had a high concentration of hostels.

In 1991 there were 220 hostels in South Africa housing more than one million people (Race Relations Survey, 1991/92: 354). As many as half a million hostel dwellers were accommodated on the Reef where most of these hostels are located and where much of the political violence has been centred (IBIIR, 1992). Soweto, for example, now has eight hostels, Alexandra has three and there are four in the inner city of Johannesburg. The East Rand too has a number of hostels: Vosloorus alone

has eight, Katlehong seven, Thembisa five and Thokoza four. The only area that has few hostels is the West Rand where there are only three. During the period of investigation the West Rand was characterised by relative peace as compared to other areas on the Reef where most of the hostels are located. The question arises as to whether they are "total institutions" in Goffman's sense.

3. HOSTELS AS A FORM OF TOTAL INSTITUTION

According to Goffman, compounds, asylums, prisons and other structures differ profoundly from other institutions because of their "totally closed" attributes (Goffman, 1961).

The total institutions is a social hybrid, part residential community, part formal organisation; therein lies their sociological interest. There are other reasons for being interested in these establishments too. In our society they are the forcing houses for changing persons; each is a natural experiment on what can be done to the self (Goffman, 1961: 22).

Hostels have been perceived as "total institutions" whose control by bureaucrats is capable of creating a situation whereby inmates become completely submissive and are subject to orders from authority.

... the inmates' life is penetrated by constant sanctioning interaction from above, especially during initial periods of stay before, the inmates accept the regulation unthinkingly (Goffman, 1961: 43).

Foucault has also analyzed institutions in which individuals are physically separated for long periods from the outside world. Foucault claims that in such institutions, people are "incarcerated"; they are concealed from the external social milieu. He goes further to argue that "carceral institutions" are pioneers of surveillance and discipline because they seek to maximize hegemony over their inmates' behaviour (Foucault, 1979: 228).

Fanon has provided a vivid description of the degree of social control experienced by migrant workers living in hostels in a different context.

Typically, the black migrant workers sign a contract for a specified period, usually a year, without any choice of job assignment or negotiating power on salary. They are strictly prohibited from bringing their families to the environs of their employment and thus are forced to leave them behind. These migrant workers are usually cut off from their families for a good part of their adult working life. The institution of the family is thereby disrupted with significant consequences for the labourers, their spouses and children and ultimately, their community. The circumstances under which they work only deepens their alienation. At the end of each day's labour, they go "home" to hostels fenced with barbed wire. These barren hostels are invariably crowded and control is absolute. They have few amenities, no visitors' rooms, no recreation facilities, and no privacy. Visitors particularly the opposite sex, are not permitted. The labourers are also grouped to prevent the development of class or national consciousness (Fanon, 1985: 168).

In South Africa, however, hostels cannot be viewed as total institutions in the sense of places where inmates sleep, play,

and work together under stringent surveillance, separated from the wider social world. As Ramphele suggests,

The blurring boundaries between working space and living space, as well as the nature of these spaces, raises the question of the extent to which hostels can be conceived as total institutions (Ramphele, 1993: 8).

She suggests that hostels "can be seen as a special type of 'total institution' for the purpose of ensuring a compliant labour force" (Ramphele, 1993: 30).

Prior to the abolition of the Influx Control Act in June 1986, hostels were mainly inhabited by employed adult males, who qualified to live in the hostel only if they produced proof of a job contract and correct papers in the form of passbooks which detailed their residence status in terms of the Bantu Urban Areas Consolidation Act.

The abolition of influx control in 1986 was the crucial event in the changing development of the hostels as social institutions. The abolishing of influx control released processes of social, economic and political disruption in both the rural and urban areas. This process not only increased the number of people wanting to stay in hostels because of the shortage of cheap accommodation in the townships, it also spawned a huge influx of people into the urban areas and the proliferation of the squatter communities around the Reef (Jooma, 1991; Mabin, 1991). Men and women increasingly flocked to the urban areas in search of jobs and opportunities

that did not exist in the rural areas. Once in town these people were not only faced with the problem of finding a job, finding accommodation was another challenge.

The abolition of influx control relates to the Goffman thesis concerning total institutions in that it involved the weakening of the form of control over hostel inmates employed by apartheid bureaucrats. Municipal administrators lost the legislative power to search hostels for "illegals", which opened the hostels to an unhindered flood of migrants. Among the new arrivals were women and children who were previously prohibited from entering the hostels.

An interview with the Soweto City Council's spokesperson, Mr. Mojalefa Moseki, revealed that by 1992 women and children made up about 30% of the hostel population on the Reef (Key informant no. 4, Soweto Council spokesperson). The presence of this group challenges the Goffman theory of total institutions. According to Goffman, total institutions are incompatible with the central social institution of our society, the family (Goffman, 1961). With the abolition of influx control, hostels, in general became neither exclusively migrant labourers' hostels nor single sex hostels, but came
 ((to house a large number of men, women and children as family units (Segal, 1991).

Both Goffman and Foucault argue that in these total or carceral institutions, inmates are "incarcerated", kept hidden

from the external social environment because of the "totally closed" nature of the institutions (Foucault, 1979; Goffman, 1961). In spite of their isolating features, hostels are more open than "incarcerating". It will be demonstrated below that prior to the advent of the violence on the Reef many hostel inmates participated actively in township life through individual social networks composed of relatives and friends, or through associational membership in churches, sports clubs, stokvels and "magotlas". There was also a great deal of social interaction and movement between hostel inmates and township residents. Hostel inmates could move in and out of the hostel at will. Hostel dwellers could quite easily venture into neighbouring townships in search of women, alcohol and leisure activities. Likewise the township residents would visit the hostels in search of various types of African beverages brewed and sold there.

Another feature distinguishing hostels from total institutions is that hostel inmates, like township residents worked in industries that were located up to twenty kilometres away, which compelled them to journey side by side to and from work with township residents in the same taxis, buses or trains. The mini-bus taxis, buses and the trains were (and still are) the most important means of transport to and from the city. It will be shown below that during the last metamorphosis of the hostels, all three modes of transport became the target of attacks by hostel inmates.

Another factor in contrast to the view of hostels as total institutions in Goffman's sense is that there was a high degree of integration between the hostel inmates and the township residents on the factory floors. In his sociological investigation of metal workers on the East Rand, Sitas (1983) found that it was the migrants in the hostels who played a pivotal role in providing an organisational base for the unions in the early 1980's. Sitas' argument is that the introduction of trade unionism into the social and the economic life of the migrant workers demolished barriers that fostered an "us and them" mentality that made hostel inmates antagonistic to the surrounding community. Hostel dwellers became organised both at the site of production and reproduction (Sitas, 1983; Mayibuye, 1991).

Hostels in general did not totally separate their inhabitants from associating with the outside environment and its people. Though geographically separate from the township, there were a number of activities that bound the two communities together. As Themba Mthethwa argued:

... there is a process of intermingling between some of the hostel residents and the broader outside environment of the township. To the extent that this intermingling occurs it remains contrary to the thesis of "total" exclusionist tendencies of total institutions (Mthethwa, 1990: 47).

The crucial point is that hostels, in common with other total institutions, involve a denial of individuality and a

subjection to collective living in harsh conditions marked by a lack of privacy or respect for human dignity.

4. CHANGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOSTELS

The hostel system was constituted long before formal apartheid was introduced, but was reinforced and extended by the ideology and practices of "grand apartheid". However hostels and the migrant labour system have come to be understood essentially as artifacts of the apartheid generation (Smit, 1991; Wentzel, 1993).

(a) THE FIRST METAMORPHOSIS 1913 - 1948: The establishment of hostels in the inner city

During this period hostels were located in the inner city. The first hostel was built in 1913 as a solution to the chronic accommodation shortage experienced by black migrants. It was built on the south eastern side of the emerging central city of Johannesburg.

This hostel was built by the Johannesburg City Council in 1913 after it received representations from the Johannesburg business community. Johannesburg Employers as they were called, protested against their workers being located with the rest of the black population in the segregated black township of Klipspruit. Employers feared that locating their workers in places far from the working environment would affect their

work performance because most of these workers would arrive late to work using transport problems as the excuse (Carr, 1990).

Hostels were intended to accommodate the entire emerging African working class in the city next to their places of employment. The theory behind this idea was that African workers would be "caged" in the hostels whilst in the service of the white masters in the white cities (Piere and da Silva, 1986).

Eleven years later, in 1924, after the government promulgated the 1923 Urban Areas Act which forced the municipalities to provide housing for Africans, Wemmer hostel was built as a second hostel in the city's industrial area. The third and last set of hostels to be built in the inner city were built in 1932 and 1946 respectively. They were the Wolhuter or Jeppe hostel and the Denver hostel (Piere and da Silva, 1986).

At this time, in all, the inner city hostels accommodated about 1 400 legal, temporary sojourners. It is alleged that these hostels had more than 4 000 illegal occupants, which created a serious problem of overcrowding. The Johannesburg City Council (JCC) was constantly criticized by white residents for building hostels in the inner city. The JCC had compounded the problems by giving out permits to 10 000 employees allowing workers to remain in the city in what would

be later called the "location in the sky" (Piere and da Silva).

The idea of hostels was not altogether a new one, it bore a resemblance to the compound system which first emerged in the 1880's in the diamond mines of Kimberley (Callinicos, 1989; Mokwena, 1990). They were similar to the compounds in that they too were a more effective locus of control, that ensured a continuous supply and control of cheap labour. They differed from compounds in that compounds were more closed structures that resembled Goffman's "total institutions", created to cater specifically for mine workers. Migrants who entered those institutions "[found] themselves virtual prisoners in the compounds; for the compound system imposed almost total control..." (Callinicos, 1985: 43), over any migrant while he was an employee of a particular mine.

Other differences between the hostels and the compounds are their geographic location. Compounds were built in the mining environment which were usually located on the outskirts of the cities or outside the industrial areas; whereas hostels were located in the inner cities.

Another essential feature that differentiates the compounds from the hostels is that hostels were more open than compounds. Many hostel migrants participated actively in township life through individual social networks of relatives

and friends, or through membership in churches, stokvels, *magotlas* and sports clubs.

Another notable difference between these two institutions is that the compounds were the mine owners' private buildings, which housed workers who were exclusively employed by the mines. Hostels on the other hand, were built by the City Council to house workers who worked for a variety of different employers.

Hostels were later removed from the inner city and located on the peripheries of townships, except for a tiny minority which were built inside the townships. They were built mainly to cater for the emerging proletarians, who moved in and out of the hostel as their work shift allowed them. Entry at the gate required a special permit as the guards were changed from time to time. Women and boys below the age of sixteen were not allowed in the hostel (Key informant, no. 14, Old Mapetla resident).

The construction of hostels was essential during the early 1900's because of the migrant labour that was coming to the Reef (Pitt, 1981). Most of these migrants flooded the PWV areas without their families in search of employment opportunities (Sitas, 1983). The local authority and the industries were compelled to provide accommodation for the migrants, as there was an upsurge in the economy that resulted in a large number of migrants coming into towns, securing work permits

and looking for some place to live (Pitt, 1981). The evolution of black townships in and around the PWV areas could not absorb the huge migrant inflow.

The South African Parliament's first Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1913 permitted employers to provide their own accommodation for black workers if they so wished (Mandy, 1984). This resulted in many employers providing sleeping quarters on their premises in what was equivalent to a "small, private, unsupervised compound" (Piere and da Silva, 1986: 4). Some migrants provided their own shelters in proliferating inner city hovels. These were perceived by civic authorities and the white public as "menacing cesspools of degeneracy where prostitution and illicit liquor thrived" (Piere and da Silva, 1986: 6). Their physical existence was vehemently challenged by white ratepayers' groups who lived in or next to where hostels were planned.

It must be remembered that before the advent of the Nationalist government to power, there was already an urgent need to accommodate African workers who were flocking to the urban areas in search of employment in the growing secondary sector of the economy. Most of these African workers were housed in the hostels or inner city compounds that were built in the city, a place which up to then had predominantly been reserved for whites (Carr, 1990).

Some of the African workers were accommodated in private homes in the city or in company hostels/compounds which were also situated in "white" areas. "The company compounds were overcrowded squalid places which had earned a reputation as breeding grounds for all sorts of social evils" (Mokwena, 1990: 24). This provoked a dispute between the state and representatives from the white communities.

The debate between the State and the ratepayers Association raged on for ten years, until the state promulgated Section 2 of the Bantu Urban Areas Act, no. 25 of 1945, which proclaimed hostels as "Bantu areas" designed for accommodating single men or women working in town on a migrant basis (Sitas, 1983; Mandy, 1984).

These protests continued throughout the 1940's gaining credibility and intensity in the late 1940's when it became possible to argue that "racial segregation would be better served if hostels were situated in the townships" (Piere and da Silva, 1986), as opposed to in the inner city.

A resolution was taken in 1949 by the Sub-Committee of the city Council of Johannesburg that no further hostels should be built in the "white" areas (Mokwena, 1991). This was a clear indication of the perceived danger of situating hostels among established white communities. This marked the beginning of the second metamorphosis.

(b) THE SECOND METAMORPHOSIS 1948 - 1976: Hostels moved to the townships

When the Nationalists took over power in 1948 many more hostels were planned and built in African townships. Almost all hostels, except for a very small number, were built on the edges of the townships which ensured maximum geographical marginalisation.

This marked the second phase in the metamorphosis of the hostels. The fact that hostels were built long distances away from workplaces meant that hostels inmates had to travel far to work as opposed to the short journeys prior to this phase.

The first hostel to be built away from an industrial setting, was built in Soweto in 1955. It was built on the periphery of the Soweto's first "up-market" township, Dube, and was to house only male migrants who were moving to the city in increasing numbers.

Residents of Dube Township had been forcefully ejected from Sophiatown in 1945 (Mandy, 1984: 176). Both the residents of Dube and the prospective inmates of the hostel vehemently opposed the idea of the hostel and solicited employers' support as well as that of various Native Advisory Boards to no avail (Piere and da Silva, 1984; Mokwena, 1990; Carr, 1990).

The two groupings opposed the idea of relocating the hostels to the townships far away from the work place for different reasons. They channelled their grievances through different structures. The residents of Dube channelled their opposition to the hostel through various community structures, particularly the vociferous Residents' Association. The hostel inmates objections were articulated through the Rand Daily Mail, the only progressive newspaper at that time (Mokwena, 1990).

The Dube Residents' Association felt that the concentration of large numbers of single men would lead to all kinds of social evils and could be a serious threat to peace in the township (Key informant no. 4, chairman of the Dube Residents' Association in 1953-1957). Furthermore, the association believed that the hostel system would invariably lead to a deterioration in the living standards of the township populace. It was also argued that not only would the number of illegitimate babies increase, but there was a fear that many marriages would be put in a precarious position (Key informant no. 4). At this time most black women were illiterate and unemployed. The fear from the male dominated residents' association was that these women would be easy prey for the single hostel migrants.

On the other hand the hostel inmates opposed the move for different reasons. Their main reason for opposing the move was more economic than social. They believed that it would

cost them more in travelling expenses if hostels were located in the townships than it would cost them from town. According to Carr:

The Africans to be removed bitterly opposed the proposal and prevailed on their employers to make a special representation to the department on their behalf. Because of the inconvenience and expense of daily train trips to and from the austere Dube hostel 12 miles away, it was not really surprising that they resented the move and did all they could to thwart it (Carr, 1992: 70).

The protests of the hostel inmates were to no avail. Mokwena claimed that:

This was the last lap in the battle against hostels. The state had won. From then on the hostel became an integral part of the geography of the township and a normal part of the social make-up of Soweto (Mokwena, 1990: 56).

The first inhabitants of Dube Men's Hostel moved in, in July 1956. The hostel came to accommodate approximately 30 000 migrants. The Local Municipal Authorities of Johannesburg did not only aim to partition the hostel dwellers from the township residents, but planned to divide the hostel population itself along ethnic and rural/urban lines. The ethnic division of the hostel is well described by Can Themba:

There was a building for the Sotho group, a set of buildings for the Nguni (Zulu, Xhosa, and Swazi) groups, another for the Venda-Shangaan group (Can Themba, 1985: 117).

This enforced ethnic differentiation laid a seed for ethnically motivated violence that occurred in 1957 (Carr, 1990; Mokwena, 1990; Themba, 1990).

Dube hostel was located between the two townships, Dube and Meadowlands. It was not as isolated as had been envisaged by the architects; instead there was a degree of reciprocity and social interaction between the migrants and the township residents (Mokwena, 1990).

The government did not build recreational facilities for the hostel inmates; a huge beer garden was the only amenity. This resulted in people playing draughts or cards on their beds during the week, while partaking in traditional dancing at weekends (Themba, 1985: 90; Carr, 1990).

... [But] those who could not take part in either of these games resorted to alcohol, dagga and any mind twisting drugs. What else could they do? Very few of us went to the townships where there was a variety of games where we could take part either as active participants or spectators" (Respondent no. 3, Dube hostel resident).

This lack of recreational facilities provided the impetus for new relationships between the hostel dwellers and the township residents. Township people, particularly women, flocked to the hostels under the guise of watching traditional dancing, though often their purpose was to look for men. Other spectators to traditional dancing games included grown-up township men, and children, but the best and the more energetic dancers would find themselves surrounded by a group of lady admirers from the townships.

The siting of hostels around the townships attracted other activities which cemented the relationships between the hostel

inmates and the township residents. Second hand garments were displayed and sold by women from different parts of Soweto. Hostel inmates bought these garments even if they were going to end up hanging on the walls and roofs inside the hostel dormitories. This appetite for buying displayed by hostel dwellers led to a belief by township people that hostel dwellers were always "loaded with money" (Key informant no. 17, Mapetla resident).

This impression led to the proliferation of informal sector activities in front of the hostel buildings. The type of food which was mostly sold to hostel inmates included meat of different quality such as offal, "skop" (sheep's head), "amanqina" (sheep and cow's legs), chicken feet, low-grade red meat as well as anything that would act as "izagila zephalishi" ("any thing that would help usher the porridge down the throat"). Traditional healing herbs were also sold to the hostel inmates who bought all these goods and in the process established close social relations with township residents.

Prostitution also flourished inside the hostels. Some women had "whistlestop" sexual relationships with their customers. These women would often be smuggled into the hostel, beating the "blackjacks" (municipal police), at their own system. Sometimes this was done through bribery because the system was open to abuse, but sometime it was due to the weariness and

drunkenness of the "blackjacks" who often worked long, tedious hours (Key informant no. 6, Mapetla residents).

his pattern of harmonious interaction between the two social groupings of township residents and hostel inmates predominated until the early stages of 1976.

(c) THE THIRD METAMORPHOSIS 1976 - 1990: Women and children come to inhabit the hostel

The third phase which occurred after the 1976 period, introduced a different dimension to life in the hostels. The visiting women and children who had lingered around the hostels because they were attracted by the economic opportunities and inter-hostel traditional dancing, now became permanent residents. Women and children were seen roaming freely inside the hostels.

Control over the hostels and townships began unravelling. The system of law and order governing the hostels completely collapsed after the 1976 Soweto uprising. Every building that had a government tag was targeted; many rent offices, beer-halls, bottle stores and post offices were burned down. The lives of many white officials were threatened, and the murder of a white man sent shivers down the spines of most white officials. Most of them operated from offices outside Soweto, leaving black employees who had never functioned without the vigilant eye of a white official, to look after themselves.

This was the beginning of the end of the early morning township and hostel raids which had always been conducted by white officials, in search of the illegal hostel dwellers or their visitors. These developments changed the face of hostels in most South African townships forever.

Hostels completely ceased to accommodate single men exclusively as more and more women found their way into them. Contrary to Zulu's (1993) assertion that most of the women found in the hostels were "loose women" or prostitutes, some of them were wives or girlfriends of the migrants.

Since the 1976 uprising more and more stable relationships were established between hostel dwellers and township women, particularly in the Mzimhlophe hostels because of the integration that occurred after the Kliptown floods (See below). There were women who vacillated between two or more men in search of a partner that would be willing to support them and their children. This type of vacillation cannot be equated with prostitution because these were not commoditised relationships.

It cannot be denied that prostitution is often common in an environment where men outnumber women. However the townships were different because there were more women than men (Posel, 1991: 203-204). This factor contributed to women flocking to the hostels in search of male partners. This development was further exacerbated by the decline of the rural economy and

the abolition of influx control in the 1980's, which sent rural women to the cities in droves. The type of women who frequented and inhabited the hostels therefore changed from women who were regarded as township "drunks" formerly dubbed "izibotho" to include rural women who were newcomers to the city.

These two groups of women were very different. Homeland or rural women could be defined as those women originating from the Bantustans, who had been living and working on white farms, or in small, rural towns and villages. Because of the poverty of these areas, women moved into the cities in increasing numbers. Posel notes they were:

leaving the rural area permanently, fleeing the rigours of patriarchy and the stresses inflicted by the migrant labour system and the violence that has engulfed the rural areas particularly those in Natal [Emphasis added] (Posel, 1991: 28).

The migrant labour system, poverty and violence propelled many rural women to the hostels in the urban areas. The plight of women in the rural areas is best articulated by Phyllis Ntantala who attested that:

... it struck me every time I went home that girls I had been in school and had known in these villages, many of them my age and younger, were living the lives of widows as their menfolk were working in urban areas. In some cases the men had not been back for years and girls were left alone in the countryside, raising their children, scraping the bare soil for a living. ... today most of the rural areas are places of women without men (Ntantala, 1992: 3).

It is therefore not surprising to see these women moving to the cities in huge numbers, in search of work and a peaceful environment in which to raise and educate their children. Many children came to the urban areas with their mothers. On their arrival in the urban areas they were confronted with a scarcity of space and accommodation and found themselves compelled to beg for a place to stay anywhere, even in the hostels.

These women who came to the hostels from the rural areas were often despised by township women, who belonged either to the working class or to the emerging black middle class, and had mainly grown up in the township. Some of them had brothers, uncles and relatives who had lived in the hostels for many years, but they did not imagine themselves falling in love with hostel dwellers, let alone staying with them in the hostel. (They despised women who had affairs with hostel dwellers and who lived in the hostels. These women were regarded as "failed women") (Key informant no. 7, township resident).

The other category of women who came to inhabit hostels on the Reef during this period were township "drunks" dubbed "izibotho" were township women of low status. They were regarded as township rejects who stood little chance of "getting" township men. Their only solace was with the hostel dwellers. This category of women made up a large percentage of women in the hostels. These women did not drink because

they moved into the hostel, but moved into the hostel because they were heavy drinkers. The hostel was the only place that could provide them with different concoctions at cheaper prices. Their plight is best articulated by Kopelus:

Most of these women are unemployed, giving them the time to sit in the shebeens for most of the day and part of the night. As men come off from shifts at different times of the day and night, they are willing to buy alcohol for them (Kopelus, 1994: 91).

