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Continuities and Changes: A survey of Soweto in the late 1990s, focusing on key demographic indicators and physical living conditions

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CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES: A SURVEY OF SOWETO IN THE LATE 1990S, FOCUSING ON KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS AND PHYSICAL LIVING CONDITIONS[1]

INTRODUCTION

In1995 Mr Danny Kekana, who was at that time was the Mayor of Soweto, and himself a graduate of the Wits Sociology Department, approached the Department to do a household survey of Soweto. He was struck by the paucity of hard data on Soweto and was keen that this be rectified. The household survey was eventually conducted by members of the Department in January 1997. Approximately 3 000 households were surveyed.[2] This paper outlines some of the key findings.[3]

POPULATION SIZE

In terms of policy knowing the size of an area's present population and having some idea of its expected population growth is obviously vital. Interestingly, in the case of Soweto, probably South Africa's largest historically African township, there has been no consensus as to the size of its population and the extent to which the population is expected to increase in the future. Historically, the size of Soweto's population has been an issue which has evoked a good deal of controversy and conjecture and population estimates for Soweto have varied dramatically. In 1988 the town clerk of Soweto, Mr Nico Malan said that the township's registered population was 593 682 (Mashabela, 1988:146). In the same year Mr Chris Heunis, the then minister of Constitutional Development, said that the population was 1 194 574 (ibid). A few months earlier he had said that the population in Soweto was 1 474 000 (ibid). The 1991 census concluded that there were 888 212 people in Soweto (Mears and Levin, 1993:8). The Urban Foundation in 1978 projected that by 1985 the population would be 1 170 000, in 1987 the South African Defence Force said that there were 2,5 to 3 million people in Soweto and in 1988 the South African Institute of Race Relations estimated that Soweto's population was 1 195 000 (Mandy, 1989:2-5).

This survey found that the population was lower than commonly perceived. The population estimate

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[1] This paper is based on a household survey conducted jointly with the following present and past members of the Department of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand - Belinda Bozzoli, Jacklyn Cock, Owen Crankshaw, Leah Gilbert, Deborah Posel, Elizabeth Siegert, Zwelakhe Tshandu and Elsa van Huyssteen.

[2] The methodology used for the survey is not discussed in this paper. A discussion of the methodology is available and will be included in the final write up of the survey.

[3] For the purposes of this paper only two sections of the final report are reported on. The report covers eight different areas. In addition to key demographic indicators and physical conditions, it covers migration, gender, marriage and family, health, crime, human rights and social relations.

was calculated by multiplying the average number of people per stand by the total number of stands and then adding that to the population of the hostels.[4] The population of the hostels was estimated by multiplying the average number of people per room by the total number of hostel rooms.[5] The average number of people per stand was 6,4. The total number of stands (i.e. all units excluding hostel rooms and backyard structures) was 154 478. Soweto's population therefore, at the time of the survey in 1997 January, excluding the hostels, was 988 584. There were 23 860 hostel rooms with an average of 1,7 persons per room. The hostel population was thus 40 901. The total population of Soweto was 1 029 485 (988 584 plus 40 901). Noteworthy, is that this total population figure is close to the 1996 census population estimate for Soweto. The 1996 census concluded that Soweto's population was 997 000 (Statistics South Africa, 1998).

Table 1 Population by housing domain

	Units	Average Number of Residents per unit	Population Distribution	Percentage
Council Houses	106 853	5,5	587 085	57
Private Sector Houses	19 883	4,7	92 654	9
Backyard structures	120 744	1,7	205 897	20
Informal Settlement Shacks	17 496	3,5	61769	6
Site and Service dwellings	10,246	4,3	41179	4
Hostel Rooms	23 860	1,7	40 901	4
Total	299082	3,4	1 029 485	100

[4]Note that the average number of people per stand was calculated using the weighted cases for the council house, private sector, squatter and site-and-service domains. The backyard tenant domain was excluded because it is not a representative sample of stands. It is only a representative sample of stands with independent backyard households.

