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BOUNDARIES AND CROSSING POINTS:
GEOGRAPHY, CLASS AND IDENTITY IN
THE FISH HOEK VALLEY

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Boundaries and Crossing Points: Children, Geography and Identity in the Fish Hoek Valley

Abstract

This paper is about children and young people who attend a formerly 'white' state school¹ with an increasingly diverse student population, and live in a highly segregated environment. I take a closer look at the way these schoolchildren work within, around and against divisions of class and 'race'² in a specific place and time in South African history, to understand which factors promote and obstruct the possibility of diversity and integration in their everyday lives. How are they negotiating the landscape, discourse and practice around them? And how do they create and verbalise ways of being themselves? Data for the study was collected by a variety of methods, to enable children to express themselves by engaging them in the research project through visual, group and individual exercises, discussions and interviews. Initially, maps of the area drawn by and commented on by the children show that apartheid history and an environment shaped by this history has a deep impact on these children's daily lives, and general stereotypes about places and people prevail. However, as the research project progressed, a more nuanced picture emerged of a generation of young South Africans who express an ideal of non-racism and negotiate a racially defined physical and social environment in their own particular ways.

¹ Limited desegregation of white state schools started in 1990, following educational reforms announcing the possibility that white state schools could legally admit black pupils. Formal desegregation came about only in 1993 (Vally & Dambala 1999:10-11).

² The hierarchical ranking of the world's population according to 'race' was developed by western Europeans following their global expansion beginning in the 1400s (Gregory & Sanjek 1994: 1). This system has become a standardised and naturalised way of differentiating between population groups, and is often used to discriminate negatively against groups and individuals on the basis of their physical appearance (i.e. racism). Research since the 1980's has proven that there is no substantial biological basis to distinguish between what is perceived as different 'races'. However, people continue to attach meaning to physical appearance (most notably skin colour), and racial classification and racism continue to be a reality most people live with. In this paper, I will use 'race' in brackets when referring to the classificatory system, race without brackets when referring to people's use of the term, and treat racial classifications and racism as an everyday reality.

1. Introduction and Context

I pulled into the parking lot to pick up Leanne from college in Muizenberg on our way to a meeting. She was wearing a particularly colourful outfit, happy to be free of the ill-fitting school uniform she had been wearing until recently. As she was putting her things into the car she was telling me about all her adventures since she started college, especially about her new friends, and how one of them said such hilarious things to the teacher today. When we drove off she noticed I was playing a CD by India Arie –a young black Motown R&B singer- and Leanne exclaimed: “Oooh I love her!!” She asked me if she could select her favourite song so I said go ahead, and she punched in nr 4 while excitedly repeating how much she loves this music. She pushed up the volume and started singing along to the song: “Brown skin, you know I love your brown skin, I can’t tell where yours begins, I can’t tell where mine ends ...” and I chuckle to myself ...this is a white Christian girl who grew up in Boksburg³? (Extract from fieldnotes, February 2005)

Western Cape premier Ebrahim Rasool recently stated that South Africa’s history of apartheid and decade of transformation has meant that race and colour identity is one of the main categories in South Africa that is continually undergoing change, constantly being challenged and defended. At the beginning of 2005, the premier called for a renewed debate around race and racism in South Africa after reports of an increase in racial tensions in the Western Cape since the beginning of democratic rule. Fanie Du Toit from the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation agrees with this need for debate. He suggests that in order to continue the process of transformation successfully:

...a further need remains - to build trust across divides that defined our past. (...) Branded as among the most unequal cities in the world, Cape Town’s socio-economic divisions still run largely along racial lines. (...) Despite integrating schools and workplaces, people continue to retreat to their racially homogenous suburbs at night, only to stare at one another over the fence, road or railway line (*Cape Times*, 07/04/05).

At first glance, the research setting of this paper seems to be such a divided area: Fish Hoek valley, situated on the South Peninsula of Cape Town. Eleven years after the official end to apartheid, the physical layout of the valley still follows racial lines. The majority of the poorer and previously classified ‘coloured’ and ‘African’⁴ population continue to live in distinct and separate communities

³ A mining town close to Johannesburg, commonly associated with white Afrikaners.

⁴ The racial categories most used in South African public discourse and by government are ‘white’, ‘coloured’, ‘Indian’ and ‘African’. There is an ongoing debate about the accuracy of these categories, for example the argument that all South Africans are African, which sometimes leads to the use of ‘black Africans’; that all non-whites should be categorised under ‘black’; and that the term ‘coloured’ encompasses people from such a wide range of origins that it is essentially a non-category. There is however little public debate questioning

spatially contained in an area of ever expanding middle class and ‘white’ suburbs. Skin colour seems to largely determine where and how people live, work, shop and who they mix with, with little visible evidence of any significant changes towards the more egalitarian, inclusive and integrated society propagated by the post-apartheid government.

However, when listening and looking more closely at the experiences and opinions of schoolchildren growing up in this area, a more nuanced picture emerges: one of a generation of young South Africans negotiating physical and social boundaries in particular ways that differ from their elders; ways which are partly within and partly against apartheid structures and divisions still in place; ways which express an ideal of non-racism in a daily environment that seems shaped by racial differentiation; and ways which show the possibility of change.

Children and identity

In recent decades, social theories related to childhood issues have been increasingly recognising children’s agency and role in society (for example Coles 1986; Hecht 1998; Rapport & Overing 2000; Reynolds 1989; Reynolds 1991; Stephens 1995; Yon 2000). Rapport & Overing (2000) state that anthropology has moved from the idea of the child as ‘incomplete’ and still developing towards becoming an adult, to the realisation that children as agents play a role in the creation of ‘culture’ and identity; for example adults learn to be parents because of their children (*ibid*: 32). They argue that instead of looking at the child as a passive recipient of ‘adult’ knowledge, we should acknowledge children as dynamic agents who learn and create culture and society in interaction with other children and adults (see also Caputo 1995, Reynolds 1995). Children can at once reflect, resist and reinterpret adult conceptions. As Coles (1986) has argued, a nation’s politics becomes a child’s everyday psychology, and Sharon Stephens (1995) emphasises that children’s lived experience of everyday life can tell us a lot about what is going on in the world. She urges us to acknowledge “...young people as social actors in their own right, engaged in making sense of and recreating the social worlds they inherit...children creatively live from inside complex mixtures of languages and social domains that are external structures for many adults” (*ibid*: 24).

In South Africa, there is a growing body of research within this paradigm of recognising the agency and role of children in society (Barbarin & Richter 2001;

the need for using these categories altogether, as this division seems engrained in people’s understanding of South African society. Participants in this study mostly use the categories ‘white’, ‘coloured’, and ‘black’, which I have followed in my language.

Bray 2003; Bray 2005; Henderson 1999; Jones 1993; Levine 1999; Ramphele 2000; Reynolds 1989; Reynolds 1991; Reynolds 1995; Swart-Kruger 2000) but there is only a limited amount of published work on children's identity in general and racial identity in particular, and, to speak to the topic of this paper, how they experience diversity and integration (Dolby 2001a; Dolby 2001b; Soudien 2001). Some South African research on issues of post-apartheid identities has concentrated on the psychological aspects of racial identity and prejudice amongst children (Dawes & Finchilescu 2002) but mostly on adults and the dynamics within a given racial identity, focussing for example on the meaning of 'whiteness', 'colouredness', and 'blackness' itself (Distiller&Steyn 2004; Dolby 2001b, Erasmus 2001; Soudien 1996; Steyn 2001). These studies give insight into the symbolism of and changes within certain racial identities, but the importance of racial identity in people's every-day lives seems taken for granted.

Internationally, a relevant and very interesting study that focuses on the fluidity of young people's identities is Dan Yon's work with high school children at a 'multicultural' school in Canada. Using young people's discourse as a main focus, he looks at their strategies in identity formation in what he calls 'global times', how they make, perform and contest identities, in some instances accepting and emphasising racial identities as positive, in others contesting them when they are felt to exclude them from certain social realms. In his work he takes young people's agency as a given, and comments on theoretical concepts of identity, race and culture by looking at young people's discourse and flexible use and interpretations of these concepts as opposed to the way adults in the same school environment express more fixed ideas about culture, race and identity.

There are two fairly recent publications resulting from research projects on young people's racial identity in the 'new' South Africa that connect to Yon's work, and also draw on discourse as a theoretical framework for understanding identity. 'Constructing Race: Youth, Identity and Popular Culture in South Africa' by Nadine Dolby was based on an ethnographic study in 1996 and published in 2001, and Crain Soudien's 'Certainty and Ambiguity in Youth Identities in South Africa: discourses in transition' was written in 2000 as a result of survey based research involving high school children attending 'mixed' schools in Cape Town over a period of three years in the late nineties.

Soudien (2000) is particularly interested in the way young people are thinking their way through what he calls post-apartheid 'identity conundrums' and the role of school and government discourses in these processes. His conclusion is that young people have to negotiate 'old' and 'new' racial identities on a daily basis: "...the identities young people develop are internally divided... Their

identities are...of their apartheid past, but simultaneously against it” (*ibid*: 314). Although he emphasises how young people negotiate their possibilities with regard to identity, his main focus is still on ‘race’ as a primary marker of identity for children growing up in a post-apartheid society, without much attention to other aspects of identity. Furthermore, he does not comment on the possible fluidity of racial identities themselves, but maintains that children are defined and define themselves according to the standard categories, that is, white, African and coloured. He concludes that despite the official government ideology of non-racialism, racial tensions have not disappeared, and experiences of children participating in his study show how difficult it was for students to evade the racialising structures in which they found themselves. To a degree, this conclusion is relevant to the everyday lives of children at school in Fish Hoek. My first comment however is that issues of identity, diversity and integration are not only about race, and one should certainly consider other elements of identification.

Race never operates alone but articulates with gender, class, nation, sexuality, ethnicity, and other differences to form heterogeneous identities and crosscutting social hierarchies. (Gregory & Sanjek 1994: 28)

Although in my study it is also evident that South Africa’s history of racial classification is something that continues to be a part of children’s and young people’s everyday lives in one way or another, I have found that ‘race’ is only one aspect of the many identities that young people negotiate; furthermore it is not necessarily the most important, nor a fixed and clear-cut category, and not necessarily problematic. This does not coincide with much of existing South African literature on the topic of racial identity, which assumes racial identity to continue to be the main point of identification for South Africans ‘grappling’ with a post-apartheid environment.

Nadine Dolby, an assistant professor in Education in the U.S., based her book on a yearlong intensive ethnographic study in what she calls a ‘multiracial’ high school in Durban, a formerly ‘white’ school that quite rapidly changed to a majority ‘black’ student population. Her aim was to gain more understanding about young people’s construction of racial identities post ’94, to look at the dynamics between children themselves, and those between students and teachers within a changing school environment. Similarly to Yon, one of the main points she makes is that racial identities are not fixed, but fluid and changeable, and should be seen in a global context.

[C]ategories of identification (i.e. race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.) are not pre-given, essential traits, but constitute an array of available cultural meanings and identities into which one places or sutures oneself, at the same time internalizing those meanings in an attempt to stabilize both oneself and the

surrounding world. Available racial categories shift and move, contingent both on time and space (Dolby 2001a: 9).

In the case of these Durban schoolchildren, racial identity is re-constructed and expressed by young people through their taste in popular culture. Particular styles of local and international music and fashion are associated with a particular racial identity, but there are several case studies that indicate this does not necessarily connect to skin-colour. This flexibility is in marked contrast to their teachers and school administration, who mostly speak in fixed racial categories and try to hold onto a 'white' school identity despite the changing student population.

In my study, I have found that young people's experiences of 'race' and their use of racial categories differ from the way the previous generation interprets the same environment and discourse, but in different ways than described by Dolby and Soudien in the earlier days of 'mixed schooling'. Possible reasons for this could be that the children I worked with are five to ten years younger and further 'away' from the apartheid days, and the teachers and schools in this study have moved further along a liberal 'multicultural' approach as proposed by the South African government's constitution. There is however an ongoing tension between ideas around the fixity, and 'reality', of racial categories, and the fluidity, and often unimportance of these same categories in practice. In my study this has come to the fore through the use of various research methods. In short, exercises in which children were asked to draw maps and categorise their environment has shown constrained movement and stereotyping of places along 'old' racial categories, an expectation of difference between groups of people, and a standard use of racial categories. However, in individual interactions and in talking about relations with peers and friends of different backgrounds, young people strongly emphasise being the same, 'wish away' or ignore race as a factor in their lives, but simultaneously use racial name-calling in subversive and humorous ways.