(d) THE FOURTH METAMORPHOSIS 1990 - 1993: Hostels become centres of violence

The 1990's marked the fourth stage of transformative change as hostels, particularly those in the Transvaal, gained international notoriety as theatres of violence. According to Everatt (1992), hostels in the 1990's

... also lay at the centre of the strategy of destabilisation, which the figures strongly suggest is being carried out by Inkatha and various agents of the state *some who were previously involved in destabilisation of neighbouring countries* [Emphasis added] (Everatt, 1992: 9).

According to the Human Rights commission in the three year period between 1990 and 1993, 44 per cent of Soweto's 1,106 deaths from political violence have been hostel linked. According to the Independent Board of Inquiry into Informal Repression between July 1990 and April 1992 there were 260 attacks on township residents launched from some 15 hostels.

This development was to change the perceptions of township residents and their social relations with almost all hostels, particularly those which were used as launch pads for attacks on the townships. Previously only the Dube and Meadowlands hostels were viewed negatively by the surrounding township communities because of the 1957 and 1976 conflicts.

The first conflict that involved hostel dwellers and township residents occurred from the Dube hostel in the mid 1950's. This conflict was provoked by thugs from the township who often robbed the hostel dwellers of their hard earned cash. These thugs were perceived as Basothos by the predominately Zulu-speaking hostel inmates, giving the conflict its ethnic flavour (Wentzel, 1993). The conflict broke out on 14 September 1957 when bands of Zulus living in the hostel attacked Sotho-speaking people living in the family houses in the adjacent township of Zones 4 and 5 in Meadowlands. The conflict left 40 people dead and over 40 injured. The violence began on Saturday afternoon, and broke out again on Sunday during the memorial service of those killed the previous day (Mokwena, 1990). This marked the first schism between the hostel residents and the township community that later developed into an "us and them" syndrome.

The "us and them" syndrome was further fortified by another violent confrontation that occurred in 1976 between the Meadowlands' hostel inmates and surrounding townships. The violence occurred when the students of Soweto rebelled at the

introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black schools. The students sought to enforce a number of stayaways and consumer boycotts without the mandate of every stakeholder in the townships. The inhabitants of the Meadowlands hostel claimed they had never been consulted on this strategy and were not obliged to risk their jobs by following orders from children. They bulldozed their way to work in the midst of stones; rampaged into the surrounding community killing and maiming many male township residents, particularly the youths who stood in their way.

A psychological, political and social schism developed between township residents and the hostel inmates after this conflict. The outcome was the feeling on both sides that they were enemies.

However evidence which emerged from interviews with both the township and the hostel residents suggests that a healing process had been taking place after the 1976 violence in Meadowlands. This was best articulated by respondents who claimed that:

We were trying our best to put the Meadowlands episode behind us, we felt it was an unfortunate event that was engineered by elements opposed to societal unity (Respondent 31, hostel resident).

We were on the verge of uniting the two communities when the violence erupted in mid-1990, which shattered the dreams of knitting the relationship between the two communities (Respondent 50, hostel resident).

The onset of the 1990's saw hostels on the Reef turned into "fortresses of fear". Violence spread to the rest of the Reef areas where there was a high concentration of single-sex hostels. In most of the hostels non-Zulu male hostel dwellers were forcefully expelled as each hostel was turned into a fortress from which attacks on surrounding communities and nearby squatter settlements were planned and executed. Zulu-speaking inmates who refused to align themselves with destructive forces, were also violently ejected from the hostels (Everatt, 1992; Innes and Kentridge, 1992).

As non Zulu-speaking hostel dwellers were evicted, they were replaced by pro-Inkatha Zulu speaking members who were either bused in from Natal, or who moved in from expensive township backyard rooms or even from other hostels where there was acute overcrowding (Respondent 48, hostel resident).

Contrary to Minnaar's assertion that only Xhosa-speaking migrants were targeted for expulsion, every non Zulu-speaking male hostel dweller was a victim. Those who remained as members of Inkatha were interrogated as to why they preferred Inkatha to the "Xhosa/communist-led ANC". If someone was suspected of being a member of the ANC, he would be expelled.

However at no stage were the hostels exclusive Zulu enclaves as suggested by Minnaar. Non Zulu-speaking women who had boyfriends in the hostels were never expelled, even Xhosa-speaking women who were girlfriends to the hostel dwellers

ere granted reprieve, and allowed to stay with their boyfriends in the hostel.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that hostels have gone through a number of changes since they were built in 1913. Hostels were institutions that were first built in the inner city near to industry to house and control exclusively male migrants. Hostels were later relocated to the peripheries of most of the black townships in the mid 1950's to ensure an "us and them" syndrome that complemented the "divide and rule" policies of the apartheid government. In the post-1976 period, the hostels came to accommodate women and children who flocked to the urban areas particularly after the collapse of influx control laws. Despite this changing social composition, from the beginning of the 1990's, hostels, particularly those on the Reef, began to house mainly Zulu-speaking migrants. They were bused in from rural Natal, and were largely IFP supporters. These themes are explored in more depth in the following two chapters.

The chapter has further given a full description of the two social categories of women found in the hostels. The chapter has argued that the first category of women found in the hostel were rural women who came looking for their husbands, boyfriends, relatives. A second category of women who

inhabited the hostels during the height of violence, were low status township women.

CHAPTER FOUR

A SOCIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF MEADOWLANDS HOSTEL

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will try to paint a picture of the inmates of the Meadowlands hostel and show how they were involved in the destabilisation of the neighbouring communities in the early 1990's. When the idea of erecting the Meadowlands hostel was first mooted, in the mid 1950's, the idea behind its development was that many of the urban Black workers were migrant workers who through choice, or because of influx control, had left their families in the rural areas and would never gain permanent urban status, which at the time was the preserve of whites. The government's utopian dream was that because the migrants had left "their families and their hearts in the homelands" it could accommodate them in bleak barrack-like "single" hostels for the purpose of controlling and monitoring their entry to and presence in the cities.

Today Meadowlands hostel is one of the more than 220 South African hostels, housing more than one million people (Race Relations Survey, 1991/92). It is one of eight hostels in Soweto to be featured on national news for months in the 1990's, because it was involved in violent conflict with the surrounding townships.

A conspicuous pattern in the Meadowlands hostel since 1990 has been that Inkatha-supporting vigilantes seized control of this hostel and ejected non-IFP-supporting residents. They instituted a militaristic regime, attacked neighbouring houses, occupied some and kept others empty to maintain a buffer-zone around the hostel. It had become a launching pad for destabilising the surrounding townships.

This chapter will endeavour to show clearly how this development took place, after the unbanning of the liberation movements in February 1990. The chapter has four sections. It will firstly give a historical background of the hostel showing the social composition of the hostel and the relationship between hostel inmates and township residents before 1990. Secondly, the chapter will examine the changing social characteristics of hostel inmates in the 1990 - 1993 period. Thirdly, the chapter will outline the changed social organisation of the hostel in the 1990's, and finally, will analyze the pattern of violence that came to characterise the relations between hostel and township residents.

2. A HISTORY OF MEADOWLANDS HOSTEL

The Meadowlands hostel is a huge structure that was conceived in 1954 by the non-European Affairs and Housing Committee because of the serious shortage of hostel accommodation for single male "natives" in Johannesburg. By then there were 13 500 names of people on the official waiting list for beds in

hostels (Johannesburg City Council File N342/8). Immediate steps were taken to set aside four sites for the establishment of hostels.

The first site was set aside at portion 504 and 505, farm Doornfontein, no. 24, where a barracks type multi-storied hostel with 4 000 beds, called Inhlazane hostel was erected. The second was the Dube Hostel built in Dube between Meadowlands and the railway line. The third site was the portion of Klipspruit site no. 8 which was situated to the West of the Railway line near the Nancefield station. This one was called the Nancefield or Lifateng hostel. The fourth, was built in the portion of Orlando West (Mzimhlophe) between Klipspruit and the railway line (JCC, file N342/8). This is the hostel under focus: the Meadowlands hostel.

The Meadowlands hostel, which was built in the early 1960's, is similar to the physical structure of most Soweto hostels. It consists of more than 20 rows of single storied brick barracks. Each block has one entrance that leads to a huge kitchen with one small coal stove. The blocks are comprised of single rooms and sixteen-bed dormitories (because of the critical accommodation shortage more than 20 beds are often squeezed into the dormitories) public toilets, an ablution room, a boiler room and taps (hot and cold) set above concrete wash tubs outside the toilets and ablution room.)

The general appearance of the rooms is somewhat depressing and dark. Unpainted, semi-plastered walls and ceilingless asbestos roofs add to the general gloomy environment. The inhabitants suspend their larger possessions from the roof beams, and their clothes hang from poles or ropes across the room. Old calenders, pictures of semi-naked women, pictures of Chief Buthelezi and King Zwelithini, news paper cuttings, an IFP flag and other such decorative materials are pasted onto the walls and are the only sources of colour.

The grimy dilapidated, windowless structures are enveloped by a sickening stench that permeates the entire block. Some of the stench emanates from the ever blocked toilets which are located in close proximity to each block. Most residents claimed that the toilets had not been functioning properly since 1988.

The hostel is bordered on the east by a minedump. On the north of the hostel there is a ghost town dating from 1990 of about 200 houses which were either gutted or evacuated as the residents fled for their lives, in an area known as Zone One, in Meadowlands. This was in response to the political violence. On the west, the hostel is separated from the neighbourhood township of Killarney by a two lane extension of the Soweto highway called Modise street, named after Rev. Modise of the International Pentecost Mission Church of Zion. On the south, the hostel is divided from the neighbouring township of Mzimhlophe by the two lane MaBasotho Street.

Because of its proximity to both Meadowlands and Mzimhlophe townships, the hostel is either called Meadowlands or Mzimhlophe hostel. Notwithstanding its position, residents of these townships still perceived it as culturally and geographically separated from these townships. This form of subtle marginalisation of the hostels, is strongly reinforced by the hostels being named after railway stations next to which they were located, instead of the township in which they were built. There are many examples of this: Mapetla hostel in Mapetla Township is called Merafe Hostel, Merafe is a name of a station. Lefateng Hostel next to Nancefield station is called Nancefield hostel, and Jabulane Hostel situated in Jabulane and next to Inhlazane Station is called Inhlazane Hostel.

Meadowlands/Mzimhlophe hostel inmates even though they come from the hostel that is situated between the three townships, are not referred to as Meadowlands, Mzimhlophe or Killarney residents, but are categorised as hostel dwellers.

This disassociating of the hostel name from the township name is a clear indication of the patterns of marginalisation. As one of the respondents asserted:

Hostels are not part of the townships, they are a government creation. They housed people who do not regard themselves as part of the township population. People who come to the cities only because they are looking for jobs. Theirs is to live as cheaply as possible. They are dedicated to consolidating their lives in the rural areas. The large number of overloaded buses and vans leaving the hostels every Friday night bears testimony to the

goods hostel inmates take home to the rural areas. Goods such as doors, corrugated irons, chairs, windows and many other things that symbolise consolidation of life in the rural base. Some of the goods that are sent home by migrants are bought with their hard earned meagre salaries, some of them are looted in our houses during the violent confrontations. They have nothing to lose these people, their wives and children are left in their respective homeland. While we had to fight with our backs against the wall defending our wives, children and belongings. Most of the time we defend these things with our lives because they are our lives (Key informant no. 3, Mzimhlope resident).

It is only hostels built far away from railway lines that have tended to retain their names. Hostels such as Dobsonville, Diepkloof and Alexandra to mention just a few, are hostels that still maintain their original names.

The Meadowlands hostel is sandwiched between two stations, the Mzimhlophe station and Phomolong station. Most hostel inmates who live in the north of the hostel use the Phomolong station.

In the case of Meadowlands, when the hostel was first established, township residents used to pride themselves on their relations with hostel residents. However these perceptions changed immediately after the 1976 hostel inmates' conflict with the township community. Each township refrained from associating itself with the hostel. Meadowlands residents called it Mzimhlophe hostel while Mzimhlophe residents called it Meadowlands hostel (Respondent no. 14).

Meadowlands residents vindicated their assertion by pointing to the fact that the hostel's single gate was located on the north of Mzimhlophe township. A number of the shops, most of them damaged during the 1976 uprising, were built around this area. Since then residents bought their goods in shops that were located in townships adjacent to the hostel, i.e. Mzimhlophe, Meadowlands or Killarney.

Male residents of Meadowlands claim to have come from "*Kofifi*" (Sophiatown). They call themselves "*real ouens van Ndofaya*" (real male inhabitants of Meadowlands). They claim to be South Africa's jazz connoisseurs, whose thirst for jazz music is unquenchable. This was evident by the sounds every Sunday morning when they would be heard playing either Duke Ellington or Johnny Hodges (Respondent, no. 4). In the hostel a different kind of music was popular, mainly traditional choral music which could be heard on weekends especially.

Over time the initial acceptance of hostel inmates by township residents changed to attitudes of contempt. Hostel inmates were perceived as "*mogoes van Toeka*" (stupid rural boys), whose origins were various rural places of South Africa. Even though the townships were built to house the poor, lower income group of people living precariously on or below the breadline, the township male community felt socially superior and materially better off than the hostel inmates.

The history of the Meadowlands hostel will be analyzed in terms of two historical phases: (1) The PRE-1976 PHASE, and (2) the 1976-1990 PHASE, which includes the KLIPTOWN episode. Each phase involved people with different social characteristics and different social relations between the hostel residents and the township communities.

THE PRE-1976 PHASE

The pre-1976 era covers the period when the hostel was built in 1962 right until the Soweto uprising of 1976. During this period Meadowlands hostel was mainly inhabited by predominantly peace-loving migrants who came from all over South Africa and represented different ethnic groups. Among them were migrants from neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and those who came from countries north of Limpopo who were dubbed "makwerekwere" for their inability to express themselves in any of the South African black languages. Over the years these migrants had developed creative strategies to cope with their social reality.

During the 1960's the standard of living of both the hostel and the township residents was still very low, and the rural/urban divide was tenuous. The life style of the two communities was still unsophisticated, and both communities kept strong links with their traditional authorities.

Zulu-speaking migrants were still dominated by traditional Zulu men dubbed "iziqhaza", conspicuous with deep traditional marks on their faces and enlarged earlobe openings for traditional earrings or corks. Migrants lived side by side with the township people. It was only when some township residents experienced vertical occupational mobility in the late 1960's that class differentiations emerged. These changes in social status created divisions between the hostel inmates and the township residents and between the township residents themselves.

A sense of harmony and social solidarity was expressed by Tom Magawana, a former resident of Mzimhlophe hostel and one of the oldest residents of Mzimhlophe Township. He came to Johannesburg as a migrant, and then married Lindelwa Ndlazi a daughter of a Mzimhlophe resident:

I came to Johannesburg from Villiers (OFS). I was among the first inhabitants of Mzimhlophe hostel. I was scared of the township life because for many years we have been bombarded with news that urban life was rough, fast and cruel. Only the fittest survived, we were told. I was not sure whether I would cope with that pace. Poverty compelled me to move out of my long protected environment where only cows determine the pace. But things turned out different when we came to Mzimhlophe hostel. We were more than welcomed by the communities around us. Elderly women called us "*bakhwenyana*" (sons-in-law) presumably because we were bachelors, and men and boys called us "*s'bali*" (brothers-in-law). The pass-raids by the "black-jacks" (municipal police) were rife during those days: we were compelled to seek temporary accommodation with friends, relatives and even strangers in Mzimhlophe Township, when we had visitors from home. Mzimhlophe residents were more than eager to extend their hands of friendship (Key informant no 3, Mzimhlophe resident).

Influx control was strictly enforced during the 1960's, only people in possession of section 10(1) (a), (b), and (c) of the Urban Areas Act were allowed into the townships. Black South Africans who had lived and worked in an urban area legally, for less than 15 years, faced expulsion from the urban areas once they lost their employment (Posel, 1992). The official "*modus operandi*" for access to hostel beds was that men should have guaranteed employment upon their arrival in the urban areas (Ramphela, 1993). Meadowlands hostel was a well guarded male-only institution housing two main social categories of people: employed males older than 40 years, and younger employed males between sixteen and forty years of age. That is where the name "*ezimpohlweni*" (bachelor's paradise) emanated from (Key informant no. 6, Mzimhlope resident).

During this time, according to one respondent:

only men stayed in this hostel. Women and children were locked outside the gate. We met women in shebeens which were littered throughout the townships. Shebeen aunties invited us left right and centre to drink at their joints. They attracted us to their shebeens by inviting mainly Basotho girls as a ploy to attract us to their shebeens (Respondent no. 14, hostel resident)

Female migration from Basotholand was at its peak in the 1960's when Johannesburg and several other towns on the Reef "experienced an unprecedented influx of Sotho women" (Posel, 1991: 31). That is why it was possible for shebeen queens to use them to attract single migrants.)

Many Meadowlands and Mzimhlophe residents turned their houses into shebeens, working many hours a day brewing and pressing home brews dubbed "*blue-train*", "*skokiaan*" and "*barbaton*", in order to minimise poverty and to generate a cash income with which to educate their children. Some women operated shebeens in their houses in order to augment their husbands' meagre salaries. As Longmore said: "Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of the urban African community during this period was *its poverty*" [Emphasis added] (Longmore, 1959: 34).

Whether they were married or single, almost all Black women had to carry a major responsibility of supporting themselves and their offspring (Posel, 1991). The practice of turning their houses into shebeens was a matter of survival for some of them. Even in stable marriages, the majority of fathers did not give a reasonable proportion of their earnings for the use of their families (Kuzwayo, 1960). Also their earnings were very low; the vast majority of male city workers earned less than R30 a month. (Key informant no. 6, Mzimhlope resident).

Despite this shared experience of poverty, certain social differences existed. The townships were family communities, while hostels were bachelor quarters for men who had left their wives and children back home.

In this pre-1976 phase, the hostel population was composed of people from different ethnic groups including:

(a) *Elderly migrants*

A larger proportion of this group apart from having their families in the rural areas, also owned land, cattle, goats, sheep and other livestock in their respective homelands. Because of this they had no intention of settling permanently in the urban areas.

(b) *Young married migrants*

A small proportion of this group had families, land and live stock. But a larger proportion had none of these commodities and came to the cities mainly to accumulate capital in order to acquire these goods.

According to one informant in this pre-1976 phase, over half of these migrants were young men from different ethnic groups who came to work for bride-wealth payments and to buy cattle, agricultural implements and consumer goods (Key informant no. 7, Mzimhlope resident).

(c) *Migrants from white-owned farms*

This group only had families in the rural areas, but possessed neither land nor livestock. They had no secure access to land and other assets on white farms. Their tenure on white farms was usually contingent upon the ability of the household to provide labour to the white farmer.

(d) Township Bachelors

A small percentage of township bachelors stayed in the hostels because of overcrowding in their respective homes. This category included single township men who vowed never to get married, as well as those township youth who felt out of favour with their families because of their quest for an independent existence or because of their deviant behaviour.

THE POST 1976 PHASE

The face of the Meadowlands hostel changed forever after the 1976 student uprising. The first serious conflict between Meadowlands inmates and its adjacent areas occurred in 1976, when the students of Soweto revolted at the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in black schools. The trouble that flared between Meadowlands hostel inmates and township residents lasted two weeks and left 70 people dead as well as countless others injured (Kane-Berman, 1978).

The students tried to coerce all Soweto residents including hostel inmates to obey "stay at home" calls. The hostel inmates, who had never been consulted on this act of protest and were little inclined to risk their jobs resisted the call. To them it was business as usual and they went to work under police escort (Kane-Berman, 1978).

While this non-consultation was a source of deep resentment among hostel inmates, it is debatable whether even ordinary Sowetans

were consulted on the issues of stayaways. The calls were issued by the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC), which was a significant factor in Soweto politics during that period. The power of students is best expressed by Kane-Berman who argues that:

Their [students] writ was virtually law in the series of campaigns which they organised in the second half of 1976, among them the four strikes, the crusade against shebeens, the Christmas shopping boycott, and the ban on festive and sporting activities (Kane-Berman, 1978: 110).

These were decisions enforced by students without concern for, or consultation with the broader community. According to interviews most of the hostel dwellers supported the stayaway, in principle, even though they still went to work.

On Tuesday, August 24, 1976 something extraordinary took place in Meadowlands and Mzimhlophe. A section of the migrant worker population of Meadowlands Hostel, with the condonation and even suspected encouragement of the police, rampaged through the streets of the township attacking any young person who dared cross their path. The attack did not involve all migrants who lived in that hostel but only the Zulu migrants, of whom there were 1 630 in the hostel that housed a total of 10 300 people (Rand Daily Mail, 26.8.1976). At that time, armed with their so called traditional weapons (clubs and pangas), the Zulu migrants roamed the streets of the township and beat up all children of school-going age on their way to school. There were police armoured cars within sight and from time to time the police would fire tear gas or live ammunition, not at the migrants engaged in

these violence, but at the children and youth (Lodge, 1983; Gorodnov, 1983).

In this episode, township houses were not damaged or looted. A

Rand Daily Mail reporter wrote:

There I saw a policeman in a camouflage suit, armed with an FN rifle. Through an interpreter, the policeman said: 'You are warned not to continue damaging the houses because they belong to the West Rand Administration Board. If you damage the houses, you will force us to take action against you to prevent this. You have been ordered to kill only the troublemakers (Rand Daily Mail, 26.8.1976).

These violent confrontations between Meadowlands hostel dwellers and township residents not only affected the relationship between the two specific communities, but affected the relationship between the whole community that lives adjacent to hostels in Soweto. Township residents became highly suspicious of the hostel migrants. Zulu-speaking Meadowlands Hostel dwellers, particularly those who could be easily identified by marks on their ears and faces were targeted. Whenever they appeared from the hostel or railway stations, shouts of "MaZulu!" (there come the Zulus!) would echoed in the streets of Mzimhlophe or Phomolong, while the youth descended on them with all kinds of weapons. Often when they were caught they would be beaten and left for dead, because necklacing had not yet begun in the townships during this period (Key informant no. 4, township resident).

These changes in hostel/township relations is best articulated by Nkanyezi Madlala, one of the few remaining Meadowlands Hostel residents from the 1976 epoch:

Before 1976 we were not totally isolated from the township environment, many of us preferred to call ourselves as members of the township instead of the hostel, because we spent our weekends with the township people. The hostel was just the place to lay our heads. But 1976 spread a black cloud over the entire hostel community. Our families were evicted from their temporary accommodation, never to be taken back again. There was nothing we could do to reverse this decision, the township jungle justice has taken its toll (Respondent no. 7, hostel resident).

In the pre-1976 phase hostels were characterised by male exclusivity. The 1976-1990 period, however, brought many changes to the hostel environment. Meadowlands hostel ceased to be an exclusively male domain. This change echoed Mamphela Ramphele's observation on Cape Town hostels, where she claimed that "What was essentially a 'man's world' ... changed into an environment accommodating men, women and children" (Ramphele, 1993: 57).