[5] As listed in Table 1 six housing domains were identified in Soweto. The council house domain refers to those homes which were built by the authorities and rented out to Africans who had Section 10(1)(a) rights. Most of these homes were built in the 1950s and 1960s. The private sector homes refer to homes built by developers or by private individuals using a building contractor. These homes were generally owned and occupied by more middle class Sowetan residents. Most of these homes were built in the 1980s and 1990s. The backyard dwellings were almost all located in the stands of council houses. In terms of the relationship to the council house there were two kinds of backyard dwelling. About half of all backyard dwellings were extensions of the council house in that they were used to house family members who could not be accommodated comfortably in the main house. The occupants of these dwellings would invariably eat and cook in the council house. The other half of backyard dwelling were occupied by tenants. These tenants would have little connection to the council house. Backyard structures became a feature of Soweto in the 1980s. Site and service scheme housing refers to housing in the site and service areas established by government in Soweto from the late 1980s. Informal housing is different to site and service in that the former are "shacks" built on land that has been invaded and has no official status. Service provision in these areas is negligible as a result. Finally, the hostel domain is constituted by the hostels built for migrant workers. Most of the hostels in Soweto were built in the 1950s and 1960s.

The majority of Soweto's population lived in council houses (57%). A substantial proportion (20%) lived in one-roomed backyard structures; roughly half of these were "shacks" and half were solid brick and mortar dwellings. The large number of backyard dwellings is testimony to the enormous housing shortage which developed during the time of apartheid. From the late 1960s government policy was to virtually curtail the building of homes in African townships and residential development was supposed to take place solely in the so-called homelands (Mabin, 1992; Watson, 1989). This policy meant that for expanding families, newly-weds and people moving into the area for the first time, backyard dwellings often represented their only accommodation option.

The older adult occupants of council homes invariably had either been born in Soweto or had lived in the area for a long period of time. In the apartheid era council house residents would have been allocated homes by the apartheid authorities on the basis that the residents in question had Section 10(1)(a) rights - the right to live with their immediate family and work in Johannesburg.

Many of the residents of the informal settlements, hostels and site and service schemes are more recent arrivals from the countryside. During the apartheid era many of these residents would been denied the right to live in Soweto on the basis that they did not have Section10(1)(a) rights.

Residents living in homes in the private sector domain make up a modest 9% of Soweto's population. This suggests that the middle class in Soweto is still fairly small. This point is elaborated on when the income profile of the area is discussed (see Table 6).

AGE PROFILE

A quarter of Soweto's population is under the age of 15. This is below the average for less developed regions (33%) and much lower than least developed countries where it is estimated 43% of the population is under 15.[6] In the more developed regions 19% of the population is under 15. The global average is 30% (ibid). In Soweto the proportion of the population in the 0-4 year-old category (7%) is smaller than the proportion of the population in the in the 5-9 year-old category (8,8%) and the 10-14 year-old category (9,2%). These figures and the fact that a smaller proportion of Soweto's population is under 15 in contrast to other developing regions, suggests that in Soweto a fertility transition is occurring and that the population growth rate appears to be declining. This finding concurs with other demographic research (Chimere-Dan, 1994). Soweto also has a different demographic profile to the national profile. In the 1996 census 11,7% of the African population was between 0 and 4 and 46,8% was below 20. In Soweto 33,6% of the population was under 20.

[6] The United Nations Population Division defines less developed regions as "all regions of Africa, Asia (excluding Japan) and Latin America and the Caribbean, and the regions of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia." The least developed countries include the 48 poorest countries of which 33 are in Africa (United Nations, 1999).

Table 2 Detailed age profile of the total Sowetan population (%)

Age group	Male	Female	Total
0-4	7,2	6,8	7,0
5-9	8,8	8,8	8,8
10-14	9,0	9,5	9,2
15-19	8,5	8,7	8,6
20-24	10,6	10,2	10,4
25-29	12,9	12,0	12,5
30-34	11,5	10,4	11,0
35-39	9,4	9,0	9,2
40-44	6,2	5,7	6,0
45-49	5,0	4,5	4,7
50-54	3,2	3,0	3,1
55-59	2,4	2,7	2,5
60-64	1,6	2,9	2,3
65-69	1,4	2,4	1,9
70-74	,9	1,3	1,1
75-79	1,0	1,0	1,0
80-84	,2	,6	,4
85-89	,2	,3	,3
90 and above	,0	,1	,0
Total	100	100	100

