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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 MIGRANTS: AN OVERVIEW

#### 1.1.1 The Global Perspective

It has been predicted that the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>, will be a time of migration. It is the result of worldwide political and socio-economic changes and upheavals (Castles & Miller 1998:2).

Today, global migration follows main trends. These include: a decline in labour migration in Europe; family reunions; countries of emigration changing to countries of immigration; economic migration to classical immigration countries; new migrations as a result of socio-economic change; foreign labour recruitment from less developed countries by oil-producing countries; mass movements of refugee and asylum-seekers; increasing international mobility of skilled people (Castles & Miller 1998:79).

In a paper presented to the Symposium on African and African-American Intellectuals at the University of California in 1998, Paul Zeleza, Professor in History and African Studies, remarks that the quantitative scale of international migration is less than is often supposed. However, changes in the composition and direction of international migration have been quite significant. Here, he emphasises two developments, i.e. the growing diversification in sending/receiving countries of immigration and the greater significance of skilled migration which in the last instance is evident in its actual flow and in the formulation of migration policies (Zeleza 1998:3).

Castles & Miller (1998:92) note a rapid increase in skilled migration in the 1980's and 1990's and identify this as a key element in globalisation. The United Nations (IMRDX: 2001:5), support positive migration trends, specifically when these are linked with well-informed decisions, offers of employment or social connections. It is true that the legal status of migrants plays a role in their vulnerability to exploitation, discrimination and hostility. Many would argue, then, that the very nature of the position of professional transients/migrants would protect them. The opposite seems to be true, especially when the migrant is a black African. However, in South Africa, for reasons discussed hereunder, African immigration, whether skilled or unskilled, is problematic.

The status of migrants in the host country is usually defined by a specific legal status i.e. that of foreigner or non-citizen. Their visibility compounds the issue further. Migrants often come from communities with different socio-political and religious institutions, customs and cultural practices. In addition, they may also be visibly different, e.g. physical characteristics and ways in which they dress (Castles & Miller 1998:10).

There is less diversity when migrants are indistinguishable from the host population, e.g. Western Europeans in North America. Another example could be that of skilled transients/migrants who are rarely seen as presenting assimilation problems: *"skilled migrants are not an issue of public concern, since they are perceived as bringing economic benefits for the receiving countries without creating social burdens* (Castles & Miller 1998:92)"

Castles & Miller (1998:13) remark that migration and subsequently immigration may cause strong reactions from certain sections in a population. The presence of large numbers of foreigners is often linked to socio-economic changes in a country. People who are already caught-up in the unpredictability of social change may regard newcomers as the cause of this change. Within this context, migrants are blamed for taking away employment opportunities, changing life styles and standards and interfering with social cohesion. They are also perceived as a burden on social services.

The above corresponds with Wagner's statement (Wagner 2002:12) that a situation where migrants do not fit any formal typologies can create tension in the host country. Differences between migrants and the host society are often described in terms of 'ethnicity' or 'race' (Castles & Miller 1998:10). Within this context the United Nations (IMRDX: 2001:5) cautions: *"the migration process exposes them [many migrants] to racism and xenophobia, when leaving their own country, transiting another or entering their country of destination"*. Castles & Miller (1998:14) remark that racism is *"a threat, not only to immigrants themselves, but also to democratic institutions and social order"*.

### **1.1.2 MIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA**

Crush (2001:8) remarks that before the 1990's, African migrants did not perceive South Africa as an ideal migration destination. This changed after the end of the apartheid era. The new political climate in the country and the new migration movements linked to increased globalisation, changed the situation significantly. South Africa became an

attractive migration destination and a stepping-stone to other prospective destinations.

Many African migrants expected South Africans to be more welcoming, but the public and official climate appears to be quite hostile - despite the fact that many African countries supported the apartheid struggle. Studies have shown that many migrants to South Africa have little legal or employment protection and hardly any rights (Crush 2001:8,9).

Linked to this is what Wagner (2002:13) calls the 'new bases for South African self-identification'. Apartheid politics may have fostered allegiances along racial lines, but the socio-economic and political climate of post-apartheid South Africa created new categories for South African self-identification along exclusive nationalistic lines rather than race. Crush (2001:11) refers to a 1998 Human Rights Watch report stating that a significant number of South Africans regard foreigners, especially black foreigners, as a threat. It would seem that South Africans of all races prefer North American and European migrants/immigrants.

With reference to an Executive Summary by the South African Centre for Policy Studies (number 8), Wagner (2002:16,17) notes that migrants from non SADC countries have a different socio-economic impact on South African society. They are often more educated and affluent. She argues that South Africans overlook the resources and benefits non-SADC migrants bring to the host country and that they choose to give preference to race and regionalism over wealth and education. It is also interesting that racial differences are hierarchically ordered. SADC migrants are more welcome than those further up north of South Africa's borders, particularly migrants from West and Francophone African countries. However, the difference in negative attitudes to SADC and non-SADC migrants is marginal (Wagner 2002:14, Crush 2001:22,23).

Within the above context, the South African Human Rights Commission quotes a detainee at a deportation centre: *"It is clear that being a black foreigner .. is no protection from racism, especially if you are from a country north of South Africa's neighbouring states. Instead, black foreigners from these countries can expect to experience the same levels of abuse, discrimination and stereotyping endured by black aliens in other parts of the world"* (Crush 2001:22).

Wagner (2002:5) notes that migration is socioculturally meaningful because it is about people and where they are physically situated e.g. in villages, cities, states, regions, etc.

Although Wagner's study focuses on Johannesburg and its relevance as a mass migration destination, many of the aspects mentioned are relevant to Cape Town. She firstly distinguishes Johannesburg from other global and international cities and defines it as a transnational city that is to be seen as distinct from a transnational village. Transnational cities are according to Levitt, (in Wagner 2002:7) *"looser more flexible defined place-based communities [which] form when migrants leave one urban area for another"*.

The fact is that migrants have transformed South African cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town. Wagner (2002:19) indicates that in the case of Johannesburg, it has become transnational and cosmopolitan. In cities such as Johannesburg, migrants highlight *"the highly contentious relationship between the movement of people and the stability of places" .... demonstrating "both the obstacles in the way as well as how the transnational migrants manoeuvre about them"*.

Migrants in any city are in a situation where they 'give and take' from its sociocultural and economic environment. Wagner (2002:15) remarks that the residential and employment patterns of migrants highlight the boundaries of membership. These patterns emphasise the *"simultaneous levels of interconnectivity and isolation among the communities of migrants"* Like those from the SADC, non-SADC (or northern African countries) and local South Africans.

## 1.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

### 1.2.1 Aims

- To place professional African migrants in a specific historical and present context.
- To adequately define the concept "professional (African) migrant".
- To determine how professional African migrants from non-SADC countries define reality in a specific urban setting through the conventional constructs: identity, culture and community.
- To discover whether the 'memory' of African migration flows of the past (i.e. diasporic events) and current global/continental events affect this reality.
- To establish how external influences such as xenophobia, racism and intolerance shape professional migrants' definition of reality.
- To ascertain how professional African migrants interact with South African society and culture.

### 1.2.2 Motivation

Contemporary professional/skilled African migration can neither be divorced from its historical past nor from the dynamics of current political influences. The past is forever present in the memories of older processes that created the ongoing African diaspora. Contemporary processes such as transnationalism and globalisation have put Africa at a critical juncture. In order to be a player in the global arena it needs to turn the human cost of the diaspora into a positive and change the course of the current professional migratory flow.

The idea of Pan-Africanism revives in continental projects such as *Nepad*. The African professional has become a tool in the development of Africa. The emphasis seems to be on the fact that each country needs its own pool of skills and that the intra-continental flow of professional migrants is undesirable. Ultimately, the formulation of new immigration policies will address the flow of professional migrants and migrants in general.

Skilled/professional migrants are usually not an issue of concern for the host country. Their status as professionals would seem to set them apart from other migration flows. Host countries generally perceive them as bringing economic benefits to the country without creating a social burden.

Since 1994, the new political climate in South Africa and the new migration movements linked to increased globalisation have made the country an attractive migration destination and a stepping-stone to other prospective destinations.

Many African migrants expected South Africans to be more welcoming, but the public and official climate appears to be quite hostile - despite the fact that many African countries supported the apartheid struggle. Studies have shown that many migrants to South Africa have little legal or employment protection and hardly any rights.

Apartheid politics may have fostered allegiances along racial lines, but the socio-economic and political climate of post-apartheid South Africa created new categories for South African self-identification along exclusive nationalistic lines rather than race. It would seem, as has been mentioned, that South Africans of all races prefer what has been termed "the paler strangers" i.e. North American and European migrants/immigrants.



A 1998 Human Rights Watch report states that a significant number of South Africans regard foreigners, especially Black foreigners from non-SADC countries and more specifically those from Francophone - and West-Africa as a threat. These migrants are often more educated and affluent than their South African counterparts.

Studies have shown that there is less diversity when migrants are virtually indistinguishable from the host population, or where the assumption exists that they do not present assimilation problems. However, in the case of professional African migrants in South Africa, the opposite seems to be true.

Research indicates that African migrant communities in South Africa live a marginalised existence. This also seems to be true in the case of professional African migrants. As was alluded to above, they are set apart through well-publicised legal definitions, i.e. 'foreigners' or 'non-citizens'. These labels, combined with the visibility of many migrants in respect of e.g. physical characteristics, different socio-political and religious institutions, customs, dress codes and cultural practices, serve to emphasise "otherness" or "apartness".

In this marginalised world, identities, perspectives and definitions change. Issues such as class, gender, race, citizenship, ethnicity and sexuality play a role in the definition of "belonging" and how people assign meaning to aspects of their reality. Culture may play a significant role as an identity-source in the sense that it builds self-esteem in a social environment where capabilities and experiences are undermined by official and public attitudes. Within this context, culture, as a dynamic entity is often recreated and stretched to become a bridge between the past and the actual situation.

The transcultural nature of the migrant's situation creates multifaceted sociocultural identities. These identities are transitional and renegotiable and possess new transcultural elements. This is a world where the migrant could be both one and something other, e.g. a Francophile-African born in France but with strong ties to Benin. The intriguing question is whether this Francophile-African man or woman identifies and recognises his ethnic self and whether this is primary or secondary to his identity as a French national. Being a professional transient, could he become 'post-ethnic'?

The nature of the migrant's position in the host society determines community and membership. On a formal basis, the position is determined through immigration laws and regulations. Informally, various social and economic relationships come into play.

Community and membership are about negotiated spaces. Within these spaces, migrants highlight the interrelationship between the movement of people and the stability of places and identify obstacles in the way and how they negotiate these obstacles. Residential and employment patterns of migrants highlight the boundaries of membership, emphasising levels of interconnectivity and isolation among migrant communities.

### **1.2.3 HYPOTHESES**

- Professional African migrants form unique identities, cultural - and community structures within a given host country and a specific locality. The constructs: identity, culture and community set them apart from other migration flows and categories of economic migrants.
- Within a specific migration flow/event, there exists a dynamic interplay between the past and present (e.g. memories of the African diaspora and current African/global events). These dynamics will in turn, shape the perceptions of professional African migrants in respect of identity, culture and community.
- Although professional African migrants may bring economic benefits to their host country (South Africa), they are less protected than their White and Black counterparts and are often marginalised and exposed to racism, xenophobia and intolerance. In turn, marginalisation and related events affect their perceptions of identity, culture and community.
- The category "Professional African migrants" defies existing definitions and migration typologies. Although they are highly skilled and qualified, their position in the world of (African) economic migrants is not automatically one of cosmopolitanism, privilege and glamour. Their decision to migrate is also not necessarily voluntary.

## **1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION**

### **1.3.1 Research population**

The research group consists of Black professional/skilled (i.e. tertiary or similarly qualified) migrants from non-SADC countries who are resident in Cape Town. They

have come to work and live in South Africa out of necessity or have been recruited in Africa, Europe or the US for employment purposes (See Annexure A).

### **1.3.2 Literature study**

A literature study which focussed on anthropological and general theory and research data in respect of migration, identity, community and culture as well as the constructs of globalisation, transnationalism and diaspora was conducted. A critical analysis of the relevant discourses will follow in the ensuing chapters. I have also analysed topical media narratives which emanated from newspapers, magazines, news magazines, documentaries, television news and the internet.

### **1.3.3 Fieldwork**

I identified a number of key research participants with whom most interviews were conducted. These key research participants with whom interviews were conducted on several occasions, provided access to other individuals who were part of their social networks (see Chapters 3 & 5). My interaction with such a core group of research participants ensured that the emphasis shifted towards an exclusive engagement with research participants which further enabled me to concentrate on core issues pertaining to the aims and objectives of this study.

A biographical profile of the core group of research participants is included. In the use of names, reference to place of work, etc., care was taken to protect the identity of those involved (See Annexure A).

Structured questionnaires which included closed and open-ended questions were used with success. These questions included issues pertaining to identity, culture, community, racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Some of the questionnaires were completed by the research participants themselves. The majority of contact sessions were informal in nature (e.g. during meals and coffee sessions) and these occurred in a variety of venues. I was fortunate to interact with and engage these individuals on a personal and one-on-one level, to the extent that sensitive information was exchanged.

The close and personal interaction enabled me to develop a matrix of social networks for each participant (see Annexure B).

Such an endeavour would not have been possible without regular and intensive interaction between researcher and research participant.

## **1.4 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THIS DISSERTATION**

The dissertation consists of six Chapters, two Annexures and a Bibliography.

The first chapter (**Chapter 1**), as was seen, introduces the reader to the global and continental framework of migration, by means of an overview. Secondly, the research question, hypotheses research design and process of data collection are addressed.

The second chapter (**Chapter 2**) interrogates the concepts of community, culture and identity within the context of mobility. The notion of mobility is analysed with reference to the global and local migrant. The second part deals with the statistical profile of South African immigration.

The next chapter (**Chapter 3**) centres on the notion of place and home with reference to the countries of origin of the research participants. Issues such as attachment to and desire for home are addressed.

The fourth chapter (**Chapter 4**) discusses migrant encounters with the host nation and its complexities. Labels, stereotypes and constructs like xenophobia inter alia, are engaged.

The next chapter (**Chapter 5**) explicates placemaking and the establishment of network systems in the host country. Various levels of relationships are analysed.

The dissertation is concluded with a final chapter (**Chapter 6**) which briefly revisits the conclusions developed in the preceding chapters and summarises and highlights the main issues in the dissertation.

## CHAPTER 2

### COMMUNITY, CULTURE, IDENTITY, PROFESSIONAL MOBILITY AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN IMMIGRATION CONTEXT

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

“Mobility” infers a certain fluidity and interconnectivity between people and places. It rests on the notion of people traversing transnational boundaries and renegotiating identity in a new landscape. In Africa, human mobility has been an integral part of the past and it is today present in the daily existence and experiences of its people. Contemporary processes such as globalisation, transnationalism and the African Renaissance are some of the stimuli behind the current intra-continental mobility of professional or skilled Africans. It is not possible to detach professional or skilled African mobility from the history of human movement on the continent or from the dynamics of current socio-political influences. Africa appears to be at a significant crossroad. In order to be a player in the global arena it must address the skills shortage in the aftermath of the African Diaspora. Skilled or professional Africans are an important tool in the development of Africa. However, Africa-focused incentives such as Nepad seem to emphasise the fact that each country needs its own pool of skills and that the intra-continental flow of skilled or professional individuals is undesirable.

Globally speaking, skilled or professional mobility of individuals is usually not an issue of concern for host countries. Their status seems to set them apart from other population flows in the sense that they bring economic advantages to the host country without being a social responsibility. Usually, mobile professionals do not wish to settle permanently. However it may be, African population flows into South Africa, whether skilled or unskilled, appear to be a problematic issue.

Rex (1996:102-103) identifies three streams within what he terms the ‘transnational community’, i.e. migrants from economically challenged countries to economically successful countries; migrants who are consciously exploiting foreign economic opportunities; and refugees. The first and more specifically the second categories are of interest. In the first category, migrants enter economically successful countries in order to find work. Some may want to settle permanently in the host country whilst others maintain contact with their country of origin and may wish to return eventually. The desire to return,

whether it is possible or not, is often fired by what Rex calls 'the myth of return'. The second category consists of migrants who are "part of more extensive migration movements, who migrate to a number of countries and who intend to go on living abroad and exploiting whatever opportunities are available..." (Rex 1996:103).

These migrants form part of an international community that is perceived as quite distinct from that of their country of origin and those of the host countries.

Since 1994, the post-Apartheid political climate in South Africa and the new population movements linked to increasing globalisation have made the country an attractive destination for Africans (Crush 2001:8;9).

At this juncture the interplay between imagination and social reality becomes a factor. Authors such as Wagner (2002:14) and Crush (2001:6,22) mention the disappointment, anger and indignation of particularly non-SADC migrants at their treatment by South Africans, specifically Black South Africans..."*we have never treated them as they do us*" (Crush 2001:22). Wagner (2002:14) argues that the 'disappointment' is a "*residual effect of the disjuncture between the imagination....and the lived social relations*". The 'imagination' creates an expectation of acceptance by the host country based on race and sympathy. Imagination, in this case, falls short of reality.

Because they are members of a distinctive group, mobile professional or skilled Africans should be less vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination and hostility. However, South Africa seems to present a unique situation in that as a group or individually, mobile skilled or professional Africans defy official migration categories. This may lead to hostility and tension among the receiving population creating a situation where strangers are described in terms of 'ethnicity' or 'race'. In turn this may lead to xenophobia, racism, stereotyping and intolerance (Wagner 2002:12; Castles & Miller 1998:10; United Nations 2001:5).

A 1998 Human Rights Watch report states that a significant number of South Africans regard strangers, especially those from non-Southern African Development Community (SADC hereafter) countries and more specifically those from Francophone - and West-Africa as a threat (Wagner 2002:14,16,17; Crush 2001:22,23).

An influx of strangers, however qualified, may cause strong reactions in certain sections of a population. The presence of large numbers of strangers from beyond its borders is often linked to socio-economic changes in a country. People who are already caught-up in the unpredictability of social change may regard newcomers as the cause of this change. Within this context, strangers are blamed for taking away employment opportunities, changing life styles and standards and interfering with social cohesion. (Castles & Miller 1998:13)

## **2.2 COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND IDENTITY AS FEATURES OF PROFESSIONAL MOBILITY**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

Chambers (1994:6) writes *“... to sweat in slow queues before officialdom, clutching passports and work permits, is to acquire the habit of living between worlds, caught on a frontier that runs through your tongue, religion, music, dress, appearance and life... Cut off from the homelands of tradition, experiencing a constantly challenged identity, the stranger is perpetually required to make herself at home ...”*

The stranger experiences what is to be ‘there’ and not ‘here’ and to be simultaneously ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ a situation. It is not always easy for people to move between countries or to cross borders at will. However, *“it is also true that for reasons of necessity and sometimes choice, people do cross borders and see their lives unfolding in diasporic settings”* (Brazier & Mannur 2003:15). Clifford (1999:247), quoting Tololian, states: “Diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment”. Modern technologies create border relationships and therefore, longing, memory and (dis)identification are shared by all kinds of dispersed people.

Globalisation, for lack of a better term, has resulted in what Amit and Rapoport (2002:1) call politico-economic restructuring. The traditional relationship between work, place and family is being redefined and new forms of mobility, increasingly transnational in nature are emerging. To “belong” in this world, becomes a process of change and fluctuation. ‘Crossing borders’ will mean different things to different people. Issues such as class, gender, race, citizenship, ethnicity and sexuality play a role in how “belonging” is defined

and how people assign meaning to movements across borders (Brazier & Mannur 2003:14-15).

The dilemma of the mobile stranger has, however, also created a dilemma for the anthropologist. How is the interplay between community, culture and identity to be read against the background of globalisation? According to Clifford (1999:245), the old localising approaches in anthropology “obscure as much as they reveal” (i.e. by bounded *community*, by organic *culture*, by *region*, by *centre* and *periphery*).

Geertz (2000:221) maintains that it is increasingly difficult to relate “local realities with overarching ones, “the world around here” with the world overall”. If Geertz is interpreted correctly, he means that ‘the global’ can only be understood if it is examined through what he terms instances, differences, variations and particulars – “in a splintered world, we must address the splinters”.

Applying this train of thought to aspects of identity, community and culture among a handful of African mobile professionals in a single locale appears relatively uncomplicated. The problem is, however, that of theory.

If the anthropologist is to study bits and parts, what happens to theoretical concepts and constructs that were used to analyse and describe the traditional demarcated domains of anthropology? Geertz (2000:220-221) argues that the modern-day anthropologist is faced with a reality where there is a prevailing sense of dispersion, complexity and uncenteredness. The disassembly and heterogeneity of this world has brought into question the “totalizing concepts” such as identity, culture, values, society and people, that have, for so long, been used by anthropologists to describe differences and similarities between peoples, cultures, states and societies.

Post-modern anthropology has “rejected the fixity of expertise, place and boundaries” (Amit & Rapport 2002:1). However, post-modern anthropology must also be criticised for its lack of master narratives regarding almost everything, specifically identity, tradition and culture (Geertz 2000:222). Interestingly, post-modern anthropology “does not appear to have dislodged [the] conventional expectation that the construction of community and culture – of ‘cultural community’- will continue to situate both the ethnographic enterprise



and its ethnographic subjects, perhaps all the more so when these are no longer fixed conveniently in singular places” (Amit & Rapport 2002:1).

The constructs of community, culture and, it goes without saying, identity are, therefore, not obsolete. The question is how the anthropologist deals with them when first, there is a change in traditional fieldwork locales, i.e. small-scale groups that are being “incorporated into ever expanding systems of political, economic and cultural connections” (Amit & Rapport 2002:4) and second, when the discipline has difficulty in coping “with a world that is neither divided at the joints into ingredient sections nor a transcendent unity – economic, say, or psychological.... (Geertz 2000:250)”

Against this backdrop, Amit & Rapport (2002:3) wonder if post-modern anthropologists are as willing to surrender the constructs of ‘community’ or ‘collectivity’ as they were to surrender that of ‘place’. Both ‘community’ and ‘place’ are inherently part of what they call the “fixities of its [anthropology] disciplinary identity” namely ‘culture’ and ‘society’. In the absence of ‘place’ it would seem that only community remains as an analytical construct. “Even more than place [Amit & Rapport 2002:3 argue] the notion of collectivity or community has served a fundamental purpose in the anthropological *Zeitgeist* as the medium for cultural process, mediating between the individual and larger political and economic systems while also framing ethnographies”.

This is the dilemma addressed by Amit & Rapport (2002:2) “inasmuch as ‘society’ and ‘culture’ and the processes, practises, institutions, forces and structures which they have been seen to embody, were traditionally conceived of as fixing individuals, their behaviours and cognitions, within certain systems of signification, classification and identity, how is anthropology theoretically to approach a world characterised by plurality, transgression and irony concerning socio-cultural identities?”

The answer, partly, seems to be embodied in current anthropological usage of ‘community’: “there appear to be some indications that the conception of collectivity, or at the very least of collective identity, has become an even more crucial anchor for the efforts of anthropologists attempting to locate transnational or multi-sited ethnographic fields” (Amit & Rapport 2002:3).

Anthropologists often use 'community' as an idea or "categorical referent" rather than an actual social group, specifically within the realms of multiculturalism, nationalism and identity politics. However, there is much to be said for the use of 'community' as a 'field of investigation' "that does not necessarily conform to fields of social relations but instead ...seek out individuals who are conceptually but not personally connected, or...who do not imagine their personal commonalities in ongoing collective identities" (Amit & Rapport 2002:5).

It is in this last instance that the idea of professional mobility acquires meaning. Captured momentarily in a locale, these individuals defy the traditional boundaries of community or collectivity. They may or may not participate in what can be termed "emerging transnational collectivities". They may or may not attribute "a new social identity to the experience of mobility" nor may they demonstrate the "strong symbolic markers of categorical identity" (Amit & Rapport 2000:5). Some may or may not share consensus about cultural fundamentals or they may demonstrate "the notion that ....the order of [cultural] difference must somehow be maintained" (Geertz 2000:250).

In a similar vein, Wagner (2002:14) asks "in what capacity is a migrant a member of the host society: as a denizen, a resident, or a full-fledged citizen?" She reasons that on a formal basis, membership is dependent on political access and political authority – aspects that in turn are linked to citizenship status. However, on a more informal basis, membership is also negotiated through economic and social relationships.

Within the realm of globalisation the notion of culture as "consensus on fundamentals – shared conceptions, shared feelings, shared values" (Geertz 2000:250) is certainly being contested. In transnational or multi-ethnographic fields it is almost not a workable notion. Geertz (2000:250) remarks "whatever it is that defines identity in borderless capitalism and the global village it is not deep-going agreements on deep-going matters".

The analytical construct of 'community' is, therefore, a point of departure in describing the lives of some mobile African professionals in Cape Town. It is hoped that it will also lead to an understanding of how identity and culture are expressed in a locale that is subjected to global tensions.

Community, culture and identity are henceforth dealt with as separate but interrelated analytical constructs. Each is situated, defined and discussed within an appropriate theoretical framework.

### 2.2.2 Community

Traditionally, for anthropologists, “the field was the community and the study of communities, read as a convergence of place, people, identity and culture, was construed as the proper subject matter for anthropology” (Amit in Amit & Rapport 2002:15). Even when anthropologists extended their domain to include urban landscapes, they were still set on either a localised approach or the exactness of network analysis.

In contrast, anthropologists such as Frederik Barth and Ulf Hannerz offered a disseminating view of culture. Barth, already in the late 1960’s (1969:38) argued that culture is not bounded, “it can vary, be learnt, and change without any critical relation to the boundary maintenance”. Hannerz, some thirty years later, has a similar view when he says that not only do people and meanings move, but that meanings and meaningful forms can move by themselves – “territories can not really contain cultures” (Hannerz 1996:8).

This shifted the focus onto individual agency and subsequently questioned the validity of ‘community’, “which could no longer be seen as an obvious outcome of aggregation, but rather as the cumulative outcome of a set of choices and strategies employed by individual agents” (Amit in Amit & Rapport 2002:16).

It follows from the above that ‘community’ appears to fulfil a function in that it provides an interpretative framework for anthropologists entering transnational or multi-sited fields where they are often confronted with collective identities. However, Amit (in Amit & Rapport 2002:13) refers to the tendency to extend the term to include a range of categories such as (quoting from Gerd Bauman’s (1996) *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-ethnic London*): “Catholic community”; “the community”; “financial community”; “community charge” (referring to poll tax).

The immediate conclusion is that popular usage strips ‘community’ from its inherent or intended meaning. But, it certainly also emphasises the fact that ‘community’, even if it is

characterised by multiplicity, serves a purpose in that it provides a “collective connection”. Application of the construct ‘community’ should be approached with caution, it is not “a ready made social unit upon which to hang analysis” (Amit in Amit & Rapport 2002:14).

Caution is certainly part of Hannerz’s deliberation when he examines the “question of the boundedness of societal and cultural entities, against the background of present-day global interconnections and their part in the spread of modernity”. More specifically, he is concerned with central-peripheral relationships in the global ecumene. The latter is a construct formulated to describe interconnectedness in the world that comes about through interactions, exchanges and related developments and affects cultural organisation – a global community (Hannerz 1996:45,7).

To clarify his point of view in respect of transnational ethnography, Hannerz (1996:91-98) suggests a re-examination of Robert Redfield’s folk-urban continuum and subsequently also the constructs *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. He adopts the scheme, (in his own words a “rough delineation”) of Roland Robertson, a sociologist, who suggests that the global ecumene is composed of four representations or images. Each image, Hannerz feels, would find an intellectual niche within distinct globalisation contexts and therefore, one image would not necessarily be more correct than another. However, he also feels that transnational ethnography is too complex to fit squarely into Robertson’s images. This becomes clear when Hannerz sets strains of contemporary cultural anthropology within each image. In a further attempt to demarcate transnational ethnography, he draws on Craig Calhoun’s ‘four categories of social relationships’. However, it is important to first describe Robertson’s scheme:

*Global Gemeinschaft 1*: Closed and unique communities that exist on a more or less equal basis at a national level. Globalisation is perceived as a threat. This is the situational context of anthropological relativism, the notion of the world as a “cultural mosaic”, the local as a site of individualism, cultural diversity and resistance against globalisation.

*Global Gemeinschaft 2*: A world-wide community that fits Marshall McLuan’s notion of a “global village.” There are weaker and stronger members. Problems of globalisation are addressed. Examples are the peace movement and environmental movement and also the Roman Catholic Church. Hannerz (1996:94 – quoting Robertson) mentions that this image reflects more diversity and that it entails a “con-cultural” view where “cultural traditions are

a set of indigenous variations on the conditions and predicaments of mankind". Anthropologists, recognising the unity of mankind aim to uncover variations on common themes.

*Global Gesellschaft 1*: Significant socio-cultural exchange, of a more or less equal nature, takes place within a global order of open national societies. This is the context for transnational anthropology where sociocultural exchange, rooted in multiple national societies, is documented. However, the notion of transnational communities seems to be incorporating something of either *Global Gemeinschaft 1* or 2.

*Global Gesellschaft 2*: This image rests on the notion of the world as a single system. Formality and planning are the keys to world order. This image is most representative of anthropological world system theory (Hannerz 1996:93-95).

Following from the above, Calhoun's categorisation, albeit a variation on the *Gesellschaft - Gemeinschaft* theme, provides context for Hannerz's (1996:95) pursuit of "how to identify more clearly the kinds of relationships which go into the making of contemporary social structures, especially those covering great spatial distances and crossing national boundaries; and to discern how these kinds of relationships link up with one another".

Calhoun (in Hannerz 1996:95-96) distinguishes first between primary relationships i.e. face to face symmetrical relationships among individuals; and secondary relationships that are more asymmetrical in that individuals interact through their respective and specific roles. These relationships are, therefore, of a direct nature and require a physical co-presence. However, they are not altogether representative of life in the global ecumene where indirect and asymmetrical relationships may play a more significant role. Second, Calhoun thus creates two more relationship categories, namely tertiary relationships that are in effect relationships between individuals, but technology and/or large organisations as entities (and not the people that constitute the entity), dominate and play a mediatory role; and quaternary relationships where one or more of the participants are unaware that there is an association between them.

Hannerz suggests that Calhoun's categories are not bounded and that valid or imagined shifts occur between them. The idea of transnational communities is not contradictory, "it is a matter of friendship, of leisure pursuits, and of occupational and corporate communities.

What is personal, primary, small-scale, is not necessarily confined in space and what spans continents need not be large-scale in any way” (Hannerz 1996:98).

### 2.2.3 Culture

Cohen (1985:115) in reference to *Boon's Other Tribes, Other Scribes*, says that cultures (the principle can also be applied to communities and individuals) orientate themselves through implicit or explicit contrast to bearers of other cultures, inadvertently emphasising what the culture is not and exaggerating themselves and the other. Furthermore, “...just as bearers of other cultures are only observable from the perspective of a culture with which it is contrasted, so also people see their *own* [sic] culture from the supposed vantage point at which they imagine others to view it”.

Hannerz (1996:58) however, cautions that given a choice, people may not necessarily choose what is perceived to be ‘their’ culture. Yes, people are in a sense “possessed” by their culture, but overall agreement on how meaning is constructed and structured, may be compromised. This may be specifically true in the case where a “collective structure of meaning” is merely “a working arrangement reflecting the more or less contestable balance of power among the members”. People adhere to a cultural repertoire, but they also have the capacity to open this repertoire to new possibilities.

The above rests on Hannerz’ (1996:8,25) argument that the notion of ‘culture as an integrated whole carried by a people should be re-investigated. He acknowledges the fact that culture is socially acquired and organised but emphasises that there are inherent conflicts. One such area of contention is the idea that cultures are “packages of meaning and meaningful forms, distinctive to collectivities and territories”. The lived experiences of people differ and are not necessarily contained within a demarcated area. People and meaning are influenced by “increasing interconnectedness in space”, thus moving beyond assumed collectivity towards interconnectivity. Hannerz asks: “How, and to what degree, do people arrange culture into coherent patterns as they go about their lives? How, as they involve themselves with the interconnectedness of the world, does culture sometimes, in some ways, become organized into the more or less tidy packages we have called ‘cultures’, and under other circumstances take on other kinds of distribution?”.

Hannerz (1996:49:22,25-26,69-70) speaks of a “pool of culture, held more or less in common with the global ecumene”. He says that complex contemporary culture is accentuated by an intersection of ‘habitats of meaning’ that can be produced by individuals or collectivities and ‘circulated in social relationships’. It should be noted that the production of meaning by individuals or small groups and the resulting production of bigger cultural entities cannot be isolated from the management of meaning by corporations and institutions. To facilitate better understanding of this view, he identifies four organisational frames or frames of cultural process within which meaning and meaningful forms are produced and through which culture is managed either in a specific locale (the local) or universally (the global). These frames are: form of life; the state; the marketplace; and movement (which he does not discuss).

The *form-of-life frame* is fundamentally important since it covers the lived reality and the circulation of meaning among individuals in, for example, households, workplaces and neighbourhoods. Apparent in this frame is the manner in which people adapt to this reality and relationships of a close or more unregulated nature. The *state frame*, on the other hand, defines the more formal relationship and interaction between institutions in the public domain and subjects or citizens. The *market frame* is again more formal as it covers commoditised culture.

Although Hannerz sets his model within creolisation theory, he moves away from the historical meaning of the term which was linked to both the recognised creole cultures in the New World plantation areas and its traditional link to language. He uses ‘creolisation’ in a more generic and unbounded manner, saying that creole culture is in effect a product of increasing diversity, interconnectedness and innovation in the global ecumene. “Creole culture’ is set on a continuum (or rather different continua, because different interactions may occur at the same time). At the one end is the culture of the centre and at the other, cultural forms of the outer limits or periphery. Along the continuum there is a constant interaction of meaning and meaningful forms, producing, through the different frames discussed above, different creole cultures. In clarification, Hannerz states “...along the continuum, people are differentially and somewhat complicatedly placed or on the move among different situations, mixing, observing each other and commenting on each other...the cultural processes of creolization are not merely a matter of a constant pressure from the center towards the periphery, but a more creative interplay” (Hannerz 1996:68,66-67).

Meaning and meaningful forms are, however, unevenly shaped by the different frames. This results in an unequal arrangement of culture along the continuum. Naturally, great variation occurs along the continuum as it offers a range of local and regional traditions. Hannerz (1996:73) describes these as “most likely the situation of domesticity and neighbourhood life, or work situations where the part of formal education is limited or negligible”.

However, one of the major causes for asymmetry along the continuum originates in the state frame, more specifically through education through which difference is created. At this point, the state becomes a ‘transnational cultural mediator’ since “it is involved here on a large scale in ordering the population into categories with different cultural horizons, where those with a stronger orientation towards both global and national centers are also given more power and prestige... (Hannerz 1996:72,71-72).

Obviously, as mentioned before, the state and formal education are not the only factors shaping ‘cultural beings’. Hannerz (1996:72) says that “people are formed continuously through their experiences in all kinds of contexts; and a great many of these contexts...belong...in the form-of-life-frame”. It is clear from its description above, that this frame is the dominant one. It is here, for example, where individuals can elect to have ‘more or less’ formal education. It follows that the more time someone spends on education; the more he/she is shaped by it. A direct consequence of this is the rise of educated elites with highly visible and imitated life styles. Some of these groups and individuals are recognisable through labels such as “evolues”; “assimilados”; “brown sahibs”; Afro-Saxons; “beentos”.

It is at this point, in the expression of specific forms of culture and thus the “idea that a range of other groups within today’s society likewise have distinctive clusters of meanings, symbols and practises, that the notion of globalisation or much more appropriately, a global ecumene becomes meaningful (Hannerz 1996:38). However, this is not to say that the global ecumene can only accommodate collectivity. Hannerz (1996:39) implicitly states that it is now “possible for individuals to become constructed in quite unique ways, through particular sets of involvements and experiences”.



Individuality is an inherent part of the domain of culture and is expressed in a cultural repertoire that is established through different jobs, mobility and cultural choices. Aspects of any given repertoire may be shared with other individuals or groups but the degree to which it is integrated to “become a perspective, a self” is up to the individual (Hannerz 1996:39).

It is, therefore, through the individual that notions of ‘the local’ and ‘the global’ become meaningful and may be carried through to a greater collectivity (should one exist). ‘The local’ represents an individual’s sense of place. It is the locale for everyday and face-to-face encounters. It is the starting point for Cohen’s process of comparison and exaggeration of an individual’s culture, of imagining how it is perceived by others. Perhaps here, among the numerous face-to-face encounters emerges the recognition that ‘the local’ is not independent but rather that it is here that individual frames of reference or habitats of meaning overlap. Increasingly, these habitats of meaning reach beyond ‘the local’. Long gone are the days that ‘the local’ was really a bounded locale and only a privileged few crossed the boundary. Increasing interconnectivity brings the rest of the world right into the individual’s locale where he can experience what might have been local elsewhere (Hannerz 1996:26-29).

Elaborating on this, Hannerz (1996:29) says “the arrangements of personal interconnectedness between the local and the global are getting increasingly opaque. So many kinds of kinship, friendship, collegiality, business, [and] pursuits of pleasure or struggles for security now engage people in transnational contacts that we can never be sure in which habitats of meaning these can turn up, and have a peripheral or a central part”. In this new world of interconnectedness, it becomes easier for people to be mobile. As Hannerz (1996:29) notes, life styles and the markets to serve them are replicable. Modern transport and technology put everything within easy reach.

How does this translate within the context of mobile professionals in Africa? Who exactly are these globalisers and what kind of mobility is expressed?

Culture, for a Franco-African working in Cape Town, for example, will, just as in Lisa Lowe’s Asian-American research population in *Theorizing Diaspora* (Lowe 2003:136-137), include inherited, modified and invented cultural practises. It also carries an inherent ‘otherness’ born out of the historic and present position of Franco-Africans in Europe. This

individual's 'habitat of meaning' "will of course depend on not only what in some physical sense [he/she is] exposed to, but also on the capabilities [he/she has] build up for coping with it knowledgably..." (Hannerz 1996:26).

It is clear that Hannerz' global ecumene, given his argument regarding metacultural choices of similarity or difference, can either be a threat or an opportunity to continued cultural diversity. Hannerz (1996:60-61) sees an intrinsic value in the access to diversity and identifies three different benefits, namely aesthetic attitude; generative cultural process or the creativity that occurs when individuals in a culture or cultures encounter each other and come to new understandings; a global cultural reserve of repository or improvements and alternatives. The first two occur on a micro-level through individual experience, but it is the first, 'aesthetic attitude' that is pertinent to this discussion (Hannerz 1996:60-64).

'Aesthetic attitude' denotes the inherent positive experiential value in "other cultures" whilst the boundaries of the primary culture remain intact – "a person rooted in one culture thus enters another [or more than one serially] with its meanings and practices...usually temporarily". 'Aesthetic attitude' is an important building block for a particular type of mobility that Hannerz describes as cosmopolitanism.

#### **2.2.4 Identity**

In *Ethnicity in the Age of Diaspora*, Radhakrishnan (2003:120) mentions that his son's confusion over whether he is Indian or American prompted him to further investigation. He tells his son that he is in fact both Indian and American, but realises at the same time that he has touched on the multiplicity of what should be the unity of identity.

This is precisely the predicament of migrants and it is compounded in the case of mobile professionals. For example, who exactly, is a Franco-African working in Cape Town? Radhakrishnan (2003:122) states emphatically that "*when people move, identities, perspectives and definitions change*". The underlying question, however, is "*how could someone be both one and something other*" (Radhakrishnan 2003:122). A further intriguing question is whether this Franco-African identifies and recognises an ethnic self and whether this is primary or secondary to an identity as a French national. Being a

mobile professional, could this person, in the words of Radhakrishnan (2003:122) have *“left it behind when the time is [was] right to inaugurate the ‘post-ethnic’?”*

Castles & Miller (1998:297) suggest that *“it is part of the migrant condition to develop multiple identities, which are linked to the cultures both of the homeland and of the country of origin...such personal identities possess complex new transcultural elements”*. The transcultural nature of the migrant’s situation creates multifaceted sociocultural identities. These identities are transitional and renegotiable.

However, is this not the ideology of cultural difference that Keya Ganguly warns of in response to Clifford’s bifocality inherent in his notion of ‘travelling cultures’? Clifford (1999:37) argues that cultures such as Haiti can be ethnographically studied in the Caribbean and Brooklyn. Ganguly (Clifford 1999:45) responds: “being a child of Indian immigrants, I find it very difficult to identify myself with [that sort of] ideology of difference, especially since the identification may occur at another level. For instance, I choose to be identified with Philadelphians rather than with Indians from Bombay”. Ganguly wants to know if bifocality can be likened to Stuart Hall’s “contrastive double vision of a familiar stranger” or if it is in effect the “othering of others” in that, for example, “locating ... Haitians in a continuous space between Haiti and New York, Indian in India and New York” an ideology of cultural difference is propagated.

Clifford’s answer (1999:46) focuses on the idea of identity as politics rather than an inheritance. He speaks of a choice that is not voluntary but historically constrained. Notwithstanding the fact that he states emphatically that there are no binary choices or open alternatives in the construction of identity, Clifford perceives identity as made up of components that can either be deep/superficial’, or central/peripheral: “...identity is a processual configuration of historically given elements – including race, culture, class, gender, and sexuality – different combinations of which may be featured in different conjunctures”.

In the multicultural study of Silicon Valley, English-Lueck (2002:122) warns against the impasse that occurs when ‘identity’ is used as a fixed noun (what a person is) and different identity categories are defined on the basis of cultural characteristics and other components. Identity becomes undifferentiated and static. This neglects what he calls the process of identification (what one feels and does) and thus other behavioural and

symbolic indicators. This fixed perception of identity is typical of a 'text' (what people say) approach in which people's actions (how they act out their identity) are ignored.

When identity is perceived as a fluid process (and not a stable symbolic category), anthropologists can examine how identity is articulated in interaction with others. It is possible to determine this through what people say (text) or what people do (behaviour) in the different domains of their lives. Questions to be asked are, for example, which cultural boundaries play a role in identity categories; do cultural boundaries reflect different categories or life domains; do people verbalise these differences; are people aware of the differences; do the differences influence behaviour across boundaries; what can/cannot be attributed to cultural boundaries (English-Lueck 2002:122).

These and other questions can be answered within the context of community. Cohen (1985:110) writes that "community is the compass of individual identity; it responds to the need to delimit the bounds of similarity". It is the diversity of the constituent parts of 'community', i.e. that it is a mental construct; highly symbolised; flexible; and its underlying characteristic of communality, that allows, by virtue of the social space that it occupies, the accommodation of expressions of identity through the 'selves' of its members, not compromising individuality (Cohen 1985:108-109). The other side of the coin is that 'community' is "made" when people "map out their social identities and find their social orientations among the relationships that are symbolically close to them". How people conduct themselves, be it within the community "mode" or in a specialised or limited manner is determined by what Cohen terms "boundary management" (Cohen 1985:28).

It has been suggested by Schwartz (Cohen 1985:109) that there is a close relationship between community and identity. He describes this relationship as 'cultural totemism' or 'ethnognomony'. These terms suggest that it is the 'selves' of individuals and subsequently identity, that refracts community and "marks what is not, as well what is, emphasizing traits and characteristics, 'at once emblematic of the group's solidarity and of the group's contrasting identity and relation to the groups within its ambit of comparison'." Within this context, individual identity emerges as people adopt an outward view, a self-reflective position "construct[ing] what they see in terms of their own stereotypes", playing what Cohen terms vis-à-vis or the game of implicit or explicit contrast (Cohen 1985:109-115). What emerges here are the divisions of 'us' and 'them' and the well-known categorisation of 'otherness'.

Authors such as Wagner (2002:14) and Crush (2001:6,22) mention the disappointment, anger and indignation of particularly non-SADC migrants at their treatment by South Africans, specifically black South Africans...“*we have never treated them as they do us*” (Crush 2001:22). Wagner (2002:14) argues that the ‘disappointment’ is a “*residual effect of the disjuncture between the imagination....and the lived social relations*”.

## 2.3 HUMAN MOVEMENT IN THE TIME OF GLOBALISATION

### 2.3.1 The case for “mobility”

As a term, ‘migration’ seems to provide a rather rigid framework within which to explain all types of population movement. ‘Migration’ as a term is limited in that it does not cover all types of geographical mobility and that it implies the explicit movement from A to B within a specific geographical space (De Bruijn, Van Dijk, & Foeken 2001:2; Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til 2001:11).

Mobility (from a cultural perspective) implies “a close reading of people’s own understandings of the spaces and places in which they move and the experiences these movements entail” (De Bruijn, Foeken & Van Dijk, 2001:2). This implies that “the extent to which people themselves perceive travel and movement as forms of breaking away from a social or ecological environment, from family and friends or from a specific cultural domain, needs to be investigated. Furthermore, the term also implies more than only the movement of people since values and ideas also move and change (De Bruijn, Van Dijk, & Foeken 2001:2; Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til 2001:11).

‘Mobility’ thus becomes an “umbrella term” in that it includes “...all types of movement including travel, exploration, migration, tourism, refugeeism, pastoralism, nomadism, pilgrimage and trade. It therefore, allows for those migratory movements that do not fit preconceived administrative and legal categories (De Bruijn, Van Dijk, & Foeken 2001:1).

This argument is (partly) based on a critical analysis of the concept ‘migration’ during a 1977 conference of the African Studies Centre at Leiden University. The Conference argued that the concept “migration”, which was defined as “the geographical displacement

of people” was embedded in dichotomies such as rural-urban, tradition-modernity and subsistence economy-capitalist economy. It was then said that “the dualism pervading most social science approaches to migration in Africa may take too much for granted, distinctions and boundaries (conceptual, structural, political) which the ongoing transformation of Africa may render increasingly irrelevant” (Van Binsbergen & Meilink 1978:12 quoted in De Bruijn, Van Dijk, & Foeken 2001:1).

The concept ‘migration’ also often implies a ‘rupture’ and ‘breakdown’ in a given society where the social system is in disorder. However, De Bruijn, Van Dijk, & Foeken (2001:2-3) regard ‘ruptures’ and ‘breakdowns’ as the result of certain forms of mobility caused by, *inter alia* inter-ethnic strife, hegemonic struggles, control over resources and dissolving states. Many other forms of mobility are an inherent part of life and creating livelihood. Mobility can become entrenched in a given society to such an extent that not being mobile is perceived as irregular whilst immobility (i.e. remaining within set borders or cultural boundaries) could be perceived as a deliberate act to escape certain social obligations. In a positive sense mobility establishes new connections; it can create continuity and also negotiates modernity (De Bruijn, Van Dijk, & Foeken 2001: 2).

People do not think in “dichotomies”. Their day-to-day life and subsequent decisions within this context will dictate whether they move or not. However, bipolar models and perceptions still dominate African migration research. The authors put forward an argument for a Cultural-Studies approach (with the emphasis on notions such as cultural continuity and concepts such as ‘travelling culture’ and ‘diaspora’) instead of a neo-Marxist approach to understanding African mobility.

### **2.3.2 Typology**

Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til (2001:11) state that ‘migration’ embraces a range of ‘types of mobility’. Migration research differentiates between types of migration but sometimes applies unclear criteria. Many categorisations are quite monolithic in nature. Ideally, all types of migrants should be accommodated in categorisations and/or definitions. However, there is an inherent problem in that human movement is dynamic and therefore, people do not always fit strict migration typologies.

Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til (2001:11-13) present six useful criteria that can be applied in the analysis and identification of different types or forms of migration:

### **2.3.2.1 Geo-administrative level**

This category deals firstly with inter-state (international) migration which is then further divided into intra – and intercontinental migration and secondly, intra-national migration. The authors note that in the first instance, statistics and other data are readily available because of state regulations, although migration of the latter type is a more common occurrence in, for example, Sub-Saharan Africa (Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til 2001:11).

### **2.3.2.2 Area of destination**

In migration research this criterion is simplified to the rural-urban dichotomy, a classification that is usually based on a distinction of a wide range of destination areas. Four types of migration are identified, namely rural-rural (e.g. migration as a result of small- and large scale commercial farming), rural-urban (e.g. migration as a result of socio-economic pull factors in urban centres), urban-rural (e.g. migration as a result of retirement) and urban-urban (e.g. migration as a result of the fact that many migrants first move to smaller towns before they continue on to large urban centres). Of the four types, rural-urban migration has received the most interest from researchers. Factors influencing rural-urban migration are among others, the tendency by African governments to focus investment on urban centres, an economic decline in rural areas, the presence of relatives and friends in urban centres, perceptions that urban centres provide better living conditions and that working there can enhance social prestige (Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til 2001:12).

### **2.3.2.3 Duration**

This category is based on the period of migration, i.e. permanent or temporary. The authors state that duration is a most important criterion in ascertaining whether somebody is a migrant or not. In Sub-Saharan Africa, temporary migration often occurs in the forms of seasonal (for example rural-rural agricultural migration) and circular migration (for example when women leave urban centres for a certain period to farm rural land)(Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til 2001:12).

#### **2.3.2.4 Choice**

This category deals with whether migration is (a) voluntary (where choice and free will underlie the decision to migrate) or (b) forced (where there is no other option but to migrate, for example refugees (international forced migrants) and internally displaced people (intra-national forced migrants)(Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til 2001:12-13).

#### **2.3.2.5 Legality**

A distinction is made between legal migration that can be subdivided into (i) organised migration (groups of low-skilled people moving to a country to compensate for labour shortages) and (ii) the free movement of people. Legal migration is usually based on an agreement between departure and destination countries. A second category is clandestine migration (for example when individuals cross state borders illegally to work illegally in the informal sector of a given country (Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til 2001:13).

#### **2.3.2.6 Migrant's characteristics (in relation to motivation)**

Reasons for migration differ, particularly in respect of gender, age and education. In the past, it used to be men who migrated to find work or to do work on a contractual basis. Women used to move to join their husbands. However, today, many women have entered the labour migration domain traditionally dominated by men. Children and students also migrate to schools and universities in other countries and elderly people return to their home town or country after retirement (Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til 2001:13).

Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til (2001:13) describe education as “highly decisive in relation to migration”. Well-educated rural people leave their home towns and countries for better opportunities elsewhere. It is a fact that rural areas lag far behind urban centres in respect of professional or skilled job opportunities. Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til (2001:13) state that “This is also the group for whom international (legal) migration is an option. Low salaries and massive retrenchments have induced many highly skilled people from countries like Ghana, Uganda and Kenya to move to countries in Southern Africa and the western world”.



### 2.3.3 Categorising the research participants

It is a distinctive group of educated individuals that is of interest to this study. Available research, in attempts to categorise and classify this group, provides various terminological labels and definitions, but each is open to criticism which ranges from accusations of exclusivity and elitist to insular.

English-Lueck (2002:1) describes the typical mobile professional, albeit within the context of a closed environment namely Silicon Valley, “Akok is a software engineer in one of the showcase companies in Silicon Valley, a gleaming edifice of glass and tile. He and his wife were born in India. Like many in his network of friends, he went to Stanford University to pursue a graduate degree and found work in a large company. He stayed in that company for three years, coding, learning American ways and discovering that political hierarchies in American workplaces are very different from those he had known in India. His team mates were like family... Suddenly, the product on which his project was based was cancelled. His group was broken up and his team mates were distributed among a number of other projects.”

English-Lueck (2002:2) points out that returning to India is not really an option for someone like Akok. It is possible to have the “good parts of India – the people and the culture – without having to put up with a decaying bureaucracy and failing infrastructure. As for interaction with people from other cultures, because Silicon Valley is in essence a melting pot, it does not differ much from interacting with people from different cultures and religions in India.

Ulf Hannerz (in Wagner 2002:10) uses the term “cosmopolitan” to describe privileged voluntary migrants who may interact with foreign cultures but never fully commit – always knowing where the exit is. Wagner warns against the Eurocentric and exclusive nature of this definition. She argues that its focus is on the glamorous and excludes those who migrate because of economic necessity and whose actions are therefore involuntary. “Just because a migrant’s interaction with another culture stems from involuntary relocation does not mean that the interaction [with a foreign culture] is any less engaged, significant or influential (Wagner 2002:11).”

Aihwa Ong (in Wagner 2002:11) proposes a type of “flexible citizenship”. Here, the cosmopolitan, well-informed politically progressive migrant’s movements across borders are strategic choices. Flexibility, migration and relocation are desirable choices and citizenship becomes a manipulated commodity. Wagner (2002:12) rejects the notion of flexible citizenship as it is too elitist in its focus on a privileged group of people i.e. multiple passport holders, wealthy multicultural managers, etc.

Appleyard (in Castles & Miller 1998:91) created the phrase “professional transients” to describe executives/professionals/experts sent overseas by international organisations. Castles & Miller (1998:91,93) use the term “skilled migrant” or “skilled transient” and include managers and professionals of all kinds in this category, e.g. executives, accountants, information technology experts, medical practitioners, engineers and research and development personnel. Also included are people fitting the category of “brain drain”. These are often individuals who migrate from less – to more highly developed countries where there is a demand for their skills, or because of a lack of employment opportunities in their country of origin.

The term “brain drain” infers a reduction in the functional core of the economy of a country. This core includes people on the corporate ladder with post-graduate qualifications and those without formal qualifications who have worked their way up on this ladder as well as entrepreneurs (with or without qualifications). The core also includes people at various stages of the corporate ladder, for example, senior and middle management and administrative and support staff.

Skilled transients/migrants have sought-after abilities. Although they usually stay in the host country for short periods, they may have a significant impact since they are often perceived as agents of modernisation and social transformation. As such, they can have an unpredictable influence on economic relationships and way of life in that country. They are often welcome in countries where there is antagonism towards the immigration of less-skilled people because they bring economic benefits (Castles & Miller 1998:92-93).

Mattes, Crush & Richmond (2000:1) state further that skilled immigrants and migrants are important contributors to the growth and development of any given country. They bring innovation to an economy through new ideas and skills, fill the gaps created by skilled emigration and help to address the shortcomings of a country’s education and training

system. The authors (2000:17) make a clear distinction between “skilled immigrants” and “skilled migrants”. They base this distinction on the status of the respective groups in their host country. In South Africa, “skilled immigrants” mainly belong to the pre-1991 group, are mainly European and in possession of permanent residence. Skilled migrants are in effect non-citizens who entered the country post-1991. They have acquired temporary residence status through work permits. They are predominantly from African countries.

In the second group a further distinction can be made between people who are temporary residents through circumstances or individual preference (for example employees of foreign companies or those who have contract positions) and people who want to permanently immigrate to South Africa but cannot do so (Mattes, Crush & Richmond 2000:23).

## **2.4 IMMIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA: DEMOGRAPHICS AND LEGALITIES**

### **2.4.1 GENERAL STATISTICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **2.4.1.1 Introduction**

“The lack of demographic clarity” complicates research on foreign nationals living and working in South Africa. This means that there is neither a reliable methodology to determine actual numbers of foreign nationals in the country, nor is there the means to create a proper demographic profile. It is, therefore, difficult to generate reliable samples within the overall population and to make conclusive statements about the overall population (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:5).

The above sentiment is echoed by Van Dijk, Foeken & Van Til (2001:15) who state that although it is a world-wide problem, African countries in particular fail to provide acceptable migration statistics. They identify three data sources for statistics, namely administrative sources, for example population registers, registers for foreigners, visa application forms, residence permits and work permits; border statistics and household-based inquiries, for example census forms and other surveys. Administrative sources and border statistics are the main sources whilst household-based inquiries usually provide figures for intra-national

migration. In the last instance, however, census returns and surveys do not always accurately reflect temporary and return migration.

However, it is possible to gain some quantitative data of population movements from various other published and unpublished information sources, albeit not official sources.

#### **2.4.1.2 South African immigration statistics**

Many non-citizens, whether they are legally in South Africa or not, are reluctant to be sampled and interviewed because they fear harassment, deportation or questioning of their legal status. They are also not that willing to supply detailed information to total strangers. The result is unrepresentative studies, based on a few direct interviews, second-hand evidence and hearsay. This in itself leads to broad conclusions and generalisations as well as stereotyping by the media, politicians and academics alike (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:5).

McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:4,5) emphasise the methodological challenges that underlie the above problem. Researchers should acknowledge sampling problems and limitations. Generalisations are useful in that they render “defensible statements about the character of migrants and migration ...as a whole” (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:5). The case study approach can shed light on the socio-economic lives of migrants/immigrants in South Africa but the authors plead for “more comprehensive, more rigorous and more transparent information that goes beyond the case study approach” (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:5).

South Africa’s immigration policy is not a public policy tool. It is, instead, rather restrictive. Furthermore, “immigrants and migrants (even the most highly skilled) are more often stereotyped as a threat to the economic and social interests of South Africans” (Mattes, Crush & Richmond 2000:1,6). In the eyes of officials, the media, et cetera, immigration/migration is a problem that needs control since it has the potential to contribute to the country’s unemployment problem by taking jobs away. Possible reasons for this situation are (Mattes, Crush & Richmond 2000:7-8):

- Current immigration is associated with South Africa’s Apartheid past and subsequent immigration history, which favoured European immigration and

controlled the legal entry of black people from other African states. This policy disappeared from record books as late as 1991.

- Nation building, new nationalism, citizenship and membership form the cornerstones of the “new South Africa identity”. It firmly excludes those who do not belong and alienates even those Africans who have been living in the country since pre-1994. “South Africa has no policy of immigrant integration and no vision of a national identity that would welcome and embrace new members” (Mattes, Crush & Richmond 2000:7).
- In the popular mind and policy formulation, legal migration and immigration is confused with undocumented migration. The hidden threat contained in the latter, has led to moral panic and a policy obsession with the control of illegal aliens. In *Citizenship and identity, brain drain and forced migration: The Zimbabwe case*, Kirty Ranchod of the South African Centre for Policy Studies says the South African government's reaction to ‘uncontrolled migration’ has been to set more stringent controls for entry of unskilled workers whilst skilled migrants or those who wish to invest capital are ‘selectively allowed entry’. Perhaps as a countermeasure to this perception, the Immigration Amendment Act (Act No 19 of 2004) [hereafter ‘the Act’] highlights the Government's intention to attract scarce skills. The Act makes allowance for migrants to change their ‘permit statuses or renew permits whilst still in South Africa where in the past they had to leave South Africa. In the case of students from Africa, it dispenses with the payment of a deposit, given a written undertaking by the respective governments to pay deportation expenses if necessary. Regulations that require police clearance certificates from all countries of residence since the age of eighteen still stand for basically all permit categories (Immigration Amendment Act, Act No 19 of 2004).
- Widely spread xenophobia among the wider population, the media and officialdom.

Obtaining relevant and detailed statistics has been rather difficult. The Department of Home Affairs states in electronic correspondence that it “does not keep separate statistics for specific categories of permits as per [your] request. Statistics are calculated per permit and available annually at the end of a financial year”. The request in question asked for a

breakdown of the statistics, e.g. country of previous residence; gender; age; type of permit issued; occupation category, etc. The available statistics are quoted below.

Statistics South Africa provides detailed statistics in respect of documented immigration. Successful permanent residence applicants supply a significant portion of these data. Details are, inter alia collected about country of birth, country of previous citizenship and previous permanent residence. (Stats SA Report 2003: iv;v.) In the absence of reliable data for professional and skilled migration, the statistics and tables below may be helpful in profiling professional and skilled migrants.

The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) published two reports that are relevant to this study, namely: *The Lives and Times of African Migrants & Immigrants in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (1999) and *The Brain Gain: Skilled Migrants and Immigration Policy in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. (2000). Some of the relevant statistical data from the two projects have been included below.