Prior to June 1976, women were prohibited from entering, let alone staying in the hostels. Pass raids and arrests were, for decades, a common feature of South African urban life and hostels were easy targets for such raids. Women in hostels were in a particularly vulnerable position as they were susceptible to prosecution both for not having residence rights and for trespassing (Segar, 1991). The events of June 1976 resulted in the disintegration of the West Rand bureaucratic structures of control. Women, children and the unemployed flooded into the hostels.

The first group of women and children to enter the hostel were hostel inmates' visitors and wives who had been temporarily housed in the township. A large number of these were traditional zulu women, who were illiterate and unemployable. Most of them were accommodated in parts of the hostel that had been vacated by inmates fleeing the violence.

The social composition of Meadowlands hostel also changed in that it included children after 1976. Migrant labour hostels in general were not built to house children, but children have entered the hostel social environment in great numbers, after the 1976 upheavals (Reynolds, 1984). From then on children became a permanent feature of the hostel social milieu. At first it was children who accompanied their mothers on visits to fathers and other relatives. There were also a small number of children who came on their own to visit during the school holidays, while others came for special reasons such as the need for health care (Jones, 1990). Other children were born in the Meadowlands hostel. This pattern is also reported by Ramphele in her writings of Cape Town hostels, "Many children below the age of 17 have been conceived in the hostels, as the results of the increasing trend, since the 1970's, for women to come to the city" (Ramphele, 1993: 37).

Before the 1976 violence between the hostel and township residents that took the lives of 70 people, the security of the hostel was tight, with a "black jack" policeman at every entrance to the hostel, preventing outsiders entering the premises. The

post-1976 period resulted in a slacking of security that allowed free traffic between the townships and the hostel. The hostel ceased to provide exclusively for employed males, and unemployed males, women and children, moved into the hostel. This phenomenon attracted even people from countries as far afield as Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi etc, who were living illegally in South Africa and previously had not been able to rent beds in the hostel because of their illegal status. They would have been easy prey to the previously frequent police raids.

This loosening of control led to an escalation of criminal activities that initially strained the relationship between the hostel and the township residents. Crime, murder and rape increased around this hostel, as

some inmates and other foreign inhabitants of this hostel, formed bands who invaded the location at night solely to rape and kill, so that there was someone lying dead somewhere in the adjacent locations, one in every week. This gave the hostel people a formidableness that made it difficult to befriend them or to sympathise with their terrible lot (Matshoba, 1987: 221).

The changing social composition of the Meadowlands hostel was given a special impetus by the arrival of Kliptown squatters. The beginning of 1977 introduced hundreds of families into the Meadowlands hostel. These were families whose shanties were swept away in an avalanche of rain, in a place called Kliptown, a few kilometres away from Meadowlands. These families moved into a section of the hostel that was vacated during the 1976 turmoil between hostel dwellers and township residents (Keller, 1993; Matshoba, 1987).

This section of the hostel was situated on the south eastern side of Meadowlands Zone one, and it was later called Kliptown, named after the new occupants' place of origin. The new Kliptown section attracted a wide variety of people, particularly those from the lower echelons of the job market. Among them were street-vendors, washer-women, gangsters, security guards, factory workers, as well as day labourers and unemployed people.)

The hostel inmates used the same transport as the Kliptown squatters. As they travelled together side by side in mini-bus taxis and trains during long journeys to and from their places of employment, new bonds and relations were forged. Mistrust, fear and suspicion slowly evaporated as they started calling one another "makhelwane" a Zulu word for neighbour. This brought with it a neighbourly atmosphere to the hostel. As a hostel "induna" said: "The presence of a large number of women and children contributed a certain amount of warmth and reason for living" (Key informant no. 7).)

A number of other social practices emerged that diffused the atmosphere of hate and mistrust that had come to exist between the township residents and the hostel inmates, after the 1976 revolts. An example of these practices was participating in sporting activities.

3. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY MEADOWLANDS HOSTEL RESIDENTS

This research has revealed a different picture from media reports of hostel inmates as a homogeneous group characterised by violent pro-IFP, Zulu-speaking, single males, who wage war against the township at night and rub shoulders with the same community at the workplace during the day. This different picture emerged after extensively interviewing 31 Meadowlands hostel inmates.

Hostel inmates were found not to be an homogeneous group. There were profound differences in age, educational levels, social class, rural origins, marital status, skill, and in personal and political loyalties and aspirations. The majority, 80% of the respondents were Zulu-speaking and belonged to the Zulu ethnic group, factors that helped to strengthen ethnic allegiance and pride among Zulus in the Meadowlands hostel. Only a small number, 10% of hostel dwellers spoke Tswana, while 5% spoke Sotho and a further 5% spoke Pedi.) The research uncovered underlying tensions that were not immediately apparent.

(i) Age profile of hostel inmates

TABLE 1: AGE PROFILE OF MEADOWLANDS HOSTEL INMATES

AGE IN YEARS	10-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60
NO OF PEOPLE	7	10	7	4	3

seventeen (55%) of the people interviewed were below the age of 30, and 70% of them had come to Johannesburg for the first time.

(ii) Relations with rural origins

A large proportion of those interviewed, 75%, had not visited their rural homes since coming to the Reef. Their experiences are clearly articulated by Manz'ekhofi Mpiyakhe who claimed that:

I have never gone home since I was here (Meadowlands hostel). Maybe I will go this Christmas. I do not want to arrive at home empty handed. My wife and children know I have gone to Johannesburg. They expect a lot from me. The precedent have been set by those who had come to Joburg before us. After twelve months in Johannesburg they go home with boxes full of all sorts of things. But they must expect that things have changed now. They must appreciate that even if I do not bring home anything, I am still alive. Many go back to their homes in coffins, if they were lucky enough to be identified in the mortuary. So our families must learn to appreciate just to see us alive that is all (Respondent no. 12).

A significant number, 10 (32,3%) of the newly arrived young migrants preferred Johannesburg to any other place. Social networks of relatives appeared more powerful magnets than job prospects. This is what one respondent had to say about the choice of coming to the hostels on the Reef:

I do not have a brother or relatives in Cape Town or in any other places. Cape Town is the place of the Xhosas, I will never set my foot in that place. Xhosas think they are the most cleverest than any other ethnic group in South Africa. I came to Johannesburg because my brothers are here, and I am assured of a place to stay in the hostel. Unlike in Cape Town or Orange Free State where I would be compelled to stay in a squatter camp. Me never (Respondent no. 21).

A large number, 28 (90%) of the people interviewed, among them people who were in full time employment, did not pay rent. Those who did, paid as little as R15 a month for a bed.

In spite of its violent nature, hostel life was positively evaluated by 16 (52%) of the respondents. Life in the hostel is best summed up as:

I found every thing okay for me here. It is better than staying at home (Tugela). Because even there, there is heavy fighting that is coupled with poverty and hunger. Here (Meadowlands hostel) we are protected. Nobody touches us here. But at home they can burn you and your family at once. There is too much violence at home, both political and the remains of faction fighting (Respondent no. 18).

What emerged clearly from these interviews was that the pride of association with home was declining as compared to the pride which older migrants felt. There were no longer young men wearing beads and skin necklaces, which indicated engagement to a girl from home (Meyer, 1982). There was a strong element of emulation of their urban peer group: those who could afford it, wore gold or silver chains around their necks, rather than skin necklaces. They permed their hair, wore Dobbshire trousers and "All stars" canvas shoes. They preferred urban to rural girls; they were regarded as smart because they always wear perfume and look presentable, while rural girls allegedly wear towels over their bodies and look old long before their twentieth birthdays.

A large number of this group (10 respondents) preferred settling permanently in an urban area to going back home. They felt hostels should be converted into family units, rather than being

demolished. The group did not mind living in a multi-ethnic environment, as long as Zulus could occupy separate dormitories from other ethnic groups.

There was a sharp difference between the older and younger groups. A large proportion, six of the eight (75%) older migrants, although they had worked in the urban areas all their lives, said they would prefer to retire to their rural homes, rather than to stay in the cities. The idea of retiring to an old-age home would have been unthinkable to them. They advocated the retention of hostels as they were, and preferred their families to stay in the rural areas while being able to visit them in the hostels.

Another vast difference among Meadowlands hostel inmates was their geographical origins. Migrants in this hostel were not exclusively newcomers from rural areas, but included a few migrants from smaller cities and towns situated outside Johannesburg.

Intra-hostel harmony was attainable largely because most Zulu-speaking residents came from the same village or rural setting, and they were accommodated as such in their separate dormitories. The majority, 19 respondents (61%) preferred this arrangement whereby rooms in the Meadowlands hostel were not only ethnically divided, but were divided according to the rural origins of the migrants. According to a number of respondents, nobody deliberately set out to divide the inmates, but:

the process happens automatically, it is a case of people feeling comfortable among their own kind particularly during these strife torn period (Respondent no. 6, hostel resident).

This arrangement of grouping people who came from the same geographical area, who shared the same norms, values and culture and spoke the same dialect had other effects. It made communal living possible and easy to organise. Generational boundaries were prevalent and were respected by people who hailed from the same geographic area. Those who were employed contributed to the communal budget, which ensured that food was distributed equitably. Internal conflict was thus minimised.

Fourteen respondents (45%) came from Nkandla, Bergville, Msinga, and Mahlabathini in Natal. The research revealed that most of the older respondents from these areas had live-stock such as goats, cattle, chicken and sheep at home. 50% of them had migrated to the cities because the rural way of life was inadequate as a sole means of earning a living.

This group of migrants were people who had been in the leadowlands hostel the longest - in most cases longer than ten years. These older migrants were a war weary group. They were dogmatic and ardent followers of the King of the Zulus, King Swelithini, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and the Inkatha Freedom Party. They were naive about Inkatha's ideology and policies but its ethnic tag acted as a powerful magnet. Their quest for peace is articulated here by Mbadlanyika:

"impi ayinamvuzo, ayikho impunzi yehlathi" (there is no winner in war. Everybody is a loser because it is mankind that you destroy). We cannot run away from the war in the village and come and cause war in the townships (Respondent no. 11, hostel resident).

The areas which many hostel dwellers came from had long been engulfed by faction fighting amongst different Zulu tribes. Violence had become a dominant culture among both young and old men of these areas. According to one informant, in these areas a man's status was established according to the number of people he had killed. This informant was a hostel resident who preferred to remain anonymous:

In my area (Msinga) you cannot be called a man if you have not killed anybody. That is why I will not respect urban-men (*amadodedolobha*) because they are like women they have not killed anybody. They run away like women leaving their sons to fight the war (the township violence). You will never see that with us (Respondent no. 16, hostel resident).

This statement expresses a sharp polarisation of gender roles and a militarised conception of masculinity. This conception legitimises violent activities for many actors.

(iii) Marital status

Because of the changing demographic structures of the hostel whereby inmates were becoming younger and younger, only nine (29%) of the people interviewed were married and had children. The number of children per family ranged from eleven to three, and there was an average of seven children per family. Five (56%) of the married people would have liked their children to

have joined them in the urban areas, whereas the other four (44%) rejected the idea of being joined by their children. This is how one respondent viewed the issue:

No! No! No! I do not want my children to come to Johannesburg. But because there are no schools at home, I would like them to come only for education. After attaining their qualification they must go back. That is how they are going to escape the corruption of the city life (Respondent no. 17, hostel resident).

iv) Women in the Meadowlands hostel

One of the themes that emerged during the interviews was that the Meadowlands hostel was fast becoming home for not only young single males, but for a growing influx of young and middle-aged females from both the townships and rural areas. Both these young males and females who came from the rural areas were becoming less interested in maintaining their rural bases. For them, the urban areas held better prospects than drought-stricken and violence-ridden rural Natal.

Meadowlands hostel had for a long time ceased to provide only single-sex accommodation, the number of families having increased in the post-Kliptown period. Women became an integral part of the hostel environment. Some became residents of the hostel out of their own choice, while others had their residency imposed upon them. Their existence in the hostel was explained by one of the inmates as follows:

They live with us in the hostel. Most of them have children by hostel dwellers. Some come voluntarily while others are dragged against their will because they think they are smart. They think we are worth nothing and we are township rejects, that is why we

drag them in screaming and kicking (Respondent no. 7, hostel resident).)

Only those women who are regarded as township "rejects" and rural women voluntarily visited and inhabited the hostel. Those women who perceived themselves as "ladies" or "mshozas", i.e. the best township women, had to be coerced into the hostel.

(v) Educational profile of hostel inmates

The inmates of Meadowlands hostel show a surprisingly high level of education particularly among the young inhabitants. This is contrary to Ramphele's findings of low levels of education among Cape Town hostel dwellers (Ramphele, 1993). This level of educational attainment may be due to May's assertion that the rural household tended to invest their monies in their children's education because it represented "an investment in an urban-orientated future in which education is seen as the primary means of securing employment" (May, 1990: 178).

Twelve people (39%) interviewed had standard nine education. Six (19%) of other interviewees had gone up to standard ten, while the other six (19%) had standard three. Five of the respondents (16%) were totally illiterate, while only three (10%) had post matric and other diplomas. Their educational status elevated the youth ahead of their parents (Bernhardt et al., 1990). However the older migrants were a valued source of informal, experiential knowledge. They understood the complexities of the urban social

milieu. This understanding according to Segal, acted as "a survival kit" for youthful migrants.

It is the elders who initiated the younger migrants into the struggles and complexities of the city by sharing the knowledge of job opportunities, survival strategies, etc. As a result, a gerontocratic form of control has been established in the hostel (Segal, 1991: 9-10).

(vi) Employment profile

Meadowlands hostel was mostly inhabited by unemployed migrants. This became apparent both from interviews and from participant observation. Of the 31 people interviewed, nineteen (61%) were unemployed, five (16%) were in informal employment that ranged from dagga smuggling and distribution, running shebeens, repairing shoes, recharging car batteries, selling blocks of ice, street vendoring, running spaza shops, fixing cars, "izinyanga" (traditional healing) and "mashonisa" (money lending). Seven (22%) were in formal employment that ranged from working as security guards, taxi drivers, bank messengers, to owning mini-bus taxis. Only one (3%) of the respondents was in professional employment, as a teacher in one of the Soweto schools.]

These unemployed people acted as "soldiers for conscription into the violence" (Shubane, 1990), As Woods stated:

The presence of unemployed people in the hostel could create several problems for their working co-inhabitants, as many of many of the former are naturally frustrated, anxious, insecure and poor. Although many of them are supported by their fellow inmates in terms of the meagre amount of money and food, many of them turn to petty crime and unacceptable behaviour inside and outside the hostels. Their actions do at times, have a direct and negative effect on the relationship between the hostel

residents and the surrounding community (Woods, 1993: 71).

Salaries or wages of those respondents who were employed in the formal sector ranged from R600 to well over a R1000 a month. Three of those who earned more than R1000 included a bank messenger, a teacher, and a taxi owner.) All of them had been in their respective employment for more than five years. None of them or any of the employed respondents reported belonging to a trade union.

This is in contrast to Sitas's (1982) research finding that in the 1980's the trade unions had recruited extensively in the hostels on the East Rand with many migrant workers becoming members (Sitas, 1982). Hostel inmates became the centre of the emergence of the unions. When Sitas conducted his research among the East Rand migrant workers in 1982, the East Rand contained the largest concentration of industrial workers in the PWV, who were grossly underpaid and lived in appalling conditions in the hostels. It was these appalling conditions that gave impetus to workers' grievances and mobilisation. By the early 1990's this had changed, particularly in the Meadowlands hostel as it came to be inhabited largely by unemployed migrants.

A major tension existed between hostel dwellers who did business with the township community as customers during the day and were bitter foes after sunset. (Taxi-drivers and "mashonisas" often found themselves in this predicament. Many taxi drivers, particularly those who were hired by township taxi owners, left

he hostel for backyard rooms in the townships, in spite of high rentals charged for rooms, because of this tension.

ongani Shusha explains the problem as follows:

Life was unbearable to me. Every morning and every day I had to carry a load of fifteen passengers, all from the township who related the same story of being attacked by hostel inmates. I was always scared that one day they will find out that I was one of them and they will turn against me. Besides, how do you kill your own customers? I had to battle for months with my conscience, until finally I divorced myself from my own brothers and clan group. I had to or I would have been torn apart. I live a lonely life in the township, but at least my conscience is clean, it is a matter of months before I get used to people. Surely I will (Respondent no. 18, hostel resident).

4. THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF MEADOWLANDS HOSTEL

(i) Leadership

Those who were living in the hostel, were ruled over by committees that were led by indunas. Part of the induna's brief, apart from attending meetings that linked the Meadowlands hostel to other hostels, and "enforcing" decisions taken by the Inkatha central Committee in Ulundi, was to ensure that peace prevailed among his "subjects". Only Zulu inmates were chosen as indunas because Zulus made up the largest proportion of this hostel's population.

The indunas were mostly senior residents of the hostel, they were not elected but were imposed by the Inkatha structures in the hostel. Most of them were "traditionalist" Zulus, respected by

The Zulu residents for their wisdom. The way the Indunas were imposed from above by Inkatha hostel leadership fits well with the organisation's non-democratic traditions in the hostels.

7.1.1) Hostel activities

The major leisure time activity in Meadowlands Hostel was listening to their radios. Their plight was best articulated by Matshoba writing at an earlier time when many hostel inmates were illiterate:

The thirst of the illiterate masses for knowledge about the world at large is quenched by the mass media. To them, the radio is still one of the technological wonders of the world - a box that speaks many languages, including their own. And there is no suspicion in their minds that the box may tell lies in their languages (Matshoba, 1979: 144).

What became clear when questioned about activities within the hostel was how hostel dwellers had become completely marginalised. The social networks that prevailed between the hostel and the township communities prior to the 1990 period had completely ceased to exist. Only two respondents (6%) still maintained relationships with the township community by way of membership of a *Makgotla*, which is equivalent to a *stokvel*. Both of these respondents were Tswana-speaking hostel dwellers.

Eleven (35%) Zulu speaking hostel dwellers belonged to a burial society that only admitted Zulu-speaking hostel dwellers from various hostels. Each member contributed R25 a month.)

The remaining 18 people (58%) belonged to other social groups within the hostel. The most prominent was a football club whose membership in theory was open to every person but in reality was only open to hostel inmates.

The lack of recreational facilities in the hostel underlines the intense boredom of hostel life, an existence which is largely isolated from mainstream township life. Before the current violence erupted township people including women would flock to the soccer field situated at the edge of the hostel.

Only seven people (23%) interviewed stated that there were soccer activities in the hostel, meaning informal, infrequent matches between inmates. 28 respondents (90%) said that formal soccer matches including township residents ceased to exist when the violence erupted.

For many hostel dwellers drinking is the only social activity that they are involved in. As one respondent said:

We live to drink. There is nothing we do except drink, drink, drink. We buy it. What is surprising is that people do not have money to buy food but they are always drunk (Respondent no. 4, hostel resident).

(iii) Economic activities

From the time that violence erupted and the Meadowlands hostel community became isolated from the township, business activities proliferated inside the hostel. These informal businesses ranged from shebeens, motor mechanic shops, barbers, meat sellers, spaza

shops and jumble sales. According to one respondent businesses operating in the hostel

are run by Zulus who have money. They are very expensive though they are helpful to most of us. Everything was built for the township people. Schools, hospitals, doctors surgeries, shops and everything. One cigarette cost fifty cents. Most of us buy it, what can we do? (Respondent no. 4, hostel resident).

Nineteen respondents (61%) believed that there was an outside hidden hand that ran most of the successful businesses in the hostel. These business people were thought to use hostel dwellers as covers to run these businesses for them and supplied them with everything, including transport. By contrast those hostel dwellers who owned their informal businesses sold their goods and services in a more hand to mouth fashion. Most of the time their goods were stale in comparison to those that were sponsored by outsiders. Ntuthuko Majozi believes that:

People get permission from leaders to own and manage such undertakings amidst the uncertainty and violent hostel environment. Not everybody can afford this type of business. You must have a car and plenty of money before you own it. Most people take things on credit and do not pay. You cannot force them to pay because most of them are not working (Respondent no. 22, hostel resident).

Shebeens were the most successful businesses in the hostel. Twenty five (81%) of people interviewed drank alcohol. Types of drinks which were popular were: brandy, beers, *skokian*, *Mqombothi* and *Malamb'edlile* among others. Unlike the township shebeens which are mostly owned and operated by women, shebeens in the hostels were owned by men and sometimes operated by women as a ploy to attract customers.

Because of the recession and high levels of unemployment "if one of the hostel inmates dies, the society will buy a coffin for the dead body, and *bury him nicely*" [my emphases added] (van Onselen, 1976: 199). Death among hostel inmates was regarded as a solemn, dignified affair, a passage to the place of the ancestors. Decent and dignified funerals were the only hope the inmates had after living a degraded life (Ramphele, 1993).

For decades hostel inmates buried their dead in the rural areas irrespective of the financial implication this custom had on their limited economic resources. For many years funerals were not seen at the hostel because dead migrants would be taken home for burial. The post-Kliptown era introduced a new phenomenon in the Meadowlands hostel. Funeral ceremonies were held regularly inside the hostel, with marked differences to township funerals.)

Funerals in the black townships are generally regarded as dignified occasions, preceded by night vigils where the deceased's coffin is left for mourners to pay their last respects. Mourning women, surround the coffin wrapped in black shawls or blankets, wearing black head scarves or black berets, to communicate with the bereaved during the ritual of the wake. Chief among the mourners would be the deceased's mother or wife, who would be seated between four lit candles which symbolise a light in the dark cloud that has befallen a family.

This is a standard practice among most black families regardless of class or status. The sense of community is powerful. It is easily discernable when mourners return from the graveyard and a number of tin bathtubs with water are placed outside the yard next to the gate, for people to wash their hands before queuing for food in a kind of ceremony of purification or cleansing, to wash away death from the mourners' hands. The feasting reinforced social bonds. However hostel funeral were very different from township funerals.

As already stated hostel inmates preferred to be buried at their country homesteads where all their ancestors were clustered. Spakupaku (not his real name) claimed:

...death always stretched the almost non-existent hostel dweller's resources to a breaking point. With the high rate of unemployment in the hostel, we rely on collection from the fellow hostel dwellers and donation from sympathetic undertakers just to secure a coffin. Otherwise we would have settle for a pauper's burial. We always remind ourselves that "umuntu akalahlwa" (we do not throw away a human being) we do our best under the difficult circumstances. We all have our wishes. None of those is to be buried in the city because a man who is buried in the city is like a man who is buried by the road side (Key informant no. 6, hostel resident).

Hostel funerals differed sharply from township funerals. There was no slaughter and feasting which characterised township funerals; there was no traditional wearing of mourning dresses by women. Funerals in this environment appeared like pauper's funerals.

A funeral observed by this researcher was like that of a completely different nation, there was little of the community spirit that prevails at township funerals. Almost all funerals in the hostels irrespective of the nature of death were regarded as political funerals, and involved political speeches by hostel inmates.