The data show that Soweto's school going population was stable. Thus the schooling facilities which expanded dramatically in the 1980s will now have to expand only to cater for those not properly catered for at present, rather than for an expanding school population. The age profile by employment availability is also of interest. It indicates that 65,1% of the population was of employable age (16-64 years) and that 4,3% of the population was 65 or older and thus at or over retirement age. Nationally, the 1996 census found that 4.2% of the total African population was 65 or over. In contrast 10,3% of the total white population was 65 or older (Statistics South Africa, 1998:2.19).

A large proportion of Soweto's population (57,7%) was between 15 and 44 years-old. This grouping is most vulnerable in terms of HIV/AIDS and if current trends continue a large proportion of this part of population will succumb to the HIV virus and require extensive medical care. The most recent United Nations Human Development Report estimates that life expectancy in South African is expected to drop from 60 to 48 by 2010 (*Star* 13 July 1999). Liz Floyd, the director of Gauteng's Health Department's AIDs programme, confirmed the UN report, stating that the province's most recent research (July 1999) indicated that 22% of women between 15 and 30 and 20% of men between 15 and 40 in Gauteng were HIV positive.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT PROFILE

The employment status of Sowetans reflects the disastrous levels of unemployment in historically African townships. The data illustrate that if we take out the student, disabled and retired category,

we find that only 40,5%of the population aged 16 and over was employed full-time and a further 5,8% were employed part-time. A massive 41,6% of the population said that they were unemployed but still looking for work and a further 7,8% were unemployed and no longer bothering to look for employment.

Table 3 Employment status among different age groups (%)

	Age groups							Total
	6-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-65	66 +	
Employed full-time	,6	21,0	46,8	49,1	40,8	14,7	3,0	29,9
Employed part-time	,3	4,8	4,9	6,5	5,5	3,3	,6	4,5
Self-employed	,2	2,2	3,9	5,9	5,5	1,8	1,1	3,1
Unemployed (looking for work)	8,8	43,2	27,1	30,0	22,7	7,7	2,1	30,7
Unemployed (not looking for work)	2,5	6,0	5,2	7,0	11,4	7,2	2,2	5,8
Student/Scholar	87,1	22,1	1,2	,2		,3		16,9
Disabled (unable to work)	,6	,7	1,0	1,6	5,1	2,0	,8	1,3
Retired	,6	9,4	65,8	89,5	81,0			
Total	100.	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

A significant finding is that only 25,8% of the 20-29 year-old grouping were employed full-time or part-time. Just under half of this grouping said that they were unemployed. These figures reflect the catastrophic levels of unemployment afflicting younger township residents. Noteworthy, is that 22,1% of this age grouping said that they were studying. It is probable that a sizeable proportion of those in this age group who were studying were doing so because they could not find employment. The big question is whether these students found employment once they completed their tertiary studies. Clearly, if most did not then we will witness the intensification of a crisis that is already acute.

Employment status also had an important gender dimension. Unemployment amongst adult women and men who were not studying, disabled or retired indicated that female unemployment was higher than male unemployment.

Table 4 Employment status among men and women (%)