The structure of the paper

After this introductory section, I will briefly focus on the schooling environment, and consider the teachers and school administration's attitudes towards diversity and integration. In section 3: 'Mental maps, stereotypes and mobility', I elaborate on Fish Hoek schoolchildren's mapping of their environment. This data provides insight into children's general knowledge of and stereotypical ideas about their spatial and social environment, and the ways in which they reiterate the dominant discourse of difference present in the valley and broader society. The subsequent section: 'Crossing boundaries: language and everyday relationships', is based on more detailed ethnographic data around

identity, diversity and social relationships. This will give more insight into some of the ways young people constantly move within and around spatial, conceptual and social boundaries, sometimes reinforcing, many times contesting the dominant discourse of difference. In the conclusion I will pull together my arguments to support the main proposal around the need to acknowledge children's agency, their role in creating the world around us, and what we can learn from them in thinking about race, integration and diversity in contemporary South African society and beyond.

'Growing Up in the New South Africa'

This paper is based on ethnographic data that emerged from the larger 2004 research project 'Growing Up in the New South Africa', a study carried out by Rachel Bray, Susan Moses and myself with children at, respectively, schools in Masiphumelele, Ocean View and Fish Hoek for a period of just over one year.⁵ We chose Fish Hoek valley as a research setting for the reason that the area includes three historically divided communities based on the racial classifications 'African', 'coloured' and 'white' of the apartheid era, in close proximity to each other. The overall study was of an exploratory nature that aimed to understand the perspectives of young people on their daily lives, ten years after the first democratic elections of 1994. To gain permission to research groups of children, the research team approached schools in these three communities; going to school is a critical part of children's everyday lives, and schools therefore provide a useful point of access to a range of local children⁶. Fieldwork with children began with classroom-based activities, after which the researchers each established after-school art clubs or discussion groups with volunteers from certain age groups. We chose to work with children in grades 6 (11-12 years old), 9 (approximately 15-16 years old) and 11 (approximately 17-18 years old) in order to get a sense of 'growing up', be able to look at ways in which children at different life stages deal with a similar environment, and compare experiences across our research sites. From those groups the researchers worked on a more individual basis with young people using a range of visual and verbal methods including photographs, hero books⁷, diaries and

⁵ This study was funded by the Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR) at the University of Cape Town. Publications that have currently resulted from the study are: Bray & Brandt 2005, Bray & Gooskens (2005), Moses (2005). We are currently working on a monograph of this study, and possibly a 'popular' publication for the general public.

⁶ This of course means we did not reach children who are not at school, a choice we had to make to limit our focus.

⁷ The method of making hero books with children was developed by Jonathan Morgan (2004), a psychologist, mainly as a tool to help children infected and affected by HIV/Aids to deal with their circumstances. However, many of the activities can be used as a way of understanding children's life worlds in general.

interviews. Another part of our research involved working with a group of six grade 11 young researchers who called themselves ‘Tri’, to reflect the three communities (Fish Hoek, Ocean View and Masiphumelele) they live in. Meetings with these six volunteer trainees revolved around short training sessions combined with focus group discussions around relevant topics for youth in the area. Also, as part of their training and data collection for our study, they conducted interviews with peers.

An important point to make for this paper is that school as a social arena can be an opportunity for children to meet and make friends across colour and class divisions, and is one of the few places in the Fish Hoek valley where this is possible. However, as mentioned above, the physical layout of the Fish Hoek valley is still very much along apartheid lines, and the continuing overlap between class and ‘colour’ in contemporary South Africa maintains many categories and boundaries based on ‘race’. Schools in the valley serve communities that are to a large extent still segregated along the apartheid categories ‘African’, ‘coloured’ or ‘white’, and these divisions continue to reflect general differences in income and class. A few children from Masiphumelele attend school in Ocean View, and a small percentage from Masiphumelele and Ocean View attend school in Fish Hoek. No children living in Fish Hoek attend school in Masiphumelele or Ocean View⁸. This means that despite a majority white middle class students, schools in Fish Hoek have the most diverse student population in the area in terms of class and ‘race’, and therefore provide an interesting context in which to examine diversity and integration issues for young people in the valley.

Race in South Africa

One of the reasons for my interest in racial identity is, ironically, my unease around the emphasis on ‘race’ in South African popular, political and academic discourse. A main point of concern is the neglect of the entanglement of race and class. Too many times, in the media, in political discussions, in academic presentations, and in popular discourse, this leads to interpreting what is essentially a class issue in racial terms, therefore continuing to use ‘race’ as an explanatory concept for people’s way-of-being and a prevailing way to categorise, describe and understand South African society. As Daniel Herwitz

⁸ There is a major difference in fees charged by schools in the respective areas. Fees at Fish Hoek Middle and Senior High are just over R7,000 per year, at Ocean View Secondary R350 per year and at Masiphumelele High R200 per year. The fees reflect the vast differences in resources available to children at these schools as well as the historical inequalities between schools in ‘white’, ‘coloured’ and ‘black’ areas. Fish Hoek schools do offer the possibility to apply for fees exemption for those accepted at the school but unable to pay the fees, and there are a number of students from Masiphumelele sponsored by American and British funds.

(2003) concludes in his book 'Race and Reconciliation', South African society is "...a profoundly overracialized society"; 'racialism' is prevalent in most public analyses of South African society, for example in newspapers and television, and racial categories are often given as the only relevant ones. He cautions:

When race becomes a marker of every aspect of life, the rich languages, concepts, ideals, affiliations and emotions people have about things are straightjacketed - as they would by any singularity that cannibalizes the human mind, encroaching itself in our every thought and action. South Africa is racially obsessed...

Race, a virtual fetish item in South Africa, veers between being an item of direct confrontation and one of hostile silence. It is something every South African lives with every day, although not in the same way; something every South African learns to ignore, subdue, maintain, resist, subvert, capitalize upon, identify with, refuse, displace, proclaim, split off (Herwitz 2003: 106/7).

In this study many young people express a desire for change in the emphasis on race in practice, in language and in ideology. Sometimes they are able to live it, by 'ignoring, refusing, splitting off', but often times they find themselves 'resisting, subverting, maintaining', and essentially always interacting with 'race' in one way or another. However, in the dominant South African discourse, 'race' is presented as a simple and obvious reality. This hides differentiation within and between people of a certain skin colour, the fluidity of 'race' itself⁹ and the symbolism of 'race' as a social category.

In this paper I will address these issues by taking a closer look at the dynamics between children and young people's experience of their everyday physical and social environment, and the way they speak about, understand and use racial, and other, classifications within a larger framework of identity in their daily lives. I believe that by examining these children and young people's ambivalent and diverse experiences of and ideas about racial identity, we can understand something about the role young people play in creating new ways of being within a rapidly changing society. That understanding might allow us to approach issues around identity, diversity and integration in contemporary young South Africans' daily lives in new ways, breaking with conventional ways of doing so.

⁹ A pertinent fact in this respect is South Africa's history of 'mixing', which accounts for the wide range of ancestry in the country's population.

The geography and socio-economics of Fish Hoek Valley

In order to adequately contextualise children's experiences and understanding of their environment, it is necessary to describe the current local geography and history of segregation in some detail. The following maps (Figure 1: Cape Peninsula and Figure 2: Fish Hoek valley) will give readers an understanding of the position of Fish Hoek valley in relation to the rest of the peninsula, and the relation between the suburbs within the valley. They will also provide some orientation to the maps drawn by children featuring in section 3.

Fish Hoek valley is situated on Cape Town's South Peninsula, about an hour's rail or half an hour's road journey (35 kilometers) away from the city centre. The valley is connected to Cape Town by two roads and a railway line; residents often speak about the rest of the Cape peninsula as 'up the line' and 'over the mountain', signifying a sense of distance and separation from the rest of Cape Town.

Apartheid history is highly visible in the residential geography of the valley. The implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Land Acts of 1954 and 1955 by the apartheid government saw non-white people forcibly removed from their homes and relocated to separate communities established according to the official population categories 'African', 'coloured' and 'white'. Fish Hoek was designated 'white', and Ocean View was established in 1968 for local 'coloured' residents who were being removed from designated 'white' areas throughout the valley. People classified 'African' had been removed to Guguletu¹⁰ in 1965; Masiphumelele is a more recent settlement mainly formed by migrants from the Eastern Cape in the early nineties.

The geographical location and physical characteristics make it very easy not to 'see' Ocean View or Masiphumelele if you don't live there. There is no thoroughfare of traffic as they are both just off the main Kommetjie Road, and Masiphumelele particularly, is concealed from vision and not signposted at all. This 'invisibility' clearly extends to more than geography, as shown later in the paper. Except for some church meetings, there are no organised activities in these areas that are meant to include young people from outside the neighbourhood. Only a small percentage of schoolchildren from Fish Hoek have been to Masiphumelele or Ocean View, usually because of their involvement in 'community' and charity projects organised by a small number of schools, churches and the local library in Fish Hoek.

¹⁰ A large township established in the 1960's situated approximately 15km from the city centre.



Figure 1: Cape Peninsula

Source: www.fishhoek.com.

Note: The absence of Masiphumelele, as is the case in most published maps. It is situated between the wetlands to the west of the 'M65', 3 km to the north-east of Ocean View.

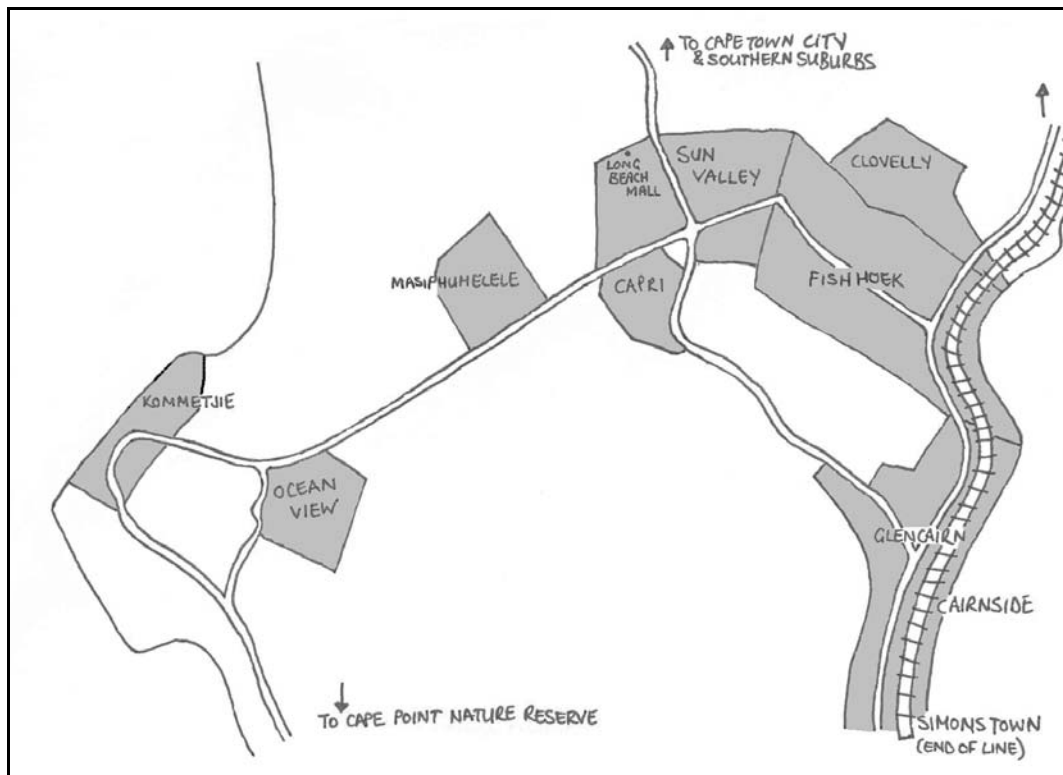


Figure 2: Fish Hoek valley

According to the 2001 Population Census figures, Fish Hoek had grown to a population of just under 16.000, of whom 96% were classified 'white', and Ocean View, an area of about one square mile, had a population of just over 16.000, of whom 98% were classified 'coloured'. The Population Census figures give an estimated 8000 residents of Masiphumelele in 2001, of whom 97% were classified 'African'. However, current unofficial estimates by the City of Cape Town and local service providers are much higher: for Ocean View around 35.000, for Masiphumelele between 12.000 and 20.000. Masiphumelele, also known as 'site 5' and established in 1992, is a formal settlement with mostly informal housing. This small area on the border of the wetlands between Kommetjie and Noordhoek has had a steady influx of people migrating in from the Eastern Cape in the past decade. Fish Hoek has also seen a rise in new residents in the past decade, while the 2001 census indicates a generally stable population for Ocean View with only 3% of adults having lived outside of Ocean View five years previously. Racial classifications in the area largely overlap with differences in class: there are substantial inequalities in household incomes within and between the three areas. According to the 2001 population census the average household income in Fish Hoek is approximately three times the average household income in Ocean View, and eight times that of

Masiphumelele households¹¹. Fish Hoek has the largest range of household incomes (ranging from 'no income' to over R200.000 a month), with the majority earning between R3.200 and R12.800 a month.