(v) Political organisations

Meadowlands hostel, like most other hostels on the Reef has become an Inkatha Freedom Party stronghold with 28 respondents (90.3%) claiming to support the organisation, and only three respondents (10%) belonging to other organisations. Ten of the respondents (32.25%) had joined the organisation before 1990 while 13 (41.9%) respondents joined in 1990 and 7 (22.6%) joined in 1991.

Their reasons for joining the organisation differed from person to person. A discernable pattern was that the Zulu-speaking hostel dwellers joined the organisation because of its articulation of their Zulu aspirations. This is captured by one respondent who claimed that:

"Ngaba yilongo le Nkatha (IFP) ngoba kwiiyona nhlango yodwa elwela ilungelo lama Zulu" (I joined the IFP because it was the only organisation that represents the aspiration of all the Zulus) (Respondent no. 17, hostel resident).

This is a clear expression of the ethnic nationalism described in Chapter two above. The non-Zulu Meadowlands hostel residents

claimed to have joined the organisation because of its ability to protect its members.

Only seven respondents (22.6%) could articulate the aims and the ideals of the organisation while 24 (77.4%) respondents gave vague statements about the organisation's objectives. From the scant information this researcher received, it is possible to infer that no thorough explanation of aims and ideals was given to members during meetings.

All respondents (100%) unanimously agreed that only Inkatha meetings were held regularly in the hostel. Two types of meetings held in the hostel were identifiable; formal meetings that were held once a week, particularly on Sunday mornings, and informal meetings that were held on an *ad hoc* basis whenever there was a problem.

Again all residents claimed that hostel meetings were for hostel residents exclusively and no township people were allowed to attend. They claimed that with suspicion running very high it would be a dangerous move to allow township people to attend these meetings. They felt that sensitive information could easily have leaked out, which would have endangered the lives of all hostel inhabitants.

Similar sentiments were raised against the organisation holding meetings in the township. All respondents claimed that it would not benefit the hostel residents to hold meetings in the township

because of the strong possibility of being attacked by township people.

(vi) Relations with township residents

Township residents have coined various derogatory names for hostel dwellers which accentuate their aloofness from the hostel and demonstrate their general attitude of contempt. Historically hostels have been geographically secluded from the adjacent communities but the 1977 Kliptown floods obliterated this phenomenon. The clear distinction between the hostel and the Meadowlands community became blurred as hundreds of members of the Kliptown community moved into the Meadowlands hostel. Relationships, "vat-en-sit" (live-in lovers), and marriages proliferated.

Most respondents claimed that the relationship between the hostel inmates and the townships improved a great deal during the 1977 - 1990 period. Hostel inmates began to see themselves as residents of Meadowlands township rather than just of the hostel:

I spent lot of my time with my new in-laws in Zone one Meadowlands. I go to the hostel only to visit my father and my relatives, particularly on weekends. I was slowly seeing myself as a township person, so did many of my colleagues who were in similar positions. Only traditional marks on our faces and our deep Zulu accents remained conspicuous, and eventually sold us out when the violence broke out. I was forced to separate from my wife and my son who I have never seen ever since just because I once belong to the hostel and I am a Zulu (Respondent no. 8, hostel resident).

However relations deteriorated markedly after 1991. There was a clear divide between the two communities, concretised by a strip of bombed-out houses which divided the hostel from Zone one Meadowlands where one respondent - Bkekani Mthiyane's family was located. If he dared to venture to visit his girlfriend and son, he would have been a marked man, as he said, "I am sure I would never see the sun rise again".

The same sentiments were echoed by twenty-one (68%) other hostel respondents who claimed that their separation was forced upon them by the township residents. Educational institutions such as schools were situated in the townships, and as the result, hostel children did not go to school for fear of beatings and harassment. Doctors' surgeries, Community Health Centres, clinics and a hospital were all in the townships. Even ambulance drivers did not want to drive into the hostel. Sick and injured hostel dwellers relied on traditional healers, or were driven kilometres away to Coronationville or to white hospitals in town (Respondent nos. 9,11,13 and 14; hostel residents).

5. VIOLENCE IN AND AROUND MEADOWLANDS HOSTEL 1990 - 1993

Violence in the Meadowlands hostel began in March 1991 between the hostel inmates themselves in what was tantamount to "ethnic cleansing"; Zulu-speaking residents of the hostel ejected Xhosa-speaking residents. Twenty four Xhosa speaking inmates died in that confrontation (Key informant no. 3).

There were many factors which made the Meadowlands hostel a centre of violent confrontation between inmates and township residents. What emerged after interviewing hostel inmates about the violence was that although Zulu-speaking hostel inmates were often blamed for the conflict, it was not this entire social category who were violently inclined. A substantial number of older migrants, particularly those who had been around Johannesburg for more than ten years were sick and tired of violence, and were doing everything they could to create peace between the two communities. Their efforts were overridden by factors beyond their control, specifically they felt that the younger generation of migrants had become uncontrollable. Most of the migrants interviewed came from rural areas of Natal where a long and established tradition of violence reigned. Most informants believed that the Reef violence was a continuation of what they call the "Natal war".

Seventeen of the respondents (54.84%) believed that the conflict was caused by the "bully boy tactics" of the ANC which they claimed wanted to be "the only bull in the kraal". They claimed that:

The Xhosa-led ANC thinks that it can rule over the Zulus. Where have you seen "ixhosa" (derogatory for small man) leading a great nation like the Zulu nation. We will fight to put the Zulu-led Inkatha ye sizwe back to the throne (Respondent no. 16, hostel resident).

This comment illustrates the politicisation of ethnicity referred to above in Chapter Two. The other ten (32.26%) respondents

believed that socio-economic factors were major contributory factors in Natal violence. Most of them believed that:

The rate of unemployment is higher in rural Natal, very few school leavers find employment over there. This phenomena is further exacerbated by a large number of people who are retrenched and had to go back to their rural homes because in here they will not be able to pay for their rent, services and food (Respondent no. 11, hostel resident).

The other four (12.9%) respondents attributed the violence in Natal to faction fighting (*impi yezigodi*). They believed it was hard to separate political conflict from faction fighting. They claimed that in areas like Mondlo, Nkandla and Msinga there were different regions that had neatly divided themselves into political regions, some belonged to the ANC, others to Inkatha and they continued to fight.

A large proportion of the respondents, twenty-two in number (71%), believed that the conflict on the Reef was the continuation of the conflict in Natal. The reason advanced for this argument was that:

... our brothers in Reef hostels are being killed just for being Zulus and members of the IFP but when we retaliate by defending them and ourselves we are then labelled troublemakers and perpetrators of violence (Respondent no. 28, hostel resident).

Only nine people (29%) believed that the Reef conflict was a township versus hostel conflict. To these people:

township people have always looked down upon us as uncivilised low class people that still adhere to old fashioned traditional norms and values. They scorned us in buses, trains and taxis as people who do not wash their feet and armpits. We have become their children's laughing stock and source of mockery and

play. Even Christians of high magnitude would have defended themselves against these ridicules (Respondent no. 12, hostel resident).

Nineteen respondents (61%) perceived the current violence as "war" because of the scale and intensity of political violence.

In a "war" situation many homes are left with lots of widows, single mothers and sometimes many orphans. South Africa's black townships and hostels does not differ from countries that are at war (Respondent no. 14, hostel resident).

Twelve (39%) respondents perceived this as violence and not "war". One of the respondents asserted that the anarchic nature of the violence and the absence of restraining norms meant that the conflict it was not a war.

A war is fought by strong men and not small boys (*abafanyana nje*) as it is the case in this situation. And again in a war situation a woman is respected, if you dare kill her, the whole operation will fail because "*intelezi*" (muti sprinkled in a war situation) will be affected by this. This is again not the case in this situation as women and children are indiscriminately killed every day and nothing happens (Respondent no. 31, hostel resident).

Ironically more than 50% of the respondents had arrived in the hostel once the "war" was already raging, and thus do not know when it actually started. This situation is best explained by one respondent (No. 9) who claimed: "I do not know when and how the violence started in this hostel. There was a "war" (*impi*) when we arrived" When the respondent was asked whether he was afraid to go into a hostel involved in violence, he replied:

No! how could we be afraid, if we claimed to be real Zulu men we can't really afford to be afraid of a "war". We do not want to be seen to be behaving like Johannesburg men who behave like women. Johannesburg

men do not fight, but send the children to fight the "war" for them. What kind of men are they? That is why our brothers kill them so easily in the train. They do not fight back, but throw themselves out of moving trains. Can you call these people "men"? Some of them die in their pyjamas without even fighting back (Respondent no 13, hostel resident).

This comment illustrates the theme of militarised masculinity described above in Chapter Two.

Those respondents who were in the hostel longer than ten years tended to link the current violence to the first serious clash between Meadowlands hostel and the surrounding townships in 1976. These tensions deepened over hostel resistance to the UDF call to boycott white shops over the christmas of 1985. These differences left scars in the minds of hostel residents that made it difficult for them to separate the current strife from that of the past.

Six of the respondents (19%), who had Standard 10 education located the genesis of this violence in March 1991 when non-Zulu speaking inmates and ANC sympathizers were raided and forcefully driven out of the hostel in March 1991.

Hostel inmates variously regarded township residents, the ANC and "the youth" as their enemy. Thirteen respondents, (42%) perceived every township dweller as an enemy. Some of them expressed a strong antagonism to "township people":

The township people, all of them, men, women and children are our enemies. It must be an eye for an eye, when their children who call themselves comrades see any of the hostel inmates in the township, they

kill and necklace him or her. Why should we not do the same? (Respondent no. 22, hostel resident).

Seven (23%) of the respondents perceived only members of the ANC as their enemies. Eight respondents, (26%) perceived township youth or comrades as their enemies. They maintained that the conflict with the township youth began long before the current political violence, and was rooted in criminal attacks. They believed that the township youth perceived them as targets and claimed that for decades township youths, dubbed *tsotsis* or comrades by hostel inmates, had been robbing and molesting migrants at will.

Three (10%) respondents believed that the enemy was any person who regard them as enemies. This group was aware that not all township residents or youths were their enemies. They also believed that not all ANC members regarded them as their enemies.

Some believed that all strangers were enemies.

It is easy to identify your enemy, particularly when he lives in the township. Any person we do not know is the enemy to us (Respondent no. 13, hostel resident).

A very large number, twenty eight respondents, (90%) believed that the language which people speak and their dress codes were not the best forms of identifying their enemies. Most hostel dwellers particularly the younger ones, emulated the urban township style of dress which could easily have categorised them as urban youths.

During the 1990 - 1993 period most of the notorious killings and massacres on the Reef occurred in areas that had hostels nearby. A high level of militaristic organisation was displayed by groups of what appeared to be, highly trained young hostel dwellers. There were persistent reports from Meadowlands township residents of police arming, transporting, and assisting hostel -based attackers and being the last line of defence for Meadowlands hostel inmates. This observation is supported by Nkosenkulu Maphalala who claimed that:

there
 We do not organise attacks against the communities, but we defend ourselves against them. And let me tell you something for nothing; the best form of defence is attack, because once your enemy attack you first, you will be lucky to see the sun rise again (Respondent no 17, hostel resident).

Twenty one respondents (68%), who claimed that they were informed in advance when attacks were going to take place. A team of Inkatha organisers would arrive at the hostel and would call a meeting of all Zulu-speaking inmates and instruct them to ready themselves for an impending onslaught by "comrades", who were coming to demolish the hostel. The residents would be urged to take cognisance of the fact that the best form of defence was to attack first. One of the respondents confirmed that: "We always organise in retaliation, just like they plan their attacks on us we plan it too" (Respondent no. 9, hostel resident).

The other ten (32%), which included non-Zulu speaking respondents and older Zulu-speaking inmates claimed that they were not informed in advance when attacks were going to be launched. They

claimed that they were always informed at the eleventh hour and were forced to join the fighting.

The changing demography of hostel inmates mentioned previously also affected the leadership of the Meadowlands hostel. ^{Young} and highly trained Inkatha Youth Brigade members seemed to have usurped the leadership of the hostel from the tribal authority of the indunas. Their leadership was confirmed by sixteen respondents (52%), one of whom claimed that:

... *siholwa yintsha engashisi, equ'zumentshisi* (we are lead by a youthful leadership that is sharp and articulate) (Respondent no.7, hostel resident).

This is further strengthened by Bill Keller's assertion that:

to fortify hostel defense, Inkatha has deployed men like Robert Hlomuka, a skinny and voluble 21-year-old who says he has learned his military skills as a teenage recruit in the military wing of the ANC. He studied weapons and tactics at ANC centres in Angola, East Germany and Tanzania before a falling out landed him in a camp for traitors. Upon his return home he enlisted with Inkatha, which sent him first to another Soweto hostel called Nancefield and then to Meadowlands in June (Keller, 1992: 49).

Several neighbouring township residents claimed that there were people who were bused into the hostel whose duties were to foment and sustain the violence for as long as they were in the hostel.

All thirty-one people, (100%) interviewed were unanimous in mentioning one of the following weapons as frequently used by hostel dwellers against township people: AK-47's, R4 automatic rifles, pistols, R1 rifles, shotguns and pistols, handguns,

knives, axes, spears and knobkierries, sharpened iron poles, sticks, tomahawks, pangas and machetes.

Reports of arms coming into Meadowlands hostel were rife during the height of the violence between hostel inmates and township residents in August 1992. Residents of Mzimhlophe township, particularly those who lived in houses facing the hostel entrance gate claimed to have seen police and white men in plain clothes offloading weapons for hostel dwellers.

The arms traffic changed the way hostel dwellers approached the attacks they launched into the township. Most of the fierce attacks were made during the night. When interviewees were asked why they mostly fought at night, thirteen respondents, (42%) believed that at night everybody was at home resting in preparation for the next day.

We know that township men are like women, they are all either drunk or asleep at night. So we attack them in the comfort of their pyjamas. Where have you seen a man sleeping in pyjamas? (Respondent no. 9, hostel resident).

Eleven (35%) respondents believed that nightfall protected them from being seen by their enemies and by the police. Furthermore it is difficult for people to run away when it is dark, most people get caught during the confusion. The night time raids also enabled hostel dwellers to loot people's houses and then to disappear into the safety of the hostel with the loot.

Seven (23%) of the older hostel dwellers believed that nighttime attacks had to do with traditional ways of fighting war, where the entire regiment had to be:

"ngwekwesiko amabutho uma ephuma kumelwe achelwe ngezintelezi, manje ezinye zihambisana nobumnyama basebusuku kanti nezitha zisuke zijumekile ubuthongo zingazelele lutho bese kumbozwa ngehlahla labe sivakashele khona" (be sprinkled with "muti" because some of those traditional herbs are associated with forces of darkness that compels the enemy to fall asleep as we discern to attack them) (Respondent no. 28, hostel resident).

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to draw a sociological profile of Meadowlands Hostel. It has done so by firstly describing its physical location in Soweto and then outlining a history of Meadowlands Hostel from its establishment in 1962. This history is analyzed in two phases, pre and post 1976. The events of this year were decisive; after 1976 the relationship between hostel and township residents was predominantly characterised by conflict and antagonism.

The chapter then attempted to draw a social profile of contemporary hostel residents emphasizing the growing influx of youth and female migrants, as well as unemployed migrants. The chapter also analyzed the social organisation of the hostel with reference to leadership structures, leisure activities, political organisation, economic activities and relations with township residents.

The final section analyses the political violence in and around Meadowlands Hostel during the 1990 - 1993 period focusing on the perceptions of hostel inmates. It is suggested that the pattern of increasing political violence is mainly due to the influx of younger, Zulu speaking men originating from the rural areas of Natal and supporters of Inkatha. It is this group who were involved in the destabilisation of the surrounding community.

CHAPTER FIVE

A SOCIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF MERAPE HOSTEL

1. INTRODUCTION

As with Meadowlands hostel, Merafe hostel was built in the early 1960's. It's establishment generated much frustration and a sense of helplessness in neighbouring communities. This is best expressed by a key informant who said:

We had to sit back and watch the emergence of what was to be the last hostel in the area we call the "wild west". The hostel was built without overt opposition from its neighbouring communities. Unlike the people of Sophiatown who mourned the destruction of their well established community - we bemoaned the birth of a fostered community. Because we neither had any political nor economic power to resist its emergence, we learned to cope by turning the lemon into a lemonade - we accepted the community that lives in it, not the hostel (Key informant no. 6, Township resident).

For decades Merafe hostel was at peace with neighbouring township residents to the extent that the hostel dwellers would call from inside the hostel window to any township child and send him\her to the shop without fear that the child might abscond with the money. Inmates cemented relationships with neighbouring communities by buying presents for township residents in preparation for the visit of their wives or relatives, particularly those who were not allowed into the hostel. They did this hoping that such township residents would offer hospitality to visiting relatives. This harmonious relationship was destroyed by the violence which first began on the Reef towards the end of August 1990.

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Merafe hostel became the first hostel to erupt into violent confrontation with its neighbouring communities of Mapetla, Mapetla Extension, Naledi Extension, Tladi and Moletsane.

2. A HISTORY OF MERAFE HOSTEL

Mapetla township is situated about 20 kilometres west of Johannesburg, bounded on the northern side by two predominately Sotho-speaking townships, Moletsane and Tladi. The eastern side is bounded by another predominately Sotho-speaking township, Molapo. On the southern side it is bordered by a predominately Tsonga- and Venda-speaking township, Chiawelo.

The township of Mapetla was built in the mid 1950's as a by-product of the Group Areas Act, when existing mixed townships, i.e. townships with the population of Indians, Coloureds and Blacks and Chinese were dismantled. Blacks were to be isolated in areas defined as "Bantu Areas" where all individuals not classified either as White, Coloured or Indian were to be dumped. Ethnic grouping was to be enforced and Soweto was divided into three basic main groups, Nguni, Sotho and "other".

Within Mapetla township a hostel was built which was officially named Mapetla hostel. Its name changed to Merafe hostel because of its proximity to Merafe station. Merafe hostel is a maze-like, colossal, grey structure that was built

in 1962 between four locations, Mapetla, Mapetla Extension, Chiawelo Extension 3 and Moletsane. On the north-eastern side, the hostel was separated by Masilela street from Mapetla, an area that was predominately zoned for Sotho speaking people. On the northern side, the hostel was divided by a railway line from Moletsane township, also a township that was built for Sotho-speaking people.

Like most hostels in South Africa, Merafe hostel was conceived as part of the apartheid ideology to house hundreds of thousands of single men, most of whom had left families in the homelands in search of job opportunities in the city of Gold. Unlike Meadowlands hostel and the vast majority of hostels in South African townships which were located on the fringes of the townships, Merafe hostel was one of two hostels in Soweto which was built within the township. It was characterised by its close proximity to all four townships surrounding it, all of which were predominately Sotho-speaking.

It was partly this proximity to the four townships that enabled the inmates from this hostel to form harmonious relationships with the people from these townships. The peculiar characteristic that distinguished Merafe hostel from most of the hostels in Soweto was that it was separated by a single brick wall built adjoining each outer structure as compared to most hostels which were fenced in.

In the late 1960's, the hostel inmates together with the township residents demolished this brick wall to enable an easy passage for both hostel and township residents to visit each other. The passage was mainly used by Mapetla Extension residents who live on the south-western side of the hostel. As Sophie Motsumi said:

We used to cross right through the heart of the hostel on our way to and from work. This path was used by males, females and children without incidents. The only problem was when the hostel inmates were drunk particularly on weekends, when they would scold and insult us even in front of our husbands. Other than that we were just a big happy family (Respondent no 14, hostel resident).

On several occasions the West Rand Administration Board (WRAB) rebuilt and closed this wall in its endeavour to keep the hostel dwellers apart from the township residents in compliance with the grand apartheid plan of keeping races, communities, and ethnic groups apart. In 1984 the National Housing Commission approved an advance of 26 million rand to the Soweto Council in order to extend and enlarge the following hostels: Mapetla, Dube and Jabulane, because of the unavailability of land in Soweto for the construction of new hostels. The better part of the budget allocated to the Merafe hostel was used for rebuilding the wall (Race Relations Survey, 1984: 390), which was done irrespective of the number of times hostel inmates and township residents demolished the wall.

Merafe hostel consisted of fifteen dormitories popularly known as "hostel blocks". Each dormitory was about fifty paces long

and consisted of one door that led to a medium-sized kitchen with one coal stove in the middle. The floors of the dormitories were bare, rough cemented and dust-laden. The place was gloomy, and worsened by windows that had not been cleaned since the hostel was built in the early 1960's. This marks one of the differences between the hostel and the township community. In the township, particularly over weekends, women compete by washing windows and hanging expensive curtains which have become a symbol of their class and status. Most of the township women join "mogodiswano" (*stokvels*) called "kitchen parties" where exchange of curtains and other household goods take place. By contrast women in the hostel had resigned themselves to being temporary sojourners and they lacked a sense of pride and belonging.

On each side of the kitchen there were two smaller cubicles that housed eight people each, which made sixteen men to a dormitory, a number which increased three fold after the collapse of the hostel security arrangement in the post-1976 period.

Each kitchen consisted of two tables which were made of cement slabs anchored by sewerage pipes. Two taps of cold and hot water protruded from the sink. Long steel cabinets lined the side walls where inmates stored everything from food to clothes. Inside walls were not plastered and they were made to look more depressing by unceilinged asbestos roofs which

were "coated with thick layers of soot and spider-webs" (Matshoba, 1987: 224).

There were a number of other distinguishing features that gave the Merafe hostel features of a rural location. Township residents beautify their homes by planting flowers in their backyards and by paving their motorways. The hostel neighbourhood on the other hand consistently looked unappealing and drab though every available space was filled with mealie plants. This suggested that the hostel was regarded as a little piece of rural South Africa relocated in the city.

The history of the Meadowlands hostel is best understood in terms of two historical phases. The first phase covers the period in which the hostel was built in 1962 when the first occupants of the hostel formed harmonious relationships with neighbouring communities. The second phase is the post-1990 period when social order in the hostel disintegrated; older inmates who belonged to non-Zulu ethnic groups were ejected from the hostel. The hostel then provided a fertile ground for nurturing chauvinistic tribalism.

When this hostel was built in the 1960's, it was meant to house an official figure of 5 045, single males who were prohibited from staying with either their spouses or their children (Key informant no. 9, Soweto Council spokesperson). However in 1986, "...due to the repealing of influx control

and the demise of the Soweto Council's tight control over hostels in the mid-1980's, people started flocking in the hostel in huge numbers" (Respondent no. 14, hostel resident).

According to one informant in the 1962 - 1990 period hostel residents were older people.

...people who migrated to Johannesburg and inhabited Merafe hostel were largely of middle age, and some of them have been to the city before and had a fair working knowledge of the city life and the dynamics of township and hostel politics (Key informant no. 9, Council spokesperson).

However after August 1990 the inflow of new inmates bore the hallmark of a planned campaign. The age profile of the hostel changed; instead of the middle and early old age mixture of earlier times, Merafe hostel came to be characterised by the presence of a constantly high number of young men, who were available to wage war against township youth.