		Age groups							Total
		16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-65	66 +	
Male	Employed full-time	,5	28,5	58,1	56,1	53,1	24,0	4,3	38,4
	Employed part-time	,2	4,9	5,1	4,9	1,7	3,5	2,9	4,1
	Self-employed	,5	3,5	5,4	6,2	7,1	1,6	2,5	4,3
	Unemployed (looking for work)	6,6	37,6	27,9	27,7	19,1	9,4	2,5	26,5
	Unemployed (not looking for work)	2,0	2,8	1,9	2,1	3,6	5,7	2,8	2,5
	Student/Scholar	89,0	21,7	5	,2			,2	16,7
	Disabled (unable to work)	1,3	1,1	1,1	2,2	5,9	5,4	,8	1,7
	Retired				,1	9,5	50,4	83,9	5,8
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Female	Employed full-time	,8	13,6	35,7	42,1	29,5	9,2	2,2	22,0
	Employed part-time	,3	4,8	4,8	6,0	3,9	4,0	,8	4,5
	Self-employed		,9	2,4	5,5	4,1	2,0	,2	2,1
	Unemployed (looking for work)	10,7	48,7	46,0	32,4	25,3	2,0	,8	34,5
	Unemployed (not looking for work)	2,9	9,1	8,4	11,9	18,5	8,0	1,9	8,8
	Student/Scholar	85,3	22,6	1,8				,1	17,0
	Disabled (unable to work)		,3	,9	1,1	4,4		,8	,8
	Retired				,7	9,3	74,8	92,9	10,2
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4 shows that whereas 56,1% of males were employed full or part-time, only 36,8% of women were in a similar position. It is probable that a proportion of the women designated as unemployed, voluntarily chose not to enter the work-force.

Residents with more formal educational appeared to have a greater chance of obtaining employment - 55,4% of residents with tertiary education were employed in contrast to 36,8% of residents who had either completed or had some high schooling.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE POPULATION

Table 5 shows the devastating impact of apartheid education policies on what is probably the most

educated African township population in South African - just over one in ten Sowetan adults had, had no formal education and about a quarter had a maximum of standard four. Women were more likely to have had no formal schooling, but interestingly a similar proportion of males and females had post-matric education. This perhaps indicates that the older female residents were less likely to be enrolled in schools. The younger section of the adult population had equal opportunities and overall had had more formal schooling.

Table 5 Level of education of respondents according to gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
None	8,4	14,8	10,5
Std 1-4	16,2	16,4	16,2
Std 5-10	66,5	60,5	64,6
Post matric	8,5	8,4	8,5
Total	100	100	100

The 1996 census found that nationally 24,3% of the African population above the age of 20 had had no education and another 27,8% had some primary schooling or had only completed primary school (Statistics South Africa, 1998). What is encouraging is that at the beginning of 1997 8,5% of Soweto's population had a post-matric qualification. Although the private sector domain accounted for only 9% of the population, 29,6% of residents with a post-matric qualification came from this domain.

INCOME PROFILE

The income profile illustrates two key features of Soweto. Firstly, it shows that a large part of Soweto's population was poor and, secondly, it reveals that Soweto in terms of income was characterised by significant differentiation. The levels of poverty were striking - just over one in three Sowetan households had a total household income of less than R1 000 a month, and just under six in ten had a household income of less than R1 500 a month. In September 1997 it was estimated that a family of five living in Johannesburg required R1 293 a month for basic subsistence (SAIRR, 1998:287). Soweto's middle class at the time of the survey was still small - in only 15,4% of Sowetan households was the total monthly household income above R3 000.

Table 6 Total monthly household income categories (%)

	Council Houses	Private sector	Backyard shacks	Informal Settlement	Hostels	Site & Service	Total %
Total household income (Rands)							
Less than 500	21,0	1,8	13,9	24,1	15,9	17,9	16,4
500 – 999	18,9	6,7	20,8	31,1	28,8	28,3	20,4
1 000 – 1 499	15,6	8,0	29,9	24,9	28,4	20,4	22,3
1 500 – 1 999	10,1	10,1	14,9	10,4	13,8	13,3	12,4
2 000 – 2 499	8,3	6,4	10,1	3,2	4,7	7,5	8,3
2 500 – 2 999	6,1	6,2	3,8	1,4	4,3	5,0	4,8
3 000 – 3 999	10,5	15,5	3,5	3,4	1,6	5,4	6,9
4 000 – 4 999	4,2	15,8	1,7	1,1	,3	,7	3,6
5 000 +	5,1	29,5	1,4	,6	2,1	1,4	4,9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

There were differences between the different housing domains as regards income. Not surprisingly, the poorest section of Soweto's population were the residents of the informal settlements and hostels where eight in ten households had a total household income below R1 500 a month and only 4,5% had a monthly income of R3 000 or more per month. The situation of site and service households was also parlous - 68,1% earned below R1 500 a month and only 7,5% earned above R3 000 a month. Even the long established Soweto residents in council homes had low monthly incomes - over half had a monthly income below R1 500 a month and only one in five had a monthly household income above R3 000.