In contrast to the rest of sprawling suburbia in Fish Hoek valley, both Masiphumelele and Ocean View are more clearly demarcated neighbourhoods. Ocean View is a formally constructed suburb, with mostly brick houses and flats and a small area of informal housing. Within Ocean View there are considerable differences between the cramped conditions of the flats and informal housing, and the wealthier part of Ocean View consisting of freestanding houses further up the mountain. In Masiphumelele, shacks fill up most of the space between the initially established houses, buildings and streets, and people live in close quarters to their neighbours. There is an expanding area of informal housing towards the wetlands, and shack fires or flooding are a regular occurrence. As an indication of differences in service provision between these three communities, in Masiphumelele almost no households have water taps in the house, in Ocean View most households do, only a small number of houses have taps in the yard, and almost all Fish Hoek houses have indoor taps. There is no police station in Masiphumelele, only in Ocean View and Fish Hoek, and the public hospital is situated in Fish Hoek. In terms of political allegiances, in the 2004 local elections the Democratic Alliance came out as the largest party in most areas except for Masiphumelele, where the ANC won an absolute majority. Christian political parties have a relatively large following in the valley.

Fish Hoek itself used to be a small fishing village, established at the beginning of the 19th century, and has grown out into a chain of suburbs towards the other side of the peninsula. Fish Hoek is known for its Christian ethos; there are at least 13 registered churches in Fish Hoek itself, and banners and boards around the village remind one of the 'presence of God'. For a long time Fish Hoek was home to mostly seafarers, tradesmen, and fishermen. In recent decades, however, there has been a steady influx of people from a much wider range of economic backgrounds. Migration into Fish Hoek has thus had a considerable impact on the diversification of the population. This is mostly class-related, and since 1994 there has been some growth in the non-white population.

Fish Hoek is the main junction for public transport, essentially the 'gateway' to the rest of the valley for those without private vehicles. A lot of people from the valley come to the Main Road to shop, especially at the cheaper stores. The diversity and number of people at the station and main road show a marked contrast to the residential areas directly beyond the main road where there are few people walking around, and perhaps the odd gardener in blue overalls

¹¹ See Appendix A.

cleaning the yard. All three Fish Hoek schools¹² that the children featuring in this study attend are situated in the middle of Fish Hoek proper. This area has a quiet suburban feel to it; the physical layout of most of Fish Hoek consists of a grid of roads lined with neat gardens and family homes, as does most of suburbia in the valley. Early in the morning and around half past two in the afternoon groups of children in burgundy red school uniforms spill out into the streets on their way home, but otherwise there are few children to be seen in the streets. This is in marked contrast with Masiphumelele and Ocean View, neighbourhoods with a lively street life, where children spend a lot of time ‘hanging out’ or playing in public spaces after school¹³.

All Fish Hoek school grounds are fairly large and well kept, with sports fields and playgrounds, and the schools offer after school care and a wide range of extra curricular activities. Out of school, however, there are very few facilities or entertainment spaces accessible to young people in the valley. Furthermore, Fish Hoek has a high percentage of elderly people, and is typified by teenagers as ‘Grannyville’, a boring place where you have to be quiet and behave. In letters to the editor of *The People's Post*, a local newspaper, elderly writers regularly complain of ‘hooligans’ skateboarding on the streets and pavements, and how ‘the youth of today’ have no respect and misbehave in public.

2. Fish Hoek schools as a site of integration in a post-apartheid landscape

My first day here [5 years ago] was very interesting; there were two coloured guys in the class -we have got more now than we had then but still- and they say “hey Chester so what’s the weather like in Ocean View today!” [laughs] ...and Ocean View is just like 10k’s away, no not even...3 or 4! And we did a comparison between where you live, like socio-economic class, and one boy who lived on the mountainside [in Fish Hoek] said ‘where is Masiphumelele’... he’s been living here since he’s been in his huggies! He didn’t know, was completely unaware; a lot of the kids are completely unaware of life in someone else’s culture. And that’s particularly so, I find, in this valley. We’re in the backwoods...

It’s changed a bit now in the school because we’ve got different people coming in the last couple of years. You’ve got people of different races, and different economic groups as well. I think the kids have become desensitised...they are not so aware, and more accepting of kids from different cultures (Interview Middle school teacher, September 2004).

¹² Fish Hoek Primary (grade 1-6), Middle (grade 7-9) and Senior High (grade 10-12).

¹³ For more details on children and public space in Ocean View see Moses (2005).

School as a learning ground

As mentioned in the introduction, school is an important part of children's lives, and for practical reasons this was the best way to gain access to a wide range of children. At the request of school principals, fieldwork with children took place in time slots between exams from August 2004 to June 2005. I spent most of my time at the Middle and Senior High schools, and I observed that the overall attitude is that the school principals and teachers take their students education very seriously. In the staff room, teachers would often speak to each other about the best way to teach certain parts of the curriculum, where to find teacher support materials, how to approach an especially difficult student, or how to help someone who is not doing well. In individual discussions with teachers, they confirmed this impression and displayed an interest in their students' general lives and wellbeing. I did however speak mostly to the younger generation of teachers, and heard from both teachers and students that the 'old style' teachers were less involved, and more authoritarian in their teaching methods and approach to students.

As for changes in the student population in the past ten years, teachers were positive about the increasing diversity at school, but also acknowledged that having students whose first language was not English, and/or came from a different schooling background (mostly students from Ocean View and Masiphumelele schools) was an added burden to their job:

We have to teach a bit harder, because if they come from other schools in those areas we generally find that they haven't had the advantages that children have had at say Fish Hoek primary. It's a cultural and a language thing, and you have to teach hard and help, give them extra help. You often find even after a year their language skills pick up and they get better. And then their comprehensive skills get better. Often it just comes right (Interview Senior High school teacher, September 2004).

The appearance of the school grounds and buildings demonstrate that there is time and money spent on the school; the Middle school campus is in a less groomed state than the Senior High campus, which was newly built in the 1980s when the student numbers outgrew the old building. Both schools have large school grounds with space for sports fields and playgrounds, and have a reception area, assembly hall, staff room, space for students lockers, a courtyard with a tuck shop, designated art rooms and computer labs, and classrooms generally in a good state. Children at the Middle school did complain about the bad state of the classrooms and the old furniture, and expressed that they have less respect for a school that does not look good.

The main mission statement for the Middle and Senior High school is “Learning to make a difference”. The schools place a strong emphasis on responsibility and discipline, and have a code of conduct for each student to sign at enrolment. Uniforms, the school emblem, song and events like the yearly Founders Day nurture the school’s history; the importance of keeping up the schools name and high pass rates is made clear in assemblies and other events. There is also a strong emphasis in the written rules on respect for each other, and penalties for racist, sexist and blasphemous language and behaviour. Fish Hoek schools ethos is based on the Christian faith, although this is not stated in their mission statements. However, bible studies are compulsory for all students unless parents request otherwise. Many teachers are Christian, and a lot of children I worked with are active members of church youth groups, often referring to the importance of God, church, and their faith as supports in their lives. Two teachers, themselves not Christians, commented that religion is perhaps filling a void in children’s emotional and spiritual lives, especially since many of them have to cope with difficult family situations such as parents getting divorced, and they see Christian faith and church youth groups to possibly be a stabilising factor in their lives. Churches are also one of the main sources of ‘community outreach’ programmes in the valley, and many children involved in the school’s outreach project have a Christian background.

Diversity at school

Diversity is not only about ‘race’, and as shown in the general socio-economic outline as presented in the previous section, there are substantial class differences within and between the communities these schoolchildren come from. Although class is difficult to determine, judging from what children and teachers have told me about parents’ occupations and financial situations, there is a clear indication that in each classroom there will be children from diverse economic backgrounds ranging from an unemployed single parent to double income professionals. To reiterate a point made earlier, due to the history of apartheid, class and ‘race’ overlap to a large degree, but certainly not in all cases. Another aspect of diversity is religion; the majority of children and teachers are Christian, but there are a small number of Muslim children at the school. Children also come from a wide variety of household types. Just under half the children in my sample live in nuclear families with both biological parents; the rest live in various family compositions, including stepparents, single parents and the extended family, which typically includes grandparents. From the data it is clear that this range in family composition is a normal feature

in children's lives across the overall project's research sites (Fish Hoek, Masiphumelele, and Ocean View).¹⁴

Regarding specifically racial diversity, the formerly 'white' Fish Hoek schools opened up to non-white students in 1991, but have only had a more significant influx of non-white students since 1994. As one of the teachers pointed out, "...just look at the school photographs hanging in the hallways, you see a few more coloured and black faces each year". At present, an estimated 20% of the schoolchildren are not 'white'. Many of the non-white students live in Ocean View ('coloured') and Masiphumelele ('black'), but a fair number of them live in formerly 'white' areas. For example Fish Hoek Senior High had 713 students in 2005, of whom 43 are registered as living in Ocean View, and 9 in Masiphumelele. However, when going through the list of students, there are at least 17 Xhosa or other 'African' names with addresses in suburbs other than Masiphumelele. In some cases these are postal addresses, and surnames are not necessarily an indication of ethnicity, but the object of this example is merely to illustrate that certainly not all 'black' students live in the 'black' township of Masiphumelele. The principal pointed out that it is not possible anymore to determine someone's race solely by their surname (an interesting comment in itself), especially when it comes to the 'coloured' and white population. From my own sample it is clear that certainly not all 'coloured' children live in Ocean View.

The teacher population at schools in the valley largely follow racial divisions between neighbourhoods: there are almost exclusively black teachers at Masiphumelele schools, a few black but a majority coloured teachers at Ocean View, and a very small number of black and coloured teachers at Fish Hoek schools. The opening up of schools has not resulted in any white children going to a non-white school in the area, and generally expectations around school admissions rely largely on race. For example one Fish Hoek teacher relayed the story of a white couple from Kommetjie (situated on the other side of the valley) who came to the school to enroll their child. They were upset to have to go through the admission procedure, and complained about the fees. When the principal explained that according to the official Department of Education's division in the area Ocean View Secondary would be the closest and therefore designated school for their children, they were silent, and then exclaimed "You

¹⁴ This variety in family structures and children's experiences of home life is a topic outside the scope of this paper, and will be addressed in a forthcoming monograph on the overall findings of the 'Growing Up in the New South Africa' project, to be published at the end of 2006. Suffice to say here is that these similarities in economic and family circumstances across the board add to the need to look at diversity and similarity in children's lives in more respects than along 'population groups', as is often the case in academic research publications.

have got to be joking!”). They could not believe that anyone would expect their child to go to a ‘coloured’ school.

Interpreting diversity and integration: discourse at school

Inevitably discussions about diversity at school lead to speaking about racial groups, even when I did not ask specifically for this. At the same time, at all three schools, the principals and teachers are reluctant to have to talk in terms of race. When I asked if they know what percentage of the school children are not white, they were quick to point out that they do not like categorising their students on the basis of race but that the Department of Education insists on these statistics¹⁵. Interestingly, the department does not require figures that indicate ‘class’ or ‘income bracket’, which is part of the aforementioned discourse in South Africa in which the population is typically categorised according to ‘race’. A recent call from the Department of Education for new numbers has again met with resistance from the teachers to fill in their pupils ‘race’, and the principal had to convince them of the necessity of doing this, for the sake of the departments mandate to keep track of transformation at schools.

Fish Hoek schoolteachers reported they do not feel there are many problems around racial discrimination at school, and believe it is not the children but parents that cause any existing tension:

Teacher 1: I am impressed with the lack of it; the amount of cross over and how comfortable children are with each other. A lot of children are good friends, best friends across different groups and stuff...there’s racism, there’s negative stuff around...but overall I think it’s pretty good.

Teacher 2: But you see they haven’t grown up with it, they’ve been born into ...when Mandela was freed they were 3 years old. The racism that does come out I think, is from their parents, they don’t get it from each other because they don’t know it (Interview with two Middle school teachers, November 2004).

Most teachers also expressed the opinion that race is unimportant and should not be given too much attention. When I asked a school councillor what she picks up about discrimination among students her initial comment was: “I don’t know...I am so busy trying to get them to look at each other for good qualities, to look at people as people and not as race, status or anything”. After some

¹⁵ The ‘non-racial’ attitude or ‘colour blindness’ of principals of formerly white schools has been noted in an extensive study by SAHRC into racism at schools countrywide, where it is mainly interpreted by the researchers as a strategy to avoid discussing the issue of race (Vally & Dambala 1999: 6, 27).

thought she suggested the most obvious division was the Xhosa-speaking children from Masiphumelele:

I think socially they struggle a little bit because when they are out of class they will only speak Xhosa because they are comfortable with it; they will only have Xhosa friends. It's hardly a train smash but I do think it isolates them a little bit... [At Senior High] I think they have adapted. They are the same kids but they have gotten used to the system.