#### **2.4.1.2.1 Data from the Department of Home Affairs**

The Department of Home Affairs states that the aim of its migration programme is “ to co-ordinate and exercise control over the admission of persons to, their residence in and their departure from the Republic” (Dept. of Home Affairs 2003:50). There are six sub-programmes in the migration programme, namely immigration permits; work permits; work seekers permits; study permits; temporary residence and permanent residence (Dept. of Home Affairs 2003:50).

The Department’s Immigration Selection Board processes permanent and temporary residence applications. The Board issues permits in line with established skills needs and economic, social and cultural interests. The number of permits issued in 2001/2002 was:

Immigration permits - 4832

Work permits - 19 430

Work seekers permits - 8

Study permits - 33 361

Temporary residence (holiday, medical, business) – 5 433 840

### 2.4.1.2.2 Data from Statistics South Africa 1990 – 2002

*[Note. There is a clear distinction between people with permanent residence status and those with temporary residence status (i.e. a work-, study-, business-, work-seeker- or medical permit). These two categories are quite separate from that of citizenship].*

#### (i) Historical immigration data for all documented migrants: 1990-2002

YEAR	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
1990	14499	7806	6693
1991	12379	6607	5772
1992	8686	4544	4142
1993	9824	5126	4698
1994	6398	3175	3223
1995	5064	2314	2750
1996	5407	2606	2801
1997	4103	2053	2050
1998	4371	2157	2214
1999	3669	2091	1578
2000	3053	1505	1548
2001	4832	2575	2572
2002	6545	3718	2818

(STATS SA REPORT 2003:2)

#### (ii) Economically active and non-active population of all documented immigrants: 2000-2002

	2000	2001	2002
<b>Grand Total</b>	3053	4832	6545
<b>Economically Active</b>	662	953	1054
<b>Not Economically Active</b>	2391	3879	5491

(STATS SA REPORT 2003:3:7)

#### (iii) Economically active and non-Active population of documented immigrants from Africa

	2000
<b>Grand Total</b>	2502
<b>Economically Active</b>	269
<b>Not Economically Active</b>	2233

(STATS SA REPORT 2003:21)

**(iv) Occupational Categories of Documented Immigrants from Africa: 2002**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	2002
Professional, Semi-Professional & Technical Occupations	196
Managerial, Executive & Administrative Occupations	55
Clerical & Sales Occupations	8
Transport, Delivery & Communications Occupations	1
Service Occupations	2
Farming & Related Occupations	0
Artisan, Apprentice and Related Occupations	2
Mining, Quarrying & Production	1
Occupation unspecified or not classifiable	4
Total not economically active	2233

(STATS SA REPORT 2003: 3-7)

**(v) Occupations of Documented Immigrants by country of previous permanent residence: Africa 2002**

	Econ. Active	Prof. Semi-Prof Technical	Manager Executive Sales	Clerical Sales	Transport Delivery Comm..	Ser- vice	Artisan Appren- tice	Mining Produc. Quarry
Algeria	2	1			1			
Angola	1	1						
Benin	0							
Botswana	1	1						
Burkina Faso	0							
Burundi	1	1						
Cameroon	6	2	3	1				
Cape Verde	0							
Comoros	0							
Congo	10	6	3	1				
Cote D'Ivoire	0							
D.Rep.Congo	6	5	1					
Egypt	5	1	4					
Ethiopia	2	1	1					
Gabon	0							
Ghana*	34	28	5					
Guinea	1		1					
Kenya	21	16	4	1				
Lesotho	4	4						
Madagascar	2		2					
Madeira Island	0							
Malawi	3	2	1					
Mali	0							
Morocco	1		1					
Mozambique	0							
Namibia	0							
Nigeria*	48	36	7	2		2		
Rwanda	3	1	2					
Senegal	2		2					



Sierra Leone	1		1					
Somalia	0							
Sudan	1	1						
Swaziland	6	4		1			1	
Tunisia	0							
Uganda	33	32	1					
Tanzania*	6	3	2					
Zaire	6	5	1					
Zambia	15	13	1				1	
Zimbabwe*	48	32	12	2				1

\*Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe each have one person unclassifiable/unspecified.

\*\* Only the applicable occupational categories were included in this table.

(STATS SA REPORT 2003: 21-22)

#### (vi) Age and Gender of ALL Documented Immigrants: 2002

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	2002	Male	Female
Professional, Semi-Professional & Technical Occupations	576	456	120
Engineers, Architects & Related Occupations	34	31	3
Natural Sciences Occupations	59	49	10
Medical, Dental & Related Health Occ. & Services	88	73	15
Educational & related Occupations & Services	189	147	42
Humanities & Related Occupations and Services	179	137	42
Art, Sport & Entertainment Occupations	27	18	18
Managerial, Executive & Administrative Occupations	382	301	81
Clerical & Sales Occupations	26	13	13
Transport, Delivery & Communications Occupations	5	3	2
Service Occupations	21	20	1
Farming & Related Occupations	2	2	0
Artisan, Apprentice and Related Occupations	14	13	1
Miner & Quarry Worker, Production, Supervisor & Related	9	9	0
Occupation unspecified or not classified	19	10	9
Total not economically active	5491	2900	2591

(STATS SA REPORT 2003:10-17)

In respect of the age of immigrants, the majority seem to fall within the 30-34, 35-44 and 45-54 age brackets. The differences in terms of the numbers for male and female immigrants are also present in the respective age brackets. For example, in the Professional, Semi-Professional and Technical Category, 90 are between 30 and 35 years old (58 male & 32 female); 198 are between 35 and 44 years old (169 male & 38 female) and 178 are between 45 and 54 years old (150 male & 28 female). The remainder are between 55 and 64 years old (64 – 53 male & 11 female), whilst four (2

male & 2 female) are under 20 years of age and eight older than 65 (7 male and one female). (Stats SA Report 2003:10).

**(vii) Gender of Documented Immigrants from Africa: 2002**

Of the 2505 immigrants, 1566 were male and 936 female. (Stats SA Report 2003:26).

*[Note. It is possible to obtain a detailed gender-breakdown for each African country].*

**(viii) Country of previous permanent residence and economically active/inactive populations for documented immigrants from Africa**

	Economically				Economically		
	Total	Active	Inactive		Total	Active	Inactive
Algeria	18	2	16	Madeira Island	4	0	4
Angola	15	1	14	Malawi	66	3	63
Benin	2	0	2	Mali	3	0	3
Botswana	37	1	36	Morocco	56	1	55
Burkina Faso	1	0	1	Mozambique	87	0	87
Burundi	2	1	1	Namibia	3		3
Cameroon	54	6	48	Nigeria	631	48	583
Cape Verde Island	1	0	1	Rwanda	10	3	7
Comoros	1	0	1	Senegal	30	2	28
Congo	30	6	24	Sierra Leone	6	1	5
Cote D'Ivoire	15	0	15	Somalia	5	0	5
Dem. Rep. of Congo	30	6	24	Sudan	8	1	7
Egypt	53	5	48	Swaziland	104	6	98
Ethiopia	18	2	16	Tunisia	4	0	4
Gabon	1	0	1	Uganda	111	33	78
Ghana	202	34	168	Tanzania	26	6	20
Guinea	10	1	9	Zaire	30	6	24
Kenya	75	21	54	Zambia	101	15	86
Lesotho	123	4	119	Zimbabwe	464	48	416
Madagascar	4	2	2				

(STATS SA REPORT 2003:10-17)

#### **2.4.1.2.3 The Southern African Migration Survey of Skilled Migrants and Immigration Policy in Post-Apartheid South Africa**

Mattes, Crush & Richmond (2000:1-2) plead for a greater awareness of the profile and contribution of skilled migrants and immigrants currently living in South Africa. In 2000, as a Southern African Migration project, they published the results of a survey that consisted

of face-to-face interviews with 400 skilled foreign nationals in the metropolitan areas of Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. The authors used the year 1991 as the nominal split between Apartheid (old) and post-Apartheid (new) immigrant movements.

The “old” group is mainly Western (European) but also includes some African and Asian immigrants who entered the country under the previous government’s immigration policies. The second group is mainly African but also consists of Europeans and other skilled people who are linked to the influx of foreign capital into South Africa in the post-Apartheid years (Mattes, Crush & Richmond 2000:16). The authors reached the following conclusions:

### **(i) Migration Source Regions**

Europe – 47% (United Kingdom contributed 31%)

Africa – 41%

SADC Countries – 18%

The high European percentage reflects South Africa’s pre-1994 immigration policy that clearly favoured white immigration. However, the higher African percentage also denotes the movement of skilled Africans (immigrants and asylum seekers) after the demise of Apartheid.

### **(ii) Dates of entry**

Europe (pre-1991) – 73%

Africa (post-1991) – 87%

SADC Countries – even split between pre- and post 1991. This indicates that the brain drain from South Africa’s neighbours began before the demise of Apartheid.

### **(iii) Status of immigrants/migrants**

- 75% of skilled non-citizens (mainly whites) who entered pre-1991 are permanent residents.

- 91% of skilled non-citizens (mainly blacks) who entered post-1991 are temporary residents with work permits.
- 7% of temporary residents with work permits have applied for permanent residence.
- 45% of all respondents indicated that they would want to “to a large extent” become permanent residents.
- 60% of African respondents have some interest in becoming citizens, however, only 20% want to be buried in the country.

#### **(iv) Symbolic and patriotic links with country of origin**

*[Note: These indicators can also be used as markers to establish how “transient” South Africa’s skilled non-citizens are – i.e. by examining: their continuing economic commitments to their country of origin; how often they return to their country of origin; their developing ties to the host country].*

The survey established that skilled migrants/immigrants have strong and active links to their country of origin.

Bank account in their home country – 50%

House in their home country – 35%

Investments in their home country – 34%

Will never return home – 12%

Return home often – 16%

Have a job to return to – 19%

Proud to be citizens of their home country – 80%

Citizenship in home country an important aspect of self-image – 66%

Children must be citizens of home country – 54%

Duty to contribute to development of home country – 46%

#### **(v) Qualifications**

- 70% of skilled non-citizens with university degrees and 60% with post-graduate training arrived post-1991.
- 93% of the total number of respondents has post-secondary qualifications.
- 15% have postgraduate degrees.

## **(vi) Occupations**

The occupations of the respondents include full-time/part-time employed and full/part-time entrepreneurship in the formal/informal sector. They cover all employment sectors.

## **(vii) Geographic distribution**

- Post-1991: Johannesburg 64%; Cape Town 29.8%; Durban 21.1%
- Pre-1991: Johannesburg 35.9%; Cape Town 69.9%; Durban 78.9%

## **(viii) Gender**

The two groups are predominantly male, although the “old” group have more females because immigration in this group was more family-linked. In their home countries, the training and mobility of skilled Africans are male-dominated.

### **2.4.1.2.4 The Southern African Migration Survey of African Migrants and Immigrants in Post-Apartheid South Africa**

In mid-1998, the Southern African Migration Project conducted a study of 501 migrants from 28 African countries living in the main metropolitan areas of three provinces of South Africa, namely Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Since African migrants from outside South Africa are by far the most significant migration group in recent immigration/migration history, respondents were limited to this category. *It is important to note that the sample contains a large number of mainly West – and East African asylum seekers and refugees* (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:5,6).

The respondents were divided into ‘migrant communities’ which had political and policy significance, for example Basotho’s, Mozambicans, Zimbabweans, Nigerians, Malawians, Francophone-Africans, Contract miners, Hawkers and Traders, Migrants in metropolitan Durban and Migrants in metropolitan Cape Town. The sample included skilled -, semi-skilled- and unskilled people (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:6,10).

Since random sampling of migrants living in South Africa is virtually impossible, the researchers used “snow-ball sampling” within different “migrant communities”. The following criteria delimited the different communities:

- migrants from source countries that were historically large sources of cross-border migration into South Africa, for example Lesotho and Zimbabwe;
- migrant groups that denote particular political/policy significance, for example hawkers, traders, Nigerians, Malawians et cetera;
- urban-centred migrants, since migrants tend to converge on cities;
- migrants from other African countries, because African migrants are the most numerous group and the one which attracts negative publicity (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:6).

*[Note. This category is important for the purposes of this study].*

The results of the study can be summarised as follows:

#### **(i) Migrant Profile**

- **Gender**

79% - male

21% - female

Based on these data and the results of a study by Belinda Dodson (African Migration Policy Series Number 9), the authors conclude that women migrants are becoming an important feature of migration. Dodson found that the cause of the gender imbalance in migration from Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, is the fact that in comparison to African women, men are more mobile and move to a wider range of destinations. As migration routes become more established, women will participate more and one can expect to encounter more women from East and West Africa (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:7).

- **Age and Education**

The average age of the respondents was 32 years.

73% - secondary school education

22% - tertiary education

The above questions two stereotypes namely the assumption that migrants are young, and that they are relatively uneducated (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:9).

- **Employment**

78% - working part- or full time

38% - employed in the informal sector

62% - employed in the formal sector

78% - employed in country of origin before they came to South Africa

The researchers suggest that the high levels of employment are because migrants have to support themselves in their host country. It also indicates that foreign migrants have employable skills (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:9).

The following occupational categories were used in the study: employment/manager (formal sector); professional (i.e. accountant, lawyer, et cetera); non-manual office worker; skilled manual labourer; semi-skilled manual labourer; unskilled manual labourer; miner; agricultural farm worker; trader, hawker, vendor; armed forces/security personnel; student; never had a job (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:10).

- **Status and modes of entry**

Most respondents entered the country by means of formal transportation.

More than 33% arrived by plane.

Only 18% arrived on foot.

93% - had official documentation allowing them to be in South Africa

7% - had no documentation

8%-5% - of Nigerians, Senegalese and Ivory Coast had no documents

13% - permanent resident status

27% - refugee permit

23% - work permit

33% - no documentation

- 53% - want to become permanent South African residents
- 24% - want to become South African citizens
- 68% - do not want to retire in South Africa
- 80% - do not want to be buried in South Africa.

The statistics challenge the stereotype that all migrants are in the country illegally. The statistics are particularly meaningful given the fact that it is quite difficult for migrants to obtain the necessary documentation to enter South Africa. About a quarter of the sample stated that getting proper documentation was a significant problem, whilst almost half indicated that they experienced no problems whatsoever (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:12).

## **(ii) Migration histories**

The sample shows a strong cross-generational aspect (family members who have been to South Africa before) in respect of respondents from countries relatively close to South Africa. However, West – and East African migrants are often the first person of their family to visit the country. A very small percentage of Senegalese, Ivorians and Nigerians have been to the country before. Some of the West African respondents indicated that their parents had been to South Africa previously.

Migrants from non-traditional source countries (for example Nigeria, Senegal and the Ivory Coast) did not have any significant networks (i.e. a place to stay, family and friends) in place before they came to South Africa (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:14).

## **(iii) Links with home country**

- House in their home country – 93%
  - Head of household (or spouse of) – 43%
  - Travel home at least once a year – 50%
  - Send money home regularly – 55%
- (McDonald, Mashike & Golden 1999:15,16)



### **2.4.1.3 Application and interpretation of quantitative parameters to research selection**

It was clear from the start that a reliable research sample would be difficult to come by. There exists indeed “lack of demographic clarity” in respect of the number of legal “foreigners” in South Africa at any given time. Therefore, it was decided to use the available quantitative data for 2002 as mentioned above, as a benchmark for the interpretation of the current research selection.

In 2002 a total of 6545 legal “foreigners” entered South Africa. Of this number, a total of 3718 were male and 2818 female. Of the grand total of 6545, a total of 1054 were economically active and 5491 did not indicate any economic activity. Of the total of 1054 that were economically active, 269 were from Africa. Of the total of 5491 who did not indicate any economic activity, 2233 were from Africa. Of the 269 economically active persons, 258 had skilled or professional occupations. The above individuals came from Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Tanzania, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe. 29,8% predominantly skilled/professional Africans lived in Cape Town (drawn from Mattes, Crush & Richmond’s 2000 sample). If this figure is generalised and applied to the above 258, then approximately 76 would live in Cape Town.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

It is precisely the transcultural nature of the mobile African and more specifically the mobile professional’s situation that stimulates the creation of multifaceted sociocultural identities. In this marginalised world, identity becomes transitional and renegotiable and embracing of new transcultural elements. Perspectives and definitions of identity change to combat otherness. This is a world where someone could be both one and something other.

In dealing with ‘community’ and more specifically ‘transnational communities’ in the global ecumene, it should be borne in mind that the categories in effect represent a single field with an inherent fluidity of direct and indirect relationships.

An individual would aim to achieve competency in coping with other cultures, learning the rules, so to speak, but also demonstrate an adeptness in handling distance from his/her own culture. Cultural experience so gained is utilised on an individual level and is rarely used to effect change in the primary culture.

An aspect which may influence identity, community and culture among Black professional migrants, is the interplay between imagination and social reality. The 'imagination' creates an expectation of acceptance by the host country based on race and sympathy. Imagination, in this case, falls short of reality.

'Mobility' should also be analysed and discussed within current arguments in anthropology about contexts of scale – i.e. the local and the global.

It is not suggested that 'migration' and related terminology should be dispensed with. Within the context of this study, 'mobility' is the preferred terminology. However, for the purpose of clarity, it is used in conjunction with 'migration' and other related terms where applicable.

Brazier & Mannur (2003:8) state that "transnationalism" addresses the larger more impersonal forces of globalisation and global capitalism. It can be defined as "the flow of people, ideas, goods, and capital across national territories in a way that undermines nationality and nationalism as discrete categories of identification, economic organisation and political constitution".

Statistical information provides a clear picture of the transformation in the profile of African migrants to South Africa. These data were informative in the analysis of the profile of research participants which will be discussed in the ensuing chapters.

## CHAPTER 3

## PLACES OF ORIGIN AND IDENTIFICATION

**3.1 INTRODUCTION: PLACING 'THERE'**

During the course of my research it became clear that Africa as a geopolitical entity, the nation-states from where the research participants hailed and other nation-states where they resided before they arrived in South Africa, all had a profound influence on their identity of place(s) and their perceptions of here and there. Step by step the distinctiveness of these places emerged in the narratives of the research participants. But, to paraphrase Clifford (cf. Gupta and Ferguson 2002:68) ... what does it mean to speak of a native land or indeed a native continent?

In the following section I shall examine the research participants' perception of 'there'. In support of whether their description of 'there' is in fact really 'there', I argue that they described their affinity and affiliation with these places from afar. Hereby I mean that they were all firmly established in South Africa and made clear references to 'there' i.e. Africa or their homelands as opposed to here, i.e. Cape Town, South Africa. Following Fortier (2000) I argue that it is in the research participants' identification and description of significant 'places' of origin that the ambivalence inherent in the notion of 'global interconnectedness' is revealed. 'Arriving at' a specific place naturally infers 'coming from' a certain place. As mobile individuals, they experience according to Braziel and Mannur (2003:15), what it is like to be 'there' and not 'here' and to be simultaneously 'inside' and 'outside' a situation. As such, 'place' can become multidimensional. Not only can it be 'here' or 'here' it can also be 'there' and/or 'there'. What then is the sum total of 'there'?

Anne-Marie Fortier (2000:162) concurs with Clifford's assumption that living 'here' presupposes a definite link and a certain unity with 'there'. However, 'there' is not always a single locale or a bounded entity such as a nation. She argues that Clifford (and others) continue to explain 'here' and 'there' as spatially oppositional, i.e. territorially or geographically oppositional. Not saying that this is wrong, she delves deeper and pointedly asks: *"Where or what is 'there'? Is it necessarily not 'here'? How long is 'there' a significant site of connection? And for whom? How far away is 'there'?"* (Fortier 2000:162).

For Gupta and Ferguson (2002:68) the familiar distinctions between 'here' and 'there' become indistinct as people become more mobile. Increasingly this leads to the imagining of places, homelands and communities. They remark: "...as *actual places and localities become even more blurred and indeterminate, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient. It is here that it becomes most visible how imagined communities come to be attached to imagined places...*" (Gupta and Ferguson (2002:69).

I agree with Gupta and Ferguson (2002:69,70) that memories of places among displaced people function as symbolic anchors. However, this is but one aspect to the construction of 'there' since living in an increasingly globalised reality also brings with it, as they say, a specific context i.e. the global capitalist economy. In the earlier days of Transnational Anthropology, Schiller *et al* (1995:52) similarly remark: "*The new circuits of capital provide the context in which migrants, often fully incorporated in the countries of settlement...maintain or construct anew transnational interconnections...*" The authors (Schiller *et al* 1995:50) identify three 'forces' which may influence people's decision to lead a transnational existence that is both politically and economically insecure. Employment insecurity in both sending and receiving countries are put foremost, followed by racism in receiving countries and then nation-building projects in both sending and receiving countries.

Therefore, in examining the research participants' construction of identity *vis-à-vis* Africa and their respective homelands, it is important to take note not only of the imagined but also the more concrete or immediate aspects thereof. I believe that the research participants revealed in their description of 'there' the utter insecurity of their transnational existence.

### **3.2 A CONTINENTAL AND BLACK IDENTITY**

All the research participants revealed African sentiments in their narratives. For example, in answer to the question as to what defined her as a Kenyan foreigner living in Cape Town, South Africa, Joan stated it was 'being African' that enabled her to cope with feelings of alienation:

Okay I guess not my...it is not my friends, my tribe, my culture, I think it is just being an African...Its being an African. With Africans in general whichever country you go, would be pretty similar in many ways. We are the conservative ones. We are the ones who value family life, we are...I mean...we both are...you hardly ever hardly ever been able to not to live in Africa [...] I think what keeps me together is my roots as an African as an African gal [girl]. African culture...will teach you to respect your femininity...and teach you that value. I think its very highly prized, you know ...your culture ... we are actually taught ....how to carry yourself. I think what we [hang] on to, is more of an African...general African culture. Yeah...Africans we are... [Joan]

But when do people claim an African identity and under what circumstances? At what point then does someone cease to be a Kenyan or a Burundian and become African? Furthermore, what does it mean when somebody says: "I am an African" or "I am from Africa"? Which Africa is this? Is it Africa, the geographically demarcated continent or a spiritual Africa demarcated by memory, longing and symbolism? Does one then *have* to be uprooted to 'see the bigger picture'?

In order to answer these questions, it is perhaps necessary to revisit the African Diaspora. I do not propose to discuss the Diaspora *per se*, but rather to apply some of the constituent elements of diasporic identity formation in order to explain the research participants' claim to an African identity. For this I turn to Adeleke (2005) who examines current manifestations of Afro-centric consciousness and identity among black Americans. Adeleke (2005:247,556) does not question the fact that black Americans in the Diaspora shared a deep seated "African consciousness" and "strong affinity to Africa". However, she questions current manifestations of Afro-centric consciousness and identity which she says has a popular dimension to it and is utilised as a tool of resistance or opposition as opposed to an intellectual dimension which expresses a deep-seated longing to *be* African. Adeleke (2005:547) defines Afro-centric consciousness and identity as "*a consciousness of affinity to Africa, sustained by, inter alia, subscription to African cultural values, advocacy and invocation of African ideals and idiosyncrasies, and the conception of existential realities within an African cosmological framework. Affirmation of African identity derives logically from this Afrocentric consciousness. Africa becomes the basis of self-knowledge and identity; the quintessence of one's being*".

Although Adeleke's definition should be read against the specific milieu of the socio-political struggle of black Americans it is certainly relevant to the topic at hand. The research participants' claim to a black African identity encompassed its own unique dynamics and was perhaps not as shallow or without substance as one might think. I

believe their engagement with Africa is directly related to the historic legacy of Colonialism and it should therefore not come as a surprise if it featured in their narratives. The question is, however, how it impacted on their current identity construction.

Similar to Adeleke's African Americans, the spectre of colonialism manifested throughout in the narratives of the research participants. Consider for example Hospice's general remark about the impact of Colonialism on Africans:

[...] The French taught the Africans the first man who became an administrator, to move into the French administration, being a bureaucrat, that's what it is. It is better to be a doctor than to be a farmer, to be an advocate than to do anything that is a manual job. So the tendency is to [...] try to work in an office environment. [...] I think it is also true from a British perspective; they created the same bureaucratic [legacy]. Yes. You make progress within the system, but the minute you move out of it you become part of your traditional hierarchy. You have been a teacher all your life and someone else a doctor, but the doctor is still going to be more important [...] it's about social classes.

But even if one were to ascribe the construct 'Africa' to the colonisers, it is as Comaroff (1996:163) suggests, in fact decolonisation which intensified cultural awareness and identity consciousness. Uchendu [1975:269] states that it was "*the demand for a political kingdom which compelled a search for a continental identity. Continental identity became an instrument and a weapon for post-independence international diplomacy ... [then] there is the search for a black identity which is motivated by racial pride...*"

The question whether the identity construct of 'blackness' or 'being black' infers 'racial pride' as Uchendu suggests should be answered with an emphatic 'no' in the research participants' case. However, I think 'race' is certainly a factor insofar it invokes the binary opposition of white vs. black. Consider as an example, the following remark by Wanjiru in illustration of the aftermath of the Colonial legacy:

[...] you probably don't know this because I think this way...Africans have this idea that to be sophisticated is to acquire White mannerisms...White ways of doing things. In truth, they even have a saying you know 'ah, you look like a White person'; 'oh, you act like a White person'; 'oh you walk just like a White person'. You know, those came out of the Colonial days when everything was pure and it was internalised into the culture and...so, just small things that I find, for example, when I go [home] now, I find that some of my friends who have never left the country ...for them, to be more...sort of...developed and more...you know...how do you say...developed is not the right word...be more sophisticated, is to acquire things that they perceive as White....Not...not things that are White...the perception

of White they think is White [...]...it is more the West, yeah, the West...the perception of what, you know, the West is like. [Wanjiru]

Here Wanjiru taps into what I perceive as Euro-colonial perceptions of race. Referring to her own work among Cape Verdean islanders, Gibau (2005:535,534) discusses how colonisation dominates the worldview of the colonised: *"defining what is acceptable behavior, and how it fashions one's tastes in clothes, food and other social aspects of life. [...] While "racial democracy" exalted racial miscegenation for obliterating racial distinctions, it simultaneously promoted whiteness as the social and physiological ideal"*.

But where does this leave the identity construct of blackness or being black? Adeleke (2002:551) argues that 'being black' has little to do with intrinsic or genetic factors: *Being black acquired importance in history primarily because some people chose to use pigmentation as the basis of dealing with others. In other words, race assumed significance only because of a conscious and deliberate effort by a group of humans to adopt it as a platform for hegemony and exploitation.*" History bears witness to the fact that this 'deliberate effort' included a specific portrayal of blacks as inferior and primitive (Adeleke 2005:549).

Mbembe (2002:265) says that there are more than one expression of 'whiteness' and 'blackness' and that the formation of racial identities in Africa is moving beyond the binary opposition of black vs. white. For him the current meaning of 'whiteness' is not the same as it was under Colonial rule, i.e. it is moving away from the notions of power, privilege and oppression (Mbembe 2002:264). If people experience 'whiteness' or 'blackness' differently, why do some of the research participants' remarks unearth familiar racial stereotypes? Why is 'whiteness' still desirable? Note how Jean weaves racialism into the following anecdote:

...African hair is specially curly and kinky, so we put chemicals, put to relax it so that we can get the kink out and it can be straight and have bounce and body and whatever...actually a bid to become more White and that is the way I have always had my hair. But then...here, South Africans, black South Africans actually, are very much like into natural hair. I find that so cool. I thought ... [it] used to be like 'oh my goodness, look at all these backward people'... [...]

I used to think Africa was...or the rest of Africa was just ah...jungles and naked savages. [Jean]

Jean's remark also included a specific perception of "the other". Her albeit changed perception of black South Africans as 'backward' is reminiscent of the Eurocentric view

(Adeleke 2005) of Africans as inferior. But was this a one-sided construction? Note how Jean in the following remark invoked racialism and interpreted black South African perceptions of other black Africans:

...this girl, she is a South African Xhosa, this girl, she is very, very light skinned, I don't know if she has got like some White lineage, maybe a grandmother or something, but anyway, she marries this guy he is from the DRC and I am chatting to her and she says 'yeah, you know, these Black Africans'...and I say, 'where is your husband from?' she goes...'oh somewhere in North Africa' and I say 'oh where, like Egypt or Morocco'...? She says 'no, no, no, just...you know...DRC. And I said 'are you mad, do you think that's North Africa'. And she is like 'yeah, its north of here'. They just don't care...to them it is like some other dark corner. [Jean]

Are there then degrees of blackness? Adeleke (2005:549,250) writes that historically, many black Americans felt they could not identify with being black Africans. Some perceived Africa as inferior and claimed, if they could, either a white or Euro-African identity. More often than not they also claimed to be culturally superior to their African counterparts. In Africa, the historical dominance of white hegemonic identity may be shifting as Mbembe (2002) argues but it certainly remains a factor in identity construction even if such construction stands in opposition of such hegemony or not.

I want to suggest that it is not only the force of white hegemonic identity that is at work here but also from the perspective of the research participants, an almost exclusive black hegemonic identity. This latter construct of identity can not be divorced from the philosophies of African intellectuals such as Kwame Nkruma's 'African personality' and Léopold Sédar Senghor's 'negritude'. These labels transcend state borders and have directly or indirectly become part of identity references. It is, however, in the combination of Senghor's 'negritude' which Maquet (1972:7) defines as '*the consciousness of being black*' and the political ideology of Pan Africanism that the idea of sub Saharan Africa as a cultural unit emerges. This unity says Maquet (1972:8) "*is the unique cultural face that Africa presents to the world*".

But how unique is this face of Africa if its black hegemonic identity functions as a boundary mechanism whereby black South Africans are firmly placed outside this unity? I believe that this is also true from the perspective of black South Africans and will discuss more fully later how black hegemonic identity sets boundaries and prevents black African foreigners from being integrated in South African society. The reason for this dichotomy, I will argue, can be found in different interpretations of black consciousness and Pan



Africanism, at the core of which lies two different perspectives of rootedness or autochthony.

Suffice to say here that the research participants' narratives revealed an Africa that in their view was beyond the grasp of black South Africans. In the research participants' view black South Africans lacked understanding and knowledge and the ability or courage to cross the border into Africa – literally and figuratively. The main reasons for this state of affairs were ascribed to a lack of education and media exposure and an unwillingness to travel into Africa to gain first hand knowledge. In this light, consider the following examples:

Nobody ever told them that if you go to Nairobi, it's like this. Then they got an opportunity to watch DSTV [satellite television]. It showed them a whole variety of SABC Africa [a satellite television channel] programmes. They would say 'you know what, yesterday we were watching this programme and they showed this city with all these buildings. How is Nairobi, it looked so nice up there, is it a good place to go?' Now they are taking holidays in Zanzibar. Then they come to realise they were being stupid. They come to realise they are not the most educated people in the world. [Benson]

I think there is very little education [in South Africa] about the rest of Africa. I think, for me, I just see a much higher level that just doesn't make sense to me like, you know; the President [Mbeki] tries a lot to get people into the sense of the whole Africa Renaissance. I don't feel that it trickles down. [Wanjiru]

Oh, they [people who have been to Africa]... they are very much different. They will interact with you, they are more different, they are more accommodating, they are more outgoing, more...you know...they are very different. They are definitely...the ones who travelled, who have been exposed. I guess it is just lack of exposure because it opens up your mind and you are thinking oh wow, you know [...] [Jean]

The identity construct of 'blackness' or 'being black' often appeared interchangeably with 'being African' in the research participants' narratives. But how exactly did they perceive Africa? What were the functions of Africa or of being African? Was Africa merely a geographical construct or was there more the sense of rootedness, common values and/or common identity? 'Frame of reference' says Victor Uchendu (1975:271) will determine if someone will identify him- or herself as African: *"a Nigerian student in London or New York is more likely to identify himself as an African than as a Nigerian unless the situation clearly indicates that the identification of his country is expected or required"* (Uchendu 1975:271).

When they lived in the United Kingdom, Joan and Benson would often say when asked where they came from, that they were 'from Africa' or that they were 'African'. When I asked them why, they said they were of the opinion that people would not be able to 'place' Kenya geographically.

I mean, when I am away, like I am in Europe, I am very happy that I am [African]...I mean most of the world that you see, they don't know from where are you, you say you are from Uganda, they have no idea, so normally you just say you are from Africa. There is that pride, you know. [...] Its only in South Africa actually coming to think of it, that coming from Africa is not all such a great deal because its like 'oh you are from Africa' [...] Whereas when you are in Europe when you are from Africa at least it's a sense of you know what ...adventure. 'Why, you are from Africa' and they want to know about you and all that. [...]Joan]

You know, when I lived in the UK, I can't believe what people were saying, especially the white indigenous people. Born in Birmingham, lived in Birmingham, schooled in Birmingham, grew up in Birmingham, married in Birmingham. I would say have you ever been to London? [They would say] a couple of times; I went for shopping in December. So you never lived in London? The say "no" [...] So when I tell them I have just moved from London, they say, "Oh my God, you travelled all that way". They don't understand. So when you say I travelled all that way, I also came from Kenya, they say "Oh my God". It is just a mindset thing. [Benson]

Jean admitted that she became more aware of her African roots at a late stage in her life. In fact, it became more important once she had left Kenya. She was raised in Nairobi and felt that:

[...]...when you grow up in the city, there is so much exposure to so-called Western culture [...] as a teenager or young adult, you don't really want to be associated with your Africanness or your African culture. [Jean]

In contrast, Hospice who has travelled and worked extensively all over the world in places such as the United States and France, said he never looked at his return to Africa from the perspective of returning to his roots. During the discussions, he often portrayed himself as being removed from his country of origin and Africa as such. However, when he had a choice to settle anywhere in the world, he elected to return to Africa. He said he did not have to travel to some place to know who he is like for example African Americans:

Sitting in the US, I have no identity. I don't belong there. I am looking for where I belong... I have a lot of friends over in the States, some of them Black Americans who try to go to their roots. They go to Ghana and other parts of Africa. I met this lady last year in Nigeria ... subconsciously she felt she was going back to her roots. [...] Africans...do not... think the same way that black Americans do. Black Americans

have a feeling that they have to go back to their roots and search their identity.  
[Hospice]

Hospice also said he was raised in an environment where certain African values were deemed important. It will be discussed in more detail later but I would like to point out that Hospice's parents were from Benin where, under French rule they were considered part of the intellectual elite. As such they had the opportunity to alternate between Africa and France where they also studied.

[...] my father lived in two worlds, [and] he always compared the two. He would look at the African culture and say, oh that's great, you know the support system. [...] The African culture is like that and the values are giving and serving and sharing. These are values that my father thought that the French system did not offer because it was too individualistic in the first place. Finding the balance between the two is the best way and when the tradition tries to weigh you down, he said, no, no, no ... [Hospice]

In respect of so-called African values or a shared value system, I would like to recall some aspects of Joan's remark on 'being African' [see quotation at the beginning]. The essence of that remark reflects her reliance on a perceived shared value system among Africans. She highlighted conservatism, the value of family life, respect and specifically respect for women. Hospice referred to the values of sharing and serving. I would like to suggest here that a research participant's identity as an African or the notion of 'being African' and a perceived shared value system would often coincide with being away from their countries and with feelings of being out of place in their home countries when they returned for visits or other places where they were living. Nicole, for example, left Burundi about ten years ago and has lived in the United Kingdom, the United States and for the last four years, South Africa:

[...] Really, I think I am more African than Burundian. I'll relate it to you like when I go back home I find that I don't speak with my friends anymore, they think in a way that is exactly the same than when I left. I am more African. [Nicole]

Wanjiru on the other hand has never lived outside Africa. She lived in Namibia for a short time and has been in South Africa for the last ten years. She felt being away from Kenya changed her in many respects:

[...] And then you realise that you, by virtue of this exposure to different things, you grow in a different way compared to people who have never left [...] And then when I go back, you know, I find that ...I don't really have a lot of things to talk about with people [...] and I feel that our opinions are very varied. Even though I feel like this

strong attachment to Kenya and all of that, we just have grown apart in our way of thinking, our view of life, for example...you know. [Wanjiru]

In our discussion Wanjiru interestingly described herself as a 'global child' but when pressed for an explanation she said she had used the description without much conviction because she would probably never leave Africa. However, the remark touches on one of Lake's (1995:27) findings among Diaspora Africans in Ghana. Lake divides his research population into Africanists and 'citizens of the world'. Although Lake points out that these are not mutually exclusive categories, but perceives the second category as a more dispersed identity in the sense that it accentuates class identity or a global community as opposed to a single pan-African identity or community.

This emphasis on a class identity or global community also appeared in the narrative of Hospice, who, as has been pointed out, has travelled extensively and portrayed himself as an urbane global citizen who could fit in anywhere. Hospice contrasted African life and values with more individualistic Western or European values. Besides the values of sharing and serving which have been discussed above, he generally perceived the African value system as controlling:

[...] the system does not give you breathing space, you... are in charge of, responsible for everybody else and everybody else tells you what to do. So...I think it's a bit, it's a bit difficult for most people... [...]...people born in Africa, it's difficult to unfold to grow within a system that ...really controls you and most people will look for freedom [...] and an understanding of life that ...ah ...you are not necessarily part of a brotherhood, that you are yourself first, you know...yeah...being an individual, able to enjoy freedom and be responsible for your life. And I think its an idea that is propagated more and more...ah...it has become more predominant within the Black culture, the youth, for instance...individuality, as opposed to, having a personal identity as opposed to...become a part of the masses, part of the structure that really holds you hostage all your life.

For Hospice there was a certain similarity here to the Japanese value system where according to him group identity overshadows the individual. Although Hospice has never been to Japan, he said he had made a study of Japanese culture independently and through a former mentor and business partner who used to live and work in Japan. Apparently he has always been interested in how Japanese culture influences all aspects of social and economic life. In the last instance Hospice pointed out that Japanese culture has a profound influence on negotiation techniques and business practice.

In Hospice's case there are echoes of Adeleke's (2005:250) assessment that the concepts of race and Africa cause conflict in the identity formation of black Americans. She draws a line from current to historical responses to these notions: "*Distancing themselves from African, while emphasizing their Euro-American cultural identity [...] underscore [ing] their disdain for Africa's primitive nature, and proclivities by proclaiming their Euro-American cultural essence and affiliations. They endeavored to convince themselves, and the Europeans, of their cultural superiority over continental Africans*". Throughout Hospices' narrative he de-emphasised his black and African identity in favour of a more Eurocentric identity. Towards the end of our interviews when pressed on how people in his immediate social and business environment deal with him being black, he said it didn't matter at all because once people got to know him, they overlooked his blackness. But even though he said this with much conviction, it was interesting that he tried to show his [white] wife and her well-off friend the "real" Africa:

My wife always tells me she can adopt an African lifestyle. We were in Ghana, the real, real Africa, not those [tourist places] with a friend [of my wife] who lives in Tokai, rides her horses and so on. We were there at a restaurant. They could not eat! They could not eat! I said, you told me you were more African, that you can adapt. This is the real Ghana. So she could not use the toilet anywhere. We had to go to the Labadi Beach Hotel because they both wanted to go to the loo. And when you look at Ghana it is the cleanest place in the West African world. The level of hygiene is way above. [Hospice]

So where is the real Africa that Hospice and the others alluded to? Within this context I would like to examine the function of 'Africa' in the construction of identity. Is there such a thing as Africanness? It is perhaps at this point where there is room for the notion of an 'imagined community'. Anderson (1991) originally referred to 'the nation' as imagined in the sense that people do not necessarily know each other but nevertheless share a certain perceived connectivity. However as Gibau (2005:534) suggests, it can still facilitate understanding of how a sense of belonging can draw people together. For example, Gupta and Ferguson (2002:69) mention that notions such as Englishness or Armenianness "*refer less to a bounded place than to an imagined state of being or a moral location*".

I prefer to use Appadurai's (1996:33) term 'imagined worlds' which he offers as an extension to Anderson's imagined community. And with this in mind, I would like to suggest that in the case of the research participants, Africanness and indeed blackness are more imagined than spatially fixed. Appadurai's (1996:33) ethnoscaples, mediascaples and ideoscaples are of significance here in that they provide a framework for the reality in

which the research participants construct their identity as black Africans. If Appadurai's ethnoscapas are indeed representing a world of human movement then I propose that mediascapas through the dissemination of information and ideoscapas through their permutation of a dominant ideology, play a part in how this world is constructed (Appadurai's strips of reality)(Appadurai 1996:33,34). Throughout the interviews the research participants demonstrated an awareness of the media and its perception of Africa. Virtually all of them mentioned how 'African' news items in newspapers or television news channels portrayed a negative image of Africa and yet, their own images of Africa corresponded closely. Following Appadurai (1996:36) I suggest that the ideological master narrative on which perceptions of Africa is based, either through the media or in the research participants' own view, is certainly one that leans heavily towards a Eurocentric view of the continent. Examples of images and keywords highlighted in the research participants' narratives are: poverty, drugs, AIDS, war, genocide, slums, shacks, disease, malaria, politics, politicians, migration and religion. Against this background, consider the following extracts:

[...]The media does play a very large role, because...you know, wherever you go... I think most people, most places they go in the world; they always think of Africa as this...you know...lots of poverty and drugs, you know, and AIDS [...] you know, Zimbabwe, DRC, whatever, because here it is war, and genocide and AIDS. You know that is what they think Africa is about... [Jean]

Yeah, they [the media] represent Africa so badly, you know. You just have to watch SABC Africa...have you watched the news program in the morning? And when they show parts of Africa that they are always showing where they are fighting, where they are burning shacks, where there is [sic] the slums. [Wanjiru]

In all Africa there is poverty, trying to overcome disease, malaria and all this. People want to move. In places where there is a war now for many years, people want to move. They give up on the politicians that they have hired because nothing changes. [Hospice]

And this is why in Africa it is very easy to sell religion to Africans. Because there are so many problems in Africa it is where you will find the most churches and most who believe strongly, you know. [Joan]

An interesting aspect is that news items in particular were often the research participants' only contact with life outside South Africa. News items about virtually any country in Africa or even general items provoked a sense of familiarity and belonging not only because they could tap into a sense of 'being' African but also because it was something they could share with other foreign black Africans in the host country.

It is perhaps now necessary to look at the usefulness of 'blackness' and 'Africa' as identity constructs. I mentioned before how Adeleke (2005:548,551) underscores the shallowness of 'race' and 'Africa' as identity constructs. In her view, 'race' as a modern social and political construct in America, infers the idea of 'being black'. This idea finds historical resonance in the common experiences of black American slaves, i.e. alienation, oppression and scorn. The idea of unity inferred by the term 'Africa' is also problematic. For Adeleke (2005:248) there is no 'ethnic significance' in the term since it is a colonial creation...*"all blacks originated from a landmass the Europeans called 'Africa'; and since collectively blacks were referred to as Africans, the word 'Africa' has naturally been adopted as a unifying and identifying construct"*.

I agree with Adeleke (2005:549) that in many instances the function of the construct 'Africa', and I would like to add here 'race', are largely utilitarian. She states: *"In times of dire distress and alienation, many black Americans turned towards Africa for succor. This utilitarian function of Africa can be traced to the very dawn of slavery ... slaves managed to subvert the debilitating and dehumanizing impact of enslavement by invoking African cultural values and idiosyncrasies. Slaves developed a world of their own, whose realities were shaped more by African rather than European values.* Incidentally this argument also forms the foundation of Adeleke's (2005:256) main reason for the current 'popular' claim to Afrocentric identity and consciousness in America i.e. *"the state of alienation from American socio-economic and political realities that blacks found themselves in"*.

This, in my view, is a relevant aspect to the research participants' identity construction as black Africans. Similar to Adeleke's (2005:551) African-Americans, I suggest that 'African', 'Africa' and 'blackness' don't, in the case of the research participants have anything to do with culture or ethnicity and subsequently a shared value system. 'Being black' and 'being African' are identities constructed to deal with being displaced and with feelings of alienation. In this sense, and I shall discuss this later, it is perhaps constructed as a counter-hegemonic identity *vis-à-vis* black South African identity. I would like to put forward, that in the case of the research participants this identity construct lacks true historical and intellectual substance. It is similar to Adeleke's (2005:548) popular Afrocentristic construct which is at its best employed as a counter-cultural device.

So, are the research participants' perceptions of Africa important? They certainly are insofar as they play a role in the construction of *their* specific identity as black Africans. However, I do believe that the place Africa occupies in their construction of identity is indeterminate. It is, therefore as Gupta and Ferguson (2002:69) would say an imagined place and a symbolic anchor.

In the next section I shall examine the research participants' perceptions of 'there' in respect of the countries from which they hail. How do they construct their identities as Kenyan, Burundian and Benin/French? What is the role of the respective nation-states in the construction of this identity? In the course of this discussion I will distinguish between two processes, i.e. the nation-state as imagined and the imagining of a homeland.

### 3.3 IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION WITHIN THE NATION-STATE

The research participants were from Kenya, Burundi and Benin or France - and these states naturally emerged as primary places of identification. The mixture in itself is interesting in that first it presents not only the historical development of the nation-state in Africa but also its modern-day manifestation. Second, it also presents the nation-state in Europe, i.e. France. Any individual claim to an ethnic or national identity ought to be examined against this background since it brings into contention perceptions, philosophies, and modern-day loyalties, expressions of nationalism and ethnonationalism and historical labels.

Such examination also opens the door to one of the most current and fiercely debated issues in Anthropology, namely 'ethnicity' and subsequently also the notion of 'the tribe'. The arguments surrounding 'ethnic group' and 'tribe' are firmly located in Constructivist and Essentialist approaches to Anthropology, i.e. tribes or ethnic groups as inventions as opposed to tribes or ethnic groups as encompassing continuity. Essentialist theorists have been trying to separate ethnicity from its singularity as a Colonial invention by introducing the *concept of 'imagination', which does more justice to the multifaceted, long-term processes of creating new, and rearranging older, elements – processes in which many actors with diverse intentions and interpretations are involved* (Lenz 2000:108).

This idea of 'imagination' has become an inherent part of the discussion about the nation-state and the idea of a homeland. And it is with circumspection that I use these constructs.



From the outset I should state that I follow Malkii (1997:53) in that I examine how “*people* [my research participants] *construct, remember, and lay claim to particular places as “homelands” or “nations”*. Second, I also engage with Appadurai’s (1996:161) perception of the modern nation-state as a product of collective imagination. At this point I therefore distinguish between nation-building by the state and how, following Cohen (2000b:146) in his exploration of nationalist sentiment in Scotland “*People construct the nation through the medium of their own experience, and in ways which are heavily influenced by their own circumstances. The nation is mediated through the self.*”

I shall examine how primordial attachments (cf. Appadurai 1996:161), for example, tribe and ethnic group are dealt with in the research participants’ narratives. My emphasis is first on historical consciousness and construction in the manifestation of these identities. Here I go along with the Comaroffs’ (1996:166) view that “*...identities are not things, but relations; that their content is wrought in the particularities of their ongoing historical construction...*”. This theme is also picked up on by Gibau (2005:535) who, based on an earlier article by the Comaroffs (1987) argue that historical memory contributes to how people imagine community or collectivity. Second, also following Gibau (2005) my emphasis falls on the idea of ‘diasporic nationalism’ or as Gibau calls it, ‘transnational patriotism’ i.e. “*the public or domestic patriotic expression of attachment that immigrants exhibit for the homeland*” (Laguerre 1998:60 in Gibau 2005:535). For Fortier’s Italian community in London, ‘homeland’ is neither a site of contention i.e. separation, displacement or discontinuity nor is it a mythical or imagined place. The ‘homeland’ is in fact perceived as a place where one can return to. Fortier sees ‘the homeland’ as an institutional expression of identity but it “*is not so much about the connection with a country as it is about the creation of a sense of place which is often uttered in terms of home*” (Fortier 2000:162,163).

The research participants’ narratives as presented in the following section provide a personal and therefore unique perspective of their home country, revealing not only the mark of history but also pride, prejudice and a sense of belonging to a specific place. For the sake of clarity I present and analyse the narratives against the background of the relevant nation-states. I shall discuss perceptions of home and homeland under a separate heading.

### 3.3.1 KENYA

The Kenyan research participants were from the Kikuyu community of the Central Province who together with four smaller Bantu-speaking groups constitute 25% of the Kenyan population; the Bantu-speaking Luhya from the Western Province which constitute 14% and the Kisii from the Nyanza Province which constitute 6% (Ajulu 2002:251).

On the surface, the research participants' narratives revealed a certain commonality in respect of assertions to 'Kenyaness' or of 'being Kenyan'. It appears that President Mwai Kibaki's reign, at least in the minds of ordinary Kenyans, was associated with the rebirth of the Kenyan nation. The reign of President Daniel Arab Moi ended in 2002 when Kibaki, his former deputy and a Kikuyu from the Central Province and his National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) won the general election (all of this obviously predates the most recent dynamics in Kenyan politics). A journalist who observed this victory remarked as follows: *"Overnight NARC became the party of choice and ecstatically swept the electoral board in what would later be dubbed as 'the second liberation'. KANU was vanquished and NARC set out to achieve its electoral promises [...]...not even the 1963 independence celebrations could match what was witnessed during the swearing-in ceremony of President Mwai Kibaki as the third president of Kenya in January 2004. It was the dawn of a new era, or so Kenyans were made to believe. Kibaki electrified the nation when he took the oath of office..."* (Wanjohi 2006:10,11).

None of the research participants were living in Kenya at the time of those elections but they nevertheless remarked on their impact which Jean for example described as a 'ripple effect'. For them, returning home after the 2004 elections was marked by a distinct 'before' and 'after' feeling. The narratives of the research participants indicated a sense of nationalism evident in their obvious patriotism and also in the physical expression of this identity in the form of desk flags, t-shirts with slogans, bandanas in Kenyan colours and bracelets. Consider as examples the following remarks:

I would not hide away that I am Kenyan. I am proud of it. No, no, no! Not at all! [...] this Kenyan [thing]...I think is a recent thing...in general, because we just have a sort of a new Government. We have a president who has been in power for two or three years. Before that, we had Daniel Arab Moi who was in power for twenty seven years. [...] There was not much to be [united] about then; it was not really encouraged, like you could not buy merchandise that was Kenyan, even something as simple as a flag. You could not, for example, be seen waving the Kenyan flag

[...] at a game or something. It was really restricted in a very silly way. [...] But with this new democratic government [...] there was quite a mass euphoria, you know. It was time for change and you have got a new government and you...there is a lot of hope and [...] a surge of pride of being Kenyan. And now there is a lot of merchandise on sale. You get Kenyan bracelets, Kenyan t-shirts and a lot of Kenyan flags that you can wear as a bandana. I've got a little desk flag. Last year we went to watch the rugby and we had this big, huge, Kenyan flag. All of us were wearing like Kenyan t-shirts. And that was quite great, you know, because we did not use to have that... [Jean]

[...] I think there is a kind of...sort of revival [in] most tribes. For example, I was in Copenhagen [...] and a friend of mine with whom I was with was wearing a cap which said Kenya, a T-shirt that said Kenya. And a friend of mine walked up to him and said you know, I feel proud of you, you are the first African I have seen, wearing his country's name and wearing it where you can see it everyday [...] You know, it never occurred to me! And it's cool, you know. But then I realised, in Kenya there is this totally new thing. My little nephews, all of them have T-shirts that say Kenya. But in my day you never wore anything Kenyan [...] [Wanjiru]

I would like to return here to Gupta and Ferguson's (2002:69) idea of 'imagined state[s]' and 'moral location[s]' and Appadurai's (1996:33) imagined worlds, in particular ethnoscaples and ideoscaples. I believe the assertion of a Kenyan national identity as illustrated in the previous examples reveal the fluidity of people and ideology. Claims of a national identity do certainly lend some structure to the research participants' reality as displaced nationals but at the same time this identity is the product of a political narrative (cf. Appadurai 1996:36). Here one then also encounters the Kenyan state and its image of 'the Kenyan nation'. At this juncture I take into account Gibau's (2005:535) caveat that *"self-identification is often complicated by the capacity of nation-states to construct social categories and identities for its citizens ...the state exerts its power as a natural condition of everyday life, thereby rendering individuals and groups as imagined constituents of a community or nation..."*.

A pertinent example of how the Kenyan nation-state constructs an imagined collective identity for its citizens is through language. This aspect was specifically highlighted in the research participants' narratives. Wanjiru, for example, remarked that Kenya today, is indeed 'a very tribal society' but that the nature of this society is undermined by the fact that English and Swahili are the official languages. This was reiterated by Jean who also mentioned the rapid development of slang among the younger generation.

[...] In Kenya we have a common language. It is Swahili. So people don't speak their mother tongue, they speak Swahili. [...] I think personally the language is a very big thing in terms of continuity. And I had a discussion with someone who

thought that the whole world should just speak English to make life easier. Which I can also understand...and then he is like why do you want to hold on so dearly to this culture, you know, everybody speaks English, let's just all speak English. That's been happening in Kenya, a lot of young people now cannot speak their mother tongue. They speak Swahili and English and that's it. [Wanjiru]

It is a bad thing because you really [...] lose touch with your culture and your people and especially if you don't also learn the language. Because if you grow up in the city, chances are that you will definitely speak Swahili and ah...you have to learn...you learn English at school...English and Swahili. [...] So, if you grew up in like ah...not really the slums but ah...low income areas where they have more unemployment, they speak a very special type of dialect [...] it is called *Sheng*, it is a mixture of English and Swahili...so it is really corrupted English-Swahili and it is a very young, sort of language and it is mostly spoken by young people. And those kinds of people are really not quite different from the way they behave, you know, and the way they behave is quite different from the rest... [Jean]

The question of language as a post-colonial dilemma in the nation-state is also touched upon by Tambiah (1996:129). He asks: *"in a country with plural languages, what shall be the language or languages of education and administration?"* An interesting development noted by Tambiah is the substitution of English by 'one's own language' in, for example, countries such as India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Tambiah (1996:131) links this to the development of ethno-nationalism but I also see a parallel here with the official status of the Swahili language in Kenya which dominates other languages. Again, this is an example of how, as Appadurai (1996:140) remarks *"Ideas of collective identity based on shared claims to blood, soil, or language draw their effective force from the sentiments that bind small groups"*. Obviously one looks at it here from the perspective of 'the State' and within this context, Tambiah's (1996:131) assertion that *"linguistic [ethno] nationalism asserts a consubstantial identity between a collectivity of people and the language they speak and transmit"* makes an interesting point.

If one accepts the idea that the Swahili language in Kenya creates a certain commonality albeit imagined, then it is necessary to ask how the research participants represented ethnic identity in their narratives. What was the extent of their ethnic consciousness and subsequent construction of ethnic identities as Luhya, Kisii and Kikuyu? De Jongh (2006:12) remarks *"ethnicity can only 'happen' when sets of people who are consciously 'ethnicities' (groups?) are in contact with each other and differentiate themselves and the 'other' on the basis of some markers or criteria be it sociocultural and/or sociobiological and/or geographical"*. I believe in the case of Kenya, these criteria are to a certain extent embedded in the Kenyan nation-state's political narrative of which certain aspects are historically constructed. Ajulu (2002:253) mentions that specific historical developments

such as events linked to Colonialism created an uneven distribution of resources and that people will react to the restrictions and demands of the situation in a particular manner. To illustrate his point, he refers to a remark by Oyugi (1997:43 in Ajulu 2002:253) who studied Colonialism's influence in the Kenyan political economy and the role of ethnicity in election processes: *"...the combination of colonial attitudes and strategies and the responses to them by the various ethnic groups were to provide the setting for future competition and conflict ... the "development" strategies devised tended inevitably to benefit some groups at the expense of others"*.

If, as Ajulu (2002:257,254) says, ethnic identity played a big part in the formation of nationalistic political parties in the early independence years, then The Kenyan African National Union of President Jomo Kenyatta is a case in point: *"This was an alliance of urbanised, proletarianised and relatively more educated sections of the indigenous ethnic groups, which for historical reasons came from the Kikuyu, Luo, Kamba and sections of Luhya"* (Ajulu 2002:257). This alliance was not accidental. The Kikuyu and Luhya along with the Luo had, for example, been a dominating force in the labour market since the 1930's. History thus created a fortuitous position for certain ethnic groups. Note how Benson, a member of the Luhya, described the early post-independence years:

Kenyatta was a good guy. He was a socialist. He knew what he was doing. That was a socialistic approach. [...] They knew that to give people land, it was going to be messed up. So the Government decided we shall give them the wheat and help them to sustain it... [...] We never really used to own a farm.

[...] in my family, my uncle, my eldest uncle was one of the assistant ministers since independence. During the 1960's and 70's [people used to say] that's the family of so and so the eldest son is an assistant minister. He's an MP. [...] Back in the 70's, Kenya was independent in 1963, ten years down the road there was so much land in Kenya. The White men had left all the land. [...] The Government said, the rains are coming, if you want to farm, here, you have to lease the land for 6 months. So they supplied the grain [for] harvest and all that [...] So my dad would take the land, leased, 6 months, plant, grow, harvest. Get paid out. So people had that kind of understanding. To buy a farm people did not have that kind of money. So it was easier to lease. That's how people got money and started buying farms. We did not do it the Mugabe style. [...]

[Benson]

The socio-economic advantages enjoyed by groups such as the Luhya and the Kikuyu in the post-independence years under Jomo Kenyatta, never quite reached the Kisii who were living a kind of isolated existence in the fertile mountain region of Kenya's Nyanza

Province. The contrast between the differing circumstances of the Luhya vis-à-vis the Kisii became particularly evident in Benson and Fred's accounts of their earlier family histories and education.