The private housing sector, in the main, is clearly occupied by a very different class grouping relative to the rest of Soweto's population. Only one in six households in this sector said that they had a monthly income below R1 500, six in ten said that they had a monthly income of R3 000 or more and three in ten had a monthly income greater then R5 000 a month. Although private sector dwellings made up only 7,7% of all Sowetan households, they accounted for 30,6% of households earning R3 000 or more a month and for 46,1% of all households with a monthly income of more than R5 000. Only one in twenty Sowetan households had an income greater than R5 000 a month. The council house and private sector combined accounted for 84,2% of these households.

The median and mean household income illustrate the dramatic differences between private sector households and others. Whereas the average household income in the private sector was about R3 750 in the council housing domain it was approximately R1 780 and in the site and service sector it was about R1 400. Table 2.8 also shows that on average those homes with backyard structures had a lower household income than those households without backyard structures. This suggests that in

many cases backyard structures were used to supplement the income of poorer households.

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

The occupational distribution shows that Soweto, unsurprisingly, was mainly a working class community. Relative to other African townships there was, however, a relatively high proportion of middle and lower middle class occupations. Noteworthy is that only 0,8% of Soweto's work-force were in managerial positions. A sizeable proportion, about one in eleven however, defined themselves as professionals. On the other side of the continuum nearly one in four employed residents fell into the category of unskilled service or manual workers. The table indicates that most Sowetans worked in the service sector. Using the 1980 census data Seeking (1988) reached a similar conclusion. He found that 58% of Soweto's population was in the service sector in contrast to 38% on the East Rand and 37% on the Vaal

Table 7 Occupational structure (%)

Manager	0,8
Supervisor	1,4
Professional	8,9
Business owner	1,7
Routine white collar	9,8
Semi-skilled service	11,7
Semi-skilled artisan	8,5
Semi-skilled Manual labour	23,0
Semi professional	2,1
Informal	3,6
Unskilled service	8,7
Unskilled Manual labour	16,4
Farmer	0,1
Security	3,2
Sport	0,1
Total	100

WHERE DO SOWETANS WORK?

An unexpected finding is that about one in five working residents worked within Soweto itself. This indicates that Soweto generates a significant amount of employment and is not merely a satellite area for Johannesburg. Nearly one in three formally employed Sowetans worked in Johannesburg's central

business district and were probably mainly employed in the service and retail sector. Only 8% worked in the northern suburbs. This is surprising as the major growth centre in Johannesburg over the last ten years has been the northern suburbs.

Table 8 Where do Sowetans work (%)

Greater Soweto	21,4
JHB Inner city	29,2
West Rand	7,2
JHB Northern suburbs	8,0
JHB Southern suburbs	7,4
Randburg/Sandton	6,4
JHB Western suburbs	10,1
Outside Gauteng	1,2
East Rand	5,4
South Rand	3,2
JHB Eastern suburbs	3,2
Total	100

HOW DO RESIDENTS GET TO WORK?

By far the most commonly used form of transport for those going to and from work was the taxi Nearly half of all employed residents used the taxi as their sole form of transport to work . About one in six workers used trains and one in ten used buses. Only 6,4% of workers used a combination of transport modes. These figures indicate that for most Sowetans taxis are considered much more convenient than trains and buses. Taxis, although more expensive, are much faster than trains and buses. The limited use of private cars suggests that most residents could not afford motor cars. More Sowetans walked to work than used a private vehicle.

Table 9 How do Sowetans get to work (%)

Does not travel	5,3
Bus.	9,3
Train	16,6
Taxi	46,3
Bus & Train	1,0
Bus & Taxi	1,6
Taxi & Train	3,3
Train, Bus & Taxi	0,5
Private Car	7,7
Lift club	0,4
Motorcycle	0,0
Bicycle	0,0
Walk	7,9
Total	100

Number of Rooms Per House (Excluding Bathroom and Kitchen)

At the time of the survey just under half of all Sowetan housing consisted of only one room and only 14,7% had four rooms or more. The size of the dwelling was determined to a large extent by the housing strata individuals found themselves in.