The entry of these youth into the hostel was understood by one key informant as part of a planned and calculated strategy of destabilisation:

Their mission seems as clear as day light, that is to destabilise townships adjacent the hostel through promoting a so called Zulu/Xhosa or hostel/township war. Like in the case of Meadowlands hostel, they first brought what appear to be highly trained, mainly Youth Brigade leaders whose knowledge of the township and urban warfare was unquestionable (Key informant no. 3, Mapetla Civic leader).

These youth occupied strategic positions within the hostel structures, breaking the monopoly of the Induna system. They

either ignored the prevailing hostel Indunas or removed them. Their leadership role was not questioned by their subjects because of the raging violence. They were seen as the solution to the monstrous township "comrades". They were articulate, well armed and vicious (Key informant no. 7, AZAPO spokesperson).

3. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY MERAPE HOSTEL INMATES

(i) Age profile

TABLE 2: AGE PROFILE OF MERAPE HOSTEL INMATES

AGE	10-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 ±
NO OF PEOPLE	32	11	6	2	-

A general pattern of youthfulness in Merafe hostel was discernable. Of the 51 people interviewed, 32 (63%) were between the ages 10 and 30. Eleven (22%) were between the ages 31-40. Seven (14%) were between the ages 41-50 and only two (4%) were between the ages 51-60.

This change in age structure had a deep impact on the sub-culture of Merafe hostel. The "young migrants" or "youth" (*intsha*) as they preferred to call themselves, were linked to criminal activities in the minds of several informants. They were described by a key informant as:

...people who had not only formed a strong regiment to unleash violence against the township residents, but were able to integrate well with the township "car hijackers" and the gangsters who use the hostel as a place of relative security.)

This informant went on to say:

The particular problem with Merafe hostel emanate from the harbouring of the township car hijackers call "SULA" (sweep), who specialise in hijacking mini-bus taxis and other private vehicles. These gangsters or car hijackers were harassed by police in the township almost daily, they then sought refuge in Merafe hostel while becoming nominal members of the Inkatha Freedom Party. While using the hostel as a base and for protection they continue their criminal activities harassing the passing motorists and the residents alike.

This statement was supported by another informant (No.11) who asserted that:

Motorists dare not drive past the hostel half an hour before sunset lest they play into the hands of the thugs from the hostel who also rob and kill people indiscriminately. Cars are hijacked and taken inside the hostel because no police dare enter the hostel to recover them. Girls are jackrolled into the hostel in broad day light and police are doing nothing to save our children from these hostel rapists. (Key informant no 11, township resident).

Thus Merafe hostel became a zone of terror to township residents.

(ii) Rural origins

Similarities between the Meadowlands and the Merafe hostels were discernable in that an overwhelming majority, 39 residents interviewed, (76%) came from Natal and Kwa Zulu, with the Eastern Transvaal as the second largest source of

recruitment. Seven of the residents (14%) came from the Eastern Transvaal township of Wesselton in Ermelo, four of the residents (8%) came from Harrismith in the Free State and only one resident (2%) deserted Zondi township in Soweto.

Those who came from various places in Natal spoke Zulu and claimed to be Zulus, those who came from the Eastern Transvaal spoke Pedi and Setswana. Five of the respondents were Bapedi (pedis) and two respondents were Batswana (Tswanas). Those who came from Orange Free State spoke Sesotho and Zulu and claimed to be Basothos who lived on the fringes of the Free State bordering Natal.

A large number of people interviewed, 33 (65%) came to Johannesburg between 1990 and 1991. It was strange that all of a sudden in the 1990's Merafe hostel experienced an influx of rural people who came to inhabit the hostel amidst the violent confrontations between the residents of the hostel and the township. Ten (20%) of the respondents came to Johannesburg between 1980 and 1990, and only eight (16%) of the people interviewed came to Johannesburg in the 1970's and in the period before that.

Most of the respondents said they chose Johannesburg over Cape Town because of the job opportunities. The feeling of this group is best captured by the following:

"Igoli yilona okwiyidolobha elikhulu futhi nezimboni zabe ziningi, kukhona ngisho nezimayini lapho ngafikela khona ngiqala ukusebenza". ("Igoli" is the only big town that has most factories and

mines. It is the first town that introduced me to urban life) (Respondent no. 9).

(iii) Marital status

Of the 51 people interviewed, 32 (63%) were single and had never been married. Fourteen (27%) were married and either lived with their wives in the hostel or had left their wives in the rural areas. Three (6%) of the interviewees were divorced and two (4%) were widowers with both of them having lost their wives in the current violence.

Most of the people interviewed in the Merafe hostel had children, unlike in the Meadowlands hostel where only a very small proportion of people interviewed had children. In Merafe hostel a large proportion of people interviewed, 38, (75%) had children. The issue of children was not only confined to the married migrants. Of those who were single, seventeen (53%) had one or two children with different women in their respective places of origin. The overwhelming majority, 25 (93%) of married migrants had between three and nine children each. Two of those who did not have children were desperately trying to have their wives conceive. Their plight was articulated by one of them as follows:

We have previously tried every witch doctor recommended to us by our peers or relatives with no avail, and now as a proof of our desperation, we have brought our wives to the cities amid the violence to try the white men's medicine as a last resort (Respondent no. 33, hostel resident).

This points to the deep seated nature of gender identity among some informants. The content of this identity and in particular the relation between fathering children and masculinity is an issue that requires further research.

The dominant perception among hostel inmates was that hostels were places for adults and not children. Twenty one (41%) respondents said they did not want their children joining them in the hostel. This group included a large number of the middle-aged traditionalist migrants who still believed strongly in old fashioned traditional values which they feared could easily be corrupted by the urban environment.)

By contrast 15 (29%) respondents, who were largely drawn from the group of younger hostel dwellers, preferred their children to be in the hostel rather than sending them back to the drought stricken and violence-ridden rural areas.) Most of this group had escaped from these environments and they were loathe to see their children brought up under similar conditions..

I know how it is to grow up yearning to grow up beside your father while my peer group were running home to their father every night. I vowed that I would never let it happen to them because I have walked that road for them (Respondent no. 7, hostel resident).

(iv) Educational profile of hostel inmates

The level of illiteracy in Merafe hostel was very high.

Sixteen people interviewed (31%) had no formal education at all, while fifteen interviewees (29%) had between Standard 1 and Standard 3 education. Eight people interviewed (16%) had between Standard 4 and Standard 6 education while six had Standard 10 education. Only three respondents claimed to have any post-matric qualification.

(v) Employment profile

The majority of the residents of this hostel were unemployed - 34 (67%) of the people interviewed were unemployed. Those in full-time employment were low-income earners who did unskilled work that ranged from being security guards to flat-cleaners. Of these unskilled workers, five (10%) security guards earned between R500 and R1000 per month. Three (6%) were flat cleaners who earned between R500 and R750 per month. Two (4%) were hotel porters who earned R1500 per month. Five of the respondents (10%) worked as taxi drivers most of them in taxis owned by hostel inmates. This last point illustrates the heterogeneity of hostel inmates. Taxi owners were clearly of a much higher socio-economic status than most of the inmates.

However they were not popular figures. It was these taxi drivers who were blamed for fomenting the train violence in order to boost the taxi industry. From July 1990 to late 1993 attacks on commuters on Soweto trains took place near or around stations bordering the hostels. In eleven of these

incidents were 73 people were killed and 265 injured between August and December 1993. According to several key informants Merafe hostel inmates were involved.

Only a fraction of the inmates worked for taxis owned by township residents. Only two (4%) of the respondents worked in the semi-skilled sector of the job market. Both of these respondents worked as clerks in the Soweto Council Offices which were located inside the Merafe hostel itself. They earned R1350 and R1665 respectively.

(vi) Unionisation among Merafe hostel inmates

Most of the employed inhabitants of Merafe hostel were not unionised. This suggests a shift from Sitas's findings on the emergence of unions in the East Rand in the 1980's that the East Rand hostel migrants, faced with the rural collapse and growing retrenchments built a strong union that was able to articulate their demands (Sitas, 1983).

Only five (29%) of the respondents who were in full time employment belonged to a union. One security guard belonged to the National Education Health Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU). Both hotel porters belonged to the South African Catering Commercial Workers Union (SACCWU), and both the Soweto Council Employees belonged to the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU). All these unions are affiliates of the Congress of South African Trade Unions

(COSATU). This change in patterns of unionisation reflected the changes in the social composition of the hostel that occurred between 1980 and 1990.

(vii) Ethnic composition

A large number of people interviewed, 41 (80%) claimed that only one ethnic group, the Zulus occupied the hostels. However 10 (20%) respondents claimed that there were a number of other ethnics groups, even Xhosas, who shared their hostel rooms. Ethnic groups mentioned by informants were Southern Sothos, Zulus, Pedis, Vendas and Xhosas.

A number of informants referred to a block called "Zonk'izizwe" (a block housing different ethnic groups). This researcher suspects that there was an attempt to camouflage the fact that this hostel had become a predominantly Zulu enclave. A total of 6 (12%) respondents claimed that, in the same way as in the Meadowlands hostel, Zulu-speaking hostel dwellers stayed in the same blocks as each other in order to ensure their control of the institution. Seven respondents (14%) said they did not know and were not aware of these ethnic divisions.

4. THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF MERAPE HOSTEL

(i) Inmates perceptions of hostel life

Merafe hostel, like Meadowlands hostel did not inspire deep loyalties among all of its inmates. Most of the respondents felt that if they had cheap alternative accommodation they would not wish to see themselves living in a hostel. This validates Can Themba's assertion that, "For many of them it is just a place to lay down a weary head, and a shelter from the dust or rain" (Themba, 1985: 117). Living conditions were mostly overcrowded, dirty and unhealthy. This is best captured by a Merafe hostel leader who angrily asserted that:

This is not a fit place for human inhabitant. Where on earth have you seen a place where on average 16 people to a block in two groups of eight and sometimes more are forced to sleep? It would be an insult even to the animal kingdom if animals could be squeezed like this under one roof (Respondent no 6, hostel resident).

For many inmates it was only the economic constraint of high rents and the violence that had already claimed thousands of lives and destroyed the fabric of black society that kept them from seeking alternative accommodation in the adjacent townships.

In spite of the distressing conditions in the Merafe hostel, there were people who had spent two decades of their lives there. Two (4%) of the oldest residents had been in the hostel for 20 years. Thirteen respondents (25%) had been

residents in the hostel for eleven years. Eight hostel dwellers (16%) had stayed in the hostel for six years. The largest number of respondents, 23 (45%) had arrived in the Merafe hostel in 1990 and afterwards. It is argued below that it was this group of relative newcomers who were responsible for much of the political violence between 1990 and 1993.)

Only four of the 23 people interviewed (45%) came straight from rural Natal into Merafe hostel; the other 19 respondents (37%) had lived in other hostels before coming to Merafe hostel. All these hostels had been flash points for violent conflicts between hostel inmates and township residents.

Thirteen respondents (25%) came to live in the Merafe hostel through various social networks, such as relatives, and "homeboy" networks. Nine interviewees (18%) arrived because of calls by village indunas who disseminated information that there were plenty of job opportunities for young and middle aged men on the Reef. Sixteen (31%) were recruited by various security companies with promises of well paid secure jobs that would provide them with uniforms including bullet proof vests, training, and armaments. These promises were attractive to the scores of unemployed rural youth who were living in violence-ridden areas. Seven respondents (14%) came out of curiosity.)

I wanted to grab the opportunity of venturing out to the big city of Johannesburg - *kwa ndonga ziyaduma, kwa mfaz'ushayindoda ngemfaduko* (the city of the rambling mountains where women beat their husbands). I have heard so much about Johannesburg.

When the opportunity availed itself I grabbed it with both my hands (Respondent no. 13).

Only six of the respondents came because they were running away from the violence that had already claimed hundreds of lives in their home areas of Natal.

...there was no way we could go back. At least here we can seek protection in the hostel. At home there is no place to hide unless in your own grave (Respondent no. 21, hostel resident).

For many of them it was a matter of choosing the better of two evils. The countryside had long ceased to be a safe haven since the advent of political violence in the 1980's. The violence coupled with the poverty and drought that pervades the rural areas of Natal/KwaZulu were powerful "push" factors.

Despite living under these bad conditions, a substantial number of the respondents were determined to make Merafe hostel their home. For most of them appalling living conditions appeared to be better than spending their rest of their lives under open skies or highways or in violence-torn rural areas. This perspective was articulated by 25 respondents (49%) one of whom claimed:

We saw nothing wrong in living in the hostel. To us conditions in this hostel were not different from the conditions in the rural areas with one exception, here (in the urban area) you only become hungry because you are lazy. There are many ways to survive in the urban areas even if it is putting your life into your hands every day. At least you survive (Respondent no. 8, hostel resident).

On the other hand seventeen respondents (33%) found living in the hostel intolerable. Nine respondents (18%) were neutral; one claimed that:

... there is no difference between the two dwellings. The only difference we can claim to see is that in the rural areas we stay with our families and our girlfriends are only a stone throw from our homes whereas in the hostel we have to produce instant families who most of them exploit our loneliness as migrants just to milk us and dump us after they have finished our money (Respondent no. 23).

(ii) Rent payment in the hostel

The high level of unemployment among hostel inmates made it difficult for hostel dwellers to pay rent. The figure supplied by the Soweto Town Council shows that more than 75% of hostel residents stopped paying their rent in 1992 (Key informant no. 9, Council spokesperson). Most of the Council structures had already collapsed by then.

The majority of the respondents, 37 (73%) claimed that they did not pay rent, while seven (14%) respondents, particularly those who were hosted by a close relatives, did not know whether their hosts were paying rent or not. The other seven (14%) claimed to be paying R45.65 monthly rental. All seven (100%) of the residents who payed their rent, paid it themselves.

(iii) Hostel residents relationships with township residents

Before the advent of political violence between Merafe hostel

inmates and the adjacent townships in August 1990, the hostel vicinity was a hive of social activity. These activities constituted a strong social link between hostel dwellers and township people. On weekends, groups of people from different ethnic groups would converge on the playing ground opposite the entrance to the hostel draped in their various traditional attires waving their dancing shields and sticks to entertain the township people. Most of the spectators of these games were township traditionalists who were reminded of their places back home. Among the spectators were township women, particularly those who were rejected by township men for either being less appealing, too fat, having too many children or widows in search of new husbands.

The games that formed part of social activities in and around the Merafe hostel ranged from soccer to traditional dancing. These were games that catered for every hostel inhabitant young or old, either as administrators, players or spectators.

The most popular activity was the riotous money-making game of dice that normally began on Friday evenings when everyone had money, and followed through right up to Sunday afternoon when most would have lost their hard earned wages and would have to prepare themselves for another long hard week. The game of dice attracted men from various townships who wanted to augment their meagre salaries, though unfortunately they usually ended up losing the little they did have.

The second most popular game which formed a strong social link between hostel and township people was soccer which recruited young players from the townships. Owners of various soccer teams would be hostel dwellers, who would play against other hostel teams from other townships or township soccer teams.

The third most popular social activity in the Merafe hostel involved religion, which was evidenced by inmates from different denominations leaving the hostel in droves to worship in the townships, while others worshipped under the trees near the hostel. Given the poor conditions in which the hostel inmates lived and their exploitative working conditions, one could use a Marxist explanation of why they sought solace in religion. However some hostel dwellers used religion as a social avenue to get to know township women whom they could then develop relationships with (Informant no. 17, hostel resident). All church buildings were in the townships and most of the congregation were women. Church thus provided a means of social access to township women.

However political violence, however, came to obliterate these social activities which involved intimate relations between hostel and township residents.

The crucial point is that there was no history of acrimony between hostel dwellers and township residents before 1990.

Over half of the people interviewed, 29 (57%) were envious of township people and wanted to emulate township life styles.

They too wanted to live in big houses and drive fancy cars (*sishayel'imoto zikanokusho*). People with these aspirations and a positive view of the township residents were a diverse sample of the hostel inmates including young and old, new arrivals and veterans of the hostel. Before 1990 many hostel inmates seemed to be becoming assimilated into an urban lifestyle and culture.

Many youthful migrants hardly referred to the rural areas as "home". According to one respondent:

For us the young hostel dwellers the word migrant is no more appropriate. We do not want to be called migrants any more. Our future is in the urban areas. We regard ourselves as permanent urbanites. We do not see ourselves ploughing fields and herding cattle, goats and sheep any more. The days of the empty, meaningless tedium days of migrant life are over, forever (Respondent no. 16, hostel resident).

Some traditionalist Zulu men had undergone surgery to close their earlobes which had been opened as part of their tradition. This indicates the decline in adherence to traditional life styles.

On the other hand a significant number of hostel residents had resisted this assimilation process. Fifteen respondents (29%) made up of thirteen people who inhabited the hostel during the post-1990 period, and two respondents who had stayed in Merafe hostel for more than ten years, claimed that they had never associated themselves with the township and its community. To them the hostel was their only home while they were in the

city of Gold and their loyalty to it was deep. All of these informants claimed to have only had limited contact with township people and did not wish to extend this relationship beyond already existing parameters. Their only friends were other hostel dwellers living in other hostels.

(iv) Indunas in Merafe hostel

The Induna system was a dynamic institution fraught with favouritism and nepotism. A sizeable number of hostel inmates claimed to believe in and honour the induna system. An overwhelming majority of respondents in the Merafe hostel, 41 (80%) confirmed the existence of indunas in the hostel. However six (12%) respondents did not believe indunas existed in the hostel and maintained that if the indunas did exist, they would be inefficient. Four respondents did not know whether indunas existed or not and were ignorant of their functions.

A noticeable trend was that the majority of hostel dwellers who came from the rural areas and peri-urban towns of Natal/KwaZulu were loyal to the induna system. In contrast hostel residents who came from other parts of rural South Africa outside the borders and boundaries of KwaZulu/Natal were ignorant of indunas.

There was a lot of confusion about how indunas were elected. Seventeen respondents (33%) believed that indunas were imposed

from above by "Amakhosi" back home in the rural areas and therefore represented only the aspirations of the Amakhosi and not the hostel dwellers. However an equal number (33%) claimed that the induna system had evolved from below. This group believed that it was the hostel residents themselves who were responsible for electing hostel indunas. The latter group further argued that a person who was elected to the position of induna was a person who was endowed with the dynamism of both the urban and the rural cultures; a person who displayed leadership qualities and who was impartial in his judgements. They claimed that this rare combinations of leadership qualities is normally found in people who are in their early 60's.)

The duties of Indunas differed from hostel to hostel. One of the duties of the induna in Merafe hostel was to see to it that most of the "king's" subjects were accommodated and fed. The fact that 29 respondents, (57%) came from the same rural area fostered a type of communal living in the hostel. Seventeen respondents (33%) said they had created their own social networks that involved close ties, while only five respondents (10%) said they lived a lonely, isolated life.

Belonging to a rural network was an urban survival strategy; it meant that one did not go to bed with an empty stomach. This was confirmed by 31 (61%) respondents, as one said:

... we buy food for those who are not working.
most of us know how painful it is to go to bed on
a hungry stomach, especially when one is at a

strange place where violence is the order of the day
(Respondent no. 17, hostel resident).

Another ten respondents (20%) claimed that strong family relationships existed among hostel inmates; paternal relatives and family members looked after each other. According to these respondents, food did not come from the Induna but from other relatives in the hostel. The other 10 (20%) respondents claimed that they bought and cooked their own food in the hostel. Most of this latter category either belonged to other non-Zulu ethnic groups or their rural origins differed from the rest of the inmates.

(v) Burial societies

The advent of political violence in the mid 1990's involved the proliferation of burial societies, which came to the forefront of activities in the Merafe hostel. Prior to 1990, burial societies were few, their membership was not compulsory and was confined to members of the same tribe. According to one informant subsequent to 1990, membership was made compulsory for hostel residents, and the indunas forced everyone to join.

Almost three quarters of respondents, 39 (76%) claimed to belong to burial societies in Merafe hostel. Seven (14%) respondents were on the verge of joining at the time they were interviewed. All had been briefed by indunas about the importance of taking out membership in a burial society. Five

interviewees (10%) said they did not belong to any burial society or stokvels in the hostel for fear of losing their deposits. These five respondents were non Zulu-speaking hostel inmates and they perceived burial societies to be Zulu associations which mainly catered for the needs of Zulu speaking hostel inmates.

Their view was confirmed by 37 respondents (73%) who affirmed that burial societies were Zulu village-based structures (*izinhlangano zezigodi*) which were controlled by hostel indunas. Membership was confined to specific people who were either known to the hostel population or had relatives or friends who could pay their dues. However 10 respondents (20%) claimed that membership of burial societies was opened to anybody who could afford the monthly instalments, irrespective of his ethnic origins.)

Burial societies were clearly support structures in the hostel. In the case of the death of a member, funds would be made available to the bereaved family. A coffin and the means of transporting the dead for burial in the countryside were paid for by the burial society. Each time a death occurred the affected member was obliged to pay an extra amount to replace the amount that had been withdrawn.

Unlike burial societies outside the hostel where an elected treasurer collected money from each member and banked the total amount, with a fine imposed on individuals who brought their donations late, in the hostel a different system

operated. The hostel induna was charged with the collection of money. Furthermore, the induna chaired all burial society meetings which were attended by representatives from each block. Defaulters were identified in those meetings. In each case of the death of a member, the induna decided whether the deceased was to be buried in the rural or urban area. According to most respondents this depended on the status of the dead migrant or his rank in Inkatha. People with high political prestige were buried in the country because according to one informant there was a fear that their bodies might be exhumed and necklaced by township youth (Respondent no. 21, hostel resident).)

In the hostel there was a perception that the burial society was an ethnic one that catered for the Zulus, and that other ethnic groups were being exploited for their contributions and did not benefit when they lost members of their families.

... even if we complain until we are blue in our faces there is nowhere we could sue or report these people (Respondent no. 14, hostel resident).

Burial societies seemed to engender more social cohesion amongst Zulu inmates than amongst inmates generally.

(vi) Economic activities in Merafe hostel

The political violence that erupted in 1990 seemed to have brought about a proliferation of small and medium businesses in the hostel. The ownership of business ventures in the hostel became the monopoly of the Zulu-speaking hostel

inmates, particularly those with highly developed entrepreneurial skills. These inmates took advantage of the rift which developed between the township and the hostel communities which compelled inmates to refrain from buying in township shops where most of the business are located, for fear of being killed.

Chief among the medium size businesses was the ownership of a fleet of mini-bus taxis which had also become the monopoly of hostel inmates. Further research needs to be conducted to establish how all of a sudden hostel inmates were able to own and control one of the biggest informal sector activities in South Africa. It was suggested that train violence was deliberately instigated by hostel dwellers to boost the taxi business (Key informant no. 6, SCA spokesperson).