[...] My great grandfather was one of the missionaries. You know [when] the missionaries came you were educated. My grandfather was educated. [...] My dad used to be like a land commissioner – he was a district commissioner in the Kenyan Rift Valley area...the lands near Nakuru [...] from there I started my schooling in Mombassa. [...] The reason why [...] Nakuru [...] it's a farming area, schooling is not the most important thing. So you need to go to a good school. So he sent me to Mombassa. [Benson]

[...] my grandfather, moved [...] to the tea-growing region of Kenya. The men were employed on the white-owned farms as cowhands or whatever. My grandfather told us that he'd go with my dad to this white-owned farm where my dad was working and he stayed for a long time, and how my dad started going to school. Out of what he earned [my grandfather] sent my dad and his elder brother to school [...] my dad was in education, by the way, an Education Secretary. He started off as a teacher and then he went to work in the Education Department and instead became like a manager of education within a province. [...] [Fred]

Raikes (1994:67) argues that the creation of a collective Kisii identity was partly a result of their administrative isolation and subsequent impoverishment during Colonialism. It appears as if this changed during the reign of President Daniel Arab Moi when Kisii Province became a barrier between the Kipsigis, to which the President belonged and the antagonistic Maasai. It was also during this period that some Kisii moved into Government administration. Raikes (1994:65) remarks that today, the Kisii account for about 90% of the population of the Kisii district and that few Kisii live elsewhere, except perhaps in Nairobi. But are historical circumstances still relevant today and if so, how do they impact on inter-ethnic relationships? Ajulu (2002:252,253) says that within the Kenyan context inter-group competition and conflicts have been and still are the result of the uneven distribution of resources and State power. To elaborate his point, Ajulu refers to a remark by Leys in respect of Colonialism's influence in the Kenyan political economy: *"The foundations of modern tribalism were laid when the various tribal modes and relations of production began to be displaced by a capitalist one, giving rise to new forms of insecurity, and obliging people to compete with each other on a national plane for work, land and ultimately for education and other services ..."* (Leys in Ajulu 2002:252). In for example, the remarks by Fred and Judith below, the Kikuyu emerge as the 'significant ethnic other'. Note how their perceptions are confirmed by the Kikuyu research participants, Wanjiru and Joan:

By virtue of the fact that the Kikuyu had a first time education system they are now sitting in positions, they decide who gets hired, who gets fired and whatever. So they will always be favouring their own kind. [Fred]

[...] Kikuyus [sic] make up about 6.5 million there...approximately...7 million people. Divide the rest of us...to something...the big groups are like 4 or 5 million...and then there are really small groups. So by virtue of that you find that Kikuyus [sic] would be overrepresented in many fields. [Wanjiru]

[...] there is [ethnic based discrimination]. [...] look at the President's clan, I mean, we, we were all in school, different ethnic groups, you find that your classmates, gets [sic] home before you even fill out the application form for the job, then they are already working. It is there, it is something that is there. I mean, if your [ethnic group] is in power, of course you help your own before you help the others [...] [Judith]

[...] In Kenya if you go and look for a job interview, the fact that you are Kikuyu already says something, you know. We are many; we are about 6 million of us. It's always the majority tribe, it's always the case. We are not the ones who seek the jobs, work or whatever but we are known as hard working. And culturally we are taught to be hard working; you know luckily we are not to be lazy at all. So I think it is fairly understandable... [Joan]

Ethnicity stands here in a specific relationship to the nation-state. Shami's (1999:19-20) view is that ethnicity and 'nationness' used to be perceived as two opposing forces. In the past, *"threats to nation-building and state-building were seen as primarily located in the realm of ethnicity and the varieties of localism expressed through the trope of the tribe ... anthropological approaches...have emphasised the constructed nature of ethnic identification...[but] rarely addressed how the wider context is informed, and ethnic categorisation determined, by nationalist ideologies of the encompassing states"*

With this in mind, I would like to examine the construction of Kikuyu identity through the narratives of the three Kikuyu research participants. In the narratives of the Kikuyu research participants, 'being Kikuyu' or 'Kikuyuness', conveyed a sense of apartness or separateness from other groups. But on what could they have based such a perception? It would seem that after independence, the Kikuyu emerged as the most dominant group and that a certain class consciousness began to develop. Upon a question as to whether such differences existed between the Kikuyu and other groups, Joan answered in the affirmative and illustrated her answer with reference to the Luo and what the consequences might be if a Kikuyu should marry a Luo:

Possibly, [there is classism] [...] you could be a Kikuyu and let's say you are a Luo, who is in society, in society people know, maybe in a very good class. And we all

know that all Luo are well respected families. They are intellectuals and [...] they have the sharpest minds in Kenya. They are the doctors, the engineers. They make money, but professional type of money. You might be a very classy family, everything ... but let's say the fact that you are Luo, is a very bad thing. You will find that it does not matter [that you come from a classy family]. And you know the irony is that [...] maybe you are getting married to a man whose family is doing so well, you know, and he is doing so well, and you are not from that family, let me tell you, there will still be trouble, there will still be. [Joan]

This consciousness of difference or class, I believe, can once again not be separated from the political and historical context in Kenya. Ajulu (2002:251) remarks that ethnicity has emerged as the most significant issue in political competition in Kenya and that it is thus also the basis for regional inequalities and class differences. *"The Kikuyu, who had experienced the most intensive contact with settler capitalism, held the advantage in adapting to the demands of the "modern" economy — the acquisition of education, business, farms and others"* (Ajulu 2002:254).

The 'ethnic self' of the Kikuyu research participants emerged as an important aspect in their self-identification. Upon a question as to whether they considered themselves firstly Kenyan and then African Jean and Joan, for example, preferred their Kikuyu identity to a more generalised Kenyan or African identity.

[I think of myself as] firstly Kenyan and then African. Actually, it is probably very arrogant or kicking in the butt to say that I think of myself as Kikuyu first and then a Kenyan and then an African. [...] If they ask me, I would say Kenyan, yeah. But I think, the way I think of myself is and what I say is different [...] And ... you know, I am proud to be a Kikuyu, others who are not Kikuyu would probably not like me very much for saying that...but yeah, Kikuyu, Kenyan and then African. [Jean]

[I am] very proud of that [being Kenyan]. Although I would like to say I've got a grounding [sic]. I know where my roots are, you know. [...] this will come out looking a bit arrogant, but we [the Kikuyu] are such a powerful tribe, we are like the aristocrats. It does not mean everybody is doing well, we are very hardworking people. See, when you talk about it, when you just ask to anybody, in fact you should ask the Kenyans when you have a conversation, what are the facts to come into your head when you think about Kikuyu: money, we're go getters. A Kikuyu may not have any basic education but he works so hard, he'll be selling stuff on the street. They're the ones who are like...very...driven, they are very driven and the hard workers. [Joan]

The question here is why they claimed such a strong Kikuyu identity. Carola Lenz (2000:108,109) in her work on ethnicity in Ghana, examines the link between colonial and pre-colonial models of identity and the different meanings assigned to the construct by different groups. She refers to a remark by John Lonsdale (1992/1994 in Lenz 2000:108)



that in Kenya “*being a Kikuyu’ marks out a social space in which moral norms, the legitimacy of political leadership, the rise of social classes and gender relations are discussed*”.

If one should look for an historical explanation for this set of circumstances there is one available in the emergence of a politicised Kikuyu ethnicity (Ajulu 2005:253) in Kenya’s post-independence years. Ajulu (2005) describes the process eloquently. Suffice to say here that ethnic identities - and more specifically Kikuyu identity - emerged as specifically constructed identities in order to attain and maintain political power (Ajulu 2005:257). I believe politicised ethnicity borne of the Colonial and post-Colonial state in Kenya is relevant and reflected in the research participants’ narratives.

The Kikuyu research participants made clear distinctions between three time phases which roughly correspond with three political eras in Kenyan history. They first distinguished between a time ‘twenty thirty years ago’, second, the reign of President Daniel Arab Moi and third, the reign of the current president, Mwai Kibaki. The first time phase corresponds with the reign of Kenya’s first president, Jomo Kenyatta. During this time, according to Ajulu (2005:261) general Kikuyu ethnicity was mobilised to protect the interests of the ruling Kikuyu elite and subsequently to become ‘protectors’ of the motherland and the presidency. The second phase, i.e. the reign of President Daniel Arap Moi (1978-) saw not only the redirection of power and resources away from the Kikuyu but also ethnic conflict and ethnic cleansing (Ajulu 2005:262,263,264). The third time phase, briefly mentioned at the beginning, can be linked to the reign of the then ‘current’ president, Mwai Kibaki. Jean described how the current more amiable political context made it possible for her to become more aware of her Kikuyu identity as opposed to the oppressive circumstances during the regime of President Daniel Arap Moi:

[...] I think of myself as a Kikuyu first and then a Kenyan and then an African. It is not a good way but again it is [...] because the previous regime [...] they really had it in for Kikuyus. Daniel Arab Moi tried to have a little bit of a genocide thing going there with the Kikuyu. So [...] for me it is just...sort of...like reaffirm my Kikuyuness and I wanted to learn more about the Kikuyu people and ask where we came from and my culture. [Jean]

If, with hindsight, one can deduct how Kikuyu identity is interwoven with all aspects of Kikuyu sociocultural, political and economic life and how history influenced this process, then it comes as an interesting surprise that the culture-history knowledge among the

Kikuyu research participants was at best fragmentary. The Kikuyu research participants all remarked on this lack of knowledge and stated that they would like to explore their origins.

In an attempt to explain this 'knowledge gap', I think one should look again at Ajulu's (2005) politicised ethnicity as a possible explanation. If Kikuyu identity were specifically constructed to facilitate specific political goals then it would negate notions of ethnicity or tribalism in their 'ordinary usage' i.e. "*groups of people sharing common consciousness based on language, culture or common ancestral heritage*" (Ajulu 2005:252). I concur with Ajulu that in this sense the constructs tribe or ethnic group do not always carry negative connotations. However, although the Kikuyu research participants' narratives revealed common usage of the term 'tribe' as in 'my tribe...my people' or 'we are such a powerful tribe' there was little or no evidence of 'common consciousnesses' except perhaps in that they shared a common language or languages i.e. Swahili and English. However, this they share with all Kenyans. Jean remarked that she gained some knowledge of the 'Kikuyu tribe' when she was at school but that this knowledge was not augmented by her parents.

We used to have civil education where you studied about like the origins of the tribe, how they came to be. That's how I came to know the little that I know about Kikuyu culture. But certainly my parents, they taught us the language and they speak to us in the language, but in terms of, you know, teaching us the deeper Kikuyu values or whatever, they never actually did it, which I think is a shame. [...] I was brought up in the city, maybe for others who were brought up in the rural areas, they might have different ideas, but certainly for us [...] if you speak Kikuyu, you know, you are like this really backward little person. [...] if your parents have even bothered to teach you anything about your culture, or where you came from or where your people came from [...] you forget it, you don't want to be associated with it. [Jean]

If one accepts the premise of the Kikuyu as an amalgamation of migratory groups it is not difficult to postulate that over time the culture, history and identity of individual groups became lost in the processes of enculturation and acculturation. A case in point is Wanjiru's story. On the topic of what it means to be Kikuyu and what she knows about Kikuyu history, Wanjiru explained that she became interested in tracing her roots when she realised there were only a few surviving members left of her matrilineal decent group, the Ndorobo:

**[Interviewer: Is Kikuyu history something you would research?]** Yeah, yeah...! I have become more interested in those kinds of things. When I went home last year, I did interviews with my parents because I wanted to find out more about my roots and my history and that kind of thing [...] One of the things that I wanted to

find [out]...I knew that my mother was originally from a small community that became extinct and I just wanted to explore...from here, because she's the eldest in our family and the other people have died, my grandfather have (sic) died. I just wanted to find out where they came from, you know. But that was interesting...it was very interesting to find out that she could only go back so far and there is so much more she couldn't tell me, and nobody could tell me. And she probably has living relatives in this small community that has almost become extinct.

**[Interviewer: What did you discover?]** [...] I always wondered why for example my mother did not have cousins. You know, in my language you don't even have a word for cousins, because my dad's father or uncle...my dad's father, I would call him big papa or small papa depending on whether he was older or younger and my cousins are exactly like my sisters [...]. And so, my mother...my mother didn't have cousins from her maternal side.

**[Interviewer: Is she Kikuyu?]** Ah...brought up Kikuyu, but her parents were not.

**[Interviewer: What were they?]** They were from this little tribe... [Ndorobo]

**[Interviewer: Is the tribe basically extinct or is it just this community where she came from?]** No, the tribe is almost extinct; I think there are probably only a couple maybe left a few hundred people that speak the language.

**[Interviewer: Your mom doesn't speak it anymore?]** She doesn't speak it. The last person to speak it in her lineage was her grandmother...no, her aunt, her father's older sister.

**[Interviewer: What did you discover, why did her lineage disintegrate?]** You know what happened with this community...when Colonialism came; there was this small ethnic group which lived in the forest. They were hunters and gatherers, they were called Ndorobo [...] Now they got...as the land was getting demarcated, and the Colonialists are taking huge tracts of the land, the forest land on which they lived, they sort of were pushed out of the forest. And because there was between two, almost two really big ethnic communities, they got assimilated with these communities. So some...became socialised with the Kikuyu way of life and others became socialised with other ways of life. And so with time, you know, my mother and her parents then moved to Kikuyu land and in time the language just died and the last one to speak it was the aunt and when she died, that was it.

**[Interviewer: And there is nothing she told you as a child about...her culture...?]** She didn't know any...she didn't know any...because they moved into a [town] and her father had already adopted Kikuyu language and Kikuyu culture.

The case of the Ndorobo who were absorbed into a greater Kikuyu amalgamation is adequately recounted by Droz (1998). Droz (1998:263,266,267) discusses how the people of the forest were isolated by stronger groups in the pre-colonial and colonial periods and how some of these groups came under socio-economic pressure as a result of the influx of other migratory groups and widespread famine. A struggle over land rights ensued with the Ndorobo in what is today the Kiambu Region of the Central Province. The outcome saw

the stronger groups adopting the name 'Ndorobo' and staking their claim to the land in question. This claim was later overruled by the Colonial Administration but the integrity of the Ndorobo as a group was damaged.

When prompted, the Kikuyu research participants singled out urbanisation as a possible cause for their lack of historical and cultural consciousness. The associated perils of urbanisation were mentioned such as Westernisation and Americanisation. Speaking one's own language or dialect as Jean's earlier remark illustrates, would have been perceived as 'backwardness' and lead to disassociation with one's own culture in order to blend into the urban landscape. The research participants made a clear distinction between 'the rural' and 'the urban'. For them 'the urban' represented a modern environment as opposed to the traditions and 'old cultural practices' of 'the rural'. Note the following descriptions by Jean, Wanjiru and Joan:

[...]...if your parents migrated to Nairobi in the 50's or in the 60's [...] the children who are raised in those sorts of unions [...] are like any other modern child you find in any other city. While there are families that are largely influenced by tradition and old cultural practises, it is really being so diluted when you grew up in the city. Because you don't have that context, exposure and censure, you know. [...] the disadvantage of growing up in the city [...] you are quite disturbed that you can't really relate to the people who are from the villages. [...] It is also a different kind of mindset. So they have grown up more with the cultural values at home and tend to practise them more, or believe in them more or expect that of their spouses as opposed to like young men who just grew up in the city like my brother [...] he is definitely a city boy. [Jean]

My father was born in the city. But my father was born [...] in the Colonial days. So they lived in the city. [...]My mother moved to the city when she married my father. So she was born in the rural area [...] [I would describe my family as modern or traditional...I think both...yeah. How...both because well...my mother is...I think the combination of both. My father, by virtue of having been born in the city, for example, wasn't very exposed to the traditional way of life as much as my mother was. And then my mother moved to the city and became urbanised so she brought her rural background to the city and she became more urbanised. [Wanjiru]

We were raised in an era where our parents have moved to the city in search of better jobs. So for them, it was a big thing for the parents that children moved out from the village to the city which is what everybody was doing. Now, in our case we were born in the city, grew up in the city where all the tribes mixed. [...] You see they were looking in search of opportunities when they moved...it was a really big thing to move from the village to the city. [Joan]

The Kikuyu research participants perceived the rural and the urban as two entities or, if you will, two life worlds. Ferguson (1997:137,138) in his study of links between the country

and the city on the Copperbelt in Zambia, remarks on the rural-urban dichotomy in Africa and its inherent oppositions such as primitive-civilized, tribal-Western and traditional-modern. In addition there are also certain moral perceptions associated with this dichotomy such as natural-artificial, pure-immoral and authentic-corrupt. These dualisms, he says, creates the impression of urbanisation as 'a literal journey from one world to the other'. But more than anything else they also reveal how the urban and the rural are imagined (Ferguson 1997:153).

Perhaps more than anything else the presence of these dualisms in the narratives of the Kikuyu research participants sheds light on the construction of a general Kikuyu identity and the dynamics of individual identity consciousness. After listening to the narratives, one cannot help but question the notion of a single Kikuyu identity. Droz (1998) for example, examines this question within the context of the construction of social groups in Kenya. For Droz (1998:262-263), Kikuyu identity as it developed through Colonial and post-Colonial times, is at once invented and imagined. I feel that perhaps now with a new political dispensation in place in Kenya, Kikuyu identity and subsequently ethnicity are being questioned. However, I do not think the research participants were questioning the fact of their Kikuyuness but merely what constitutes 'being Kikuyu' in the first place. I further suggest that by asking these questions, the Kikuyu research participants, and for that matter all the research participants, were defining their identities as migratory strangers in their host country.

### 3.3.2 BURUNDI

Burundi is inhabited by the Hutu (85%), the Tutsi (14%) and the Twa (1%) communities. The two sisters, Nicole and Haydee identified themselves as Tutsi and this immediately begs the question as to the nature of identity construction and representation in a country that has been ravaged by war. As a place of identification, the Burundi nation-state presents a specific 'image' and an historical and modern-day narrative which should impact on the construction of ethnic and national identities. Within this context, what then did 'being Tutsi' or 'being Burundian' mean? How were events such as Colonialism, post-colonialism and the war perceived and remembered? Similarly, how did the research participants perceive and present the Burundi nation-state? Did they buy into the collectivity of a Burundi nation?

When I collected a basic history from Haydee and Nicole, I was struck by how a single experience, i.e. the 1993 war, impacted on their perception and identity of place. Because Haydee, in her own admission was too young at the time to remember much detail, this is for all intents and purposes more Nicole's story...

In colonial times] They [my family] lived in the South of Burundi and they were cattle farmers [...] they did not work for colonial administration [...] [After Independence] some [lived] in Bujumbura others stayed in the country side. [Some] worked for the government. [...] [Before 1993] we lived in different towns of Burundi: Bururi and Gitega. [Nicole]

In 1993, when she was about twenty years old, Nicole left Burundi to study in the United States and the United Kingdom. She related how her family left Burundi in 1995, fleeing the war that erupted in 1993. Together with her youngest sibling, fourteen-year-old Haydee, Nicole's family settled in Johannesburg where her elder brother was living. Her elder sister emigrated to Canada. After the war ended, Nicole and Haydee's father returned to Burundi. He died shortly afterwards in a car accident. Nicole's mother remained in Johannesburg to look after Haydee whilst she completed high school. When Haydee was accepted at the University of Cape Town, her mother returned to Burundi. The family had resident status in South Africa but Haydee elected to become a South African citizen when she was eighteen years old.

The simple facts of the family's history belie its inherent dynamics. The words 'Tutsi' and 'war' carry a multitude of meanings that are deeply imbedded in the socio-cultural and political past and present of the country. Nicole was not keen to discuss war and became quite withdrawn when asked about it. However, she did say that her family had lost "a significant number of relatives". However, for Nicole and her family the year 1993 was the watershed year:

In 1993, the first democratically elected president of Burundi was killed. There was a war in the following 13 years. In 1993, I had left Burundi so personally I felt only emotional pain [Nicole]

Some historical contextualisation is in order here. On June 1, 1993, Melchior Ndadaye became Burundi's first democratically elected president. In the days leading up to the elections, anti-Tutsi rhetoric and slogans were common among Hutu supporters. Since the new president was a Hutu, many Tutsi believed that the elections were ethnically rigged, particularly when many Tutsi were removed from key administrative and regulatory

positions. On October 21, 1993, the President and other key government figures were assassinated by the Tutsi dominated armed forces (Kadende-Kaiser & Kaiser 1997:31,37,38; Lemarchand 1996:178,179; Laely 1997:695).

Lemarchand (1996:178,179) notes that in the aftermath of these events, many Tutsi's feared an ethnic backlash and either retreated to areas where they could be protected by the army or fled the country. Although I am aware of the displacement of large numbers of Hutu in response to the conflict in Burundi in earlier years, I would like to pay attention to the specific dynamics of 1993. Fearing an ethnic backlash obviously resulted in significant Tutsi displacement not only in terms of refugees but also economic migrants. I asked Nicole about the nature of mobility among Burundians:

Recently, because of what happened in 1993, the war and all those things, people were forced to do it [being mobile]. It is not like oh we wanted to do it ...to leave our country. It is not something that we do, but it started because of the war. [...]It is still not something that happens naturally. It does not come from inside, it comes from external factors [...] [Nicole]

Nicole's use of 'we' and 'our country' are interesting. Karen Armstrong (2000:591) looks at the complexity of the link between national events and individual experiences. She argues *"Individuals' perceptions are grounded in local worlds, although at times their own concerns may link the local to larger communities ... there are times when personal experiences merge with the collective experience of these particular events... Such connections are drawn by the individuals themselves when they use a group-We. This group-We is presumably what Anderson means by an imagined community"*. I accept that Nicole's narrative merely scratched the surface of a complex matter. However, what interests me is that the events of 1993 were the only ones she deemed sufficiently relevant to mention. They stand conspicuously alone as reference points or linkages to a larger community or if you will, a 'group-We'.

It is with circumspection that I suggest here that Nicole's 'group-We' is related to the collective experience of Tutsi's in the aftermath of the assassination of Melchior Ndadaye. I agree with Armstrong (2000:593) that *'a personal memory ... links an individual to the group, to events involving other people, and to a group consciousness"*. The event itself is naturally part of the historical narrative of the Burundi nation-state and at this point it thus becomes clear how the individual (Nicole) and the group (Tutsi) become linked to a larger

collective national identity... as Armstrong (2000:593) says "*Over time, personal memory and memories of persons merge, becoming part of the nationalist story...*"

The 'nationalist story' reappeared in Nicole's narrative when she related another event which she did not experience directly. The story contains a villain (the Colonial power) and a hero who is a prince no less...

We were [taught Colonial history] but it was quite superficially, they didn't explain what really happened. It was more about important dates and events that happen but nothing in between like the effect of colonisation on the social landscape in Burundi [...] As soon as Burundi had its independence the hero of Independence was killed by the colonial power. He was the symbol of unity for the entire country. He was a prince but married a Hutu and therefore all people could relate to him.  
[Nicole]

The events Nicole referred to, took place during the late 1950's and early 1960's. Prince Louis Rwagasore was the eldest son of King Mwambutsa IV and a member of the Bezi clan. He became a prominent figure in the Parti de l'Union et du Progrès (Uprona) and opposed the Belgians for the Parti Démocrate Chrétien (PDC) and their favoured candidate, Baranyanka, a member of a minor clan, the Batare. As a legitimate heir to the throne, he was popular among the emerging urban elites, commercially astute and intensely nationalistic. If ethnic prejudices existed, it disappeared after he married a Hutu woman. Uprona won the September 1961 elections overwhelmingly. On 13 October, Rwagasore was shot by a Greek assassin in a plot masterminded by the PDC, possibly with active support from the Belgian administrators. After his death, Rwagasore became an almost mythical figure in Burundian history with some saying that he was in a position to avert conflict that was to come (Lemarchand 1996:46-55).

I regard this story as a kind of meta-historical myth. Armstrong (2000:595) says: "*These narratives of a nation are the "pre-thematic complex of historical time" (Carr 1986:167 in Armstrong 2000:595), narrative themes that individuals enter and to which they contribute.*" Armstrong (2000:595) further suggests members of an existing collectivity (imagined community?) make sense of their origins through '*a narrative of common background...The concept of shared origins allows people to identify with the We of the group even if they did not directly share the experience (for example, later generations)...*'

The notions of 'shared origins' and 'common background' beg the question as to the historical and present construction of ethnic identities in the Burundi nation-state. ”.



Kadende-Kaiser & Kaiser (1997:31,32; cf. Lemarchand 1996) argue that German and Belgian Colonial rule institutionalised the differences between the respective groups. An important consequence of Colonialism was the creation of stereotypes that in the case of the Hutu and Tutsi, 'branded' their identities into perpetuity: *"the [minority] Tutsi were perceived as innate rulers, wily, aristocratic, and the history of Burundi was believed to be the history of the Tutsi. The [majority] Hutu were perceived as boorish workers who feared and respected the Tutsi as their masters"* (Kadende-Kaiser & Kaiser 1997:31,32 also: Lemarchand 1996).

However, Nicole suggested that ethnic identity was not an important aspect in the current sociocultural and political climate in Burundi. She subscribed to a notion of 'one language, one culture' where adherence to ethnic identity constituted a power play.

In Burundi we have only one culture. [The importance of ethnic identity] [...] depends on people; some people especially politicians identify themselves with their ethnic groups to gain power and influence but other than that Burundians speak one language and have one culture.

[...] You have people of different cultures who are equal in Burundi culture, they want to be part of it or to stay outside and do there own thing, that's fine, yeah.

It should be taken into account that Nicole was not exactly wrong when she said Burundians were equal. Kadende Kaiser & Kaiser (1997:38) point out that besides the fact that both Hutu and Tutsi speak Kirundi, they also "share similar cultural practices". Furthermore, until 1993: *"...Hutu and Tutsi lived together, prayed together and engaged in commercial activities with minimal regard to ethnic origin. Even though periodic outbreaks of ethnic violence precluded the possibility of multi-ethnic solidarity, an uneasy truce enabled both Hutu and Tutsi to interact in the public sphere without outright hostility and violence"*.

Once again, the events of 1993 seem to be pivotal. Waters (1995:346) who writes after 1993 suggests that ethnicity is not the primary cause for the divisions and bloodshed in Burundi and that the categories of Hutu and Tutsi extend beyond specific nation-states, in fact, the assumption of the nation-state should be removed from discussions about Tutsi and Hutu identity construction. Waters (1995:345,346) further issues the caveat that Hutu and Tutsi identities are not fixed but rather that they are malleable and can be manipulated: *"In other words, the ideological construct of Hutu-ism and Tutsi-ism, despite*

*a similarity of labels across time and geography, has different consequences: the ability to manipulate them can be trivial, important, or fatal..."*

I agree with Waters that in a situation where identities extend beyond geo-political borders, one should certainly not examine them through a single lens. However, I think what Waters tries to show is that each nation-state has the ability to mold these identities to suit a particular narrative. When Waters (1995:343) says "*at different times and places being 'Tutsi' means very different things*" I wonder if it does not provide a specific vantage point as to Nicole's perceptions of Tutsi identity. Note for example, how she described 'being Tutsi' and how she assigns a minority status to this identity, particularly in resigned acceptance of Hutu dominance in the workplace:

To be Tutsi doesn't mean anything beside the physical aspect because all Burundians have one culture, now what we have is the culture of different places in Burundi, people in the capital city for example have a different culture from people from the country side. Things are changing very fast in Burundi, we have a new government and it is a majority Hutu government and they hire more Hutus than Tutsis [...] because the majority Hutu party won the elections automatically they hire more Hutus. [Nicole]

I suspect that 'being Tutsi' as Nicole described it, fits into the narrative of the current Burundi nation-state. In informal discussions with prominent Burundians, I have learned that this narrative leans heavily towards unity and equality. There is even a 'unity song' which hails the 'sameness' of all Burundians. Waters (1995:347) calls this a '*redefinition of the ethnic situation*'. This links interestingly with Lemarchand's (1996:32) observation that the Tutsi subscribe to the illusion of ethnic harmony. Following Foucault's notion of 'the regime of truth in each society' he argues that it is part of Tutsi interpretation of so-called 'official truths' in respect of ethnic realities.

Buckley-Zistel (2006:143) writes in a similar vein about the discourse of reconciliation in Rwanda where ethnicity is perceived as a colonial creation..."*Consequently, in today's public discourse, all references to Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are suppressed (and occasionally accused of being divisive) and have been replaced by a nation-building discourse of an all-inclusive 'Rwandaness'*". In her narrative, Nicole often referred in general terms to 'the colonial power' as opposed to a specific reference to Belgium. It was almost as if she had tapped into a rhetoric or formula as to how Colonialism should be perceived. Be it as it may, Colonialism was offered as the root cause of Burundi's problems, i.e. the conflict between Hutu and Tutsi:

[These problems were there because] the colonial power killed the hero of independence and continued its policy of divide and rule. [Nicole]

One might extend this argument a little further and ask if Nicole's narrative is perhaps not an example of what Buckley-Zistel (2006:131) describes as *chosen amnesia* in her work among the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda. I mean this specifically in the sense suggested by Buckley-Zistel i.e. the absence in the narrative of some aspects such as past tensions. The problem of such amnesia lies not in its aim of perhaps helping former adversaries to live in harmony but rather in its failure to address the status quo. Buckley-Zistel (2006:132) remarks: "*collective identity is not merely produced through remembering but also through forgetting*". I believe Nicole's memory of the 1993 war and the absence of references to previous conflicts implied more about her place within the collectivity of Hutu and Tutsi and her sense of belonging to this collectivity. This then is also the foundation for her perspective about the current state of Burundi where she singled out issues such as poverty and gender:

Many things have changed because of the war one can feel the impact of the war in many areas of life. People are poorer and more dependent on government [...]

[...] But, you know, when war comes it means a lot of things and one of the things is that it brings poverty. Because of the poverty level and because the poverty level has increased, women have to earn [...] Burundi is still a male dominated society, but things have changed in the last 10 years mainly because of the war, many women fought in the war and others had to provide for their family while their husbands were fighting. Other women had to work because the economy was bad and the home had to depend on two incomes instead of just one. These different situations have given women a new confidence and even if the society is still male dominated women now know that they can do as much as men.

Clifford (1994:314) in his article on diaspora, writes "*diaspora women are caught between patriarchies, ambiguous pasts and futures. They connect and disconnect, forget and remember, in complex strategic ways. The lived experiences of diasporic women thus involve painful difficulty in mediating discrepant worlds*". Personally I see the evidence for such mediation in how Nicole perceived Burundi from afar (to paraphrase Geertz) and how she subsequently positioned herself in this landscape.

I think I have become more open-minded than Burundian people. Yes, for me it is definitely. I think for me it is a step up. [I see] the bigger picture... our problems ... the bigger picture [...]

Things are changing [in Burundi] but also, I did not have that for me. Sometimes I see different women from a different background and they are more independent, much stronger.

In the end, distance provided perspective but also a sense of exclusion and self-doubt and longing.

### **3.3.3 BENIN AND FRANCE**

The last of the research participants, Hospice, was born in Benin but he grew up in France, only returning to Benin intermittently for his studies. He held dual Benin and French nationality. The latter he had acquired through his father. Previously, as a UN employee, Hospice travelled and worked in more than 46 African countries. He also worked in Switzerland and the USA.

Perhaps because my discussions with Hospice took place at the same time as those with the Kenyan research participants, it intrigued me that he almost stubbornly disclaimed any ethnic self-representation or for that matter any specific nationality. Despite this claim, I asked him pertinently that if he had to absolutely select an ethnic affiliation, what it would be. He would later joke with an acquaintance that I wanted to know to which 'tribe' he belonged. However, in answer to this question he answered "Fon". Hospice then went on to explain that his family were from royal descent and originally came from the centre of Benin.

It is near the centre of Benin, [where my family comes from] where you have a lot of history and the royalty and the kings. They lived in the east of Benin; my grandparents [...] It is all based on hierarchy. They [my family] were from the royal family [...]. My grandparents came from a place where they speak a language called Fon. [...] I understand it but I cannot speak it.

The Fon constitute about 40% of the population in Benin. The remainder are Adja, Ewe, Yoruba, Aïzo, Bariba, Somba and Fulani. The official language of Benin is French although Fon is widely spoken in the south. Although there are numerous legends associated with the origins of the royal family, most can be traced to a common ancestor (Argyle 1966:3,5). The royal family is clan-based and as Argyle (1966:60) puts it 'just one descent group among others'. However, in the past, certain privileges assured that the royal clan

grew in numbers. Already in 1939, Herskovits (in Argyle 1966:60) remarked that it would be difficult to find any Fon not descended from royalty.

Hospice not only identified himself as Fon royalty, he also demonstrated an interesting awareness of Benin's socio-cultural and political structure and the position of an individual within this context. Not only was his description quite accurate, he also supplied the correct terminology in Fon.

[...] the social structure [in Benin] has not changed much. You still have the hierarchy. You have the kings. The hierarchy is still there. You get nothing done if you don't know the hierarchy. The traditional chiefs, they are part of the wisdom pool of the country. So, if the head of the state wants to do something, he would go to the chiefs. They call them *gan*; there are different types of them [and] of hierarchy and they would all comment and debate the issue on a government level although they are not part of government. They are just considered part of the wisdom pool. [Hospice]

The notion of a 'wisdom pool' is present in the work of Argyle (1966:2). He (1966:77) refers to the role of the 'confidant' (mentioned by Skertchly in 1874) who used to be present at important meetings; his sole role being that of '*a living book of reference*'. 'Outside' the royal court there were different types or categories of officials. Many of these carry the suffix '*gan*' which means 'chief' in Fon. Argyle (1966: 69-80) gives a detailed account of these categories and their past role in the 'political aspects of kingship'.

The historic facts are not of overriding importance here but rather how they were employed to construct a specific ethnic self. I wonder if one does not too readily expect some kind of ethnic identification. Primordialism sometimes offers an easy answer or escape. It lures the investigator and the 'investigatee' along a path of familiar signposts and markings. For I see in Hospice's answer a certain measure of contrivedness and measuredness. To the anthropologist he offered something recognisable, i.e. 'the tribe', 'kinship' and 'the myth' of origin. De Jongh (2006:22) cautions: "*...while individuals cannot escape their perceived 'ethnic heritage' (even though it might be invoked or imposed by others from the 'outside'), they do conventionally adopt multiple identities according to circumstances or context. Sociocultural ethnicity may merely serve as a backdrop to multiple roles and respective self-perceptions, not as an exclusive identity.*"

In Hospice's case, he offered almost an alienated ethnic self that was, however, still recognisable. In his narrative one can identify notions such as those put forward by De

Jongh (2006:78-79) e.g. an historical community, socio-cultural similarities, common symbols and legends of decent. Following De Jongh (2006) I accept that it was not presented as an exclusive identity but at the same time I wonder if it is really possible to by-pass the imposition of the nation-state on ethnicity. I would like to suggest that in Hospices' case, his ethnic identity appears to be secondary to his identity as a Frenchman, although he denied it vehemently at first.

French! I don't think I am French! There are a lot of things in France that I like. But I don't think I am French. I don't think I feel I am French...

He later conceded that he 'felt more French' because he could speak the language.

[...] in South Africa they will say, 'you are not local'. They hear my accent; they will say that's definitely not a local accent. Ah...if it is in Benin, they will go like, he does not belong here, and he does not understand us. Ah...in France where, where you speak the language [...] you relate to people when you can speak the language.

Here, an altogether other imposed identity appears, albeit one that is irrevocably linked to ethnicity. For the sake of clarity, one should delve a little into Benin's Colonial past and French Colonial policy which contained altruistic elements in the form of education and certain 'privileges of citizenship'. The two elements were interlinked since education was perceived as a prerequisite to civilization which in turn opened the door to French citizenship. French Colonial education policy focused on: "*Instruire la masse et dégager l'élite*" [educate the people and extricate or uplift the elite]. Administrators were of the opinion that a small number of people possessed the intelligence to learn. The French Administration planned to establish a small but significant elite whom they could transform to correspond to French ideals (Mair 1936:189,214,215; Ronen 1974:71).

Furthermore, according to Mair (1936:189) it was assumed that "*French civilization is necessarily the best and need only be presented to the intelligent African for him to adopt it ... if he proves himself capable of assimilating French education, he may enter any profession...*". Hospice explained how the French Colonial system worked and how his parents, as part of the chosen elite spent their time between Benin and France.

[...] Benin was looked at as the intelligentsia. Capacity building; black people who were educated...they used to call it the black Latin headquarters of Africa ... basically the French-speaking Africa; Benin, at the time. The French were interested as sort of an experiment [...] It was beneficial to a [small] number of people [...] they had more opportunities, to study [...]. They [my parents] were

teachers. [...] [They lived] part in France; part in Benin. The system was that they would be in France and during winter in France they would come to Benin for six months and then move back. They moved back and forth for their education. It was a colonial type of system. [Hospice]

At this point, ethnicity comes into play again. The Fon were the dominant group when the French arrived in Dahomey. Among them were the descendants of Portuguese traders and liberated slaves who formed an elite group. The early French colonialists turned to this 'elite' group to spread '*la civilisation française*' [French civilization]. Ronen (1974:55) states: "*The number, behaviour, and attitudes of the Dahomean modern elite, of the 1930's have been outstanding among the French-speaking African elites and have earned for Dahomey fame as the Latin Quarter of West Africa*". From the 1930's onwards, many members of this group eventually found their way into positions in the Colonial administration as civil servants or teachers (Ronen 1974:56,58). Hospice indicated that his family was deemed important enough to be presented to the French Governor at the time.

[...] When the French came, they [my family] were from the first ones to be presented. My grandfather went to war for France. [...] They [the French] fought against Algeria at the time... [Hospice]

Hospice's parents were granted French citizenship through naturalisation and finally settled in Paris, France. As mentioned before, this was one of the privileges of the educated elite under French rule. Not many Black Africans were lured by the attractions or privileges of French citizenship. As a result the desired 'association of the elite' did not exist in France. The assumption underlying the so-called privileges of French citizenship was that there would be no legal differentiation between European (read: white) citizens and naturalised citizens, either abroad or in France (Mair 1936:190,191).

In practice this never happened. In the years to come, immigrants from Africa would experience increased isolation. In recent years the anti-immigrant climate in France and Europe has intensified even more. Verena Stolcke (1995:1) states: "[there] *has in the past decade developed a political rhetoric of exclusion in which Third World immigrants, who proceed in part from its ex-colonies, are construed as posing a threat to the national unity of the 'host' countries, because they are culturally different*".

This is a reality that was very familiar to Hospice. He described how, in France, he felt isolated because of his blackness. He perceived discrimination against Africans as based on perceptions of differences in lifestyle and therefore class-based.

[In France] class is linked to skin colour, probably [...] it is also linked to what you do and what you relate to, where do you come from, which area you [live in]... your connections. France is pretty much like that. It is [much more stratified] because if you live in the, what they call '*usitée*' which is ...communal blocks where you [...] live and have no social security. You live differently, just differently. [You are] just one of those people. Xenophobia is encouraged there [in France].

If a Senegalese is pounding [...] yams in the middle of the night or killing the cow that lived in the back room, obviously it's a problem because that is not the French culture. Obviously, people would not want to have anything to do with them, because they are beating their wives, that kind of thing. So, from their view, segregation comes from the distance, the difference in lifestyle. [Hospice]

In France the notion of *l'étranger* [the foreigner, which can also be translated as outsider or stranger] was already present in the rhetoric of the Revolution and it is still part of the current polarised debate over immigrants' rights to difference. Among the French political right this notion materialises in the form of 'differential racism'. Stolcke (1995:5) remarks: "*It is a "doctrine which exalts the essential and irreducible cultural difference of non-European immigrant communities whose presence is condemned for threatening the 'host' country's original national identity"*. Rootedness or *enracinement* is a basic principle of this doctrine which in this case basically means that foreigners should either stay in their home countries or go home if they are already in France. In contrast, the French political left has moved away from this identity-based debate and focused instead on the former republican notions of shared cultural values and cultural assimilation as a condition for citizenship (Stolcke 1995:10).

Ethnicity thus seems an important element in identity construction in France. It is interwoven with the notion of rootedness, a recurring topic in this dissertation and I would not elaborate here much further suffice to say that in Hospice's case it goes to the heart of French citizenship and what it means to be French. Hospice acquired French citizenship through his father. The legal basis for this can be found in the *jus soli* principle which automatically grants citizenship to the children of foreigners born on French soil. It is interesting to note that this principle was only extended to the French colonies after World War II. Before, French citizenship depended on the principle of *jus sanguinis* which granted citizenship based on direct descent from a French father or in the case of an



illegitimate child, the mother. The Republican principles of citizenship are currently entrenched in French law. However, in the early 1990's certain reforms were promulgated, partly as a result of arguments from the French right that the *jus soli* principle did not ensure that foreigners who become French citizens were 'French at heart'; they pushed for a return to the *jus sanguinis* rule (Stolcke 1995:9).

Legalities aside, is Hospice then a Frenchman at heart? Hospice can answer 'yes' to all the prerequisites for French citizenship i.e. shared cultural values and cultural assimilation. Although he became a French citizen based on the principle of *jus soli*, Hospice is not just a Frenchman on paper...

[...] One cannot [completely get away from culture]. We are all under the umbrella of culture, because of the environment we live in [...] so I understand, I know what the French culture is [...] As a Frenchman [...] we criticise the worldview, the politics. Just look at it...French demonstrations, you know, workers, they want to work less and earn more and they get on the streets at the drop of a hat. You drink wine and eat cheese...ah, have coffee... but as a Frenchman does. Really, you know. And how about if I don't like coffee [and] now I don't drink wine anymore...I used to do those things before [...] [Hospice]

But then, in final analysis, who exactly is this Franco-African man? Can identity be split into two? Can someone move beyond ethnicity as an identity marker? Radhakrishnan (2003:120) mentions his son's confusion over whether he is Indian or American. He tells his son that he is in fact both Indian and American, but realises at the same time that he has touched on the multiplicity of what should be the unity of identity. Is it possible as Radhakrishnan (2003:122) says, that someone could "*be both one and something other ... [or] left it [one or the other] behind when the time is right to inaugurate the 'post-ethnic'?*"

Radhakrishnan's argument is set within post-structuralism and its essence is really philosophic. I shall not elaborate further, but would like to suggest that his idea of the 'post-ethnic' is interesting and useful. For him, post-structuralism succeeds in removing the term 'post' from 'semantic heteronomy'. As such, its signification changes in that it now denotes 'that which comes after'. In essence it "*indicates a kind of mercurial, theoretical progression that is constantly marking out new thresholds, frontiers and boundaries*" (Radhakrishnan 2003:218,219). The notion of post-ethnic does not deny 'the ethnic self' as Radhakrishnan (2003:216) remarks: "*What the ethnic self, and the non-self, has to contend with is the reality of its entrapment in multiple temporalities and histories. It has to empower itself as identity...*". I believe this sits comfortably within the dynamic nature of

ethnicity, specifically the idea of ethnicity as a post-colonial construct (De Jongh 2006:12,13).

Radhakrishnan (2003:122) states emphatically that “*when people move, identities, perspectives and definitions change*”. The underlying question, however, is as he says, can ‘someone be both one and something other’. In Hospice’s case I don’t believe the post-ethnic is fully developed. However, one should take cognisance of the fact that what is happening here is perhaps as Radhakrishnan says, the result of ‘entrapment in multiple temporalities and histories’. Hospice can, therefore, be French and/or African and/or something else altogether. I believe it is not a case of being without identity as Hospice claimed, for his narrative proved otherwise. It is rather a case of pushing the boundaries of preconceived notions about identity. Hospice’ claim that he ‘felt no association with another’ begs the question: How did he arrive at this point?

I am not searching for identity [...] there is not a yearning to find my roots or to look for an identity. I don’t have that kind of...sense. I have a sense that what you see is what you get. This is me. That is what I have got. [...] I don’t feel an association with another. People say, oh...you are a black man, and I say yes I am a man in a black skin [...]

### 3.4 HOMELAND AND HOME

If the discussion above refers to geographical entities such as Kenya, Burundi, Benin and France and the research participants’ relationship to these entities, what other attachments are left? Is there an emotional bond that extends beyond a country’s borders? How does mobility alter the relationship between the subject (research participant) and place?

The attachment to homeland and home as ‘places’, is quite topical within the context of this research and it recurs once again at a later stage. However, for now I would like to look at the research participant’s perceptions of such attachments and the bearing these have on their construction of identity within the context of their specific countries of origin. I focus here more on the expression of longing or belonging at an emotional level – in other words, what did the research participants mean when they said they missed home. Furthermore, did they make a distinction between home and homeland or did they perceive these as one and the same?

### 3.4.1 The attachment to Home and Homeland

Moya Flynn (2007:478) in her study of displacement and resettlement among Russian and Russian-speaking migrants from former Soviet republics to the Russian Federation, asserts “*Crucial to a place being ‘home’ is the existence of immediate social and personal relations that contribute to ... secure social, economic and ethno-cultural identities*”. Although I shall discuss more fully a bit further on the research participants’ sense of belonging to the host country, I want to state here that perhaps with the exception of Hospice and Haydee, I never gained the impression from their narratives that ‘home’ was ‘here’ and thus ‘immediate’. Instead they alluded to ‘home’ being ‘there’ i.e. Kenya or Burundi.

Nicole was particularly unhappy in South Africa. Burundi has always been a place she wanted to return to. But once again, the war of 1993 became her point of reference. Here it acted as an impediment which prevented her from returning.

Sometimes I think if there had been no war, I would have gone back, straight back into the system. It’s the circumstances that forced me to be like this [mobile].

And yet, she spoke longingly of a ‘dream trip’ to Burundi by car through Zambia and along Lake Tanganyika. This trip which she wanted to undertake with friends was something she apparently had been planning for a while. However, she could not break it down into details. It was in fact shrouded in vagueness. I believe, however, that ‘the trip’ became a metaphor for her own longing to return to Burundi. At about the same time that our discussions took place, Nicole was engaged in discussions to be transferred home. Her unhappiness with her situation was quite apparent. When prompted she said she felt ‘removed’ in Cape Town. When the opportunity of a transfer arose, there was no hesitation on Nicole’s part. Within a month she sub-let the apartment she shared with her sister Haydee who then moved to Johannesburg. For Haydee this was not a difficult decision to make. She regarded South Africa as her primary home although she recognised Burundi as her ‘homeland’ in the sense that this is where her mother lived and as such the door was always open to return if she wished.

What the Kenyan research participants missed most about home was as Jean pointed out, the connection with people at an emotional and physical level.

You know my dad asked me that question when he was dropping me...driving me to the airport [...] after my holiday. He said: "Jean, what do you miss the most about home?" And I said it is the people. And yeah, it is the people. It is a very different type of people in Kenya [...] I miss having friends and family a lot. [...] The whole atmosphere is very different. [...] there is [sic] lots of people, it is a bit more crowded, but the people are very warm and friendly [...] there is a lot of family and friends, there is a lot of connection, emotional and physical. So I really miss that emotional sub-structure... [Jean]

In their research among expatriate academics in Turkey, Tandogan and Incirlioglu (2004:107), identify two 'tiers' upon which perceptions of 'home' rest: "...*home is usually, but not always, a fixed place—a place where people are socialized and enculturated, and that they are attached to; they and their relations belong there. Some other people, however, define home in terms of "the self." They focus on becoming in the present ("to live fully in each moment"), on who they are and how they nurture themselves. For them, "home is a place for the soul" and "contemplative time need not be sought in special places or at special times." With such a definition in mind, they take home wherever they go*".

Tandogan and Incirlioglu (2004:105-106) assert that some of their research participants' definition of home was linked to specific relationships and communality i.e. common language, culture and/or family. The question of common language is an interesting one and reappears again later on when the research participants' relationship with the host country is examined. Wanjiru specifically mentioned her familiarity with the language (Swahili) as a key to feeling at home in Kenya. It provided her with navigational skills and almost an inherent knowledge of the place she called home. Furthermore, it also allowed her to stay in contact when she was away.

[...] I think there is a sense of familiarity, I know this place, I know the ins and outs, I can speak the language, I can get myself out of a situation and things like that. [...] I am very much in touch with what goes on in Kenya. I read the Kenyan newspaper everyday, without fail, the first thing in the morning; I read the Kenyan newspaper...online. I keep up with the politics; I keep up with what's happening there, with my family. [Wanjiru]

Here then is the meeting of the tangible and intangible or as Jean so aptly said the emotional and the physical. Here the nation-state becomes a homeland. In the case of the Kenyan research participants there is no evidence of a clear-cut separation between the nation-state and homeland. In fact, I was left with the impression that inherent knowledge or 'familiarity' enhanced their sense of place.

Whilst the Kenyan and Burundian research participants can be placed within the context of Tandogan and Incirlioglu's (2004) first tier, Hospice firmly belonged to the second. Tandogan and Incirlioglu (2004:108) established that some of their research participants neither looked for permanency inherent in the notion of 'home' nor did they highlight specific places of attachment in their past. For Hospice, home was where he lived at any given moment.

I [don't] wake up and I feel gee, you know, I am French; this is how we do it in France. I think it's funny; I tend to live in the present moment. Maybe I am an exception about that. [Hospice]

Even though he had returned to Benin for business and a short vacation he explained he never felt a sense of belonging...

I have been to Benin, yes [...] interesting, just to see. It was difficult to adjust to the consciousness there, quite frankly [...] I went to the zoo area, where the king lives and I also went to the museum, had a look, basically the history. [...] [there are] people you never met, you don't know who they are, they could be great friends, you know, aunts and nephews [...] And you are trying to find, and reach...what do I have in common with these people? And finally you are a mere stranger because you do not understand them. You don't necessarily like the lifestyle; you don't want to be surrounded by people all the time. And finally one draws a line and say, I don't belong; I don't belong in this way of thinking because I don't view life from these perspectives. [Hospice]

Perhaps Hospice experienced what Georg Simmel (in Wolf 1950:402) so eloquently describes: "[...] the stranger [is] the person who comes and stays tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the potential wanderer....he is fixed within a particular spatial group...but his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning...". Seteney Shami (1999:27,28,29) in her study of Circassians after the break-up of the Soviet Union, describes how the reality of encountering one's homeland after years of minimal contact, leads to shock as ethnicity is "*suddenly experienced not as a fact but as a contradiction*". Furthermore, the initial euphoria of 'locating the past' and meeting long-lost family and kin soon wears off as a sense of divergence and social discomfort set in. This results in a renewed question of identity and alienation of 'the self'.

I agree that this might lead to detachment but would like to suggest that 'being detached' begs the question – from what. What happens when the place which is supposed to be

home and/or homeland does not turn out to be that? Isolation and marginalisation in a host country carry the inherent implication that 'homeland' and often 'home', would always be 'there' or as in Hospice's case quite indefinable. I believe that for the displaced, the attachment to 'home' and 'homeland' stands at the very essence of belonging to 'a place'. It lies at the heart of rootedness. However, to belong 'there' is not always a foregone conclusion. Hospice has demonstrated the elusiveness of such attachments and as Wanjiru's remark shows, the displaced are often caught 'betwixt and between':

[...] even after ten years, I have never felt that I completely belong here [South Africa] and [...] even when I go home, I sometimes feel lost except when I am with my family, because most of my friends have left the country [...] Sometimes I question whether *ubuntu* is real, even the one that I feel in Kenya. Sometimes I wonder whether it is real. I don't know. [...] [Wanjiru]

### 3.4.2 Homing desire and/or the desire for a Homeland

Earlier I have referred to Fortier's (2000:163) position that creating a sense of place often has nothing to do with a specific country. It is at this juncture that Avtar Brah's (in Fortier 2000:163) distinction between a 'desire for the homeland' and 'homing desire' becomes relevant. She links the latter with "*the creation of a sense of place, a structure of feeling that is local in its materialisation, while its symbolic reach is multilocal*". As far as I can see, this fits comfortably within Appadurai's (2000) production of locality. The informant's creation of a place and spaces of belonging within the host country is discussed at length later-on. However, at this point I would like to briefly look at how the homeland is remembered, imagined or reproduced in the production of locality. Even though someone cannot (regularly) return to a homeland it is still something that is longed for and as such 'brought into' the 'home' space, wherever that might be.

At this point, according to Fortier (2000:164), 'homing desire' and 'desire for the homeland' become interlinked. She notes, for example, that Italians in London used material culture and indigenous architecture to create habitual spaces that conveyed as sense of 'home'. In a less complex way, all research participants did this by decorating their homes with Kenyan or Burundian cultural artefacts. Even Hospice had cultural material decorations such as ethnic fabrics in his home - albeit not from Benin. In a more complex way the 'homeland' was brought into the 'home' space through the tropes of kinship and family, rootedness and food and memory.

### 3.4.2.1 The trope of family and kinship

Fortier's (2000:60,61) remark that diasporas feature transnational kinship and family ties encompassing more than one country is common knowledge. However, she moves away from the traditional study of the family and family networks as an institution and instead examines "*how languages of kinship 'work', what they 'do', and in turn the meanings projected onto them within the broader narratives of migration*". The trope of family and kinship in effect becomes "*the cradle of original, pristine forms of culture which remain uncontaminated by the 'host' society's degenerate ways of life*".

In the research participants' narratives, the family became, as Fortier (2000:62) remarks, a site of belonging amidst feelings of isolation and alienation in the host country. Through the trope of the family, the research participants emphasised the importance of values, tradition and support. This stood directly oppositional to the host country's shortcomings. A few examples will suffice.

Fred indicated that his family and kinship relationships provided a solid cultural base and something he could believe in. He perceived his family as strong and conservative as opposed to South African families who were permissive and without values.

We don't have that. We were brought up and reared and that [how to behave] have been handed down across the generations, we are very strong like that, very conservative. People who have a child at a tender age and just go out and have sex [that doesn't happen often], it is determined by marriage. It is happening more and more now that you get single pregnancy and that is what I find happens here [in South Africa] quite a bit. [...] at the end of the day what I have encountered [here] does not change what I am. I will try and live as close as possible to the culture. [...] when I am at home, it gives me, [great] pride to know that I have something that is solid that I can believe in, that shows that [it] works, that it has worked very fine up till now. [Fred]

Judith agreed that Kenyan and South African societies have vastly different value systems. She highlighted the important role of kin and family in the support of the elderly. She felt the elderly in South Africa were neglected by their families. At the time of our discussions, an elderly South African couple were involved in a court case with their children. They requested the court to compel their children to look after them financially. The court found that children had a moral and a legal obligation to look after parents in need. Judith was shocked by these events and remarked:

[When somebody is elderly] you ... get them somebody to look after them and pay that person, pay for their food, basically take over. All the children must come together and we need to talk how much money you give every month for this, then we give it. Then you get a nurse, you pay that nurse, you get somebody to cook for them. We were laughing about that court case of parents who took their kids to court...laughed at it [Judith]

The notion of isolation was a theme throughout Jean's and Wanjiru's narratives. They felt that the extended family protected the individual against loneliness. There is a direct link here with their feelings of alienation and feelings of not belonging in the host society. South African society was perceived as cold as opposed to the warmth and shelter provided by family and kin. In fact, Wanjiru once remarked that if her family had lived in Johannesburg she would not have any reason to return to Kenya.

I wish I lived in Johannesburg; I'd go [home] every two months. Because for me, family is very important [...] my family, we are very close and that is probably the one reason I go back to Kenya, is my family. If all my family were here, I am not so sure if I'd be inclined to go every year as I do.

In the same vein, Jean vehemently pointed out that the very idea of the extended family precluded isolation...

[...] There is no way this [isolation] would happen. I mean jeez, we've got cousins, aunties, uncles, nephews, nieces, friends, neighbours! No, definitely not! There is no way! I mean, unless you are an orphan who [?] has completely no family. No! This definitely would not happen at all. [...] I was at home staying at my parent's place and one of the neighbours the son died or something. What happens when there is a funeral, people come to your house everyday [...] And they had run out of chairs and I just saw this woman walking into our house and grabbing chairs [...] But it shocked me that they just walked in unannounced and because I had not been at home for so long, I was used to this really isolative society that's Cape Town [...] it was a great thing to be at home, but I was bombarded by this visual [elements] [...] And it is because [I have become] like a tortoise, you know, when you are not gonna show and it just retracts everything and it just sits there in its shell, that's how I was. And suddenly, you know...boom! [Jean]

Hospice once remarked that South African society was restrained and that people did not think outside their limitations. This, he felt, also impacted on the status and role divisions within the family. South African families were constrained by hierarchy. He contrasted this with the positive and freethinking atmosphere in his home.



[My parents] were not [conservative]. They were very open-minded themselves, you know, like my mother would challenge anything ... in our family, people were liberal, I mean, they were thinkers.

...in our house, my father used to wash dishes, you know. There was not the woman in one room there [and the men in the other], you know. [...] in our family everybody does everything, so they won't be sitting down watching the news while [the wife] is in the kitchen doing all...everything by herself. So it is very remote for me [...]. And that's how we have done it. Other families' side is different, it is like, you know, the lady has to take care of the house, you know. The roles are clearly defined. Yeah, it is very [much] defined and it's the hierarchy of things, which is a complete difference, yeah. I make beds, I clean stuff.  
[Hospice]

A final example concerns the role of tradition. A universal topic in the narratives of the Kenyan research participants was the importance of marriage, specifically traditional marriage. They all mentioned the significance of a traditional marriage ceremony, the fact that it was still practised among family members and how people still returned home to be married. They pointed out that either they had a traditional wedding in conjunction with a Western (white) wedding or that they planned to get married in this way. The narratives focused on the importance of ritual, symbolism and tradition inherent to the ceremony. Fred likened it to building a bridge between two families. The dowry was similarly described by Jean and Joan as an act which brought two families together and allowed them to get to know each other. It was also an act of appreciation signifying the value of the woman being married. What stood out most perhaps was the fact that the ceremony provided the research participants with a direct link to their main source of support i.e. the family. Jean remarked upon a question as to why she chose a traditional ceremony: " [...] *[I] did it for my parents and the clan, [...] you know, relatives, and you know my grandparents, great uncles and aunts.*

At first I was perplexed as even the male research participants mentioned and described the traditional marriage ceremony, including female roles. However, when set within the context of the trope of family and kinship it explains perhaps the informant's quest to belong, to be anchored in the familiarity of tradition and family as opposed to being adrift in a host society where they feel marginalised. In the end, the trope of the family disguises as Fortier (2000:63) says, the trauma of migration. The family appears in the narratives as synchronised and stable. In Fortier's research, the family preserves and protects culture and becomes a metaphor for her subjects' perceptions of the 'hostland'.

This, I believe is where, within the context of migration and settlement, perceptions of ‘the other’ originate. The family becomes a metaphor for what the host society is not. Ultimately this leads to value judgements, intolerance and other related vices. In the end it limits integration into the host society. Fortier (2000:63) remarks “*as such the family trope is a site of construction of the very boundary between self and other*”.

### 3.4.2.2 Home and the attachment to the land

When one speaks of a homeland, there is always an implicit reference to ‘the land’ and subsequently the notion of rootedness. The latter is a familiar theme in Anthropology and eloquently dealt with by Liisa Malkii (1997). With this in mind, and hopefully moving away from a purely primordialist perspective, I would like to examine what, if anything, the research participants’ narratives revealed about ‘the land’ where they came from. Here I would like to step away from the geographic entity of the nation-state and instead look at how ‘the land’ was presented.

The research participants’ often inferred an attachment to ‘the land’ in terms of ‘the place where I was born’; ‘the farm where I grew up’; ‘I/we own land’; ‘we farmed’. Often, a reference to ‘the rural’ would signify ‘the land’. ‘The land’ appeared interlinked with their families and tradition and also sometimes a place they wanted to return to. Once again, a few examples would suffice.

One of Benson’s first statements told of how his father, a land commissioner in Kenya’s Rift Valley (“...*the lands near Nakuru...it’s a farming area*”) acquired the farms where he [Benson] was born and grew up and how his mother managed the farms after his father’s death.

Fred referred to his family’s ancestral connection to the land and to the importance of returning to his own land...

[...] my grandfather [and] my great grandfather had acres and acres of land and of course in our culture the land is divided amongst the sons, so my grandfather had also a portion [...] of big land [...] Now, if I look at my cousins for example, they probably got something like four, five acres of land and there are already five boys. Each of them is going to expect a share, five acres would become one acre and when one of them gets two sons, then [what]. So you can have five acres of land

but then you end up with a small piece of land. So modernisation has an economical relationship and that changed the thinking.

Where my dad grew up, where my grandfather was, the ancestral land, so to speak, my father decided a long time ago, he went out and bought a small [piece of] land. So we used to live on our own farm, but it was a farm that my father bought with his own money [...] it is [big], we still have it. Even near the ancestral land my dad bought a huge piece of land [...] I own land. My neighbour is farming it. I am renting it out. But in future, when I go back home, I will settle on my little farm in Kisii” [Fred]

In Wanjiru’s narrative ‘the land’ appeared once again in the familiar rural-urban dichotomy presented by Ferguson (1997). Once again, I would say the idea of moving from one life world to another was present as were dualisms such as modern-traditional. But to me, the movement and dualisms seem inverted. There is movement away from the urban and modernism towards the rural and tradition and extended family.