Table 10 Number of rooms by domain type (excluding bathroom and kitchen) (%)

	Council Houses	Private sector	Backyard Structures	Informal Settlement	Site & Service	Total
1 room	0,8	0,6	94,1	65,0	51,1	47,8
2 rooms	13,3	1,3	5,3	24,6	27,5	10,2
3 rooms	64,8	14,0	0,5	7,5	13,8	27,3
4 rooms	12,7	28,1	0,0	2,9	4,8	7,3
5 or more	8,4	56,1	0,0	0,0	2,9	7,4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 10 shows almost all backyard structure residents lived in one room as did close to two thirds of informal settlement residents. In contrast 85,9% of council homes and 98,1% of private sector homes consisted of three rooms or more. These figures reveal dramatic differences in living conditions. In almost all cases the one-roomed backyard structure doubled up as a bathroom and kitchen. An interesting statistic is that just over one in five council homes had four rooms or more. This shows that the building on of additional rooms by council house occupants has not been extensive.

An interesting finding was the relationship between the gender of the main breadwinner and the number of rooms. Homes where the main breadwinner was female were far less likely to have one room. This was possibly due to the fact that female-headed household were far more likely to have children. Also, most of the backyard structures were one room and most of these were headed by men.

Kitchens and Bathrooms

In many cases living rooms doubled up as kitchens and bathrooms. Overall, only half of all dwellings in Soweto had a separate kitchen. Almost all backyard structure households (those backyard households that did not share the main house) had to cook in the same room in which they ate and slept. Just under three-quarters of informal settlement and half of site and service residents were in

a similar position. Only 4,2% of council house residents said that their dwelling did not have a separate kitchen. An even smaller proportion of households, just under one in five, had a separate bathroom. In the informal settlements and backyards only one in a hundred households had a separate bathroom and in the site and service schemes only one in ten did. Almost all the houses in the private sector and just under three-quarters of council homes did.

Table 11 Houses with separate bathrooms (%)

	Council Houses	Private sector	Backyard Structures	Informal Settlement	Site & Service	Total
Has no separate bathroom	73,3	2,5	98,9	99,4	90,5	81,8
Has a separate bathroom	26,7	97,5	1,1	,6	9,5	18,2
Total	100	100	100	100	100,	100

DENSITY LEVELS

Surprisingly, density levels per room were not dramatic. Overall, the average number of people per room was 2,3. It was highest in the informal settlements (3 persons per room), site and service schemes (2,9 persons per room) and the backyard structure domain (2,6 persons per room). Not surprisingly the private sector had the lowest density level with only one person per room.

Table 12 Average number of people per room according to domain type

Council houses	Mean	1,9
	Median	1,7
Private sector	Mean	1,0
	Median	1,0
Backyard shacks	Mean	2,6
	Median	2,0
Informal settlements	Mean	3,0
	Median	2,3
Hostels	Mean	2,5
	Median	2,0
Site and service	Mean	2,9
	Median	2,5
Total	Mean	2,3
	Median	2,0

A key factor would be the size of the room. Room sizes were not measured but it is probably safe to conclude surmise that in many instances rooms were small and that they often had a range of functions - sleeping, cooking, eating, washing studying and relaxing would all be done in one room. Multi-functionality was certainly the case in those backyard structures whose occupants had no connection to the main house and in informal settlement and site and service schemes.

TOILETS, TAPS AND ELECTRICITY

All households had access to a toilet, but in very few homes was the toilet inside the dwelling. In the

case of backyard, site and service and informal settlements less than two in a hundred homes had toilets inside the house.