IG: Do you see any difference between black children from Masi or those living in Fish Hoek?

There is a difference in coping, because they are living locally they would have gone to Fish Hoek or Sun Valley primary...their English is quite strong. It's a language thing where they can cope better and they are used to the society. Kids from Ukhanyo Primary [in Masiphumelele] they come here and they are learning in a third or second language and they struggle. And then they also have to adapt to a different system, to a majority white kids, to being a minority...it's frightening for those children. We try to put in a couple of things to assist them and it's slowly working¹⁶.

IG: What about children from Ocean View who come to school here?

Now they have less of an issue, their language skills are fine, they are half Americanised in any case [laughs]! I call them the Americans, they watch so much TV and get the lingo and everything. Culturally they click in very easily. There is a lot more mixing, you'll see coloured and white children all together (Interview Middle school councillor, April 2005).

These comments convey some more general attitudes around integration I have come across: firstly she feels it is language that obstructs integration; as soon as children learn to speak English fluently there is no problem anymore. Secondly there is a sense that children 'adapt to the system', recognised to be that of the white majority. Furthermore, she refers to a difference in 'culture' between children from Masiphumelele, Ocean View or Fish Hoek, and how children from elsewhere adapt to 'the society' at school. This illustrates the way many people see Fish Hoek valley, and diversity in general. Differences between people in the valley are often framed in terms of 'culture' rather than 'race', but the categories still run largely along racial lines of identification. Many adults I spoke to were hesitant to use the words 'black', 'coloured' and 'white' and very careful not to allude to any kind of racist attitude, and would say 'it's a different culture'; this awareness and caution I found with children to a lesser degree, and mostly with younger children who tend to follow their parents discourse. This talking around the issue does mean that many underlying (and in many cases essentially racist) assumptions about difference go unchallenged, and are

¹⁶ The school offers extra English tuition and the possibility of a Xhosa-speaking councillor.

expressed through comments alluding to a difference in ‘culture’. In these cases ‘culture’ is perceived as an obstacle to people mixing, and not something that can (or should) change. For example two church youth workers from Fish Hoek commented thus on the lack of inter-community youth events within their church:

Yw 1: We are affiliated slightly but don’t really get together. They have their own church in the area they can walk to so they don’t bother coming here and we are not going to trek out there...

Yw 2: They have a youth fraternal that runs in Ocean View, all the churches in Ocean View are a part of that. ...

Yw 1: It’s a total cultural thing. Some of their kids came along to one of our worship evenings and they hated it, they don’t like the music, its not their style...then they want our kids to come to a fashion show in Ocean View and our kids are like....fashion show?! They don’t enjoy the same things. It’s a cultural thing; if you don’t enjoy the same music it doesn’t work (Interview church youth workers, November 2004).

On the other hand there is a movement towards embracing cultural diversity, for example the schools organise drama evenings with a multi-cultural theme, as a way of familiarising and including children with ‘different backgrounds’. The school also staged ‘District Six’ as the 2005 school musical, which depicts the heyday of a mixed township in Cape Town and the subsequent pain of its destruction and forced removals of coloured and African people from this area. In this way, whilst keeping up a certain pride in their heritage, the school management consciously carries out a non-racial and multi-cultural approach. Focusing on diversity¹⁷ and addressing historical divisions, can actually reinforce the idea of difference¹⁸, and does not extend to political or practical interventions to actively overcome segregation in the valley. For example schools in the area have no connection with each other, save a sporadic girls’ volleyball game between Ocean View and Fish Hoek secondary schools, and a ‘community’ project run by the Primary and Middle school for children in

¹⁷ For example in December 2005 the ‘Mzansi’ carnival parade from Masiphumelele to the shopping mall in Sun Valley was meant to ‘celebrate the multi-cultural valley’. This is however a once-off and there are few events or places in which people from different communities are brought together, nor events in which existing divisions are really challenged.

¹⁸ As stated in the SAHRC report on racism at schools, “...this form of multicultural education does not acknowledge that there could be differences within perceived ‘racial’ or ‘cultural’ groups, and that the identity and culture of individuals and groups are temporal and changing. According to Kalantjis *et al.*, (1990), “the multicultural approach may delineate ethnic groups iconographically and stereotypically, so contradicting reality. This can increase, rather than reduce racism and social division.” (SAHRC 1999: 43)

Masiphumelele in which Fish Hoek schoolchildren bring sandwiches to young children in an after-care programme. Moreover, the latter ‘community’ project, although a well-meant initiative, adds to the stereotypical and hierarchical ‘welfare connection’ between Fish Hoek and Masiphumelele so often depicted in the local press and found in the general discourse of people in the valley.

As we will see in the following sections, the discourse of difference is to an extent adopted by children and young people, and to an extent purposefully contested by repeatedly pointing out that ‘we are all the same’. Students in general resent being reminded by teachers and school about ‘race’ and racism. They are aware racism exists, but proclaim “not at our school! We are all friends”. This expresses a genuine wish for equality, but can also be attributed to political correctness, and to a certain kind of ignorance, in expecting classmates to be the same as you. As one teacher explained:

[T]he majority of the kids at this school are white. When they talk about ‘us’ they really mean it, they mean everyone in the class, and then they talk about ‘them’ when talking about black kids. I think that’s just because of numbers; if it were the other way around they would be more aware and question what they were saying. What’s distressing is that the kids won’t ask a black child that comes from Masi...white kids won’t have a personal conversation but will make sweeping comments about what people are prepared to accept in Masi. And they don’t think of asking [their classmate] what’s going on...

IG: But I don’t think they really make that connection.

No they don’t because as far as they are concerned that kid is not the same as the rest of the people in Masi (Interview Senior High school teacher, May 2005).

Race and racism

As mentioned above, staff generally avoid race issues, and there is a definite ‘race fatigue’ among many young people, with little desire to discuss the topic. However, at the time of this study the school organised a screening of a documentary about racial classification during apartheid and how this ruined a family’s life by separating a daughter from her ‘white’ parents on the basis of her darker skin colour and curly hair. The screening was not appreciated by many of the students, and emotions in the grade 11-class discussion the next day ran high. A number of students expressed how ‘tired’ they were of hearing about apartheid, as it is not their reality. “It is being dragged out, even in English class there are always exam questions about apartheid!” Some also felt strongly that Afrikaners get blamed for everything, and that bringing up the issue of race and apartheid creates animosity where there was none. “Yes it’s important to know history, but this is not applicable to us”. Young people themselves (of all

colours) repeatedly stated that they have no racism issues. “It’s made a big issue by the older generation, not by us”. This includes the government legislation around preferential treatment based on racial categories, which is not condoned by the majority of students. But as one (black) student said, most people in her class do not understand or think about the background and reasons for Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), and assume everyone has the same chances in life. She herself however refuses to use the fact that she is black to secure a scholarship for university, and is adamant to be judged on her abilities and her grades. As will become clear throughout the paper, there are many cases such as this where young people reiterate the discourse around them, but do not feel it is necessarily applicable to themselves or their peers.

In a conversation around diversity, a Senior High teacher commented on the ease with which her students use the racial categories ‘black’, ‘coloured’ and ‘white’ in their everyday language. She herself is continuously trying to point out the subjective nature of racial classifications, for example by telling students that she looks ‘white’ and was brought up ‘white’, but was classified ‘coloured’ because of her grandparents. She is uncomfortable with the ease in which students use racial categories, and has understood children’s apparently ‘uncritical’ use of racial categories as stemming from ignorance of the past and the acceptance of ‘old’ categories as real. However, the ethnographic data suggests this is only a partial explanation. Young people learn to negotiate between ideals expressed in public discourse and their own personal aims and wishes, and the realities they see in their own lives and those of their parents, teachers, peers and friends. They continuously need to make sense of what they learn through public discourse (media, school curriculum, adults) and what they learn in their personal experiences. In this way young people find their own way of dealing with everyday life in this complex web of ideals and realities, and develop their own language, which is not necessarily understood by ‘adults’. More on the topic of young people’s discourse will follow in section 4, but first a closer look at the mapping process and children’s prevalent stereotypical ways of speaking about each other’s communities.

3. Mental maps, stereotypes and mobility

Michael, a blond and blue-eyed 15-year-old boy, takes the bus to school every day. The bus drives from Kommetjie (‘white’) through Ocean View (‘coloured’), past Masiphumelele (‘black’) to Fish Hoek (‘white’), picking up schoolchildren. He told me he had never really been to Ocean View even though he travels through it every day. “They are racist towards whites, even the small children in Ocean View already act like little gangsters, using gang symbols and rude gestures, and shouting at me ‘hey whitey’”. He then said with a wide grin: “I got out of the bus only once, just to be able to say that I have been to Ocean View”.

This provoked some laughter from the rest of the discussion group, who showed an ambiguous reaction to the depiction of the dangers of Ocean View and its people. None of them live in Ocean View themselves, and only one of the boys (who is white) actually goes there regularly: “I go to church youth meetings, and I visit my friends there...” -he shrugged his shoulders- “...and it’s not dangerous at all!” (Fieldnotes, November 2004).

Mapping

To explore children’s perceptions of their neighbourhood and community, I conducted mapping exercises with children from all three age groups; grade 6 (11-12), grade 9 (15-16), and grade 11(17-19 years old). The mapping exercises were designed to create a platform for children and teenagers to give their visual interpretation of the valley, indicating the boundaries of what they thought of as 'their' neighbourhood, to investigate their perceptions and knowledge of the area, how, where and when they do or don’t cross certain boundaries, and to make a start in understanding the specifics of children’s lives in this particular place. In general, the mapping method turned out to be very helpful in visualising children’s ‘mental maps’ of their neighbourhood and their general knowledge of communities, places and people in the valley. Some perceptions about who and what constitutes ‘my’ neighbourhood are evident in the drawings themselves, others were elicited through talking about the maps, mostly during the drawing sessions and in some cases in separate sessions. I asked the children to identify places according to the categories ‘fun’, ‘needs’, ‘important’ and ‘dangerous’; these maps indicated quite clearly children’s sense of mobility and their knowledge and perceptions of their environment.

Case study: ‘Safer in the place you know’

This case study of mapping workshops and discussions with grade 9 children (around 15-16 years old), will illustrate some of the connections between mobility, familiarity and stereotyping.

The grade 9 workshops consisted of two classroom sessions for each of three ‘Life Orientation’ classes. The group consisted of 44 girls and 26 boys. Most of the 70 children that participated live in the formerly ‘white’ areas: just under half are from Fish Hoek itself, nine out of the 70 live in Ocean View and five in Masiphumelele. For clarification, and to repeat an earlier point, not all of the children who live in ‘white’ areas are ‘white’, and it is mostly someone’s place of residence that determines their mobility, knowledge and stereotyping of other places in the valley. One of the questions I asked was if they were allowed to walk around by themselves in their neighbourhood. One of the boys commented: “It is safe for us in the valley. I sometimes walk home from Sun

Valley to Fish Hoek at two in the morning and it's fine". In many of these accounts, children would feel that their own neighbourhoods were safer than others, and would not consider going to unknown and therefore 'unsafe' areas by themselves. A mixed group of girls living in Fish Hoek, Sun Valley and Masiphumelele drew their own neighbourhoods, shaded everything in red and wrote: "Everywhere u go is dangerous, but most of the time, in our areas, it is safe". This indicates the general feeling that as long as you know a place, you are safe, but at the same time you must be on your guard anywhere.



Figure 3: Map of Fish Hoek valley by four grade 9 girls from Fish Hoek, Sun Valley and Masiphumelele

The places actually featuring on the maps themselves clearly depended on the group composition, and show obvious stereotypes of areas unfamiliar to the group members. Most groups drew a fairly comprehensive map comprising a large part of the peninsula, but Ocean View and Masiphumelele only feature in any detail if one or more of the children in the group live there. When I asked the class to indicate dangerous places with a red colour, children not living in or accessing Ocean View and Masiphumelele (also called Site 5) marked either or both places as an area shaded in red, with no features like roads or houses, or specifics as to what was dangerous there.