Well, my grandparents are all dead, but my parents have moved back to the rural area to live after my father retired so they moved to a farm and they have ties with most of the other relatives [...] because [...] my parents moved and I went off to boarding school and then I went off to university and then I came here... I have never really established very strong ties ... you know. [...] But still when I go home I do feel this is where I belong. [Wanjiru]

Flynn’s (2007:468) description of the fusion of home/land in the memory of displaced Russians touches on the essence of rootedness. She highlights the significance of attachment to the land of their forefathers and the tangible rootedness of families in ‘the soil of the land’: *“Migrants demonstrated the importance of establishing some sense of family rootedness over a period of time when they spoke about rodina [homeland] not just as the territory where they were born, but where their roots were located, the place where their parents were born, to where their ancestors had arrived.”*

The attachment of Flynn’s (2007:469,470) Russians to the home/land was linked to the locality where they were living at the time and what this place signified. Because they initially had positive experiences at this locality i.e. security, networks, and connectivity, they felt ‘at home’ and as such home and homeland became linked. I do see this as being so in the case of my research participants. South Africa or rather Cape Town was at best ‘second home’ as Jean said: *“...this is second home and that’s about as far as I am willing to go”.*

In conclusion I agree with Flynn (2007:463) that *“The home/land narrative focuses attention on the spatial and temporal levels at which displacement and resettlement take place, uncovering how the immediate locality of ‘home’ and the wider national ‘homeland’ shift in reality, meaning and perception. Key aspects of the narrative, which interact with one another, are made explicit: kin, its continuity over generations and attachment to the land; a sense of socio-economic and socio-political security; and social networks of family and friends”* There is no need to extend this definition but I would like to suggest that within this context, narrative references to ethnicity, culture and tradition also signify attachment. As with the other aspects mentioned by Flynn, these also display temporal and spatial dimensions.

### **3.4.2.3 Food and memory**

What is the role of food in cultural continuity, asks David Sutton (2001:120) in his investigation of the significance of food within the context of migration. It is an intriguing question and also one that merits an all too brief examination, for food - or as Sutton (2001:121) calls it, the tastes and smells of homeland - was often mentioned in the research participants' references to home. I would like to follow Sutton and not only include here the role of food in the research participants' production of locality and migrant networks, but also briefly, ideas around sharing of food and memory of food production.

Sutton (2001:121) basically asks how food impacts on the identity of migrants, whether they bring it with them or in the form of food parcels from home. He argues that food is a cultural site and bases this on the idea put forward by Olwig and Hustrup (in Sutton 2001:121) that ‘cultural sites’ or, *“localized cultural wholes...become points of identification for people displaced by migrations caused by larger global processes...food may be analyzed as just such a cultural site and is especially useful in understanding...experiences of displacement, fragmentation, and the reconstruction of wholeness”*. Sutton's (2001:121,122) concept of ‘wholeness’ is based on the ideas of James Fernandez about ‘revitalisation’ and ‘the return to the whole’.

Fernandez initially worked among religious revitalisation movements in West Africa where he concluded that alienation and fragmentation often lead to attempts to reconstruct or reintegrate the past and the present in order to recreate the completeness of a former way of life – a return to the whole which is in effect a *“state of relatedness – a kind of*

*conviviality in experience*" (Fernandez in Sutton 2001:122). Such a return to the whole is based on or created through the senses or sensory experiences. In the process of recreating or re-imagining a sensory experience it becomes revitalised as it acquires new value within a specific context.

I initially began thinking about food and memories of home or homeland when Hospice described the aversion of the French to 'foreign' cultural activities in the immigrant quarters of Paris such as '*pounding yams in the middle of the night or killing the cow that lived in the back room*'. Also, Nicole, Joan and Benson mentioned the large West and East African communities in London. These were places I had visited myself and I could identify with, when they mentioned them. However, what further intrigued me was the fact that I would not have been able to do this if I had no point of reference or the advantage of shared sensory experience to paraphrase Fernandez. In other words, my sensory experiences of Africa provided a shared connection with the research participants' narratives.

But then, how far back should one go in examining the connection between food and memory? Where is the origin of that state of relatedness...the source of 'the whole'? With the research participants' narratives in mind especially that of Fred, I would suggest that the basis for memories of food is its production at home. The research participants' description of farming activities did not only convey an attachment to the land but also certain memories based on shared sensory experiences around food production. In fact, these memories were important enough to appear in their narratives about home. Consider Fred's description of farming in Kisii...

They are a purely agricultural community. They are always dependant on the land...tea growing, coffee, dairy farming, cereal, maize. The village[s], yes they are wealthy. The community, even if there is a drought right now, they can look after themselves. Nobody gets hungry. They are well-off in the sense that everybody has a three square metre piece of land [...]my mom was staying on our farm and managing it, because we had cattle, we had tea. [...] Somebody has to pick up the tea and take it to the factory. My mother would oversee that. [Fred]

Fred's memories of food production in Kisii invoked a certain kind of life or as Sutton (2001:122) says, "a *whole way of life not divided into pieces*". Combine this with his description of land ownership and division (above) and one is left with a particular but true image of Kisii Province which is a densely populated area where tiny farms line the hills in a carpet-like fashion.

The memory of food production in Fred's narrative also linked it to a specific place and displacement from that place. Once again, referring to Fernandez, Sutton writes (2001:126) *'The remembered house [one could also read 'place'] is a small scale cosmology symbolically restoring the integrity of a shattered geography'. As Fernandez describes, integrity is restored through a remembered coherence, or structural repetition between domains. This occurs because the food event evokes a whole world of family, agricultural associations, place-names, and other "local knowledge."*

Obviously the notion of 'what' food events invoke can be extended and I would like to briefly look at how memories of food or a food event appeared in the research participants' descriptions of traditional marriage ceremonies. Consider the following two examples which come from two different cultural traditions: Kisii and Kikuyu:

We do a normal wedding and after the wedding they make some pap... the brown pap like the Maltabella. My cousins bring it to Fred's home... they will take the pap with a goat... Then now, after the thanking of Fred, they also do the thing [to show] that it is appreciated, they also [slaughter] a goat and [...] they send the meat to my mother's...now the sale is due [Judith]

We have roast lamb and you have the shoulder and he slices it up and then just feeds you a piece per piece and that [is] like the birthday cake... the wedding cake, type of thing. And then after that there is a whole lot of dancing and all these traditional songs. For me it was the first time I heard them. It was like one of the most enjoyable days I have ever had... [Jean]

Bear in mind that I have suggested earlier that through the trope of the family these ceremonies were already linked to home and homeland. Once again the references to the ceremonies invoked a certain 'whole'. However, I would also like to suggest that 'revitalisation' is central to these narratives in that within the context of displacement and alienation in the host country, the marriage ceremony was been reconstructed in memory and bestowed with new value or revalued as Fernandez said.

In Sutton's (2001:122,123) research among Greek migrants, longing for home is a painful experience and it reverberates in acknowledgement and attachment to the land. These migrants often take a physical object with them to remind them of their homeland. But what would someone do to counter this longing in the absence of such an object? Sutton finds the answer in food packages. Kapella (in Sutton 2001:123) states that food parcels in

effect recall the whole symbolically in that they are a piece of homeland that convey certain sensory experiences.

Nicole remembered the food of Burundi with nostalgia. She said when she lived in London it was easier to obtain traditional ingredients because there was a large East African community. In South Africa she relied on food parcels from home. Jean described a similar reliance on food parcels and she further conveyed a sense of living from moment to moment or conversely food parcel to food parcel.

[In Burundi] we eat a lot of meat, stews, and mealy meal [maize meal]. We eat plantain, we fry it. We eat cassava, we grind it with a mortar and pestle and fry it in palm oil and then we eat it with rice or mealy meal. [...] We eat starch and some rice and corn as well [...] I used to [miss food]. It has been ten years now. When somebody comes from Burundi they always bring me some cassava....and plantain. I do not look for Burundian food [here], I used to in London. The community is bigger there.

You miss it [food], well I certainly miss it. And when you go home, you really pig out. We try to bring back dried food stuff [...] you bring back the flours, bring the butter, tea and spices. And that lasts you until the next time you go or somebody [comes]. I mean there is always somebody going home or coming, that sort of thing. [Jean]

Based on Anderson's notion of 'an imagined community', Sutton (2001:126) makes the suggestion that "*there is an imagined community implied in the act of eating food "from home" while in exile, in the embodied knowledge that others are eating the same food*". However, he does not discard the idea that real communality takes place in the cooking and sharing of food. As mentioned before, the Kenyan research participants indicated that they missed traditional foods and foodstuffs. As a result of this there developed a food network that was rather distinctive. Jean related it thus:

Joanne was a very good cook and she used to prepare for the weekends, cooking and she'd sell the food to the others like all the guys, to John, to Benson. Like we make a very unleavened sort of bread like a roti...chappati and she would make those and she would make the [other] food and she would make rice, like a mixed fried rice and then she used to sell that. [Jean]

Commercial aspects aside, the act of cooking food from home and dispensing it among Kenyans established a particular local network. In retrospect, the idea of invoking the whole is obvious in this scenario but it also tapped into a wider imagined community of

Kenyans (cf. Sutton 2001:126). I also see traces of this in Jean's tale of how Fred tried to placate his father when he came to visit:

Fred ...they love to eat 'pap' [maize porridge] with 'kale'. And here you don't have the kind of 'kale' that we have at home. So when his father came to visit a couple of years ago, he actually had him plant their whole garden with 'kale' ... [Jean]

Acquiring, cooking and selling food from home or planting food from home for mutual consumption when a family member comes to visit invoke 'wholeness' in a very specific way. Sutton (2001:127) suggests that actions around food *"become more intensified in the migrant context, where cooking is not simply an everyday practice, but an attempt to synesthetically reconstruct and remember, to return to that whole world of home, which is subjectively experienced both locally and nationally, if not at other levels as well"*.

Because cooking is not just an everyday practice it is in the very act of sharing food that the difference between the migrant and the locals is sometimes most acute. Whilst Fred was working in Ghana, he formed a relationship with a Zulu man at the company's Cape Town office. Once they had settled in South Africa, this colleague invited Fred and Judith for their first South African *braai* [barbeque].

I shall not discuss the cultural significance of a *braai* in South Africa here, suffice to say that it is a traditional gesture of hospitality and a communal affair. It involves the sharing of meat but there is a specific version of a *braai* which requires people to bring their meat to be grilled on a communal grill but not necessarily to share it. This is often called a '*bring and braai*'. Similarly, a traditional barbeque in Kenya is a communal affair and more often than not it involves eating from communal platters as well. Fred and Judith described their first South African *braai* as such:

[My colleague and friend] he is a mixture of Zulu and Scottish; he called me on the Saturday and said we are having a *braai* at my house and why don't you come with your family. So he explained to me how to get to his house. [?] So we had a *braai* and so on. [Fred]

[...] Everything was just shocking me. I mean, when I have a *braai*, my friends come with all the meat [already] there. This guy goes, just bring your meat, *braai* it and eat it yourself. Me, I am in shock. And there was this black couple ...it took me by surprise... they were seated there with nothing, because they had brought pasta salad [thinking there would be meat to share]. So we had brought enough, so we shared our meals...I mean, that was the first time that I have seen people packing food in the lunchboxes [afterwards]. I mean, I am not used to this thing. When I



bring you meat, it is for you to *braai* and what remains is for you to keep, not for me to carry off. I mean, that's weird. [...] [Judith]

Sutton (2001:127) recalls the following remark by Fernandez: "*The kitchen's the place in the house where, after being separated in our different rooms, we come for revitalization, a small return to the whole.*" One could possibly say the same of a *braai* or a traditional Kenyan barbeque. Perhaps Fred and Judith were searching for something that could provide a link with home and wholeness but instead they experienced something that confirmed their alienation and fragmentation in the host country. Here, instead of conviviality, the experience only invoked memories of 'the whole' they have left behind.

### 3.5 A PLACE CALLED HOME

Gibau (2005:533,34) extends the notion of diaspora to include what she calls 'less than static movements or relocations', for example migrancy, immigration, refugees and other forms of displacement that are either voluntary or involuntary. Central to identity formation among such dispersed groups is perceptions of the homeland in their collective memory. Based on her research among Cape Verde migrants she argues (2005:34) for the understanding of diaspora "*in relation to local and global phenomena, whereby the "here" and "there" are no longer mutually exclusive but are in constant dialogue*".

Inherent to the dialogue between 'here' and 'there' there is a metaphorical and symbolic dimension. Wilson and Donnan (1998:2) recognise that movement within the context of globalisation includes the metaphorical aspects of crossing borders. That this helps to explain the deterritorialisation of everyday life is a fact but one that should not be brought into contention unless there is a direct link to the experience of crossing borders. This is an important point and also the reason the research participants' perceptions of home and 'homeland' were discussed in their totality. There is a distinct connection between their metaphorical perceptions of their homeland and the literal experience of crossing borders and negotiating micro borders.

According to Gupta and Ferguson (2002:68) 'remembered places' such as 'the homeland' can become a symbolic anchor but the meaningfulness of 'homeland' depends on the context of the individual. All the key research participants could recall their 'homeland' in much detail. Some recollections displayed a certain historical depth and sensitivity. Others

revealed an unmistakable link between kinship and family and the notion of home or homeland.

The research participants' narratives left an impression of interwoven threads or layers. Family and kin, friends and community, history, memory, ethnicity, nationalism, patriotism, culture, tradition, politics and economy all come together to construct what can ultimately be understood as a place called home. As Tandogan and Incirlioglu (2004:110) remark in respect of expatriate academics in Turkey: *"While for some home meant homeland, others carried home in their pockets. Some highlighted permanence and control; some emphasized the relational nature of home; some defined home in terms of the self; yet others said that home was anywhere they lived. This diversity beyond pattern may indicate that unique personal histories and idiosyncratic attitudes are significant in these formulations"*.

In the narratives about home and homeland the trope of the family stood out as a significant reference point as it formed an integral part of the research participants' identity construction and their sense of belonging. Above all, family ties were a buffer against loneliness and isolation. In their study among West African migrants, Stoller & Tahmaseb McConatha (2001:663) determined that the absence of family can be directly linked to feelings of well-being. They remark: *"isolation limits the range of activities and interactions in which people can participate; it also reduces feelings of control and competence...sustaining such social and emotional support systems as family may diminish some of the negative effects of immigration"*. Nwadiora (1996:118; also see Stoller & Tahmaseb McConatha 2001:663) also stresses the fact that the group and specifically the family constitute a major source of identity for Africans. The cohesive family, say Stoller & Tahmaseb McConatha (2001:663-664) is an ideal that eludes Africans in a strange land. On the other hand it is also the driving force behind the maintenance of active ties as we shall see later.

Adepoju (2006:31) found that generally speaking, migrants, especially first-time migrants tried to maintain tradition, culture and values: *"This behavioural pattern attests to an enduring feature of African migration dynamics: that a migrant rarely severs ties with home, hoping ultimately to return "*. The research participants never perceived their absence from their home country, family and kin as permanent. Some of them had already

returned at the time of writing and for those who remained, their eventual return always loomed on the horizon.

Following Fortier (2000:163) I believe that home and homeland are oppositional to the 'hostland'. The tension here is between *"the homeland as the object of longing (in nostalgic remembrances, the myth of return, political commitment), and the hostland as the object of efforts to belong (integrating, fitting in, politics of difference)"*.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

"Blackness" as an identity construct sits with uneasiness with most of the research participants. Being black was equated with being African. As far as nation-state identity is concerned, namely being Kenyan, Burundian or Beninian, there were mixed responses to the notion of such constructed identities. As far as a particular Kenyan identity is concerned, the communality of language, Swahili, seemed prominent. Sub-identities such as a 'tribal'-Kikuyu identity still featured prominently among the narratives of research participants. Colonialist narratives and the recent genocide in Burundi shaped the identity of the respondents from that area.

Participants from Benin and France acknowledged the complexities involved with being Franco-African (Benin). Being "home" for most research participants also appeared problematic. The sense and notion of belonging seemed evasive. Thus "home" and its identity is nurtured around a collective memory. Border and boundary is both lived as a reality in time and as metaphor, underpinned by experience. On the micro level, institutions such as family, clan and kinship are crucial underpinnings. These three institutions constitute "home". Thus, home is constantly either juxtaposed with being "there" (the foreign country), or polarised/compared with local institutions. Within this fluid world degrees of belonging and alienness are constantly negotiated and mediated.

## CHAPTER 4

## NAVIGATING AN UNFAMILIAR PLACE: SOUTH AFRICA

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

What should one make of the notion of a 'host' nation? It is a unique and dynamic fusion between geographic entity, imagined nation and a people. But inherent to this is also, as the previous chapter showed, the idea of leaving some place behind and crossing the border into a new place. What then constitutes 'first contact'? How do these encounters shape the identity and sense of place of the migrant?

Based on the research participants' narratives, I suggest that 'first contact' can be broken down into three separate but related encounters with, i.e. the nature of the nation-state and its concomitant history; the government and state institutions; and the people.

I would like to set the first encounter – once again – against the backdrop of the development of the nation-state in Africa which in turn is tied to particular historical circumstances. Some contextualisation is in order here as certain identity-related themes borne of specifically Colonialism's impact on the African nation-state manifested in the research participants' encounters with the host nation.

## 4.2 ENCOUNTERING THE 'HOST' NATION

Tambiah (1996:124) writes that "*The charter for the nation-state [...] has been widely thought to be transplanted by its European progenitors, in their global role as imperial powers, onto their dependencies and colonies in the Third World*". Bear in mind that the model for the European nation-state rested on a specific philosophy and ideology based on the ideals of the French Revolution and the premises of European Enlightenment. Two important aspects of this model were first secularity and second an 'aggressive' nationalism built on a common culture and language. Thus emerged the 'bounded' nation-state where "*political integration, continuous economic expansion, and, frequently, linguistic homogenization for administrative purposes and for "high" cultural productions*

went hand in hand" (Tambiah 1996:126,125). The model and its inherent features were transferred to the continents, countries and territories affected by colonial expansionism.

But what was the effect of the Colonial encounter on state-formation in Africa? Comaroff (1996:175) says that the African version of Colonialism and "*the struggles which it sparked – often produced hierarchies of nesting identities (so-called tribalism, ethnicity, nationalism, race), all relatively discrete and relationally constructed*". A certain understanding of the '*historic formulation of the relations of production in a nation-state*' (Wilmsen 1996:10) is perhaps necessary to appreciate the inner-workings of identity construction in modern-day Africa. Tambiah (1996:127) explains this in his 'three phases of independence' in Third World countries, i.e. the decolonisation phase (circa 1944 – later 1950's) where Colonial administrations transferred power to elite groups in their former colonies; a second phase (late 1950's -1960's) of home-grown nation-building and nationalism; and a third phase (1960's-) characterised by identity struggles, ethnic conflicts and ethnonationalism. The latter phase corresponds with Comaroff's 'Age of Revolution' where increasing nationalistic and ethnic awareness have created the contentious terrain of identity politics (Comaroff 1996:176,177).

In respect of the second encounter, I concur with Wilson and Donnan (1998) that the role of government and related state institutions is often taken for granted in the study of identity. And yet, they shape 'place' in the first instance. Wilson & Donnan (1998:3) state "*whilst the use of 'borderland' as an image for the study of connections between cultures wherever these connections are found has opened up new ground in social and cultural theory, it has often done so at the expense of underplaying changes in political economy*". This is not to say that there is no validity in people's experience of identity as being deterritorialised when they migrate BUT it should be asked in what way these experiences are linked to "*the experiences of living at or crossing state borderlines, and of managing the myriad structures of the state which establish microborders throughout the state's domain*" (Ibid).

Aihwa Ong (2002:174-175) who has done extensive research on Chinese identity and culture and more specifically the mobility of what she calls diasporan managerial classes, says international managers and professionals are 'controlled and shaped by nation-states and capital markets'. The nation-state and subsequently also the marketplace, are institutional contexts that shape identity. Globalisation does not mean a collapse of

borders or geopolitical entities and therefore one cannot separate the influence of what Ong calls 'governmentality' on mobile individuals.

If the nation-state as a geographic entity and subsequently the government and institutions can be perceived as hurdles in the migration process, then it is people who constitute the final obstacle. I suggest that it is within the realities of the third encounter that identity formation is at its most dynamic for there is a very specific interplay between identity construction by those who come to live among the host nation and the ongoing identity construction of those already there. Here the migrant also encounters the interrelationship between a nation-state and its people.

In this I follow Appadurai (2000:161,162) in that I believe the migrant encounters the nation as a product of collective imagination. However, deep-seated loyalties such as language, blood, soil, race, tribalism, ethnicity and nationalism are sometimes an inherent part of how the nation is imagined and cannot be disregarded. I shall try to show how these loyalties manifest and interlink. I further believe that the framework of the nation-state, its government and people largely determine whether the migrant is embraced or if he or she becomes an outcast. I shall discuss this in more detail in a separate section focussing on labels, attitudes and stereotypes.

For the stranger, making sense of a place certainly constitutes a challenge. As the research participants' narratives shall show, the framework of the nation-state, government and people, provides a specific perspective of 'here' – this place that must eventually be lived in.

#### **4.2.1 First encounter: The legacy of Apartheid**

[...] The other day Mbeki was telling them in parliament, you are asking me how much foreigners are going to cost us in South Africa. Has anybody asked how much it was costing us helping South Africa becoming independent? [Benson]

As a host country, South Africa was the primary 'place' the research participants encountered. To them, as the following excerpts from Judith, Wanjiru and Jean's

narratives illustrate, South Africa was a place embedded in the history of Apartheid, the charismatic presence of Nelson Mandela and the ideal of the Rainbow Nation.

Yes, yes [I was aware of Nelson Mandela]. I picked it up [...] he is a man I admire. My dad was speaking about it, my dad was talking....you know, when you are young [...] I knew of Apartheid. In those days when we got our passports, you can go to any other country but they only had this big stamp: 'except the Republic of South Africa'. But you really don't understand it. I could not understand it well and I just had to go and find out. It is one of those things [...] because we did not do South African history, we did West African history. [Judith]

[...] When I was fifteen I decided I was going to come to South Africa because we read a lot of South African history and I read a lot of South African literature [such as] Bessie Head, you know those books. I was fascinated with this place. And also, it was very difficult for me to understand the concept of Apartheid. My parents would tell me about Kenya in the Colonial years, but I mean, I was born in a free Kenya and I was born in a Kenya where race was not a word I knew until I came to Southern Africa. So I was really curious to go to this country, and I'd memorised Mandela's teachings. I love this man! I don't really understand some of what he said. [...] I could not, for example, understand why would you not go to a place because you're this colour and not the other colour, you know, that was difficult for me to understand. So, I decided I have to go to this country [...] [Wanjiru]

I thought on campus I would meet all these great, wonderful people and South Africa is a nice place you know, the New South Africa, Rainbow Nation and yeah, I had completely different expectations from what I got. [...] I thought, okay, you know, South Africa is predominantly black so there would be also a lot of like black students. So I come to Cape Town and well, enough said...Yeah, eventually, I did get to meet a few bright people, South Africans. But they are nothing like, you know, people from the rest of the continent. They are very hostile. They are not warm and welcoming and friendly and, you know, they are very suspicious and like, what exactly you are doing here, why did you come here and what are you doing in our country. [Jean]

South Africa thus presented at once an idealised place, a place of opportunity and a place associated with ill-will. But I would suggest that the research participants initially bought into a certain 'myth' about South Africa. The larger than life persona of Nelson Mandela and the phrases "Rainbow Nation" and "New South Africa" constitute central themes in the imagining of the South African nation and nationalism.

In a way, the 'new South African nation' is reminiscent of Appadurai's (2000:162) point that the leaders of new nations in the post-World War 11 area "...understood that [these nations] needed to subvert and annex the primary loyalties attached to more intimate collectivities". Be that it as it may, I believe the 'new South African nation' succeeded in presenting Appadurai's paradox "that modern nations were intended to be somehow open,

*universal and emancipatory...but that their nations were nonetheless, in some essential way, different from and even better than other nations”.*

However, is it not this notion of ‘difference’ and ‘the better than’ perspective that are the draw cards for migrants of any type? The narratives of Wanjiru, Joan and Jean highlighted the contrast between their own country and South Africa. For them, South Africa became an attractive migration destination and a stepping-stone to other prospective destinations.

I think also a lot of young professionals like myself [sic] see South Africa as a place to build their careers, make some money and move on. [...] Being in South Africa is so much better than being in Kenya [...] you know...poor salaries... America is very appealing to people who have just done their undergraduate...or want to do their undergraduate [studies]. But for professionals, people are going more and more into Africa because they have the skills so you don’t really have to go and flip burgers in the States. So people are focussing on especially South Africa...they know they have the skills, they know there is demand for black people there in the job market you know, so that makes it very attractive. And first of all, it is Africa. [Wanjiru]

I mean, I would probably not have been able to buy a house in Kenya at my age, but here life is easy. You go to a bank they give you a loan. In Kenya it is a cash economy. So you get engrossed in yourself. Your job, your house, things like wine courses, extra things, extra things you can do. And you are thinking, you know what, I have got the chance now, why don’t I just do it. [Joan]

I think it is largely economic, because you know, you’ve got the qualifications and you go back home and you can’t really get a job or if you get one it is not going to be as much as you would get if you are out of the country, for example. [Jean]

As was indicated before, Crush (2001:8) remarks that before the 1990’s, African migrants did not perceive South Africa as an ideal migration destination. This changed after the end of the Apartheid era. The new political climate in the country and the new migration movements linked to increase globalisation obviously changed the situation significantly.

It was also this change in the economic climate that influenced Hospice in his decision to settle in South Africa. Having decided to return to Africa, he was faced with the dilemma as to where the ideal place to live would be. As mentioned above, Hospice has dual Benin and French citizenship and he has travelled extensively in Africa. Among other places he lived in Nigeria, the Congo and Benin. Hospice spoke fluent French, English and some German and Portuguese whilst his South African born wife only spoke English. He explained his decision as follows:



I did not come to South Africa because of the changes [i.e. post-1994] I came to South Africa because I was looking for somewhere to go. I said to [my wife] do you want to live in Europe or do you want to live in Africa? If you want to live in Africa, and I said [which would it be] French speaking Africa, or English speaking Africa. At the time I said if it was French speaking Africa, then I would prefer Côte d'Ivoire, because, there is potential there for being more developed. If it is an English speaking country, well, South Africa would be the ideal place because the prospects...there is a lot to do. [Hospice]

Certain research participants such as Judith and Fred had contact with South African exiles in Kenya during the Apartheid era. They perceived the exile community as exclusive but friendly nevertheless. Their initial connection with South African exiles led Fred and Judith to believe in the possibility of renewed contact once they had settled in South Africa. This never happened.

I just came [to South Africa] because I have met some South Africans in Kenya and they were so friendly...so...'smile'...you know. [I met] both, both, black and white. And the same people, I don't even see them [now]. They are here [in South Africa]...I know them but I don't see them. [...] When you come here, you realise this is the reality. [Judith]

My expectation was that having had contact with the people who were leaving Kenya, who were exiled [that I might have contact with them in South Africa]. [In Kenya] they were part of the community. They were not seen as South Africans, they were people, [and] they were working somewhere physically. They were a closed community and that is a feature of [that] society. For me, I looked at it as an opportunity to where I must go for friends. That really has not happened [...] strangely enough I always thought that I would bump into them here. [Fred]

The excerpts from Fred and Judith's narratives contain an expectation that was inherent to the migration experience of all the research participants. Barbara Anderson (2006:100), in a contextual review of South African immigration policies writes: "*Under apartheid, many southern African countries were friendly havens for members of the ANC and other banned organisations, who were allowed to leave with little restriction of their comings and goings. This debt to other African countries presented a dilemma to the new South African government....*". Crush (2001:8:9) corroborates the fact that because many African countries supported the Apartheid struggle it created an expectation among migrants that South Africa would be more welcoming. The opposite happened. The research participants attested that they too, encountered a hostile public and official climate. The following excerpts from the narratives of Wanjiru, Jean and Benson highlight these perceptions:

[...] you come to South Africa from another African country and ah...especially in those days, by virtue of the history that I knew of South Africa, I knew I was not...probably was not going to be accepted within a white sort of social circle. So the expectation you had is that you will identify more with black South Africans by virtue of them not just being black, by virtue of shared African culture, whatever that culture may be, by virtue of the political history, by virtue of the rest of Africa having fought for South Africa. [Wanjiru]

I was just really shocked by that sort of attitude and behaviour and I am thinking, jeez, you know, we have been fighting for you people [...] at least, you know, don't welcome us with open arms, but jeez, the hostility! [Jean]

I expected the hostility to come from the majority of the black community. But it came from all over. When I lived in the UK I already had that experience. You have been there and you know what to do when you come out. But you don't know what to expect from the other people. You would read about it that somebody was shot down. You begin to know what to expect. That it can come to that. [Benson]

Bouillon in his study among Francophone migrants in Johannesburg, writes that many immigrants perceive South Africa as a 'closed society' (2001:125): *"this general feeling of 'closure' has a corollary in the fact that most immigrants do not feel integrated...insecurity and violence, tension in their presence...latent conflict around employment, suspicion...immigration policies and administration...noticeable differences in modes of life and 'states of mind' intensify the feeling of unease."* In Bouillon's case (2001:124) his research participants often tried to explain this as a result of the country's isolation from Africa during the Apartheid era. In answer to a question in a similar vein, Wanjiru summed it up as such:

I think [...] South Africa was so closed that many black South Africans...besides those that went into exile...were so unexposed to everything, you know...African. Because, I found out that they did not even teach African history. I had read more South African literature than many black South Africans because of the education system. [Wanjiru]

#### 4.2.2 Second Encounter: The New South African Government

I have watched movies on South Africa for years and followed [what was happening]. I was with the UN, I knew a lot, you know. I had a fair idea before. [...] What I did not really get clearly was, after the transition in '94... [...]that politics would be an issue]. I was very naïve on that. I did not think so. I just thought [...] things have changed and people go about their business and try to make a living, you know, be themselves, you know. That is what I thought but it was not that simple. [Hospice]

The overriding question to why such an unreceptive climate exists in South Africa elicits a complex answer that I believe originates as much from the dynamics of the political arena at a governmental level, than the intricacies and peculiarities of South African identity at grassroots.

For the research participants their first real encounter with South Africa was through the control mechanisms of the State. Applying for a work, study or residence permit is often a first step in the process of belonging or a sense of permanence as Fred said:

[...] We then went and got an application for South African residence to at least get some sense of permanence, so that [...] I don't have to worry about my family in South Africa. And then, quite frankly, truly, right now, in every aspect I am viewed as a foreigner, but I think, given some sense of permanency, I could contribute a lot more to the country than I am doing currently. [Fred]

For some of the research participants such as Fred and Judith, permanent residence or citizenship was an ultimate goal in this process of belonging and one they actively pursued. They saw the acquisition of "the right papers" as a prerequisite for making a positive contribution to the South African economy. Classified as accompanying spouse on her husband's work permit Judith felt her life in South Africa was one of liminality until they could get permanent residence. Although she could not work, the goal of permanent residence gave her hope. At first, she applied for jobs *en par* with her skills but she soon realised that nobody would employ her without the correct permit. Fred summarised it thus:

So, there is a lot more that can be achieved [...] from the perspective of contributing to the economy. My wife can't get a job, for example. She is fully qualified, she's got her degrees and everything, [and] she is looking for a job. She is here by virtue of the fact that I work permanently and it is clear in her passport...but, if she was allowed to contribute like any normal South African and work. So, yes, I am looking forward to getting permanent residence because then I will also be able to sympathise. [Fred]

Fred and Judith, Joan, Nicole and Benson were luckier than their fellow research participants. The company they worked for had a designated person who dealt with immigration issues. In a way, they were shielded from the actual process. The other research participants had to deal with the Department of Home Affairs directly. Landau (2004:8) describes the department thus: "*One of the most corrupt departments during the Apartheid period, administrative incompetence and irregularities flourished between 1994*

*and 2004...While South Africans regularly (and justifiably) express frustration with the department, the immigrant-related activities taking place under its auspices go beyond mere administrative incompetence...”*

Before the introduction of the Immigration Amendment Act (Act No 19 of 2004), applying for student visas or work permits was an arduous process fraught with obstacles as Wanjiru described:

I didn't even bother to take out permanent residence when I was up for it, because I am like, how can you be so unpatriotic; you are betraying your country. [...] I met people and they ask me....are you still here? And I am like hmmm. And I have nothing to say. I have a work visa. The way it works is that you have to get a job and [your employer] they pay for it. [...] I waited for my [visa] they rejected it three times. The first time it was because the job had not been advertised nationally. The other two times I don't really know what the reasons were. I had to go home to apply for my work permit and after the first two rejections, I wrote to my boss and said okay, it is fine, I don't really feel like pushing this[...] It has become a lot easier. Now, you don't have to leave. When you are here, you don't have to leave. I think if you apply afresh now, you don't have to leave. [Wanjiru]

Hospice had immense difficulty in obtaining permanent residence even though he was married to a South African for more than ten years. One of the requirements of the Immigration Amendment Act (Act No 19 of 2004) is that someone who applies for permanent residence should obtain police clearance certificates from each country of former residence from 18 years onwards. The main purpose of this requirement is crime control but it causes lengthy delays because it usually means that an applicant has to visit the relevant countries in person. Hospice complained bitterly about this process as he had to do it at a considerable expense but he also said he felt like he had done something wrong. Unfortunately this was not the end of his woes as he also wanted to obtain a permit for his seven year old son from a previous marriage. He was denied a permanent residence permit but allowed to apply for a temporary residence permit. The Immigration Act (Act No 13 of 2002) stipulated that any such application had to be from outside the country. Having to leave South Africa with his young son was a very stressful experience for both.

Even though it may be the intention of the Immigration Amendment Act (Act No 19 of 2004) to smooth the administrative path of immigrants, often the opposite seems to be happening. When the ANC came to power, they merely followed the path of least resistance in respect of immigration. In fact, the new government was perceived as

decidedly apathetic in this regard. The old Apartheid era immigration act was only changed as late as 2002 and the Apartheid Government's Aliens Control Act (Act 96 of 1991) remained in force until 2002. Crush and McDonald (2002:7) point out: *"to argue that the new government has been actively hostile to immigration would be an overstatement. Benign indifference would be a better description. There is little evidence that the ruling African National Congress (ANC) saw any role for immigration in its social and economic transformation plans..."*

Within this context I suggest that South Africa presents a contradiction in the sense that it subscribes to the notion of African integration and mobility on the one hand but on the other, negates this through control over immigration and citizenship.

Since 1994 South Africa has become a powerful force in Africa. The country plays an important role in initiatives and organisations such as the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD); the African Union (AU); and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)(Landau 2004:4). Various trade and administrative agreements govern the flow of currency, goods and people. The master narrative here is one of developing Africa's potential and the importance of human capital in achieving this goal. These are all prerequisites for the African Renaissance. Increased integration, cooperation and development imply a certain ease of mobility. The opposite seems to be happening. Sally Peberdy writes (2002:16) *"... President Thabo Mbeki has launched what he calls an "African Renaissance" to strengthen South African ties with the rest of the continent. Yet despite this talk of diversity, inclusivity, and Afritude, official attitudes to immigration and migration have been slow to change. Indeed, South Africa is increasingly characterized by powerful xenophobic and exclusionary discourses centered on migration from the rest of Africa. This language of exclusion has been accompanied by vigorous attempts to control and discourage both legal and undocumented immigration and migration. The state has taken a draconian approach to border and heartland policing..."*

This is in stark contrast to what has been happening in other regions in Africa. Regulations governing the mobility of people are geared towards facilitating and directing the process rather than "plugging the holes". Hospice expressed his surprise at the South African Government's approach to migration saying that other systems offer more freedom of movement.

But look at West Africa. You have Nigeria, next door you have Benin, and next door you have Togo, then Ghana and then Ivory Coast. All linked together. You don't need a visa to move around. We're in a system called ECOWAS. It's the West African Council. They move freely. You can drive from Nigeria to Côte d'Ivoire, without any visa, without any documentation. So, the borders are kind of blurred, somehow you move, the same way that Europe is moving today. [Hospice]

If Comaroff (1996:169,173,174) is right, globalisation is causing a crisis in the nation-state. Traditional economic and political boundaries are disappearing; money and markets are more fluid; the flow of transnational labour and large-scale migration of workers is easier. Nation-states basically lose their ability to control and regulate the movement of people, currency and commodities. Often, the response to this threat to their autonomy is a defensive one. Comaroff (1996:173) further remarks: *"national governments commonly make defensive efforts to (re)assert their sovereignty and control, even while opening themselves up to penetration or encompassment"*.

Often, one of the 'defensive' options is through the control and regulation of citizenship. Kipnis (2004:265) argues: *[...] even when most in-migrants are upwardly mobile professionals, the exclusions that citizenship laws entail have significant life consequences. One can imagine a nation that would provide equal treatment to people of all extant configurations of race, gender, class, religion, ethnicity, sexuality and so on, but still discriminate against 'foreigners'".*

But why would one conceive of the South African nation-state as 'in crisis' and 'defensive' and what bearing might this have on people such as the research participants? I believe the South African nation-state embodies the problems of any nation-state in the age of globalisation. On the one hand it tries to adhere to an ideal or image of what the nation-state ought to be and on the other hand, to paraphrase Appadurai (2000:162) it struggles to control, classify and survey those within and those who wish to cross its borders. This is the context of South Africa's immigration laws and policies. Peberdy (2002:16) states *"immigration policy must be seen in the context of the nation-building project of the post-1994 state and the effort to construct a new inclusive national identity based on citizenship and national territorial integrity...Control over the movement of people into and out of national territory is integral to the exercise and maintenance of state power... the process of [immigrant] selection conveys powerful ideas about the self-image of the destination state, race, national identity, and the stereotyping of non-nationals and their places of origin."*

Based on their narratives, one cannot help but transfer to South Africa, Kipnis' image of a nation-state that preaches equality but simultaneously discriminates against and excludes those who do not belong. It is the focus on control which has bearing on identity formation within the nation-state as it has the power to manipulate identities to suit its particular nationalistic vision. This is the reality which the research participants had to contend with and goes to the heart of how they made sense of the nation-state as place.

#### 4.2.3 Third Encounter: The South African People

I believe the labels in South Africa are a lot more pronounced [than elsewhere] Very clear...clear... The boundaries are clear as well, yeah. [Hospice]

Thornton (1996:159) reminds us that boundaries and categories of political and socio-cultural life in South Africa “...are not mere edges: they are themselves the focus of attention and identity”. One would therefore expect a powerful reaction at grassroots level to the boundaries set by government and the processes of globalisation.

As Comaroff (1996:173) asserts, the response to globalisation at grassroots level is certainly dramatic: “*exacerbated by the transnational movement of people and cultures in post-colonies, there is a dramatic assertion of difference, an explosion of identity politics, within the national community*”. These assertions serve to highlight difference and emphasise localism (Comaroff 1996:173) – but it is localism with a twist.

The research participants certainly did not encounter what the Comaroff's (2003:446) so aptly termed a ‘generic citizen’ but rather one within which the personae of citizenship are subjected to an uncomfortable co-existence: “*The generic citizen of postcolonial South Africa may be the rights-bearing individual inscribed in the new Constitution; also the rights bearing individual — typically urban, cosmopolitan — presumed in much mass-mediated discourse. By contrast, ethno-polities and traditional leadership speak the language of subjects and collective being. For many — perhaps most — South Africans, it is the co-existence of the two tropes, of citizen and subject that configures the practical terms of national belonging (Ibid)*”.

Thornton (1996:151) recognises early on that South African identities are “*multiple and cross-cutting in that each overlaps a range of context, or a common context or institution may contain many identities within it. On the other hand, these differences are also seen as the principal source of conflict in South Africa*”. Herein is contained the double charge of South African identity in that it presents an image of stability based on notions such as ‘the Rainbow Nation’. However, this image is inherently flawed by its potential for disintegration. Strange as it may seem, it is this inherent potential for conflict that provides stability as Thornton (1996:152) says: “*South African identities have never polarised sufficiently to permit devastating conflict. They are either too fragmented or too solid.*” Thornton follows Max Gluckman who argued that conflict bred coherence and stability in that it can be channelled or steered (Thornton 1996:151).

The Thornton-Gluckman framework offers an explanation for ‘the South African experience’ (Thornton 1996:151,152) which is one of integration combined with conflict. Insofar as this study is concerned I believe that the research participants were faced with an image of unity fraught with the tension of identity construction post-1994. Potential conflict and tension is an enduring presence in the ongoing construction of South African identities particularly where it intersects with real or imagined borders and boundaries, as Thornton (1996:149) remarks: “*All of these boundaries raise questions about who is ‘inside’ (and inside what) and who is ‘outside’, who is an enemy and who is a friend, who is a citizen, a ‘home boy’, a permanent resident or a refugee, a native, a settler, an African, a South African, and so on*”. Crush (2001:10) states that immigration and its usefulness or value became a focal point in the redrawing of boundaries and that the imagined ‘racial inclusiveness’ of the new South Africa breeds hostility towards immigrants who are perceived as a threat.

The changing political context in South Africa thus saw the emergence of what Mattes, Crush and Richmond (2000:1,70) refer to as the ‘new South Africa identity’. This identity is being constructed on the cornerstones of nation building, new nationalism, citizenship and membership. It firmly excludes those who do not belong and alienates even those Africans who have been living in the country before 1994. Hospice reacted with some bitterness to the exclusiveness inherent in South Africa’s new identity construction:

Identity, they are finding their own identity. But that is the paradox. The paradox is that within the system there are levels of hierarchy, discrimination, you don’t belong here, you belong there. [...] Oh, I can tell you now, the South Africans have told me



many, many times at every occasion: 'you don't belong'. You cannot understand this. I don't know why [one does not belong]; because I don't understand the cultural thing that is so important. [Hospice]

#### 4.2.3.1 Encounters with identity construction in the new South Africa

It would be, as mentioned above, a mistake to assume or ascribe unity to this identity. There is, as Thornton (1996) says, too much multiplicity and intersecting allegiances. An inherent aspect of the 'new South Africa identity' is increasing ethnic identification and cohesion within each group. It also unmistakably, features the development of territorial ethnicity. The evidence is clear in rising black nationalism and ethno-nationalisms. Judith provided an outsider's perspective to this aspect of identity construction which she based on conversations with a black South African friend:

I foresee a problem in this country, in future, I think, when the blacks are going to have that real power, I think there is going to be another story. There is power, but not [like] when the blacks are going to be like really in control, I see that as a problem. They might start claiming their land. That's what we have been discussing with another friend of mine. But you find there are some blacks who are still not bitter, which is a plus. But there are some who still feel like okay I lack power. A friend of mine, her sister and her husband, I mean, those people, they have some anger. When those people talk [...]

And the bad, they remember the bad, more than the good. Because there, I see Mandela [who said] I am going to work for the blacks to win their support, because without him, this thing would not have happened. I admire him for that. And I realise people have so much respect for Mandela, to the extent that the day he is going to die, there would be a stampede to his funeral. Then after that, what? After that, what? Because I believe that most people are calm because of Mandela. I believe that most people have placed value on when he told them and that is to forget and forgive. Then there are the ones that never forget, but now they want what is truly ours that is what we want. The advantage is that, you find that the wealthy blacks and especially with wealthy whites as well...it is a [different] class. [Judith]

I would like to briefly pursue the question of ethnic identification here as it was highlighted time and again in the research participants' narratives. Among the issues Tambiah (1996:129) highlights as problematic in respect of the growth of the nation-state and modernisation in developing countries and newly independent states "*is large-scale population movements and migration that cause dramatic, speedy changes in the demographic ratios of peoples in a region who perceive themselves as different on the*

*basis of ethnic origins, religion, length of residence, and so on....*" In order to illustrate his point, Tambiah refers to the research of Wiener (1978).

Weiner's hypothesis, based on extensive research in India, is that modernisation first, generates the conditions for internal migration; and second, provides the context for increasing ethnic identification and cohesion. The latter aspect of the hypothesis is of particular interest as it contains an inherent potential for conflict when groups compete over access to economic wealth, political power and social status: "*when there is a strong notion of 'territorial ethnicity' – the notion that certain ethnic groups are rooted in space as bhumiputra (sons of soil) – especially among the indigenous folk of the region into which migrants are coming...*" (ibid).

Based on Wiener's hypothesis, I would like to suggest that the dynamics of nation-building may have set the parameters for South African identity construction and have led to a specific discourse *vis-à-vis* immigration but it has also internalised competition over resources. Peberdy (2002:25) writes: *The promise of resource and service delivery and equal access to state resources is intrinsic to the post-apartheid state's nation-building project ...Economic, political, and social viability for the "new" nation is linked to the provision of services and jobs to all South African citizens. Immigrants and migrants, legal and undocumented, are portrayed as an inherent threat to this nation-building project, and therefore a threat to the nation itself*".

Once again there is potential for conflict in that allegiances are formed to enable access to these resources. What I find interesting is the suggestion in the research participants' narratives that these allegiances may be linked to ethnic identification.

One time I went out for lunch. I sat with this group and talked. [Later] somebody knocked on my door, and he said 'do you realise whom you were sitting with?' I said [...] he is from KwaZulu-Natal. The whole table was from Durban so I sat with the Zulu-speaking table. He is a Xhosa, so I said are you telling me there are restrictions, he said 'of course'. I could go back to Ghana if I don't understand. I said okay, I don't accept it, because at the end of the day there is enough, more than enough available to share for the Xhosa, for everybody.

Why is there a general assumption that one is either Xhosa or Zulu? Nobody can answer. Nobody can answer that. In Kenya we are I don't know how many tribes, there are two main tribes, but nobody will assume that you are from a specific tribe. [...] Again, I am just telling you, there is a lot of rivalry between the Xhosa-speaking

and the Zulu-speaking and the other groups and I did not know about it until I came here. [Fred]

It is just that here, people say that some ethnic groups like Xhosa or Zulu get all the jobs, etc...and you start from your own house, if you are Zulu you will have to help your fellow Zulus before you can...it is just human nature. [...] I think...there are so many Xhosas here, the majority are men. They are so different. I find the Sotho more, like they are more outgoing. I don't know...the Xhosas...they keep...they keep to themselves. I find them glued together. [Judith]

The research participants' experiences were indeed localised but they do raise questions about ethnic identification and allegiances within a wider context. Which factors provide the impetus? Are they largely economic or perhaps historic or cultural? What happens when another force, i.e. professional migrancy intersects with one or more of these cross-cutting allegiances?

For Tambiah (1996:130) the lesser evil is the type of migration that creates a dual-labour system, for example when members of a specific ethnic group work in positions subordinate to the predominant ethnic group or nationality in a specific area or region. A far more problematic situation arises when migrants are better qualified or more skilled than the dominant local group. This puts them on a collision course with the dominant local group or 'sons of the soil' who derive their power from a shift in the political status quo and therefore claim exclusive access to status, wealth and power.

In the case of South Africa, this claim is entrenched in official laws and regulations such as those pertaining to black Economic Empowerment (BEE), Affirmative Action (AA) and Employment Equity (EE). However, there is also an intangible and mythical aspect to this claim. In this myth, the 'sons of the soil' have an absolute right of entitlement. The myth is borne out of the struggle against Apartheid and the fact that the majority of South Africans were disenfranchised. Again it is interesting that this also forms part of the culture of exclusion and the criteria of who belongs where. Fred and Hospice described their encounters with black South Africans in the workplace and the regulatory environment as such:

[...] There is (sic) some who in their minds they fought hard for their independence or whatever they believe it is and in the corporate world they go for maximum economic benefit and we are almost seen as parasites; we just come in and we do not know what happened in the years prior to 1990. I think the biggest problem is they don't know how to cope with it. On level ground...and because we cannot compete on level ground I find that we are singled out [...]. [Fred]

I am trying to get a business started. Are you BEE? And I go, yes, sure. And they are like well, if you change your name a little bit to like 'Mphumelelo'. And I say, and why? Because of the sound; your name does not sound BEE. The only way one can integrate oneself here can only be on a professional basis I think. [Hospice]

In pursuit of answers to my questions about the driving forces behind ethnic identification and intersecting allegiances, I would like to pose the question here if Herder's notion of a *Volksgeist* is perhaps relevant. Tambiah (1996:134) describes *Volksgeist* as "*people fused into some kind of organic whole by historical memory, language and literature, and cultural production*". Herder did not link this concept to the nation-state and nationalism but rather to cultural pluralism. But as Tambiah (1996:134) shows, the concept allows for politicisation and because of this, it might provide an explanation for the particular dynamics of the South African situation. Tambiah (1996:134-135) writes: "*the politicisation of ethnonationalism and the imposition of an ethnonationalist state representing an intolerant majority on a pluralistic terrain spawns violence and warfare*". Thornton (1996) suggests that in South Africa the situation has not developed into 'devastating conflict'. However, one certainly gets an impression of simmering tension and thus potential conflict over various issues such as immigration.

#### **4.2.3.2 Encounters with linguistic ethnonationalism**

As said before, the immigration discourse is set within a specific image of the South-African nation-state where there are definite rules of who belong where. Following Tambiah and Herder, I would like to suggest here that language may play a role in defining boundaries of exclusion. Central to Herder's notion of a *Volksgeist* is the idea that cultural consciousness is formed by language and literature. To him, language represents the essence and spirit, traditions and history of a nation (Tambiah 1996:133). But what happens when language becomes part of the culture of exclusion? Bouillon (2001:113) writes that structural misunderstanding can occur when people are ignorant of each other's language and culture. For him, language is one of the primary objects of initial interaction. The phrase 'do you speak....?' embodies and signifies a multitude of meanings. But what if exclusion on the basis of language is deliberate?

To the research participants the question of language and the subsequent tensions it invoked in their relationships with South Africans were important issues. Since English was

the language they had in common with most South Africans, they felt communication should not have been a problem. And yet it was. South Africans and specifically black South Africans were perceived as discourteous in their preference for a local vernacular instead of English. Language became an invisible barrier and because of this they felt excluded as Joan and Jean's narratives illustrate:

[...] It depends on you, because you know what, you teach...I read something, you teach what you allow. What you allow you teach. Because...if I came into your presence and you do not acknowledge it and you just continue speaking [...] the disrespect if somebody comes and he does not understand the language and you just speak. I mean that's common courtesy. So this happens to me and you know I will just not allow myself to be put through that. I just will not be in your presence again if that is the way you treat me, you know. So I am not teaching someone to treat me badly. I am not going to allow that. [Joan]

[...] the people themselves are so hostile so you are like you don't even want to [get close to them]. You don't even want to learn the language, you know, because...only from a practical point of view like if you are greeted by someone. But really, personally I did not want to. I did not feel I wanted to know much more about them [...] [Jean]

Tambiah (1996:131) raises the issue of linguistic ethnonationalism. He discusses the phenomenon within the context of ethnic conflict in South Asia and Eastern Europe among others. However, the question he asks is relevant and extendable to the issue at hand - i.e. *"what are the relationships between a language, its native speakers, and the cultural capital and social reality they construct?"*

All the research participants reported indigenous black languages as a potential or real barrier to being accepted by the local black population. Afrikaans was never perceived as problematic as most Afrikaans-speakers switched to English when they realised the research participants were unable to understand or speak the language.

Afrikaners only they speak Afrikaans right...they hardly ever speak Afrikaans in the presence of other...yeah... hardly ever. [...] I mean they always, always try to speak English. They are obviously dealing with the world in Afrikaans you know. And even if I find them speaking Afrikaans I don't think they would continue. I mean it rarely happens [Joan]

However, indigenous languages, specifically Xhosa, were always given preference over English, even if the conversation initially began in English. The research participants also reported that there was a common perception among local black people other than work

colleagues, that because they are black, they would be able to speak Xhosa. Conversations were often initiated in the local vernacular, only to be cut short when the research participants did not respond.

The following excerpts from the research participants' narratives provide keyhole perspectives into this world where language became an important obstacle. The experiences range from Wanjiru's encounter with a black South African woman who questioned why she spoke English; Hospice's sense of not belonging because he couldn't speak a local black language; Joan's sense of almost invisibility as black South Africans switched to Xhosa in her presence; and Fred's feeling that people's attitudes changed when they realised he was not South African.

And then you get here [...] and first of all...you know, you don't speak the language. And that is only the first barrier to establishing any kind of relationship with South Africans. There is an expectation that because you are black you must be able to speak the language. We were walking with a friend of mine in town. This woman, I think she was walking behind us, she touched us on the shoulder saying: why are you two speaking English? And I am taken aback like why...but you are both black, you must not speak English. And so we... we tried to explain to her that we are both black, but we actually come from different communities so we don't have a common mother tongue. [Wanjiru]

Where do I fit in? That's where the challenge is. [...] Well, [to fit in] it can only be from a professional viewpoint. It could not be otherwise. You have to speak the language. I go to a service station, people speak to me. I go to a [shop] people speak Zulu or Xhosa to me. I look at them and then I am thinking this and then it is like: who do you think you are. [Hospice]

[In Kenya] people will talk to you in English or maybe in Swahili because there are two national languages accepted by all and only then they will figure out that okay, you are from this particular tribe and if he is of the same tribe, he will switch to that language. Even in Kenya, the South Africans will speak to you in Swahili and if you don't speak it they will switch to English. Here, they will always, invariably, switch to Zulu or Xhosa. [...]

Or even, let's make it better, you go downstairs to the canteen, with a black person, a friend of yours, you go down, you are sitting, the two of you, there comes another one, a second one, a South African and this new person comes and initiates a conversation in Xhosa. And I mean it won't be like 'oh sorry, we forgot you're here'. I mean, completely serious you know [...] there are (sic) no way they would switch back into English. And it becomes worse because you are joined by a third, a fourth and a fifth, you're the only...you sat and you are so uncomfortable. [Joan]

[...] I am just thinking where I have never encountered this [...] you name it, the first time they address you it would be either in Xhosa or in Zulu, and immediately I respond back in English they say sorry and you see the change, immediately, the

change. Why is there a general assumption that you are either a Xhosa or a Zulu?  
[Fred]

Bouillon (2001:116) mentions that immigrants often fear hostility or abuse when locals realise they cannot speak the local vernacular. The most common defensive action is to keep quiet. Furthermore, a sudden change to the language of 'the other', however innocent and spontaneous it may be, creates extreme tension. It also *"creates suspicion and gives rise to the feeling of being treated with contempt, manipulated, even cheated because of being excluded unexpectedly from the exchange"* (ibid). Note the inherent suspicion in Fred's comment and the fact that Wanjiru decided to rather keep quiet than let it be known that she was a foreigner:

I would sit down and someone would come and sit with me, then you will be getting another and another and another. If somebody comes and sits with me we start conversing in English and then this person comes and that person and before I know it, the conversation is switched to Zulu or Xhosa or whatever. I am wondering why am I there. There was a time when our salaries were being discussed, what I get in terms of me being a foreigner. [Fred]

[...] I went to Gugulethu and...and my car broke down there and I took a taxi to come and get my mechanic to go and fix the car and ah...this guy was standing by the roadside and ... asked the conductor where he was going and he said he was not going... from his accent you could tell he was not South African. And then he [the conductor] said something and used the word *\*makwerekwere* it is what they do in Cape Town for African foreigners. I couldn't understand the language, so I don't know what they were talking about. But suddenly there was this discussion in the taxi about *\*makwerekwere* and yours truly was just sitting there like quiet, thinking 'uh uh, here we go again, and I am trying to laugh at the appropriate points, when they laugh, to look like I know what is going on, I just don't want to participate . [Wanjiru]

*\*[makwerekwere, the Sotho term for black African foreigners is discussed more fully in the following section]*

It is Tambiah's (1996:131-132) position that *"linguistic ethnonationalism asserts a consubstantial identity between a collectivity of people and the language they speak and transmit ....such potent exclusivist identity, which overlooks and suppresses exchanges, borrowings, and interaction between languages and their speakers and the migrations of peoples, becomes even more divisive and intense when the heritage of language is conflated with ethnicity and race, religion, territory and homeland"*. The implications of assuming such an identity are far-reaching. They impact on how reality is constructed and shape perceptions of political and cultural entitlement.

[...] One of them asked me, do you have a South African ID card? And I say yes. And he said how is it possible, you don't even speak our language, you are not even interested in learning. Just by listening to you, you are not interested in learning our language. How can you hold an ID card, I mean really. And I say but you don't need to speak the language you know, I mean, you know, if you go to Switzerland, you eat for over a year, ah, Swiss fondue, *Fondue Swiss*; and I said you know, you don't need to speak the language because there are many languages in the country...Hospice]

Such a culture of exclusion or as Tambiah says a 'potent exclusivist identity' can only emerge through the confluence of specific dynamics. The answer as to why it exists is complex. Thornton offers an articulate explanation in his critique of Appiah's and Mbembe's fusion of the postmodern and the postcolonial. He postulates that "*South Africa is indeed postmodern in a number of respects, but it is not post-colonial...Apartheid was a form of rampant modernism and ...post-Apartheid is therefore postmodern...it is also after the 'colonial'...but the label 'postcolonial' [is reserved] for Apartheid itself*". Within this context emerges what Thornton calls the 'post-Apartheid condition': i.e. '*the special relationship between modernism, colonialism and Apartheid*' (Thornton 1996:136).

I would like to briefly discuss Thornton's post-Apartheid condition here as I shall refer to it in the next section. I believe it offers a possible explanation for the prevailing emphasis on difference and differentiation (Thornton 1996:143) in South African society. For Thornton (1996:138) there is an inherent nostalgia to the post-Apartheid condition which translates into a basic longing for, albeit sometimes dismal, certainties of that era: "*...Apartheid offered ... a promise of the future unfolding and a sense of historical majesty that goes with any nationalist narrative, especially when this is paired with a promise (if not the reality) of the rationally administered state*". The central premise of Apartheid was that of racial and spatial difference. However, Apartheid also introduced another motto that would eventually destroy its political model, namely the power of unity – the emphasis on difference undercut this unity.

In post-Apartheid South Africa, "*the logic of difference remains, but it now lacks the political, philosophical and aesthetic image of unity of the total nation*" (Thornton 1996:142). This is then the predicament of the New South Africa where the boundaries and categories of political and socio-cultural life are fluid and identities complex. Thornton argues that the end-result of this fluidity is chronic confusion (Thornton 1996:139,144-146). If the South African citizenry is confused, what is the migrant to make of this? If there is no simple way 'to be Zulu', as Thornton says, how is one then 'to be a professional migrant' or



a refugee or whatever? If in South African society there is conflict between the different domains of 'being Zulu' then it is also no accident that conflict plays a significant part in the interrelationship between South Africans and immigrants. When individuals such as the research participants or any other stranger for that matter encounter these fluid boundaries they encounter a culture of exclusion that is based on deep-seated difference.

The Comaroffs (2003:446,447) present a complementary argument. Theirs is a story of "a crisis of culture", of "the counter politics of ethnic assertion" against the most liberal of constitutions that in effect strives for democratic pluralism. Even though their focus is more on the question of citizenship and custom and the subsequent tension between the South African constitution and the politics of diversity among the populace they do ask an important question: *What happens when a liberal democracy encounters a politics of difference that it cannot embrace ethically or ideologically within its definition of the commonwealth, a politics of difference that is not satisfied with recognition, tolerance, or even a measure of entitlement — a politics of difference that appeals to the law or to violence to pursue its ends, among them the very terms of its citizenship?* (Comaroff & Comaroff 2003:447).

There is, within the context of this study, a tail to this question: What happens when the politics of difference in that liberal democracy extends to strangers within its borders? What happens when it is deeply entrenched not only in law but also in the everyday practices of ordinary citizens? What happens when recognition, tolerance and entitlement at grassroots level become part of a national rhetoric that makes strangers *personae non gratae*?

What happens is that people such as the research participants are excluded through a politics of difference that operates at state or governmental level and at the level of the ordinary citizen. Aiwa Ong (2002:173) says that mobile professionals have the ability to "...manipulate...schemes of cultural difference, racial hierarchy and citizenship...but they do not operate in free-flowing circumstances". I cannot agree more. Hospice described it eloquently...