Other medium size businesses found in the hostel were shebeens and "spaza" shops. Unlike other businesses, shebeens in the hostel catered for both hostel and township customers. Before the start of the political violence in 1990, most of the "township drunks" would flock to the hostel in search of the variety of concoctions that had long been the speciality of hostel shebeens. However with the emergence of political violence in the 1990's, the shebeens in the hostel began to serve only hostel inmates and a few of the "township drunks", particularly those who could not afford the expensive township concoctions. This group of "township drunks" dubbed "izibotho"

(hobos) swelled the numbers of the people murdered and necklaced by hostel inmates during the period 1990-1993.

The deaths of these people did not prevent or discourage the increasing numbers of profligate women in hostel shebeens, some of whom had no other intention than selling their bodies to sexually starved hostel men. As in the case of the Meadowlands hostel, prostitutes moved in from the periphery of the hostel where they were confined prior to the emergence of conflict between the two communities. Their access to the hostel had previously been prevented by the ever vigilant municipal police.

The 1990's, however, saw prostitutes becoming an integral part of the hostel social milieu. In Merafe hostel, prostitution was a more complicated issue than simply "the granting of sexual favours for monetary gain" (Giddens, 1992: 195). Most prostitutes in and around the Merafe hostel were found to be poor and relatively powerless women who originated from both urban or rural environments. They were women who because of their high rate of illiteracy could not find any alternative means of survival and therefore resorted to prostitution.

Two categories of prostitutes could be identified: the first group were women, both urban and rural, who were genuinely looking for permanent partners. Some were either divorcees or widows, who because of their low educational status and their unemployability, were compelled to enter the hostel,

using prostitution as a way of trying to locate permanent partners. This new phenomenon of black women "chasing" men goes against the grain of African culture. In most African cultures women are not supposed to display their affection to men, less they be labelled "izifebe" a derogatory term for "whores". The dominant perception among hostel dwellers of these women that they were "izifebe". They failed to understand that it was the poverty and homelessness of these women that turned them into sexual victims of hostel men.

The second category of prostitutes were commonly referred to as "izibotho" or "township drunks". They descended on the hostel and used sexual favours in order to get alcohol. They became victims of all the sexually starved men in the hostel when they were drunk.

(vii) Political organisation in Merafe hostel

The IFP itself maintained that hostels in Soweto and other areas had become exclusively Inkatha strongholds. In figures provided to the IBIIR by one of the IFP senior members, Mr Humphrey Ndlovu, the figures of its hostel support were claimed to be as follows:

Merafe - 100%

Dube - 87%

Nancefield - 90%

Jabulane - 100%

Diepkloof - 95% (IBIIR, 1992: 32).

This figure was confirmed in interviews in this research. Informants stated that from July 1990 there had been a concerted drive by Inkatha elements to establish political hegemony in Merafe hostel. Within a short period of time after the violence began in this area, Inkatha leadership had moved swiftly to organise a large majority of Zulu-speaking migrants who came from different geographical areas of Natal into a strong Inkatha force. Within a short space of time, Inkatha leadership was able to mobilise hundreds of hostel dwellers to attend Inkatha meetings and to become card-carrying members of the organisation. It was also able to expel from the hostel all those who refused to conform, after accusing them of collaborating with the enemy (Key informant no. 6, SCA spokesperson).

This coercive method of mobilising elevated Inkatha from an unknown organisation in the hostel to a position in which it enjoyed a monopoly inside the hostel. This was supported by a large majority of respondents, 45 (88%) who claimed to be card carrying members of the IFP, with only six (12%) respondents who claimed to belong to the PAC.

Twenty-nine respondents (57%) claimed to have joined the IFP in 1990, while 13 interviewees (25%) had joined between 1991-1993, with only nine respondents (18%) claiming to have joined the organisation before 1990. This is a clear indication that the IFP mobilisation policy of the 1990 gained the organisation a huge number of supporters.

This coercive mobilisation method of the IFP was further validated by the statements of 23 respondents (45%) who claimed they joined the IFP to secure a place in the hostel, coupled with their allegiance to the Zulu nation, rather than to the party itself. This method of recruitment was similar to IFP recruitment methods during the 1980's in Natal where IFP-aligned warlords abused shackdwellers and other groups. The ways in which Inkatha manipulated the relation between ethnic mobilisation and access to resources is best articulated by Mare who claimed that:

Allegiance to the "Zulu nation" - measured through membership of Inkatha could determine access to resources. Inkatha claimed total representation of "Zuluness" in the first years after its formation in 1975. It was the sole party in the bantustan government. Those who sought to politicise and mobilise Zulu ethnicity also controlled pensions, land allocation and education; signed work-seekers' permits; and approved bottle store licences (Mare, 1993: 67).

As in Meadowlands hostel an overwhelming majority of respondents, 39 (76%) were not clear about the aims and the ideals of the IFP as an organisation. Bhekizwe Ndwahe claimed that:

... the policies of the IFP were to seek the liberation of the black man by confiscating the land from the whites and distributing it among the Africans (Respondent no. 13).

The organisation held all of its meetings in the hostel as according to a large number of respondents (32) 63%. These meetings were held every Sunday and all members were coerced to attend.

The only time the organisation held meetings in the township was when there was a large Zulu gathering dubbed "*imbizo*" at Jabulani Amphitheatre when they were expecting to be addressed by either the Zulu Monarch or Chief Mister Buthelezi. These were not meetings that were attended by everybody, they were Zulu meetings that were held quarterly.

5. VIOLENCE IN AND AROUND MERAPE HOSTEL 1990 - 1993

A large majority of respondents, 34 (67%) perceived the conflict in Natal particularly during the mid 1980's to date as a war between the ANC and the IFP.

The war is between two bulls, the ANC and the IFP fighting over political turf. The issue of multi causes is the issue of academics, people who are cursed with the ability to think, people who find reasons where there are no reasons. There if you are ANC in an IFP turf you are dead, the same happens if you are IFP in an ANC environment. There are no other causes unless you construct them, a thing which academics are good at (Respondent no. 8, hostel resident).

Most respondents argued that when the ANC was still banned, the only violence in KwaZulu/Natal was "faction fighting" between different clans. These faction fights were said to be over non-political antagonisms. However after the unbanning of the liberation movements, the ANC was perceived as threatening IFP hegemony in the region: "people buried their tribal differences in defence of their political ideology" (Respondent no. 19, hostel resident).

Many Merafe hostel residents articulated a strong ethnic nationalism. The belief that the proud Zulu nation would fight to the last man in defence of its Zulu heritage was strong among Merafe hostel dwellers. Several informants stated that since they had defeated the ANC in KwaZulu/Natal, there was a strong possibility that they could weaken it in the Transvaal. These respondents argued that the strength of the PWV IFP lay in the number and power of the Zulus particularly those who fled the war torn KwaZulu/Natal.

Seventeen respondents (33%) believed that the conflict in PWV was the continuation of the violence in Natal. Nineteen respondents (37%) believed that the violence in the PWV was precipitated by the threat from ANC factions that the hostel was going to be demolished. The response by many hostel dwellers to this perceived threat was aggressive defense of the hostel. The issue of closure and demolishing of hostels was not an idle one because the hostel in Kathlehong as well as the Tsakane hostel were demolished by township residents. Hostel dwellers thus felt that it was foolish not to take rumours of attack and demolition seriously.

The issue of the ~~hes~~ hostel was raised as one of the differences between the violence in Natal and the PWV. In Natal most of the opposing factions either lived in shacks or formal housing whereas in the PWV area there was this township/hostel divide. Twenty four (47%) respondents noted similarities between the Natal and PWV conflict with all citing politics as the cause

of the conflict. According to these informants in both Natal and on the Reef fighting was over political power and influence and involved many of the same techniques such as mobilisation through emotional rallies, the use of "traditional weapons" and the bussing of Inkatha supporters from various strongholds in rural Natal.

Well over 80% of the respondents (43) referred to the pattern of political violence on the Reef as "a war", because of the number of people who had died and were still dying. As Lungile Ngcobo explained, it is:

... a war that has taken thousands and thousands of innocent lives particularly women and children. In our part of the country "wars" are not defined in terms of instruments used or uniform that various factions wear. To us war is war as long as there is conflict and people are dying in large numbers to us it is war (Respondent no 3; hostel resident).

On the other hand, eight respondents (16%) did not believe that the current political violence was on a scale justifying the use of the word "war". To this group:

a war involves men fighting each other with what ever weapon they could lay their hands on. It is a situation of such a magnitude that men are forcefully separated from their wives and stay in the mountains for weeks or even months. War is not what we are experiencing now where men from the hostel fight children from the township. None of the group has fled its dwelling (Respondent no. 11, hostel resident).

It is an extraordinary feature of Merafe hostel that even during times of violent turmoil it attracted a sizable number of newcomers from the rural areas. It is surprising that 19

respondents (37%) claimed to have arrived at this hostel from Natal or other hostels when the violence in Merafe was at its peak. This supports the suggestion that Reef violence was imported from elsewhere.

Sixteen respondents (33%) claimed to remember how 'the war' started in 1990. According to Azikhwelwa Majosi:

On the 22 August 1990 we held a meeting in the hostel, where it was reported that the hostel was about to be attacked by township comrades - there was no way that we could take the rumour lightly because our brothers had died in Sebokeng when they had been warned beforehand. To us it was the matter of "*ukubona kanye ukubona kabili*" (once bitten twice shy). As in any other war - the best defence is attack. We then planned the attack for the 24 August after we had thoroughly consulted with the traditional healers, inyangas and sangomas on all the rituals that had to do with war. When the day of the attack finally arrived - we then attacked the townships - they were all unaware, we caught them by surprise - we attacked and attacked and attacked (Respondent no. 40, hostel resident).

However not all respondents were told of the attack; a sizeable number of respondents, 16 (31%) were not aware and therefore had no part in the decision making regarding the attack. They claimed that they did not know how "the war" had started.

The origin of the political violence in and around Merafe hostel appears from interviews with several key informants to lie in rumours of an attack on the hostel by township residents on the evening of 24 August 1990. That night alone 14 township residents were killed and 124 were injured in the attack by an estimated number of 400 hostel dwellers (Everatt and Schrier, 1994). In that year alone there were 121

incidents of violent conflict between Merafe hostel residents and residents from the surrounding township. In these incidents 73 people died and 265 were injured (IBIIR, 1992).

An overwhelming majority of respondents did not perceive all township people as their enemies. 21 people interviewed (41%), perceived only the ANC-allied township comrades as their enemies. However this group admitted that it was difficult to distinguish these comrades from the rest of the township youth because they almost all spoke the same language and wore the same clothes. But "... when we attack every youth we come across - we know there is a 99% chance that we will hit the right target" (Respondent 31, hostel resident).

According to Thembinkosi Biyela this blurring of antagonists is problematic:

If you are in a war situation where the line of division is blurred, where it is not overtly identifiable by race, in terms of black and white we must create a badge of identification. Our common symbol of identification is red head bands. We see that as normal because where we come from every regiment was identified by the colour of its shield (Respondent no. 47, hostel resident).

Not all inmates agreed on this form of identification, 23 respondents (45%) believed that the lines of identification between themselves and their enemies were blurred, to this group: "There were no clear lines of identification of the enemy in terms of external appearances or languages" (Respondent no. 27). Because it was difficult to identify who

belonged to the ANC, specifically the target of attack sometimes became all township residents.

During the height of the conflict between the two communities, there was increased arms traffic into the hostel. Township residents who lived near the hostel accused the police of being the main suppliers of arms to hostel inmates. To some informants a clear indication of police complicity in violence became evident from 1990 when teargas canisters were fired from within the hostel. In South Africa teargas is one commodity that is the monopoly of the State, and is unavailable on the open market. Its availability within the hostel was said by nine respondents to constitute proof of the hidden hand of the state in the carnage. These were older inmates who were opposed to violence.

The nature of the war that raged in the townships is indicated by the types of weapons used. The most common types mentioned by 48 respondents (94%) were bush-knives, AK47, pistols, knob-kierries, pangas, spears and teargas (*usisi lezinyembezi*) among others. Most respondents asserted that possession of weapons had become common in the hostel. Inmates described it as follows:

"Abantu sebaba nezikhali zabo ngoba vele nasemakhaya bakhula ngezimpi zombango okuyizimpi zezigodi" (people have long acquired the habit of possessing arms because even in the rural area they are socialised in the environment of faction fighting) (Respondent no. 49).

on the other hand 17 respondents (33%) claimed that most of the weapons used in the violence were manufactured in the hostel by inmates themselves. These are weapons called "qwashi" which are hand made guns firing various objects such as nails or marbles termed "irons". Hostels had not only become "fortresses of fear" but also armouries, institutions where weapons were manufactured, stored and distributed.

The confrontational nature of this violence and the type of weapons used coupled with the desire of most inmates to maximise the damage inflicted on their enemy were cited as reasons why the hostel war was fought at night. One informant maintained that the darkness helped him cope with his emotional responses to violent actions:

When you fight your enemy during the day, you are bound to feel pity when you are confronted by his/her spouse or offspring. But not at night, we just destroy everything that moves and has life, even dogs or cats suffer the same fate. We only learn about the extent of the damage when we listen to the news on TVs or radios stolen from their houses the following day. But if we fight during the day we would be compelled to preserve other things, therefore minimise the damage (Respondent no. 3).

This informant was one of 31 interviewees (61%) who asserted a great wish to end this violence because:

... the winner in this violence is the grave - which like a sea is never satisfied. The sea receives water from many rivers and rivulets but has never ever bursts its banks - in times of serious drought, the sea never dries up and will always supply water to the rivers and rivulets (Respondent no. 48, hostel resident).

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that there have been dramatic changes in Merafe hostel since it was built in 1962. These changes included a gradual erosion of the harmonious relationship that existed between the hostel dwellers and the township residents. Between 1962 and 1993 there was also a dramatic change in the social composition of the hostel from middle aged, older employed residents in the early period to that of predominately younger unemployed migrants who flooded the hostel in the 1990's. Most of these younger migrants who came to inhabit the hostel in the 1990's were bused in from areas engulfed by violence in Natal. It is suggested that this group of relative newcomers were responsible for much of the political violence between 1990 and 1993. This group's *modus operandi* was not only to destabilise the neighbouring communities by violent confrontation, but they were also implicated in criminal violence. They integrated with the township gangsters, thugs and ganged up against the neighbouring communities by hijacking cars, raping women and causing complete chaos in the area.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FUTURE OF HOSTEL IN POST APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of hostels on the Reef as "launchpads" for political violence during the 1990 - 1993 period raises complex policy questions for the transition to a more peaceful social order. This chapter attempts to identify different perspectives on the future of the hostels as perceived by different stakeholders, including the hostel dwellers themselves. The chapter will identify different views on the future of the hostels by categorising four broad positions: (i) those who were in favour of the total destruction of hostels, (ii) those who advocated hostels being kept as single sex institutions, (iii) those who supported the integration of hostels with township communities by converting them into flats and family dwellings, (iv) and, as a short-term measure, those who advocated the fencing off of all troubled hostels. While there is some degree of overlapping these positions are distinct in terms of emphasis.

It has been apparent right from their inception in black townships in 1956 that migrant worker hostels were apartheid creations. They were built not only as part of the rigid apartheid ideology that required separate accommodation for people who were regarded as temporary sojourners, but also as

a form of control that facilitated the monitoring of the movement of black people.

Furthermore, the blocks within the hostels were organised in such a way as to accommodate hostel dwellers along ethnic lines. This was a blatant attempt to accentuate and deepen ethnic cleavages. It formed part of the strategy of urban social control that was integral to the "divide and rule" policy of apartheid.

In recent times, particularly in the 1990's, when the dawn of the new South Africa was in sight, these hostels, particularly those on the Reef and some sections of hostels in some of the townships of KwaZulu/Natal, were used as launch pads for destabilising activities.

This strategy of destabilisation involved hostel dwellers launching attacks on the neighbouring communities. These attacks not only resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and in the dislocation of thousands of families, they seriously damaged the social fabric of the black community. This pattern of dislocation resulted in the majority of the original hostel dwellers being either forcibly evicted or fleeing of their own accord. The destabilisation of the neighbouring community generated a controversial question: should these apartheid institutions be preserved as the country entered into a transition from authoritarian rule to democracy?

This question of the future of the hostels was constantly debated by ordinary people both in the hostels and in the neighbouring communities. A crucial question was, who had the authority to decide on the future of the hostels? Was it the hostel inmates? Was it the residents of the surrounding communities who bore the brunt of the destruction wreaked by hostel inmates? Finally, it could be asked, what about the views of the thousands of wives of migrant hostel residents?

2. THE "ABOLITIONIST" POSITION

The 'abolitionist' position asserted that hostels should be totally abolished as institutions. This view was asserted by 80% of the hostel dwellers interviewed. Those who believed that hostels should be totally abolished included township residents and members of political organisations. They maintained that hostels had long been a menace in society; that they threatened peace and stability; that they were never built with the mandate and consent of the community; that they were "technocratic designs" imposed from above by apartheid ideologues whose intention was to divide black people in order to subjugate and control them.

According to one informant, "It is a matter of time before the future of the hostels are ruthlessly decided by communities. There has been no doubt that the hostels have been the albatross of the apartheid regime, their future is in a precarious position. Their days are numbered. A few years

ago, most township communities spoke with compassion about the conditions in which their fellow South Africans were living. But since the beginning of this violence, a feeling of hate and resentment has descended. Many township residents, especially those bordering the hostels, are demanding that the hostels be demolished" (Key informant no. 3, township resident).

Informants who articulated this position included members of very different political persuasions, such as the Black Consciousness Movement (AZAPO), the ANC and ANC-aligned organisations such as the civics and the progressive trade unions (ANC, 1992). All these organisations advocated the urgent abolition of the single-sex hostels their replacement with family dwellings. The ANC advocated abolition because of the havoc the hostels had caused among its constituency (ANC, 1993). A document released by the ANC on the issue of hostels claimed that:

Hostels have been cynically used to foster and further racial policies, isolation, dependency relations and the exploitation of labour. Generations of Africans, numbered in millions, have endured hostels as places of misery, poverty, loneliness and despair.

The ANC, and other parties, have consistently over the years called for the demolishing of these structures and their replacement with more appropriate accommodation for migrants (ANC, 1993: 11).

This view was further supported by the views of other parties. A member of AZAPO, for instance, believed that hostels had to be destroyed as part of the overthrowal of apartheid:

If AZANIA truly believes in liberation - it cannot afford to inherit all albatrosses of the outgoing apartheid institutions, particularly those who have played a pivotal role in engineering black emotional destruction. Hostels are good examples of these institutions. The government, if it claims to represent the will of the majority, should bulldoze them from their foundation so as to obliterate any ideas of rebuilding them in the future. They must be destroyed roots and all, so that those who ever think of rebuilding them and should never forget the nation's feelings towards such institutions (Key informant no. 7, AZAPO branch chairperson).

A member of the ANC-allied Civic echoed the same sentiments, and warned that if the government did not act to abolish the hostels; township residents would destroy the hostels themselves.

... the government must do away with the hostels while people are still prepared to negotiate their future. Once it leaves this issue for too long, they (hostels) will take the same route taken by hostels in Duduza, Tsakane and Khalanyoni. People will bring them down with their bare hands, because there is no way that our people will ever accept the issue of hostels. They have caused enough pain and destruction in our communities, they must be destroyed or the people will destroy them. (Key informant no. 9, Civic member)

This 'abolitionist' view was also articulated by some township residents interviewed who stressed the destructive social impact of hostels:

... the epoch of the hostel is over. They should be demolished brick by brick - even the shadow of their roots must be uprooted. They have done enough harm to the dignity of the black people. What have we done to deserve these institutions? Where have you seen or heard of an Indian only hostel? A coloured only hostel or even a white only hostel? They must go now - not even the shadow of their existence should linger on the minds of our black people. Their site make us feel like vomiting - the sooner they are terminated the better (Respondent no. 2, Township resident).

This same view, was expressed by Selina Liphoko who had lived next to Merafe hostel since its inception in the early 1960's:

Living next to a hostel is like living next to a zoo that contains wild and sometimes dangerous animals. They are only contained during the day. At night not even the moonlight can stop them from causing havoc to entire neighbourhoods. This is what has come to characterise our lives since the eruption of violence in 1990. We live just for today only wishing we are not the next victims. Nothing can be done to reform them (the hostels) - they must be demolished - they must go because they have really overstayed their welcome (Key informant no. 6, Township resident).

Thabiso Molorane, a resident of the community next to Meadowlands Hostel maintained that because hostels are sources of deep social antagonisms and tensions, their abolition is essential if political violence is to be ended.

No peace will ever prevail if the hostels still exist. Opponents of the new democratic order will always find reasons to manipulate the division that exists between the two communities to the detriment of the entire social order. If one hostel is embroiled in violence the entire communities who live adjacent the hostels tremble because they do not know where and when it is going to hit next. We cannot live like this. We have already become a nation of neurotics because of these hostels. Our children have sacrificed their childhood stages. They have been propelled to adulthood by the crime committed by people who live in these hostels. The only solution is the total destruction of all the hostels (Respondent no. 11, Township resident).

However not all informants supported this 'abolitionist' position. From a number of interviews a 'reformist' position could be identified.

3. THE "REFORMIST" POSITION

The reformist position stated that hostels should not be physically destroyed, but be upgraded, improved and retained as single sex entities. This position was primarily articulated by the Inkatha Freedom Party, a minority of hostel inmates themselves, the Hostel Association and some academics who were sympathetic to the IFP's cause. Inkatha's interest in the position relates to the fact that 90% of hostel dwellers on the Reef were card-carrying members of the IFP (Woods, 1993; Minnaar, 1993; Schlemmer, 1991) and therefore it wanted to be seen to be protecting the interests of its constituency.

Adherents of this position believed that the dismantling of hostels would have no bearing on the violence that has engulfed South Africa since the mid-1980's. Schlemmer for instance asserts that:

South Africa has known many poorly considered and hurriedly attempted solutions to the social problems in the black townships, many have done more harm than good. The latest argument to dismantle the hostel system may be yet another. While hostels are manifestly inadequate institutions, they both contain and have created certain social realities which will not go away with the dismantling of the physical structure (1991: 5).

Schlemmer further argued that:

The inevitable conclusion one must draw from my research results and other similar results is that, notwithstanding the constrained, frustrating and unnatural conditions in the hostels, a substantial proportion of the residents prefer this mode of urban existence to making any significant

investments in more stable urban accommodation. Their priorities are in rural areas (1991: 5).

To support his argument for the retention of hostels as single-sex dwellings, Schlemmer used results from the research he conducted in the mid-eighties that indicated a massive support for hostels as single-sex accommodation. At that time a sizable proportion of hostel dwellers preferred having temporary single status in the cities in cheap hostel dwellings (Schlemmer and Moller, 1985).

This view is further supported by a minority of hostel inmates. As has been shown repeatedly in this thesis, violence adversely affected life in almost all hostels on the Reef. Life in these hostels has never been a paradise for inmates nor for the neighbouring communities. Yet, the hostels had become home to thousands of migrants whose loyalty to them was astonishing. This loyalty is seen in this statement by one hostel dweller:

To some of us these hostels have acted as the only shelter in a strange land. We arrived from the rural areas jobless, penniless and nowhere to stay. We would not have afforded rents in the townships. As long as we are in this position we are going to protect these hostels (Respondent no. 12, hostel resident).