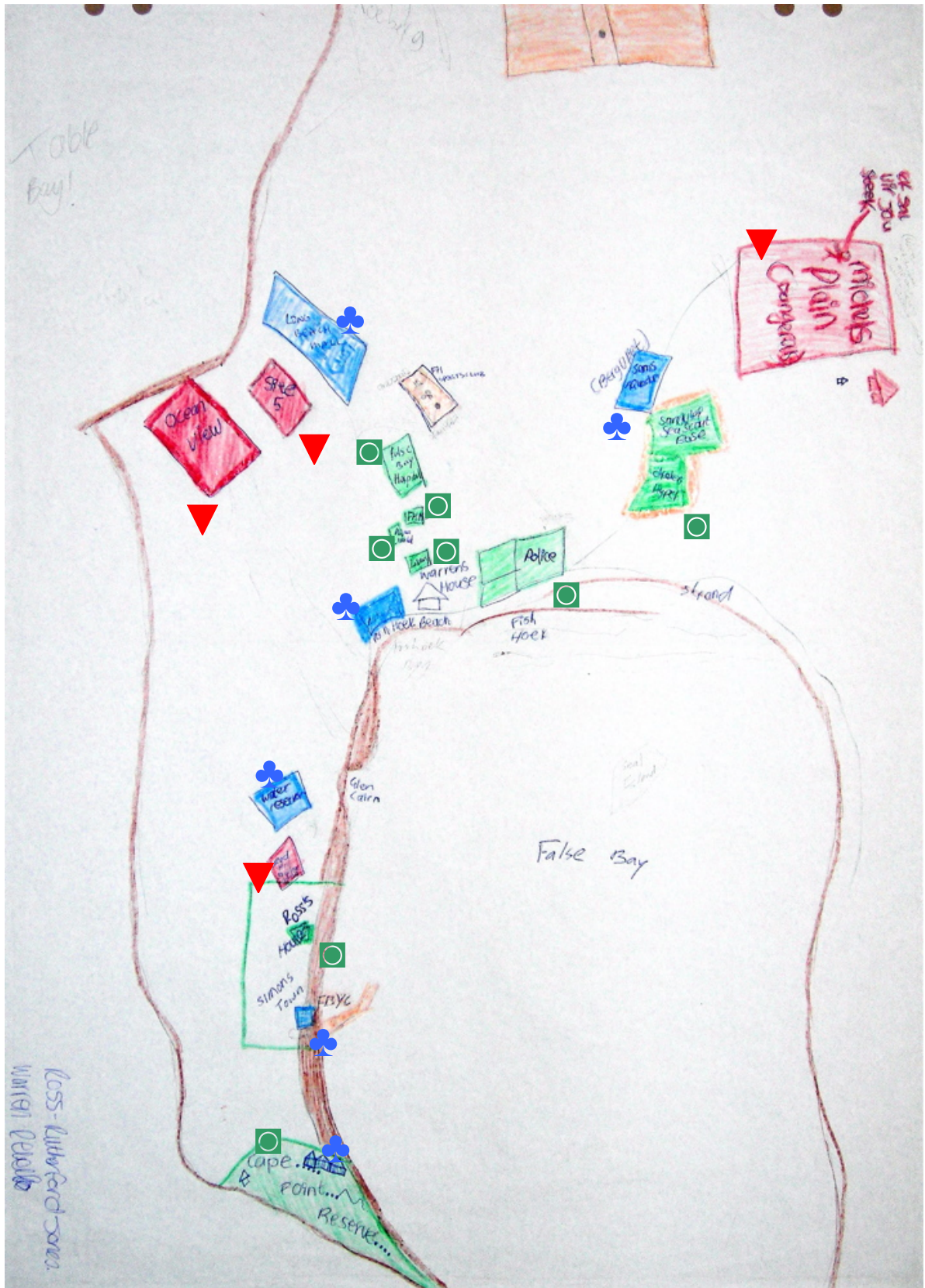


Figure 4: Map of the peninsula by two grade 9 boys from Simonstown and Fish Hoek.

▼	Dangerous places	●	Important places	♣	Fun places
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Two boys were arguing over a map because the one (white) was joking with the other (who is coloured): “Your whole neighbourhood should be coloured red, it’s full of gangsters!”. The boy in question was not amused and said he actually lives in Simonstown (which was formerly zoned ‘white’). Of a group of five girlfriends from Fish Hoek and Ocean View, the girls from Ocean View told me they mostly meet with their school friends in Fish Hoek. This does not happen the other way around, but they accept this and enjoy spending time in Fish Hoek since there is ‘nothing to do’ in Ocean View.

Apart from drawing maps, the children were asked to write up individual lists of places considered important, needed, fun or dangerous. In the category ‘dangerous’, ‘townships’ in the valley and greater Cape Town came top of the individual lists, followed by places like shebeens, bottle stores and clubs, and streets at night. Many children also wrote ‘anywhere alone’, stranger’s houses, the beach, the sand dunes and the mountains alone. Most of the children not living in Ocean View and Masiphumelele almost immediately wrote both down as ‘dangerous places’, usually without having been there and without much nuance as to the reasons these are dangerous and out of bounds. On the other hand, the lists of categories indicate that some of the teenagers from for example Ocean View consider Fish Hoek to be dangerous and will not walk there alone. Other ‘out of bounds’ places for most children include ‘townships’ around 10 to 20 kilometres away from Fish Hoek. Some of these are on the basis of a personal experience, for example one of the two boys (who are both white) that drew Figure 2 was attacked and robbed in Mitchell’s Plain (a formerly zoned ‘coloured’ suburb) while visiting someone, and will therefore never go there again.

Most of the children say they know these places are dangerous on the basis of other people’s stories and opinions: “The other day someone on the school bus told us about a gang in Lavender Hill [a notorious ‘coloured’ gang area] who had cut off four people’s heads”. Some had more direct information, mostly from domestic workers or gardeners who live in Masiphumelele: “Our domestic was attacked by a gang close to her house and they tried to rob her. She says there is a lot of violence and even murder in Masi because of drinking”. Many of the children gave reports of violence and crime in the media as an important influence on their image of certain places. Examples range from general stories about violence in ‘townships’ on TV, which they connect to any township known to them, to specific stories and the crime statistics published by the police in the local press. For example one of the (white) boys said “I know that people get killed regularly in Masiphumelele, and I read in the paper that they also do strange things with animals, something to do with witchcraft”. In discussing these stories, the children articulate their awareness of

sensationalism, and that these reports colour their perception of certain places, but still seem to largely accept that these depictions are true.

Safety, mobility and stereotyping

In the ‘Anthropology of space and place’, the authors define places as ‘meaningful localities constituted through practice’; in other words personally experiencing or not experiencing a place will influence what you know and the way you feel about a certain place. One of the main points relevant to this paper is that “...places act as means of shaping conceptions and producing experiences of self and identity” (Gray in Low & Lawrence-Zuniga 2003: 227). The main conclusion to be drawn from the mapping exercises is that there is little knowledge of and movement between the historically separated ‘white’, ‘coloured’ and ‘black’ neighbourhoods. Because of limited knowledge or exposure to different places, the children spoke in very general terms and stereotypes about ‘other’ communities. The most evident example is that those who don’t live in Masiphumelele or Ocean View label either place as ‘dangerous’ without any specifics as to the reasons; they just ‘know’ it is not safe to go there, and generally do not have any experiences of being there. Negative depictions of certain neighbourhoods arise partly from actual crime figures published weekly in the local paper, but are in large part due to general taken-for-granted prejudices prevalent in the discourse in the valley about each other’s communities. The children’s acceptance of their parents’ restrictions points toward a negative perception of these places on the children’s part, since they do not protest or secretly go anyway. For the majority of children from Fish Hoek and other middle class areas, Masiphumelele and Ocean View are completely outside of their daily environment and experiences. There are also not many people moving between Masiphumelele and Ocean View, and children from the one place do not know much about the other. Fish Hoek is the most open to everyone in the valley, but again in a limited fashion; only a small number of children from Ocean View and Masiphumelele have friends there and have experienced Fish Hoek apart from the main shopping street and station.

Negative stereotyping of Ocean View and Masiphumelele is not exclusive to white children; the determining factor is the children’s own place of residence and unfamiliarity with both these places. Children living in these areas themselves have a much more informed view of ‘danger’. They identified specific places as unsafe, for example the shebeens in Masiphumelele, and the ‘drug dealers’ flats in Ocean View, and do not typify their whole neighbourhood as dangerous. Another important factor supporting prejudices and generalisations about Ocean View is classism. For example Darren’s father, one of the ‘coloured’ grade 11 boys, warned him that “...the car taking you to the

matric ball will not pass by Ocean View”, telling him he could not take a girl from Ocean View for a date. Darren indicates that his parents, and many other middle class coloured people, disassociate themselves from Ocean View residents and discourage their children from spending time there, as they feel they are ‘above’ them. He tentatively agrees with his parents, and his friends accuse him of being a ‘wannabe white’ because of this attitude. In his words, “colour is not the issue, I just don’t want to associate myself with uncivilised people”. This indicates his resistance to the stereotypical label ‘coloured’, which would associate him with a group of people in a negative way on the basis of stereotypes, in assuming that all coloured people are from Ocean View, and all people from Ocean View are lower class. Darren and his friends speak about ‘the coloureds’ at school as a category that misbehave, are rude, disrespectful, and noisy, but do not classify their own (coloured) friends in this manner¹⁹.

As mentioned before, there are marked differences between Fish Hoek valley’s ‘suburbia’ and the ‘townships’ of Masiphumelele and Ocean View. Despite many differences between these two neighbourhoods, compared to ‘suburbia’ they are both characterised by higher levels of population density, poverty, and crime. However, and interestingly so, data shows that despite seeming less safe, the particular physical layout of houses and streets combined with a public community life, gives children much more freedom of movement within the neighbourhood than children in ‘suburbia’. Because of this, children from Masiphumelele and Ocean View have much more independence in maintaining contact with neighbours, friends and relatives living close by, identify more clearly with people living in their neighbourhood as ‘their’ community, and are more knowledgeable of and connected to places and people in their neighbourhood than children living in other Fish Hoek valley suburbs.

Peer networks and friendships

The data indicate that spending time with peers without adult supervision gains importance with age, and that teenagers make more conscious choices who to associate themselves with. As children grow older, they are given more freedom by their parents. More friends are made outside of the school or neighbourhood, and young people meet an increasingly diverse range of people. Again, mobility is crucial to this process, and it depends on teenagers’ possibilities to move around whether they can expand their horizons. One of the grade 9 boys’ strategy is thus: “You need to find someone older with a car to make friends with and then you can use them to go out...it is much more interesting over the mountain; we go clubbing in Claremont and meet lots of people”. ‘Going out’

¹⁹ Section 4 will speak more about this topic of young people’s use of language and racial categorisations, in which they work within, around and against general stereotypes.

increases in importance with age, and the desire to meet new friends from different places grows as teenagers start feeling bored with people at school, the valley itself and the little it has to offer them.

Association with a certain group of people becomes more significant with age, and teenagers stress the importance of choosing friends who have the same style as you, or who are interested in the same things. Thayo, a grade 11 girl explains:

I am open to anyone, but being Christian affects my choice of friends. For me it is important that friends have the same morals; friends have to be 'real' and really care. (...) It is difficult for me to stay friends with people who start taking drugs; I have lost a friend over this.

Groups at school are categorised by their 'style', indicating common criteria such as interests, activities and dress code; for example the surfers, the jocks, hippies, punks, druggies, wannabe's, plastic people, As Lara -a 'white' grade 11 girl- explained, she can recognise 'her kind of people' by the way they behave and dress:

If there is a group of girls walking around all wearing clothing of the same brand, I know what kind of girls they are, and I know I will not feel a connection with them. My kind of people are the ones who don't really care about clothes or image, and can look like they just got out of bed. How many people do you see at school who have dreads? There are not many people like me in the valley....I have felt the odd one out ever since I was young.

Now that she has a boyfriend with a car, and has been going out to for example trance parties and alternative music events in greater Cape Town, she feels she has found 'her' community, and much more of a sense of belonging.

Communication by telephone

Telephones, particularly cell phones, play an important role in these children's lives, for social and security reasons. Cell phones are given to children as young as 11 years old, so parents can keep in touch with what their children are doing. In this way parents can also allow their children a bit more freedom of movement. A grade 6 girl explained: "If I want to go to the beach after school I can phone my dad to come and fetch me there later". Cell phones are a treasured commodity, often taken out to compare, to see which music, pictures or ringtones the other has. Children are not allowed to have their cell phones turned on at school but do it anyway: "...we just keep them hidden in our pockets and send each other messages in class", keeping connections going within and beyond the classroom.