When you are a foreigner and you come to South Africa you need to find your way in. How do you do that? That is a major challenge because [...] where do you fit into it. I have to fight to be black. Because they say, you are not. Then what? [Hospice]

The experiences of the research participants at this micro-level are significant in the sense that they allow one to see how South Africa's immigrant discourse shapes the reality of individuals who must eke out a living in a strange place where, as the Comaroffs remark, there is hardly any room for difference and subsequently tolerance. Wanjiru provided the following perspective:

I sometimes really understand their feelings and what kind of caused it. I don't have any ill feelings about it. I just...you know, I just accept that it has been taken out on me and I am comfortable within myself to know that it is not about me...it is about things bigger than me. Sometimes I totally understand that kind of affinity and I am like yeah...I mean, if someone did something, you know, that were done to people's families, I could understand that kind of thing. And I can understand them not wanting to extend their hand to an outsider or stranger. [Wanjiru]

Stereotypes, xenophobia, intolerance, racism and 'othering' are often the most visible signifiers of a culture of exclusion, the tip of the iceberg if you will. But the real power of such a culture is contained in the unique blend of state sanctioned rules of belonging (citizenship) and the interpretation of these rules based on history and culture, by legitimate citizens.

#### 4.3 LABELS, ATTITUDES AND STEREOTYPES

I tell you, because, most people, we even know who says what, I mean they tell you, and I know that most, they laugh, and somebody would say something like 'oh when are you going back to your country'. In your face! I don't think they care what they say as long as you hear it. You get defensive, you know saying I will never go back; I am going to get permanent residence. I am lucky, they don't *do* anything. But the fact that someone could actually come and say: when are you going back to your country - you know!! [Joan]

It follows from the previous section that inherent in the encounter of stranger and native South African is thus an entanglement of modern and post-modern orientations. There is a certain fluidity and perhaps unpredictability to these encounters but is the African migrant really such a pariah? Why is he or she vilified? Wanjiru and Joan tried to rationalise anti-immigrant feelings among South Africans:

I think it is just the fear of what you don't know...and sometimes I can totally understand where they are coming from when they have that kind of hostility, because they endured so much and there is still a lot of anger and hurt and all of

that. Sometimes I can...sometimes I can understand it, other times I think, okay, time is up, get over it. [Wanjiru]

I think its okay, in my mind I have decided that, I have analysed it, I have decided that, you know, when for a long period of time you are colonised and you have been made to feel inferior for a long time, now things are all right. You want somebody else to be inferior to you, you want somebody, and you want to feel better about yourself, so somebody else has to be below you. [Joan]

I would like to examine the assignation of labels and stereotypes in respect of African migrants against the background of boundary construction and crosscutting allegiances in post-Apartheid South Africa. Within this context I find the following comment by the Comaroffs' (2001:63 1) valuable, "*Why, at this point in the history of postcolonial nation-states, and of South Africa in particular, has the question of boundaries and their transgression, of membership and citizenship, become such an incendiary issue?[...] And how, in turn, does the naturalisation of nationality relate to the construction of older identities framed in terms of history, culture, race, ethnicity?*" De Jongh (2006:3-4) provides part of the answer when he emphasises that issues of (ethnic) difference in South Africa were swept under the 'politically incorrect' carpet during the Apartheid years. The advent of democracy has once again highlighted difference and more specifically ethnic difference and identity: "*now that difference is no longer legislated but seemingly accommodated, voluntary identification with distinctive background, race, ethnic group, community, has become and overt reality*". At a very basic level, the research participants did not quite perceive it as such. Their perceptions are more rationalisation than anything else.

Crush and McDonald (2002:9) suggest that in the past, successive governments presented new visions of national identity and set rules of exclusion based on race and culture. Furthermore, "*there has been considerable continuity in the immigration policies and practices bequeathed by Apartheid...; the ANC has ... demonstrably tried to distance the state from the past. But these were historical correctives...*" (Crush and McDonald 2002:9).

The end of apartheid did not coincide with new perceptions of Africa. An important legacy of the apartheid era is the perception of Africa as "*a place of otherness, of danger and threat*" (Crush and McDonald 2002:9). In the apartheid era, this perception translated as a threat to white domination. Is it possible that this has now become a fear of the African stranger and a domination of another kind? I would like to set the discussion of labels and

stereotypes against this perception of Africa. I have loosely arranged the issues highlighted in the research participants' narratives around the following topics: language, job security, employment equity and xenophobia.

#### 4.3.1 The power of language

Following Tambiah's (1996) notion of linguistic ethnonationalism, I suggested earlier that language plays a role in defining boundaries in South Africa's immigration discourse. I have shown there that language has become a powerful tool of exclusion of 'the other'. Here I would like to examine how language is used to label 'the other' and how this labelling process is an extension of apartheid stereotypes. I discuss two related issues here namely the existing perception of African immigrants as aliens and their labelling as *amakwerekwere*.

Languages of exclusion have many facets but I believe the foundation for terms of exclusion can often be found in the descriptions of immigrants and migrants by officialdom. Peberdy (2002:23-24) provides an interesting perspective when she says that the terms 'illegal aliens', 'aliens' and 'illegal immigrants' are negative descriptions and apartheid era relics, used by State institutions to describe immigrants and migrants. Not only do these terms reflect the State's insecurities, there is also failure to distinguish between the two categories. This creates 'one category of alien' with the unfortunate result that documented and undocumented immigrants and migrants are both perceived as illegal and thus criminals. This language of exclusion highlights the difference, strangeness and otherness of the immigrant and migrant. Furthermore, as Peberdy (2002:24) says, *"These conceptual conflations in the language of immigration hide another implicit construction: that most "aliens" and "illegals" are (black) Africans. The state's negative attitudes to both immigrants and migrants are most evident in its stereotyping of African migrants. These foreigners supposedly threaten "the nation" by endangering its physical and moral health, and its ability to provide services, employment, and to control crime."*

In the course of her argument, Peberdy (2002:23,24) makes the observation that the term 'alien' infers that non-South Africans are 'extraterrestrial' - not of this earth. I suggest that in certain ways the culture of difference and exclusion has to do with a certain perception of rootedness and entitlement among South Africans. I shall return to the idea of

rootedness at the end of this chapter but would like to briefly say here that in this I follow the Comaroffs (2001:63) who in a satirical examination of the pre-occupation of South Africans with invader or alien plant species wonder if perhaps an existential question needs to be asked. They suggest that this pre-occupation is almost metaphorical in that it equates human invaders (migrants, refugees et cetera) with alien plant species. The Comaroff's make this analogy in a similar vein to Liisa Malkii's (2001:56) examination of the metaphysical relationship between nation, place and territory. Malkii argues that the relationship between people and place often appear as botanical metaphors.

This begs the question as to why there exists a perception of the African migrant as an invader – whether from outer space or perhaps more earthly. In a similar vein to the Comaroffs above, Marianne Gullestad (2002:50,51) in her examination of egalitarianism, nationalism and racism in Norway, discusses how the Norwegian word for immigrant, '*innvandrere*' has become a powerful rhetorical concept and a stigmatising, racialised label of 'the other' who in this case is perceived as of Third World origin, dark skinned and working class. However, the term is often generalised and as such signifies those who are not Norwegian regardless of nationality, social position or identity.

I believe these contexts provide the setting for degrading terminology such as *amakwerekwere*. In this vein, Crush and McDonald (2002:8) write, "*Many of the same Apartheid-era images and stereotypes have simply been displaced onto African immigrants and refugees, known pejoratively as kwerekwere.*" Jean and John Comaroff (2001:646) agree: "*Once singled out, 'illegals' are seldom differentiated from bona fide immigrants or refugees. All are referred to as makwerekwere, a disparaging Sotho term for incompetent speech – and, by implication, for exclusion from the moral community.*" Note how Nicole and Hospice experienced and rationalised the labeling process:

Sometimes I could be in the street and they would say '*amakwere*'. It does not hurt, I don't feel like it is generalised. Maybe it is because I know that most people, especially, no, the reason is here, if somebody would say this in London or in Europe, maybe I would feel bad or in any other country. But in South Africa my reasoning is that under apartheid there was (sic) so few people who went outside South Africa, who went out to other countries. And I would say, people who think like that are probably not educated, does not feel worthy or if they had commonsense, I mean, they would not think like that. They should really ask [the others] there were so many people from South Africa in Tanzania and all those countries. So I am just thinking, so many people who should know but just don't know [...] So, if it was another country, yes I would be hurt, but here I just put it in a

different context and I am feeling they just don't know. [...]Here I just think oh, it is one person's view and not worthy of comment. [Nicole]

No, it is in no way hurtful...I laugh about it. People get surprised. So it is not a case of them doing this to me, they doing that to me...No, because that's the way people are. I have seen a little progression, you know, I have seen it is improved a lot. It has improved drastically. I have been here for six, seven years, I mean; it has been a while now. It has improved a lot. [Hospice]

In the research participant's attempts to explain their labelling, I see a certain poignancy. There is a belief that this might be an isolated incident, perhaps not aimed at them individually. Here, however, I agree with Gullestad (2002:51) who argues that immigrants remain outsiders and locked into a specific reference group and nothing seems to be able to change this. She further states that these frames of reference often operate clandestinely (behind people's backs).

The terms *amakwerekwere* or also sometimes *amagongogo*, do not even constitute proper words. They are, according to Bouillon (2001:113) "*constructed in the same way as onomatopoeic terms which evoke the 'stuttering' sounds that foreign languages are considered to consist of...the other one's language is considered not a proper language, especially in relation to my language which is the only proper one*". Bouillon (2001:120,21) further asserts that the categorization of 'the other' as *amakwerekwere* signifies their inferiority.

Through regular use, labels become common practice. They therefore direct and structure perceptions and interactions. In language lies a powerful tool in that it instigates and supports a certain consciousness about the other.

#### **4.3.2 The fear of losing jobs and services**

By far the most enduring stereotype about legal immigrants is that they take jobs and services away from locals. African immigrants have become, to paraphrase the Comaroffs (2001:645), anti-citizens and economic vultures. This happens in the face of evidence to the contrary. Nicole and Joan felt that the perception of foreigners taking jobs away from South Africans should not be an issue at all.

One day, one day at work in the cafeteria, someone, a South African national, was asking why they had to go and recruit foreigners. I mean he did not say it because of me but it was very surprising that someone would say it upfront. [...] It bothers me but I just do not think about it. Also there are many foreigners. I don't think it should be an issue because most foreigners here are educated it is not like they come with nothing [Nicole]

Yeah...they already thinking we are taking their jobs. So obviously you tend to find the person whom you think would [take the job] that would be legally, legitimately yours. The more you think about it, we are not taking their jobs, they are not trained for them. I mean, there has been a gap, for many years there has been the struggle and all that, and there is a gap. So, we are not taking anybody's jobs. [...] [Joan]

Research indicates, for example, that legal migrants make a positive contribution to the economy and that they do not want to settle permanently in South Africa. (Crush and MacDonald 2002:7; Peberdy 2002:25) The research participants did not contradict these findings.

In terms of access to employment and services, Judith's situation easily comes to mind. As mentioned earlier, based on her type of residence permit Judith could not seek regular employment work. However, she was not to be deterred and based on the elusive promise of permanent residence Judith began to investigate business possibilities. Once again, Judith encountered difficulties. She found that it would be difficult to open a local bank account, obtain credit or enter into lease agreements without the correct permits. Landau (2004:11) writes, "*Patterns of exclusion are also evident in private sector industries where one would expect the profit motive to trump other considerations. Even non-nationals with the right to live in the country are often unable to access the most rudimentary banking services; let alone loans or other forms of credit... Under pressure from lobbying groups, some banks have now begun extending services to refugees, but are still unwilling to open accounts for most other African immigrants who are unlikely to have the requisite thirteen digit ID number, foreign passport, and a written employment contract*"

However, even an employment contract could not shelter research participants from prejudice. The company Fred worked for went through some critical changes at middle and upper management level. Fred's boss, a Frenchman who was a permanent South African resident became one of the first casualties. A black South African – coincidentally a Xhosa, replaced him. Very little of what happened had anything to do with affirmative action or other similar policies. However, as Fred told it, rumours and gossip had it that the changes had something to do with the foreigners in the company.

My boss was a foreigner and I had someone who said, by the way, did you not hear, they are getting rid of all foreigners, they are getting rid of all the foreigners. A black manager said to me, are you worried? They said this is the rumour that is out there. This is a black manager who saying this, a colleague of mine. [...] My current boss said, if you are not speaking Xhosa, you are a foreigner. A very strong statement, but he has reason for that and maybe he is right. [Fred]

As mentioned before, most African migrants, and this includes the research participants, have no desire to make South Africa their permanent home, perceptions to the contrary prevail. Benson made it clear that he did not intend to stay permanently even though he had bought a house. Benson has since returned to Kenya and now works for a multinational company.

Originally in my mind, I knew I was going to be a token, because I was not actually meant to stay here for long. I am staying here longer by default rather than by design. I did not come here to stay. They told somebody, don't worry that guy is only here for a short period. And they say 'yeah yeah'. I said: I don't stay here for long. I could see that they were angry. They did not think before I will be appointed. They were told, don't worry about it. But I think the worst time was when somebody gets appointed in a position, when they said 'we are pleased to confirm that so and so has been appointed in this position' and then they went 'huh?!' That's when you know they don't actually like you. [Benson]

Jean explained that she was only in South Africa to complete her PhD and training as a Marine Biologist. She said she could definitely see herself returning to Kenya.

[In Kenya] we have quite a big marine component, because we have got a bit of coastline. So there are a couple of marine biology institutes, so the opportunities are there. Basically the plan is... there is a drive from here to set up a whole marine ecosystem facility like from South Africa, all the way up to Somalia. And it is a big thing, you know, like the World Bank, EU sort of funded programme. But it is just picking up now [...] I envision my self at least helping in the managing of our section of the coastline. [...] So yeah...definitely, I would like to go back home.

Mattes *et al* (2000:1,6) point out that the Government's vision of a common South African identity does not accommodate the integration of immigrants. It is also not a vision that welcomes and embraces new members: *"immigrants and migrants (even the most highly skilled) are more often stereotyped as a threat to the economic and social interests of South Africans"*.



Research participants reported that recruiting agents and even representatives from the companies they ended up working for, perpetuated the notion of a hostile South African reception. How did this notion become part of the local narrative in respect of black immigrants? It may be the result of an increasing sensitivity towards foreigners brought about by national campaigns to counteract intolerance but it is nevertheless an interesting phenomenon.

Joan, Nicole and Benson were recruited by a company representative in the United Kingdom. It would seem that the picture he painted was attractive enough to convince them to accept the offer of employment. However, he also deemed it appropriate to forewarn them about local attitudes towards foreigners. Interestingly, the man in question was Xhosa and politically speaking well-connected. All the research participants had the utmost respect for him and felt rather vulnerable when he left the company. They also found it difficult to reconcile the general hostile attitude of black South Africans and their black colleagues with that of their recruiter.

I expected a lot of ... from the people, when I came here, people knew and people will tell you if you are black in South Africa and you are not South African someone might shoot you. Oh yes [I expected this to happen], I came that time, during 2000 this thing called AA. It was all the hype of it. Nobody ever understood. During the interview I was told, I remember I was told: would you survive in that climate? Yes, I was told openly that people were going to be hostile. You won't find it easy. If you are strong you will survive. I can say that they underemphasised. [...] somebody from here [said it]; yes [my department manager said it]. [Benson]

As mentioned earlier, Haydee, who had dual Burundian and South African nationality, had been living in South Africa for about ten years. Coming from a war torn country, South Africa presented a world that one could only dream about. She said she often wondered what they were getting into when her family decided to move. Nevertheless, they perceived South Africa as a 1<sup>st</sup> World country with many opportunities. After completion of her studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT), she began searching for a job. An international insurance company eventually offered her a position in their corporate strategy division. Her interviewer, who is Swazi, pertinently asked her whether she would be able to deal with hostility from local black colleagues who might find her presence as a foreigner threatening. This surprised Haydee because as a student she never experienced hostility or xenophobic attitudes towards foreigners.

Hostility is a reality of life that all African migrants and immigrants encounter. Crush (2000:118) states that migrants engage with South Africans who are not divided on the basis of race, economic or social status in their attitudes towards African foreigners. It is a deep-seated hostility based on myth and stereotype and not necessarily direct experience. Sinclair (1999:471) suggests that African migrants typically respond to this hostility by returning home and not seeking any permanence in South Africa. Interesting, however, is the fact that not all migrants necessarily experienced direct hostility. But as Crush (2000:118) remarks, *“only those who have had direct personal experience of hostility, abuse or prejudice, are prepared to translate that general awareness into a firm belief that South Africans are intolerant and hostile”*.

#### **4.3.3 Black employment equity**

The South African policies of Employment Equity (EE) and Black Economic Empowerment are at the centre of nation-building and the idea is that jobs and services should be accessible to all. These policies favour in particular those who were disadvantaged under the apartheid system. Peberdy (2002:24) writes in this regard that *“Economic, political, and social viability for the “new” nation is linked to the provision of services and jobs to all South African citizens. Immigrants and migrants, legal and undocumented, are portrayed as an inherent threat to this nation-building project, and therefore a threat to the nation itself ... the state ... is trying to redress decades of unequal resource allocation and service delivery which have left South Africa a highly divided society”*.

The research participants inadvertently ended up right in the middle of this initiative. I find the questions as to how they were perceived in terms of employment equity and their opinions about this process quite interesting. Research participants felt they were not black enough and that they were subsequently discriminated against even though they sometimes had better qualifications than their South African black and white co-workers. Within this context I found the emergence of counter-stereotypes most interesting such as ‘South Africans are not educated’, ‘black South Africans have a lower standard’ and ‘black South Africans struggle more’. Bouillon’s research (2001:135,136,137) among African immigrants in Johannesburg and Cape Town revealed similar stereotypes such as ‘South Africans are lazy’ or ‘they are not driven enough’.

The research participants rationalised these stereotypes by referring to South Africa's isolation during the apartheid years. Jean's perception was, for example, that affirmative action employees really battled to get ahead and that they have no support base. But she also did not like the fact that African immigrants were often equated with affirmative action employees.

[...]I believe quite a few affirmative action employees, they struggle and everybody says oh no. You know, you give them a chance, see how they perform. And they are not coping and to some extent it is true. But I think it is also like unfortunate because I think the country can afford to make them part of the training and you know, these people need to be there and learn by making mistakes [...] how else do you learn? But it is like they are supposed to be given this job and they know they are not qualified enough and they hang them in the first place and then they expect them to perform like they are a 100% ...

For the purposes of this study I asked key employees at one of the companies which employed some of the research participants what the position was in terms of the company's employment equity or affirmative action policies. I was told 'off the record' that this company excluded legal African (black) immigrants from their employment equity calculations. These immigrants were perceived as 'white' and 'male'. They therefore did not even count in terms of gender equity if they happened to be female. This situation has also generated a myth in the company that white male employees would rather see positions, even their own, going to black immigrants than local black South Africans. Joan and Fred who worked for this company explained their positions in the company as follows:

I think also the whites have those situations, like now, they feel its better a foreigner is taking the jobs, you know, that they take your jobs, but also like, I think it is about their own security, the white part. Because you know what, the more...you know how things are, black economic empowerment. So, by the way, I am classified as a white male. We all are, because we are foreigners [...] if you were to lose a job, who [sic] do you lose to, I mean... [Joan]

I stopped [going to meetings of the black Managers Forum]. There is nothing to gain from it. Nobody wants to listen to you. In any case in the true sense of the word, I am black when it suits them in terms of numbers but in reality I am no different to a white person in the eyes of the council and the real issues that count ... [Fred]

Wanjiru and Jean were both employed at the University of Cape Town. In contrast to Fred and Joan's experience in the private sector, they felt they were employed or recruited as post-graduate students because they increased the institution's black equity numbers. I

can not confirm or disprove this perception as none of the people I spoke to at the University were prepared to say anything on or off the record. Wanjiru's experience at the University was more gender-related in that she was the only black female in a predominantly white male department. She said that initially she felt that she was there to 'make up black numbers' but that she was never discriminated against because she was from Africa. She did, however, point out that she felt University lecturers and staff treated her and other black students as dim-witted and slow. Wanjiru wondered if this was perhaps a relic from the country's apartheid past when blacks were perceived as not worthy of higher education. Jean made a similar remark but her perspective was slightly different in that she believed educated black migrants were judged by the same standards as black South Africans:

One of the things that I don't like is that they just perceive 'the black person', they view your education level, exposure, everything, they judge you on a black South African standard. It is very difficult, obviously for a person who did not even grow up here. So they judge you by that first and then if you turn out to be a little bit better than them or whatever, then it is like wow, it is so amazing, where did you come from? Initially I wanted to educate everyone and tell them, no, I am not the only black marine student in Kenya, there are lots and they got PhD's and they got them a long time ago and not just in Kenya, even in Tanzania, Zambia and even in other countries. Life went on, you know, we have had years of independence. Now I really don't care. There is a blank and they really don't care. They really don't care. [Jean]

When I asked Jean whether she felt singled-out as a foreign black African PhD student, she made the following comment:

...personally, nobody has said it to my face. But I have asked my supervisor, I asked him, did you just get me this degree because you needed like a black person to start with and black people would score you the highest points? And he said: "no, no, no, no, nothing like that!" But I think it was largely a combination, because last year... you know every year you apply for funding, he gave me the proposal that people had submitted for him to the council and I read it and he had written it, he knew I would read it, so he wrote there in brackets like "I am so sorry but I had to write this". He is like [in the proposal] oh we have black students, you know [...] so that we could get funds. And he is like [to me], you know, this is all just political. Then I thought, yeah right! You know, I understand how things work, you know... [Jean]

South Africa's participation in continental initiatives such as the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (EU) in effect opened the door to skilled migrants from all over Africa. But still, black African migrants are perceived as a

threat. I concur with Peberdy (2002:29) who says: *Black Africans from outside the borders are threatening because...they can become part of the nation (legally or otherwise), and therefore deprive citizens of their hard-won rights, entitlements, and access to state resources. Previously, foreign black Africans (like black South Africans) could not become citizens. They were not, for the most part, seen as a threat to the nation per se or a threat to its interests. Now that South Africa's national vision only encompasses all citizens, (black) Africans have been redefined as a "threat" to the nation and its resources.*

#### 4.3.4 Xenophobia

It follows, therefore, that xenophobia would be omnipresent in South Africa's immigration discourse. This has much to do, I believe, with what Landau (2004:8) calls 'territorially exclusive nationalism'. He further states: *As black South Africans re-claim areas from which they were once excluded...they are confronting foreign-born nationals also seeking fortune or refuge in the country's cities. These interactions are contributing to a nativist discourse and anti-foreigner practices [...] The elevation of indigeneness as a condition for social, political, and economic inclusion threatens the inclusiveness outlined in Mbeki's 'I am an African' speech, the Constitution, and commitments delineated by domestic and international law.* Pauw and Petrus (2003:173) concur with this line of thought, especially the impact of the Government's vision of national unity and a common South-Africanness on boundary construction between insiders and outsiders.

How close to the truth is this situation? How did the research participants experience xenophobia? For them, xenophobia was initially something intangible and as Jean said, something she had only heard about. Joan said that before she had come to South Africa, she was not even aware that such a thing as xenophobia existed.

[...] I did not even know what xenophobia meant. I actually had to check it up in a dictionary when I got here, because I kept on hearing it and hearing it, hearing it. But you kind of picture what it is by the way you are being treated. I tell you [...] I don't think they even realise that they do it, or say, pass a remark. [Joan]

I started hearing about all these nasty incidents, people being thrown off trains and you know the whole xenophobic type of thing. And, so I thought the best thing would be then just to avoid them and well, just not mix or interact with them... which is what happened... [Jean]

Crush (2000:106) suggests that since 1995, South Africans have become increasingly intolerant and xenophobic. He speaks of a latent hostility that often culminates in verbal and physical attacks. Most of the research participants experienced verbal abuse such as name-calling. None were physically attacked. However, Benson said a colleague cautioned him not to use a specific carwash in Gugulethu, one of Cape Town's high-density suburbs, which has a predominantly black South African population.

I used to go to Gugulethu to wash my car on Saturdays. You know, it's a place where you park your car it gets washed and when it is finished you go back home. But one day, somebody came on a Monday and said 'ah, do you go to Gugulethu to wash your car?' and I said yes. He said: 'you better be careful, some guys are talking about you'. I stopped going there. **[Interviewer: Why did you go there?]** Because you can wash your car for R5. [Benson]

To assume that xenophobic tendencies are not addressed at an official level would be wrong. As early as 1998 the South African Human Rights Commission (SHRC) launched the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign. In 2001 the Government hosted the Third World Congress on Racism. President Thabo Mbeki has also on many occasions spoken out against xenophobia. There is, however, one alarming tendency namely the increasing adherence to stereotypes and xenophobic tendencies by Government officials.

As mentioned before in '*Second encounter: The new South African Government*', some of the research participants experienced difficulties in their interaction with Government officials. Hospice, for example, described how his residency application papers were 'mislaid' and that he was asked for bribes to expedite his application process. He felt this had more to do with the fact that he was a black foreigner than with possible bureaucratic ineptitude.

Xenophobic tendencies among Government officials were the theme of a SHRC conference in the Gauteng Province in 2005. An SABC news item on 18 August 2005 stated: *"Xenophobia has taken on institutional proportions, with civil service officials mirroring the stereotypes of society...negative perceptions about immigrants with and without the proper documents especially those from the African continent. Xenophobia is wide spread in South Africa, with between 60% and 70% of the population having expressed a deep intolerance toward foreign nationals. These include immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. According to the Human Rights Commission (SHRC), the face of xenophobia is changing. Zonke Majodina, the deputy commissioner, said: "In the past*

*people attacked and killed in some instances, but now it's more verbal ... also on an official level: where foreigners find it difficult to access services from government officials."*

The research participants felt that their position as outsiders was compromised by their visibility, i.e. the fact that they looked foreign. However hard they tried, they could not 'disappear' among the local population. Note how Wanjiru and Nicole perceived their visibility:

I am reminded of it every day that I am not South African. [...] [It is also a physical thing]. I look at someone, they look at me and they know...you know, I am walking down the street and I look at someone, saying that's a Kenyan...you know...and they walk down too, look and say you're not South African. You know, I go to the flea market, buy something and they say something...something that reminds me of ...in a sense, you know, reminds me of being Kenyan and not being South African. [...] You know, like a Japanese [sic] can tell a Chinese from a Japanese...I can tell a Congolese from a South African. They can tell that I am not South African. So you have that experience where you go to the flea market to buy something and immediately they say something to remind you...maybe unconsciously...they didn't mean to remind you...but they said something that remind you that you are not South African. [Wanjiru]

I stand out [...] maybe because of my height. In Burundi I am quite average. I am thinking mannerisms, yes some people can pick it up quickly, like I can go in the cafeteria they say oh, she is not from here it is probably because of the weight and the way I am speaking, they say I am different. [Nicole]

Some of the research participants tried to change their appearance in order to fit in. Jean, for example braided her hair in a similar way many black South African women do instead of straightening it as is common practice among fashionable women in Nairobi. Hospice, as I have mentioned before, attended elocution lessons to neutralise his accent. But somehow it was never enough. In this respect I find the following remark by the Comaroffs (2001:646) applicable: *"In a parodic perversion of the past, they are marked ineluctably by skin colour and 'native' culture. This is most dramatically revealed, as such things often are, at moments of mistaken identity – when South Africans are themselves thought to be outsiders and treated accordingly. Like the national volleyball star, apprehended by police because she looked too dark, or the son of a former exile, arrested eight times over the past few years because his 'facial structure' and accent marked him as foreign".*

Crush and McDonald (2002:7) confirm that high levels of intolerance continue to exist in South African society and that outsiders from other African countries bear the brunt. Within this context, Crush (2001:22) refers to a report of the South African Human Rights

Commission in which a detainee at a deportation centre remarks: *"It is clear that being a black foreigner...is no protection from racism, especially if you are from a country north of South Africa's neighbouring states. Instead, black foreigners from these countries can expect to experience the same levels of abuse, discrimination and stereotyping endured by black aliens in other parts of the world"* (Crush 2001:22).

[...] it is hard to explain this [...] in Kenya the concept of race is not something you grow up with. My first encounter with race was when I went to Namibia and I...I couldn't...I couldn't understand it. It took me like three years to finally begin to understand race, because it is not...it is not...it is not a discourse of discussion in Kenya. And that does not mean there are no racist people in Kenya...there are both racist blacks and racist whites...you know..., that's not part of our everyday life. [Wanjiru]

The stereotypes are familiar; such as those pertaining to criminality, corruption and dependence on an already stressed social system. Already present in the public mind, Mattes et al (2000:7-8) remark that these perceptions are perpetuated by the media and officialdom. Pauw and Petrus (2003:175) concur in respect of the media's role in furthering stereotypes. But they also point out that some media take a stance against xenophobia and stereotyping, sometimes even criticising official immigration policy.

According to Pauw and Petrus (2003:172) the word xenophobia in popular usage, refers to a fear of unknown people or groups. In anthropological terms, it is studied as a socio-psychological phenomenon. The authors (2003:175) also mention a report in an Afrikaans newspaper in which the disheartened writer conveyed how shocked he was at the naked hostility and hatred towards foreigners of all categories by particularly black South Africans. The reporter thought that these were not xenophobic tendencies but rather racism.

It is difficult to extend the notion of Thornton's post-Apartheid condition to grassroots level, as Thornton himself (2005:24) in a later work remarks: *"...historical forces have clearly left their mark, especially on the macro-social structures... but these facts are not up to the task of explaining political action or concepts"* at a local level. Xenophobia, intolerance, racism, 'othering' are talked about and acquire impetus at the local level albeit not necessarily in specific terms.



However, 'to have suffered' does not necessarily earn respect. Some of the research participants harboured a perception that "the other" subscribed to a victim consciousness and are caught-up in the past.

The research participants, who were recruited in London, had as mentioned before, the highest respect for their former boss. They were generally disrespectful towards Xhosa people but in this case it did not matter. He was perceived as a protector and somebody who understood and respected them in turn.

We could not trust anyone [...] especially South Africans because you feared...but you know who we would turn to for advice, my boss who was Xhosa, a black South African. You could tell him anything and know that it will stay there and he would give good advice and all that. So there is one overall, the whole idea is looking at travels, I mean he was out of this country for a long time. I think that helps when you work outside of South Africa for three years. So I think they need to be exposed to the rest of Africa in particular. [Joan]

It is the complaining and this and that, for me it is a waste of time [...] And I say, no, I do understand the political part of it, but the victim, the victim consciousness I don't understand it. I don't accept it. I think you should take charge of your life. Move out of there, the victim consciousness. [Hospice]

black people, on the other hand, the only discussion they want to engage in is [sic] how they have been the victims. I think that is it...I don't know. But I think...do you think that...the influx of more African professionals...would probably help [...] I don't know, because I don't think it has helped very much in America...I don't. [Wanjiru]

The research participants indicated that black South African's harboured a perception that foreigners were reaping the rewards of 'the struggle' against apartheid.

And I think [there is] also...not jealousy ... but anger at the fact that we were busy hiding, we had no time to go to school. These people were waiting, you know, for us to finish the struggle. I will probably do the same. Here we are all these years, struggling, struggling and then these Africans just wait...and now when things are smooth sailing here come these black people from the rest of Africa to work in a peaceful environment, now they are coming to take the reward we fought for. You know, I think, that's more like it. [Joan]

You know, what I have noticed here in South Africa, the racism here is different than the racism in Europe. [...] In Europe, once you have reached a certain standard of living, racism is not there anymore. Like here, it is more a matter of colour. You can have as much money as you want but...Yes that is my impression. I think it is more like America. [Nicole].

### 4.3.5 Race

'Race' or racial stereotyping also appeared in a sort of hierarchical ordering of 'blacks' 'whites' and 'coloureds'. These perceptions are elaborated on in the following chapter therefore a few examples will suffice.

[...]We are talking about the coloured people, I know they are called the mixed race or whatever, but they tend to be very, very friendly. They are more open and enquire about you. I tell you, you look at black people, and you see half the problems. If you have been away, they say like 'oh you are back'. But you can see they are not truly excited to see you back, you know. But it is definitely the issue of manners; sometimes I think they are getting worse. And it's repeated, over and over. White people, they are great. [Joan]

South Africa is very diverse. I have a friend who is white, another who is coloured another one who is black, I think if only it was a factor of let's say coloured, it would be easier, but now it's like when I go out with a coloured it is a coloured thing. white, black, people... here it is more difficult, it is like you have to be different every time it is not like let's enjoy it, you know, I think that is why it is difficult to be a part of South Africa. [Nicole]

[...] the black community is much more difficult, because ...there is more effort on my side...on my part to make it work, you know, there is more, you know, there is more investment of energy [...]...in fact, Afrikaans people, for me...they move faster [...] my experience is, either he is there or he is not there, you know, there is not a middle path. Ah...the English side is more polite, there is more politeness and more reserve...oh and then they get to know [you] and they get to know, oh yeah...that's what...ah...So, in terms of Afrikaans people, I communicate faster, quicker than the English people [...]South African society is hierarchical, it's very hierarchical, yeah, it is. Very clearly defined...from both sides, black and white...yeah. [Hospice]

Ah...Cape coloureds are also like something that was really difficult like to get my mind around. Because the whole thing of being a coloured person...I did not know anything like that. [In Kenya when] they are there, we call them half-casts, point five (.5) or whatever and they are a mixed race. They are...their parents are...one parent is black the other is white. So we have those, yes. But, for us, they are not coloured, they are just mixed race, point five. [The perception is that there are gradients of colour] ...so the lighter skinned you are the sort of the better you are. You have that also with the Indian caste system, the lighter skinned you are the more superior you are. So, that's...that's a more, that's a newish thing, I think, as far as I know, it did not use to be like that. [...] but this...I don't know...this mixture of everything... it took quite a while to get my head around. And they are also...like also...ah...yeah, maybe if you are white they might be more of your friends than if you are black. You get this two types of coloureds, you get those ones who, you know, they are like yeah black brotherhood and let's embrace our blackness, but ah...then you get the ones who are you know, they are like white Africans. [Jean]

It would seem that this positioning depended on personal interaction and the perceived positive or negative nature of these encounters. However, the spectre of Thornton's 'post-Apartheid condition' appears almost unexpectedly in the guise of former apartheid racial categorisations.

#### 4.4 MAKING SENSE OF 'THE OTHER'

The reasons for 'the othering' of black African immigrants and migrants do not take into account the root causes of the problem. It is all very well to say 'South Africans feel threatened' but as Crush (2000:114) remarks, South Africans are certainly not unique in their attitudes towards foreigners. Based on the research participants' narratives, I would like to examine here how perceptions of 'the other' might originate and be perpetuated. Robert Thornton's (2005) examination of the dynamics underlying local level politics in South Africa offers one plausible explanation, whilst Marianne Gullestad's discussion of 'othering' in Norway, provides another interesting perspective.

Thornton (2005:23,24) perceives the local political level at which individuals make decisions as separate from the broader national political level although the latter certainly informs the first. What really matters to people at the local level is *their politics*. At this level, daily political dialogue consists of four fundamental and recurring concepts or principles i.e. suffering, jealousy, respect and equality. The relationship between the respective concepts or principles creates a specific system of meaning and shapes social values (Thornton 2005:24).

I suggest the principles of equality, respect, suffering and jealousy may be applied to the actions and interactions of African immigrants and native South Africans separately and jointly. Just as in Thornton's villages or informal locations, the African immigrant or the native South African in an office setting or any other location for that matter, could not care less about the company's or the State's regulations and laws. For them it is about acquiring or relinquishing socio-economic power. The African stranger and the native South African may share the fundamentals of political dialogue at a local political level but they adhere to different systems of meaning.

For example, the first principle, equality, is common to and predominant in African political systems. It rests on the notion that all members of a community are equivalent as human beings or as brothers and sisters, i.e. the notion of a brotherhood (Thornton 2005:25) - but it is not quite how the research participants perceived it:

[...] it is a constant reminder that you think you need to fit into a certain group which you don't really, you know [belong to]...a person calling you 'brother' when you feel you have nothing in common [...] How can you be somebody's brother when you don't even know anything about the person? You don't know what the values are. [Hospice]

I thought...you know, South Africa is still a part of Africa, so I am gonna still get a lot of that African...sort of brotherhood and connection. You know, at home, when you meet a stranger or persons who are Kenyan, we really, really go out of our way to make them feel at home. You can literally meet someone on the street and take them home for supper[...] So I was expecting that sort of thing here, I mean, I was not expecting a big reception at the airport and all these people coming home and come to my house ...[Jean]

The notion of an African brotherhood? That is nonsense! A comment from me – it is bullshit! An African brotherhood exists in their [South Africans] own minds. [Fred]

The second principle, respect can, according to Thornton (2005:25,26) be equated with virtue or distinction. It is recognition of somebody's status, his or her personal charisma or spiritual power. However, those with perceived wealth and power are not necessarily respected or empowered. Note how 'respect' becomes a two-sided sword in Fred's comment below. On the one hand he believed South Africans abused (disrespected) his status as a foreigner but on the other he is disrespectful towards South Africans because they portray a false image of wealth.

...now it is a pattern; it falls back on the whole thing of xenophobia. They are more than happy to come and spend my money, whatever, but they will never invite me to their home for two reasons, one they are seeing me as a foreigner working in their country, the perception being you have everything, you can afford to feed us, it does not matter, and two, and this is typical, especially of the black South Africans, the image they portray to the outside world comes from the lifestyle that they lead and the actual reality. When you go to their house, it is two different things. So they will be driving flashy-flashy cars and flashing money, you go to their house they barely have anything in their house. [Fred]

The third principle, suffering, appeared in the perception among the research participants that black South Africans suffered in their struggle for freedom during apartheid. Hospice's remark below illustrates the point. It is also through this principle, I believe, that black

South Africans claim a certain commonality and entitlement as Thornton (2005:26) remarks: *“Those who suffer most achieve respect, while those who manage to transcend their suffering are held to possess special virtue or power (amandla)”*.

[...] People don't even know each other; they just group and start talking because they think they have something in common. They were part of the struggle. Okay, when they start this kind of discussion, how do I fit in? I don't understand it. I can make jokes out of things ...and then they get very upset. They get very upset because you know, it is very serious. In one of the [MBA] classes we were doing a case study on Darfur in Sudan, and then [this one person] was very upset because it reminds him of the struggle. So he was talking and he said: 'comrades...' I just could not stop. I just laughed and laughed and laughed my heart out. He was not too impressed with me... [Hospice]

The last principle, which Thornton (2005:26) calls *“the evil within”* is jealousy. Jealousy intersects with all the other principles. It is not easily controlled at the local political level because people often question the principle of equivalence and 'unexplained distinction'. The research participants felt, for example, that black South Africans were angered that foreigners were reaping the rewards of the struggle against apartheid. Jealousy is fed by gossip and concealed (or sometimes overt) threats. Because jealousy can easily spin out of control it can lead to anger and violence and present a real threat to socio-political order. Many perceptions and opinions in respect of African immigrants are fuelled by gossip. The sometimes physical backlash against foreigners is a familiar occurrence in South Africa. The mere threat of violence or antagonism seemed to have been enough in the case of Benson who stopped going to the car wash in Gugulethu and Wanjiru who decided to keep quiet during her taxi ride rather than being identified as foreign.

Marianne Gullestad (2002:46), in the same vein as Thornton, highlights the role of cultural boundaries and the *“role played by the power to categorize others”*. She touches on similar concepts to those put forward by Thornton. Two concepts in her argument, 'equality' or *'likhet'* and 'decency' or *'anstendighet'* are of particular relevance here.

Gullestad's notion of *'likhet'* meaning likeness, similarity, identity or sameness in Norwegian is similar to Thornton's equivalence although she equates it with 'equality'. Thornton (2005:25) argues that equality is perhaps more a liberal bureaucratic-democratic notion, but this is not what Gullestad means. She points out that people must *“consider themselves more or less the same to feel of equal value...in order to have their desired identities confirmed, people need relevant others who are willing to recognize and support*

them" (Gullestad 2002:46,47). The concept of "*likhet*" is linked to other concepts such as 'fitting-in together' or 'sharing the same ideas'. For Gullestad these concepts firmly set the boundaries of inclusion since commonality takes precedence over difference. An interesting perspective offered by Gullestad (2002:51) is that even though people may intend to seek commonality with strangers, "*the interpretive frames may still continue to anger and distance. Such frames are not accidental ornaments but intrinsic parts of any argumentation. Talking about the relationship...means that a specific frame of reference is applied, constructing a difference, which then has to be bridged*".

Gullestad (2002:46) discusses how elite groups in Norway employed egalitarianism (equivalence) towards immigrants. Norwegian immigrants experience similar problems to African immigrants in South Africa. Thornton presents his model within a specific context but it can be argued that equivalence, within the context of autochthony, can become an effective tool in a culture of exclusion. Gullestad mentions that in Norway, immigration issues highlight '*the ethnic subtext in the imagining of the nation*'. It cannot be successfully argued that the rise of black nationalism in South Africa is a direct result of the influx of African immigrants. The process is much too dynamic. But it can be argued that African immigration is perceived as a threat at the local level (or the discursive level as Gullestad calls it) and that in the very least it has contributed to a 'closing of ranks'.

Thornton's and Gullestad's frames of meaning or interpretation can most definitely be extended to include perceptions and stereotypes held by African immigrants about South Africans. Through the lens of equivalence the research participants offered a unique perspective of 'the other' as Fred's remark illustrates:

My biggest disappointment about the black South Africans today is that people are moving quicker than quick from the township environment and go and set up base elsewhere in the suburbs and affluent areas and whenever he wants to have some fun and a private life he goes back to the township, have his beer and socialise and get back in his car and go away. So, the typical township child growing up today, who is his role model? That is the sort of person. That person is not available to even talk about in terms of charting their course in terms of where they want to go [...]. There is a big gap and we keep blaming and say, where is the social structure? But it is created by the very people who have moved out of this area.

[...]If I can adopt one child, and let that child grow up as part of my own and give them the same love and things that I am giving my own children, he will be a better South African, he will be able to contribute more than they can in the situation they are currently living in. [Fred]

In order to categorise 'the other', the research participants subscribed to principles of imagined sameness. In their case 'they' (read: 'we') are black, educated and foreign. Throughout their narratives they also emphasised their Africanness and their spirit of ubuntu. The research participants made a clear distinction between themselves and other migrant or immigrant categories such as illegal immigrants or refugees. In their own eyes, they seem to constitute an elite group although they were clearly categorised by native South Africans as outsiders.

By virtue of their perceived elite status, the research participants defined clear categories of 'us' and 'them' and the result is a sort of upside down host-guest relationship. Gullestad (2002:54) writes that in Norway, the relationship between native Norwegians and immigrants is often compared to "*a host receiving guests in his home*". 'The guest' and 'the host' in most cultures have certain obligations and are expected to adhere to certain rules. In a metaphorical localised scenario the host must be thankful to the guest for his support during the anti-Apartheid struggle; he must allow the better educated guest to help him overcome the obstacles of the past brought on by isolation; he must not emphasise the guest difference but rather celebrate their communality as Africans; he must allow the guest to help him to become more African, more warm-hearted, *et cetera*. Generally, in a host-guest relationship, the guest would not criticise the host; the host would have a certain right to set certain rules and to control resources; the guest would appreciate the hospitality extended to him; the guest would not emphasise his difference; the guest would not ridicule the host's 'suffering'; the guest would adhere to the principles of equivalence; the guest would not be jealous, *et cetera*.

Similar to Gullestad's (2002:54) ethnic boundary between Norwegians and immigrants, the boundary between immigrant and native South African is a "*relation of power*". But this power relationship strikes a fine balance as the (perceived) uninvited guest can easily become an intruder and /or and enemy (Gullestad 2002:55). In turn it could, as Thornton postulated, lead to exile.

Gullestad's second concept, i.e. decency would perhaps find a comfortable home with Thornton's notion of 'respect' although it somewhat broadens its definition. The concept of 'decency' might be equally applicable in perceptions of South Africans about African immigrants but in this case it follows on from the research participants' elitist positioning. It

also provides a framework to interpret a specific stereotype about South Africans i.e. that they are sexually promiscuous and permissive as the following excerpts illustrate.

It is more permissive, definitely more permissive. I find black men here have very little respect for women. They don't respect your boundaries and your space and they have no respect for even economic or social boundaries. So you go to a gas station and the petrol pump attendant will try and chat you up and ask for your number and say he wants to pay lobola...or the watchman or the street guard, or you know, anyone, as long as you are a woman they will try and hit on you. I find that very offensive. It is very unusual. You definitely don't get that at home. Your gardener is not gonna knock on your door after he has finished cutting the grass and say, you know, so, would you like to go for a drink. It is just not done, but here it is. Some of the black women I have talked to, they treat such behaviour casually...they think of...marriage as not a problem...you just rush your kid home to your mother.

A lot of women have their children raised by their grandparents. Their own mothers actually. To me that is just ah...unusual. To me, you get pregnant, you have a child, you not gonna dump it on your mum [...]. So, yeah, it is a very permissive society. And I...I found that ah...it makes us also become...more ah...less relaxed about our morals as well because we are all so young and also we are separated from our very conservative society. I mean, there are no aunts or uncles to cover, if you like...you know, to see you or censure you or whatever ... [Jean]

[...] there are a lot of single parents in South Africa today, most of them live in the black community and I have never understood why. You find somebody who is married, but then he says you know I have a 24 year old, and when you look at him he is about forty. You've got a 24 year old, you must have had it when you were very young, and so there is a lot of that. We don't have that. We were brought up and reared and that have been handed down across the generations, we are very strong like that, very conservative. People who have a child at a tender age and just go out and have sex [...] it is determined by marriage. It is happening more and more now that you get single pregnancy and that is what I find happens here [...] quite a bit. [Fred]

Judith agreed with Fred. She thought that the South African Government's child grants contributed to single parenthood. What shocked her most however, was the divorce rate in South Africa. She also emphasised that Kenya was a very conservative society and that she found social behaviour such as kissing in public (by mainly white people) and revealing clothes problematic. Homosexuality was also not acceptable. She was most concerned about how she could shield her children from permissiveness.

For Gullestad (2002:57) the binary opposition of decency ('*anstendighet*') is 'indecent'. She argues that in the Norwegian language, the words are associated with sexual morals and the 'suggestion' of "*an overwhelming desire which needs to be tamed*". Those who are



considered outsiders are perceived as not being able to control these feelings whilst the opposite is true for the elite. Gullestad (2002:58) presents 'decency' and 'indecent' as a social model to interpret the feelings of native Norwegians and immigrants. However, this model can certainly be extended to interpret how research participants as an imagined elite group feel about South Africans. The stereotype of immorality may be about moral values on the surface but it in effect becomes a metaphor denoting inherent disrespect and inequality ('inequivalence').

The phenomenon of the African immigrant challenges the notions of equivalence, suffering and respect. Because he is an outsider he has not earned respect. He cannot be equivalent to native South Africans because he does not have anything in common with them and, to quote Thornton (2005:26), "*he thinks he is better*" Not even his Africanness makes him acceptable. He does not understand the concept of suffering because he has not suffered 'with' South Africans. He is the subject of xenophobia, intolerance and racism. Sometimes he is the object of violence.

You know it is like the [soccer] cup feature, there is always somebody better than the other. You can't all be the same. And for them [black South Africans] I mean, it cannot be the blacks, it cannot be the whites, because already, society has made it that some groups are better, they are already justified, so they have to find another victim, to go below them and that is the foreigners. [Joan]

The dynamics of Thornton's principles may explain why, in the encounter of the African stranger and the native South African is contained in two differing perceptions of African belonging. There are, as Thornton (2005:26) suggests: "*definable differences – specifically cultural differences - for political thought and action in local-level African politics*".

Consider a further example. The research participants were amazed that locals could accuse them of not understanding Africa or the African way. This was confirmed in informal discussions with black South Africans. At the same time, the research participants accused South African natives of lacking the warmth of Africans and that they paid lip service to the notion of *ubuntu*. These may infer differing perceptions of Africa but it is in fact two sides of the same coin.

I was at a meeting the other day with some South Africans who were black. They are like, how do you reconcile, you think you [have] ID cards but you don't understand a thing, because you don't understand the value of being an African, the African culture, and how it [applies] on what happens today. [Hospice]

They always talk about *ubuntu* and what that means. They don't have that Africanness, you know, type of...you know, warmth and accommodation and welcoming strangers. They don't have it, so I tried to read The Covenant to try to understand it. But it is like, you know, you can't...maybe they are just not exposed enough sort of, or they also don't know why they are the way they are or they don't even remember what it used to be like. So...you can't really have this kind of conversation with...quite a few of them, because they just don't know. And also, they themselves are not interested. So I just read a few books and tried to talk to a few people and they...just...yeah...And then I did not want to after that... [Jean].

One time I said, you know what, we have had two deaths at the office, a child and somebody's mother. I said, the culture where I come from, at the office, we get together, put in something, make some kitty and give that as soon as possible. [Here] I don't see anybody do this, why? They said we don't have that here, used to have it. It is something called *ubuntu* or whatever. Then somebody said that's a good idea, let's revive this *ubuntu* and physically give the money to the relatives. And they had a staff meeting and somewhere along the list they said something in Xhosa or Zulu, I don't know the language they were talking in. I said, hey, I don't know what you are saying; maybe if you were speaking Swahili I would understand exactly what you are saying. Nothing...there is a couple of lessons like this, one is our African brothers do not necessarily accommodate you. There are guys who generally come up to you [...] and there are guys who outright will always ignore you completely. [Fred]

But what does *ubuntu* mean? It stands for a common African humanity and equality and is rooted in the community. If jealousy and disrespect are taken as negative values of an individual nature, then the community is the antithesis in that it strives for balance and equivalence. Should individuals transgress the boundaries set by *ubuntu* and the community there are, according to Thornton (2005:29) one of two options: i.e. exit or exile: *"The leader exits while the criminal is exiled: Both leave the community. They leave the community that is constituted as a group of equals who 'respect' one another and whose jealousy is limited by the equality of results and distribution of goods. This act also re-defines the political community as a group exclusive of those of whom one is jealous, and those who are not respected or who have no claim to respect"*.

This is perhaps the heart of the problem in that the African immigrant and the native South African are equally rooted in Africa but adhere to different systems of meaning at a local level. Consider within this context Fred's comment:

[...] I think, having lived in a community from a Kenyan perspective where we did not come back from this apartheid or whatever the colonialists left forty years ago and there is no memory of that [in terms of] where we are today. I think there is a lot

we can share both ways. But they [South Africans] have maybe a lot more to learn from us ... [Fred]

What is there to learn? The research participants never entertained the notion that they were not still part of their local communities, so is it perhaps possible not to exit the community when one achieves a certain skills level or distinction? In South Africa this does not happen at local political level. Furthermore, at this level the African immigrant is not perceived as adding value to the community and is exiled... *“The 'exiles' may continue to live in the local communities, but are ostracized and isolated, frequently living in marginal spaces...”* (Thornton 2005:30).

#### 4.4.1 Making sense of place

So what is one to make of the encounter between the research participants and their host country South Africa? Here then are individuals who arrived in the country with optimism and expected to be welcomed with open arms. However, they encountered deep-seated and enduring hostility at all levels. Why would a government that preaches an African Renaissance be xenophobic? Why would the people of the country vilify African foreigners and demand that they are send back to their home countries?

If I were to highlight within the context of this study, the most important aspect in the encounter between the research participants and the host country it is without question the powerful boundaries of exclusion. The determinants of these boundaries are deeply embedded in South Africa's immigration discourse and were present at every level of contact between the research participants, the South African Government and related institutions and the South African people. Once again, also, history played a role. As highlighted above, Landau (2004), Crush (2000; 2001), Peberdy (2002) and many others emphasised the different dynamics of South Africa's immigration discourse and in due course some of these also appeared in the research participants' accounts of their interactions with South Africans.

These accounts provided a micro-perspective of what day-to-day living was like. Their narratives recounted how the individual research participants were looking forward to come to the proverbial land of milk and honey, the land of the Rainbow Nation where there would be ample opportunity to advance their careers. However, they were excluded at

every level, the most important being linguistic exclusion and South Africa's policy of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). The narratives further highlighted their disillusionment when they encountered jealousy, hostility and xenophobia at every level. They tried to rationalise this as a remnant of apartheid in the sense that South Africans never had the opportunities they had and subsequently fear the unknown, i.e. Africa and its people. If they were looking for a common humanity or a fellowship of Africans subscribing to the values of *ubuntu* it was not there.

I would like to suggest here that boundaries of exclusion are based on inherent rules of belonging and thus the inherent link between identity and place. Verena Stolcke (1995:1) says that humans are predisposed to reject strangers based on perceptions of cultural difference and the boundedness of cultures. I agree here with Stolcke's (1995:1) remark that the tension between foreigner and national is determined by "*a reified notion of bounded and distinct, localised nation to cultural identity and heritage that is employed to rationalise the call for restrictive immigration policies*". I have introduced this argument in this chapter with various examples from the research participants' narratives and literature. I shall now discuss the particular dynamics of South Africa's interaction with specifically foreign black Africans against this background.

There is nothing straightforward about the encounter between African foreigners and South Africans. For the African stranger is no innocent bystander. They arrive in a host-country, cloaked in the illusion of false unity, to paraphrase Thornton (1996:140). The remarkable thing about Africa, and it goes without saying, South Africa, is that there is not only a continuance between the structures of the colonies and that of the post-colonies but also a continuance of the underlying mindset, for example the idea of the state as sole custodian of the law, the truth and social life.

The Comaroffs (2001:631-632) argue that the postcolonial nation-state in Africa is historically unbalanced: "*a polythetic class of polities-in motion...it reveals, with harsh clarity, many of the contemporary obsessions of postcoloniality, many of the contradictions that confront the effort to make modernist polities in post-modern, neoliberal times. That effort, those obsessions, reach into diverse realms of collective being-in-the world: into the struggle to arrive at meaningful terms with which to construct a sense of belonging ... in circumstances that privilege difference...*"

Perhaps the question here is, to paraphrase Elizabeth Barrett-Browning, Africa, how do I love thee...let me count the ways of belonging... The Comaroff's (2001:635) caution against imagining the postcolonial African scenario as apocalyptic because such a perception does not allow for the complexity of globalisation. Africa has entered the era where the nation-state is in crisis. Subsequently it has opened the door to numerous other crises of which identity struggles occupy pride of place.

The connection between identity and place is no coincidence. In the research participants' narratives about Africa and their home countries it emerged as the predominant point of reference. In their encounters with South Africa and South Africans, it is also a central theme. Similarly in formal research reports such as the C.S Mott Project's Race and Ethnic Relations Barometer of June 2005 and various studies done by the South African Migration Project (SAMP).

If any of the research participants or South Africans were to be asked to classify this attachment to place, they might not choose 'autochthony', but if they did, it would be correct. For the attachment to 'the soil' or if you will 'place of birth' has emerged as one of the most important defining themes of identity struggles.

Within this context the Comaroff's (2001:635) remark: "*autochthony is implicit in many forms of identity, of course; it also attaches to places within places, parts within wholes*". The notion of *autochthony* resounds in Stolcke's (1995:4,9) reference to how *enracinement* or 'rootedness' has become part of the rhetoric of exclusion of the rightwing French politics. It shows how one of the basic principles of citizenship in the nation-state, *jus soli* became a focal point in a specific identity struggle. The Comaroffs (2001:648) also refer to an interesting article by Geschiere and Nyamnjoh about mobility and belonging in Africa. They argue that the roots of Africa's preoccupation with autochthony lie in a much deeper cultural and historical preoccupation with ethnic differences and that "*the increasing currency of slogans about autochtones versus allogènes can be seen as marking a new form of ethnicity*". The boundaries and categories defined by autochthony are vague and malleable. It is easy "to set the self against the other" or to "[change] swiftly between one other to another".

De Jongh (2006:13) cautions that issues such as belonging, identity and placement can result in "*contested and conflicting interpretations of space and place*" (ibid). This appears

to be the case in the meeting of African immigrant and native South African. However, the new forms of ethnicities which are developing in the positioning of autochtones and labeling of allogènes are deceptive. If autochthony is accepted as a central theme to identity struggles, what happens when, for example, 'African belonging' is claimed by two autochthonous groups or by different categories of people such as immigrants? Who is then the 'most African'? Who has a legitimate claim to Africanness, to the practice of *ubuntu*? Who are the true sons of the soil?

In a South Africa, faced with postmodern challenges, it appears that the principle of *jus soli* (birthplace) acquires its own dynamics once it moves beyond the realms of formal legislation. Furthermore, once *jus soli* combines with what Stolcke (2001:9) calls '*the most exclusive principle of citizenship*', i.e. *jus sanguinis* (descent) the rules of belonging are almost irrevocable and these rules feed directly into a culture of exclusion. South Africa's citizenship law, as embodied by the South African Citizenship Act, 1995 (Act 88 of 1995), is a five page amendment to the South African Citizenship Act of 1949. The new law of citizenship is in many respects similar to the apartheid era law and another example of how Thornton's post-apartheid condition manifests itself in the 'New South Africa'. Be it as it may, the law subscribes to the same principles (i.e. *jus soli*, *jus sanguinis* and naturalisation) as many European - and other nation-states.

How then does one create places and spaces of belonging amidst such tension? How, can the foreigner, to paraphrase Appadurai (2000:179) produce the inherently fragile social achievement that is locality? In the following section, I discuss spaces of belonging within the context of a specific place, Cape Town. I will elaborate on many of the themes and concepts explored in this chapter and will provide a glimpse of how the research participants lived in local communities.

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

Making sense of place entails a challenge which is complex and exhibited a multiplicity of historic processes. The legacy of Apartheid provides one such challenge to foreigners. The "post"-apartheid South African state and its residents have proved no more sympathetic to migrants from other African states.

Encounters with identity and linguistic membership are some of the barriers in addition to stereotyping, prejudice and apathy. In the employment arena migrants are challenged by fears of security of tenure and xenophobia. Eventually, security of place and a sense of belonging remain at large.

## CHAPTER 5

## WHEN SPACE BECOMES PLACE

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I intend to explore the different locales that the research participants have lived in. Their narratives were interesting in that they moved from a more generalised experience of 'here' as discussed in the previous chapter, to the more intimate specifics of space - and place making. I gathered from their accounts of their day-to-day lives a sense of impermanence. For each one of the research participants were anticipating to move on to another position in another country within the foreseeable future. Could they have meaningfully produced locality against an essential feature of their reality, namely mobility?

Appadurai (2002:179) who investigates how locality is realised in social forms such as neighbourhoods asks "*what can locality mean in a world where spatial localisation, quotidian interaction, and social scale are not always isomorphic?*" Although he (2002:51) does not negate the inherent stability of networks, place and space, he emphasises that "*these stabilities are everywhere shot through with the roof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move*" (Ibid).

Hannerz (1996:39) implicitly states that it is now "*possible for individuals to become constructed in quite unique ways, through particular sets of involvements and experiences*". Individuality is an inherent part of the domain of culture and is expressed in a cultural repertoire that is established through different jobs, mobility and cultural choices. Aspects of any given repertoire may be shared with other individuals or groups but the degree to which they are integrated to "*become a perspective, a self*" is up to the individual (Ibid).

Long gone are the days of 'the local' as a bounded locale, where only a privileged few crossed the boundary. Increasing interconnectivity brings the rest of the world right into an individual's locale (Hannerz 1996:26-29). The local represents an individual's sense of place but mobility adds another dimension and perhaps makes it more fluid. What are the



implications here for people such as the research participants? How does increasing connectivity impact on their homes, places of work and neighbourhoods where they live? In the following sections I shall examine the day-to-day reality of the research participants' lives as immigrants.