A group of seven respondents (23%) in the Meadowlands hostel and 11 respondents (22%) in the Merafe hostel preferred living in single-sex hostels where accommodation was very cheap. Of this group of respondents, 22% were young migrants who were either illiterate, unemployed and unable to support them-

selves, and 65% of them were older migrants who were not only unemployed but illiterate and too old to enter any meaningful job market. Both of these social categories are characterised by a marked sense of vulnerability; they harboured a bleak view of their future. Their views are well articulated by Nkanyezi Madlala:

We are going to stay in these hostels until our dying days. Some of us have been here for many years now, we have grown to know each and every stone in this hostel. We have no other place to stay except in here. Life is affordable in here though the conditions are deplorable. Rent is cheap for those who still pay it, communal life is still rife except that this violence is threatening to erode this communal life (Respondent no. 12, hostel dweller).

Both these groups view their only possible survival in the urban areas as remaining in migrant labour hostels. They argued for the retention of hostels as single-sex institutions because they were opposed to bringing their families with them to the urban areas. For example:

bringing the whole family to the urban areas is going to be encumbered. Living from hand to mouth of one individual is hard enough - having to feed and accommodate an extra mouth or two is really going to be difficult. The pain of seeing your children cry of hunger and disease is unbearable. I doubt most of us are ready to encounter those problems. It is only our wives who are better equipped and better suited to absorb these pains. They hardly complain about these things (Respondent no. 6, hostel dweller).

This was further supported by another hostel dweller who claimed that:

I do not want my wife and children to stay with me under these conditions. It is really hard enough for me to provide food for myself- what more if I

have to provide food for my wife and children it will be a big task. At least at home (Natal) I have got an extended family to run to in time of difficulties. If there is no plate on the table - they could easily go to any of the relatives for a plate (Respondent no. 7, hostel dweller).

Some informants gave a very dismal account of hostel life.

For example, Thamsanqa Ximba said:

... violence in this hostel alone (Meadowlands hostel) has become the order of the day. The rule of law has collapsed, people are killed inside here and nobody bothers to investigate who the murderers are, women are raped in broad daylight and nothing is done about it - and lately even thugs from the townships have tended to make this hostel a hide-out from the police from their various criminal activities. They too know that no policemen would dare sat his foot inside the hostel (Respondent no. 17, hostel dweller)

However the notion of retaining hostels as single sex accommodation is limited in a number of ways. It fails to acknowledge that the position of migrants has changed over the years as indicated in this thesis. Increasing numbers of younger and literate migrants have over the years flocked to the urban areas. Their position in the job market has been enhanced by higher levels of education than that obtained by some of the older migrants. Their improved educational levels coupled with the fact that old apartheid laws have been repealed, changed their views on permanent urbanisation. The availability of low cost housing through various schemes was an added factor in shifting views regarding urbanisation.

The majority of hostel dwellers in both Meadowlands and Merafe prefer permanent urbanisation where they would be able to live with their wives and children. Only older migrants were

totally opposed to the idea of their wives and children joining them in the hostels or in the city. Their rigid traditionalist position emanates from the fact that they were firmly established back home. Years of apartheid influx control has engrained an urban- rural dichotomy in their minds so that the urban areas were regarded as "esilugwini" (the whiteman's territory). Furthermore, years of working in the cities had enabled them to build houses, accumulate livestock and educate their children, albeit to a limited degree. Their marriages were the authoritarian, patriarchal kind that ignored the views and the feelings of women and children. There was a feeling that bringing their dependents to the cities would not only corrupt them, but spoil what seemed to be a totally controlled family life and marriage.

A further limitation of the view that hostels should be retained as single-sex institutions is that it only echoes the opinion of male migrants, disregarding the feelings and the opinions of hundreds of wives and children of the migrants who form a new category of hostel dwellers. In the quest to find a balanced view of the position of hostels remaining as single-sex dwellings the opinion of women on the issue was sought by interviewing ten women in each hostel and eight Zulu-speaking wives of hostel inmates in the rural area of Nongoma in KwaZulu/Natal.

Their views are important to the hostel debate. It must always be remembered that when migrants flock to the urban

areas in large numbers, they leave behind hundreds of destitute women and children who for the rest of the year struggle to make ends meet. Their plight is well articulated by Nokuzama Ndwandwe who attested that:

... ours (rural women's story) will always remain the story of pain and suffering that will never be heard by the world. When our men go to the mines and factories (*ezimbonini*) in the cities we are left to look after the children and plough the land that has never produced enough for our subsistence, but nobody ever cares to listen to our stories of pain. Some of us are even married to polygamous marriages where many children are born. Most of the rural women raised these children single handedly, without a cent from their migrant husbands. But still what is important to researchers and academics is the feelings of the migrant husbands.

Furthermore rural women still believe that children help with farming and would provide them security when they have reached the old age. In most part of the rural areas women's identity is associated with motherhood. Women only derive their social status from the number of children they are able to bear, as a result we suffer for our ignorance when all the men had left for the towns. But still our plight and pain is never articulated. Instead the world go on to ask the very men who are party to our suffering about how we feel (Respondent no. 6).

These women viewed single-sex hostels as sources of pain linked to family disintegration.

... if from the beginning we were allowed to migrate to the cities with our families we would have long avoided the pain caused by the migratory system and its hostel situation. The system allows our husbands to disappear in the urban area, God knows where they disappear to, and hardly send money to us and the children to survive on. We are seated with heavy hearts, unhappy that our husbands are not contributing to the upkeep of the family. Compounding this problem is the fact that most of us are not working and therefore lack the finance to send our children to school. When we follow them to the cities we are always scolded like children in these crowded hostel rooms, constantly being threatened with deportation and being asked who gave us permission to come to the cities.

Whereas if we were part of the deal from the outset our family structures would have been intact. That could only happen if hostels as they are currently are demolished or turned into family structures (Respondent no. 8).

Allowing hostels to remain as single-sex accommodation perpetuates the denigrating of women, according to Phangisile Khuzwayo:

... the hostel system must be phased out immediately because it make us appendages of our husbands. We spend a lot of money and time locating which hostel they live in. After we have found them, that is, if we are lucky they are not staying with local girls; who boast of been "*umfazi we phepha*" (legal wife with a marriage certificate -rural marriages are customary marriages with no marriage certificate) we would be threatened with deportation if we misbehave. We do not have a say in anything our husbands do because hostels are men places. We also want places that we would be proud of. But they must be cheap so that we could afford them (Respondent no. 9).

An overwhelming majority of 17 out of 28 women interviewed (61%) were in favour of migrating to the cities with the purpose of joining their spouses in order to resuscitate their dying family lives. The argument for retaining hostels as single sex institutions or upgrading them but restricting them to accommodate single migrants does not have widespread support. It was clear from these interviews that the views of women connected to male, migrant hostel dwellers must be made the subject of debate and intensive research.

4. "CONVERSION OF HOSTELS INTO FAMILY UNIT" POSITION

The position that hostels should be converted into family

units was the most widely held position put forward by the majority of academics, COSATU-aligned unions, civic organisations, hostel inmates and people living in communities neighbouring the hostels.

Proponents of this position believe that if hostels were either converted to family units or flats, they would be able to retain the bulk of the inhabitants and hostel dwellers would be able to bring their immediate relations, such as their wives and children to live with them. The type of accommodation advocated by this position is that they should be affordable to ordinary hostel dwellers (DBSA, 1993).

Advocates of this position believed that this proposal had a number of benefits for hostel inmates in the sense that (i) the hostel community would not be interrupted or dispersed as a settled community. The entire community would still occupy their located site; (ii) There would not be any new acquisition of land required; (iii) There might be spare capacity in the existing infrastructure, the use of which would also signify a saving in the cost of resettlement (DBSA, 1993).

This position supports Schlemmer's assertion of the need to keep the hostel community intact because:

The hostel dwellers are not merely a category defined in terms of accommodation. They are in a sense a social "enclave" with a different/political culture and different kinds of interest than the surrounding township dwellers. Clearly, dismantling the hostel system is not only complex

in its implications for the residents but may not remove the problem perceived to surround the hostel and their environments (Schlemmer, 1991: 5-6).

Schlemmer further asserted that forced integration by demolishing hostels was not the solution to the current violence because:

... the hostel dwellers are so distinct in terms of socio-economic interests and political orientation that they will remain "enclaves" even if their hostels are closed down (1991: 6).

Citing his two decades of experience working among township communities as a city council employee, Schlemmer concludes that integrating migrant and township residents is impossible:

Having been employed in the township prior to the programme of hostel construction in the sixties and seventies, and mindful of the pattern of residential locations elsewhere in Africa and in the third world, I would make the confident prediction that migrants would establish themselves in clearly defined and bounded concentrations within squatter camps and easily cause havoc from within, with an added advantage [Emphasis added] (Schlemmer, 1991: 6).

The view that hostels should be converted into family units was supported by a large number of respondents in both the Meadowlands and Merafe hostels, and many residents in neighbouring communities. Most respondents in the two hostels believed that:

... upgrading the hostels and converting them into family accommodation would not only remove the violent element from within the hostel but would create an environment that is conducive to peace and stability (Respondent no. 39, hostel inmate).

The call for the conversion of hostels into family accommodation was opposed by the IFP and the IFP-allied National Hostel Residents Association (NHRA) which was formed at the peak of the hostel debate by predominantly IFP dominated hostels in the PWV and Natal/KwaZulu regions. These groupings perceived the call for conversion of hostels into family accommodation as an endeavour to weaken the IFP's strong power base particularly in the PWV, where the IFP was only strong in the hostels.

The Transvaal Hostel Residents Association (THRA), added its voice to denouncing the dismantling of hostels and to converting them into family accommodation. Instead the organisation recommended the expansion of the existing single-sexed dormitories into structures that would accommodate a single person per room (Key informant no. 3, THRA member).

Members of the Soweto Civic Association (SCA) asserted that:

... Meadowlands and Merafe hostels had been converted into military bases for attacks against township residents. The IFP's opposition to the conversion of the hostels stemmed from the fear that the military bases would effectively be destroyed through the upgrading of these hostels into family accommodation (Key informant no. 1, SCA).

However a COSATU-aligned informant maintained that:

The call for the upgrading of hostels should not be perceived as the strategy to demobilise or undermine the IFP. Hostels throughout the Reef were a great social concern because of the continuous violence that emanates from them. The sooner they are upgraded and turned into family accommodation the better it is for both the

residents and the hostel dwellers (Mbulelo Biyana, COSATU).

Informant's reasons for supporting this position on the future of hostels varied widely. While some were concerned with the violence or with political considerations such as the response of the IFP, others were more concerned with protecting family life. For example Nokulunga Mngadi maintains that:

... hostels should be made accessible to all who want to stay in them by upgrading them into family accommodation. Men should be encouraged to live with their wives instead of allowing hostels to destroy family life. Most of the rural women have never enjoyed a complete family life because most become married spinsters as soon as they got married because they have never experienced living with their husbands. Allowing hostels to remain unchanged is like allowing migrant labour policy that has split families and destroyed the fabric of social life to go unchallenged (Respondent no. 7).

This position on the conversion of hostels into family units also has many limitations. In places such as Duduza, Tsakane and Katlehong, where residents have demolished the hostels, inmates have moved to stay in shack settlements next to those areas. Not a single group has formed itself "in clearly defined and bounded concentration" within those shack settlements. Instead as their hostel structures have disintegrated, they have formed new structures linked to local community-based organisations. Contrary to Schlemmer's prediction, no violence has been experienced.

The view that hostel dwellers are so distinctively different that they would remain in segregated social enclaves even if

physically integrated, is problematic. It ignores the fact that hostel dwellers shared schools, clinics, and recreational facilities in the township for decades without incident, even though until recently women and children were not part of the hostel environment. The sharing of these facilities by the hostel residents and township people strengthened the relationships between the two communities.

Lastly, this view ignores the fact that the introduction of women and children, which has become a permanent feature in hostels, has meant a number of changes in the relationship between hostel inmates and township residents. Children cannot be physically restricted; they have transcended the boundaries of space by venturing into the township in search of peers and open playing space which is unavailable in the hostel milieu.

5. THE "FENCING OF HOSTELS" POSITION

In a summit meeting between Mandela and de Klerk on September 26 1992 it was agreed that to prevent township violence by fencing and policing hostels. The position that all hostels associated with violence and crime should be fenced off as a short-term interim measure in order to curb the violence, emerged after an intensive investigation by the Goldstone Commission on the involvement of some of the hostels in politically motivated conflict and in criminal acts.

The ANC also advocated this position. As early as 1990, the ANC believed that the para-militarisation of the hostels had been an attempt by various political parties to establish support for themselves through violence and intimidation. It then recommended that all hostels implicated in violence should be fenced off as an interim measure against violence.

Both the Goldstone Commission and the ANC believed that fencing could contribute positively to the hostel situation so as to increase the privacy and security of both hostel and township residents. Furthermore as an interim measure, fencing would allow police and other institutions of law and order easy monitoring of people entering and leaving the hostels. Many township residents, particularly those living adjacent to the two hostels under scrutiny welcomed the fencing of hostels as an interim move to curb the violence.

However the fencing of hostels was rejected by the Transvaal Hostel Residents Association. They emphasized that there had not been sufficient consultation with hostel residents. Instead they called on the government to "immediately speed up the process and provide the funds to enable hostel residents to take part in the process for the improvements of the hostels" (New Nation 2.10.1992). They pointed out that the R240,000 security fence erected at Thokoza hostel in September had already been torn down (Sunday Times 4.10.1992).

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion it is clear that the future of the hostels must be located in a broader policy framework. The RDP programme on hostels states that they must be:

transformed, upgraded and integrated within the policy framework that recognises the numerous interest groups in and around the hostels and provide a range of housing options, including both family units and single people (RDP programme, 1994: 25-26).

The RDP programme further stipulates that the hostel policies must address the integration of the hostels into communities, the safety and privacy of hostels, and arrangements for family living in the hostels (RDP, 1994: 26).

The RDP envisages a programme of housing that would (generate employment, skills and economic activities, as well as provide affordable and decent houses in a peaceful and dignified social milieu (RDP, 1994: 22-23). This is in line with the wishes of 66 respondents (80%) from both the Meadowlands and Merafe hostels who believed that hostels should be destroyed and that they should be replaced with affordable housing that would integrate them with the local communities. As Bonga Dlodla said:

... the integration with the local community will make us part of the township. For decades we have never been regarded as the township people or the Sowetans like the rest of the residents of Soweto. We are always referred to as hostel dwellers, no matter how many years we have stayed in Soweto, we never qualify to be Sowetans just because we live in the hostel (Respondent no. 39).

These desires for community integration were expressed by an overwhelming majority of young migrants and indicate that the younger generation of migrants wants to urbanise permanently. The process of urbanisation and social integration was understood as part of a developmental process. As one informant said,

... the upgrading and construction of hostels should be conducted in such a way that it shapes our future. Here in Meadowlands the development industries have the opportunity to do more than amend the skyline; they have the opportunity to alter how whole townships and hostel communities operate. Construction can be made to become an engine for change, a massive job creator and a means of achieving integration and harmony where there was once division and hostility (Respondent no. 14).

Ultimately the social integration of hostel and township residents is part of the wider process of creating a common society in post-apartheid South Africa. One of the difficulties this involves is to unravel the linkages that have been forged between violence and deep seated ethnic, gender and political identities.

CHAPTER SEVEN**CONCLUSION**

This thesis has focused on the relation between hostels and the political violence on the Reef from the time the violence erupted in July 1990 until December 1993. This analysis was done using a case study of two hostels in Soweto, the Merafe and Meadowlands hostels.

The thesis has explored the pattern of political violence and the role played by hostel residents in the violence. The thesis argued that while "war" is a contested notion, the political violence that engulfed the Reef constituted a war. The thesis further argued that the hostel system played an indispensable role in this conflict since it frequently provided bases and launch pads for the agents of the political violence.

The dominant perception of hostels is that they were armed camps of the Inkatha Freedom Party. It is believed that Inkatha colonised these institutions, drove out non-Zulu occupants and ANC supporters and transformed the hostels from migrants camps into "fortresses of fear" from which they terrorized the surrounding communities.

This thesis has tried to anchor this view in a sociological profile of both the Merafe and Meadowlands hostels in Soweto. This involved examining these hostels as social institutions,

the social relations and culture operating within them, and their place in the social structure of the surrounding township. The thesis focused on the social characteristics of the hostel residents such as their ethnic identity, age, gender identity, marital and employment status, and work history. Through a series of in-depth interviews outlined in the methodology section, the thesis attempted to map the different experiences and understandings which hostel dwellers had of the political violence in relation to their own political and religious beliefs and broader world views.

The first chapter outlined the objectives of the study and the methodology. The second chapter explored political violence in South Africa generally and the Reef specifically. The chapter argued that these destabilisation policies which were initially aimed at neighbouring countries were finally turned inwards into South Africa, in order to weaken the anti-apartheid forces and prevent South Africa's move towards democracy. These destabilisation methods involved unprecedented levels of political violence, especially on the Reef.

Chapter Three traced the changing nature of hostels from their inception in 1913 as migrant labour hostels built to house single males in the inner cities. The chapter indicated how present day hostels developed, by tracing their development from compounds to "fortresses of fear". This chapter has argued that there were five main changes in the hostels on the

Reef since their inception in 1913. These changes involved firstly, a shift in location of hostels from the inner city to the townships. The second change concerned the gender composition of the hostels. While hostels were originally built to house and control exclusively male migrants workers, they came to accommodate increasing numbers of women and children who themselves migrated in large numbers into urban areas. The third change involved the ethnic composition of the hostel. When hostels were first built, they were multi-ethnic institutions that housed male migrants from different parts of South Africa and its neighbouring countries. In the early 1990's Reef hostels came to house mainly Zulu-speaking migrants who had been bused in from rural Natal and who were sympathetic to Inkatha. The fourth change involved an increase in the numbers of people inhabiting these hostels as the control mechanism of influx control collapsed. The fifth change involved the relationship between township residents and hostel inmates. After the unbanning of the political parties and the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, this relationship changed from one of peaceful social and commercial interaction to one of violent antagonism. These changes were both dramatic and negative. The concept "metamorphosis" has been used in the attempt to capture the dramatic nature of changes in the hostels.

The fourth and fifth chapters focused on Meadowlands and Merafe hostels by tracing their historical origins, the social characteristics of their inhabitants and their relationships

with neighbouring communities. It was shown how in both cases the 1990's brought enmity and antagonism between hostel inmates and neighbouring township residents. These chapters explored the role which both Merafe and Meadowlands hostels played in the current political violence and suggests how both hostels provided sanctuary for "warlords" imported from Natal.

Chapter 6 attempted to identify the different perspectives on the future of the hostels as perceived by different stakeholders including the hostel dwellers themselves. The chapter identified different views on the future of hostels by categorising four broad positions: (i) those who were in favour of the total destruction of hostels, (ii) those who advocated hostels being kept as single sex institutions, (iii) those who supported the integration of hostels with the township communities by converting them into flats and family accommodation, (iv) and those who advocated the fencing off of all troubled hostels.

Hostels are deeply embedded in the history of apartheid. They were built to provide single-sex accommodation for male migrants and were part of an intricate system of control, exploitation and denial of human rights.

Almost all hostel residents on the Reef had a harmonious relationship with their neighbouring communities, except for the Dube hostel conflict of 1957 which was bound up with the ethnic policy of the Government. Serious conflict broke out

on the 14th of September when Zulu-speaking inmates living in Dube hostel attacked Sotho-speaking people living in adjacent Meadowlands. The conflict left 40 people dead and more than 100 injured. From then on hostels were quiescent except for a few intra- hostel conflicts which were also easily quelled by the authorities.

It was the post-1976 era when the face of Meadowlands and Merafe hostels were to change forever. The Meadowlands hostel violence of 1976 was the biggest hostel-versus- township conflict that had occurred in several decades since the Dube hostel violence of 1957. Even in that conflict, Zulu-speaking migrants were the perpetrators of the violence and it is arguable that the invisible hand of the apartheid state was used to stir up the conflict.

These migrants were scorned and feared by the more sophisticated township residents because of the perception that they were "born of warrior blood" ready to wreak violence at any moment. These perceptions increased the sense of isolation and resentment of hostel dwellers as they continued to be referred to as "communities in isolation".

This sense of isolation and resentment helped fuel the kind of violence we have witnessed on the Reef between the hostel inmates and the township communities. The township communities continued to call hostel residents the "OJ's", *iziqhaza*, (stupid people), *amadramti*, (literate), and

amagoduka (migrants), and many other stigmatising names. Township people blamed them for political violence in the run up to the first ever democratic dispensation.

This 'invisible hand' was most active from mid-1990, a few months after the liberation movements were unbanned, when many Reef hostels became military barracks. They became a base for smuggling and manufacturing weapons and launching attacks on township residents. This thesis has shown that by this time both Meadowlands and Merafe hostels were then dominated by Zulu-speaking migrants who generally came from the rural areas of Natal. Most of these migrants were unskilled, and a majority of them did not find employment. This raises a number of questions such as, who was feeding these people? Who was clothing them? How many of them were graduates from Mkhuze camp, an Inkatha paramilitary training camp in Natal?

Various newspaper's exposes have revealed that the former Vlakplaas commander Eugene de Kock who was arrested in May 1994, following the release of the Goldstone report, was involved in a sophisticated gun running network. Weapons of war were available to the inmates of both the Meadowlands and Merafe hostels in the 1990 - 1993 period.

There are grounds to suggest that the violence that engulfed the Reef from August 1990 was "imported from Natal". More than 60% of young respondents in the interviews in this study hailed from KwaZulu/Natal areas that were engulfed by violence

from the early 1980's. More than 50% of them had moved from one hostel to the other between the period of August 1990 to December 1993. More than 50% of them arrived in either Meadowlands or Merafe hostels when the violence between the two hostels and their adjacent communities was at its peak. Several key informants maintained that there was nothing spontaneous about the conflict, that, on the contrary, it was carefully planned and orchestrated and had nothing to do with ethnicity. The randomness of some of the attacks which emanated from both the Merafe and Meadowlands hostels supports the idea that hostels were used as launch pads for attacks on neighbouring townships.

This researcher believes that the violence between the two hostels and its neighbouring townships was not simply about ethnicity and can be blamed on the covert actions by the agents of the state as a part of a secret destabilisation plan in the run up to the elections.

Ethnic groupings have long been a contentious issue throughout the African continent and elsewhere in the world. But ethnicity has not posed a serious threat in South Africa. For decades the apartheid government tried to promote ethnic cleavage without success. From as early as the 1950's the South African government fostered the housing schemes to be built on ethnic group lines. The government was fully aware that when racial groups were arbitrarily and compulsorily separated, latent group hostilities would be exacerbated.