Cell phones become increasingly important for teenagers as they grow older. They communicate extensively by SMS and make arrangements to meet. Darren (now 17 years old) recalls he has had a cell phone since the age of 11, and from the time he was in grade 9 "...everyone at school had cell phones... we use mostly SMS for social reasons, to tell friends about parties, to make plans to go out and so on". This is the one medium that is in the control of young people themselves and could truly transgress boundaries, but is clearly limited to those who can afford it. This means most of the children from poor backgrounds cannot participate in this way of communicating, and will not be in touch with what is happening outside of their direct environment. A home telephone is also indicated as being crucial for keeping in touch with friends and family not living close by. Virginia, a grade 11 student, showed me a picture of the phone table in her photo essay about daily life: "My mum complains that I am always on the phone... it's true I talk every day on the phone to my friends that are not at school with me". Most of the children from all age groups have friends at different schools, and many have friends and relatives all over the country and overseas. Keeping in touch over the phone is considered very important to keep an ongoing emotional bond with those further away.

Keeping boundaries

As expected, the grade 11s are most independent from their parents' social world. Although it became clear through the diary projects that many of the older teenagers I spoke to do spend a considerable amount of their free time at home, they are allowed to go out by themselves and therefore have more choices and experiences of 'different' spaces and people. Most of them show more interest in going 'over the mountain' (i.e. clubs and malls in the southern suburbs) than to somewhere like Masiphumelele, although reportedly there are sometimes a number of 'white' and 'coloured' youth to be found at certain shebeens in Masiphumelele. What is important to note is that although having friends from different social backgrounds is considered normal for these young people, this familiarity does not often extend to their homes if they are not from the same neighbourhood. There is an obvious hierarchy in this: on the whole Fish Hoek is the accepted location for any meetings, activities, parties or sleepovers, and a few children may have a church activity or visit friends in Ocean View, but no-one from outside seems to go to Masiphumelele on a social call, even though young people there have frequent social get-togethers. This hierarchy seems generally accepted and engrained in people's minds and behaviour. One of the grade 9 boys commented: "Our friends from Masi don't invite us, and we wouldn't go anyway. We don't want to tell this in their face but we would never come to sleep over".

The main explanation for children's stereotyping of 'other' communities is unfamiliarity. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of opportunities for children and young people in the valley to meet across physical boundaries outside of school. There are small numbers of young people from Masiphumelele and Ocean View who join for example sports clubs in Fish Hoek, but in general most after school activities in Fish Hoek valley (for example Scouting groups, Life Savers) are not very accessible for children without the necessary financial resources, with the added problem of transport for children not living close-by. A number of church youth groups are the most 'integrative' in this respect, often actively bringing children from different communities together for events and outings. For example Virginia (a grade 11 girl) belongs to the New Apostolic church in Sun Valley:

We have regular events with youth groups from churches in Ocean View and Masiphumelele, as well as churches from other areas in Cape Town. I really enjoy this, because I really like meeting new people from different places.

On the other hand there are also many churches in the valley that do not seek contact outside of their own communities. As mentioned earlier, a youth worker from a church in Fish Hoek was of the opinion that because of 'cultural differences' it is hard to organise events that will speak to youth from 'different communities'.

One local youth organisation actively promoting connections across communities is OIL. OIL trains peer educators at all high schools in the peninsula, and organises the 'LubeLounge', a regular event for which they bus in children from all participating schools for an evening of workshops and celebrity presentations on youth issues. Children who take part in these events speak very positively about the 'LubeLounge' as one of the few opportunities to meet people from other communities. Members explained: "...it is so nice to be in a place where we don't even think of the colour of our skin and hug our friends from different communities". They realise this is not something that is available to many children in the valley. Interestingly however, these events usually take place in Fish Hoek or Simonstown, and not in Masiphumelele or Ocean View. This again highlights a hierarchy in people's minds about the accessibility or appropriateness of certain places for valley community events, and in this way even the most well-intentioned initiatives inadvertently keep reinforcing existing boundaries.

4. Crossing boundaries: language and everyday relationships

Boundaries, to those who have experienced crossing them, become a matter of play rather than an obsession (Steyn 2001: 149).

I have many white friends, but sometimes someone will join our group and make racist comments about black people! When I say something about it they would say: "...but I don't mean you, you don't act like a black person. You know you are not like them, you are white".... And even when colour is not an issue someone will mention it at some point. Sometimes I will get comments like "Oh you think you can do that because you are black". I just turn it around, tease and make jokes, I say: "I can do this because I'm **black!**". Or I do 'black' accents on purpose... (Francis, 19).

This section explores young people's play with identity in the everyday, their ideals and experiences in peer relations and friendship, their experiences growing up in a changing society, and the interplay between discourse and identity. Drawing on key topics brought up in discussions with young people about their lives, for example the quality of friendships, family relations and their ideals, this section explores the normality of change, diversity, contradictions, and the crossing of boundaries; the fluidity of everyday experiences as opposed to the fixity of ideas and concepts around (racial) identity that have been discussed so far, and the difficulties young people sometimes have in negotiating these spheres.

In this section I will draw on data obtained from interviews, discussions and visual research methods with eight grade 11 teenagers, three boys and five girls between the ages of 17 and 19, who have taken part in this study. Six of them volunteered from two grade 11 history classes to take part in an after school discussion group, and I met with them about ten times during the course of the year, for creative exercises and focus group discussions. The exercises consisted of concentric circle diagrams to indicate which people are close to them, network diagrams to understand their connections to family and friends, and a diary and photography project of their daily routine for about a week. In individual interviews with each of them I used a timeline of events in their lives for me to understand the chronology of their lives, as a handle to talk about events they remember as significant, and to speak about issues such as their memories, schooling, friendships and family relations. I also used their photographs and diaries to talk about their current daily lives. The other two volunteers, Thayo and Leanne are in the same grade as the rest of the group but are also members of 'Tri', the young trainee researchers with whom we held focus group discussions throughout our fieldwork.

The normality of change and diversity in young people's lives

To gain an initial sense of this group of teenagers, the following table provides some background information. This data already indicates the vast diversity in origin, background and current lives within a group of only eight young people from one grade.

For most of these children, moving around has been a part of their growing up to some degree, and most have experienced changes in neighbourhoods, schools, homes, or family. For some of them this has meant changes in country of residence, in provinces, or in distinctly different neighbourhoods, in some instances crossing cultural, racial, and class boundaries. As for family and home situations, five out of eight grew up in a family with their biological parents and siblings. One of the girls was raised by her grandmother, two out of eight have parents that divorced early in their childhood, and one girl's parents got divorced during the time of this study. Only three out of eight were born, raised and schooled in the Fish Hoek valley, and have relatives living close by. Of the other five, two boys in this group were born in Cape Town and moved to the Fish Hoek valley with their families when they were still young; some of their close relatives continue to live in Cape Town, and some have moved overseas. The last three girls come from out of Cape Town, two of them from foreign countries, and they do not have their close relatives nearby. Two of these girls are moving overseas to the UK with their families in the year after finishing school, and two others of this group are going to the UK on a working holiday, where one of them has relatives they can stay with.

Table 1: research group of eight grade 11s

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age^a</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>	<i>Place of residence</i>	<i>Move^b</i>	<i>Family^c</i>	<i>Schooling^d</i>
Virginia	17	F	Sun Valley	Sun Valley	0	Father, mother, brother. elder sister out	Sun Valley primary, FHM, FHSB Matric
Justin	17	M	Fish Hoek	Marina da Gama (outside FH valley)	3	Single mother, stays w dad sometimes. elder brother out	Sun Valley primary, FHM, FHSB Matric
Lara	17	F	Fish Hoek	Glencairn	0	Grandmother and 2 siblings, visits father sometimes	Simonstown primary, FHM, FHSB Matric
Darren	17	M	Woodstock (Cape Town)	Fish Hoek	3	Father, mother. 2 elder sisters out	Bay primary (FH), Sun Valley primary, Wynberg grade 8+9, FHSB Matric
Konrad	19	M	Woodstock (Cape Town)	Sun Valley	1	Father, mother, 2 siblings. elder sister out	Pinelands primary, Sun Valley primary, FHM, FHSB repeat grade 10, Matric
Leanne	17	F	Boksburg (Johannesburg)	Fish Hoek	2	Father, mother, brother.	Boksburg primary & high, FHSB, failed grade 11, False Bay college, Pass
Francis	19	F	Tanzania	Fish Hoek	8	Lives alone, stays with mother and 2 siblings on weekends	Woodstock primary, OV primary, FHP, OV high, Mitchell's Plain high, FHSB repeat grade 11, Matric
Thayo	19	F	Zimbabwe	Fish Hoek	3	Father, mother 2 siblings. elder sister out	Zimbabwe/Mozambique primary & high, Grade 10 FHSB Matric

Notes:

- a) 'Age' is age at the beginning of our study in 2004.
- b) 'Move' refers to the number of times children moved house.
- c) 'Family' indicates the household composition including siblings who moved out.
- d) 'Schooling' is an indication of level and place of schooling.

Resisting racial classifications

One of the main themes of this paper, the ambivalence and negotiations around racial identities and classifications in these young peoples lives, immediately comes up by an attempt at describing 'race' in this group. Clearly, classification according to 'race' is not clear-cut, nor something these young people are necessarily comfortable with or interested in. At the same time it seems inescapable to refer to their racial identity in this context altogether. Ironically, in writing about young people's ambivalence around racial identities, it seems unavoidable to use these labels, to be able to make the point that these same labels are increasingly irrelevant in young people's self-identification.

By conventional South African racial categories used by people in the valley and based on physical appearance, Virginia, Justin, Konrad and Lara would be classified 'white', Darren 'coloured' and Francis 'black'.

However, *Francis* considers herself an African (not in the sense of 'African' as a racial category, which is not used by young people in daily conversations) because of her Tanzanian and South African heritage, and because she resents people using the label 'black' in categorising herself or anyone else. In her daily life she speaks English with most of her friends at school and in her neighbourhood, and she speaks mostly kiSwahili at home with her family. She also speaks isiXhosa, her father's mother tongue, but does not really identify with 'being Xhosa' and says most people in Masiphumele consider her an outsider because of the way she speaks English.

Darren, who would be considered 'coloured' by his physical appearance, gets labelled as a 'wannabe white' by his friends. He is resistant to this allegation, but is also resistant to be associated with what he calls 'common coloureds', whom he associates with the lower class, and agrees with his friends that he doesn't 'act coloured'. (The meaning of these kinds of labels will be discussed further on in this section).

Konrad does not classify himself or others in a racial sense and never spoke in any kind of racial terms; even when directly asked he avoided the issue. He looks 'white' but some family members seem to have some 'coloured' physical traits. He clearly stated that he is not interested in classifying along racial lines, and it was inappropriate to ask him about any racial classification pertaining to himself or his family.

Thayo, Leanne and Lara do not refer much to racial classifications at all, and do not have a particular opinion on this matter other than that it is 'unimportant'. *Virginia*, who generally upholds a 'white' identity, told me in our private

conversations that she has a coloured line in her family. However, when I asked what she considered herself to be she said adamantly:

I am white! In my dad's family up the tree there's coloured people but my mum's white, my dad's white, I am white.

IG: Just out of curiosity, if there's coloured people in the family when does this change? When do you 'change' from coloured to white?

P: Uhm... I don't know...it's just somewhere in the family, like my dad's father's brother is...my dad's father, he looked a bit coloured, and then his brother looked major coloured, and he has a coloured wife, and a daughter that's coloured. I don't know it's just like in the family... I don't know the real background.

IG: Is that something that's important?

P: No it's nothing, I don't mind, I have other colours in me, it's interesting. (Interview with Virginia, May 2005).

This quote alone is already full of contradictory and ambiguous remarks around a racial identity. She 'is' white, but has coloured heritage; her grandfather looked 'a bit' coloured and his brother looked 'major' coloured. In her remark 'no, it's nothing, I don't mind' there is some hesitation indicating possible problems with acknowledging a coloured heritage, but at the same time it is for her a potentially interesting identity. Not many of her friends know about her heritage, and she has recently decided to find out more about the family tree for a school history project.