## 5.2 REALISING LOCALITY

It is through the individual that notions of 'the local' and 'the global' become meaningful and may be carried through to a greater collectivity (should one exist). 'The local' represents an individual's sense of place. It is the locale for everyday and face-to-face encounters. Perhaps here, among the numerous face-to-face encounters emerges the recognition that 'the local' is not independent but rather that it is here that individual frames of reference or habitats of meaning overlap (Hannerz 1996:26-29).

According to Hannerz (1996:49;22,25-26,69-70) complex contemporary culture is accentuated by an intersection of 'habitats of meaning' that can be produced by individuals or collectivities and 'circulated in social relationships'. To facilitate better understanding of this view, he identifies four organisational frames or frames of cultural process within which meaning and meaningful forms are produced and through which culture is managed either in a specific locale (the local) or universally (the global). These frames are: the state (i.e. the relationship between public institutions and subjects or citizens); the marketplace (i.e. commoditised culture); and movement (which he does not discuss) and more importantly, form of life. The latter covers the lived reality and circulation of meaning among individuals in, for example, households, workplaces and neighbourhoods. Of significance here is the manner in which people adapt to this reality and relationships of a close or more unregulated nature.

Increasingly, the habitats of meaning produced within the context of these four frames reach beyond 'the local'. Long gone are the days, as was mentioned above, of 'the local' as a bounded locale where only a privileged few crossed the boundary. Increasing interconnectivity brings the rest of the world right into an individual's locale (Hannerz 1996:26-29). Elaborating on this, he says *"the arrangements of personal interconnectedness between the local and the global are getting increasingly opaque. So many kinds of kinship, friendship, collegiality, business, pursuits of pleasure or struggles*

*for security now engage people in transnational contacts that we can never be sure in which habitats of meaning these can turn up, and have a peripheral or a central part*" (Hannerz 1996:29).

Although this model is set within creolisation theory, Hannerz moves away from the historical meaning of the term which was linked to recognised creole cultures in the New World plantation areas and its traditional link to language. He uses 'creolisation' in a more generic and unbounded manner, saying that creole culture is in effect a product of increasing diversity, interconnectedness and innovation in the global ecumene. "Creole culture' is set on a continuum along which *"people are differentially and somewhat complicatedly placed or on the move among different situations, mixing, observing each other and commenting on each other...the cultural processes of creolization are not merely a matter of a constant pressure from the center towards the periphery, but a more creative interplay"* (Hannerz 1996:68). Meaning and meaningful forms are, however, unevenly shaped by the different frames. This results in an unequal arrangement of culture along the continuum (Hannerz 1996:66-67,73).

In a similar fashion to Hannerz, Appadurai (2002:46) highlights the interactive aspect of the current era. He remarks that (2002:50): *"The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing centre - periphery models...Nor is it susceptible to simple models of push and pull (in terms of migration theory)"*. Appadurai proposes a basic analytical framework of what he calls (2002:50) *"deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors"*. The constructs he refers to are in effect different landscapes formed by the actions and interactions of different 'players' such as nation-states, diasporic communities, neighbourhoods, families, individuals, et cetera. He suggests (2002:51-53) five landscapes: ethnoscapas (i.e. people); technoscapas (i.e. global technology); finanscapas (i.e. global capital flow); mediascapas (i.e. the electronic distribution of information and the construction of a specific reality); and ideoscapas (i.e. ideological images).

It is the first of these landscapes, namely ethnoscapas that is of relevance at this point as it links with an essential feature of the research participants' reality, namely mobility. Ethnoscapas are in essence landscapes harbouring the reality or potential for human mobility.

Although not to the same extent as Hannerz or Appadurai, the notion that individuals use different frameworks or criteria to construct an identity profile or a “self”, is also a theme in the work of English-Lueck (2002:21) among the residents of Silicon Valley in the San Francisco Bay area.

English-Lueck (2002:122) suggests that identity is articulated in the day-to-day interactions of people. She further poses a number of thought-provoking questions, i.e. *“Which cultural boundaries make a difference within categories? Do they reflect different categories, or different domains of life? Are these differences expressed verbally? Are we conscious of those differences? Do these differences alter our behaviour as we act within and across boundaries?”*

Hannerz’ form of life frame, Appadurai’s ethnoscares and English-Lueck’s questions form a backdrop for the following discussion of the day-to-day reality of the informant’s lives as immigrants. It examines the contexts of that reality, i.e. the City of Cape Town and her neighbourhoods. It further looks at how meaning and social relationships are produced and perhaps extended beyond the confines of the city.

### 5.3 CAPE TOWN AND HER NEIGHBOURHOODS

The first day I arrived in Cape Town...I took ah...an early flight the day before, so when I came the next day, my lift was not at the airport and I took a shuttle and it dropped me here in Adderley Street and it was ah...I think it was a Sunday and it was quiet and I was like: “Huh! There is no life in this city!” And then I went to wherever I was staying and all I saw was white people. So I am thinking, I am supposed to be in Africa and...I am here...and all I see is white people. That was a shock to me because I was... it was so different, first of all to see a city so deserted on a week-end and to just see white people everywhere...and I am like: “oh okay”. So...so slowly at first getting used to it... but I have lived in Namibia so I knew...in terms of the reality of segregation, I sort of knew what to expect. But I hadn’t lived it, you know... [Wanjiru]

Wanjiru’s remark situates Cape Town as a city at the turn of the Apartheid era. So, what has changed? Did the demise of Apartheid alter the landscape of the city? What are the characteristics of Cape Town ‘the place’ in the new millennium? In late 2005, the then Executive Mayor of Cape Town, Ms Nomainda Mfeketo introduced the ‘Cape Town

*Welcomes You'* campaign. This is not a project aimed at visitors or tourists *per se*, but it was hoped that it would enhance their experience. Furthermore, the visitors or tourists the project was indirectly aiming at were not European or American but rather fellow Africans.

Based on a 5-point plan, the project hoped to change the attitudes of Capetonians towards foreign visitors and tourists, specifically those from Africa. Although it was positioned as a tourist initiative the project emanated from a recognised deep-seated and longstanding malaise in South Africa of which Cape Town society is a micro example, i.e. intolerance and xenophobic attitudes towards specifically African foreigners, whoever they may be. For the Mayoral office to initiate such a project, and for the country's Deputy President Phumzile Mhlambo-Ngcuka to officiate at the launch, it meant that the problem had escalated to such an extent that drastic action was called for. In November 2005, in an interview, Ms Mfeketo referred to Capetonians as "cold", "largely aloof", "unfriendly" and "unwelcoming". In her opening address at the launch of the campaign, the Deputy President remarked that Cape Town had lost its 2002 status as the world's most hospitable city..." *People...come to Cape Town and they are treated like nothing when they walk into the Waterfront. That's bad*" (Fredericks and Davids 2005:5).

For Wanjiru, who has lived in the City for more than ten years, the changes after 1994 are noteworthy but not really remarkable.

[...] the changes are tangible...I think...well actually I think things have changed a lot in terms of...both in terms of the situation changing but also in terms of myself changing. I think I feel more ah...even though Cape Town is not integrated, I feel there is more...more and more people are beginning to...sort of...tolerate each other a lot more and I can feel that. I remember when I first came to Cape Town, you know, it used to be...the city used to be really white, you'd go out and it is all white. And now I go to places and I see...I see...you know...there is more black people, there is more...but it also...it also differs a lot, depending on where you go. If you go to...to Observatory or some places here in town, you are likely to find ninety percent of the black people there are not South African. And they just sort of seem to gravitate towards each other...those that are not South Africans. [Wanjiru]

Without exception, all the research participants indicated that their expectations of Cape Town and what they were confronted with in reality were two completely different things. The hostility of some local residents became almost tangible. Mostly their narratives reflected a sense of loneliness and separateness borne out of their existence as strangers.

So I come to Cape Town and [...] eventually, I did get to meet a [...] lot of people[...] but they are nothing like, you know, people from the rest of the continent. They are very...not very hostile...actually they are hostile. They are very hostile. They are not warm and welcoming and friendly and, you know, they are very suspicious and like what exactly you are doing here, why did you come here and what are you doing in our country. [Wanjiru]

It is difficult... I mean, when you come from Kenya...where...you know, everybody go and say hi to their neighbour. Here it is like...you know, everybody is giving you that...well it is your problem attitude. [Judith]

Judith's remark links with perceptions that Capetonians lack a sense of 'neighbourliness' and that it is a clique-orientated society. These views are common among many strangers, whether they are immigrants or migrating South Africans. Jean and Wanjiru also missed the integrative aspect of community back home.

[...] just having people drop in, you know ... for a tea or a chat or for dinner or lunch. You don't need to make an appointment. It is like a very...ah...informal sort of set-up. And ah...it is not a big deal, whatever you have in your fridge, you take it out and you share. And ah...you know, and you can also just be driving in this area and I think, oh yeah, Joanne lives here or works here and I just drop in and say oh, I just came to say hi. People don't do that here or at least, I don't know people who do that here. And ah...so you miss that interaction and constant interaction with people. [Jean]

[...]I found this very strange [...] one thing that I really missed when I came to Cape Town is the sense of...you know the way life is in Nairobi, depending of course on where you grew up, you know if you going to need some salt [...] you don't need to know who lives down the road, you should know them anyway...you just go to their door....'hello, I need some salt' or 'I need a tomato'...that's very common. So now [here]...we don't, for example, have a...small culture and that kind of thing.

[...] A friend of mine who is white...white Norwegian, we were talking about it...and he lived in Cape Town, [...] he said he experienced exactly the same thing, that...Cape Town is very cliquish. People that went to school together, that went to Rondebosch hang out together, who [sic] went to Bishops [a well-known school in Cape Town] hang out together. It is very cliquish and it was interesting for me to hear it from a white person because, you know, the perception is always you'd probably speak to him because he is a white person [...] but he said it was not like that at all, even for him, because it was very cliquish so it was difficult for him to make friends. [Wanjiru]

In a comprehensive study among West African street vendors in New York City, Stoller and Tahmaseb McConatha (2001:662) established that loneliness, socio-cultural isolation and alienation from mainstream society influenced perceptions of social well-being. Based on available research, the authors highlight four interlinking factors which may influence well-being i.e. a sense of control; feelings of competence; subjective health; availability of

and satisfaction with social and emotional support. Recognising that immigration and social isolation are connected, Stoller *et al* (2001:662-663) further remark – *“Intensified by cultural difference, feelings of isolation from the larger sociocultural environment can have a significant impact on physical and psychological well-being. Isolation limits the range of activities and interactions in which people can participate....”*

Nwadiora (1996:123; cf. Stoller *et al* 2001:663) in an attempt to guide psychologists and related professionals towards culturally sensitive therapy, mentions *inter alia*: *“Loneliness and isolation from cultural peers and from American neighbors also may contribute to Africans’ stress, In African cultures neighbors interact frequently. It is not uncommon to stop by each others’ homes without prior notification”*.

Not all of the research participants have had the benefit of comparison such as in Wanjiru’s case, but even more recent arrivals such as Nicole still experienced a feeling of apartness, of being removed from Cape Town society. As mentioned above, some of the research participants, i.e. Benson, Joan and Nicole, were recruited and as such they did not have a choice of destinations and those who had a choice, such as Jean and Wanjiru, ended up in Cape Town by default. But once they had been living in the city for a while it was difficult to conceive living in their home countries again.

[...]Cape Town was not really a... choice, what happened was I went to the Consulate, I got a list of all universities in South Africa and I...I...I just went pick-a-pick [...] I sent an application to Pretoria, PE [Port Elizabeth] and to Cape Town. And ah...Cape Town responded first...and that’s why I came here [...]

[...] why I stayed is because partly ...for me is, first of all, the weather is good; I can go home at short notice. Cape Town is beautiful, I like the lifestyle, and you know your economy is not as bad as Kenya’s economy at the moment...it is not even the money. I was just talking to a friend of mine who is working in Kenya [...] and asked about job opportunities in her organisation and she told me the kind of salary I’d get and I’d probably be earning a better salary in Kenya. And there is no system ...you wake up in the morning and there is no water, you come home at night and there is no power. You know, it is just little things...inconveniences that make me stay outside the country [Wanjiru]

They [the company] then told me you had to go to Ghana to be Acting Managing Director. I would then go back to Kenya. Within two months I had to settle/organise all my activities and relocate to Cape Town, where the plan was to keep me here for two years and develop my other skills and then send me out as managing director, country manager, whatever, to other areas. And that is how I came in.

Fred used to visit Cape Town regularly on company business before he settled there. During this time he had contact with a number of people from the company's head office. These encounters were cordial and hospitable. However, once he had settled in Cape Town, the atmosphere became unreceptive. Because he had some contact with South Africa and Capetonians before, he expected a support structure of some sorts, but he realised upon arrival that he would have to fend for himself.

I was very innocent [...] I used to come down maybe four five times a year [...]. Again, you come in, do business; I would spend two days shopping. I would really be round the office environment and they handled me quite well. [Later] people were [different] and they were actually people whom I have been dealing with for a long time and there was not a problem. We met on a couple of occasions, quite frankly, conferences for example, when you sit with a group of people and they switch right off you. I find it rude and you do not think that it might have anything to do with your position. [Fred]

I arrived on a Thursday night at eleven o'clock. [...] the company sent a shuttle bus; the HR manager was there in the arrival hall. They sent me to the hotel, an apartment [...] I woke up the next morning and a car was delivered to me, they said okay, here's your car. But I did not know where the shops were, I did not know where to find what ... [Fred]

Thornton's (1996:154) post-1994 image of South Africa is of *"a country stretched as thin as a sheet over three points of power and wealth"*. These points, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town are not merely cities but city states with recognisable identities and loyalties..."*they mark the space around them and dominate their hinterlands which look to them with desire and anticipation, loathing and disdain...*". But in these cities, the ghost of Apartheid lingers in their geography, as Vigouroux's (1999:174) says in respect of Cape Town during the 1990's: *"Le système d'Apartheid a dessiné les contours géographiques et humains d'une ville à majorité blanche, qui en font encore maintenant une ville très européenne"*.

Be this as it may, the city is often perceived as a dream destination. Note Vigouroux (1999:173) description from an outsider's perspective: *"Au pied de l'océan Atlantique, Le Cap a toujours été une destination privilege pour tourists estrangers ou natiounaux, <Mother City>, la <ville mère> comme l'appellent les Sud Africains, rappelant l'époque des premiers colons blanc venus, par aventure ou nécessité, y construire une vie. Sa position géographique excentrée a contribue à faire du Cap une ville à part, où les habitants eux-mêmes se reconnaissent souvent plus <Cape Townians> que Suid-Africains"*.

Cape Town's landscape therefore remains remarkably unaltered in the post-Apartheid era. In fact, it presents at once an image of exceptional wealth as opposed to pockets of integration and desperate poverty. Not unlike English-Lueck's (2002:121) Silicon Valley, the post-Apartheid City of Cape Town encapsulates "*different categories of people, with finely nuanced shades of distinction....Heterogeneous groups live side by side, unable to form sealed enclaves and forced to interact in schools, workplaces, and in civic struggles. The groups mingle in public places – while shopping, learning...Most profoundly, the groups are not stable...the very basis for identity shifts like desert sands.*" The sites for these interactions are, generally speaking, located in suburbs and neighbourhoods.

In Appadurai's well-known essay on the production of locality, he applies (2000:a-b) the term neighbourhood in reference to "*the actually existing social forms in which locality....is realised*". For Appadurai (2002:g), the neighbourhood is a multiplex interpretative site. It is a life-world (2002:n) "*constituted by relatively stable associations, by relatively known and shared histories, and by collectively traversed and legible spaces and places*". He asserts that neighbourhoods are first a setting for human social action and interaction; and second, that the actions of the inhabitants of neighbourhoods can transcend the boundaries of a specific neighbourhood, thereby linking it to a larger reality. As a footnote, it should be noted that in post-Apartheid South Africa the memory of racially divided suburbs and neighbourhoods linger. The production of locality in the past and the present is interwoven with a political subtext. Here exists a continuum where segregation and integration form two opposing poles. Somewhere in the middle is a 'happy medium', a suburb or a neighbourhood, albeit still somewhat artificial, where diversity is a 'way of life'. Sometimes, certain suburbs and neighbourhoods, as mentioned below, emerge as localities where diversity is natural. But more often than not, these localities still struggle with what Appadurai (2000:h) calls its 'historically received context'. Furthermore, the nation-state is forever occupied with the 'production of its people' and 'the construction of its citizens'....."*In this new sort of world, the production of neighbourhoods increasingly occurs under conditions where the system of nation-states is the normative hinge for the production of both local and translocal activities*" (Appadurai 2000:k-l).

The research participants had to contend with the highly contested spaces and places contained within Cape Town's suburbs and neighbourhoods. In some respects, they were caught 'betwixt and between'. Somehow, and not unduly so, they expected suburbs and



neighbourhoods free of the presence of Apartheid. More often than not, they moved to and within places where race and other Apartheid divisions were still part of the local discourse. Even more so, they also had to deal with the local inhabitants of these places and spaces who were still trying to make sense of post-Apartheid challenges in the production of locality. Appadurai (2000:n) remarks: *“Neighbourhoods are ideally stages for their own self-production, a process that is fundamentally opposed to the imaginary of the nation-state, where neighbourhoods are designed to be instances and exemplars of a generalisable mode of belonging to a wider territorial imaginary”*.

Cape Town can be roughly divided into the: (i) City Bowl (e.g. Gardens, Tamboers Kloof, Bo-Kaap and De Waterkant); (ii) Atlantic seaboard (e.g. Sea Point, Fresnaye, Camps Bay, Clifton, Hout Bay); (iii) South Peninsula (e.g. Muizenberg, Simons Town, Kalk Bay, Fish Hoek); (iv) Southern suburbs (e.g. Rondebosch, Mowbray, Kenilworth, Constantia, Bergvliet, Bishops Court, Tokai); (v) Northern suburbs (Blaauwberg, Bellville, Parow, Platteklouf, Tyger Valley, Durbanville); (vi) Cape Flats (e.g. Mitchells Plain, Lavender Hill, Ravensmead, Phillipi); and (vii) townships (e.g. Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Langa, Nyanga). In between are numerous informal settlements and high density developments.

The City Bowl is really a curious mixture of spaces and places. Long Street is the main shopping and entertainment street which is perhaps best known for its bustling night life. Here can be found anything from second hand bookshops, ethnic restaurants, designer furniture and couture boutiques, traveling bureaus, backpacker lodges and boutique hotels. The street is flanked by art galleries, antique markets and most notably, the historical Greenmarket Square which houses an immense open-air African curios market. Here, on any given day, can be heard many of Africa's languages as the traders, mostly immigrants, go about their business. This spills over onto Long Street where it is not uncommon to brush shoulders with people in the traditional attire of far away African countries. At its very end, Long Street connects with Kloof Street which offers much of the same, but is more of an upmarket version and although it is vibrant in its own right, it lacks the colourfulness of Long Street. It is popular among European tourists and visitors from up country and more affluent African and European foreigners. Here, and in Long Street, one often hears the car guards conversing in Congolese French. Similar to Main Street in Sea Point, these streets are mesmerizing and sooner or later most people will spend some time here, albeit sometimes fleetingly.

Given the area's cosmopolitan air, one would expect people such as the research participants to frequent the area on a regular basis. However, their usage of the area appeared to be more work related. Long Street is close to some of the research participants' places of work and it is not unusual for them to spend lunchtime in one of the coffee shops or to browse through some of the bookshops or boutiques.

Nicole did not visit Greenmarket Square at all. She preferred the boutiques along the main street although she felt that the staff in these shops treated black foreigners atrociously. She related one incident where a white friend from the United Kingdom accompanied her to a clothes boutique. The salesperson, unaware that they were together, ignored Nicole's questions in favour of the other woman. When the salesperson realised they were together, her demeanor changed completely and she became more polite towards Nicole.

Benson cultivated a relationship with a trader on Greenmarket Square. The man was from Kenya and he specialised in African masks. During the interviews Benson expressed a keen interest in material culture from Africa. His house was also decorated with such items.

All the research participants recognised the Square as a place where traders from Africa congregate. But with the exception of Benson, they dismissed the area as a place they would visit to be among members of the foreign African community.

I know all those things [at Greenmarket Square]...and now here they have increased the price, so why would I bother [to go there]. I know where to get them [things]. When I am home, I go to the market. [Judith]

The research participants did not recognise a larger community of African foreigners or even a homogenous Kenyan community *per se*. For them there was a clear distinction between different classes of foreigners, i.e. professional migrants, the traders on Greenmarket Square and refugees.

[...] I think there are different Kenyan communities in Cape Town. Not the refugees...there is a big community that trades in the market and then there is a professional community. [Wanjiru]

This comment by Wanjiru also sets the tone for how the research participants perceived the sprawling townships surrounding Cape Town. The history of South Africa is deeply

embedded in the townships of Langa, Nyanga, Kayelitsha and Gugulethu. They are home to many South African migrants and also a recognised destination for foreign immigrants of all categories, a fact also highlighted by Vigouroux (1999:178-179). However, she also points out that the townships have a reputation for being dangerous and in many respects “segregated” and that some African immigrants therefore prefer “*les townships ‘métisses’ (coloured)*”. It must be pointed out here that the so-called ‘coloured townships’ never really featured in the research participants’ narratives. However, as has been evident from the discussion in the previous sections and also in the following section, the research participants favoured a certain racial rating system whereby coloured people were perceived as more tolerant towards foreigners.

The township as a place of danger or hostile area featured prominently in many narratives. Consider once again Benson’s account of how he was warned not to go to a certain car wash or Wanjiru’s initial reluctance to do research in the townships. And even later, when she knew her way around, she preferred to keep quiet in the taxi when her car broke down as she feared she might be identified as a foreigner. With the benefit of hindsight, a little more knowledge of the Xhosa language and more in-depth knowledge of the township environment through her HIV/AIDS research in township schools, she still felt excluded from the local black community.

[...] I have just learned to create...to forge this (sic) kind of relationships with different people and different levels and I do think that at the schools in which I work they...they overlook my...my being a foreigner. Just because of the way I approach it, you know, they... I go there and they greet me in Xhosa and I would respond in the little Xhosa that I know and then I say to them you now, unfortunately I don’t speak Xhosa and that ends the conversation...oh so where are you from....and I would say Kenya...you know, that kind of thing. So I don’t think that I am treated badly at all in the schools that I work in, no. [Wanjiru]

I can’t go and live in Gugulethu or...in Khayelitsha, you know, which is where most black people live, because...because...just by virtue of not speaking the language, you are lost there, you don’t belong and you are made to feel that you don’t belong. [...] If I have had to live in Gugulethu, maybe I would have left after my two years, you know [...] [Wanjiru]

An interesting feature in the narratives of Fred and Hospice was their perception of the townships as a place where people are in need of help. These views are obvious stereotypical constructions and thus an inherent part of the research participants’ discourse about “the other”.

We tried to move our maid from Gugulethu, to town, but it did not work out, because she was part of a social structure, no matter how far it is to town everyday. She was part of a social structure. [We tried to offer her a better life], but she was better off there because she felt at home. In town she had nobody. So she wanted to go back [...] obviously she does not want to move out of that environment because all her structure is there she supports it. But when you move beyond, beyond a certain level, you literally create your freedom, I think. [Hospice]

I feel, the ideal, the vision of that black Manager's Forum [at my place of work] would be to try and be role models for people who live in the townships, because [...] when you go back home, people say, you need to look at Fred, see that he went to school, he is a role model. These guys, the moment they come to a fantastic nice job, they buy a nice car, go and get a nice house and forget about that life. So, the poor people in the townships, the kids, have no role models. I would have thought the black Manager's Forum would want programmes to get people like us to go out on a weekend. [Fred]

The attitudes of the research participants in respect of the African traders on Greenmarket Square and the foreign immigrants and South Africans in the townships are inevitably linked to the role of class in identity construction. English-Lueck (2002:124) highlights this point when she says that class is also sometimes linked to professional identity and education. Bearing in mind the research participants' views on education discussed before, consider the following: *"The class system in the valley was repeatedly described not merely in terms of income but also as a two-tiered system of education, particularly by people in the higher tier. Those with even a few years of higher education had one set of expectations and a particular sense of self, viewing those with less, or a different kind of education, as utterly different"* (Ibid).

The Atlantic Seaboard has become the playground of the rich and well to do. The only suburb that represents the face of the "New South Africa" is perhaps Sea Point. The lower section of its principal road, Main Street, is a cornucopia of street markets, phone shops, brothels, ethnic restaurants and apartment buildings housing mostly African immigrants and some South Africans. Vigouroux (1999:178) in her research among West African migrants in Cape Town, noted a similar observation in respect of Sea Point: *"Il est difficile de dessiner une géographie urbaine générale de l'implantation des migrants africains francophones au Cap...qu'il ne'st pas opera, en ville, de regroupement significatif, par quartiers, des diverses communautés nationales, a l'exception peut-être de Sea Point..."*

After about two kilometres, Sea Point's Main Road suddenly becomes more upmarket. The hustle and bustle gives way to entrance controlled apartment buildings in leafy side

streets. Jewish matrons, other well-off locals, overseas visitors and film stars converge on exclusive boutiques, delicatessens and coffee shops. High up on the hill and right on the sea board are priceless penthouses, apartments and mansions with postcard views of the sea and Table Mountain. On summer evenings and week-ends immigrants and locals compete for space on the boardwalk skirting the Atlantic Ocean. Sea Point has seen its share of crime, drugs and prostitution and local residents have united in a drive to stop those responsible who allegedly are the Nigerians. Says one white female resident:

Well, I think we have been somewhat successful in driving the Nigerians out. Thank God, they all seem to be moving to Parklands [Northern suburbs].

Sea Point is in fact home to a varied African immigrant community, many of whom select the suburb precisely for this reason and also for its proximity to the Victoria and Alfred (V&A) Waterfront. The latter is a sprawling upmarket indoor and outdoor shopping and entertainment complex. It is a popular shopping and meeting place for more affluent African and European immigrants. Many also have mailboxes at the local post office in the complex. The Waterfront is favoured by European and local tourists, the African diplomatic corps and other business and governmental visitors from Africa.

Perhaps the one outstanding characteristic of the V&A Waterfront is the fact that it is perceived as an integrated space. It is also favoured by Cape Town residents and other South African visitors. Some of the research participants indicated that they preferred the Waterfront because they felt less visible there. However, the Waterfront is a contested space, as much as one would prefer this idealistic picture of an integrated space where locals and foreigners of any given race, class and creed work and play together.

In a way, the Waterfront is a symbolic gateway and a bridge between South Africa's past and present. For it is here, at the Nelson Mandela Gateway, that ferry boats depart for Robben Island where anti-Apartheid activists were imprisoned. This is a destination of note for many South Africans of all colours as well as black people from all over who are somehow linked to the African Diaspora. Because the Waterfront is also a working harbour, it is here that the cruise ships anchor, offering wealthy European and American tourists their first glimpse of the "New South Africa". On any given day, the Waterfront is a heady mix of African-American film stars, overseas tourists, school children on field trips, coloured teenagers belonging to one of the gangs on the Cape Flats, locals doing shopping, up-country visitors, less well-off locals who can only afford to stare at the

passing parade, beggars from the city's homeless community and many more. The Waterfront is thus a place of convergence although people's reasons for being there are diverse and complex.

With the exception of Hospice, the other research participants did not habitually visit Sea Point. Upon his arrival in South Africa, Hospice initially rented an apartment in Sea Point. However, he soon moved to more affluent Bergvliet in the Northern suburbs. This suburb is situated in one of the prime wine growing regions in the country. Besides wine estates, there are also equestrian estates and small holdings. Many embassies also have residences there. There are upmarket shopping complexes, top restaurants, organic markets and excellent schools. The general perception of the area is that the residents are predominantly white and well-off.

Despite the fact that his son went to a local school in Bergvliet and his wife had a professional practice as a psychologist, Hospice said he felt increasingly isolated and visible in the Northern suburbs. He also found the cost of living quite expensive. The family sold their house in Bergvliet. The profit on the house allowed them to buy an expensive seaboard apartment in Sea Point. Hospice argued that the move was mainly based on economic reasons but he also mentioned that it was closer to the 'hub for foreigners in Cape Town', the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront. The family also had a mailbox there. Initially they settled down well in Sea Point but as in the case of many Sea Point residents, black and white alike, the general deterioration of the area and escalating crime became a stark reality. During this time, however, Hospice said he really tried to integrate into the community of black Capetonians, but to no avail. As in the case with all the other research participants, he listed the language as the most important barrier. However, with his adventurous white South African wife by his side, he also discovered that there were other inherent socio-cultural barriers.

I have just met this pastor and he could not be much part of the congregation, in these circles, here, because there is nothing that he can relate to. You have no idea what I am talking about, right now, because I have tried it. Go to an African restaurant where these guys [black South Africans] meet. [I did] I just wanted to get a feel for what it is. I did not make sense of the language.

[...] the African restaurants in town [...] there are a lot of Africans who go there; you want to communicate that's where you need to go, there are places where you need to visit. Don't sit in Hout Bay, thinking you are going to know anything about this kind of thing, because it just does not work. You need to circle into those places and

that is a lifestyle on its own. Even the loud music, that's a lifestyle on its own. If you don't like those things, it becomes a barrier, a block to penetrating the environment.

[...] they do [ostracise people] because then, then you don't belong anymore and therefore they can't understand us, they can't relate to us. You move to the other society...the other side, and therefore, unless you visit often and continue socialising, people then forget that you are part of them. I did try, a few times. But I just can't eat in some places, it just does not work. I mean, you know, it is just the whole thing, I mean, hygiene is something that is very...ah...you know, it is just the basics and you go to...ah...I have been to a...with Phil I went to this restaurant ... just wanted to investigate, because Phil always, you know, wants to explore things, and I am like, I can't eat here, I can't eat here, my system is so fragile, I can't, and, and...ah, I could not [meet] anybody unless I go to those places. [Hospice]

Hospice's next move was to a gated community in another expensive, predominantly white, Atlantic seaboard suburb, Hout Bay.

[...] this gentleman, a Xhosa at our office...I said, come and have coffee here, [...] and he said: "no, no, no, they don't accept black people in Hout Bay". It is his reaction, jokingly, but he said it three times. You know, there is something there. I am like, there are blacks that are living out there, come on, come... [Hospice]

This suburb is mixture of housing for commercial fishermen, expensive houses either freestanding or in security estates and equestrian small holdings. Caught in the middle is a sprawling and expanding township encompassing high density and informal housing. The township has long been a sore point for the mainly white residents of Hout Bay who would prefer to see it relocated. They perceive it as occupying valuable land and a source of crime and disease. The township residents on the other hand have had many clashes, some violent, with the local authority over basic services such as sewerage, electricity and water. Be it as it may, within the walled estates such as where Hospice lives, these problems are a world away. His reasons for moving to Hout Bay were mainly security concerns, an attractive business opportunity and the fact that there is a relatively large congregation of his church in Hout Bay.

For Fred and Judith, Joan, Benson and Nicole, the situation was completely different. They were either seconded to Cape Town, as in Fred's case, or in the case of the remaining three, recruited. The company they work for initially rented apartments for its foreign employees in a prestigious apartment complex right on the beach in the northern suburb of Blaauwberg Strand.

Capetonians refer to the Northern suburbs as the area beyond the '*boereworsgordyn*'. The suburb of Platteklouf supposedly marks the border of this fictitious land. This perception is based on a popular but enduring myth that these suburbs are home to the city's white Afrikaans-speaking residents. The area is further perceived as conservative and intolerant. As is the case with many myths, there is perhaps some element of truth. Note for example, how the Northern suburbs became the domain of 'the other' in the narratives of Hospice and Joan.

If you move from the Southern suburbs to the Northern suburbs it's a different culture...ah clearly [...] just look at, just look at South Africa [referring to Cape Town], I mean all the Afrikaans people are in the Northern suburbs. **[interviewer: "That's not true"]** ...mostly, mostly [...] Just go to the Southern suburbs, you will see the English people, go to Constantia, go to places. It is not only about District Six and black people and coloured people, it is also amongst the white people...ah, the amount of people who go to the northern...the Northern suburbs, completely different from the people who go to Southern suburbs. A friend of mine, who works for a magazine in Johannesburg, came and went to the Northern suburbs, stayed there, it's a... it's a different...it's a different...even walking in the street it is a different feel, have a different feel to it...ah, you know. [Hospice]

I have actually heard of stories whereby a black guy had moved into a white neighbourhood and there was uproar, a serious uproar. [...] Apparently the person was convinced by the house-owners association, they convinced him we are going to give you the profits you want to make. [We should be] stopping a black person moving into a white neighbourhood and this person had said no thank you he is moving in anyway. [...] Apparently one of the guys...later once they became friends, told him what had happened before he had bought the house. I mean things like apparently even the gardener who used to come and cut grass in their neighbourhood, he refused to cut his grass. Yeah...and you know what, I thought, fine he was like...this is a gardener. You, apart from the fact that you are black, you can afford it to buy a house here, but this gardener who is by all means way behind socially, will not cut my grass because....I mean I find that so funny... It tells you a lot, hey? [Joan]

The Northern suburbs have been labeled as one of the areas in South Africa with the highest per capita income and in some areas such as Tyger Berg and Platteklouf and Durbanville, the up-market malls, restaurants, boutiques and exclusive schools provide ample outlets for this spending power. However, most of the remaining Northern suburbs are represented by middle class communities. Some of these suburbs such as Parow, sections of Bellville and Blaauwberg and newer areas such as Sunningdale and Parklands show high levels of integration. The newer areas, due to the many townhouse complexes also have a younger resident profile.



Fred and Judith, Joan, Benson and Nicole all indicated that they preferred the Blaauwberg-area because of its proximity to the city centre and the sea. They definitely perceived it as more integrated than other areas with a large black foreigner presence. After they had found their feet, Joan and Nicole each bought an apartment. These dwellings were in either Table View or Parklands and quite close to where they originally lived.

The Blaauwberg-area is home to commuter suburbs such as Table View and Parklands. However, it is a traditional South African vacation area and therefore has a large number of holiday homes and apartments. There is also a beautiful boardwalk skirting the Atlantic Ocean. The unsurpassed views of Table Mountain, Cape Town and Robben Island make this is a popular spot among sport enthusiasts and overseas and South African visitors. The area also attracts curio sellers from Africa who set up stalls alongside an assortment of other vendors such as ice cream sellers and home-based furniture manufacturers. Recently the area has seen the unprecedented development of so-called townhouse complexes and gated communities in new areas such as Big Bay and Sunningdale. It is hailed as the next big residential development in Cape Town. The Blaauwberg area provides everything and more in terms of shopping malls, franchise restaurants and do-it-yourself stores. On the edge is a budding township and informal settlement called Dunoon which has also seen its fair share of clashes with the local authority over services. It is true that the Blaauwberg-area is more integrated and home to a significant number of African foreigners. However, this is not always an acceptable state of affairs to some of the residents who feel that their presence influence house prices and contribute to the general rise in crime. Some residents are also convinced that the area is becoming popular among Nigerian drug lords and dealers who are being driven out of Sea Point. One white male resident, who said openly that he was a racist, remarked:

There are now so many black foreigners here in Parklands that we had to change the name to Darklands.

Judith, who was planning to open a black hairdressing salon, also encountered resistance from some shop owners and commercial property agents in the area.

I am [busy with my plans for a hair salon] but these people, I don't know what's wrong with them. I also tried here for premises and I am waiting for them to get back to me.

I don't know. I don't know, but what I have gathered is for a black man to succeed, you really have to be tough, especially if you are living in a white area. Because, what I have realised, they are always trying to...bring you down, you know [...] they always come up with something, to like, pin you down.

They are conscious [of what they are doing], they know. Now, I [...] make a phone call and first say I am black and in this case do you have a problem. Then they give you audience...because...I don't know, for some reason then they give you a...no, no, no... [It is not a problem]. Because I can go and say, hello, I am so and so, do you give blacks...do you rent these premises out to blacks...then they are like, yeah, why...you know. But, before that stage it's like no...they know what they are doing, they are very conscious [...] they know, I believe they know. [Judith]

Fred and Judith first bought a house in Rondebosch but sold it later after they had a fire and moved back to the Blaauwberg area. Notwithstanding the fact that Rondebosch is a more visibly integrated suburb, Judith found life there very difficult. She perceived her mostly white neighbours as quite remote.

We went to Dolphin Beach [...] and then to Rondebosch. At Dolphin Beach, everybody was minding their business, so you also getting into the routine of minding your business. We moved from Rondebosch to Table View... I think [people from everywhere] live in this area...because the houses are affordable. The new Parklands is quite affordable. It is just not foreigners in that apartments [sic], there are so many locals in that apartments [...] I would say that [it is more integrated] because of the [sic] Parklands. There are so many people from all over [...]

Oh it was very difficult [in the beginning in Rondebosch]. It was ah...well...you know, you just...when you are new in a place you just assume well everything is like...back home. You know, you are...you see your neighbour and you are like 'hi' and you just get this look...am I missing something here? So it takes the neighbours six months to gather that we are not from here and to bring the cake. I am not interested in that cake. That's it. But my...the neighbour across the road, we became very close. [Judith]

Once they had bought their new house in the Blaauwberg area, Fred encountered a surprising accusation among black South Africans: they perceived his action as an aspiration to be white. Given Thornton's model, there is perhaps a rational explanation. Identity in Africa, Thornton says (2005:29), has its costs. If an individual wishes to challenge the boundaries of community he doesn't have the freedom to do so: "*There is no natural freedom to exchange. Instead, one must exchange one's identity and embeddedness in the social group for 'freedom'. Freedom has costs, since it involves loss of community security and identity, but it also represents opportunity to escape the constraints of the social group. Membership in the group that confers identity is otherwise a permanent, inalienable quality of the person*".

Rondebosch was acceptable to Fred's work colleagues because, as mentioned above, it is an integrated area and also quite close to Pinelands, an area popular among the more affluent local black population. Moving to the Blaauwberg area, presented on the one hand a dilemma to Fred who was already in a sensitive position due to his status as an African foreigner, his position in the company, and his notably higher salary. On the other hand, Fred's work colleagues were buying into the myth of the Northern suburbs as a "white Afrikaans-speaking community". Fred was literally moving beyond the "*boereworsgordyn*", beyond the confines of the already fragile community of work colleagues. As Thornton (2005:29-30) argues, Fred had two choices... "*People play the political-economic game at the local level with exit as their goal: success entails exit. The characteristic organisation style revolves around reliance on the group and the community that support and nurture the person, but at the same time limit achievement, capital accumulation and personal distinction. While it supports the basic needs of the person, it militates against initiative. Those who wish to accumulate capital of any kind other than clientships and networks of friendship or kin, and those who, by reason of chance or unpredicted luck, achieve distinction or unearned windfalls, have but two choices: self abnegation and re-entry to the community through dispersal of their capital, or exit*".

[...] when I bought my house, and then the first time [someone asked about this house I have bought] I said yeah, what is wrong, and they did not answer. Later I got it why, because in their minds they can't believe why I stay in a [very] white area [...]. In their mind they think I am trying to be a white person that is why I am staying in a white area. When I bought my house, this lady, she said why did you go in [sic] a white area...straight, in my face. I said no, I did not buy in a white area, I bought a house. I don't care where it is. If I could afford something in Khayelitsha and I liked it, I would have bought it. These are some of the comments that you get. [...] They think that I portray myself more as a white man by living in a white area. But I can tell you my opinion is South African whites do not...they don't think you are white. [Fred]

Benson first rented accommodation in Table View and was in the process of buying a house in the same suburb when these interviews took place. He related the following anecdote about that experience, explaining that he thought the bank which processed his application was confusing legal and illegal immigrants. To him this incident was also a watershed moment in terms of whether his presence as a foreigner had been accepted.

Just to let you know, I bought a house. This lady, she works in ABSA [a banking group], a typical Afrikaans lady, very nice. She did not have a problem, she asked

me: "Are you going to put down a deposit?" And I said yes. "How much?" [She asked]. I said ten percent of the value of the house. "Oh. How long before you are going back, are you going to live here forever?" I said that I am not so sure, I am buying a house, I am tired of renting, I am not so sure. She said: "You know the house is over half a million [rand]". I said, yes I am aware of it. Ok, so I signed everything. The lawyers got in touch. I sent them a cheque for about R53 000 rand. Here is the transport. Here is a cheque.

She went to a school council. She lives in the Southern suburbs. She met our HR manager there. So they are talking. Their kids go to the same school. Apparently they are in the same class. She says: "Oh, somebody from [your company] is just buying a house in Table View. He is called Benson. He is not South African?" So [the manager says], the next day: "Oh hello my friend. How are you?" I said I am fine. "What's happening nowadays, are you going to be here forever now?" I said, what do you mean? He said: "You are buying a house; yo, over half a million!" I said, oh ok. So [this lady], she is sitting right there. We are drinking tea. She says: Are you buying a house, are you getting married to a South African? These are all Mancom [Managing Committee] members, reporting to directors. [...] I have been here for more than three and a half years. What should I say? Have I been accepted? Have I been accepted? I don't know if I have been accepted though. [Benson]

Table View was the suburb of choice for Joan and Nicole and her sister who was completing her studies at the University of Cape Town. The suburb has become more integrated but the racial profile is predominantly white. In Nicole's narrative the subject of racial visibility re-emerges. For Joan, the experience of acquiring her own home, something she would not have been able to do in Kenya, was an important event. Both women felt they were treated well by estate agents and other institutions.

[...] I bought in Table View. I have been there since I came here. But I can tell you, the banks here, oh they were fantastic, I mean... even the persons helping us! I did very little. I mean this is the irony of it all you know. I went to a very white area and it's a show, you know, these shows Sundays when it's a show house, walk in and it is this elderly couple, and you'd expect, you know the older people they don't loose their beliefs and all their prejudices. They take the longest to loose them, you know, because it so ingrained in their lives. But I walk in there with my friends, two young girls, I mean ladies, who obviously are coming from ... you don't know whether we are South African at the time, you know, or if we come from a previously disadvantaged community. You don't imagine people will like talk to you, you know, like you will be acknowledged. So this couple, they treated us so well. I mean wherever we went to the show houses, we were treated so well. They treated us like we were buying, you know, like they believe we could afford it. I found it heart-warming that they make us feel special like that. [...] We walked into so many different houses and I mean it was fantastic, I mean, no prejudice whatsoever. I think a businessman is a businessman, someone who is there to make money; it does not matter whether it is blue, black or green.

[...] when we first arrived we were living in an \*hotel in Table View. We liked the area that's why we stayed there. It's a complex [with] about 20 houses with little gardens. I would not want to live in an apartment, I like the garden. It is mainly white. I wanted a house, I searched for a house, but we are only two girls, it is quite scary. Can you imagine if somebody jumped over the fence? No, I would die...! So a complex is more secure. [...] We did not have any problems. I had an estate agent...I had many estate agents, and never [any problems. You know, I am so used to this [feeling visible]. I have been living in such places for ten years. I am thinking...Table View... I am so used to it.

[\* The Dolphin Beach apartment complex is managed by the Protea Hotel Group]

Jean, Wanjiru and Nicole's sister Haydee came to Cape Town as students and they drifted naturally towards areas surrounding the University of Cape Town. Similar to Sea Point, many of these Southern suburbs, such as Observatory, Mowbray, Claremont and Woodstock present a more integrated face. Vigouroux (1999:178) also noted a similar tendency: *"La cherté des loyers du centre-ville et la ségrégation au logement qui semble y régner, comme nous le verrons, ne facilitent pas l'implantation des migrants qui préfèrent se reporter des quartiers limitrophes et plus cosmopolites comme Mowbray, Rondebosch ou Kenilworth"*.

This is partly due to the significant presence of students from Africa and the large local black and coloured student population attending the University of Cape Town. These and other suburbs such as Newlands, Rondebosch and Pinelands are also close to Cape Town's city centre and thus convenient for people of all races who work there. The three suburbs in question are also popular among diplomats, black parliamentarians, judges of the Supreme Court and civil servants.

Haydee, as mentioned before, went to school in Johannesburg before she became a student at the University of Cape Town. At the time of the interviews she had been in Cape Town for three years. She lived on campus for about eighteen months before she moved to Table View to share a townhouse with her sister Nicole. As such, her history runs parallel with Nicole's. However, an interesting aspect is her acceptance of the realities of South African life. In many ways she looked at these realities from an insider perspective since she had been living in the country since she was fourteen years old.

Jean currently lives in the northern suburb of Table View in a townhouse complex of eight small houses each with a garden, arranged around a communal space. The residents are predominantly white. She selected this complex because she had been concerned about

security. Once again, her reference to the mythical *boerewors* curtain reveals a certain 'sensitivity of place'.

[...] what I wanted, is somewhere where I did not have to...every time I am trying to get into my car, leave my car, leaving my home I was looking over my shoulder, you know, that guy, is he near enough to run and if he can reach me before I reach my door or something, so that was ah...no, yeah, I don't, I don't feel that here, no, not at all. But, they do call it the *boerewors* curtain. It is actually supposed to start at Platteklouf, I wonder, is Blaauwberg part of that...Table View....yeah. [Jean]

Jean's 'residential journey' incorporated many of the aforementioned suburbs. When she first came to Cape Town, she lived in one of the residences of the University of Cape Town. When she moved off-campus, it was to the suburb of Mowbray, then to Milnerton, Observatory and Pinelands.

When I moved from campus, I moved to Mowbray...it was...volatile. **[Interviewer: "Why do you say volatile?"]** Because I was living in a house on the way down to the station, so there was always chaos outside, you know, noise or somebody being chased or police sirens, you know, just a bit chaotic. And then from there I went and worked in Knysna [...] for six months and then my housemate [...] moved to Milnerton, he got a huge house, three bedrooms, servants quarters, whatever, a laundry, swimming pool, double garage, whatever. It was a nice area. We moved there mainly because of security although we did not have any security, alarm system or anything like that so [...] we were robbed three times. [...] I moved anyway and moved to a dig in Obz [Observatory]. So I was sharing with four other...people...So we split up and Hailey [a housemate] and I moved to this other dig in Pinelands. [It was] very nice...a very nice area. Beautiful, beautiful house, fully furnished, daily service, swimming pool, DSTV, beautiful garden, ah...but I did not really like it. It was like a student dig, it was full of twenty one to nineteen year olds. [...]

When she began to look for alternative accommodation, Jean encountered resistance and hostility from potential landlords. At first she could not understand why this was happening as she had not experienced problems with finding rental accommodation before. The difference was however, that before, she never had to deal with potential landlords directly. Now she had to contend with perceptions and stereotypes embedded in white Capetonian society.

So I started phoning around ah...you know, like trying to get a place and it is very funny because I speak differently on the phone and I guess my accent is not African, so it has been like "Oh yes, come and see the house" and "yeah you sound like a very nice person" and then you show up and they are like "where is Jean?" And ah ...you know, at first that was funny, but after...my deadline got closer and I was not getting somewhere, I became really frustrated and I was like, you

know...and this one woman, she said “yeah, please just take it, come, you only need to just come and see us as a formality” and everything. And she was an old ah...you know, older woman and when I showed up at the house she would not even let me through the front gate. And I was like “but it is Jean, we just spoke on the phone just now” and she was like “no no, no, sorry, it has been taken”. It was horrible and so after that I started phoning people and I told them “Hi, my name is Jean and I am black and I am not South African, do you have a problem with that?” So people would be like “oh no, of course”, who is gonna say we have a problem with that, this is the New South Africa. So, when I called this woman I said, “you know, by the way, I am black and I am not South African” and she was like “oh, no, no, no, I don’t have a problem with that, just please come and see the house”. And I did and I liked it. [...] So she’s a...she’s a great lady, very nice.

Wanjiru initially lived in the suburbs of Rondebosch and Claremont mainly because of their proximity to the University of Cape Town where she was enrolled as a postgraduate student. When these interviews took place, she had just moved to Observatory. The suburb of Observatory has always had a Bohemian air and various fashionable cafes and bars line the main street. As such it attracts visitors and residents from all over; similarly Woodstock which has become the preferred residential area for would-be renovators. Although Wanjiru knew the suburb from before, she was not altogether happy to live there. She much preferred her previous places of residence because she felt safer in those neighbourhoods.

I have always lived in Rondebosch, Claremont. I only moved to Observatory in March. It is an area that I used to like to visit and not live. There are [many foreigners there] but I don’t really socialise in Observatory. I don’t really...for me it doesn’t matter because I just go to Observatory to sleep.

[Claremont and Rondebosch]... that was good. You know why? One time I was doing a study on ah...juveniles and I had to go to this organisation and look at how they deal with juveniles and that kind of thing. And some of them were in the black townships and some in the coloured townships and I didn’t know these places. This was a couple of years ago. Now I know my way around most of the townships. But I didn’t know the place and all the stories I have heard, I was really scared about going to these places. And I went to the coloured townships. I refused to go to the black townships. And they guy who was... [...] heading this project couldn’t understand why I didn’t want to go to the black townships. And I said to him, you know, in the coloured townships, I am immediately and outsider by virtue of my skin colour, nobody expects me to speak Afrikaans. In the black township I am expected to speak Xhosa because I am black. And that was the first barrier and I am not willing to go through that. I am not going to go there. And so I guess...I guess in relation to living in Claremont and Rondebosch, I think these are places where you are... immediately an outsider. And it is partly safer because there are no expectations. [Wanjiru]

Perhaps adding to Wanjiru's discontent about Observatory was an incident of hostile behaviour which she identified as one of the most important factors contributing to her isolation in the city.

[...]I was...sitting at [sic] a pub one day...and two friends of mine.... they were playing pool and I was just sitting at the bar minding my own business. And this white man walks up to me and asked....'so where do you come from?' I said I come from Kenya. And he said 'what then...what are you doing here, go back to Kenya'. And I got really upset and then I thought no...I am not going to...to...ah...dignify it, getting into an argument with him because at this point I'd...I'd fought so many times...fights, that I was really tired of fighting and I just don't...I fight when it is worth it. When it is not worth it I don't... [Wanjiru]

Jean described a similar incident which happened to her at the Cape Gate shopping complex in one of the farther Northern suburbs of Cape Town. She also said that sometimes she liked to make fun of people in racially laden circumstances.

[...] rarely English, mostly I think, predominantly the Afrikaans ah...people, they are the ones who are like more intolerant and [there were] a couple of incidents... most of the time I choose not to remember them. I was shopping in Cape Gate near Brackenfell in the Okavango area and this guy had his shopping cart like in the isle [...] just so that I could not get through and I found that ah...very...you know...sometimes also it is like it is not intended...but...if you get it often enough, it gets to you, you know [...]

You get a lot of condescending attitudes which is you know, almost as irritating as if someone was being racist. Like people speak to you in...slow...measured...tones...or, there is someone I was working with in Knysna, she used to be a lecturer at UCT [University of Cape Town] and ah...it was actually in Sedgefield which is like just before Knysna, a very small community. And she used to say...you know what I like...I hope you don't mind but it is nice when we go places with you like we go shopping for example in George which is "*boerewors*" country and she'd be like, you go to the guy and I'd be out there. The minute they see a black person come in they are like all defensive and then they hear the accent and then they are like suddenly their attitudes change. And that just tickled us and you know that...and ah...so...you know, you get sometimes that humorous side of it but a lot of time it is not really funny.

Joan also related an incident of hostility which occurred in an upmarket shopping mall in the northern suburb of Tyger Valley.

[...] We are in a queue, and I am at the front of the queue, then this white gentleman comes...I said excuse me sir, I think I was ahead of you. And he just blabbed something out in Afrikaans. I said excuse me, I don't understand. He said to me, no, no...he continued to speak in Afrikaans to the cashier who is coloured and she is entertaining it and can see she was going to ring his stuff up. I got so



emotional and I went to the front of the queue, I said no, I was here before you and I am going to pay before you. And he got into a...I could not follow what he was saying, I mean, all in Afrikaans.

I got that mad, people, the cashier, got scared because I mean she thought I was going to get violent and the man was big, very big. I mean, I could not understand, how could he do a thing like that and people just shut up. [...] And the manager just came and got my things and went and rung them up and all that [...].

My friend who I had been with [...] heard the commotion [...] she could not believe I am the one who is causing all this. And I said no, it's this rich man here and I point to him and everybody knows who we are talking about. And when we are leaving, my friend says no wonder Mugabe is doing what he is doing. She is from Zimbabwe. [...]

You know what was sad about it? He had his whole family there. [...]I don't know what his motivation was but if it was racist he is being allowed to do it over and over. You know people get away with it. But then you know where I was...in Tyger Valley. Later on I was told that area is very much like that. [...]. I mean I have never experienced that in Century City or in the Jo'burg area. For me it was strange and I have been so new in this country, you know ah, it kind of happened. [Joan]

Thornton (1996:155) argues that it is in the hinterlands of the city states that the myth of autochthony is embedded. In the cities the myth becomes an inherent part of the rhetoric about foreigners as South Africans, *"encouraged by presumed links between a significant foreigner presence and many of the country's social ills...are increasingly invoking nationalist rhetoric in their efforts to resolve these disputes"* (Landau 2004:2). Perhaps it is not so much a case of literal invocation but rather a mental one borne out of historical circumstance and present political discourse.

These encounters were hurtful to the research participants. Jean tried to rationalise it by saying that at least she was not a black South African who had a history of dealing with such behaviour and attitudes. However, she detested the way such attitudes made her feel saying that it put her in a certain space that was very difficult to get out of.

In turn, Joan touched on the myth, shared by most of the research participants, that Johannesburg is a friendlier and more tolerant city than Cape Town.

I have discovered that the people from Jo'burg are different. I think, because my other friend, she is black and she is from Jo'burg, but she is very nice. She is Sotho. Yeah, she is Sotho. **[Interviewer: She is different in what way?]** She can invite me to her house, she can call me, you know. You can call her. [...] She can call, to me, are you in Bay Side, let's have coffee, she can do that. But the rest...! Even the local Capetonians, even the blacks ...they look down upon the...people from

Jo'burg. Because I met this guy, he has a hair salon in Mowbray ... black ...he is from Jo'burg... and he was so friendly to me. I had gone there with a friend and we were just finding out if he could see us [...] Then he is saying 'oh no, these people here are not friendly enough'. And I am going like hello, you are from here? 'No, I am from Jo'burg'. [Judith]

[...] I think it is mainly Cape Town. That is the other thing I am beginning to realize. I've got a cousin who lives in Pretoria; she's got so many black South African friends. Maybe, and also I actually think it is more of a social status. The blacks that you find here, the Xhosa, in their professional jobs, most of them have actually migrated from other places, they are not originally from Cape Town. [Joan]

It is true that there are many black people there, but I don't feel....The other side, when I go to Jo'burg, I feel the difference, I feel like I am at home [...] [Nicole]

But as you come further down south, then...you get...you get [...] less tolerance [...] So on campus, when I was staying in res...then I had...you know, lots, I met lots of very good, very nice people, they all were mostly from up there [...] they were all from like Limpopo, Mpumalanga...northern parts of South Africa. And ah...you know, once I moved out of res and I was staying on my own, then I did not have the opportunity to keep meeting them and then I finished my workload and you know, so no more structured environment where I actually could meet other people. And ah...I just never had opportunity and really, I am not that overly inclined or motivated to...expose myself to that sort of hostility, I mean, who needs it? [Wanjiru]

[...] in the Western Cape, it is mostly Xhosa and they...everyone says they are a little bit at the bottom of the...tolerance [scale] and ah...acceptance...sort of bottom bit of the ladder. [...] you get this from other ah...black South Africans from ah...like the northern parts...Pretoria... [People refer to other black people as] they are not too smart, they are not too this, too the other and then the Zulus and Xhosas they are like completely full of themselves. And... ah...yeah...it is like [...] a lot of people that I have had some sort of relationship or friendship with are being from the northern parts of [South Africa]... I have been to Jo'burg [...] I spent like a week there...New Year's, the year before. But again, you know, like, my friend was staying in [...] Rivonia [...] we went to Sandton and ah...you know, like we went to the museums and that sort of thing [...] It was like being in a very modern Nairobi yeah...it was like black people...and ah...you know...just what I thought South Africa would be like...you know... [Jean]

Vigouroux (1999:176,179) confirms in her research the general preference for Johannesburg among African foreigners. One of her research participants surmised: "*A Johannesburg les gens sont open, les gens au Cap sont hypocrites*". For her research participants, similar to the research participants in the current study, Cape Town was a closed society embedded in racism and segregation. The sense of a 'community of foreigners' they felt was present in Johannesburg eluded them here as a result of the widely dispersed foreign African population.

After considering the data above, perhaps the overriding question should be if, in the current era, it is indeed possible to develop a sense of community. Hannerz' frames of cultural process and Appadurai's landscapes indeed allow the construction of locality or localities. But are the localities of neighbourhoods and suburbs as experienced and developed by the research participants in effect communities?

In the plural society of Silicon Valley, English-Lueck (2002:147) determined that neighbourhoods are not as much "physically segregated as emotionally negotiated". It can be argued that the same holds true for suburbs and cities. She argues that people create 'corridors of sameness' in the face of identity diversity. But in the case of the research participants there was no ethnic enclaving or monocultural comfort zone. But, similar to English-Lueck's findings (ibid) they did try to find places of residence in communities that provided at least a sense of comfort. Contributing factors here were the visible integration of the suburbs and neighbourhoods and the fact that most of them also lived within travelling distance from each other.

The fact is, however, that the research participants could not always successfully negotiate the socio-cultural boundaries that remain an inherent part of the South African urban reality. Wanjiru described it eloquently:

I have never consciously thought about it [that I belong in this space or place], it is just a feeling that I get when I am there [in Kenya]. I think it is a lot of things. It is just...you know, I don't experience some of the things I experience in Cape Town. I don't see some of the things I see in Cape Town...there [in Kenya] they are not happening to me, like, you know, issues of praise, issues of language, people being...just not nice to me because I can't speak their language, then I am black and I am taking the economic advantage away from them. I don't feel that at home, you know. So yeah, I feel...I feel much more at home there. [Wanjiru]

Driedger (2003:619), in a study of immigration and urban settlement in Canada determined that class, ethnicity and race played a significant role in the construction of boundaries. Ultimately, these factors also played a role in where people decided to reside. Boundaries, English-Lueck (2002:147) points out, may be erected by the ethnic community (if one exists); by the outside community or by people themselves. Bearing in mind the models of Hannerz and Appadurai, many boundaries will also bear the marks of history. This is inevitable in the case of South Africa. Remnants of Thornton's post-Apartheid condition, perhaps?

Ben-Ari (1995:203,215) in a study about the discourses in new neighbourhoods in Japan argues that neighbourhoods often reflect wider discourses about the local and the national. For Ben-Ari the analytical discourses about local communities are juxtaposed. He explains (1995:215) *“I use the word juxtapose, because it is not only a matter of how localities are represented according to the logic of national debates about a ‘vanishing’ tradition or a new kind of neighbourhood. It is also a matter of how wider understanding is mobilised by people in their dialogue with a variety of significant others about local identity. The national discourse is actualised in – and fixes the contours of – local dialogue”*

Similar to Ben-Ari’s Hiedaira in Japan (1995:215), the post-Apartheid suburbs and neighbourhoods of South African cities contain a ‘plurality of images’. Many of these neighbourhoods are caught between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ South Africa. The past, as Ben Ari remarks, is not an abstract notion. ‘Old’ images of racial segregation, socio-economic stratification and ethnicity inform current discourses of what neighbourhoods and suburbs should actually look like; who should live there; what kind of spaces should be developed.