When black townships like Soweto were built, ethnic grouping was enforced, the township was divided into three basic groups, the Ngunis, the Basothos and "other". This ethnic division failed to produce the ethnic consciousness desired by the South African government for effective township rule. Different ethnic groups transcended ethnic differences by inter-marrying and by living harmoniously next to each other.

However Reef hostels have now come to be associated with political violence on the part of Zulu-speaking, Inkatha supporting migrants. Before 1990 many township residents spoke with compassion about the conditions in which their fellow South African were living in Reef hostels. But since the advent of violent conflict between hostel inmates and the township communities, feelings of hate and resentment have developed. Many township residents especially those bordering the hostels, are now demanding that hostels be demolished. Residents who live in houses surrounding the hostels believe that if the residents of Duduza, Tsakane and Katlehong could physically destroy the hostels in those areas, there was nothing preventing them doing likewise.

Given that not all hostels in South Africa are involved in violent confrontation with their neighbouring communities, it is unlikely that all hostels will be demolished. But both Meadowlands and Merafe hostels were claimed by the IFP as its strongholds. The IFP leadership joined the chorus of people opposed to the conversion of these two migrant worker hostels

into family units. IFP leader in the Transvaal, Humphrey Ndlovu demanded the right to speak on behalf of the hostel inmates, thus inhibiting free expression on the part of hostel residents.

Overall a sizable number of older migrants, a small number of unemployed young hostel residents, an overwhelming number of hostel leaders such as Indunas and hostel leaders were opposed to the idea of upgrading of hostels or even converting them to family units. Their fear stems from the fact that any upgrading of the hostels or even converting them to family units would put hostels out of the financial reach of most inmates: the old, the unemployed and even those inmates who do not earn more than a R1000 a month.

It must be remembered that like their township counterparts, residents of both hostels have also developed a culture of non-payment of rent since the beginning of the conflict in those hostels. Furthermore, increase in rental would pose grave problems because of the high level of unemployment in both hostels.

Inmates opposed to upgrading and converting hostels into family units were also opposed to bringing their wives and children to the hostels in the urban areas for fear of corrupting them with fast urban life styles. But as reported above most rural women interviewed are opposed to the idea of remaining married spinsters. Many have already indicated

their discontent at remaining in the rural areas by voting with their feet. Some informants claimed that they were going to migrate to the cities in spite of the difficulties they might face there. Many rural women, some in polygamous marriages, do not want to stay in the rural areas forever, while most of their husbands are "... swallowed by the man-made mountains of the urban cities without even thinking of us and the children back home" (Respondent no. 2).

What is clear is that hostel residents are caught up in a web of tensions connected to geographical and social divisions, political antagonisms, ethnic, age and gender differences, inequalities in access to income, education, power and resources. This study has pointed to some of these tensions and attempted to provide a "view from below" of a complex issue.

It is clear from this research that hostels on the Reef were not only 'fortresses of fear' but precarious footholds in the urban environment for some migrants; they were not only launchpads for violent attacks on township residents but sites of refuge and survival. Hostel residents are clearly a vulnerable social category; their multiple identities as Zulus, migrants, Inkatha -supporters, men and hostel residents are all components of any explanation of their involvement in political violence. As Ramphele points out, "hostel dwellers, both as 'migrant workers' and as Africans, have been excluded from effective participation in the political and economic

institutions of South Africa.." (Ramphele, 1993:3) The involvement of hostel residents in the political violence on the Reef between 1990 and 1993 was ultimately a reflection of this exclusion; of their powerlessness and vulnerability. This powerlessness must be addressed as part of creating a more just and peaceful social order in post-apartheid South Africa. For this to succeed it must be anchored in a the understandings and experiences of hostel residents themselves.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE HOSTEL DWELLERS

PERSONAL HISTORY

1. HOW OLD ARE YOU?

1	2	3	4	5	6
10-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+

2. WHAT IS YOUR PLACE OF BIRTH?

--

3. WHAT LANGUAGE DO YOU SPEAK?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
ZULU	XHOSA	PEDI	NDEBELE	S.SOTHO	TSWANA	VENDA	OTHER

4. WHAT ETHNIC GROUP/TRIBE DO YOU BELONG TO?

--

5. MARITAL STATUS:

1	2	3	4	5
MARRIED	SINGLE	DIVORCED	WIDOWER/ER	OTHER

6. HOW MANY CHILDREN TO YOU HAVE?

--

EDUCATION

7. WHAT IS THE LAST STANDARD DID YOU PASS AT SCHOOL?

--

WORK HISTORY

8. WHEN DID YOU COME TO JOHANNESBURG?

9. WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO COME TO JOHANNESBURG AND NOT CAPE TOWN
FOR INSTANCE?

10. ARE YOU EMPLOYED AT THE PRESENT MOMENT?

11. HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED FOR YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYER?

12. WHAT WORK DO YOU DO?

13. HOW MUCH DO YOU EARN PER MONTH?

0-500 / 500-600 / 600-700 / 701-800 / 801-900 / 900-1000 /
1000 +

14. DO YOU BELONG TO A TRADE UNION? (i) YES
(ii) NO

15. IF YES, WHICH UNION?

16. WHEN LAST DID YOU RETURN HOME?

3
HOW OFTEN DO YOU RETURN HOM?

EL LIFE

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THIS HOSTEL?

HOW DID YOU COME TO LIVE IN THIS HOSTEL?

DID YOU LIVE IN ANOTHER HOSTEL BEFORE THIS ONE?

(a) 1. YES

2. NO

(b) IF YES, WHICH HOSTEL?

1. DO YOU PAY RENT TO STAY IN THIS HOSTEL?

1. YES

2. NO

IF YES, HOW MUCH?

WHO PAYS THIS MONEY?

22. HOW DO YOU FIND LIVING IN THIS HOSTEL?

23. HOW MANY ETHNIC GROUPS LIVE IN YOUR ROOM?

24. WHICH ETHNIC GROUPS?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
S.SOTHO	ZULU	TSWANA	PEDI	XHOSA	SHANGAAN	VENDA	OTHER

25. ARE ROOMS ETHNICALLY DIVIDED?

1. YES

2. NO

26. IF YES, (i) HOW?

(ii) BY WHOM.

27. IS THERE A LEADER OR INDUNA IN THIS HOSTEL?

28. IF YES, HOW IS HE ELECTED?

29. WHAT ARE HIS DUTIES?

30. ARE THERE MANY PEOPLE FROM YOUR HOME WHO LIVE WITH YOU IN THE HOSTEL?

31. WHO BUYS THEIR FOOD?

32. WHO COOKS YOUR FOOD?

53. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR CHILDREN JOINING YOU IN THIS HOSTEL?

54. WHAT IS YOUR VIEW OF TOWNSHIP PEOPLE? DO YOU SPEND TIME WITH THEM? ARE YOU FRIENDS WITH ANY OF THEM? (1). YES

IF YES, WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU SHARE? (2). NO

HOSTEL ACTIVITIES

55. DO YOU BELONG TO ANY SOCIETIES IN THE HOSTEL, e.g. BURIAL SOCIETY, STOKFEL, ETC.?

56. WHO BELONG TO THOSE ORGANISATIONS - ONLY PEOPLE FROM YOUR HOME OR ANYONE WHO LIVE IN THE HOSTEL?

57. HOW DO THESE SOCIETIES OPERATE?

58. ARE THERE ANY OTHER BUSINESS OPERATING IN THIS HOSTEL?

59. WHO IS IN CHARGE OF ORGANISING THESE BUSINESS?

40. ARE THERE SHEBEENS AND PROSTITUTION IN THE HOSTEL?

41. WHEN DO WOMEN COME TO THE HOSTEL?

42. WHO BRING THEM?

43. ARE THERE ANY SOCCER ACTIVITIES IN THIS HOSTEL?

1. YES

2. NO

44. IF YES, DO YOU EVER PLAY AGAINST TOWNSHIP SOCCER CLUBS?

45. WHAT OTHER LEISURE ACTIVITIES ARE FOUND IN THIS HOSTEL?

46. WHAT ALCOHOL DO YOU DRINK?

47. HOW MUCH? HOW OFTEN? WHERE DO YOU GET IT FROM?

48. WHAT DO YOU SMOKE?

ORGANISATIONS

48. DO YOU BELONG TO ANY POLITICAL ORGANISATION?

1. YES

2. NO

49. IF YES, WHICH ONE AMONG THESE?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
AZAPO	INKHATA	PAC	FIDA	ANC	NP	DP	OTHERS

50. WHEN DID YOU BECOME A MEMBER?

51. WHY DID YOU JOIN?

52. WHAT ARE THE AIMS AND IDEALS OF THE ORGANISATION?

53. DOES THE ORGANISATION YOU BELONG TO HOLD MEETINGS IN THE HOSTEL?

54. HOW OFTEN?

56. ARE PEOPLE FROM THE TOWNSHIP ALSO ALLOWED TO ATTEND?

57. DOES YOUR ORGANISATION HOLD MEETINGS IN THE TOWNSHIPS?

58. HOW OFTEN?

VIOLENCE

59. WHY DO YOU THINK THERE IS SO MUCH CONFLICT IN NATAL?

60. WHY DO YOU THINK THERE IS SO CONFLICT IN THE TRANSVAAL?

61. DO YOU THINK THAT THE REASONS FOR THE CONFLICT ARE THE SAME IN THE TRANSVAAL AS IN NATAL?

62. WOULD YOU CALL THIS VIOLENCE A WAR?

1. YES

2. NO

63. (a) IF YES, WHY?

.....

(b) IF NO, WHY NOT?

.....

64. HOW DID THE VIOLENCE START IN YOUR HOSTEL?

65. WHO DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE ENEMY?

66. HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY THE ENEMY, i.e. BY THE LANGUAGE HE SPEAKS,
BY THE CLOTHES HE WEARS, ETC.?

67. WHERE THE ATTACKS MADE BY THE HOSTEL DWELLERS ORGANISED IN
ADVANCE?

68. DO PEOPLE INFORM YOU WHEN AND HOW THE ATTACK IS GOING TO TAKE
PLACE?

69. WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

70. WHAT TYPES OF WEAPONS DO YOU USE IN THE ATTACK?

71. WHERE DO YOU GET THESE WEAPONS FROM?

72. WHY DOES MOST OF THE FIGHTING HAPPEN AT NIGHT?

73. DO YOU WANT THIS FIGHTING TO COME TO AN END?

74. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SOLUTION SHOULD BE?

THE FUTURE

75. HOW DOES THE VIOLENCE AFFECT YOUR HOSTEL, i.e. WHAT CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE HOSTEL SINCE THE VIOLENCE BROKE OUT?

76. ARE THERE DIFFERENT PEOPLE LIVING THERE NOW?

77. WHAT STEPS CAN BE TAKEN TO MAINTAIN PEACE IN THE HOSTEL AND IN THE NEIGHBOURING COMMUNITIES?

78. DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE LIVING IN THE HOSTEL?

1. YES

2. NO

79. IF YES, WHY?

80. IF NO, WHY?

81. SHOULD THE HOSTELS BE CONVERTED INTO FAMILY UNITS?

1. YES

2. NO

82. IF NO, WHY? _____

83.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

84.1 Some hostel people feel they are surrounded by enemies. Do you feel this? Yes/No.

85.2 Give reasons for your answer.

86.3 One hostel person said "we feel we are surrounded by enemies. Our children can no longer go to school in the townships. We cannot buy in the shops. The houses of IFP supporters are burnt our girlfriends are necklaced. What are we to do". Do you agree with this view? Yes/No.

Give reason.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS

PERSONAL HISTORY

1. Sex 1. Male
 2. Female

2. MARITAL STATUS

1	2	3	4	5	6
Married	Single	Widow	Widower	Divorces	Other

3. HOW OLD ARE YOU?

1	2	3	4	5	6
15-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 +

4. WHAT ETHNIC GROUP DO YOU BELONG TO?

TENACY

5. DO YOU RENT OR HAVE YOU BOUGHT THIS HOUSE?

1. RENT
2. BOUGHT

EDUCATION

6. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF EDUCATION YOU HAVE PASSED AT SCHOOL?

7. HOW MANY CHILDREN DO YOU HAVE?

8. WHAT ARE THEIR AGES?

WORK HISTORY:

9. ARE YOU EMPLOYED?

1. YES

2. NO

10. IF YES HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED FOR YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYER?

11. WHAT IS YOUR MONTHLY SALARY?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

50-100	101-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501-600	601+
--------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	------

12. WHAT WORK DO YOU DO?

13. DO YOU BELONG TO A TRADE UNION OR ANY WORK ORGANISATION?

14. IF YES, WHICH ONE?

15. WHEN, AND WHY DID YOU JOIN?

16. IF NO, WHY DID YOU NOT JOIN?

COMMUNITY LIFE

17. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED NEXT TO THIS HOSTEL?

18. HOW DO YOU FIND LIVING NEXT TO THE HOSTEL?

19. DO YOU KNOW ANY OF THE HOSTEL PEOPLE BY NAME?

1. YES

2. NO

20. IF YES, HOW DID YOU GET TO KNOW THEM?

21. DO YOU SPEND TIME WITH HOSTEL PEOPLE?

1. YES

2. NO

22. IF YES WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU SHARE? e.g. DRINKING, FOOTBALL.

23. WHAT IS YOUR VIEW OF HOSTEL PEOPLE?

24. WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD HAPPEN TO THE HOSTELS e.g INTERNAL FENCES? REGULAR GUARDS? REGULAR WEAPON SEARCHES? CHANGED INTO FAMILY UNITS?

25. DID ANY RELATIONSHIP EXISTED BETWEEN YOUR COMMUNITY AND THE HOSTEL INMATES BEFORE THE CURRENT VIOLENCE?

26. WHY DO YOU THINK THE RELATIONSHIP DETERIOATED?

27. IS THE COMMUNITY DOING ANYTHING TO REVIVE THE RELATIONSHIP?

1. YES

2. NO

28. IF YES, WHAT IS IT DOING?



Illustration: JOHN TSATSI

I LEANED against the door leading to another coach of a train racing from Dube Station to Phelani.

I tentatively pulled out a book from my bag to try and reassure the nervous eyes that were following my movement. They were scared, thinking that I could be one of the killers terrorising commuters on the Reef. I was more scared than they were. If there was an attack, I could be a victim. I could also be attacked by the nervous passengers simply because I was with me and I was not a regular coach.

Somebody had dropped a bottle or something for that matter in that coach, and I had jumped out of the window. The air was thick with fear.

In the train - 9333, I believe it was Phelani, I jumped out because I was scared. The coach now appeared menacing.

It is a ride in a train on the Reef.

I started the day, Wednesday morning - the same day on which people were killed in train at the Reef - determined to ride and to get to feel the hell come to end, sometimes twice.

Not only because of my academic interest in the subject but also because people who are dying in the train are my flesh and blood.

There were police doing to protect people who were taking their lives in the train. I had seen so much death?

A brief halt

In the morning, just when the morning was brightening, I got off at a Merafe railway station.

I went outside the station for a brief halt to load the taxi and sped away.

People were climbing the railway platform. Two people were leaning against the foot of the train in the direction of the train.

Blood on the tracks



BABYLON XEKETWANE, a masters student in sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand, rode in trains from Soweto at peak hours last week and found himself suspected of being a train killer. This is the first article in a two-part series.

although I had my bag of books which could have been guns, pangas or knives. As I crossed the platform used by trains from town, I saw two more policemen halfway down the stairs.

I pretended I had been going towards that platform but turned away because I had seen them. I wanted to see how they

whose gun lay on the ground did not even attempt to pick it up.

I walked down to the platform. There was a fair number of people down there, but not the numbers I knew when I last used a train in 1988.

It was quiet and those who spoke to friends spoke softly as if they were at a funeral.

The usual shouts, the debates about soccer and women, the gossip - the fun of an early morning ride to work - was gone.

I walked towards the corrugated iron police station at the end of the platform. I could see one policeman in it.

I did not reach it because I was attracted by a man who was standing with two children, a girl of eight and a boy two or three years older.

The children wore school uniforms; the man was neatly dressed in clean shirt, pressed trousers, but no jacket.

Why was he risking the children's lives when he could be seen standing

comparatively safer first class in the train.

He drops off the children at a school in Parktown before going to work.

He said he would rather get killed with his children than leave them at schools in Soweto.

Furtive glances

We climbed into the train. Everybody found a seat, which was also unusual. I'm told the old days of fuduwa (stir the pot, an expression used when women get into the train backwards and push with their buttocks to make space in crowded coaches) are gone.

I walked to the end of the coach and leaned against the door leading to the next coach. All the eyes in the coach turned towards me. Some stared. Others cast furtive glances. I thought if they realise that my bag had books, they would relax.

No.

'I would rather be killed with my children than leave them'

jokes and the hangovers are all gone.

Some people came aboard at Inhlanzane and this is where it became clear that passengers accept only regulars in the coaches. There were nods and quiet hellos as the new people came in. I was still the stranger.

Nobody searched

At Ikwezi Station I got off to look around the station: it was no different from Merafe. The four policemen I saw wore camouflage uniforms and were near the ticket office outside the station. None were on the platform and again nobody searched my bag.

I took a train and got off at Dube Station. Again I saw four cops.

Here I spoke to two girls who were going to work. They gave me the feeling that they had resigned themselves to their fate.

They said they could not afford taxi fares.

They feared death but they had the feeling that it happened only to other people.

Then I got on the 9333 until the menacing stares drove me out at Phelani Station.

'Hell is a train ride on the Reef'

Tomorrow

Gun shots at Mzimhlophe - but the police at the station are



Background to the Boipatong massacre

A Witte academic who has been studying the violence in the townships, places the Boipatong massacre in context. **BABYLON XEKETWANE**, a sociology masters student, questions the role of the police after 39 people were ruthlessly murdered.

THE image of the South African Police has once more been thrown into a crisis of credibility. Their behaviour in Boipatong before and after the massacre leaves much to be desired.

How could one explain the fact that it took them several days to assign a team of 200 detectives to negotiate the detention of six people after an impi of more than 300 men raided Boipatong and killed 39 men, women and children?

While we applaud that the police did act, we are still surprised that mass arrests of the murderers did not take place on the day of the massacre.

But it should not be surprising when we remember that the Boipatong massacre follows the pattern of other slaughters of blacks around the country where clear police support of the attackers was demonstrated.

The Boipatong massacre occurred a few weeks after Mr Justice Wilson and Mr Justice Didcott had pronounced about the role of the police in the current violence.

In his judgment at the end of the Trust Feed massacre case, Justice Wilson called for an independent inquiry into the involvement of police officers in "counter-revolutionary strategies as well as police cover-ups."

Eleven people were killed after an order given by Captain Brian Mitchell who was later given 11 death sentences.

Mr Justice Wilson's call was fur-

ther strengthened by Justice Didcott's assertion that certain crimes and planned murders had been perpetrated by the security forces in defiance of the law.

The allegations against the police are not new.

Apart from the Trust Feed case, there has been other strong confirmation of police complicity with Inkatha.

The "Inkathagate Scandal" is a case in point.

Inkathagate lent credence to accusations that the security forces have aided armed attacks by Inkatha members on innocent people whose views were opposed to those of Inkatha.

In 1991 2 000 people died in what State President FW de Klerk calls black-on-black violence, giving support to those who assert that inherent tribalism makes blacks unfit to be stewards of peace and democracy.

One other case in which security forces are alleged to have aided anti-progressive forces connected to the IFP is that of the Ermelo-based "Black-Cats" gang which was involved in violence against the residents of Wessellon.

A member who defected and gave evidence to the Goldstone Commission was assassinated by professionals whose methods and pattern resembled those used by the faceless killers who strike at will in trains, taxis, shebeens and night vigils and then evaporate without trace.

It is no exaggeration to assert that South Africa has one of the



best police forces in Africa. It has uncovered sophisticated political operations in the past. It has acted with precision and with lightning speed to apprehend the killers when the victims were either white farmers or white policemen.

However, now that the victims are overwhelmingly black the same force drags its feet instead of solving the problem.

It appears that a very special culture is prevalent within the security forces.

Jacques Pauw calls it the "Total Onslaught Ideology Culture," conceived from the days of "Total Onslaught" when everything that represented black political aspiration was said to be communist inspired.

It is this culture that is responsible for police connivance at IFP violence and their unwillingness to act against Inkatha and others who are against progressive forces.

This culture is embedded in police training manuals that have been obscured from public scrutiny for decades.

It is not surprising that the arms confiscated by the police were giving back to Inkatha on the eve of De Klerk's address to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly.

It is against this background that the release of Abel Shange, a member of the KwaZulu Police, should be viewed.

Shange was dubbed a "beast in a policeman's clothing" by the judge who sentenced him to 27 years imprisonment.

Shange served only

of his sentence before the "Vlok virus" invaded the computer community and saw him released, to the dismay of the community in and around KwaMashu.

Earlier there had been strong demands for the removal of Mr Adriaan Vlok and Mr Magnus Malan from the Cabinet.

It was argued that De Klerk was unable to rid himself of them.

Vlok still remains controversial: How does one explain the "Vlok virus"? It is ironic that this "bona fide computer error" favours what most South African academics call the Government's "surrogate force."

The slaughter of hundreds of blacks by faceless killers every month will not stop until this culture is changed.

We should not be fooled by the police propaganda of searching the hostels.

Madala Hostel in Alexandra, for example, appears to have been searched as a ploy to divert attention from the Trust Feed judgment.

If the police are really unbiased, hundred of displaced families in Alexandra would have been returned to their homes. The intruders who drove them out would not only be forced to vacate these homes but would have been arrested and charged with trespassing and robbery.

It is true the Alexandra community heaved a collective sigh of relief when the SADF invaded the township.

It is against this background that the Boipatong massacre should be viewed. Up to the time of writing this article I had still not heard the security forces blaming Inkatha for the killings. But predictably, Craig Kotze of the Ministry of Law and Order blamed the ANC's mass action for creating an atmosphere conducive to such violence.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. NAME :

2. PROFESSION :

3. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE CAUSES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON THE REEF?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

4. WHY DO YOU THINK THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON THE REEF INCREASED AFTER F.W. de KLERK'S FEBRUARY 2, 1990 SPEECH?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

5. WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ON THE NOTION THAT THIS VIOLENCE IS IMPORTED FROM NATAL?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

6. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK HOSTELS ARE TO BLAME FOR THE REEF VIOLENCE?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

7. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ARE SAID TO BE A CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR TO THE CURRENT VIOLENCE, DO YOU AGREE?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

8.

9. DO YOU THINK THE POLICE/SPECIAL FORCES ARE INVOLVED IN THE VIOLENCE?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

10. WHAT WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE POLICY AS REGARDS HOSTELS IN THE PWV AREA: e.g. SHOULD THEY BE FENCED AND INCREASE POLICING OR SHOULD THEY BE ABOLISHED, UPGRADED OR CONVERTED INTO FAMILY ACCOMODATION?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.