Ambiguous relationship with 'race'

In contrast with general ideas and perceptions about difference as set out earlier, talking with these teenagers about individual friendships and peer relations reveals that these young people show little concern with 'race', and in this regard emphasise 'being the same' in their ideals and expectations of everyday peer relations. Personality, sharing the same morals, and trustworthiness are said to be the basis for good friendships, and external factors like the colour of one's skin are unimportant. At the same time they cannot escape the 'reality' of racial categorisation. When asked to elaborate on the composition of groups at school, 'colour' is indicated as an obvious reason for group formation, despite being dismissed as unimportant in their own lives. For example in a discussion with Justin and Virginia, there is a constant friction between observing and labelling people according to colour, and the desire for this not to be relevant. "Coloured, black, and white groups are obvious at school...especially coloureds stick together, and will also stick up for each other no matter what". Neither of them thinks this is a good thing because many times people immediately make

something a race issue even when they do not know the context of a certain event. For example when a grade 12 student was arguing with a grade 11 student who was in the wrong line at the tuck shop (the grade 12s have certain privileges), his 'coloured' friends immediately came to join in the argument and accused the person of being racist. For Justin this is a major irritation, when "...black and coloured people make everything about race when it is not". Both of them express that race is not important and they certainly resent people accusing them of racism. Virginia added: "How can I be racist if I am friends with coloureds?". Her dad however does comment on 'black people' walking past their house making noise and doesn't appreciate 'them', on which Justin remarked that that is racist behaviour, just as it is also racist to talk about 'them' as if all blacks are all the same. In their conversations generally they hesitated to call anyone racist, felt they themselves were not racist, yet found themselves talking in terms of 'black people' and 'coloureds' or 'coloured people' and hesitantly making comments about 'them'. They confessed they would probably not have spoken so openly if Francis had been present, or 'lots of coloured people', as they were afraid they might be hurt or take it the wrong way.

Some young people do remark that race is a sensitive issue at school, although many of them don't really understand why, since "we are all equal". But there is an agreement that the topic is usually avoided, and people will not easily speak their minds. At the same time young people concur that there is actually little racism at school. Lara and Francis put forward that this is because at school you are monitored and restricted, it is only 'out there' that people speak; in social situations racial issues do come out. Francis has experiences with this, as mentioned in the quote at the beginning of this section: "...even when it is not about colour, it always seems to come up". However, she says that she does not really experience racism herself, and deals with the issue jokingly if something does come up. In her schooling career she has attended many different schools; the very 'white' Fish Hoek Primary school, a 'coloured' but more mixed school in Mitchell's Plain, a predominantly 'coloured' school in Ocean View, and now Fish Hoek Senior High. She has had bad experiences with racism in Ocean View, where both students and teachers ostracised her, but otherwise did not experience any other of her environments as racist. Lara's experiences around race are related to her having a coloured stepmother, and the different reactions she gets whether she is walking around for example a shopping mall with her stepmother, or with her (white) dad. In one particular example she got stared at when she was with her dad, and felt 'accepted' when she was with her stepmother, as it was in a mall with largely coloured clientele. She is adamant about racism being wrong, and ended a friendship with someone who was racist towards her stepmother. In a discussion around racism, Lara and Francis told me "...for most people, when they get to mix with each other on a daily basis and get to know each other, things are fine. That is the best way". They also believe

the problem is that most parents are from the apartheid era and are used to the old systems even if they were not 'racist'. Francis had a first hand experience of this; one friend's father had said he would never eat with a black person, but not long after that, "...he invited me over for dinner, and even cooked the meal himself...I don't know, I guess he just got to know me and liked me".

'Acting out of your colour'

One way young people are dealing with racial categories is by using humorous names for people who 'are' one thing and 'act' another. These negotiations of categories and naming comments on existing structures: they play around with racial identities, using 'old' categories within an ideal of non-racism, commenting on the way people are mixing up racial identities, and simultaneously re-enforcing stereotypical ideas around 'race'. As mentioned before, most young people are consistent in saying, "there is no racism in this school, we are all friends". At the same time I started to hear more and more comments about people 'acting' out of their colour, which indicates an expectation of a certain kind of behaviour linked to skin colour.

In a discussion around friends and friendships, Virginia laughingly told me that a few years ago people around her were calling her C.I.T. The others in the group were amused at my ignorant look, and explained that this means 'Coloured In Training', because she used to spend time with a group of 'coloured' friends at school. She says for her it is normal to 'hang out' with coloured people, as her dad is a pastor at a church in Ocean View where she spends time, and her sister's ex-husband and father of her nephew is 'coloured'.

I made friends with [she gestures apostrophes] 'the coloured people', that's when I got classed as a wannabe and all that. My sister influenced me, she lived at her dad's, went to school in Kraaifontein and mixed with coloured people and said you should mix with them... she is my older sister I look up to, so ever since then I just hang out with them...actually since grade 7 when I started making friends with coloured people...I had had coloured friends since I was little, [but then] it was just like I was more with them, like sleeping at their houses...being with them most of the time. Some lived in Ocean View, some in da Gama Park, some in Steenberg [where her sister lives now] (Interview with Virginia, May 2005).

Justin, one of her best friends at present, commented regularly on Virginia's lifestyle, friends and boyfriends, and seems a little disapproving of her association with the coloured group and the way she was behaving at the time. She acknowledges: "I did like speak like them [in 'kombuis Afrikaans'] when I was with them ... it was just natural. People still diss me about it, but I don't take offence to that anymore". She has however recently cut ties with this group after a major argument with her best friend, and does not go to Ocean View

anymore after she realised people were talking about her behind her back. Justin commented that coloured boys only want to date white girls who ‘act coloured’. Virginia disputed this by coming up with some examples of girls who don’t ‘act coloured’ at all, and also coloured boys who don’t ‘act coloured’ either. But she acknowledged she behaved differently herself, and “now that I have a white boyfriend I get comments from classmates that I have ‘gone back to white’. My coloured friends tell me to ‘take off your high shoes’ and say I am ‘acting white’ again”; by this they mean being all high and mighty. She doesn’t like this at all, because she feels people see white as higher, “which really it is not!” She subsequently gives the example of her friend Darren who is coloured, but doesn’t behave ‘coloured’ at all; she feels “he actually wants to be white” because he thinks it is better that being coloured. Darren, who was present at this conversation, was quick to respond and denied wanting to be white, but definitely does not want to associate himself with the behaviour of ‘coloureds’. ‘Coloureds’ in this sense are associated with being ‘common’: walking with a bounce like in American movies, speaking loudly, using a mix of ‘lazy English’ and ‘kombuis Afrikaans’, being disrespectful towards teachers, thinking they are cool but generally acting very immature and, as he typified it, ‘uncivilised’. The group recognise that group dynamics are an important factor in this behaviour; when one of these kids is alone in a mixed group they will act ‘normal and mature’. Here again there is a clear indication of a relationship between ‘acting’ a colour and a stereotypical kind of behaviour associated with this colour. In this case it is likely that ‘acting coloured’ is a performance and resistance against the authority of ‘white’ school culture and codes of behaviour, as adolescents will often find ways of going against the norm, or a certain authority.

As for black children, both Justin and Virginia agreed “...a lot of black kids at our school hang out with white friends, and many people, especially the coloureds, call them whitey or coconut”. I asked what it would be that makes them ‘white’: “It’s the way they speak, and because they are hanging out with only whites”. According to them there are a few who really do want to be ‘white’, for example a black girl who Justin thought was perhaps adopted, not knowing that she in fact lived in Fish Hoek with her mother. “ She speaks about black people as if she is not...she will for example say [disapprovingly] ‘look at that black guy! What is he doing...’”. They consider it strange, that being black herself she would comment on someone else in such a way. Again this is an example of labeling a person according to skin colour, expecting a certain kind of behaviour, and in this case some disapproval of someone who ‘denies’ their skin colour. Both found it much more problematic to comment on the meaning of ‘acting black’; Virginia explained it to mean the way someone speaks and behaves, but did not want to give examples. This hesitation I often felt in discussions about ‘black people’ points towards a more difficult joking relationship than with ‘coloureds’. I suspect this is because there is a much more

strongly felt association with racist language and apartheid categorisation of 'blacks' as inferior.

The group recognised that it is mostly others who classify you, and these labels do not reflect who you are. More examples of names given to people are 'Top Deck' (a chocolate bar that is half black half white), 'coconut' (black outside white inside), 'half a naartjie' (in between, i.e. 'not an orange and not a naartjie'), 'model C' girl (derived from the model C schools that were predominantly white), and 'wannabe whitey'. We all had a good laugh at many of these names, but during the subsequent discussion Francis got very agitated "...and so what is a black person supposed to be like then? How is a black, or coloured ...or even (sic!) white supposed to act?" She is often confronted with people who say she is 'leaning over to the white side', 'acting white', and a 'model C girl', because she does not speak English with a Xhosa accent and has many white friends. Thus, Francis stated that in this way you get judged a lot by 'so-called friends', from people your 'own colour' and of other colours (and other agreed). These young people are acutely aware of the mechanisms of being labelled, and despite this name-calling being hurtful in some cases, it is not taken too seriously.

Ambivalence around using racial terminology

The above-mentioned labels point to the identification of stereotypical behaviour and performance as well as skin colour as an indicator for group identity. At the same time as playing around with this kind of racial terminology, young people report that they struggle with political correctness and the 'reality' of race in their daily lives. In a grade 9 discussion group a number of children pointed out that it is difficult to know how to speak. One of the boys commented: "If you describe someone as black you are racist! But if he is, what am I supposed to say? Do I say he is really tall and uhm...". At the same time there are people who actively try to avoid having to use racial terms because they feel uncomfortable with them. For example Francis, who does not want to use the word 'black', yet in conversations she sometimes finds herself not being able to avoid using the term 'black people'. In general racial terminology is a difficult issue: most young people do not want to speak in a way that categorises people according to skin colour, but at the same time they cannot find any other way to speak about diversity.

Young people are conscious of their distinct use of language and words with respect to 'race'. They will speak differently to teachers than to each other, and avoid using certain terminology in the presence of adults who might not understand their use of words. As 19-year old Konrad explains, race really isn't an issue in his group of friends; they are a mixed bunch and don't talk about

each other in ‘that way’. Only when they are joking around they use words like ‘nigga’, to call each other’s attention. “It has nothing to do with a racial issue, it’s more like from a movie or something”. They mix with everyone, and make jokes like “why, is it because I am white?” But, he says:

...we really don’t see it as colour. Our parents probably see it different because of apartheid; they might take it the wrong way...it’s just for us because we are not affected. We are not racist towards each other. But we wouldn’t say it to just anyone, you have to know who you can say it to, who you can joke with.

He says people at school don’t openly object to jokes like this but sometimes you can see from their facial expression if they are annoyed. To avoid this they usually just talk like this within their group, where they understand each other.

5. Conclusion

Identity marks the conjuncture of our past with the social, cultural and economic relations we live in. ‘Each individual is the synthesis not only of existing relations but of the history of these relations. He is a precis of the past’. Making our identities can only be understood within the context of this articulation, in the intersection of our everyday lives with the economic and political relations of subordination and domination (Rutherford 1990: 20).

Among the Fish Hoek schoolchildren described in this study, discussions around experiences and expectations of relationships within the peer group are imbued with an ideal of equality, yet exist within a larger context of separateness and inequality. The social geography within which these relationships occur is still largely moulded by the history of apartheid’s divisions according to ‘race’ and class. At the same time, young people base –in both their expressed attitudes and their choice of friends- their notions of division and difference amongst their peers on gender, life-style, class, religion, moral values, and language, rather than racial identity as such. ‘Race’ collapses into these signifiers of difference, and seems to surface mostly as a category when made explicit by ‘others’ or is used in a subverted and joking manner within a peer context.

Sharon Stephens emphasises that research on childhood and children is a generative site for exploring contemporary global processes, and stresses the importance of looking at sites where ‘deviant’, ‘flexible’ and frequently contradictory processes occur. “How do children themselves experience, understand, and perhaps resist or reshape the complex, frequently contradictory cultural politics that inform their daily lives?” (Stephens 1995: 3). In analysing young people’s ways of dealing with ‘race’ in Fish Hoek, an analytical division between ‘objectified’ culture and the fluidity of cultural production seems to make sense (Hall in Stephens 1995, Yon 2000). What is apparent is that the way

these young people in Fish Hoek use categories of 'race' and 'culture' is simultaneously rigid and fluid, depending on the context in which these terms are used.

In practice these young people are less concerned with 'fixed' categories of difference, and experience identity as changing according to specific situations and in reaction to the way other people label them (Frankental 1998). There is a distinction between abstract thinking about 'race', where separateness and difference come to the fore, and speaking about experiences and expectations of relationships in daily life, in which children emphasise inclusiveness and sameness. These young people create their own world of meaning in an environment of structural racism, sometimes reproducing, sometimes ignoring, and sometimes opposing their racialised environment. There are many contradictions within and between their ideals and realities; for example, between a politically correct way of dealing with 'race' and what children witness in terms of social divisions and hierarchies around them; being good friends at school, but not visiting someone's home because of 'barriers'; a discourse of non-racism and at the same time the persistent presence of apartheid as a subject in the school curriculum; using racist terms in the same breath as challenging them.