Ben-Ari (1995:216) pleads for a deeper understanding of the ‘topography’ within which place is constructed and experienced. So perhaps, as Ortner (1997:63) says, the notion of community is *“worth keeping, so long as we do not identify the concept with harmony and cohesion, nor imagine that the sole form of community is a group of people in one place”*.

## 5.4 NETWORKS AND LOCALITIES

When you move to a new place you need a support system and the support system comes from your family, like if you are married. It comes from your professional environment if possible. But it [also] comes from what you do on a social basis. [Hospice]

Mobility in the current era of globalisation creates an impression of *“the end of community, the fragmentation of relationships”* (Ortner 1997:68). However, the fact remains that migrants and immigrants alike must create new spaces or lock into existing ones. In South Africa, given the specific dynamics of its urban landscapes, this is no mean feat. Landau (2004:2) in a paper for the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) writes: *“As politicians and business leaders applaud South Africa’s new cosmopolitanism, conflicts over rights to space, services, and livelihoods have surfaced as South Africans*

*and African immigrants converge on the streets of previously 'forbidden' cities".* Given this backdrop, how do migrants such as the research participants, structure social relationships? Given the circumstances, is it at all possible to develop a sense of belonging and community?

Albeit from an American point of view, Ortner remarks (1997:62): *"...the fate of 'communities' is precisely one of the issues at stake in contemporary American society. Most Americans live in a condition in which the totality of their relations is precisely not played out within a single geographic location and a single universe of known others, both at a given point in time and across time"*. Ortner (1997:68) maintains that networks are the proverbial tip of the iceberg in that they provide evidence of relationships among a given group of which the members live in different localities or post-communities.

Amit & Rapport (2002:5) echo this theme when they say anthropologists often use 'community' as an idea or 'categorical referent' rather than an actual social group, specifically within the realms of multiculturalism, nationalism and identity politics. There is much to be said for the use of 'community' as a 'field of investigation' *"that does not necessarily conform to fields of social relations but instead ...seek out individuals who are conceptually but not personally connected, or...who do not imagine their personal commonalities in ongoing collective identities"* (ibid).

It is in this last instance that the idea of professional mobility acquires meaning. Captured momentarily in a locale, these individuals defy the traditional boundaries of community or collectivity. They may or may not participate in what can be termed *"emerging transnational collectivities"*. They may or may not attribute *"a new social identity to the experience of mobility"* nor may they demonstrate the *"strong symbolic markers of categorical identity"* (Amit & Rapport 2002:5). Some may or may not share consensus about cultural fundamentals, or they may demonstrate as Geertz (2000:250) remarks, *"the notion that ....the order of [cultural] difference must somehow be maintained"* (Geertz 2000:250).

The boundedness of community within the context of globalisation is also questioned by Hannerz (1996). More specifically, he is concerned with central-peripheral relationships in the global ecumene. The latter is a construct formulated to describe interconnectedness in the world that comes about through interactions, exchanges and related developments

and affects cultural organisation – a global community (Hannerz 1996:45,7). Hannerz (1996:91-98) suggests, as has been alluded to before, a re-examination of Robert Redfield's folk-urban continuum and subsequently also the constructs *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. He elaborates on a scheme first presented by Roland Robertson, a sociologist, who suggested that the global ecumene is composed of four representations or images, i.e. *Global Gemeinschaft* 1: Closed and unique communities that exist on a more or less equal basis at a national level. These communities perceive globalisation as a threat. *Global Gemeinschaft* 2: A world-wide community that fits Marshall McLuan's notion of a "global village." Problems of globalisation are usually addressed within these communities. *Global Gesellschaft* 1: Significant socio-cultural exchange, of a more or less equal nature, takes place within a global order of open national societies. *Global Gesellschaft* 2: This image rests on the notion of the world as a single system. Formality and planning are the keys to world order (Hannerz 1996:93-95).

Also moving beyond the traditional views of community, Ortner (1997:68-73) identifies four types of post-community, i.e. neocommunity; invented community; translocal community; and community of the mind. Ortner's neocommunity is, in her own words, possibly the closest to conventional Anthropological perceptions of community, i.e. "*multiple kinds of face to face contact, mutual awareness of relatively intimate aspects of each other's lives, mutual caring, and of course its flip side, mutual judgement*". The construct of invented community incorporates some of the characteristics of the first type. However, it appears to be less cohesive in that members are more dispersed over a greater geographical, but bounded area such as a state or province. Maintaining such a community requires greater intent from its members. An interesting aspect of Ortner's invented community (and this can possibly not be generalised) is its incorporation of post-modern communal living such as gated communities and concomitant features such as internal homogenisation.

Ortner's (1997:72) translocal community supposes '*networks of contact*' among people spread out over different geographical locales. A strong feature of this type of community is a sense of kinship that is not based on blood but rather on place of origin. Networks may also remain inactivated until required. Ortner (ibid) further remarks: "*Yet once again, there is a sorting process that goes into the maintenance of some ties and not others, or the creation of ties that were not really there before. In some cases there are structurally generated 'accidents' that put ...people together, even in distant cities*". The last type of community is that of the mind or memory which Ortner (1997:75) describes as "*drawn*

*upon by the other three forms, as well as by the rituals that briefly pull them all together*". She distinguishes between positive and negative memories, saying that both have the power to draw people to and into communities. Memories are interlinked with social ties and "an obvious basis of a continuing community even in diaspora" (Ortner 1997:74).

An important feature of the post-community is that the *sine qua non* of community, namely 'community-ness' (Ortner's construction) does not occur "*naturally – instead it is constructed out of a range of selections, exclusions and boundary-maintaining mechanisms*" (Ortner 1997:70). In Ortner's study the '*markers of boundary and exclusion*' are very specific (race, class and ethnicity). However, one could postulate that different scenarios would invoke situation-specific markers.

Against this background it now becomes possible, as Hannerz (1996:95) remarks, to "*...identify more clearly the kinds of relationships which go into the making of contemporary social structures, especially those covering great spatial distances and crossing national boundaries; and to discern how these kinds of relationships link up with one another*" (Hannerz 1996:95).

#### **5.4.1 Social networks and spaces of belonging**

In the 1960's, Mitchell (1968:48) remarked that social relationships within an urban context are structured according to certain dynamic and variable "external determinants", i.e. the density of the settlement which leads to greater leeway in terms of association; mobility which supposes transitory or impermanent relationships; heterogeneity; demographic disproportion; economic differentiation; and administrative and political limitations.

So is there much of a difference between then and now? The foregoing chapters have shown that most, if not all of Mitchell's external determinants are still relevant today, especially given the dynamics of African - South African migration and immigration. The overriding question is how these factors impact on the structuring of social relationships and networks of modern-day immigrants and migrants.

Fortin (2002:77,79) determined in respect of migrant networks in Montreal, that the social and macro-sociological context and '*historically constructed relations of power*' all have

bearing on interpersonal relationships in an urban situation. In a study of friendship networks in London, Conradson and Latham (2005:288) remark that *“social relations ordered through mobility are different to those structured around emplacement or relative stasis. People on the move will likely employ different strategies for maintaining connection with their significant others, for instance. They may develop a sense of ‘being at home’ in the world despite relatively transient connections to particular places; certainly their lifestyle is likely to disrupt the familiar association between psycho-social security and being embedded in a geographical locality”*.

Hannerz (1996:98) suggests that the idea of transnational communities is not contradictory, *“it is a matter of friendship, of leisure pursuits, and of occupational and corporate communities. What is personal, primary, small-scale, is not necessarily confined in space and what spans continents need not be large-scale in any way”*. In dealing with ‘community’ and more specifically ‘transnational communities’ in the global ecumene, Hannerz (1996:95-96) draws on Craig Calhoun’s ‘four categories of social relationships’. He distinguishes between primary relationships i.e. face to face symmetrical relationships among individuals; and secondary relationships that are more asymmetrical in that individuals interact through their respective and specific roles. These relationships are, therefore, of a direct nature and require a physical co-presence. However, they are not altogether representative of life in the global ecumene where indirect and asymmetrical relationships may play a more significant role. The categories are further supplemented by tertiary relationships that are in effect relationships between individuals governed by technology and/or large organisations as entities (and not the people that constitute the entity), and ‘quarternary’ relationships where one or more of the participants are unaware that there is in effect an association.

In their research among West African migrants in Montreal, Fortin (2002) and Leblanc (2002) emphasise the dynamic relationship between identity resources or strategies and the construction of social ties. The idea that individual identity is inherently flexible is certainly a familiar concept in anthropology. Leblanc (2002:122) remarks: *“The recognition of plasticity and plurality in identity construction leads to the question of which identities become activated, in relation to whom, in what way, and when...In turn, processes of identification contribute to the social construction of collectivities and to the development of social links between individuals and groups”*. In a similar vein, Fortin (2002:76) states that *“individuals draw on their identity resources as a function of the exigencies of a given*



*situation*". She further argues (2002:76) that identity strategies are closely linked to strategies of belonging. Personal social ties and networks are the key to revealing which strategies are emphasised or underplayed; the 'sense' of belonging to the host country; and the extent of social relationships.

According to Mitchell (1968:52-56), *personal relationships* denote a network of personal links which individuals construct within an urban setting. He goes on to distinguish between an effective network where people known to a specific individual also know each other and an extended network where the members are only known to a specific individual. Examples include kinship and friendship relations. *Structural relationships* denote those "*which have enduring patterns of interaction and which are structured*", for example, relationships around work, voluntary or adaptive associations and institutions. *Categorical relationships* are more often than not based on visible characteristics of individuals and encompass those encounters which are at best "*superficial and perfunctory*" in nature. Examples may include relationships based on gender, race, ethnicity and/or class.

Mitchell's structure offers a keyhole perspective onto what Fortin (2002:82) calls "*different migration paths as well as different types of social lives and normative difference*". Both Fortin (2002) and Leblanc (2002) use personal social networks as a platform to other collectivities. Fortin (2002:76) uses personal social ties and networks to reveal spaces of sociability, i.e. *active and significant social ties [which] gives substance to the economic, social, and symbolic dimensions of settlement*". Leblanc (2002:123, see also 121,127), looks at how institutionalised networks constructed around voluntary associations link to networks of communality, "*i.e. elements of shared practise that bring together social actors in the context of everyday life, and to groupings of individuals and families that are exclusively known to their participants and that do not seek formal recognition*".

Mitchell's structure further provides an explanatory and comprehensive framework for more recent definitions of migrant networks, notably that of Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellgrino & Taylor (1994:227; also: Gelderblom & Adams 2006:227): "*Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin*". Gelderblom et al (2006:228) as part of a larger body of research on migration under the auspices of the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa,

offer the following: “*Social networks are relationships of mutual trust between people, based on pre-existing ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin.*” In addition, Gelderblom *et al* (2002:228,229) perceive migrant networks as social networks of a special kind in that they are “*relationships of reciprocal exchange*”. It follows that reciprocity can be based on either monetary and/or moral obligations.

Gelderblom *et al* (2006:232-234) provide an analysis of the “*functions fulfilled by migrant networks in the migration process*”, i.e. stimulating -; facilitating -; discouraging -; and/or channelling migration. In the first instance, successful migrants could set an example to those in the community of origin, thereby stimulating them into similar action. Second, members of a network might facilitate migration through the provision of assistive services, e.g. accommodation, information about jobs, financial help, emotional and friendship support. Third, those who remain in the community of origin might be discouraged to migrate by reports about certain migration destinations. Fourth, successful migrants can channel prospective migrants towards or away from certain destinations and job opportunities.

In addition, Gelderblom *et al* (2006:237-240) mention certain factors which determine how much support can be expected from a network. The authors highlight first network resources which they argue have inherent spatial - and resource dimensions. Dispersed networks cannot offer the same resources as a localised one. Conversely, tightly knit networks may not be open to new information or opportunities. Second, the authors mention the normative aspects of migrant networks. They emphasise that network resources only aid new or potential migrants if the existing network members are prepared to offer support. However, more often than not, the availability of resources is determined by real or imagined pre-existing bonds of reciprocity based on notions of community, kinship or friendship. Third, the network, through its individual members may render itself incapable as a result of residential instability, financial difficulty or internal conflict. Fourth, more successful members might select to leave or disengage from the network.

Within this context, how do migrants such as the research participants structure networks and develop a sense of belonging? Who are included, who are excluded? Do these networks transcend the boundaries of neighbourhood, city and country? Are there reciprocal exchanges involved in some or all of the networks? Are these networks linked to specific spaces and places? Do these networks convey a sense of community? To answer

these questions, the personal social relationships of the research participants documented during the research process are used as a point of departure. A breakdown of these social ties revealed the following relationships:

- kinship (consanguinial and affinity)
- friendship (effective and extended)
- institutional (formal, voluntary, adaptive)

The above is an analytical platform which is decidedly deductive in nature. However, taking cognisance of Mitchell's (1968) structure, the analysis of Gelderblom *et al* (2006) and the frameworks of Fortin (2002) and Leblanc (2002) it shall hopefully "*yield...insights into the social behaviour*" (Mitchell 1968:55) of the research participants, specifically as to the nature and extent of their categorical and structural relationships and networks and spaces of belonging.

For the purpose of the ensuing discussion, a graphic representation of the social networks of each research participant is included. These representations, with reference to Benson, Wanjiru, Nicole, Joan, Jean, Fred and Hospice are listed as a single Annexure to this dissertation. See **ANNEXURE A**.

#### **5.4.1.1 Relationships and networks of kinship**

Long before globalisation and its concomitant threats became a fashionable topic, Choldin (1973:163), in reaction to the argument that industrialisation and migration would destroy kinship networks, reported that the extended kinship network was alive and functioning well. Based on American migration data, he concluded: "1. the extended family persists in industrial settings in terms of continued interaction among kinfolk of different generations; 2. strong affective ties exist among its members; 3. the members perform various services for each other". It is true that Choldin hails from an era when true professional mobility was a rare occurrence. The question is, however, if globalisation and the dynamics of professional mobility succeeded in destroying kinship relationships and networks. Adepoju (2006:31) remarks: "*Migration in Africa is an emigration-diaspora-return continuum. Networks of family, kin and friends play important roles in decisions to migrate, assimilate or maintain ties...Networks therefore link migrants or returnees with relatives at home*".

In social research, the depth of kinship relations or any kind of relationship for that matter usually becomes evident through the detail provided in the narrative. Without exception and sometimes even without prompting, the research participants provided intimate details of their family structures, history, events such as divorce, relationships and monetary matters. All the research participants visited their mother and/or father at least once a year. In some cases parents and siblings have been to Cape Town to attend graduation ceremonies or merely for a holiday. The basic picture emerging from the narratives of the research participants is one of active links with parents back home and with siblings or close relatives who may either live in the home community or overseas.

Within this context, four factors should be highlighted. First, the research participants conveyed a clear sense of history and socio-political circumstances and how this had shaped their families and communities in their countries of origin. Second, given these unique historical and socio-political circumstances it can be argued that all the research participants' families were part of elite groupings favoured by specific contexts. This is not to deny the role of individual agency, because it is obvious that all the families used the favourable circumstances to their advantage. Third, in cases where parents and elder siblings were themselves educated, other children were encouraged to study further. Furthermore, career choices and trajectories were often the result of a supportive and more open-minded or liberal home environment. Third, the type of society i.e. matriarchal or patriarchal and/or the family form e.g. matrifocality, may have some bearing on education and mobility. For example, Jean, Joan and Wanjiru who are all Kikuyu confirmed that the matriarchal nature of their society eased their chosen educational- and career paths and their subsequent mobility. Furthermore, influential and strong mothers featured in the narratives of Benson, Hospice, Nicole and Jean. It would seem that Fred and Judith's societal and familial types were true to form, i.e. a patriarchal, clan-based society. But, note how Fred described the relationship dynamics in respect of his parents:

My dad, because of his job, moved around quite a bit, from one town to the other, we moved around quite a bit [...] my mom stayed at home, she was working in town. Because my dad was moving around, we went to schools wherever my dad was working and came home for holidays. [...] At a time [going to too many schools became too much] I was sent to boarding school and soon after, everybody else went to boarding school. [...] we spent a lot of time with my mom during the holidays. So the relationship we had with my mom was extremely close. My dad was almost like a 'meditation' because during the term he would come in on the

Friday and on the Sunday he would go back to work. During those two days it was miserable. [Fred]

Jean spoke of how her mother, a nurse, used to struggle to balance a career and family. Her father had his own business in partnership with her married elder brother. At the time of the interview, her mother had just embarked on a second career in the Sudan. Jean's younger brother lived at home in her mother's absence. She indicated that it is primarily her mother, who motivated her and understood her career choices. However, Jean also recognised the importance of full parental support:

[...] she was like you just do what you have to do...you want to study, you want to do this PhD, go ahead, go for it. We, your father and I are behind you one hundred percent...don't worry about people at home, what they are gonna say and what they are gonna think of this family. We will take care of it [...] It would have been very difficult ...absolutely very difficult. Because ...without parental support...I mean, you could still do it, but it just makes it much easier, you know. Certainly my husband's family do not really understand... [Jean]

Jean lived and worked in Cape Town. Her husband, who was running the family's export business, was based in the United States. Theirs was a story of a true transnational and professional mobility. Nairobi was their primary home base. Jean commuted between Cape Town, which she described as her second home and Nairobi. Her husband might have visited her in Cape Town once in a while but he primarily commuted between Kenya and the United States.

[...] my husband is Kenyan. He also was working in their family business. Their family exports coffee ... he left for America in 2001 after I graduated. And ah...yeah...he has been there since and I have been here.

...this is second home and that's about as far as I am willing to go. Ah...my husband wanted me to move to the US and...I am like... there is no way I am living in America. So no...I would love to visit those places but [...] I would not thrive there because...I am...I think my personality... I need to have that ah...I need intimacy, you know, people, like real relationships and warmth...that sort of connection. I mean you would not get it...certainly not in Europe...ah...really also not in America. [Jean]

The notion of isolation was a theme throughout Jean's narrative. She felt her extended family in Kenya provided a sense of being protected. She also emphasised that the sense of being part of a community is more pronounced in Kenya.

[...] There is no way this [isolation] would happen. I mean jeez, we've got cousins, aunties, uncles, nephews, nieces, friends, neighbours! No, definitely not! There is no way! I mean, unless you are an orphan who [?] has completely no family. No! This definitely would not happen at all...so that is yeah...definitely [?] a problem...yeah...something you don't even want to think about

...I was at home staying at my parent's place and one of the neighbours ah...the son died or something and ah...so, what happened when there is a funeral, that people come to your house everyday, to just, you know, they come to pray with you whatever. And ah...they had run out of chairs and I just saw this woman walking into our house and grabbing chairs and I am like yeah, what's going on and they are like oh we will return them later we are going to...we just...these are women from neighbouring houses.

We are living in sort of like a modern area. But it shocked me that they just walked in unannounced and because I had not been at home for so long, I was used to this really isolative society that's Cape Town [...] it was a great thing to be at home, but I was bombarded by this visual [elements] and...and...sort of stimulation...and... it was...I was like a sponge taking up all these things that I have missed and I did not even realise that. [Jean]

In the case of Nicole and Haydee's family, their mother was certainly a strong role model. After the death of their father, their mother had to find a way to support the family. She decided to open a guest house in the Burundian capital. Nicole's brother was the first to embark on a transnational career. His success in Johannesburg paved the way for Nicole and her remaining siblings. The implicit understanding was that he would take care of Nicole and Haydee. For example, when Nicole was transferred back to Burundi, her sister Haydee moved to Johannesburg to live with their brother.

I also think, actually my mom, she is more open than the others. I have a brother in Johannesburg, he is working there. He has his own company. They know he is going to look after me. [...] They knew there would not have been enough challenges in Burundi. So for him, it also helps, because it opened my mom's mind that families are odd, they don't actually have to come back [to Burundi]. I think my family are still balancing. They are not actually liberated. I think it is still hard for them to let it go, but they do not have much choice. They have to move with the times. [Nicole]

Nicole felt that the war in Burundi destroyed the traditional fabric of society and family. Her family was no exception. She implied the disintegration of traditionalism resulted in very little or no control over the behaviour of family members.

Just an example, like I have my younger sister in Canada and she dated this guy, an Arabic [sic] he is from Iran. Now 10 years ago, if we were at home, it would have been like, do not go out of the house, you know. But now, all they can do is to say,

do not get married. You can not tell her to come back home, there is no control. All I can do is to be a good friend. I think it is the same for me, you know. Even if they say that [come back] I will tell them no. [Nicole]

Benson's situation was not dissimilar from that of Nicole and Haydee. His father died when he was four years old. This left his mother with two farms to manage in the Eldoret district of Kenya. His father's brother who lived in Mombasa stepped in and took care of the children when they reached school-going age.

My dad passed away when I was about four. So I stayed with my uncle in Mombasa. But by then he had already bought some farm in the rural areas. You are making the money. So my mom ended up [looking after it] back at home because she knew the environment much better. So she decided to go back and do it from there because my dad was not there. So we only kept two farms - my mom managing it. My sister and elder brother, we were all at school. [Benson]

Wanjiru grew up in Nairobi but subsequently went to boarding school when her parents decided to move to the rural hinterland of Kenya's Central Province. She felt that because of this, she did not form strong ties with any specific community. In her narrative, her family, i.e. parents, two brothers and two sisters, emerged as her most important support base

Well, my grandparents are all dead, but my parents have moved back to the rural area to live after my father retired so they moved to a farm and ah...yeah, they have ties with most of the other relatives [...] because [...] my parents moved and I went off to boarding school and then I went off to university and then I came here... I have never really established very strong ties...you know. [...] But...but still when I go home I do feel this is where I belong.

I wish I lived in Johannesburg; I'd go [home] every two months. Because for me, family is very important [...] my family, we are very close and that...that is probably the one reason I go back to Kenya, is my family. If all my family were here, I am not so sure if I'd be inclined to go every year as I do.

They [my parents] were supportive. When I applied to university I did not even tell my parents. I told my Dad, when I had my admission letter, I gave it to him and said I am going to Cape Town. [Wanjiru]

Hospice also highlighted the positive and freethinking atmosphere in his childhood home. As both his parents were teachers, the children were encouraged to study and develop careers.

No, they [my parents] were not [conservative]. They were very open-minded themselves, you know, like my mother would challenge anything ... in our family, people were liberal, I mean, they were thinkers. My mother would challenge anything [...] posed by society that does not make sense. My father was exactly the opposite [...] he was like, you know ... why not learn from other people... [Hospice]

He recalled the status and role divisions within in the family and remarked that these did not correspond with what he has observed in French and South African families. He mentioned how he tried to follow the habits instilled by his parents.

...in our house, my father used to wash dishes, you know. Ah...there was not the woman in one room there, you know. Because even in France, the people used to do that, you have, you have to eat, immediately the men would go into one room and light their cigars, while the women made coffees in the kitchen. You know, our family has been different, you know, my brother lives in Madagascar, the other one lives in France, my sister in the Cayman Islands...ah...and I have cousins who were in the World Bank all their lives and people all over, all over, you know. And in our family everybody does everything, so they won't be sitting down watching the news while Phil [his wife] is in the kitchen doing all...everything by herself. So it is very remote for me because I [have] the tendency to do something, to be involved, to help. And that's how we have done it. Other families' side is different, it is like, you know, the lady has to take care of the house, you know. The roles are clearly defined. [Hospice]

Hospice's parents have both died but he revealed truly transnational relationships with his siblings. They did not see each other often but communicated regularly through electronic mail. At least one of his brothers had been to visit him in Cape Town. Hospice married Phyllis an English-speaking white South African. The distinguishing aspects of this relationship were first the fact that it was interracial and second that it was highly visible. Upon a question whether people questioned their union, he remarked thus:

Well, ah...I really don't know, I mean what I am getting at [...] is that it is still not the norm here... Let me tell you, you will find it very, very funny...ah...people...observe...are they happy. [...] You know, I have seen various cases of people who are related, who know me, or who know Phil, who know Phil's cousin or her aunt, you know, people who come, from overseas, who...they like...they are surprised...they [we] are happy. They are surprised they are happy, I mean, there must be something right there, how can that work, you know. It is like...it works because, because we are just ourselves, you know. I don't think...ah...I will be happier with somebody else [...]

There was a woman at the University of Cape Town who told me what has Phyllis done to deserve a man, that man...ah...and I said, what do you mean? [...]...and she said well, we don't go and get top of the range white men. [Hospice]



Phyllis' family was a source of social relationships and support. Even though it was a large transnational extended family, the members had regular contact with each other. Hospice was also often asked for advice or support.

Phyllis' brother, we get on very well, you know [?] talks to me all the time and [told] me later there was some friction [...] how was he going to be accepted. I am going there and people get to know you and suddenly they open their heart because they realise I don't really care [what he] looks like. [...] I am just myself, you know...because Phil belongs to a huge family. [...] Phil's cousin from England came out, they were getting married here. So they came from the UK and get married. We went to this big ah...wedding and [...] there was a girl who...I mean...you know...ah, she was not known to the family [...] because her father had a child outside and nobody knew about it. So she was the outcast, almost. So, Phil's cousin called me and said, Hospice, you know, look after that girl, you know, when you are there... [Hospice]

Judith and Fred's kinship relationships and networks were also active. They had regular contact with their families in the Kisii province in Kenya and visited them at least once a year.

[...] at the end of the day what I have encountered does not change what I am. I will try and live as close as possible to the culture. But when I am at home, like when I go home in December, I go back, it gives me, [...] pride to know that I have something that is solid that I can believe in, that shows that [it] works, that it has worked very fine up till now.

Nevertheless, it was also a time of great uncertainty and unhappiness for Fred who felt that perhaps he should return to Kenya.

My dad was encouraging. [He said] I think you must try and get your papers and stay [?] So I changed my mind and say yeah it is a good idea. [...] So I mean, in a sense it is almost like I am opening doors for other future prospects. My brothers' kids have got to come to university, so rather than send them to India ... South Africa has a fine system of education. So they rather come under my wing [...] so I look at it from a broader perspective

As mentioned before, Kisii society is patriarchal and clan-based. As such, Judith and Fred's narratives revealed more customary-based perceptions, values and beliefs. For example, even though Fred owned land and a house, he would still return to his father's house when he went home. They would not stay with Judith's family at all and she had to ask permission should she want to stay at her parent's house.

Even now when we go home for holidays, we go to my dad's house. I have my bedroom and that is where we all stay. My kids can sleep in my brother's house; I have got my own bedroom. My brother has built his house; he has not moved to his house, he still stays at my dad's house.

Upon a question whether these habits were customary, Fred answered that all families adhered to them. He went on to explain that he came from a very traditional society where kinship and community were important.

[I come from a] very traditional society. I will give you an example. My dad lost his brother three months ago. I was not there, but during the funeral it was discussed. He had [uncle] a heart problem; they needed a lot of money. So, my dad, his brothers, they had, for lack of a better word, a tribal council and they talked through it and said okay, let's tell all the men from all the people [...] Will you pick it up? Fred? [The medical bill]. That medical bill was a fortune [?]. I say you must [do it] there is no question of saying we are not going to do it. It does not happen like that, I know.

I tell you, I said to somebody I had to pay some money, they said but why. I said I have to. It still exists, the council, the community are proud of taking care of itself. What is your problem, it is our problem. [Fred]

Judith also confirmed the importance of kinship. She felt the elderly in South Africa were neglected by their families.

[In our community when somebody is elderly] you...get them somebody to look after them and pay that person, pay for their food, basically take over. All the children must come together and we need to talk how much money you give every month for this, then we give it. Then you get a nurse, you pay that nurse, you get somebody to cook for them. We were laughing about that court case of parents who took their kids to court...laughed at it [Judith]

Both Judith and Fred highlighted the importance of the traditional marriage ceremony. Although they had a Western-style or 'white wedding' as they called it, it was not perceived as equal to the traditional one. Within traditional society, the latter normally provides the structure for the inherent obligations and rules of marriage.

[I paid cattle and money for Judith.] It depends on your position [what you pay] Judy's father he said, you know what, you bring what you have. You know you have a position within this culture, you bring what you have and I will accept it. We had what you call a white wedding. The traditional [wedding]..., that coincided with the exchange... with the dowry. That was done about four months prior to the actual white wedding. Even from that day of the traditional wedding, you have now built a permanent bridge, you are husband and wife. You can proceed and do whatever you want to do. [Fred]

We first like ... the...traditional [wedding]. Because most of us who are living in town, we went home and fetch the people, you [are paid for with] a cow...Traditionally Fred had paid dowry...it is called *chombe*...just like cows. Initially, I think originally, you give four-legged cows...you know, with the modern, you can give money preferably to cows. But when they negotiate, they negotiate like okay, they need ten cows and each cow is worth more than a thousand rand...you know. No, we did a [white] wedding ... [But] after the lobola [dowry] you are as good as married. [Judith] (Also note excerpts in section 3.4.2.2, Chapter 3.)

Judith also mentioned customary behaviour and traditions in respect of children which involved close family. She adhered to these customs even though she was living in South Africa.

The tradition that we have is like.... when a kid is born, you have to invite your aunts to come and see the baby...and you provide the meat...I don't know what they call it here. [...] And then...when they grow the first hair [...] your mother in law must cut that and you buy a blanket. It is another big ceremony...it is very costly...it is expensive because you have to buy each a wrap or a blanket...you know. I bought the *matombi* [when I took the last baby home]. I bought the *matombi*...wraps. I have never seen them here. My aunties, they came [...] getting together for a meal. For my first two we did that...but even when the young one went off [home]...we did that. [Judith]

A universal topic in the narratives of the Kenyan research participants was the importance of marriage, specifically traditional marriage. Benson, Joan and Jean mentioned the importance of the traditional marriage ceremony, the fact that it was still practised among family members and how people still return home to be married.

There are two parts, the way we do it. There will be a church wedding. But is always the issue of, the lobola issue, the dowry. So you do that. That's a wedding on its own. In my country traditional [marriage] is recognised in a court of law and by the clan. Traditional values can never take precedence over the law. Traditional laws are recognised. Yes, [we would all get married like this]. My sisters did that. My brother did that. [Kenyan] people when they want to get married they still go back home. [Benson]

As for their motivation as to why they would prefer a traditional and Western-style wedding, Joan and Jean inferred that it was a beautiful ceremony that was seeing a revival in Kenya. Joan's motivation to also have a traditional ceremony when she gets married was perhaps more personal since her mother and father had a second traditional wedding when her father concluded his dowry payments. In Joan's narrative she highlighted the

inherent prescriptions and expectation in respect of marriage and the level of involvement of family and kin.

I love traditional ones [weddings]. Oh no, it's lovely. There are so many rituals. My parents actually had a white wedding. Then after a while, because my dad never finished paying [dowry], he had to come back and pay it. And the way he did it, he combined it with a traditional wedding. So they had this traditional wedding and it was beautiful. It was so nice. I mean there are so many rituals they do: You take your husband and he comes and chooses from among ten brides, you know, you can't see them, they are all covered up and you are suppose to pick from the body shape and you know. And if you can't pick from that, they are all covered up, maybe you ask can may I see the toes, you know and can I see...and you keep looking, you can't find, maybe you don't know your wife[?]. It is really, really... ritualistic, it is very symbolic. [Joan]

You find the older, the grannies and all that ...They keep telling you ...the problem is you went and read so much, you went and studied so much and now you can't find a husband. Because for them the thing is, get married and have children. I mean, if you have a job, well go and do that, but it is not the most important thing for them. So, when I go home my mother is very concerned. Even now my mother has started, you should get married, have children. She never used to be like that, but now I think, the pressure is coming and she is thinking oh, my age, she is old, she might never get married this late. With my parents, if I want to marry there won't be too much [sic] problems, because for them, foreigners have no culture. They think, I mean, should I bring somebody whose culture they know [is] competing with mine, there will be a big problem [...]

Dowry would still apply to me. Oh yeah, it would. I won't do it, but it would. It would be expected, unless I elope. It is probably what I will do. No, but if I want to have a real wedding, you know, this kind of, the fairytale stuff, believe me, bride price, will be a big part of it. I think the notion of bride price was, I think, a very good notion. It was very nice. But then unfortunately it has potentially the power to enrich people. Initially the bride price was about to bring two families together, to get to know each other. You just don't go and get married, you know. And it is an appreciation from the groom's family for taking this child away from you. Because literally, the way it goes when you get married you join the man's family. And then, it just took something like symbolic, you know, ten cows or ten goats or something. Now, it has become so financial, so economic. [Joan]

Jean said she decided on a traditional wedding because she felt she had an obligation to her family. She was also keen to do it because it afforded her the opportunity to learn how things were done in the past. She described the marriage ceremony in much detail.

[...] [I] did it for my parents and the clan, [...] you know...ah relatives, and you know my grand-parents, great uncles and aunts. They are all village based. My grand-parents they live in the village in the rural areas, so to speak. And ah...so the traditional part of marriage is more for them. I mean, they still come to the white wedding, because there is a big reception, everybody comes to that. [...]

The traditional wedding is ah...it is done in three parts. The first part is the boy informs the girl that he wants to marry and he courts her and then he wants to present himself and states his intention. And, the way they used to do that, is that the boy would show up at the girl's house with [...] his friends and just, you know, generally say that ah...I don't know, whatever language they use, flower language, you know she is a flower, and he is a god and he likes you. [...] He is allowed to come with his parents at that time as well. And he asks for a date ah...when they can come and you know, make the formal presentation...formal...ask for her hand formally. [...] In Kikuyu it literally means to plant a spear, state your claim.

And the second ceremony is when they come now to discuss the whole dowry thing. And that is another ceremony. But now, that involves the elders. Basically they discuss the girl's side and what they want, whatever. And then the third ceremony is when they actually have...now they agreeing. You never finish paying dowry, apparently, by the way. Because it really is supposed to be a gift to the girl's family for bringing her up and ah...if you...if they say you should bring fifty cows and you bring fifty cows, it is actually an insult [...]

Then you have this traditional meeting where the girl wears a short dress and you wear ah...its got an inner shift which is off the shoulder, and then you have an outer shift which is made out of leather with [...]cowry shells. [These are] old garments and you have hoop earrings...people they really used to put that thick bone or whatever in the earlobe to make it really long. Now we just wear big hoops to, you know, infer the thing. And then you'd wear like a tiara type of thing. The hoop earrings, I think, are only worn by unmarried women as a symbol that you are not married. And they have a ceremony where the girl hides herself. She has hidden herself in this long dress, like sheets of fabric. And ah...you have five people who do that and they parade them in front of the groom and he has to identify which one is his bride. And ah...if he identifies the wrong woman, he gets a penalty and so on and so forth until he manages to pick the correct woman and then after she unveils herself. There is a lot of celebration.

And then they have what they call [...] the traditional cake, sort of a cutting ceremony ... and the older women... and the songs...and that's the ceremony...yeah... and then you have the traditional white wedding. We had our ceremony in May and we got married in August. It is definitely later. [Jean] (Also excerpt in section 3.4.2.2, Chapter 3).

Through their narratives though, it became clear that most research participants did not have direct monetary obligations towards their families. Most said that their parents and immediate family members were in business for themselves and doing quite well. In some instances they indicated that other financially successful siblings or close family members were responsible for remittances if needed.

I am very lucky I don't have to support my family. My dad runs his own business, everybody is happy. Having said that, I do, but it is not required. The interesting thing is what I would do, my dad would want something from here, I would buy it.

But when I go home, [I would go to Nairobi with my dad?] and he would say let's buy something for the kids. So it's both ways. [Fred]

My dad runs a restaurant and my mom has a Habitech [sewing] shop [...]. I don't have to support my family...No...we have cousins that are also doing well... [Judith]

[...] my parents are not dependant on me. I don't have siblings that are dependant on me, so there is no expectation for me to provide for my family, for example. And ah...from a societal point of view, I don't feel...if it is there...I don't feel it because I...I grew up in the city and my parents subsequently moved. I don't feel like that I...have established strong ties with any one community in Kenya to feel that there exists such expectation. [Wanjiru]

No, no [I don't have a big extended family]. I am lucky that I don't. I really don't. My brother, the one, is a colonel in the French army, the other one is a business man. My sister is in the Cayman Islands. We only speak periodically to each other. My parents are passed away no. [...] That is pretty much it, which is not the case at all, not the norm. The norm is to have the extended family to support. [Hospice]

This seemingly contradicts the idea among migration scholars that the relationship between migrants and kin-relations back home is defined by remittances. Adepoju (2006:38) remarks: *"Remittances are an enduring linkage between migrants and their areas of origin at family, community and national level"*. Van Dijk et al (2001:23) have a similar point of view: *"Until recently, relations between migrants and their home areas were almost solely viewed in terms of remittances, i.e. a one-way flow of money and goods from the migrant to the family back home"*. In a study among migrants from Ghana in Amsterdam, it was found that remittances ranged from money, goods such as electrical equipment, medicine, material support for the elderly or when someone is ill, education and funerals (ibid).

In her analysis of translocal urban-rural relations in Lilongwe, Malawi, Barbara Rohregger (2006:1158) makes an interesting observation: *Whereas richer urbanites are able to pursue a double strategy of investing here and there, carefully shifting their resources between town and the village in trying to maintain and renew their social relations, the poorer and very poor are usually not able to recur to this strategy"*. Furthermore, the very notion of professional mobility negates the idea that in the case of the research participants, their obligations towards family and kin can be likened to more complex situations such as West-African traders in New York, Ghanians in Amsterdam or Mexicans in Los Angeles

However, closer examination of the research participants' narratives revealed that most, if not all, were engaged in the payment of remittances of some sort or helping and supporting family members. Joan went to great lengths and expense to attend the graduation ceremony of her sister in Nairobi. Hospice, told of how his mother, after the death of his father, turned to him for advice about property and money. At one time he had his three young nieces, all students from Benin, living with him and his wife in their apartment in Sea Point. Judith assisted a cousin financially. Fred, against all odds, returned home to be at the bedside of a dying nephew and to attend his funeral. Consider also how Fred paid the medical expenses of his uncle or how he was prepared to act as a link between family members who may want to study in Cape Town. Wanjiru was initially very cynical about the idea of remittances but admitted that it existed.

All the research participants were taking or sending gifts home, this included among other things, electronic or scarce products. In fact, before returning home for holidays, the research participants usually embarked on extensive shopping expeditions. In fact, when Fred's luggage was stolen on a Christmas trip home a couple of years ago, he reported a financial loss in the region of R18 000. Besides personal items and clothes, his luggage contained gifts for his family in Kisii. Conversely, family members would often send traditional food products to migrants either through the postal service or by courtesy of an intermediary. This might include coffee, tea, cassava, maize meal for porridge, spices, et cetera.

[There is] interconnectivity. Well in a sense... [in terms of] family business. You know...ah...when my mom was, was retired, she's got properties here and there. So she talked to me, you know, what do I do, I want to sell this. And I am like why don't you sell your property, enjoy yourself and so on... Everybody [in the family] was against the idea obviously. You got people saying, I mean, why you encourage such a thing. [Hospice]

It is there [the support system] [...] like, for instance, the other time my cousin was trying to go to school. I sent money from here for my relatives. Basically I just tell my brother or their sisters, give him [money]...I've got an account... [...]

To some extent it is expected, if you have [money]...because if you look at it this way...if you don't help this person, this person is going to be a bother for the rest of your life. So if he can [...] just go through school, get a job, then that is a problem solved, that is a problem off my hands. When they don't have an income, in the long run, they will still come back to you, so you better just do it. [Judith]

Oh, absolutely [some people do have to support those back home] and more so if you are in another country. Because, the... idea, even...whether it is real or

perceived, mostly perceived, is that you are earning a lot of money outside your country and everybody at home thinks they are all struggling and they are all poor and you are rich and... Some people, a lot of people have those expectations and I know, friends of mine here that, you know, have those obligations. They have to pay [for] things for their siblings, for their cousins and maintain their parents. It is very real. [Wanjiru]

Perhaps in the absence of fully-fledged support, the emphasis should fall on intangible support, i.e. moral obligations and the fulfilment of expectations. These are the unspoken elements, the inherent agreements and understanding in relationships and networks of kinship. Rohregger (2006:1157) remarks: *"The importance of trans-local support is not related to the material dimension only. Providing support has also a strong symbolic dimension, aiming at maintaining and re-assessing one's membership and position in the lineage and the village, and as such re-new one's entitlements and access to land, labour, material support and care: 'You support them in order to make sure that despite all those years in town you are still one of them. Otherwise they may say, we do not know you anymore!'"* [her emphasis]. Furthermore: *While there is a discernible strong obligation towards the rural core family, the obligation is largely defined in terms of individual moral obligations that transcend reciprocal arrangements or expectations, i.e. people do not expect anything back in exchange for their support* (2006:1162).

Returning home to be married; the wish to have a traditional marriage ceremony; adhering to customs in respect of babies and the elderly, visiting parents once a year, regular contact with siblings - these are not signs of a breakdown in kinship relations. If anything, it shows that maintaining family ties and networks were meaningful to the research participants. These structures were support systems. They formed an integral part of the research participants' identity construction and their sense of belonging. Above all, these ties were a buffer against loneliness and isolation. Some of the research participants said even though they still missed their families when they were living in Birmingham, New York and London, they were still happier there because there were large African communities. There they must have felt some of the fellowship that so eluded them in Cape Town.

In their study among West African migrants, Stoller & Tahmaseb McConatha (2001:663) determined that the absence of family can be directly linked to feelings of well-being. They remark: *"isolation limits the range of activities and interactions in which people can participate; it also reduces feelings of control and competence...sustaining such social and emotional support systems as family may diminish some of the negative effects of*



*immigration*". Nwadiora (1996:118; also see Stoller & Tahmaseb McConatha 2001:663) also stresses the fact that the group and specifically the family constitute a major source of identity for Africans. The cohesive family, say Stoller & Tahmaseb McConatha (2001:663-664) is an ideal that eludes Africans in a strange land. On the other hand it is also the driving force behind the maintenance of active ties.

Adepoju (2006:31) found that generally speaking, migrants, especially first-time migrants tried to maintain tradition, culture and values: "*This behavioural pattern attests to an enduring feature of African migration dynamics: that a migrant rarely severs ties with home, hoping ultimately to return*". The research participants never perceived their absence from their home country, family and kin as permanent. Some of them had already returned at the time of writing and for those who remained, their eventual return always loomed on the horizon.

I own land. My neighbour is farming it. I am renting it out. But in future, when I go back home, I will settle on my little farm in Kisii. [Fred]

#### 5.4.1.2 Relationships and networks of friendship

Let's just say if there were no other foreigners and I was the only foreigner, I would be purely alone. [...]Because I have spoken to other foreigners who have said exactly...you know when you are in a bad situation, you know, you always want someone who understands your situation and because I've got this other couple of supports, my fellow foreigners, that is fine. I am not lonely. But if you move that group and you leave me here in South Africa it would be absolutely terrible for me. Actually...I don't....it would be completely terrible. [Joan]

In respect of French and North African migrants in Montreal, Fortin (2002:76) asks "*[what are] the issues related to belonging and to social organisation in the context of migration? How do individuals connect in a social environment? How are spaces of sociability created? Who takes part in these different environments?*" The discussion above about kinship relationships and networks has already shed some light on how migrants structure social relationships. Overall, these relationships translated into an effective network.

The focus now turns to friendship connections. The research participants' personal relationships and networks of friendship are discussed in terms of effective and extended

networks. Following Leblanc (2002) and Fortin (2001) the impact of categorical and structural relationships where relevant, is also taken into account.

Leblanc (2002) examines the influence of structuralised or institutional networks on the construction of 'networks of communality'. These networks are, "*informal networks that figure in everyday interaction as informal groups sharing common activities and interests*" (Leblanc 2002:127). She looks specifically at voluntary associations and the impact of categorical identities such as ethnicity and nationality in the construction and perpetuation of these associations. Leblanc subsequently examines the formation of informal groups that are in effect peripheral to these formal structures. As examples, she cites *inter alia*, prayer groups and remittance activities. She (2002:121) questions whether the categorical identities linked to institutionalised networks have any bearing on informal and peripheral networks of communality: "*categorical identities...are not significant markers that by themselves promote sociability. Rather it is shared practices centred around religion, children, and so on, that provide sociability and spaces of identification*".

This statement finds some resonance in the work of Fortin (2002:79) who examines how post-migration ties and networks reflect 'spaces of sociability'. She determined that these social ties consisted of relationships with migrants (endo - and exo group) and non-migrants. Furthermore, they were also mostly active although some temporal changes might occur. The intensity of the ties depended on the specific individual.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the research participants' friendship relationships, with the exception of Hospice, is the fact that they are all part of each other's effective network. However, it is important to note that the network had no bearing or influence on their decisions to work and live in Cape Town. Furthermore, they did not know each other in their countries of origin. In respect of Joan, Nicole and Benson there was one commonality in that they were all recruited in the United Kingdom by the same Cape Town-based company.

Well [my friends], apart from one, well, we met at interviews...when we were doing our interviews in London...for the very first time. And obviously we knew each other but I can't say we became friends. Then obviously when we came here and we had met already and so we became close here. And we are actually very close, we truly depend on each other, you know. [Joan]

At the time, Fred and Hospice were already working for the company in question. Jean and Wanjiru became part of this group through a friend of Benson's whom he had known in the United Kingdom. Haydee and Judith were members of the network by default. Haydee, Nicole's sister was included when they bought an apartment together and Judith is Fred's wife. The one other significant commonality was that with the exception of Hospice, Nicole and Haydee, the remainder of the group were all Kenyan. One other important aspect was that the Kenyan members did not socialise when they were in Kenya. Joan remarked:

You know, it is not that we don't want to, but on the aeroplane or at the airport you go...yes, here's my number, let's get together. But it never happens. Once you are there, the extended family...you know, that African thing of family...takes over...and that's it until you leave again...you are busy...[Joan]

This then is, in a manner of speaking the primary effective network. Three other members of the core group declined to be interviewed or were unavailable for this research project; two were from Kenya. The dynamics of the primary group have changed slightly and this in turn, had an influence on the intensity of the relationships. Benson was offered a lucrative job in Kenya by a South African soft drinks company. Nicole accepted a position with an affiliated company in Burundi and Haydee returned to Johannesburg. Joan was often seconded to countries where the company has affiliates. Hospice left to pursue new business opportunities. Jean lamented the disintegration of the group, saying that it contributed to her sense of isolation:

[...] you know, all the people I have met over the years, you know and we had like one or two years knowing each other and I really had quite a nice support group, sort of...sort of thing. A lot of them left, Nicole, left ...I mean, so many of them like just moved on, you know, they moved to other...they went back to their countries and moved to Jo'burg, you know, so...slowly and slowly...And for me it takes time to build up that sort of relationship, but it is very necessary for me, I mean for my personality. So this year I am really struggling, because I don't have ah...just probably, just one or two friends left...ah...with that...with whom I have that intimate...you know, like have two or three hour coffee or dinner...just talk about stuff. And I need that and I don't have it. But I...am I really struggling with [it]...yeah. [Jean]

The primary effective network was partly linked to the research participants' place of work. Fortin (2001:79) certainly found the workplace a significant source of societal links for professionally active individuals. However, Poros (2001:245) writes that the labelling of personal ties, specifically within such contexts as the place of employment can be vague

and problematic: *“For instance, a workplace friend might be a quite different kind of tie from a childhood friend, and thus provide different kinds of information or resources. Distinguishing ties based on the channel through which they are related, that is the way two people meet, or the organizational context of a relationship, helps to correct for some of these ambiguities. This distinction also clarifies why some ties are strong and generate trust, while others are weak and generate new information ...organizational ties, which are typically weak ... exist when individuals are embedded in organizations or institutions... organizational ties need to be distinguished because they refer to the mediating structure of the organization, where colleagues, co-workers, supervisors, and even friends, family, and acquaintances relate to each other”.*

In the research participants' case, Benson, Nicole, Joan, Fred and Hospice formed an effective friendship network within their place of work. They typically had tea or lunch together in the cafeteria or attended work functions together. One other key member of the primary effective network, who did not take part in the research, occupied a position of power in the company. Through this person they had access to non-sensitive information which could have had an effect on their positions in the company. At work and when they socialised after work they could pool information and strategise. When Hospice left the company, he severed almost all ties with the group. Joan tried to maintain some sort of a connection but it soon turned into a latent connection. This connection turned into a very weak tie but nevertheless, it was sometimes activated by some network members in a professional capacity to tap into Hospices' invaluable knowledge about Africa.

In a sense, the friendship-based work-relationship between Benson, Nicole, Joan and Fred sometimes acted as a buffer between them and a complex office environment. The regulated nature of the South African formal employment sector has already been described and discussed elsewhere. Suffice to highlight here that Joan, Nicole, Benson and Fred had to deal not only with their regulatory status as foreigners but also with the hostility, resistance, stereotyping and racism of fellow employees. This situation was not conducive to the formation of long-lasting or even perfunctory friendships.

[...] I have never seen and I have yet to see a time when someone would say guys, let's go for a drink and meet outside this building. This is the most ... this is the coldest environment, there are no feelings [...] I hate this environment. We come in on Monday and we leave on Friday and nobody knows anything about anybody. There is no interaction or even effort to create those social events and to say guys, you know what [...] let's all go for dinner. [Fred]

[...] Some are negative some are positive [...] they saw the human side not just 'oh, this person is from Burundi, she works here'. [...] for others it is still the same, but at the same time, also, you know, I have become open in my mind. Because in my mind I have decided I am going to enjoy this time, so I don't really pay attention to negativity, but I know it is there in that place [the office] and I have to live with it. [Nicole]

In Silicon Valley, where work relationships permeate virtually all other relationships and networks, English-Lueck (2002:139) found "*racial identity, linguistic competency, political power and class distinction [to be] still very real markers of inequality*". In Joan and her colleagues' case, all four these factors impacted on the construction of office-based friendship relations and networks. Given the circumstances, it could be assumed that the impact was one-sided, i.e. only directed towards the research participants. However, the research participants also employed the markers to situate their fellow workers. For example, in interpersonal relationships or in their description of the social dynamics in the cafeteria which is racially complex, they would often employ racial classification, i.e. blacks, coloured or white.

[...] there is a time that I did not go down to the restaurant [...] when I started, because every time I went to the restaurant, there was (sic) groupings...the whites were sitting on the one side, the coloureds on the other and the blacks on the other and even within the blacks they kept to Xhosa-speaking and Zulu-speaking. It came to confusion for me because I don't care who you are, we work in the same building so your colour, your religion, your background does not matter to me, we need to relate. [Fred]

[...] I get so disgusted when I go to that canteen at lunchtime and I see large groupings by colour. It is disturbing. Because, there are some whom [sic] would rather change things [...]. I mean it is very difficult for me to just go in the middle of a white table and seat yourself or in the middle of a black table and sit down. It is difficult. Its like you say [...] ah, this is the group I want to be in. I find it very disturbing. [...] you have a white table, a black table, a coloured table and a black foreigners table. It is not just a black table as in 'in blacks' ah, ah, all the foreigners...and I tell you, even I cannot go down for lunch because I don't have company, because I do feel very awkward. There won't be anyone to speak to you and I can't just go and sit by anyone, join people. I do have this thing about, when asking which one sits where [...], because it is already colour segregated, so you go on sitting there, you are the black person joining them.

And this, I am talking about here; it has happened to me, it has happened to all my friends. All the friends... we all discuss this, it happened to us and I know it does not make a difference, we are lower, you know. We all...we manage maybe. It just happens all the time, people, you know, you think like ah, this person is beyond that, he is not beyond that, and he'd be telling us and although I say, I mean, you

found us here, so you...most of the time you just stand up and say excuse me, you leave

*Cont:* No one like (sic) to be in that, that situation, so I figured, I finally discovered, you know what, I am better off just going down with the foreigners who are going to at least speak English... [Joan]

In the company where Joan and her colleagues were employed, their perception of the locus of political power in South Africa translated into hierarchical classification based on ethnicity, i.e. Xhosa, Zulu and then the remainder of ethnic groups such as Sotho, et cetera. This hierarchical classification became quite complex since they had to assign positions to other racial groupings as well. Here, white South Africans received precedence over coloured South Africans.

In terms of class distinction it was noted that the research participants differentiated on the basis of a more superior education, more exposure to the 'outside world' such as having travelled, working or studying abroad. This differentiation was more often than not employed towards black South Africans.

There is (sic) a few people, mainly people who within the structures who were involved out there, who have been exposed to different cultures, with them we [...] have fantastic relationships. [Fred]

The issue of language has also already been dealt with elsewhere. Suffice to note here once again that language was employed by predominantly black South Africans as a tool of exclusion. Research participants reported that during social interactions, black South Africans would often switch to Xhosa. On the other hand, Nicole, Joan and Hospice, when he was still working for the company, would converse in French as a means of exclusion. Fortin (2002:85,86) examined how language and accent impacted on identity construction and belonging in Montreal and determined that '*language behaviour varies from one person to another*'. As an identity marker, language could be employed to blend in or to deliberately construct and maintain boundaries.

Race, class, language and political power certainly had an impact on the personal relationships of Jean, Wanjiru, Judith and Hospice in this newfound environment. Bear in mind that Jean and Wanjiru studied at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and that they were later employed by research institutions affiliated to UCT.

So if they [the white male lecturers] are meeting at the club after the lectures for a drink, you are not gonna be invited...and we did use to go down there with students, to go and sit at the club and have a drink. But it was so...I don't know...and we had like after school games, sometimes we played like touch rugby...but it did not happen often enough for you to form like a relationship with people. So, and once I got out of that like university sort of environment...here at MCM, I have been two, three, for like three years. Now, no offence...I mean...no...no one I can phone. Nobody I can phone and say meet for lunch. There used to be a couple but they have since moved to other departments. [Jean]...

[...] I think that...you know...if...if maybe if I had stayed at UCT in the department that I was before...because now I am in a very isolated department, which is predominantly white male...I probably would have formed more meaningful relationships with black South Africans. Firstly I gave up and maybe they did too and partly I just...I found a group of friends that I wanted to be with and I settled down and didn't look beyond that. There could be that...you know...meeting of minds...but I think language plays a really big part.... [Wanjiru]

Additional examples which illustrate the power of language and accent as identity markers, as was noted before, were provided by Hospice, Jean and Judith. Hospice employed a language coach to help him neutralise his French accent when he spoke English. He felt that his accent made him more visible. Jean admitted to changing her English accent after she had arrived in South Africa whilst Judith felt her accent stood in the way when she called agents about renting business premises.

[...] some people are so good. I have a friend and I lift [the school-run] for her on Friday [...]. She has been so good [a] friend. You know, when I am looking for premises [for a hairdressing salon], I can, I can call. I would make the phone call and I would just be told, oh nothing available. Then she calls, she gets more info of where there are other premises...What is this?! But me I am like no, no, [this is] business ...and, and the sign is there: 'to let'. You know, it annoys me, the sign is there: 'to let'. As soon as they have picked up the accent, they know. [There are many accents here]...But when my friend calls, she will get information of where they have other places available... [Judith]

In order to deal with the situation at work, all the research participants reverted to stereotyping and joking relationships. English-Lueck emphasises that jokes or 'jibes' and stereotypes, even seemingly complimentary ones, are mechanisms that enforce superiority. The employment of stereotypes vis-à-vis foreigners has already been discussed. However, similar to English-Lueck's (2002:144,145) findings, '*anthropological folk-models – culturally patterned stereotypes of other people*' were employed by the research participants. Once again, these stereotypes were embedded in the socio-cultural context of South Africa's past and present. Examples are, *inter alia*: blacks are lazy or slow

to understand or false; whites are go-getters and honest; coloureds are friendly; English-speaking people are reserved, Afrikaans-speaking people are open, *et cetera*. Consider the following examples:

[...] there was ah...one female lecturer [...] but otherwise it was white male. And all the white males are very set in their ways. They are not racist. They are not overtly...whatever, but, you know... [Jean]

No, the Afrikaans people share more. The English are more reserved as far as I am concerned, more reserved. But when they get to know you, they want to know more. They want to know more [...]they are more inquisitive in terms of...just knowing more, they want to understand more. Ah...but Afrikaans people as far as I am concerned they are definitely more open [...] [Hospice]

The coloured people [...] they are so friendly but I can't understand how come they are social...they are friendly with everyone and I think that maybe its because they are mixed that they relate with everybody around. I don't know. I find them really friendly. I find that when you meet a genuine white friend, then you have a friend, you know, somebody you can hang out...I mean you go...you invite each other to your house and all that. [Joan]

Mitchell (1968:52) emphasises the 'superficial and perfunctory' nature of categorical relationships. He quotes from Southall's *Social Change in Modern Africa* (1961): "*It is rather a matter of external classification than of self-identification*". As mentioned above, visible characteristics such as ethnicity and race serve as a basis for categorical relationships. This is why these relationships are often stereotypical. Mitchell also noted the role and function of joking relationships as means of neutralising hostility and antagonism. English-Lueck (2002:141) states: "*Using jokes, politeness, and a sizable dose of tolerance, Silicon Valley people have created an ethos of civility, where cultural gaffes are expected and forgiven. This ethos is justified by a very real instrumentality. One never knows who might be needed for the next favour, the next job, or the next son in law*". In the case of Joan, Nicole, Benson and Fred it was equally important to maintain interpersonal relationships at work although it might not have gone as far as the next son or daughter in law. They would rather have laughed with somebody about neutral topics than have a fully fledged gloves-off conversation about something contentious. The point being that they never knew if what they said otherwise could be interpreted as culturally sensitive or discriminatory.

But any other black friends I've met, not...we are not enemies, we will say hallo, we are very amicable, very ...I had a wonderful girlfriend, although she is black, she is wonderful, just wonderful [...] very rare to find those. [Joan]



While Fred was working for the company in Ghana, he had formed a relationship with a Zulu man at the Cape Town office who was peripheral to any of the black groupings at work. The reasons being that first he was perceived as 'coloured' because he had a Scottish ancestor and second because his ethnic affiliation was Zulu – the main groupings at work were all Xhosa-speaking. This colleague invited Fred and Judith for their first South African *braai* (barbeque). Since a barbeque in Kenya is a communal affair, they found the situation quite different from what they expected. (Note the excerpt in section 3.4.2.5, Chapter 3):

[My colleague and friend] he is a mixture of Zulu and Scottish.[...]Yes [he is related from the Dunn's from the shipwreck] John Dunn, his great-great grandfather who had six Zulu wives or something. [A] Very interesting history. [...] So, anyway, he called me on the Saturday and said we are having a braai at my house and why don't you come with your family. So he explained to me how to get to his house. [...] So we had a braai and so on. [Fred]

[...] when we moved in [...] we were invited to another guy's house...a *braai*. Everything was just shocking me. I mean, when I have a *braai*, my friends come with all the meat [already] there...this guy goes, just bring your meat, braai it and eat it yourself. Me, I am in shock...It is called a '*bring and braai*'. And there was this black couple ...it took me by surprise...There was this black couple; they were seated there with nothing, because they had brought pasta salad. So we had brought enough, so we shared our meals...I mean, that was the first time that I am like....I have seen people packing food in the lunchboxes...I mean, I am not used to this thing...I mean, when I bring you meat, it is for you to *braai* and what remains is for you to keep, not for me to carry off. I mean, that's weird. [...] [Judith]

Being quite a social person Fred went to great lengths to explore avenues of communality and maintain an 'ethos of civility' with his work colleagues. He really tried to bridge the divide between sociability at work and home. But Fred and Judith felt used by their newfound South African friends, mainly because there was no reciprocity. Joan remarked that South Africans would typically only socialise with foreigners if there was a social event of some kind.