For just under two-thirds of Soweto households, water was available only from an outside tap. This was the case for almost all residents living in backyard structures and six in ten residents in site and service schemes. In the case of informal settlement residents, 87% were dependent on communal taps and only two in a hundred said that they had a tap inside their residence

Table 13 Water supply per domain (%)

	Domain type (disaggregated for Council houses)								
	Council Houses Type A	Council House Type B	Council House Type C	Private sector	Backyard structure	Informal Settlement	Hostels	Site & Service	Total
Outside tap in backyard	50,9	53,6	77,0	1,9	99,2	11,1		60,1	65,7
Tap inside formal house	49,1	45,8	22,8	97,8		1,9	100	6,0	27,8
Communal tap		,6	,3	,3	,8	87,0		34,0	6,5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Access to electricity for many families was also limited. Almost all council and private sector homes in Soweto now have a conventional electricity supply in their homes. In the case of backyard structures, 86,9% were dependent on an electrical extension cord extending from the main house. This is obviously not safe or acceptable. Almost all informal settlement residents had no access to electricity. These areas are constantly prone to fire related accidents as a result of being dependent on dangerous energy sources. This was graphically revealed in August 1999 in Alexandra township north of Johannesburg when about 50 shacks burnt down. It is suspected that the cause of the blaze was an "illegal electricity connection" (*Star* 16 Aug. 1999). In the same week four members of a family were burnt to death in Thembisa when their shack caught fire after a candle fell over (ibid).

Table 14 Electricity supply of different domains (%)

	Domain type (disaggregated for Council houses)								
	Council Houses Type A	Council House Type B	Council House Type C	Private sector	Backyard structure	Informal Settlement	Hostels	Site & Service	Total
No electricity supply	1,7	1,4	1,9	,3	8,0	97,6	7,7	7,4	10,4
Mains supply with a meter	98,3	97,7	97,8	99,7	4,5	,3		1,1	43,4
Electrical extension cord from formal house		,2	,3	,0	86,9	1,3		1,1	35,4
Pre-paid card system		,8			,3			89,7	3,2
Other					,3	,9		,8	,2
Mains communal supply (hostels)				92,3		7,3			
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed an abundance of interesting data. Some of the findings have confirmed prevalent assumptions while others have subverted dominant perceptions. The finding that the population of Soweto was just over a million confirms census data and the more conservative estimates through the years. It is an important finding as it suggests that Soweto is not a hopelessly overcrowded locality that is absorbing new migrants daily. The breakdown of where Soweto's population is housed illustrates the increasing importance of informal housing in Soweto since the early 1980s. The age profile is significant as it suggests that a fertility transition is occurring in Soweto and that the population growth rate is declining.

The survey found that Soweto is a fairly differentiated locality. This differentiation is reflected most starkly in significant variations in the quality of accommodation, income levels, employment and educational qualifications. Whilst most of Soweto's long-term residents were living in adequate accommodation many residents, especially the more recent arrivals, were living in small, poorly constructed structures that either did not have access or had inadequate access to electricity and to a lesser extent water. The lack of basic facilities was particularly acute in informal settlements but many backyard structures, homes in site and service schemes and hostels also had inadequate facilities and limited space. There is no doubt that the limited facilities in many Sowetan homes added considerably to the difficulties of everyday life for the residents concerned.

Probably the biggest issue facing the post-apartheid government is job creation. The survey confirmed the desperate situation around employment, especially for Sowetans under 30. The massive levels of unemployment impacted on household income. It is evident that many Sowetan households at the time of the survey were struggling to make ends meet. A well-educated, middle class was evident, but this grouping was fairly small.

An encouraging finding was that although the CBD was still the primary area of employment, many Sowetans work in Soweto itself. This indicates that the area is generating its own economy and is no longer providing labour just for the historically white group areas.

In sum, the results indicate that the population of Soweto is still struggling to emerge from the deprivations and hardships wrought by apartheid. Those residents who had Section 10A rights and were able to obtain a council home and access to the urban labour market are generally in a far better position. They have fairly adequate accommodation and the income levels of this housing domain and the private sector are higher than those of other housing domains more especially the informal settlement domain, the site and service and the hostel domain. However, although the latter are in a particularly parlous situation the results show that even many of the well-established council house residents were struggling financially and employment wise.

Apartheid history has left a lasting legacy on Soweto and other African townships. The data show that the challenges faced by the post-apartheid government to form a well-resourced and more equal, just and thriving city is formidable and could take decades or even generations to achieve.

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