The children and teenagers discussed in this study generally do not deliberately separate people out because of 'race', but do in many ways continue to anticipate 'difference' on the basis of a person's skin colour and place of residence. Young people's discourse shows awareness around skin colour and difference, and specifically racial name-calling reinforces racist notions and reiterates the dominant discourse. At the same time young people use these racial categories in a subverted and playful way, which puts the significance and validity of racial classification and identity in perspective. Daniel Yon has found that for young people in Canada, the transitional context in which youth find themselves is "...fraught with complexity and contradictions, because conventional racist practices and old ways of thinking about race coexist with the new signifiers of race which these youth are in the process of producing" (2000: 104). This is a valid statement for children growing up in contemporary South Africa, although I would add that for the children I have worked with, a racial identity is only one of many that young people consider, and certainly not always the most important. Furthermore, they are keenly aware that racial identity is often defined by circumstances, by other people, or a certain incident that makes one aware of 'race'. This means they see racial identity as in a sense superficial, as optional: a person is not defined by his or her skin colour, and can choose to use, disregard or contest a racial identity. In this way young people 'free up' racial identity, and emphasise that skin colour or race is not "who you are". Children indicate that background, language, individual taste, experience,

and attitude are important factors that play a part in determining who will be most likely to ‘understand’ each other, and are the basis for friendships and groups. A person’s identity does not exclude a racial aspect, but living in the same neighbourhood, or having the same goals in life are much stronger elements of identification between children. This points to a different way of dealing with ‘race’ than for example Soudien (2000) and Dolby (2001) have found, whose main conclusion is that racial identity matters, even though young people construct and express it in different ways.

However, the social geography of the Fish Hoek valley continues to contest many of the ideals of these young people, and often works against them. Their bodily experience of the environment they live in, most notably the restrictions on mobility, puts boundaries on their experiences of different places, and as a result, different people. Adults’ discourse and practices continue to largely uphold attitudes confirming the validity of racial differentiation, sometimes in an openly racist manner, many times through the discourse of cultural difference, and are an important influence on what children can and do experience in the valley. At the same time, an increasing diversity at school, through church and youth initiatives, and to a minor extent in neighbourhoods, enables young people to interact, integrate and make friends with a wide range of people. The disjuncture that children experience between a generally racialised environment of ‘difference’, and their personal experiences of ‘sameness’ leads to disassociation of individuals from ‘their’ place and category of ‘them’, and inclusion into a group of ‘us’, negating or disregarding experiences and notions that do not fit their ideal of equality. In this way children and young people, as they grow up, make friends and create networks across ideological and social boundaries that are still largely in place, and are thus generating change in a racially polarised society.

It is clear that experiencing diversity as the norm makes young people increasingly less concerned with ‘race’, which is an encouraging development in a country with South Africa’s history. However, there are limits to their abilities to overcome existing barriers in broader society, and unless there are further structural changes to break down these barriers, young people’s efforts and desire for diversity and equality in their daily lives will not get the space they deserve. One way, as suggested by the writers of a South African Human Rights Council report on racism at school, is to capitalise on the integrating role that schools can play, by re-structuring school clusters and ensuring increased resource sharing. “Proper urban planning in the context of the post-apartheid city and town could allow schools to become important instruments for integrating society. The potentialities of this idea should be explored seriously by the education authorities and urban planners” (Vally & Dambala 1999: 47).

As has been evident in this study, children value spaces and initiatives enabling diversity in their lives, and their experiences of growing up in such an environment changes their attitude, as they show that boundaries once thought to be definite are in fact permeable and change is therefore possible. I believe that for this reason researchers and policy makers should pay more attention to the experiences of this generation growing up in the 'new' South Africa. Bukowski *et al* comment that, "The social world of childhood is instrumental not in conveying cultural patterns but by contributing to the formation of new patterns of living together" (1996: 30). In practice, in Fish Hoek valley it is largely children and teenagers who are developing the 'new patterns' in contemporary South Africa. Furthermore, I believe that the findings of this study confirm that certainly in a society like South Africa we must stay aware of the continuing overlap between 'race' and class, and analyse this overlap for a better understanding of the real reasons for boundaries and difference, and be very careful in the way we present our data. Racial classifications should not be treated as a given, and it is inaccurate to blindly categorise people into population groups based on 'race' and then draw conclusions from an assumption of the significance of 'race'. In addition, if we continue to speak in predominantly racial terms about the population of this country (or the world for that matter) we will be sustaining the idea that 'race' is the primary, or even only, reason for difference.

To return to the article cited at the beginning of this paper, Du Toit concludes (somewhat sentimentally) with the opinion that by, "Listening to one another's accounts of what life is like in this city, and most importantly, by identifying and amending those modes of behaviour that people experience as racist, we may yet create the kinds of trust that could translate Cape Town's natural beauty into a social one..." (*Cape Times*, 07/04/05). To further this cause, perhaps including children and young people in this debate will inspire adults to find ways 'out' of their racially polarised minds.

Appendix A: Statistics on Fish Hoek-Ocean View-Masiphumelele Area

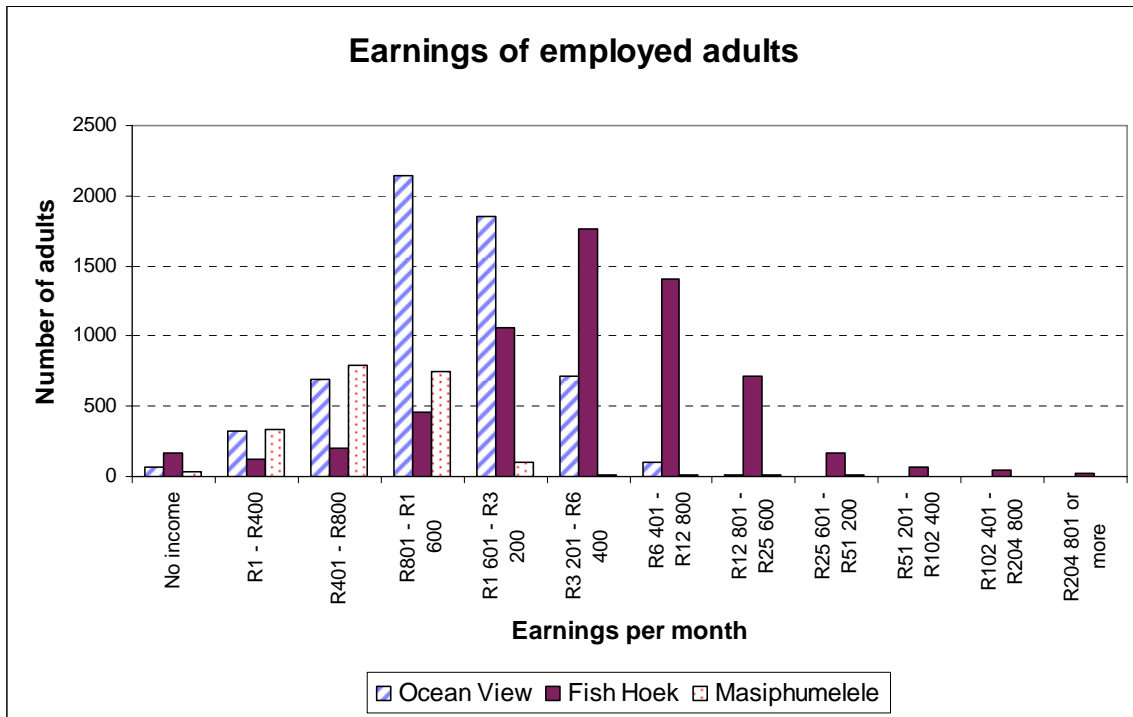


Figure A1: Earnings of employed adults
Source: Seekings (2004).

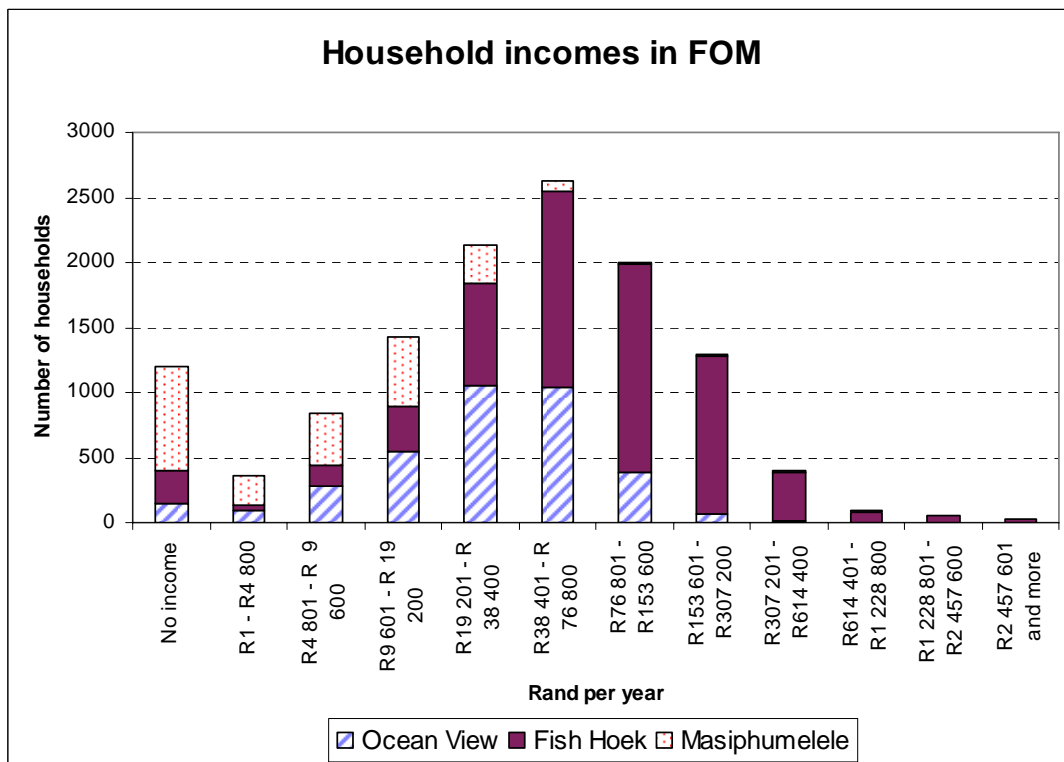


Figure A2: Household incomes in FOM
Source: Seekings (2004).

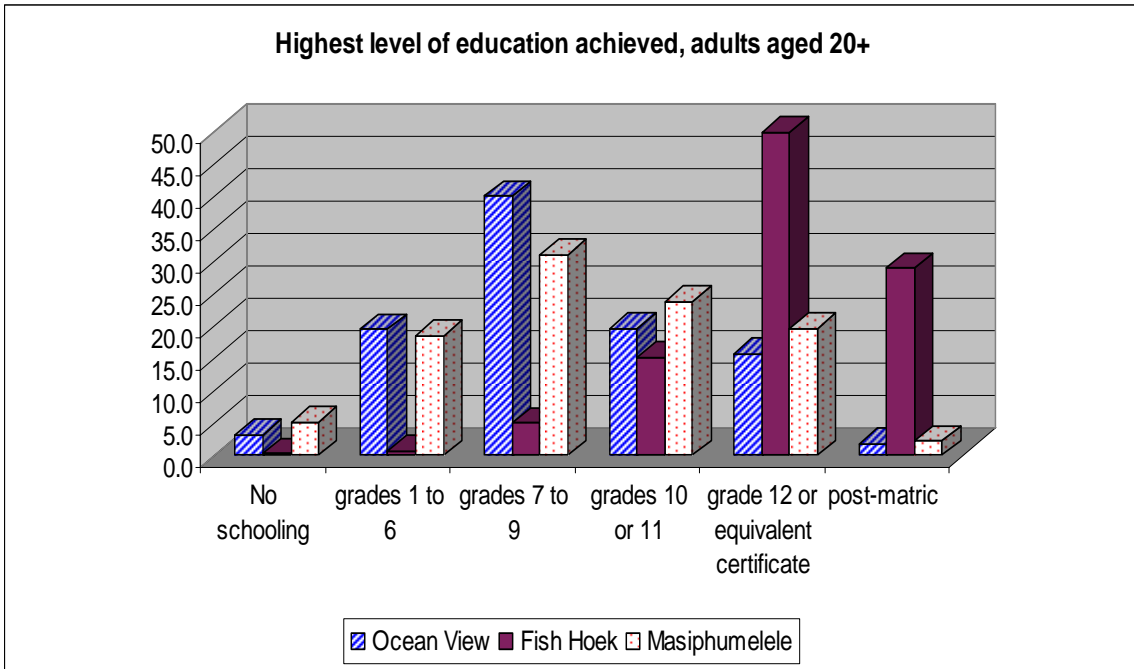


Figure A3: Highest level of education achieved, adults aged 20+
 Source: Seekings (2004).

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