When you with, work with the blacks you are friends in the office, after that, that's it. I tell you Fred ...Fred is a socialite; he wanted to be friendly with everybody. So [...] he invites everybody to his house, the very big nice house, he invites everyone to his house. They always come, come, come. I don't know...he said one day, he said, how come I am never invited to their houses? And it was like a clear statement, you know, we are coming because you invited us, I mean, they probably did not want to be there, but probably they did not want to be rude. And he just stopped [...] [Joan]

What I discovered was that it is typical South African thing to ... I only knew one person, he came with somebody else. [...] so we are chatting, a phone call comes and you can hear he says 'oh I am here, here'. And later somebody else comes. Before long, from two people, you end up with ten people in your house. I am being hospitable, our culture is simple, if you have guests, you are hospitable. I pull out my drinks, place meat on the grill, and then I cater for ten people. They used to come, without notice. [...] Friday they all come and we will have fun and the group started growing and growing. But it was one way; it was always at my house. Then one day my wife said how come none of these guys have ever invited us for a braai to their house or even said let's go out for dinner or something. It is always at our house, because I come with my drinks from Kenya so they new there was drinks at my house and they will come and poor me will just jump into the shops and bring some meat and we will have a braai, whatever. So I said to my wife, you know what, let's end it. I knew they were coming on Friday, so on Friday I took my family out. When I came back on Monday they said, where were you, we were looking for you. The next Saturday I made myself unavailable and very slowly that group died off until they were never invited to my house again. [Fred]

But this is so weird. When we came, we had so many people at Dolphin Beach from here, friends. You know, they just will come 'oh I am here'. I knew so many locals, really, because like every Friday I would have more than ten people in my house. [...] This happened for like two months and I told Fred, you know what - I don't want to see those people in my house. I don't know where they live, but they come here every other day, they eat, drink...I am not interested. Most of them are Fred's colleagues. They come, they invite their friends. You know, you know two local people, then they invite the other...'oh we are here'...and people would just come. But they would never, not even once, nobody...I don't know where they live... [Judith]

Fred was very critical of the fact that the company where he worked did not have a way of integrating new employees. Realising that nothing would be forthcoming from management's side, he established an informal network to socially integrate his own team.

I was embarrassed the other day, we were sitting over lunch with some ladies and I said by the way I have never seen you, who are you? She said no, no it is my second day at this company. [...] Then it hit me, first that company has no formal way of introducing new employees. [...] This black Managers Forum, or whatever it is, they should meet and say guys, this month we are dealing with A, B, C, D and we are hosting a cocktail to introduce new people and to socialise.

The manager in Kenya [previous position] at least twice a year she or he would have a braai at home and invite employees and office managers [...] what it did was to draw you closer together. So my wife knew everybody else's wife or husband or whatever and at the end of the day if I had a problem or was struggling or something happened, they all knew my house, we all knew where everybody else came from. [...] There was so much social interaction. [...]

What I have tried to do with my own group, my own group we are extremely tight, we are actually the envy of the rest of them. I told them, every month we go for lunch [...] I don't just need to see you; I need to know more about you yourselves.

The basic actions of fitting into a company structure and forming office-based relationships were full of the pitfalls of the uncertainty of work in South Africa. For all intents and purposes the research participants bought into the *status quo* of South Africa's socio-economic and political reality. They reverted to markers of inequality that are deeply embedded in the classification systems of Apartheid. These systems are still engrained and perpetuated in the social consciousness of South Africa and form some of the undercurrents of the new South African identity. English-Lueck (2002:141) remarks in respect of Silicon Valley: *"There is a great deal of ambivalence about cultural diversity, and this ambivalence is played out in both gross and subtle discriminatory actions. Racism and culturism, traditional mechanisms for controlling social relations have not disappeared from the landscape"*.

With the exception of Hospice, the research participants' primary effective network is currently still active, albeit at a distance. Benson, Nicole and Haydee are contacted regularly through e-mail or telephonically. When Benson got married and when his first child was born, photographs were circulated electronically; similarly when Joan's younger sister recently graduated. This is in line with current migration network research and findings. For example, in respect of friendship networks in London, Conradson and Latham (2005:295) observed: *"Despite their geographical relocation, individuals actively continue to maintain their friendships, whether through face-to-face contact with people in London or by email, telephone and letter with more distant others"*.

Branching out from the individuals in the primary effective group were numerous extended friendship relationships and networks. Conradson and Latham (2005:291) highlight the relationship between mobility, friendship networks and their subsequent embeddedness in multiple locations. All of the research participants had friendships that were geographically dispersed, some even straddling different continents. Some of these friendships originated in Cape Town through contact with other professional migrants. It is significant that these social ties were exo-group and endo-group [ethnic and national].

Nicole did not have widespread effective and extended friendship networks. She was in fact very unhappy in Cape Town. In an attempt to end her isolation she joined the women's' soccer club at her place of work. She also asked her sister Haydee to move in with her.

I have friends from Burundi and my sister. No, [I am talking about ]“friends friends”. For me a friend is somebody I can call for anything [...], that is what friends do [...]. Each friendship is important. [...] I have my group and then I have friends on the side. Like, I have friends that we are planning to go to Burundi by car. I have a friend, how old is she, I think she is twenty five; she is the one I talk to about my love life. At work I have Joanna. I have a friend who works for Old Mutual [...] he is from Zambia, a very nice guy. And he also wants to do the trip, so we are organising. There is also this French couple who work in Burundi.

When Haydee completed her university degree, Nicole activated the network link with her friend at Old Mutual in order to secure employment for her sister. Haydee, as mentioned before, was well-integrated in South African society. Her own effective and extended friendship networks included South Africans of all groups including an old school friend. She mentioned that friendship groups on campus were less integrated than expected. Friendship ‘across colour lines’ did occur but for those involved it was an all or nothing situation. She explained that individuals would often leave their formerly ‘white’ or ‘black’ friends in order to form an interracial friendship. This would often lead to that person immersing himself in ‘the other’ culture, in effect becoming ‘one of them’.

Jean said she did not have many friends apart from those in the primary effective network. When it came to friends on whom she could really count for support, she could name only two. They shared one commonality, i.e. both had met her family. She used to socialise with Nicole whom introduced her to the company’s soccer club. Even after Nicole had left the company, Jean still played for the team. She also saw Joan regularly. Joan would often cook traditional food for members of the primary effective network or Jean would bring fish home from her research expeditions and invite everybody for a meal. In terms of an extended network, Jean had quite a few relationships. Before, when she was living with housemates all over Cape Town, she had what she referred to as “*a nice little rainbow nation type of thing*”. Some of these friendships have endured even though some of the friends lived abroad. For Jean, her neighbours hardly ever featured when she discussed her extended network. This is perhaps typical of South African society which was perceived by the research participants as insular or closed-off.

I had my own like little network of friends and there was ah...my former housemates...it is just actually... is not a network...two people. One is my former housemate [...] my mom came to visit for my graduation [...] he met her [...] if something happens to me he must [...] get in touch with them. And ah...the other person is Sarah, who is my best friend; she got married to a Kikuyu. [...]...she met

my mom and the family [...]...she could have also [been] like my next of kin, type of thing. But other than that, there is no one, you know, so if something happens, I don't even know if my supervisor, she'd have all this information, but I don't even know if she would know where to start. [Jean]

So the...I did not see much of my neighbours [...] no...nobody comes knocking at your door with a pie or cake saying welcome to the neighbourhood. But again...you know, you don't...you know, if you bump into each other in the parking area it is hello, hello, hello. [Jean]

Joan's friendship relationships and networks reflected the racial classifications mentioned before. There was, however, one exception, i.e. a South African woman who joined the company at the same time as Joan. True to type, this relationship was also described in "categorical terms", e.g. ethnicity, race and gender. Joan said that generally, black South Africans did not reach out and that she did not know why. She thought perhaps they did not like to go to restaurants or perhaps they could not afford to go out.

Because I am black I can say this. And I have seen this, the people I have made friends with, the people I go to their houses. Ok fine, [they are] black foreigners, all my circles are black foreigners. Then, the next one, whites, mainly Afrikaans. I mean I am thinking about when I was buying my house, who I consulted, who I talked to, who told me all this. And these are people who don't even work in the same department [at work] you know. So which means its not circumstances that forced them to become 'pally-pally'. [...] It's a comfort, you actually can be really good friends. We share problems, our problems are shared and I do have, don't get me wrong, I do have black friends. In fact I actually have only one black South African friend, friend. On week-ends [...] we go to each others houses. [Joan]

But unfortunately for us also, you don't get to know exactly what their motivation is because they don't reach out. They don't reach out. I tell you, the people don't reach out. And this is the irony. I can tell you who my friends are. My best friends...they all white [...]. I don't mean this in a bad way but I mean, I have come close to go out with somebody here, the person was Afrikaans. I am not...never met any black guy [...] who would even consider me... you know what I mean? I don't know...And I will never understand the position, but I mean...you never up close enough [...] [Joan]

In contrast to most of the other research participants, Joan could describe all her neighbours. Initially she said that she was ashamed as she could not provide any details about them. These relationships included individuals from across the board but they were superficial at best since Joan travelled a lot. However, when she was home, she had regular interaction with them and from time to time they would even socialise.

Hospice and Wanjiru echoed some of Joan's sentiments about black South Africans.

[...] connecting with people is easy for me, as an individual it is very easy, it is something I do naturally. Ah...getting to know people at a deeper level...the black community has been very difficult, because it is not open, because I only reach a point where I can only have compassion... It is a turning point, you know, when you reached that point, you could not go any further. [...] A social basis has not worked for me. I have tried. You know that I move in a small circle. I have tried. I sit on different boards [...] and there are some black people on those boards and each time I try [over] coffee or... it is too difficult. There is no meeting point [...] they dwell on the past. I can't dwell on the past. [Hospice]

The black people though that I am friends with are not South African. I think that is where it is very different, the experience of living in Cape Town. That's why it is different. For example...a white person coming to South Africa from another country and...a black person coming from another country. They experience it different...[...] in the sense that you are even less accepted by black South Africans than you are, by other people in South Africa. [...] Which is strange...I...I don't even have an answer to that. I ask my friends, do you know black South Africans and...and in my circle of friends, nobody has a close South African...we have acquaintances...I happen to know a lot of South Africans, black South Africans, but most people don't have close, like close, close friends that are black South Africans.

[...] I am at...I am at a point where I feel that...ah...that I can choose my friends and I can decide who I will be friends with, whether they are black, white, it does not matter. I choose my friends. So, I stick with people that I feel most comfortable with, regardless of what they might be. [...] But I think also, after you have tried so hard, you get tired and you just think oh well I did my bit, and I don't have to do it anymore. [Wanjiru]

Wanjiru also remarked that apart from those in her primary effective friendship group, she did not really socialise with Kenyans:

I have said this to some Kenyans and they are not very impressed with me, but I said, just because you are Kenyan does not mean you are a friend. You could have been my next door neighbour in Kenya and we would not have been friends because we have nothing in common. So my friendships now and my...my special relationships are not really based on an, us and them kind of thing. They are just different people that I want to hang out with. [Wanjiru]

In analysis, the research participants' relationships and networks of friendship show that they are inevitably linked to the socio-cultural reality of South Africa. The research participants employed specific markers of identity to make sense of this reality, build and maintain interpersonal connections and thus create some sense of belonging. Conradson and Latham (2005:294-295) argue that friendship is an important facet in the process of self-identification: *"As such, and especially because friendship is by definition a relationship founded upon choice, an individual's friendship networks are something that*

*must be tended and nurtured. This relational 'work' is not generally carried out on the basis of some utilitarian calculus of the material returns the friendship might generate at some later date. Arguably more central are the affective dimensions of friendship; a sense of connection deriving from shared values and times together".*

#### **5.4.1.3 Institutional relationships and networks**

With reference to Pierre van den Berghe (1967) whose research focused on institutionalised racism, English-Lueck (2002:162) states *"formal, structural interactions are permitted in hierarchical, pluralistic societies in work, school, and public settings. These interactions are clearly defined, and avoid the informal, intimate domains of friendship and family. Dominant and subordinate groups 'know their places'. In this way, identity categories are clearly marked and maintained"*. As mentioned above, Mitchell (1968:51-52) highlights two types of structural relationships, i.e. work relationships and voluntary associations. Following Leblanc (2002), it has also been argued that institutionalised settings generate spaces of communality. These are informal networks which form outside of institutionalised settings.

Within this context, three institutionalised or structural settings are briefly discussed, i.e. formal work relationships with specific reference to recruitment and placement networks; voluntary associations with reference to a school and a club; an adaptive network; and religious associations. The latter two distinctions are merely to facilitate the structuring of information.

##### **5.4.1.3.1 Formal work relationships: recruitment and placement networks**

These relationships are set apart from the more personal work relationships and networks discussed above. It is given that the formal structure of work will impact on more intimate work relationships or *vice versa*. Mitchell (1968:51) remarks, *"Informal relationships among workmen modify and augment the formal pattern of relationships among them"*. Mitchell (ibid) further states that work relationships of the formal kind are *"probably the most tightly structured of all urban social relationships in the sense that the statuses and roles among workers are rigidly defined..."*

Corporate structures and the research participants' positions and roles within them were not a specific focal point in this research. However, recruitment and placement (Vertovec 2002) ought to be mentioned. Gelderblom (2006:285) remarks that recruitment agencies assist migrants with job placement and even transportation. He refers specifically to unskilled labourers but Vertovec (2002:5) extends this function to skilled and professional migrants. Vertovec (2002:6) distinguishes between schools, universities and professional recruitment organisations as possible sources of skilled migrant networks. He states "*migrant networks, especially among people who have completed degrees abroad ...show that the experience of being a foreign student significantly increases the likelihood of being a skilled migrant at a later stage*". Wanjiru who had studied at UCT had found employment at a UCT-affiliated institution and was working in South Africa at an independent foundation as a skilled migrant when this research terminated. Consider also the following remark from Jean:

I was working at the National Museum of Kenya in the Ornithology Department and they...my supervisor or my boss actually happened to be of South African descent and he is from East London and ah...he had some ties with ah the Fitzpatrick institute at UCT which is the Ornithology Department and they have this Conservation Biology programme and they had a scholarship from the McCarthy Foundation to find African students from other parts of Africa to come and do Ornithology or Conservation Biology and ah...so they contacted the Department and they were like, do you have people to recommend and so they did and we were interviewed and whatever qualified...so I was. [Jean]

Joan, Benson and Nicole were recruited by a professional recruitment organisation. Their future manager was involved at all levels of the recruitment process. Of these agencies, Vertovec (2002:6) states: "*The role of global professional associations in augmenting migration has, in many occupations, developed alongside regulatory agencies that oversee the accrediting and licensing of professional qualifications and the right to practice in different countries. Such professional and official frameworks provide an important prerequisite – and a kind of guarantee to employers – that importantly facilitates the creation of skilled migration systems*".

Poros (2001:246,247) also highlights the role of organisational ties and says very few people are true solitary migrants as most people would admit to using some sort of organisational or related network to find out about employment opportunities and conditions. However, "*professionals depend more heavily on organizational ties than do*



*most other migrants. Organizational ties play a critical role in controlling the process of selectivity for recruits, especially for recruited professionals. Formal constraints on the opportunities of immigrants to become embedded in professional organizational networks open the doors only to those who can satisfy specific requirements, such as educational degrees, certification, or licensing. External monitoring of network members is enacted primarily through organizations. This kind of monitoring lessens the risk involved in recruitment via organizational ties and preserves the occupational status of recruited professionals”.*

Vertovec (2002:6) elaborates on the role of networks of intermediaries in the lives of professional migrants. These are among others, individuals or professional organisations such as immigration specialists who check governmental regulations and procedures and interact with immigration authorities. Often they would also make sure that qualifications are in order, get involved in wage negotiations and assist with travelling and accommodation. The recruitment company involved in the employment of Joan, Benson and Nicole did all the above and more. The multinational company for which they worked also employed an immigration specialist who liaised with the recruitment company and with applicable government agencies. Typically this person would, on behalf of the research participants, apply for work-permits and their extension and/or resident applications.

This obviously made the migration process less complicated. The research participants such as Jean, Wanjiru and Hospice who had to do everything themselves, complained that the immigration process was fraught with difficulties and that the inherent element of uncertainty, for example whether an application might be approved on time, made the situation more stressful.

#### **5.4.1.3.2 Voluntary associations: a school and two clubs**

Mitchell (1968:52) suggests that the task of researchers should be to describe voluntary “*associations and institutions in relation to aspects of the social system in which they are embedded*”. The focus, however, should not just be on formal or officially recognised associations. This says Leblanc (2002:127), is why it is useful to “*examine institutionalised associations together with networks of communality. First it is helpful to move away from*

*overemphasising the distinction between formal and informal associations which often do not correspond to the associative experience*". It should also be noted that Leblanc (ibid) determined that categorical identities are not necessarily the "*basis of both associative structures and communal, everyday life practices*".

Fortin (2002:79) determined that children-centred activities in the case of migrants, who were professionally less active, were important sources of social relationships and networks. The list could perhaps be augmented with health and fitness centred activities, intellectual or self-improvement activities and much more. For many migrants who are professionally less active, end up in contexts where these activities predominate. Prominent features of South African's middle-class urban neighbourhoods are megalithic health clubs such as Virgin Active and Planet Fitness. There are also slimming clubs such as Weigh Less and Weigh Watchers.

In Judith's case, her children's school turned out to be an important network node. In addition, there was also the health club (Virgin Active) and the various slimming clubs (Sure Slim and Weigh Less) to which she belonged. Similar to Fortin's (2002:88) findings, her "feelings of belonging to one or more social collectivities [did] not correspond to a particular type of social network". For her it was simply a matter of finding some form of communality, of coping with isolation from the primary effective network of people who, even though they lived nearby, all worked in the city during the day. The friendships and associations formed were not of the same intensity as those of her primary effective network and often they reflected the particular dynamics of South African society. Consider the following remark from Judith:

I have very limited [contact with the local community] I know some...I know quite a number of people I meet at the gym but its [nothing really]. At least in Weigh Less I managed to get two friends. We have coffee, tea [...] When they learn that you are not from here, they are a little bit more friendly, but initially, they will just treat you like 'oh okay hi, hi'...no...but then when they realise you are from out, they want to know where you are from...so... that's the thing. I have never understood it. I have never...I...I don't know. I really don't know.

**[Interruption – phone call]** That was a friend of mine, we are having breakfast tomorrow. She was with Weigh Less. When we formed this...the [group] from the same club, we normally meet and have breakfast. [It's] white, black...yeah, it is all mixed. [We talk about] ...everything...everything.

Like at the gym I would interact. With the whites, I'd say 'hi', you know...chat a bit. They don't do that, they would not say 'hi'. I have never seen that. They just smile.

[...] They just say hi... [...] you can see, you can't go through this person...there is always...you can see there is a wall. Why bother.

You can be friends...just... that's all, but, you can see the friendship is not...is not deep. Because there is a lady I met at the gym and we used to chat, chat, chat...you can see, you...I am trying to be a friend, you know, [...] Let's go, you can come to my house, we take food [...] you know... You know, I don't even know her house. She lives in Parklands. You can see...I...they pick it up; they know you are not from here very quickly. [Judith]

As mentioned above, her children's school provided Judith with a source for possible networks. Government or Model C schools in South Africa are supposed to reflect the socio-cultural stratification of the "new South Africa". This environment is politically sensitive and tensions often arise over race and class. Judith was not to know beforehand what the situation was going to be like. The school she had enrolled her children in was Table View Primary, a co-ed Model C school. It is close to the edge of this suburb's border with Dunoon, a growing township and informal settlement. Judith expected the school to have more foreign students but this did not turn out to be the case. In fact, the school has been subjected to tension between the parental committee and the School Demarcation Board over the enrolment of children from Dunoon. Judith also encountered prejudice, intolerance and racism. This led to confrontations with the headmaster and parents.

There are very few, very few [black kids in the school]. You must also realise that here you can't...I mean back home, whether you live here and want to take your [child to] school in Durbanville it does not matter. But here, I realised they have some mark [*School Demarcation Board lines*]. This thing happened to a black child and the parents live in Dunoon and can afford to bring their kid to Table View. Or rather, in Dunoon they are teaching in Xhosa and now the parents want the kid to do English...I mean...what happened is...[they did not want the kid here]

I don't mix a lot with the other moms at school]. Just, 'hi...hi'. [...] I think it is just how it is. I get problems with them, because you can always see, you know, all the other parents would double park and you double park and you get somebody just nodding their head and I get so mad. The other day I asked: 'what's wrong, do you have a problem', then they said: 'no, no no'. I mean!! And there is one parent...I just told her... I said, 'why are you picking on me, there are three cars in front of me, five cars behind me', and I told her, I told her, stop being a racist. She said I am not a racist. But look, there are five cars, I am just parking behind everybody else...why me? You know...it is just getting to you sometimes...and you wonder. But basically I just ignore, unless somebody really attacks me [...]

There was (sic) problems, [for the children at school]. [...] I think if you are not from here you can not take, you can not take somebody calling your kid black monkey...and there I was breathing fire. It is her classmates, but I don't think that, that matter [...] and the teacher was so sorry. We wrote a letter...the teacher was so good, because, you know, she watched them, and they became friends. Yes, so

which means she at least did something [...] they were shocked [when I went to school] because I think they...you know, the rich! [...] we had to do something... [Judith]

Unfortunately for Judith the situation at school extended to her children's social network. Racism and prejudice were regular occurrences. These were typical, given the categorical nature of these relationships. What irked Judith most was perhaps the contrast between parents' outward behaviour and what actually happened.

[The sleepover] Ah, that was her friend in class...and she used to come [...] so naturally my daughter wanted to go and sleep there. She went and came back and upset. She cried. She told me how they put her to sleep on the ground. I said what? When this kid comes they share a bed, they are friends. What's the difference? And that was the final...she has never gone to sleep anywhere.

I... [hope that things will change]... it depends on the parents. My children, our friends' children, white children... [...] like the other time, we went to the Spar [supermarket]. My daughter's friend was visiting [...] so we went with this girl, I mean, where else would we leave her. Then afterwards she is telling my daughter, 'oh my mommy says I should not go out with you'. [...] So what...I think...so the mother probably has a problem. Don't you think she has a problem?

#### 5.4.1.3.3 An adaptive network?

In respect of formal adaptive networks, Vertovec (2002:8) states that within the contexts of increasing transnational migration, these networks are becoming more systematic, intricate and widespread: *"There have emerged a number of schemes and types of transnational networks of expatriate professionals that can be tapped to enable their effective and productive role in a home country's development – even without any physical temporary or permanent return"*.

It was determined that in respect of the research participants, three such formal networks existed, i.e. the Association of Kenyans Abroad ([www.kenyansabroad.org](http://www.kenyansabroad.org)), Burundinet ([www.info-burundi.net](http://www.info-burundi.net)) and The East African Students' Association ([www.uct.ac.za/students/societies](http://www.uct.ac.za/students/societies)).

The Association of Kenyans Abroad is described by Vertovec (2002:9) as a *"Developing Intelligence/Scientific Diaspora Network"*. The Association's own webpage describes it as more politically orientated but it seems to be developing along the lines suggested by

Vertovec. Burundinet was researched comprehensively by Kadende-Kaiser and described as (2000:121) “an internet communication network that is comprised of Burundians in the diaspora and interested non-Burundians”. It was initially developed as a reaction to the political turmoil and violence in Burundi but now appears to be an information network. The East African Students’ Association is defined by the University of Cape Town as an organisation focusing on national and cultural interests. The membership is not exclusively East African.

Interestingly the research participants all said that they did not use these associations as possible network sources. There is not a chapter of the Association Kenyans Abroad in South Africa. The Kenyan research participants all visited the web pages of the Association but it was merely to access news. However, they said that news was also available on the Kenyan newspapers own websites. Joan was on the mailing list of the Association:

[...] in America they have a, society [...] they have an association. And [...] it is the same as in Norway...I always get...I don’t know how I got included into the mailing list. They always have [information about] whatever is happening you know, in the Kenyan community, they are strong.

Unfortunately in Cape Town being ah...most people in Cape Town from Kenya are actually professionals or students. Students would normally have a society. Professionals hardly ever have the time for this you know for this function and all that. [Joan]

Nicole and Haydee were vaguely aware of the existence of Burundinet, and did not access it. When she was still studying at the University of Cape Town (UCT), Haydee was briefly a member of the East African Students Association. Haydee felt she did not need the Association’s support as she had a fair understanding of South African society and could have dealt with any problems she might have encountered.

Wanjiru was one of the founding members of the East African Students’ Society:

[...] at UCT we started ah...ah student club. I was the first chairperson actually. When I came to UCT, there were three Kenyan students and then there was...the following year there were more students and then we decided we needed to start a Kenyan student’s society.

[...] when I was in my first year in UCT, there was a Kenyan guy in my department and ah... he went missing and he was...we later found him, two weeks later, dead.

You know and then we were at a loss, what do you do, how do you take the body home, whom to contact and that...that was actually what precipitated for us to form a club because it would just make some formal channel to be able to handle things like this when they do arrive. [Wanjiru]

[...] the other thing was also just for us to be able to...to keep in touch with each other and ah...to welcome new students to Cape Town because we all had the same sense of alienation when we arrived here and we thought we could, you know ah...alleviate that with other people coming from Kenya who are found people that, you know, that they could immediately relate to, show them around, make sure they settle down...that kind of thing.

[...] I came to do a Masters [...] the other people were also post graduate students and we found that there were a lot younger students coming. And then we thought okay, we should perhaps help them with settling down [...] because it wasn't easy for us older students and it would be even more difficult for first year. So we had that at University and it is still going, yeah, they formed...I am not in contact with them at all...they then merged with Tanzania and Uganda to form the East African Student Society. I am not involved in it at all. The group is bigger and they are a lot younger [...] [Wanjiru]

The professional community of Kenyans in Cape Town within which the research participants interacted was quite small. Joan and Wanjiru estimated there were about forty Kenyan nationals living and working in the city at the time of this research. Of this group Wanjiru said she knew about ten. Most were members of her primary effective friendship network. The Kenyans living in Cape Town tried to establish a local chapter of the Association of Kenyans Abroad but according to the research participants there never really was any follow-up. However, a specific incident led to the formation of an informal association of Kenyans in the city:

There was this young girl from Kenya who was in an accident...ah....who needed an operation. When anyone who was Kenyan heard about it, they came to see her, you know, just to offer support to the family [...] and one day we were sitting in the hospital with Fred and all the people are coming and a whole lot of students came in. I think about twenty students. Kenyan students from UCT came in. And they all like. oh yeah, my name is...my name is and we are thinking, how come we have never met you , how come...I was like, you know, we need a registry of some sort, you know, we need to know where we can reach Kenyans or something where we can post some information like this.

And then, one day, I don't remember who, sent an email with all these names that they knew, and they called it "Hi! Kenyans in South Africa" and this is happening and this some celebration jamboree or something...ah...independently, what's going on or ...can we have a braai at this person [...] it started like that [...] [Joan]

Actually it is Benson. He is the one that is...sort of like new, you know, these Kenyans or whatever and then he started sending out these group e-mails and we

started communications with each other via e-mail and it was like oh, why don't we all meet together for lunch and if you know any other person in the CBD, let's get together[...]. And then we thought okay we'd make this regular so we started meeting for sundowners and then for *braais* at the week-end and ah...it sort of grew from there. [Jean]

The research participants indicated that the association was to all intents and purposes without any formal structure. Members mainly contacted each other via e-mail.

[...] It actually became something so loosely formed. [...] initially we'd decide we'd have something, we'd contribute. But the discouraging fact is we had tried - in the past they had tried a formal, you know, even registry, but it had not worked because people would not give up their commitment and people would not show up when the had...[...] [Joan]

There were basically two sides to this association i.e. social and support. In respect of the social side, Jean remarked that the group was borne out of the isolation of Kenyans who had nobody to socialise with.

[...] they had this big party [...] everybody would have a party, Kenyan's in South Africa party. And it was [...] about 40 of us who got to know each other... [...] And in fact the other foreigners who have become friendly with the Kenyans, because they would be meeting, they also formed part of Kenyan's in South Africa. [...] But this [was] a loosely formed organization that I lost track of really [...] we were having fun and we'd meet and those who were available, we'd write an email: if you are available we are meeting at Wakamata. [Wakamata] in fact became our local. Fridays we'd all meet there and speak Swahili and have a drink and it was really fun. [Joan]

Then, you know, like most things it melted...it frizzled out...you need...it was not formal, it was very informal and it was not structured either, it was oh just let's all get together and have a drink, type of thing. [...] you know, with these kind of things, you need a person to...sort of drive it, you know, kind of sits and send out an e-mail and say oh let's get together and we can do abcd, and then people actually respond to that. [...] Benson was very good at that [...] and then there was another guy who [...] organised these sorts of things and then he got transferred to Copenhagen. [...] and then people like Joanne left and a couple of other people sort of got transferred [...] [Jean]

The group's function as a network of support was also without structure. Jean described the general purpose but also mentioned another aspect, i.e. fundraising.

that was the idea that if there was a...you know, maybe somebody passed away or something like that, there would be this group that would be able to come together and organise to have the body transported home, or when there was some other

problems...yeah, that was the idea. But ah...yeah...now it has sort of like become a bit fragmented...but is just ah...yeah...maybe it is just a phase. [Jean]

[...]...that was also another aspect of that, [...] we had like a fundraiser, we had a couple of fundraisers for...there was a boy here from Kenya who came here for treatment, he had leukaemia. Fortunately he had since passed on. But like he needed money for blood transfusions and we did a couple of fundraisers for him. And then also people used to take turns to like take him out to the movies [...] because he was so sick, and you know, take him out for a meal, that sort of thing.

[...] last year, we had this girl ah...whose parents brought her here for treatment. It was very sad, you know, an accident, she became paralysed from the neck down. So she was here, brought by her parents for therapy. She was here with her mom for about six months. And we tried as a Kenyan community, you know we'd go to the hospital and spend time with her and pick up things and just...you know...tried to give her back that confidence, the sort of confidence you would get back at home [Jean]

The idea of fundraising is central to the Kenyan practice of *harambee*, a Swahili word meaning 'working together'. The concept appeared time and again in the narratives of the Kenyan research participants. It is also implicit in the idea of remittances. During the presidency of Daniel arab Moi the word *harambee* was equated with notions of "team spirit" and "pulling together". The meaning later evolved to signify 'fundraising' and it also became linked to co-operatives where people would 'pull' resources for a specific end result. A present day example would be a saving or investment co-operative. Some of these organisations are formally structured and well-organised. Joan remarked in respect of the change in the meaning of *harambee*:

This meaning got twisted into meaning fundraising. You find people inviting you for a "*harambee*" to raise funds from anything such as education, hospital bills, pre-wedding (to raise funds for the wedding), funerals etc. This concept became so abused during the Moi era that you find people being resentful of it.

The practice of *harambee* in its original form should, however, not be equated with the South African notion of *ubuntu*. Kenyans often use the word *umoja* to imply a spirit of togetherness or unity. Some of the research participants said this was the closest they would ever come to *ubuntu*. However, among the Kikuyu there exists a different concept, i.e. *itega*. This, they said, is equal to *ubuntu*.

Much more can be said about these concepts and practices suffice to mention here that *harambee* has become contentious because it can and has been misused. The Kenyan research participants were all involved in precisely such an incident. When the first



interviews were taking place, the Kenyan boy with acute leukaemia came to Cape Town for treatment. He was accompanied by his mother. Initially, when the little boy was not in hospital, they stayed in a small cottage at considerable expense and also quite far from the hospital. A pastor from the *Word of Faith Ministries – Rwanda for Christ* heard about this and took them under his wing. To the Kenyans he was a hero. When the pastor first called for a *harambee* to raise funds for the little boy, the Kenyans were not alarmed since they knew the treatment was costly. However, they soon realised that the *harambee* was merely a guise and that the pastor was actually collecting the money for himself.

What happened ... the pastor is not Kenyan, hey! He is married to a Kenyan girl. He is Rwandese. [...] he said he needed to be paid how much he had spent on them. And he...so...he became aggressive because Kenyans who knew were also upset with him. And it became so that one of our friends, as it happens, she is a lawyer, she was so upset. She went and picked up the boy and the mother and the sister and took them to her house and was going to sue him, you know for the way he treated them. So the poor Kenyans, it really upset all of us when we realised that in reality he wanted to try and make money. [Joan]

Leblanc's research (2002:127) in Montreal revealed that only some of the small number of active associations was based on nationality and that these were only activated for specific activities, i.e. political, cultural or religious events. Furthermore, they had limited membership and less-frequent participation. In contrast, countries of origin-based student organisations were more active. Leblanc (2002:127) also noted differentiation on the basis of socio-economic and immigration status. Leblanc's findings find some resonance in the research participants' informal association. First it was inclusive in that it was primarily based on the professional status of the members. Their superior socio-economic and immigration statuses *vis-à-vis* refugees or illegal immigrants are implicit here. In fact, the research participants often made clear distinctions between themselves as the 'professional community' and the 'poor refugees' or the 'traders on Greenmarket Square'. Second, the association was sometimes activated for specific reasons or events such as '*harambee*' or as Wanjiru remarked:

[When we get together] Sometimes it is a national day...other times maybe we just haven't listened to or danced to Kenyan music for a while and you are like 'hey we need to get together...play some Kenyan music'. Talk politics, you know, tell things...jokes that are purely Kenyan and things like that. [Wanjiru]

Third, the formally structured East African Students' Association was more active. But once again, this was not an association based on categorical identities or specific country of origin. It allowed other interested parties to join.

An interesting observation is put forward by Boyd (1989:652) in respect of the link between the development of networks and the policy environment in host countries: *"...the operation of networks and their temporal developments are shaped by policies of receiving countries regarding integration and settlement. A distinction can be made between countries which stress immigration and immigrant settlement and those who do not. The preceding generalisations are relevant for countries which conceptualise migration as permanent and immigrant integration as a desired outcome. In countries which view migrants as marginal and temporary other characterisations regarding the content and development of networks may exist"*.

Given South Africa's present legal and regulatory environment in respect of migration and the general perceptions underlying the treatment of migrants by the country's citizens, it may be relevant to ask here if the lack of formal associations among migrants cannot partly be ascribed to this situation. In countries with a more receptive climate, formal migrant associations are usually encouraged (cf. Leblanc 2002:127).

#### **5.4.1.3.4 Religious associations**

Aiwa Ong (1996:745) in her analysis of the impact of Western churches on the socialisation process of Asian immigrants in New York states: *"Beyond the domain of the welfare state, institutions such as the church also construct commonsensical understandings of different ways and claims of belonging in Western democracies. Church groups are vital agents in converting immigrants into acceptable citizens, since they have always played a major role in sponsoring, helping, and socializing newcomers to Western culture, whether in the colonies or in the metropolitan centers."*

Perhaps the research participants do not fit as neatly into this framework as Ong's Asian immigrants but the role of the church as a socialisation mechanism cannot be ignored. Common to the majority of the research participants was the role of religion and religious

associations. Most of the research participants said that being religious was part of their identity, of who they were.

Jean told of how she was raised Presbyterian, converted to Catholicism when she got married and began going to the Baptist Church when she started living on her own in Cape Town. She did not perceive the church as a possible source for networks but nevertheless made new friends. She said that even though she had never thought about it before, it was possible that going to church was a means of counteracting loneliness and isolation.

Nicole was raised Catholic but started going to the Baptist Church when she relocated to the suburb of Table View. Being a charismatic church she preferred it to the local Catholic Church which she perceived as too rigid and quiet. The Baptist church was also more integrated. She made some friends here and also joined a prayer group. Upon a question whether religion was something she had turned to because she was lonely she answered in the negative, saying it was not the Burundian way where religion is perceived as a personal act.

Fred and Judith belonged to the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Table View. This happened naturally as both were raised in a Christian tradition and were members of the Baptist Church in Kenya. One of Judith's grandfathers was a pastor in the church. Once again it is a place where they felt comfortable because of the high degree of integration. However, the church was not a source for networks of any kind.

Joan admitted to religion or rather spiritualism as an anchor. She was raised Catholic and attended the Catholic Church in Table View regularly although she also frequented other churches.

When I moved to South Africa [...] I used to go to church a lot [...] I would go to church to keep myself grounded [...] it is...I tell you ...more of spiritualism [...] I find religion to be a divider. It divides people more than unite people. [...] I am a Catholic and I have no problem. I go to church, I love what they teach us [...] but I do not restrict myself to Catholic churches.

Among the research participants Hospice emerged as the one individual who's social and professional networks were completely integrated with his religious identity. His religious affiliation was also his most important conduit to a sense of belonging.

[My reality is linked to my religion] It is linked to spiritual values and beliefs, and an understanding of life that I have, and my relationships in my environment, the people around me.

On a social basis it is religion for me [that is a support system]. The reason is simple, because I belong to a religion that is worldwide and when I came here they asked me to help, [I am] an ordained priest within the system. So I knew people from South Africa before I arrived here. And because I do workshops around here I get to know people within that environment. And religion is a family thing for most people, therefore my connections are religious. [Hospice]

Hospice belonged to Eckankar ([www.eckankar.org.za](http://www.eckankar.org.za); [www.eckankar.org](http://www.eckankar.org)) which can be described as a modern religious movement. It originated in Minneapolis in 1965 under the leadership of one Paul Twitchell. The current leader is Harold Klemp. Eckankar is often referred to as a "*religion of the light and sound of God*," (Nelson 2001:4). It incorporates many religious philosophies and spiritual traditions but mainly focuses on dreams as keys to knowing one self.

Religion is very important because it defines a set of values and a way of a life, a lifestyle. Basically I think...I think, my religion is closely linked to my identity, from the view that...it defines the way I live my life... and the circle I move into, the people I relate to, because they have the same values, not necessarily religion, but they have the same ethical values, the way you look at life.

My social connections, those people are all business people. Outside the church or activities, when people want to talk, they know I am doing business deals. The gentleman I bought a business from is part of the religious environment. We know each other from religious seminars in the US and Canada.

Oh yeah...I mean...ah...our friends...ah...they business partners...ah...people who sit on different...volunteers on committees, and ah...you know, we like each other, we can communicate, those are...ah...the friends...ah...family friends...people of the same religion...people in business...ah...those are the friends. [Hospice]

Eckankar in Cape Town is still a very small institution. As a priest of the church, Hospice was charged with the responsibility to increase membership. This he mainly did by inviting people to established Eckankar practices such as worship services, seminars and discussions. Hospice also presented workshops focusing on spiritual exercises. Interesting, however, is the fact that although the church is quite popular in Africa, it once again reflected the social stratification and subsequent identity markers of South African society.

They are mixed, [the Church members]] but more whites. In Cape Town, for example there are more whites than other races. And that has also worked for me. In the beginning it was easier for me to relate to white people in South Africa

because I think in my perception it is easier for the white people in South Africa to relate to somebody who is black, or whatever it is, that have no baggage from the past. [...] [The religion] ...had a support base from Africans, from other African countries, more than they did from local Africans [...] part of my role here was to set up [...] a bridge which we did too well. And it worked very well, more than a black local person would do. [...]

Besides being a source for local personal and professional networks, Eckankar was also a source of transnational networks for Hospice:

It is worldwide. Yes, 120 countries, worldwide. Yeah. In Africa...In Africa, it's a very big part of Africa, in Europe, in America, [...] Asia, to Hong Kong, to Australia. I was involved [in Eckankar in the USA and in Switzerland]. [...] That serves as a bridge for me. Not because I look for it, just because I belong to...I belong to...so when I am going to a place, I am going to Oman, then I check, is there any...in Oman, are there contacts. [Apart from electronic communication, we establish contact] always through the telephone, communication, letters, there is a whole database. It's through the power of Eckankar that you ask questions. Obviously they don't give your postal address away unless a person...so they would contact a person...unless a person has specifically said, I would like to be a focal point. Anybody coming to town, you are allowed to. They want to have that in writing for legal purposes otherwise they will say, well, such and such is coming to town and do you want the phone number or whatever.

In contrast to Leblanc's findings (2002:127) "*religious practice and associated cultural events*" did not lead to specific networks of communality among the research participants. The exception was obviously Hospice. One significant aspect is the fact that the research participants' tightly knit primary network of friendship did not extend to their religious affiliations even though they all lived in the same suburb or close by. Only Jean and Nicole attended the same church. However, the respective religious institutions did provide a way to belong in an otherwise unreceptive social environment.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

The place-making process for migrants in this study was framed within the urban context of Cape Town. Research participants had varying experiences which were unique to each person's social network. They had to contend with highly contested spaces and places. Some experiences of place were more intense as a result of the work place. Cape Town as a hostile area featured prominently in many of their narratives. The migrants struggled

to negotiate the socio-cultural boundaries which remain a part of the South African socio-political landscape.

Various kinds of social networks were established. These were based on kinship, friendship and institutional contexts. As far as kinship is concerned, most of the migrants/research participants complied with obligations in the form of remittances to family members. Respect for “natal” structures and institutions were held in high esteem. Absence from home was never perceived as permanent. The friendship networks of research participants overlapped. Establishing effective friendship networks was however, challenged by among others, the language barrier. In addition, race, class and political power were also perceived as constraints. Even in the workplace, it seemed that the burden of uncertainty of tenure of employment, contributed to establishing new social relations. The socio-cultural and socio-political reality of South Africa made a substantial imprint on their networks of friendship. In the context of education (networks through schools) similar problems were encountered such as racism and prejudice. It appeared that few of the research participants utilised the existing transnational adaptive networks, other than for instance the Kenyan practice of *harambee*, or fundraising. Similarly, religious networks seemed of little significance for a number of the research participants.

## CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSION

The strategy throughout has been to analyse and interpret the data as the different themes and issues were dealt with in the preceding chapters. These were furthermore consistently contextualised and explicated with reference to the relevant literature. Each chapter also culminated with a conclusion which captured the essence of the particular section. This final conclusion hence serves only to round off the perspectives already developed.

Chambers (1994:6) captures the essence of what this study has revealed when he writes *“...to sweat in slow queues before officialdom, clutching passports and work permits, is to acquire the habit of living between worlds, caught on a frontier that runs through your tongue, religion, music, dress, appearance and life”*. Here, the stranger experiences what it is to be ‘there’ and not ‘here’ and to be simultaneously ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ a situation: *“Cut off from the homelands of tradition, experiencing a constantly challenged identity, the stranger is perpetually required to make herself at home ...”*.

As has been seen, it is not always easy for people to move between countries or to cross borders at will. However, *“it is also true that for reasons of necessity and sometimes choice, people do cross borders and see their lives unfolding in diasporic settings”* (Brazier & Mannur 2003:15). Appadurai in Brazier & Mannur (2003:14) furthermore states that *“diaspora runs with, and not against, the grain of identity, movement and reproduction...Many people find themselves exiles without really having moved very far...Yet others find themselves in patterns of repeat migration...[it is] a new sort of world where diaspora is the order of things and settled ways of life are increasingly hard to find...”*.

Within this context thus, host countries such as South Africa, do not become a melting pot, but rather what has been termed, “another diasporic twitching point” (Brazier & Mannur 2003:15). To “belong” in this world, is a process of change and fluctuation. ‘Crossing borders’ will mean different things to different people – specifically also for skilled/professional migrants. Issues such as class, gender, race, citizenship, ethnicity and sexuality play a role in how “belonging” is defined and how people assign meaning to movements across borders (Brazier & Mannur 2003:14-15).

It has been suggested that an aspect which may influence identity, community and culture among black professional migrants, is the interplay between imagination and social reality. Authors such as Wagner (2002:14) and Crush (2001:6,22) mention the disappointment, anger and indignation of particularly non-SADC migrants at their treatment by South Africans, specifically black South Africans..."*we have never treated them as they do us*" (Crush 2001:22). Wagner (2002:14) argues that the 'disappointment' is a "*residual effect of the disjuncture between the imagination....and the lived social relations*". The 'imagination' created an expectation of acceptance by the host country based on race and sympathy. Imagination, in this case, has fallen short of reality.

In *Ethnicity in the Age of Diaspora*, Radhakrishnan (2003:120), as was seen, mentions that his son's confusion over whether he is Indian or American prompted him to further investigation. He tells his son that he is in fact both Indian and American, but realises at the same time that he has touched on the multiplicity of what should be the unity of identity.

I have argued that this is precisely the problem that migrants have to deal with and that it is compounded in the case of skilled transients/migrants. For example, whom exactly, is a Francophile-African working in Cape Town? Radhakrishnan (2003:122) states emphatically that "*when people move, identities, perspectives and definitions change*". The underlying question, however, was "*how could someone be both one and something other*" (Radhakrishnan 2003:122). A further intriguing question was whether this Francophile-African man (or woman) identifies and recognises his (her) ethnic self and whether this is primary or secondary to his (her) identity as a French national. Being a professional transient, could he (she), in the words of Radhakrishnan (2003:122) have "*left it behind when the time is [was] right to inaugurate the 'post-ethnic'?*"

Castles & Miller (1998:297) wrote that "*it is part of the migrant condition to develop multiple identities, which are linked to the cultures both of the homeland and of the country of origin...such personal identities possess complex new transcultural elements*". The transcultural nature of the migrant's situation creates multifaceted sociocultural identities. These identities are transitional and renegotiable.



Wagner (2002:14) argued that identity issues are also linked to questions of membership. She asked “in what capacity is a migrant a member of the host society: as a denizen, a resident, or a full-fledged citizen?” Wagner reasoned that on a formal basis, membership is dependent on political access and political authority – aspects that in turn are linked to citizenship status. However, on a more informal basis, membership is also negotiated through economic and social relationships.

The problem is however, as I have shown in this study, that in a country such as South Africa, the multifaceted nature of migrant identity and membership, particularly in respect of skilled/professional migrants may create diversity in that it highlights cultural differences and emphasises ethnicity and ‘otherness’.

‘Otherness’ creates a marginalised world where culture may play a significant role as an identity-source – “*help [ing] people maintain[ing] self-esteem...where their capabilities and experiences are undermined*”. Culture also becomes a bridge between the past and the actual situation. Within this context, culture is “*recreated on the basis of needs and experience ... and interaction with the social environment*” (Castles & Miller 1998:37).

Culture is certainly an identity resource for the larger migrant population. However, how does this translate within the smaller context of skilled/professional migrants/transients? Hall (quoted by Lowe 2003:136) states, “*cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’ ... it belongs to the future as much as to the past ... subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power*”.

Hence I have posed the question, how then, for example, was culture utilised as a resource by a Francophile-African working in Cape Town. Just as in Lisa Lowe’s Asian-American research population (Lowe 2003:136-137), Francophile-African culture includes inherited, modified and invented cultural practises. It also carries an inherent ‘otherness’ born out of the historical and present position of Franco-Africans in Europe. This ‘otherness’ is often described in terms of race.

Rex (1996:102-103) identified three streams within the transnational community, i.e. migrants from economically challenged countries to economically successful countries; migrants who are consciously exploiting foreign economic opportunities; and refugees.

The first and more specifically the second categories have, as was shown, been of interest.

In the first category, migrants enter economically successful countries in order to find work. Some may want to settle permanently in the host country whilst others maintain contact with their country of origin and may wish to return eventually. The desire to return, whether it is possible or not, is often fired by what Rex calls 'the myth of return'.

The second category consists of migrants who are "part of more extensive migration movements, who migrate to a number of countries and who intend to go on living abroad and exploiting whatever opportunities are available..." (Rex 1996:103). These migrants form part of an international community that is perceived as quite distinct from that of their country of origin and those of the host countries.

I maintain that the skilled/professional migrants under investigation here would fit into either one of these categories. The 'migration environment' in South Africa stimulates the formation of a local 'professional migrant community' over and above that of an 'international community of professional migrants'. And further that these communities transcend gender, racial and ethnic groupings.

Although African professional migrants bring economic benefits to South Africa, they are less protected than for example white professional migrants are. African professional migrants in Cape Town, South Africa, are not invisible in that they are often marginalised and exposed to racism and xenophobia. These migrants are sometimes seen as part of a larger group of migrants from Africa who presents a danger to South African society.

In more particular terms this study has in the preceding chapters articulated the following:

It is precisely the transcultural nature of the mobile African and more specifically the mobile professional's situation that stimulates the creation of multifaceted sociocultural identities. In this marginalised world, identity becomes transitional and renegotiable and embracing of new transcultural elements. Perspectives and definitions of identity change to combat otherness. This is a world where someone could be both one and something other.

In dealing with 'community' and more specifically 'transnational communities' in the global ecumene, it should be borne in mind that the categories in effect represent a single field with an inherent fluidity of direct and indirect relationships.

An individual would aim to achieve competency in coping with other cultures, learning the rules, so to speak, but also demonstrate an adeptness in handling distance from his/her own culture. Cultural experience so gained is utilised on an individual level and is rarely used to effect change in the primary culture.

'Mobility' should also be analysed and discussed within current arguments in anthropology about contexts of scale – i.e. the local and the global. It is not suggested that 'migration' and related terminology should be dispensed with. Within the context of this study, 'mobility' has been the preferred terminology. However, for the purpose of clarity, it has been used in conjunction with 'migration' and other related terms where applicable.

Brazier & Mannur (2003:8) state that "transnationalism" addresses the larger more impersonal forces of globalisation and global capitalism. It can be defined as "the flow of people, ideas, goods, and capital across national territories in a way that undermines nationality and nationalism as discrete categories of identification, economic organisation and political constitution".

Statistical information provides a clear picture of the transformation in the profile of African migrants to South Africa. These data were informative in the analysis of the profile of research participants as was discussed in the relevant chapter.

"Blackness" as an identity construct sits with uneasiness with most of the research participants. Being black was equated with being African. As far as nation-state identity is concerned, namely being Kenyan, Burundian or Beninian, there were mixed responses to the notion of such constructed identities. As far as a particular Kenyan identity is concerned, the communality of language, Swahili, seemed prominent. Sub-identities such as a 'tribal'-Kikuyu identity still featured prominently in the narratives of research participants. Colonialist narratives and the recent genocide in Burundi shaped the identity of the respondents from that area.

Participants from Benin and France acknowledged the complexities of being Franco-African (Benin). Being “home” for most research participants also appeared problematic. The sense and notion of belonging seemed evasive. Thus “home” and its identity is nurtured around a collective memory. Border and boundary are both lived as a reality in time and as metaphor, fixed and underpinned by experience. On the micro level institutions such as family, clan and kinship are crucial underpinnings. These three institutions constitute “home”. Thus, home is constantly either juxtaposed with being “there” (the foreign country), or polarised/compared with local institutions. Within this fluid world degrees of belonging and alienness are constantly negotiated and mediated.

Making sense of place clearly entails a challenge which is complex and exhibited a multiplicity of historic processes. The legacy of Apartheid provides one such challenge to foreigners. The “post”-apartheid South African state and its residents have proved no more sympathetic to migrants from other African states.

Encounters with identity and linguistic membership are some of the barriers in addition to stereotyping, prejudice and apathy. In the employment arena migrants are challenged by fears of security of tenure and xenophobia. Eventually, security of place and a sense of belonging remain at large.

The place-making process for migrants in this study was framed within the urban context of Cape Town. Research participants had varying experiences which were unique to each person’s social network. They had to contend with highly contested spaces and places. Some experiences of place were more intense as a result of the working place. Cape Town as a hostile area featured prominently in many of their narratives. The migrants struggled to negotiate the socio-cultural boundaries which remain a part of the South African landscape.

Lastly, various types of social networks were established and these were essentially mechanisms of adjustment. These were based on kinship, friendship and institutional contexts. As far as kinship is concerned, most of the migrants/research participants complied with obligations in the form of remittances to family members. Respect for “natal” structures and institutions were held in high esteem. Absence from home was never perceived as permanent. The friendship networks of research participants overlapped. Establishing effective friendship networks was challenged by among others, the language

barrier. In addition, race, class and political power were also perceived as constraints. Even in the workplace, it seemed that the burden of uncertainty of tenure of employment contributed to establishing new social relations. The socio-cultural and socio-political reality of South Africa made a substantial imprint on their networks of friendship. In the context of education (networks through schools) similar problems were encountered such as racism and prejudice. Few of the research participants utilised the existing transnational adaptive networks, other than for instance the Kenyan practice of *harambee*, or fundraising. Similarly, religious networks seemed of little value to most of the research participants.

Finally, it would seem that African skilled/professional transients defy any migration typology within a South African context. Their decision to migrate is not necessarily voluntary. Although they are usually highly skilled and qualified their position in the world of economic migrants is not automatically one of cosmopolitanism, privilege and glamour.

## BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE CORE GROUP OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

- **Surname:** Djohoun, Hospice
- **Gender:** Male
- **Age:** 41-50 (actual age: 44)
- **Suburb in Cape Town:** Initially he lived in Bergvliet and then in an apartment in Sea Point. During course of the research, he moved to a house in a private estate in Hout Bay.
- **Nationality:** French
- **Citizenship:** French and Benin
- **Ethnic group:** Fon
- **South African status:** Permanent residence
- **What is your mother tongue?** French; understands Fon
- **What other languages do you speak?** German; Portuguese; English
- **Year of arrival in South Africa?** 1998
- **Year of arrival in Cape Town?** 1998
- **Profession:** Director: Global Negotiation Academy
- **Brief employment history:** Financial and Administration Manager for a multinational petroleum company (Cape Town); Finance and Operations Manager: University of Cape Town; Regional Finance Manager for 46 African Countries: United Nations (Geneva); General Services and Systems Manager: UN Embassy (Brazzaville); Regional Financial Manager: WHO (Brazzaville); Also positions in Benin and Nigeria.
- **Education & Qualifications:** PhD (2005) Commonwealth University; MBA (2004) Graduate School of the International Negotiation Academy, South Africa; CPA (1998) Washington, USA; *Baccalaureate in Management and Accounting (1984) Benin.*
- **Marital status:** Married
- **Occupation of spouse/partner?** Psychologist

**Surname:** Osoro, Fred

- **Age:** 31-40
- **Gender:** Male
- **Suburb in Cape Town:** Table View
- **Nationality:** Kenyan
- **Citizenship:** Kenya
- **Ethnic group:** Kisii
- **South African status:** Work permit. Have applied for permanent residence.
- **What is your mother tongue?** Kisii
- **What other languages do you speak?** English; Swahili; Luo; Kikuyu
- **Year of arrival in South Africa?** 2001
- **Year of arrival in Cape Town?** 2001
- **Profession:** Lubricants: Marketing & Operations Manager [Africa]
- **Brief employment history:** Sales and Marketing [Petroleum Company: Nairobi, Kenya, year?]; Acting General Manager [Petroleum Company: Accra, Ghana, 2000/1]; Trainee General Manager [Petroleum Company, Cape Town, 2001-2004] Marketing & Operations Manager [Petroleum Company, Cape Town, 2004 – present].
- **Education & Qualifications:** MSc Chemistry [Kisii University]; BSc Honours [Kisii University].
- **Marital status:** Married
- **What is the occupation of your spouse/partner?** Home executive but investigating business opportunities in Cape Town.

- Name: **Benson**
- Surname: **Wangalwa**
- Suburb (*where you live in Cape Town*): **Parklands but will be moving to Table View (1<sup>st</sup> Sept 04) where he has bought a house (R500 000 plus)**
- How old are you?
  - 20-25
  - 26-30
  - 31-40**
  - 41-50
  - 51-60
- What is your nationality? **Kenyan**
- To which country do you hold citizenship? **Kenya**
- To which ethnic group do you belong? **Luhya**
- Do you have a (a) **South African work permit** or (b) Permanent residence in South Africa?
- What is your mother tongue? **Luhya**
- What other languages do you speak? **English & Swahili**
- Year you arrived in South Africa? **2000**
- Year you arrived in Cape Town? **2000**
- Marital status: **Single**
- What is the occupation of your spouse/partner? (*Should you have one*)**n/a**
- Gender: **Male**
- Profession: **Human Resources Executive (Engen Petroleum LTD)**
- Education & Qualifications: (*Details in chronological order starting with the most recent*)  
**Business Science and Economics**  
**MBA**



- **Surname:** Oigara, Judith
- **Age:** 31-40
- **Gender:** Female
- **Suburb in Cape Town:** Table View
- **Nationality:** Kenyan
- **Citizenship:** Kenya
- **Ethnic group:** Kisii
- **South African work status:** Permit to accompany a spouse. Have applied for permanent residence or work permit.
- **What is your mother tongue?** Kisii
- **What other languages do you speak?** English; Swahili; Luo; Kikuyu
- **Year of arrival in South Africa:** 2001/2
- **Year of arrival in Cape Town:** 2001/2
- **Marital status:** Married
- **Education & Qualifications:** MA Economics [almost complete]; BA Honours: Economics; BA Economics
- **What is the occupation of your spouse/partner?** Manager
- **Profession:** Economist but unable to find a suitable position due to residence status. Home executive. Currently in negotiations to start own business: an ethnic hairdressing salon in the Table View area.

- Name: **Nicole**
- Surname: **Bangerezako**
- Suburb (*where you live in Cape Town*): Table View
- How old are you?
  - 20-25
  - 25-30
  - 30-40**
  - 40-50
  - 50-60
- What is your nationality? **Burundian**
- To which country do you hold citizenship? **Burundi**
- To which ethnic group do you belong? **Tutsi**
- Do you have a (a) **South African work permit** or (b) Permanent residence in South Africa?
- What is your mother tongue? **Kirundi**
- What other languages do you speak? **French, English, Swahili**
- Year you arrived in South Africa? **2002**
- Year you arrived in Cape Town? **2002**
- Marital status: **single**
- What is the occupation of your spouse/partner? (*Should you have one*)
- Gender: **female**
- Profession: **Regional Business Coordinator, Engen Petroleum Ltd**
- Education & Qualifications:
  - BA Business Admin (Richmond University)**
  - High School Diploma**
  - Languages (Lycee Vugizo, Burundi)**

- Name: **Wanjiru**
- Surname: **Mokoma**
- Suburb (*where you live in Cape Town*): **Table View**
- How old are you?
  - 20-25
  - 26-30
  - 31-40**
  - 41-50
  - 51-60
- What is your nationality? **Kenyan**
- To which country do you hold citizenship? **Kenya**
- To which ethnic group do you belong? **Kikuyu**
- Do you have a (a) South African work permit or (b) Permanent residence in South Africa? **A South African study permit which allows employment at a research institution**
- What is your mother tongue? **Kikuyu**
- What other languages do you speak? **English & Swahili and Kikuyu**
- Year you arrived in South Africa? **1996**
- Year you arrived in Cape Town? **1996**
- Marital status: **single**
- What is the occupation of your spouse/partner? **Restaurant assistant manager**
- Gender: **Female**
- Profession: **Researcher: Sociology**
- Education & Qualifications: (*Details in chronological order starting with the most recent.*)
  - MA Sociology**
  - PhD (in progress)**

- Name: **Jean**
  
- Surname: **Mwicigi**
- Suburb (*where you live in Cape Town*): **Table View**
- How old are you?
  - 20-25
  - 26-30
  - 31-40**
  - 41-50
  - 51-60
- What is your nationality? **Kenyan**
- To which country do you hold citizenship? **Kenya**
- To which ethnic group do you belong? **Kikuyu**
- Do you have a (a) South African work permit or (b) Permanent residence in South Africa? **A South African study permit which allows employment at a research institution**
- What is your mother tongue? **Kikuyu**
- What other languages do you speak? **English & Swahili and Kikuyu**
- Year you arrived in South Africa? **2000**
- Year you arrived in Cape Town? **2000**
- Marital status: **Married**
- What is the occupation of your spouse/partner? **USA. Business degree**
- Gender: **Female**
- Profession: **Marine Biologist**
- Education & Qualifications: (*Details in chronological order starting with the most recent.*)
  - Marine Biologist**
  - MA Conservation Biology**
  - PhD Marine Biology (UCT)**

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